

A Concise Set of
Buddhist Healing Prayers and Practices

revised edition

by Jason Espada

“It is said that whenever we practice Dharma it should always be pervaded by compassion at all times – in the beginning, in the middle and at the end of our practice. Compassion is the source, the real essence of the entire path.”

- Khenpo Appey Rinpoche

Preface - I

A Concise Set of Buddhist Healing Prayers and Practices – Preface

In April of 2009, I was able to complete the first edition of A Collection of Buddhist Healing Prayers and Practices. That work contains background essays on the foundation of healing in Buddhism, as I understand it, as well as a good deal of supplementary material, such as Tibetan Buddhist Sadhanas (practice texts, or ‘methods of accomplishment’). I felt it was necessary to set the practices that are used for healing in their proper context, as part of Buddhist Tradition, and also to show how they can be used by someone today, in 21st century American culture.

Over the last two years, I’ve written a few more essays, and some more poetry that I plan to include in later editions of that book. I’ve also continued to practice with a concise set of reflections, prayers and visualizations, that is relatively just a few pages. Almost as soon as I finished the first work I thought it would be good to have a brief text that can be used for daily practice, or that can be taken as a suggestion for another person who wants to draw together various prayers and practices for their own personal use.

In updated versions of the larger book, I’ve removed some of the repetition that was put there to avoid too much page turning. The concise set of prayers and practices that I would like to offer here will also be included the later editions of A Collection. Hopefully the revisions to that larger work will make it easier to use. At the same time, *I hope to offer here a brief set of Buddhist healing prayers and practices, containing all of the essential practical points.* Those who want to know more about the underlying theory, and have more resources to bring into their practice are referred to the larger work, offered online at www.abuddhistlibrary.com on Jason’s Page, or in the form of a hard-copy, upon request.

This edition was revised on February 8th, 2012.

Preface - II

Why the Buddha is regarded as the Supreme Healer

{and how this all fits together}

To my mind, there are two reasons why the Buddha has been regarded throughout time as the Supreme Healer:

The first is that the Buddha saw not only suffering, but its causes as well, rooted in ignorance, and, from his very first talk, proposed a remedy to *all suffering*. By developing the wisdom of insight into our own nature, the Buddha taught that we can become free from all karma and delusions, and all harm. This is a radical proposition that, over two millennia, many have investigated and verified.

If a person goes to an ordinary doctor, with one problem or illness, that is what they will be treated for. By comparison, it is said that this profound remedy goes to the cause of the entire range of our sufferings. Next to a medical model that treats only one symptom, or a few symptoms, this is vastly different, as it goes unimaginably further. It aims to cure all the oceans of samsaric sufferings, over countless lifetimes, that living beings experience.

A second reason why the Buddha has been thought of as the Supreme Healer is the scope of the enlightened person's concern, which includes every aspect of our life, health and well being, from the material and psychological, to the most subtle, spiritual levels. It is care that is comprehensive, all inclusive, and it is for all living beings. It is this range, the depth as well as this breadth of love and compassion, that distinguishes the Buddha.

Over two millennia, then, born of wisdom and compassion, many Skillful Means have been developed by the followers of the Buddha, and those with realizations, to meet the needs of beings.

These methods are what are offered in the Traditions.

Preface - II

There are many ways for the Divine Light and Healing Energy to pour into this world. If we feel we have an affinity with these teachings, we are invited to try these methods and see if they work for us. When we do, we may have the experience that we are supported as well by all the great pure energy of the Saints and Noble practitioners of the Lineages.

All of this has its source in the life of wisdom and compassion of the Founder. All of these teachings and practices can be seen as the continuation of activity of that realized life. And so I join my voice with those of the past and present, and sing with them, as part of one traditional verse of praise:

*Homage to the Completely Perfected, Fully Awakened Being,
the Supreme Guide*

*Homage to the Fully Awakened One, The Glorious Conqueror,
the Subduer from the Shakya Clan*

And, from the Seventh Dalai Lama:

*Honor to Buddha, the supreme sage,
the cosmic overlord who awakens
all beings from drunken ignorance
by manifesting the hundredfold light
of truth's brilliant door.*

May all the benefit that can come from healing practice
be received by all living beings,
each according to their need,
and, in whatever way I can, may I be the cause of that

Preface - III

A few words here on contemplation, prayer, and mantra practice

As Thrangu Rinpoche taught, the shortest form of a sadhana, or ‘method of accomplishment’, is the mantra itself. Anything more than that is just to improve our sense of what we are doing, and the effectiveness of a particular practice. How many or how few reflections and prayers are used by a person is purely an individual matter. We should do whatever works best for us.

Any one of the selections offered here can be used by itself alone as a basis for reflection, prayer, or mantra practice. However we make use of material such as this, we should know that right from the beginning reflections, we are already doing the practice – of generating positive, helpful, healing qualities. That is always the aim.

Traditionally, practicing a sadhana includes visualization and the recitation of mantra, however, for most people, most of the time, these are not the only components of an effective practice. The recitation of mantra and the element of quiet meditation are presented here, of course, and a part of the practice should be given to them. The proportion is up to each individual, and what works best for them. The reason I would like to present the practice in the following way is because of the importance of contemplation as a basis for the rest of whatever practice we do.

Over the long term, contemplation that produces a response from our deeper nature, is, in fact, absolutely necessary for prayer and mantra practice to have any meaning or energy behind it. This doesn’t mean we have to spend a lot of time on the level of thinking. Sometimes thinking too much can keep things on the surface. But what it does mean is that our deeper resources need to be brought to bear in our life. When this happens, everything flows naturally, in prayer and various kinds of meditation practice that we do.

Preface - III

With our fundamental humanity, our deep nature as a basis, it can happen that we are continually generating positive energies. This is how the main reflections offered here, such as ‘I live in this world’ should be read – with this aim in mind – to produce a response from our deeper nature. Thoughts such as these can be used to this end. Reflections, and either our own writings or those we’ve collected, can orient and empower the mind. Then, everything follows from this.

This, essentially, is what is referred to in Tibetan Buddhism as ‘thought training’. By engaging some difficult or suffering situation with a positive motivation, we can turn it into a cause of benefit in our own lives and in the lives of the world. Instead of being overwhelmed or depressed by it, we can be made clear by it, and strengthened to live and act in the world with greater wisdom and compassion.

In his book ‘Becoming Enlightened’, His Holiness the Dalai Lama compared the Dharma, or Buddhist teachings, to a medicine that needs to be used skillfully to get the best result. So experiment and see for yourself what works best with all of this for you. Sometimes, without reading anything at all, you might like to try ‘informal’, semi formal, or less conceptual practice. Then, at other times, try reading texts, or poetry, and practicing with some consistency, and see what happens.

Over the past two years, I’ve found it helpful to periodically go through this set of reflections and prayers, slowly, from the opening, ‘O My ten directions three times family...’ through the mantra recitation, quiet meditation, and dedication prayers.

Then, if a sense of perspective is already there, I’ve seen that the practice offered here can work also just using the short section called ‘Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries’, beginning on page 39, which is only about 30 pages, or less, if only the sections in bold type are read. Even that much can be effective for guiding the mind in a positive direction. In fact, sometimes just reading and reflecting on one or two pages is enough.

Preface - III

Getting a positive result is really all that matters.

These are practices that can heal, and that can work to prevent illness, or to shorten their duration.

There is one application of these teachings that has proven itself for me, that I would like to mention: I've noticed that if I'm beginning to feel unwell in some way, or an imbalance of the elements, then practicing in the following way always helps. I'll wake early and, half asleep, I'll do a brief form of the practice, just reciting the mantra, and visualizing light, followed by some quiet meditation. Then I'll go back to sleep. I've noticed that whatever positive energy I can begin to cultivate will then continue in my sleep, and that I'll wake up feeling much better. Experiment and see what works best for you.

Here is another simple device that can benefit: along with having an image of the Healing Buddha, and my main teacher, I've found to be useful as well to write the names of a few teachers I have a good connection with on a piece of paper and set that to one side, within view, while practicing. When I glance at these names I do feel genuinely supported by them. For my own purposes I've been calling this 'the power of the name'. If approached with devotion and creativity, we make the practices more our own. This is my thought, at least.

I've also taken to keeping a list of specific people and situations that I want to pray for. I review this list from time to time, and add to it. Then, at times before practicing, I think of these people and their needs, and after recitation and meditation, when making dedication prayers, at a certain point I can read through this list again. This is something that is done in healing circles and at meditation centers, and I find it to be very helpful.

When using the following material for formal practice, sections with titles such as 'On Tonglen', or 'On the Refuge Tree' need only be read through the first time, or as needed after that to improve one's understanding.

Preface - III

It's my wish that anyone that this finds its way to - use this in whatever way is most helpful. Feel free to use whatever you like, to use it as it is, or to add, subtract, borrow or change what is here to suit your purpose. It's a work in progress for me as well, and if I'm blessed with more years on this earth, I'll certainly be revising and improving it myself, and sharing that. For now, here is what I've found to be most useful.

Nine Bows

Homage to all that is healing
in a person's life,
in Traditions,
and in the world

Homage to all that is healing
in the lives of Saints and Sages,
in this practice,
and in my own mind

and

Homage to all that is healing
in the Stream of Ancestral Teachers,
in the immediate Community of support,
and in our positive motivations

Many many bright blessings on you and yours. A table of contents follows.

May all beings benefit.

Table of Contents

Preface	page 1
Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections	page
1. O, All my ten directions three times family	10
2. All my family	11
3. I live in this world	12
On Tonglen – Taking and Sending	21
4. Taking and Giving Prayer – I	23
5. Vow	24
6. Taking and Giving Prayer – II	26
7. a sun prayer	30
8. a thorough going prayer	31
9. By this practice	32
10. Such is the nature	33
11. Why don't we	36

Table of Contents

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas, and Commentaries, with additional prayers

1. Motivation I	page 39
On the form of the Medicine Buddha	41
On the Refuge Tree	41
Refuge, the Four Immeasurables, Special Intention, Refuge and the Bodhicitta motivation	42
2. Requesting Prayers	51
3. Instructions for visualization and mantra recitation	56
4. Concluding practices	60
Dedication	61
On Tonglen	69
Part III: Material for reflection	
A list of things that are healing	70
Part IV: Dedication	
On Dedication Prayer	84
Dedications Prayers	88
Recommended reading	106

Homage to all the ten directions and three times

Buddhas and Bodhisattvas!

Dear friends, please read and meditate on whatever brings the most benefit. Here are a few options for practice:

1. From the following page, 'O my ten directions, three times family...', through the short, or longer dedication prayers, or
2. From the following page, and then continue on to page 39, with Lama Zopa Rinpoche's 'The purpose of our life...', and on, or
3. From the following page, continuing on page 42, with refuge, and on...
4. Experiment and see what works best for you...

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - I

O, All my ten directions three times family,
near and distant relations,

May I make a gift of my life

May my life, and this practice benefit us all,
all living beings
pervading all existences

every mind,
every body, every cell
earth and sky

May this practice surely benefit us all, extensively

May all my past, present and future selves benefit from this
and may all the past, present and future selves of all beings
benefit from this

By this practice, may we all be completely free from all illness,
spirit harm, and from all the painful, hallucinated afflictive emotions forever

May we all be free from all samsaric states forever

May all beings completely realize the Dharmakaya

May this practice be the medicine that frees everyone from suffering¹

May this bring health wherever it is needed

May this bring about the firm establishment of true health and well being,
long life, and happiness for us all

¹ a prayer inspired by the Noble Spiritual Friend Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - I

All my family
in all the world
All my relations

All my African brothers and sisters,
aunts and uncles,
grandmothers, grandfathers,
little ones,

All my family in Central Asia, and in East Asia,
All my family in the Americas
North, Central and South,
All my Caribbean family,

And in Europe, North, East, and West
and in the Mediterranean,
and in the Middle East

Mothers, fathers, children,
brothers, sisters,
elders,

Island Peoples,
and all my family in the far North and far South,

All my Native family,
All my family here in the USA

Mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers,
aunts, uncles, young children, dear friends...

All my relations

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - III
I live in this world

I live in this world
of joy, and sorrow

of comfort and ease,
and of struggle, and pain

of friendship, and community
and of loneliness and isolation

I live in this world of riches and poverty
of abundance and of hunger

I live in this world where there is health
and there is illness

Where some people can only try to care for themselves,
while others are at the point where, more and more, they have thinking about
and caring for others as the aim and activities of their life
Bless them all
Bless them all
O, Bless them all

There are people serving others in this world -
there are people taking joy in that
and again and again I celebrate all those good actions
May they blessed

I live in this world
where many are in need of a protector,
where many are in need of an advocate

where many people do not have even a basic education...

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - III
I live in this world

Today, in this world, there are many who are kept back from doing good things because of some illness of body or mind

Today there are many who are broken-hearted
Today there are many who have been hurt in relationships

May there be an abundance of heart medicine,
an abundance of earth and sky medicine today
for all of those who need it
as much as is ever necessary

Today, there are many who have had their families broken
Today, there are many who are grieving

Today there are many who have experienced an unexpected death
in the family
May they all be comforted

Every day in this world
there are people who are facing illness, and who are experiencing pain:
children, teenagers, adults, the middle-aged, the elderly;
those who are alone, and those with problems of the mind

I live in this world where there are people who are disturbed to some extent,
or who suffer from depression

This is the truth

I live in this world where some people don't love themselves,
they don't cherish their lives,
where people even hate themselves,
and where they despair,
even to the point of wanting to take their own lives...

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - III
I live in this world

I live in this world where there are so many people who are in need
of some form of human contact,

I live in this world where there are so many people who are experiencing
the absence of love
and we can do something truly beautiful, truly substantial,
truly meaningful for each other,
every single one of us
May it be this way for me now –
may I offer something truly meaningful

I live in this world where many sensitive people are overwhelmed
and use drugs, or drink, or food, or sex, to self-medicate, to escape
leading to even more dullness and obscurity,
and to more, and even worse problems
May they all be completely healed

I live in this world where many are without peace,
without control, without any freedom of mind

The root of all these sufferings, we should all know,
is the untrained mind,
self-grasping ignorance
and the afflictive emotions

And what we all need to experience
is the fruit of a practice that leads to the disbanding of stress
and to genuine happiness,
and enlightenment as to our own true nature
the single liberating essence of Great Compassion

Ah...

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - III
 I live in this world

Right now, there are people being trapped by their addictions,
 overwhelmed by their delusions, lost

I live in this world where some people are in danger of falling,
 where some are in danger of slipping - and the result can be severe for
 them...

There are many people right now
 who are in need of forgiveness, absolution,
 inclusion,
 their being welcomed back into the community;
 who are in need of purification,
 who are in need of the nectar of ethics in their lives,
 the medicine of ethics,
 the food of ethics,
 their vows restored,
 the attainment of coolness,
 strength, self control
 light, and peace,
 wisdom, purity,
 transformation, and release

I live in this world where we have all done wrong,
 some worse than others
 Some are in prisons of their own making,
 Some have done terrible things
 out of ignorance, affliction,
 or fear, desperation, despair;
 out of weakness and limitation -
 not seeing any other way
 not being able to reach any other way

I live in this world where some people suffer because of
 their own past actions, and regret, and shame
 They identify with their delusions and wrong actions,

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - III
I live in this world

and believe themselves to be wrong, lacking, innately sinful,
when nothing could be further from the truth –
They are all innately whole, perfect, and pure

I live in this world where many people feel unworthy of love

I live in this world where there are many people who are obscured,
lonely,
or numb,
self-absorbed,
superficial,
greedy,
distracted,
afraid, or sad,
where there are those who are feeling ugly,
or feeling hopeless
or who are caught in self-pity

They are all capable of awakening to perfection, but they don't yet know it

I live in this world where selves arise again and again that feel fragmented,
and isolated – even though this is not true, not even for a moment

I live in this world where many people are experiencing stress
and need comfort, love, light,
and the peaceful joy that is nourishing

May people receive such peace
everywhere it is needed
East, West, North, South,
May it be so
and may I be the cause of that

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - III
I live in this world

This is the truth
and it's better that I realize it -
I live in this world where most people
are without any sense at all of the sacred dimension in life

I live in this world where the deluded the band together
and increase ignorance and suffering

I live in this world where, even though there are those with the motivation to
learn
many people are misled by false teachers,
themselves ignorant

In these times, especially, it seems,
wrong views are supported, in hundreds of ways,
and wisdom is not;
greed is encouraged, and non-attachment and generosity is not;
aggression is supported, and peace,
sanity, respect, kindness, and being helpful
is not supported nearly enough

I live in this world where there are many people's
experience is only that of a lower-realm being-
(the realm of hell beings, the realm of hungry ghosts,
and the realm of animals)

I live in this world where there are people
who don't experience even a moment of peace;
where there are those who feel they don't have any space, light
or joy in their lives at all,
tormented, they feel they don't have any happiness, not even a little bit

For as long as this is true
I say, for as long as this is true
may I respond to it

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - III
 I live in this world

in a way that eases their sufferings
 and may they all have every happiness
may they have every happiness
oceans of happiness
skies of happiness

Every day in this world there are people with no perspective on their life,
 coarse, dissatisfied, lacking in gratitude, indulgent

I live in this world where people don't think about death
 or haven't integrated that truth, of impermanence

Every day, all around, there are people wasting precious time,
 not seeing what they have,
 not taking advantage
 of the great opportunities they have
 for all of our sake
 while they still can

I live in this world where the vast majority of people are completely without
 any Dharma

Dharma:
 deep Buddhist teaching, or contemplative teaching;
 the result of deep Buddhist practice or contemplative practice;
 the experience of freedom,
 light, and wisdom –
 that can alleviate and can bring about
 the complete cessation of suffering
 true medicine for the ills of the world

East, West, North and South,
 in the ten directions,
 May people receive the Dharma,

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - III
 I live in this world

And, without grasping or clinging to anything at all,
 may I be the cause of that

I live in this world where few people have received instructions in
 meditation, and, of these few, most are still unclear about the essential points
 that:

whatever meditation we do
 we should aim our minds
 in the direction of clarity
 and the calm continuity of mindfulness,
 and continually generate positive energies

I live in this world, where, though we may do some good,
 though we may improve our lives,
 those who *have* listened to essential teachings, *and understood*,
 many times don't practice
 and, of those who do practice, often they are not able
 to overcome the obstacles to meditation,
 and practice in a way that they progress...

I live in this world where even those people who have received, and
 practiced, and accomplished a great deal of Dharma still suffer
 they still fall into experiences that are like the lower realms

and I live in this world where some of the people who have become stable in
 realization don't share the Dharma as much as they could

I live in this world where though we *can* help ourselves and others
 much too often we don't

where though *can* remove our own and others suffering,

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - III
I live in this world

to some extent at least
and produce happiness, to some extent at least
far too often we don't

I live in this world
where people don't live in the present
Where people don't know their own worth, or the worth of others,
where people don't know their own potential...

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections

On Tonglen – Taking and Sending

The practice called ‘Tonglen’, or ‘Taking and Sending’ in Tibetan Buddhism, is usually described sequentially. If practicing for one’s self, in self tonglen, one imagines or sees with the mind’s eye a part of one’s self as perfect, whole, and loving. That self is visualized as viewing and removing the suffering and pain we have, and replacing it with peace, happiness, well being and strength, and whatever we need.

When practicing directly for others, one first imagines taking or removing the sufferings or difficulties of others, and then giving them peace, happiness, health, and whatever is needed.

The thought of others’ suffering is said to be ‘aimed’ at one’s self-centeredness or insensitivity, destroying it, so to speak. Then, the imagined giving that follows is a practice of kindness, compassion, and generosity.

These are meditations that are considered to have the power to heal.

After reflecting on the traditional teachings about tonglen for some time, I came to connect them to a few thoughts I have had also about symbols in general, and stories that communicate with vivid imagery.

The first idea is that a true symbol is a manifestation of a state of consciousness; second, a sequence of images can be a symbol (as in a dream, or a story, or myth); and third, that meditation on a symbol can produce the same consciousness as the source of the symbol, or story.

As it regards tonglen practice, after meditating for a time on the visualizations as happening one after the other, I came to realize that what is called tonglen practice is actually aimed at producing *a single state of consciousness* that at once removes suffering, and gives happiness. Even though traditionally it is expressed sequentially, to demonstrate its nature,

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections
On Tonglen

tonglen is another name for the single state of consciousness we call compassion, or active compassion.

Tonglen is a creative or magical state of consciousness, in as much as every state of consciousness is creative, producing extensive effects, but with this difference - with the practice of tonglen, or the mind of compassion, the creative nature of our consciousness is brought out, and made abundantly clear.

For more on this wonderful practice, see the essay 'Regarding Tonglen', in the third edition of *A Collection of Buddhist Healing Prayers and Practices*, or available online at <http://www.abuddhistlibrary.com>, on Jason's page.

Here follows a taking and sending prayer, a vow, and another prayer.
May all beings benefit.

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - IV

Taking and Giving prayer - I

May I have the actual knowledge
of the sufferings and needs that exist
in other beings' lives everywhere
and may that knowledge completely destroy
whatever deluded self preoccupation I have
and may it never arise again

May I then have a compassionate mind,
and respond to them in a way that frees all of them
from all of their suffering forever,
May they have every happiness
and the cause of happiness,
and may that happiness last forever

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - V

{think of the Great Aim: bodhicitta is the aim to become a Buddha, in order to bring the greatest benefit to all sentient beings}

Vow

From this point forward,
I dedicate myself to removing the suffering of all living beings,
and to bringing them happiness

I dedicate myself fully to their healing and awakening;
to their all having comfort,
strength of body, mind, and spirit,
most excellent nourishment, health, longevity
every level of protection,
shelter, food, clothing, medicine, education,
joy and wisdom

In order to accomplish the needs of living beings
in the most effective way,
I will develop my wisdom and compassion
just as my teachers have done
I aim to become free of all faults, and complete in all qualities
and, day by day, hour by hour
always offer as much help as I can

In this way, I will make a gift of my life
In this way, my own life will be fulfilled

I dedicate myself fully, leaving nothing out,
to the complete healing, fulfillment and enlightenment
of all living beings

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - V

No matter how long it takes
no matter how difficult it may be
no matter what it costs

With all my heart and with all my strength,
I vow to always serve all living beings
in every way that is necessary for them
and in every way that will bring each and every one of them
true and lasting health and happiness

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - VI

Taking and Giving prayer - II – in order to transform my own consciousness into something positive

Whatever difficulties living beings experience everywhere, I pray, may I, and others, and the environment lift them all from them

by myself becoming able, and then,
like opening a dungeon door
and carrying them out
or encouraging them,
welcoming them to walk

Through all forms of prayer,
May I myself be cure for whatever ails them
or conduit for a cure
or a help for a cure to come to them,
whatever it takes

Like the sun shining through the clouds,
dispersing them,
May I myself become a capable being,
and then like the fully rising sun
instantly
or if time is needed,
then over time,
without grasping or clinging to anything at all,
May I completely remove the suffering that all these beings experience

May the Gurus, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas bless me to be able to do this

like the sun
drying up a pool of stagnant water
so that fresh and fragrant things can grow,

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - VI

or,
easing pain,
'like removing a thorn from flesh',
mending bones
mending broken hearts
binding up wounds
and restoring them

For them, may I and others and the environment
be to them
bring to them
pray to them

a cooling rain, a healing balm
if that's what's needed

a desert chapel,
a well-funded schoolroom,
a well stocked and staffed clinic

As needed, may I *be* these things –
and may I work to bring these things
absolutely, clearly and definitely
to those who need them
here, and everywhere

For those who ache,
experience trials, or fears,
may I be
a gentle warm sun after their long winter
that, in an instant, completely dispels all their suffering
and the causes of suffering

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - VI
Taking and Giving Prayer II

Wherever there are suffering beings,
as much as needed,
may I be a fresh breeze, renewing them,
rain washing away
whatever of the thousands of sorrows these people have

May I be music, space and light for them, for their world
pure water, nourishing food and drink

or like the full noon-day sun,
the pure land of light,
destroyer of sorrow

For them, may I be
medicine clearing the way,
friendship, land, virtue, peace,
arriving when its needed most
solid, firm, stable
all of one meaning

May I have a mind of compassion,
and of love

May I, in that same single moment, develop and increase
the causes for all people to be richly blessed, in every way
May they have all joys
every happiness
and may the causes be established for
these blessings to remain for them,
stable, firm

For them, surely, may I be to them
bring to them
pray to them
wealth eliminating every type of poverty,

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - VI
Taking and Giving Prayer II

and the illusory perception of poverty

like gently waking someone from a bad dream
and reassuring them

outside, inside

May I replace ignorance with wisdom
and replace all wrong views, discomfort, and dis-ease
with knowledge, comfort, health and strength

*“May our intentions equally penetrate
every being and place
with the true merit of Buddha’s Way”*

I pray that whatever hardships I have experienced or know about, whatever
lack whatsoever, may others not experience any of those
I pray they will have it easier than I’ve had

May they not experience any privation or difficulty at all-
not even the slightest

and should they meet with any difficulties,
may they have the means to cope, to overcome these,
and to heal

and from now on,

May they experience only an abundance of health and happiness

I pray that whatever good things I have known in this life, or even just heard
about, may they all experience these, and more,
knowing the love and support of teachers, family and friends...

May the force of goodness increase in me

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - VII

{ a 'sun prayer' – called so because it is a prayer to be as constant,
joyful and diligent as the sun }

I pray that
whatever suffering there is in peoples' lives
that I can remove completely and permanently
that I will do
I pray I will now, this instant, fulfill that task perfectly

and that whatever suffering I can't remove completely and permanently,
I will now at least remove temporarily

and I pray that whatever suffering I can't remove temporarily
I will now at least lessen greatly, by half or more

and that whatever suffering I can't lessen greatly, by half or more
I will now at least lessen even slightly

and that whatever suffering there is anywhere in peoples' lives
that I can't now at least lessen even slightly
I pray I will remember and keep that in mind
and work and study and continue trying to find ways
that will benefit
immediately, in this time,
and in the future
forever

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - VIII

{ a thorough going prayer }

However much suffering there has been in our lives in the past

and however much latent potency there is still in our lives
to cause suffering in the future

and however extensive the causes and conditions
have been, are now, or can be in the future
to produce suffering

I pray,

May it all be healed now

May it all be healed now

May it all be healed now

By sila, samadhi, and prajna,
may it all be healed

By ethics, meditation, and wisdom,
may it all be healed

By prayer and mantra,
may it all be healed

By kindness and all the sources of virtue,
may it all be healed

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - IX

By this practice
may those who have perfect health
be firmly established in that perfect health
May those who do not yet have complete and perfect health
be brought to that level of health, well being and strength
and may those who suffer in any way
be it very slight, or with very great suffering
be healed
may they be brought to the highest level of health
and may they be firmly established in complete and perfect health

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - X

Such is the nature of this dependent arising:
perceiving the needs of living beings
produces the wish to benefit them as needed
naturally, spontaneously, wholeheartedly, abundantly

May the complete fulfillment of this wish be unobstructed,
without any hindrance at all, may it be immediately
and effortlessly be fulfilled
Absolutely and without question

May I myself become sure medicine for every pain.

By this prayer and practice,
May I bring to those in need,
whatever they need for health

Everywhere it is needed,
may there be a healing rain,
and may healing herbs grow
wherever they are needed

To all of you everywhere and in all times
who work to heal , I pray, may I *always* honor you
and may I always serve and support you
in whatever way is needed,
and for as long as is needed

And I pray to all healers
I pray to gather and share with all others who are in need
all that is life-giving, health giving
O, hear my prayer!
and please give me your blessing!
By your graces,
and all the sources of healing in the world,
and by my own efforts,

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - X

however much I can do,
May all beings benefit

May the force of caring
increase in me

May the power of love, compassion and wisdom
increase in me, and everywhere in the world

May my mind be healing
May my consciousness be healing
May my presence be healing

May my thoughts,
prayers,
and meditation be healing

May my words,
actions,
rest,
breath,
look,
touch,

sleep,
dreams,
and waking be healing

May everything I do be healing

May everything I do promote health and healing in this world
and in the lives of all living beings

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - X
Such is the nature

May I hold as my delight
the removing of suffering of living beings
and giving them happiness

May I dedicate myself now more and more fully to all others' benefit

May I and others and the environment increase our ability to help others
in every way that is necessary
and for as long as is necessary

May virtue increase

At all times, may I produce, maintain and increase this life giving vision
for all

May whatever is good within me and in the world increase

May that which is beneficial increase

and may I be able to share more of the good that is in me
and in the world

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - XI

Why don't we
invoke the blessings
of billions of angels
the light of love
to pour down upon
everyone we see,
hear, or even think of

Why don't we settle thoroughly
that we all have it in our power
to feed each and every one
with the food that matches their deepest need and desire
and then do it

Why don't we do this?
It costs us nothing if we do
and costs us all so much if we don't

Why don't we
wash the feet of all weary travelers,
offer them humble sustaining fare
and a soft bed
for them to be able to continue
laden with gifts
on their way

Why not
spread lotus blossoms
on the ground for each person to walk on
every step of their way

Why don't we

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - XI
Why don't we

Why don't we
wash away the murk
of our own confused thinking
and so stand resplendent
and as light for everyone's eyes

Why don't we pick up
in both our precious hands
that part of the wounded staggering world soul
we've each been given
to restore to health

In this, the briefest of moments,
this brief meeting,
our being here together,

O now,
Why don't we hold in our heart
the dreams of future generations
and heal all injury
as our gift to be passed forward in time

I say,
Why don't we
abide in perfect, overflowing fullness
with every gift passed around
from one house to another
no limit

all the broken
isolated
born but not able to be fully born –
this, plus the heart

Part I: Introductory Prayers and Reflections - XI
Why don't we

and there is vow
this path made entirely of
somehow wanting,
needing to say
a mighty yes

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

(A note on this section: the parts in bold print are for formal practice, whereas the parts in normal type I read only occasionally, to refresh my memory, and improve my sense of the meaning.)

1. Motivation I – from ‘The Healing Buddha’, translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Excerpts are in quotes, the rest are my own notes, including those sections in brackets [].

One can begin here, or with ‘For the sake of all beings...’, starting on page 42 .

‘No matter what you do, it is essential to generate a positive motivation. Therefore, think as follows:

“The purpose of my life is to free all living beings from all their problems and the causes of these problems, which are [first] in their minds, [as obscured consciousness, and ego- grasping, and then in their emotions, energy patterns, and bodies] and to bring all beings peace and happiness, especially the peerless happiness of full enlightenment, which they desperately need. For me to be able to do this, my [own] mind and body must be perfect, pure, and healthy.’

To you who can help, I pray: for all of our sake, as much as possible, please help me to alleviate the effect, and bring about the complete end to the cause of my own suffering, and obtain true health and happiness.

I pray - May I become a fully capable being – fully capable of knowing and responding to the suffering in the world, and offering whatever will help the most, temporarily and permanently.

Moreover, all these beings, my dear family, friends, and all my dear relations everywhere and at all times need health to be able to even *hear* teachings on how to be truly and completely free from their sufferings and attain happiness; to be able to receive encouragement and to be

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

able to practice and achieve realizations, and live well, they definitely absolutely without question need health, long life, and freedom from such overwhelming and distracting obscurity, affliction and distress.

‘Therefore to accomplish this purpose, [of benefiting myself and all others everywhere, in all situations and in all times,] I am going to do this practice.’

**With so much need in this world, and in these lives that I love,
I pray that I will quickly, very quickly generate spontaneous great wisdom and compassion**

‘To benefit living beings equal to the extent of space, I am going to practice this healing meditation.’

{Three verses from Shantideva}

Like a wish-granting jewel,
a wish-fulfilling vase, a powerful mantra,
Great Medicine and a wish-granting tree,
May I fulfill all the wishes of sentient beings

Just like the sky and the great elements,
May I always be the means of life
and the cause of happiness
for all the unimaginable number of sentient beings

As long as space endures,
and for as long as sentient beings exist,
May I too abide,
and eliminate the suffering of sentient beings

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

On the form of the Medicine Buddha

The Medicine Buddha, as ‘the manifestation of all the healing energy of all enlightened beings’ is seen as being in the nature of deep blue light. He sits in a cross legged position. In his right hand is the healing plant, the ‘arura’, and in his right hand, resting on his lap, is a bowl filled with long life nectars.

Here, the Ven. Thrangu Rinpoche discusses the position of the Healing Buddha's two hands:

‘His right hand is extended, palm outward, over his right knee in the gesture called supreme generosity. In it he holds the arura, or myrobalan, fruit. This plant represents all the best medicines. The position of his right hand and the arura which he holds represent the eradication of suffering, especially the suffering of sickness, using the means of relative truth. Sickness can be alleviated by adjusting the functioning of interdependent causes and conditions by the use of relative means within the realm of relative truth, such as medical treatment and so on.

‘His left hand rests in his lap, palm upward, in the gesture of meditative stability or meditation, which represents the eradication of sickness and suffering— and, indeed, the very roots of samsara— through the realization of absolute truth. From the point of view of either relative truth or absolute truth, the fundamental cause of sickness and suffering is a lack of contentment and the addictive quality of samsara. Therefore, to indicate the need for contentment, in his left hand he holds a begging bowl.’

On The Refuge Tree

Sometimes when doing Vajrayana practice, what is called a Refuge Tree is visualized. All of this is seen to be in the nature of light. Around the central

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

figure, whatever practice we are doing, one can visualize other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas that we have a connection with.

For example, White Tara can have the wonderful effect of truly strengthening the constitution and the central nervous system. Among other qualities, I bring this quality of enlightened action to mind at times when doing the Medicine Buddha practice, and imagine that She is there in the retinue of the Healing Buddha, bestowing her blessings as well. We can add to a single visualization simply, or we can just have the sense that those other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are there, whatever brings the best results.

As Geshe Tenzin Wangyal teaches, all of this, seen as a support, represents your inner truth, your pure nature. Here, the forms are visualized, with faith and devotion, as a method to help us awaken our own Buddha Nature.

{Note: For an explanation of the sequence that follows, for Refuge, the meditation upon the Four Immeasurables, and the generation of bodhicitta, see the essay titled ‘The Foundational Refuge and Mahayana Refuge’, on Jason’s page on abuddhistlibrary.com, and in A Collection of Buddhist Healing Prayers and Practices.}

For the sake of all beings

**I take refuge in the Buddha
I take refuge in the Dharma
I take refuge in the Sangha**

Repeat as necessary, and reflect on the meaning of this.

Sometimes I reflect on the following, longer refuge prayer, from the Chenrezig sadhana:

I go for refuge to all the glorious Holy Lamas

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

I go for refuge to all the Yidams, the Dieties gathered in the Mandalas

I go for refuge to all the Buddhas, those that have conquered and gone
beyond

I go for refuge to all the Supreme Dharma

I go for refuge to all the Noble Sangha

I go for refuge to all the Dakas, Dakinis, Protectors and Defenders of
Dharma who possess the eye of Transcending Awareness

A single seamless gesture - on integrating the various levels of motivation
in practice

At times we may find ourselves in a situation because of some suffering or
obscuration where that's all we can see and feel. We may feel that, 'as I am
now, I can do little or nothing to help others', and that we need to clear that
obstacle to become more fully capable. At those times, if doing a practice
for ourselves, in order to be able to offer greater benefit to others, we can
reflect and pray:

'May I accomplish this practice and share its benefit with others
as well as the other forms of help and support that I will then be able to offer
them {reflect on the result to be obtained, and its benefits, thereby
generating the energy and enthusiasm, the motivation to accomplish the
practice}

'In addition, by this practice, may I then also be able to go on to quickly
accomplish the qualities and stages of the Path, so that I can offer every
single type of material and spiritual benefit to all beings everywhere, with
wisdom, each according to their specific needs and wishes. {reflect...}

'Ultimately, may I become a Buddha in order to benefit all sentient beings in
the most complete and best possible way.'

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

If we have a mind of non-discrimination, intuitively knowing non-duality, this can be done in a single session, as a single, seamless gesture. In a deep and very real sense, to practice in this way can be like saying our true name, or recalling our own true nature. We can keep oriented, and with a heart of love and compassion for all, we can be fully motivated and clear about what needs to be done at any particular time.

Though it is focused on the particular ends that are right in front of us, practicing in this way is also actually far seeing and all embracing. Have the sense that this is inclusive of the totality of our lives and motivations. From wherever we are, wherever we may find ourselves, this is a way of continuing to make clear minded and fully meaningful steps on the Path.

To begin with, so as to not leave out any steps, I think it's a good idea to meditate on the factor of having loving kindness, and compassion towards oneself. What this means is a rich subject for reflection, and it is an essential part of the path. Being Westerners, we need this. One can use phrases, such as

**May I have happiness, health and peace,
and share that with all**

or, by simply resting in the clear sense of generating goodwill toward oneself.

Next, in order to highlight and bring out more of the quality of this as a being truly a Mahayana practice, reflect on the following:

All others are exactly the same as me in wanting only happiness, and not even the slightest suffering.

Here follow the Four Boundless Meditations, also called the Four Immeasurable Qualities, of Universal Love, Compassion, Rejoicing in

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

Happiness and Virtue, and Equality of View. Together with Wisdom, these are always the essential nature of every Vajrayana practice.

Recite and meditate on these verses three times, or as much as you wish, to bring the meaning clearly to your mind.

A few notes on the meaning of the Equanimity or Equality aspect of loving kindness and compassion: its applying in all situations and at all times, it is *unconditional* and unchanging. It has the qualities of steadiness and equanimity; clearly seeing that all are equal in deserving our love and our care makes it *impartial*, boundless, all inclusive; ultimately, it is *without discrimination* between self and others. It is the expression of our true nature.

I place Equality of View first:

In all situations and at all times, all are equal in deserving our love and our care

May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness

(or, May all beings have happiness and the causes of health and happiness, and May I be the cause of this)

If one prefers, here is a four-part method, with four reflections, for cultivating love and compassion, taught in the Tibetan Tradition:

First, one meditates: How wonderful it would be if all beings had happiness and the causes of happiness;

then,

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

May they have happiness

I will cause them to have happiness

Guru-Buddha, please bless me to be able to accomplish this.

The meditation on compassion:

May all beings be free of suffering and the causes of suffering

The four part method here would be:

How wonderful it would be if all beings were free of suffering and the causes of suffering

May they be free of suffering

I myself will cause them to be free of suffering

Guru-Buddha, please bless me to accomplish this

and Rejoicing:

I rejoice in all virtue and good fortune

A more extensive practice of rejoicing, as taught by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, is to take some time and to think about, 1., one's own positive actions, and to think, '*How wonderful!, How wonderful!...*' 2., the positive actions of our teachers, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and to think, '*How wonderful!, How wonderful!...*' and, 3., to reflect on the positive actions of all beings... (as above). Reflections that produce the feeling of gratitude can also be done here. *How wonderful!*

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness...

It is good to occasionally do the longer form of prayers. Then, when we read, recite and meditate on the shorter form, the full meaning is there.

Following the Four Immeasurables, we then produce what is called the Special Intention. This is where one takes responsibility on oneself for removing the suffering of others, and bringing them all happiness.

In Mahayana Buddhism, this Special Intention becomes bodhicitta, the thought to become a Buddha in order to bring the greatest benefit to all sentient beings. The way to genuinely help others, in the Buddhist sense, is by ourselves becoming realized, developing freedom and all beneficial qualities. Then, that is what we offer to the world.

Here is the first verse from the Eight Verses for Training the Mind:

**May I always cherish all beings
with the resolve to accomplish for them
the highest good
that is more precious than a wish-fulfilling gem**

Refuge and Bodhicitta

Out of compassion for ourselves and others, first we turn through trust, faith and devotion to our sense of refuge in the Three Jewels. Doing so, we generate as a protective force, in ourselves and in the world, the power of the Dharma of the Healing Buddha. Then we cultivate a strong motivation to be of benefit in every way possible.

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

From ‘A Commentary on the Awakening Mind, by Nagarjuna

Just as the blessed Buddhas
and the Great Bodhisattvas have generated the mind of Great Awakening,
I, too, shall, from now until I arrive at the Heart of Awakening,
generate the Awakening Mind,
in order that I may save those who are not saved,
free those who are not free,
relieve those who are not relieved,
and help to thoroughly transcend sorrow
those who have not thoroughly transcended sorrow

Here, by relying on my teachers, and on practice in this way, I aim to clarify
my mind, to purify faults, and to develop and bring out good qualities as far
as I have known them. Furthermore, I aim through this practice to continue
to learn what is possible, to awaken potentials, to gather and receive graces,
to share this true wealth with others, and to help others as much as I possibly
can, forever. Therefore, trust, reliance, and setting my motivation, seeing
my main teacher as the Healing Buddha

**I take refuge, until I attain Enlightenment,
in the Buddha,**

who is my own root and lineage gurus
actually here manifesting in the form of Medicine Buddha;

I take refuge in the Dharma,
in all the teachings on healing

and the Noble Sangha

**By the merit I have accumulated through practicing Generosity
and the other Virtues**

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

(reflect on your motivation...)

**May I accomplish Buddhahood
for the sake of all sentient beings**

May I accomplish the realization,
qualities, and activities of Healing Buddha,
for the benefit of all sentient beings

Repeat, and reflect on as necessary, to produce a sense of what is spoken of
here.

Reflecting on one's motivation is thinking about the result, the aim, in order
to develop energy and enthusiasm, and bringing the nature of the path of
practice, the method, clearly to mind. This is how we will accomplish our
aims.

Wisdom and Compassion:

From The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha, by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche :

**'As we are all the Primordial Buddha, we have the essence of Buddha
Nature. Realizing this, *relaxing* in the natural state is the absolute way
of taking refuge and generating Bodhicitta (the mind of enlightenment).
When doing the practice, be free of subject, object, and action.'**

On the meaning of this, Dilgo Khyentse says, 'The twofold accumulation of
merit and wisdom is indeed the way to buddhahood, but if it is adulterated
with clinging, arrogance and condescension, it cannot bear fruit.

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

‘More particularly, being free of attachments and concepts means being free of any clinging to whatever practice you may be doing as having some intrinsic reality.

Deshung Rinpoche adds: ‘Do not cling to ordinary notions that tend to crystallize and reify the present moment. Instead, think of the teacher, yourself and the setting as illusion-like, neither existent nor non-existent, ineffable, and away from all conceptual extremes that the human mind likes to attribute to reality.’

(When visualizing) ‘We should see our surroundings, ourselves, and the merit we are accumulating through our efforts as illusion-like. We should see them not as inherently real by their very nature, but as non-dual emptiness and appearance, like the form of a rainbow or a mirage... See them as being like the images and forms that appear to you when you dream.

‘Your form and all appearances should not be thought of as solid and tangible, but (as insubstantial) more like the mental forms that appear in dreams or magic shows. They have this nature of non-dual appearance and emptiness through interdependent origination.’

‘Through maintaining this perspective on yourself, your actions, and their results, you will be freed from the temptation to seize upon them as real, thus making them a source of bondage rather than liberation. Moreover, your virtue will be purified, made more effective, and will become a cause of attaining Buddhahood.’

To practice like this de-conditions grasping.

Dilgo Khentse concludes: ‘When a bodhisattva performs a beneficial action, he is totally free from clinging to the concepts of a subject who acts, an object who benefits from the action, and the action itself. That total absence of clinging makes the merit infinite.’

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

Om swabhava shuddho sarva dharma
swabhava shuddho hum

This is referred to as ‘the emptiness mantra’, and its meaning can be translated as, ‘all things are fundamentally free of mind created concepts of self, and I am that intrinsically free nature’.

Or, more simply, meditate on the syllable Ah, and the experience of not grasping at concepts, and of openness and clarity.

Whether or not we use concepts, the main point is to give rise to discriminating awareness, without grasping or clinging to anything at all.

Dilgo Khyentse taught: ‘Leave everything as it is in fundamental simplicity, and clarity will arise by itself. Only by doing nothing will you do all that is to be done.’

Patrul Rinpoche said, ‘Don’t prolong the past; don’t invite the future; don’t alter your innate wakefulness...’

Rest mind.

2. Requesting Prayers - I - Medicine Buddha practice as Guru Yoga

A shorter form:

**Lama Medicine Buddha,
please pacify and remove the suffering of living beings,
and bring health and happiness**

‘*Pacify*’ refers to how by means of all relative methods, suffering is alleviated; and *remove* refers to helping us to realize ultimate truth that heals the cause of sufferings; and *bring health and happiness to all* expresses the

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

positive side of the goal – that we are not just brought to a neutral state, but to one of peace, health, happiness and joy. Praying in this way, and practicing, without a doubt, we receive the blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. { You are not alone because all the time there are numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas surrounding you, loving you, guiding you, that is what they do. ~ Lama Zopa Rinpoche }

A longer form:

**Guru Medicine Buddha,
Supreme Healer,
pray, pacify this suffering and bring happiness
May all beings benefit**

**Guru Medicine Buddha
Quintessence of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
The Three Jewels and The Three Roots,**

**all vehicles
and all protectors,**

Quintessence of all that is healing,

**You have taken oceans of vows
to remove every level of living beings' suffering,
and to replace it with peace, health, well-being,
strength, and happiness**

May your vows ripen for us all now

**And because I have this same aim in my life,
to benefit all others in this same way
to bring about healing
and the firm establishment of true health and happiness for all,**

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

I pray you will help me

**In these times especially,
I pray again and again that your activities will increase**

**In these times especially,
there is so much need,
and so I pray again and again that you will give me your blessing
to become more and more like you in this world
May I *completely* become you in this world**

**Just as you have done,
May I also accomplish this practice
and with this realization
actualize these qualities and activities**

**Just as you have done,
May I become a healer of all beings**

May I realize myself fully as the Healing Buddha in this world,

**Until that time, while I am still on the path,
with total trust and respect,
faith and devotion,
seeing you on the crown of my head,
I take refuge in you
Please give us your blessing**

and,

May all beings benefit

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

**Precious children, Venerable Elders, all my dear family and friends,
may this practice benefit us all.**

**O, All my ten directions three times family,
near and distant relations,
May I make a gift of my life**

**May my life, and this practice benefit us all,
all living beings
pervading all existences**

**every mind,
every body, every cell
earth and sky**

May this practice surely benefit us all, extensively

**May all my past, present and future selves benefit from this
and may all the past, present and future selves of all beings
benefit from this**

**By this practice, may we all be completely free from illness,
spirit harm, and from all the afflictive emotions forever
May we all be free from all samsaric states forever**

May we all completely realize the Dharmakaya

May this practice be the medicine that frees everyone from suffering²

**May this bring health wherever it is needed
May this bring about the firm establishment of true health and well
being, long life, and happiness for us all**

² a prayer inspired by the Noble Spiritual Friend Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

**May this itself be (the practice of) all-inclusive, all encompassing
great universal love and compassion.**

II– From The Healing Buddha’, translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

**O Destroyer, Complete in All Qualities and Gone Beyond,
and you four medicinal goddesses,
please pacify immediately
the illnesses that afflict me now,
and help me to avoid all future sickness**

[and

**please pacify immediately
the illnesses that afflict the ones we pray for now,
and help them to avoid all future sickness]**

III – From A Stream of Lapis Lazuli, The supplication:

NAMO BEKENDZE MAHA RADZAYE

**You are endowed with an oceanic treasury of qualities and
merit;
By the blessing of your inconceivable compassion
You calm the suffering and torment of sentient beings.
I supplicate you, Light of Lapis Lazuli.**

**Those bound by very intense greed
Are born in the hungry ghost realm.
If they hear your name, they are said to be born human and
take delight in generosity.
I supplicate you, victorious Menla.**

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

**Violating morality and abusing others,
Beings are born in the hell realms.
Hearing your name, they are said to be born in the higher
realms.**

I supplicate you, King of Medicine.

**Whoever by repeated dissension and slander
Creates serious schisms and takes life,
Hearing your name, they cannot harm others.
I supplicate you, King of Medicine**

IV - From the Medicine Buddha Sadhana, translated by Lama Zopa

**The fully realized destroyer of all defilements, fully completed buddha
having fully realized the absolute truth of all phenomena, Guru
Medicine Buddha, King of Lapis Light, to you I prostrate, go for refuge,
and make offerings. May your vow to benefit sentient beings now ripen
for myself and others.**

3. Instructions for visualization and mantra recitation

{Once the visualizations are familiar, this can be read and reviewed as one wishes.}

I - It's traditionally taught that what's called 'self-generation' - where one visualizes oneself as the divine form - should only be done by those who have received the initiation of a particular Bodhisattva Divinity, but that 'front generation' - where one visualizes the divine form in space above and in front of oneself - can be done by anyone.

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

In front generation, we visualize (see with the mind's eye) above us, the Buddha or bodhisattva whose practice we are doing, and whose mantra we are reciting. It's helpful when doing this recitation and visualization, to see pure light and nectar streaming from the image we hold (that is also made entirely of pure light). These represent, or carry the blessings of the Buddha.

Traditionally, light goes out to the sources of benefit, making offerings out of respect, and prayerful requests, and then the light returns, bringing the blessings of these sources of healing benefit. These healing energies 'fall upon us as light and nectar', and dissolve into us. We then have the thought and image clearly in our mind that those we pray for receive this positive energy, and that they are completely healed by it, and made entirely well and strong. This form of prayer is referred to in the Tibetan Tradition as 'gathering and spreading'.

At this time, it's taught that we should also see ourselves and others, not in an ordinary way, not as flesh and bone, but as also being translucent and made entirely of light.

Many teachers advise, too, that when doing this visualization, we see ourselves and others in a pure land, made of light, and to make the visualization as beautiful, peaceful, perfect, and pure as we can. This is helpful.

Of course, all this can be as detailed or as simple as we like. We can also do the practice without any elaborate or detailed visualization. For example, we can just see a healing sun, with beautiful light streaming down from above us while reciting. Or without any visualization at all, we can just recite the mantra. We should do whatever works best for us.

As Lama Lodro teaches, even if you just practice for a short while, try and practice as purely and as perfectly as you can. This means concentrating on

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

the visualizations, if any are used, and the sound of the mantra, without the mind wandering from that, doing the best we can.

II – From The Medicine Buddha Sadhana

As you recite the mantra, visualize as follows:

Purifying rays of light pour down from the Guru Medicine Buddha's heart and holy body, eliminating your sicknesses and afflictions due to spirits, and their causes, all your negative karma and mental obscurations. Your body is completely filled with light and becomes clean-clear like crystal. Then the rays radiate out in all directions, purifying the sicknesses and afflictions of all mother sentient beings.

III - From The Healing Buddha', translated by Khyabje Zopa Rinpoche

Light rays of the appropriate color emanate from each of the five deities at your heart. Your heart and body are full of blissful light, which completely purifies all disease, spirit harms, and negative actions and their imprints.

Beams of five-colored light radiate from all the pores of your body, while nectar flows down from the Healing Buddha's begging bowl and the vases held by the four goddesses, completely filling your heart and body.

Generate the strong recognition that you have vanquished all disease forever and will never be sick again.

While concentrating single-pointedly on this visualization, recite the short or long Healing Buddha mantra seven, twenty-one, one hundred and eight, or more times.

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

IV - from The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha, by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche
(lightly edited)

When we recite the mantra, rays of light emanate from the heart of the Buddha, like a hundred rising suns, curing all the diseases and obscurations of beings, and their causes. By the power of this practice may all sufferings and problems be removed.

Recite while concentrating on the rays of light. At the end of the practice, by the power of these rays of light, sufferings are completely removed, like darkness is dispelled by light.

The long Medicine Buddha mantra can be done if one wishes:

**Om Namó Bhagavate Behandze / Guru Baidurya / Prabha Radzaya /
Tathagataya / Arhate Samyaksam Buddhaya //
Tadyatha / Om Bhekhandzye Bekhandzye / Maha Bekhandzye
[Bekhandzye]* / Radza Samudgate Svaha //**

** The syllables in the mantras in brackets [] are optional. The Medicine Buddha mantra can be recited both with and without the optional syllables.*

Here is the shorter Medicine Buddha mantra:

**Tayata Om Bekandze Bekandze Maha Bekandze [Bekandze]
Radza Samungate Soha**

At this point, any additional prayers or reflections can be read, such as ‘A list of things that are healing’, as one wishes and as time allows. This can be done in any of these ways: reading first, then recitation; alternating reading and recitation a little at a time, or practice and then reading, in the manner or prayer.

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

4. Concluding practices

After the recitation of the Medicine Buddha mantra, recite the Vajrasattva mantra three times, to purify omissions and mistakes.

**Om Benzra Sato Samaya Manu Palaya Benzra Sato Tenopa Tishsta Dri
Bo Me Bhawa Suto Kayo Me Bhawa Supo Kayo Me Bhawa Anurakto
Me Bhawa Sarwa Siddhi Mem Prayatsa Sarwa Karma Su Tsa Me Tsi
Tang Shri Ya Ku Ru Hung Ha Ha Ha Ho Ba Ga Wan Sarwa Ta Ta
Ga Ta Benzra Ma Me Mun Tsa Benzra Ba Wa Ma Ha Sa Ma Ya Sato
Ah**

Dissolve the visualization, if any was used. First the Pure Lands, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas dissolve into all beings, giving them joy and peace. Then all beings in the form of pure light dissolve into you. Then we imagine that we dissolve, from the soles of the feet upwards, and from the crown of the head downwards, meeting at a point of light at the heart. Pause for a moment and see this vividly and precisely. Then this dissolves into space, clear light, ‘like a rainbow dissolving into the sky’, and we rest our mind in that experience of clarity, free of concepts, and naturally awake, without grasping or clinging.

Or, more simply, from The Medicine Buddha Sadhana:

After you recite the mantra, visualize as follows:

The Guru Medicine Buddha melts into light and absorbs into your heart. Your mind becomes completely one with the dharmakaya, the essence of all buddhas.

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

To get the most out of any particular practice, at some point during the practice session, meditate quietly. This can be done either before or after the reflection and recitation, then dedicating the merit. Or, read the dedication prayers, and then meditate quietly, with sitting and/or walking meditation, as you prefer. When we do this, we can communicate beautiful, positive qualities of the heart and mind to the body, via our conscious breathing.

Dedication

May all beings benefit.

To draw out the meaning of dedication – the meaning of what is given as well as the activity of dedication itself, additional prayers can be read and meditated upon. When doing a more brief form of practice, you can use as many or as few of these, or the Traditional prayers, that you like. You can also write your own, or make prayers from the heart, whatever brings the most benefit. A short article about dedication prayer, and a few more prayers can be found at the conclusion of this work, starting on page 84.

Here are a few short dedication prayers that contain the complete meaning:

By this virtue,
gathered together with all the merit
of all of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
Saints and Sages
of the ten directions and the three times:

May all beings benefit.

May all beings have happiness and causes of health and happiness.

May the supreme jewel, bodhicitta
arise where it has not yet arisen
Where it has arisen, may it not diminish
May it ever grow and flourish

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

May our intentions equally penetrate
every being and place
with the true merit of Buddha's Way.

May this bring healing wherever it is needed.
May this bring about the firm establishment of true health and happiness for
us all.

By this virtue,
May I attain the realization of Guru Medicine Buddha,
and bring all others to that same state.

May all holy teachers live long, and guide us until samsara ends.
And may there be peace and joy in all the world.

Here is a longer dedication prayer:

By this merit,
gathered together with all the virtue,
of all the ten-directions and the three times
Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
Saints and Sages,

Realized Beings,
Lamas, Monks and Nuns,
Yogis and Yoginis,
Contemplatives of all Traditions, and excellent practitioners,

all these limitless skies of merit,

gathered together with all the virtue and pure good wishes
of family, friends,
and noble, kind hearted people everywhere,

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

by the merit and positive energy of all the good that exists,

by all the virtue of the Ultimate Nature,

By all this merit,

May the benefit of beings everywhere effortlessly arise:

May all beings benefit.

May all beings have happiness and causes of health and happiness.

May this bring healing wherever it is needed.

May this bring about the firm establishment of true health and happiness for us all.

By the virtue of this practice, by all this merit, may we all be completely free from all illness, spirit harm,

and from all of the afflictive emotions forever

May we all be completely free from all samsaric states forever

May all beings completely realize the Dharmakaya

May this be the medicine that frees everyone from suffering
(a prayer by the Noble Spiritual Friend Lama Zopa Rinpoche)

By this merit, may all those who are unhappy in any way, (confused, angry, anxious, afraid, attached, sad or depressed, with distorted views), instantly be completely freed from those states. May they be comforted, and may they have perfect peace, wisdom, strength and lasting joy

By this merit, may all those who are suffering from pain or illness immediately be totally freed from that pain, may they immediately be completely healed, and may they be firmly established in true and lasting health and happiness well being and strength, comfort and ease

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

By all this merit,
may all those who want to go on retreat
have the opportunity to do so without delay;
may they all have the resources they need,
may they find all suitable conditions,
and may their retreat go exceedingly well
may they have all excellent realizations

By all this merit,
May health increase everywhere
May ethics, and meditation and wisdom increase
May loving kindness and compassion increase, and
May peace and harmony increase everywhere

By all this merit,
may all those who work to heal
have their healing qualities increase limitlessly

By all this merit,
may all monasteries, monks, nuns, and lay practitioners,
Dharma Centers, and social service centers
have everything they need to serve beings most effectively
May monastics and laity the everywhere all keep completely pure ethics,
develop the supreme good heart, and wisdom,
and may all their good works effectively flourish forever

By all this merit,
may all beings have all they need in their lives
May those who need a job find a job
May those who need a place to live find a place to live
May those who need food and drink find good food and drink
May those who need a friend find a friend

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

By all this virtue,
May we all have everything we need to be truly happy

By all this merit,
May everything we see, hear, think about and dream be auspicious

By all this merit, may all the pure positive wishes we have for each other
be completely fulfilled,
instantly, and effortlessly,
just as in a Pure Land

(the following two prayers I have heard and admired from Lama Zopa
Rinpoche)

May those I hear about that are sick immediately be healed

May all those who have come to my attention
who have any illness,
or who are unhappy, or in need in any way
be blessed

May they be healed

May they all benefit

May they all have happiness

and the all the completely actualized causes of health and happiness

and

May those I have heard about who have passed away be reborn in a Pure
Land, without taking birth any place else

May their families be comforted

May they all know blessed peace

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

By all this merit,
May those I hear about who are experiencing difficulties
be free from those difficulties,
and may all fortunate circumstances come to them right away

May the supreme jewel, bodhicitta
arise where it has not yet arisen
Where it has arisen, may it not diminish
May it ever grow and flourish

By the merit of this practice,
gathered together with all the virtue,
of all the ten-directions and the three times
Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
Saints and Sages,
Realized Beings,
Lamas, Monks and Nuns,
Yogis and Yoginis,
Contemplatives of all Traditions, and excellent practitioners,

by all these limitless skies of merit,

gathered together with all the virtue and pure good wishes
of family, friends,
and noble, kind hearted people everywhere,

by the virtue and positive energy of all the good that exists,
by all the merit of the Ultimate Nature

May warfare cease,
may all injury be healed,
and all danger pacified

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

May we all produce the conditions
for countless generations, starting now,
to experience genuine peace

May our intentions equally penetrate
every being and place
with the true merit of Buddha's Way.

without grasping or clinging to anything at all,
may it be this way

By all this merit,
may all those to whom I am connected
by good or bad karma,
have every happiness
May they be free of all suffering
and receive every joy, and all good fortune,
May they all have good health, wisdom,
long life,
well being, and strength,
comfort and ease

May all the prayers of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas
be completely realized now
and may all of my prayers succeed immediately

By this virtue,
May those who are in need in any way whatsoever
receive every benefit
May all have happiness
and all the actualized complete causes of health and happiness

{at this point, a review of the names and circumstances of those particular
individuals that you wish to pray for can be inserted here }

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

{Two ways of doing this practice would be: to read through the names, and then continue with this prayer, or, after reading the names, to begin this prayer again and continue straight through to its end.}

By all this virtue,
May those who are in need in any way whatsoever
receive every benefit
May all have happiness

and all the fully actualized complete causes of health and happiness

By this merit,
In my mind, may I not withhold any gift whatsoever
from any being in any place,
wishing them all a great abundance of joys!

By all the limitless good that exists,
may all the needs of all living beings everywhere be completely fulfilled

By all this merit, for every one of us,
when this life is over, may we each be born immediately in a Pure Land,
and in all our lives
May we never be separate from qualified teachers,
and from conducive environments, with all the supportive conditions for
continuing our practice of the Dharma

By all this virtue
May I attain the complete realization of all practice
and bring all others to that same state

May we all individually attain the complete realization of our practice,
genuine happiness, health and peace, and all good things,
wisdom, compassion, and ability

Part II: Selections from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas and Commentaries,
with additional prayers

By all this merit,
May all holy teachers live long, and guide us until samsara ends.
And may there be peace and joy in all the world.

Tonglen

After the formal meditation session, we can practice tonglen, or taking and sending, to continue the energy of the practice. We do this by aiming, moment by moment, to remove as much suffering as we can, and to give as much happiness as we can.

Part III: Material for Reflection

A list of things that are healing

Beauty is healing
and love is healing
and peace is healing

having the sense of space
and breathing in and out
deeply and slowly
is healing

Harmony is healing

Freedom from illusion is healing

fresh fruit is healing

and joy,
and a sense of humor and laughter
transmit healing energy

Victor Borge is healing

a conversation can be healing,
even as much as a single good thought
a single shared vision, insight
perspective,
is healing

kindness is healing -
the soft voice
the patience in a voice,
the peace in a voice,
the friendliness and warmth in a voice

Part III: Material for Reflection
A list of things that are healing

and the strength in a voice,
the kind attention in a voice,
the encouragement in a voice
these are healing

gratitude is healing

Traditions are a source of healing
Saints and great teachers are healing
and our respect and devotion connects us to them

Wisdom is healing
having a breakthrough,
insight is healing, Ultimate Healing

trust,
faith in those that are worthy

drawing on the strength,
courage, and vision of our Ancestors
this is healing

natural light is healing,
and human touch, when there is love, is healing
friendship is healing, and

the morning is healing,
and the afternoon,

and the night and the moon and stars
so lovely

enjoying the peace, freshness
and joy of a new day

Part III: Material for Reflection
A list of things that are healing

this is healing
the sense of
a new week, a new month, a new year
new beginnings –
these are healing

Grandmothers and Grandfathers,
with their kindness and gentleness and wisdom are healing

Mothers and Fathers are healing

the masculine,
the feminine,
balance,

these are healing

sometimes intimacies,
sometimes abstention

being married, or
being single,

starting a relationship,
keeping a relationship,
ending a relationship
and starting over

being part of a couple, or
being by oneself

hope or letting go when it does not serve our purpose

any of these can be healing

Part III: Material for Reflection
A list of things that are healing

children are healing
with their beauty, purity, playfulness and wonder,
their overflowing joy

thinking, rightly used
including quieting the mind
this is healing

being ethical is healing

remorse for wrongdoing is healing
regret and apology is healing,
forgiveness is healing,
as is self worth
shining from within

feeling sadness,
tears, the grieving process, when needed, is purifying, is healthy,
is natural, is healing

optimism, and unafflicted hope are healthy
and healing

hope is healing, having a great aim
and generosity is healing

maturity,
wisdom
perspective
stability,
composure

these are healing

Part III: Material for Reflection
A list of things that are healing

and dreams are healing
visions, sacred songs,
dances,
inspired drawing

the awe and wonder we feel,
pure perception,
suffused with a sense of the Divine
that is always here
always available
sacred outlook
is supremely beneficial,
supremely healing

and art is healing
need I say it? -
the endless burgeoning diversity,
the loveliness of one thing well done,
with great care, and boldness too...

a child's drawing

and

painting

frescoes,
silk miniatures,
the Dutch Masters
impressionists

Picasso –
what wonders!

Part III: Material for Reflection
 A list of things that are healing

sculpture

dance

jig, waltz, ballet, tap, swing, pogo, pavane, salsa...

and

photography, poetry
 architecture needlepoint
 dress caress teaching

and on it goes

music is healing
 melody, harmony, rhythm,
 invention, expression

different great players
 all with unique personalities and genius
 expressed through their playing

and remarkable, unique instruments, each one of a kind
 with all their individual textures and qualities

oboe clarinet guitar piano drum cello violin viola
 trumpet xylophone flute sitar lute
 viola da gamba kettle drum
 harp voice (with kind and encouraging words written, like torn secret
 messages, or spoken or sung)

these and more
 all of it,
all of it, healing

Part III: Material for Reflection
 A list of things that are healing

Dvorak, Bach, Mozart, Schubert, Handel, Haydn, Vivaldi, Dowland
 Telemann, Boccherini, Rodrigo, Beethoven, Corelli, Hildegard Von Bingen

make your own lists today from these bright oceans...

the painters, the photographers eye

the authors and speakers' visions

the beauty and brilliance of writers is health
 is life
 is healing

Pablo Neruda, Walt Whitman, Julio Cortazar, Rumi, Hafiz –
 these and others
 the wonders of the world they show us
 and their delight in showing us is healing

nature is healing
 the sunlight itself
 like food we eat, nourishment we enjoy
 live juice
 the fresh air
 streams and shade, clouds, mountains,
 and trees are extraordinary things,
 if we look we can see it,
 awesome and healing
 as is the wood and the grass we stand and walk on –

and the sound of flowing water
 river, ocean, rain...

The pure elements are truly healing
 pure fire, truly pure water

Part III: Material for Reflection
A list of things that are healing

space, and allowing things to have space
pure air, pure earth

metal,
gemstones

and wide open spaces,

lakes, rivers
the sky,
and the great oceans
these are healing

May whatever is healing
touch whatever needs healing
and may that health and healing
pervade all existences
every mind, every body, every cell,
earth and sky,
O, my ten-directions three times family!

an easy walk in the park,
or on forests paths, fragrant
with leaves on the ground and
wind in the tall trees,
and birdsong,
delightful

this is healing

all the wonderful smells of the earth
flowers, of all varieties

rose, tulip

Part III: Material for Reflection
A list of things that are healing

lily
iris
freesia
sunflower

bird of paradise
daisy

and
herbs, and teas,
mint, lemon, orange

fruit with the glorious blossom of their ripening colors and flavors
strawberry, blueberry, mango, apple, pear, pluot
all of these are healing

and vegetables and grains and bread, and homemade soup
with barley and corn
give to our bodies and to our souls the power of the sun,
and the pure rain

all of these are
healthy and beautiful
and if needed, they are healing

food cooked with love is healthy, life giving

gifts given generously with love are divine, and are health and life

and if need be, they are healing to us all, the whole circle

the food we receive with love and thankfulness
is healing

Part III: Material for Reflection
A list of things that are healing

gifts received with gratitude are health and healing

simplicity, healing

sacred places, healing

loving pets, healing

angels and ancestors,

friendships,
now and recalled to mind

these are healing

thinking of
this same kind of action
in this and other places and times -
of people meditating on things that are healing
and engaging everywhere in beautiful, healing activities -
this brings joy,
this is healing

people of good will,

and stories of heroes,
famous or less known
these are healing

these gifts continue – oh!

all the memories of a lifetime's happiness
well-being and peace

Part III: Material for Reflection
A list of things that are healing

beauty, release

wonder, and celebration,
and gratitude

these are healing

gentleness

love
forgiveness

contentment
and relaxation
are healing

allowing things to have the space and time they need and deserve,
this is healing

generosity
patience (made of humility and deep knowing)

and also divine discontent, with patience and productive impatience,
is healing

vigor, zeal
clarity about
and devotion to our highest ideals
the aspirations, the vows we make,

these are healing

having compassion for ourself
this is healing

Part III: Material for Reflection
A list of things that are healing

and having compassion
the intention to remove another's suffering

this is healing
both for ourselves, and for others' sake

altruism,
the awakening mind,
the bodhi mind -

the Mahayana motivation:
the intention to benefit all others
in every way,
and the greatest possible ways
the most meaningful ways,
this is greatly healing

prayer,
mantra
samadhi
deep, calm and wakeful meditation
this is healing

sometimes talking something out,
sometimes quiet

depending on what we need
sometimes movement,
and exercise
sometimes stillness, and rest, and sometimes naps too

sometimes eating well
and sometimes fasting

Part III: Material for Reflection
A list of things that are healing

these are healing

sometimes tenderly taking care of ourself,
diligently, devotedly
and sometimes getting outside of ourself for a while
extending our world view

sometimes being alone,
and sometimes being with others,

all of these are healing

faith
humility

quieting the mind
respect for the fundamental,
immutable value,
the tremendous richness of oneself and others

these are healing

ethics
the attainment of coolness,
non-harming,
and aiming to benefit as much as possible
meditation
and wisdom –
in the sense of a transcendent insight

an awakened perspective
with kindness
energetically seeing through all of the concepts of self -
these are healing

Part III: Material for Reflection
A list of things that are healing

allowing for change, growth
generosity, patience and encouragement
moving toward the ideals we have

breathing in and out
peacefully
with an awareness of our body and our feelings
with gentleness
and with love

is healing

friendliness,
warmth

walking meditation
sitting meditation
with clarity and stable mindfulness
deep concentration

breathing and smiling
these are healing

Part IV: Dedication

On Dedication Prayer

Dedication makes a bridge from our own practice to connect with people. The more we dedicate the merit of some positive activity, in our hearts and minds, the more we are sharing whatever positive creative energy we have produced by our practice with others. As with all acts of sincere generosity, this increases its value for us all even more, and makes it shine even more brightly within us.

On another level, since there is no separation between us in reality, this kind of orientation is also an affirmation. It says, in effect, 'this is who we are'. We are connected. It's right to always be as generous as we can, and our true nature *is* this active love and compassion.

If we are cultivating love and compassion, we are naturally producing what could be called 'continual dedication'. This quality of mind is naturally connected to others. This is the one quality of mind that most facilitates re-integration with others after meditation or retreat.

The final dedication prayers we make at the conclusion of any particular practice also affirm to our own mind this knowledge we have, that the practice we are doing has the power to work for us as we intend. It's a statement we make to ourselves of confidence in its effectiveness.

It's important to dedicate the positive energy we create not only to friends, family, those we feel we owe something, and to 'neutral' people, but also to those who give us problems, the people who we sometimes perceive as antagonistic towards us. This gives our practice an indestructible quality, and makes it truly extensive, without limitation and without obstruction. No one can keep us from wishing them well, regardless of their attitude toward us. This is the freedom of the mind that we have as human beings, and such wishes are sure to bear fruit in time.

Part IV: Dedication
On Dedication Prayer

In ‘The Heart of Compassion: The Thirty-seven Verses on the Practice of a Bodhisattva’, concerning the practice of dedication, Dilgo Khyentse says, ‘Dedicate all the merit and positive actions you have done or will do throughout the past, present and future so that all beings, especially your enemies, may achieve enlightenment. Try to dedicate the merit in the same way that the great bodhisattvas do.

‘Not a single prayer vanishes. Dedicating the merit of every positive action you do with a pure mind will continuously bear positive fruit until you attain enlightenment.

‘The attitude of a bodhisattva must be extremely vast, constantly keeping in mind the infinity of beings and the wish to establish them all in buddhahood. If your mind is vast, the power of your prayers is unlimited too. If your mind is narrow and rigid, your accumulation of merit and the purification of your obscurations will also be very limited.

‘Do not let yourself be discouraged by such thoughts as that it is not worth dedicating what you see as your miserable accumulation of merit because it could hardly benefit anyone; or by the idea that for you helping others is just talk since you will never really be able to benefit them. If you keep your mind open and vast, the effectiveness of your bodhicitta (the naturally enlightened aspect of the mind) will increase, and so too will the benefit and merit of all your words and deeds.

‘In your daily life and practice you must keep developing the excellent mind of enlightenment.’

Seen in one way, in the beginning we set our motivation. Then we do a particular practice, whatever works for us, and are attentive to just this. Then, at the conclusion, being as generous as we naturally know how to, we joyfully dedicate or give over whatever positive energy we have created through our practice to accomplishing our intention.

Part IV: Dedication
On Dedication Prayer

Sometimes dedication is referred to as ‘sealing’ our meditation. In this sense it does two related things: First, it keeps whatever positive energy we have produced from becoming, even unconsciously, a cause of the negative sort of separative pride, and second it concludes and integrates the formal practice on a most positive note – that of kind regard and abundant good wishes towards others.

One last note on the subject of dedication: It’s taught that the best way to dedicate merit, if we can, is with the right view, that is, without clinging to oneself, the action or the recipient of an action as having intrinsic reality, as it appears to our mind. This is called ‘sealing the dedication of merit with wisdom’, or emptiness. We can at least have this as an aim.

In The Thirty-seven Verses, the verse that refers to this says:

Dedicating to enlightenment

Through wisdom purified of the three concepts
all merit achieved by such endeavor,
to remove the suffering of numberless beings, is the practice
of a bodhisattva

This may not be easy to accomplish, and yet there is always much we can do. In the Traditional teachings on dedication, there are many ways to engage this wonderful practice. As expressed by Dilgo Khyentse: ‘To dedicate merit in the best possible way – a way entirely free from the three concepts of a subject, an object, and an action – is possible only for someone who has fully realized emptiness. How then should we ordinary beings dedicate the merit, (as yet) incapable as we are of such perfect dedication? We can do it by following in the footsteps of those who have that realization.

‘The bodhisattva Samantabhadra mastered the ocean-like infinitude of a bodhisattva’s aspirations, while Manjushri and Avalokiteshvara mastered the oceanlike infinitude of a bodhisattva’s activity to benefit beings.

Part IV: Dedication
On Dedication Prayer

When you dedicate merit, do it with the idea of emulating the way these great bodhisattvas dedicated merit.’

Feel free to use any or all of the following prayers if you like, substitute prayers or verses of your own choosing, or write, or spontaneously, from your heart, make your own prayers.

May all beings benefit.

Part IV: Dedication

By this merit,
gathered together with all the virtue,
of all the ten-directions and the three times
Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
Saints and Sages,
Realized Beings,
Lamas, Monks and Nuns,
Yogis and Yoginis,
Contemplatives of all Traditions, and excellent practitioners,

all these limitless skies of merit,

gathered together with all the virtue and pure good wishes
of family, friends,
and noble, kind hearted people everywhere,

by the merit and positive energy of all the good that exists,

by all the virtue of the Ultimate Nature,

By all this merit,
May the benefit of beings everywhere effortlessly arise:
May all beings benefit.
May all beings have happiness and causes of health and happiness.

May this bring healing wherever it is needed.
May this bring about the firm establishment of true health and happiness for
us all.

By the virtue of this practice, by all this merit, may we all be completely free
from all illness, spirit harm,
and from all of the afflictive emotions forever
May we all be completely free from all samsaric states forever
May all beings completely realize the Dharmakaya

Part IV: Dedication

May this be the medicine that frees everyone from suffering
(a prayer by the Noble Spiritual Friend Lama Zopa Rinpoche)

By this merit, may all those who are unhappy in any way, (confused, angry, anxious, afraid, attached, sad or depressed, with distorted views), instantly be completely freed from those states. May they be comforted, and may they have perfect peace, wisdom, strength and lasting joy

By this merit, may all those who are suffering from pain or illness immediately be totally freed from that pain, may they immediately be completely healed, and may they be firmly established in true and lasting health and happiness well being and strength, comfort and ease

By all this merit,
may all those who want to go on retreat
have the opportunity to do so without delay;

may they all have the resources they need,
may they find all suitable conditions,
and may their retreat go exceedingly well
may they have all excellent realizations

By all this merit,
May health increase everywhere
May ethics, and meditation and wisdom increase
May loving kindness and compassion increase, and
May peace and harmony increase everywhere

By all this merit,
may all those who work to heal
have their healing qualities increase limitlessly

Part IV: Dedication

By all this merit,
 may all monasteries, monks, nuns, and lay practitioners,

Dharma Centers, and social service centers
 have everything they need to serve beings most effectively
 May monastics and laity the everywhere all keep completely pure ethics,
 develop the supreme good heart, and wisdom,
 and may all their good works effectively flourish forever

By all this merit,
 may all beings have all they need in their lives
 May those who need a job find a job
 May those who need a place to live find a place to live
 May those who need food and drink find good food and drink
 May those who need a friend find a friend

By all this virtue,
 May we all have everything we need to be truly happy

By al this merit,
 May everything we see, hear, think about and dream be auspicious

By all this merit, may all the pure positive wishes we have for each other
 be completely fulfilled,
 instantly, and effortlessly,
 just as in a Pure Land

(the following two prayers I have heard and admired from Lama Zopa Rinpoche)

May those I hear about that are sick immediately be healed

May all those who have come to my attention
 who have any illness,

Part IV: Dedication

or who are unhappy, or in need in any way
 be blessed
 May they be healed
 May they all benefit

May they all have happiness
 and the all the completely actualized causes of health and happiness

and

May those I have heard about who have passed away be reborn in a Pure
 Land, without taking birth any place else

May their families be comforted
 May they all know blessed peace

By all this merit,
 May those I hear about who are experiencing difficulties
 be free from those difficulties,
 and may all fortunate circumstances come to them right away

May the supreme jewel, bodhicitta
 arise where it has not yet arisen
 Where it has arisen, may it not diminish
 May it ever grow and flourish

By the merit of this practice,
 gathered together with all the virtue,
 of all the ten-directions and the three times
 Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
 Saints and Sages,
 Realized Beings,
 Lamas, Monks and Nuns,
 Yogis and Yoginis,

Part IV: Dedication

Contemplatives of all Traditions, and excellent practitioners,

by all these limitless skies of merit,

gathered together with all the virtue and pure good wishes
of family, friends,

and noble, kind hearted people everywhere,

by the virtue and positive energy of all the good that exists,
by all the merit of the Ultimate Nature

May warfare cease,
may all injury be healed,
and all danger pacified

May we all produce the conditions
for countless generations, starting now,
to experience genuine peace

May our intentions equally penetrate
every being and place
with the true merit of Buddha's Way.

without grasping or clinging to anything at all,
may it be this way

By all this merit,
may all those to whom I am connected
by good or bad karma,
have every happiness
May they be free of all suffering
and receive every joy, and all good fortune,
May they all have good health, wisdom,
long life,

Part IV: Dedication

well being, and strength,
comfort and ease

May all the prayers of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas
be completely realized now
and may all of my prayers succeed immediately

By this virtue,
May those who are in need in any way whatsoever
receive every benefit
May all have happiness
and all the actualized complete causes of health and happiness

{at this point, a review of the names and circumstances of those particular
individuals that you wish to pray for can be inserted here }

{Two ways of doing this practice would be: to read through the names, and
then continue with this prayer, or, after reading the names, to begin this
prayer again and continue straight through to its end. }

By all this virtue,
May those who are in need in any way whatsoever
receive every benefit
May all have happiness

and all the fully actualized complete causes of health and happiness

By this merit,
In my mind, may I not withhold any gift whatsoever
from any being in any place,
wishing them all a great abundance of joys!

Part IV: Dedication

By all the limitless good that exists,
may all the needs of all living beings everywhere be completely fulfilled

By all this merit, for every one of us,
when this life is over, may we each be born immediately in a Pure Land,
and in all our lives
May we never be separate from qualified teachers,
and from conducive environments, with all the supportive conditions for
continuing our practice of the Dharma

By all this virtue
May I attain the complete realization of all practice
and bring all others to that same state

May we all individually attain the complete realization of our practice,
genuine happiness, health and peace, and all good things,
wisdom, compassion, and ability

By all this merit,
May all holy teachers live long, and guide us until samsara ends.
And may there be peace and joy in all the world.

Part IV: Dedication

By this virtue
may all beings,
my dear family, friends,
and all my dear relations everywhere and at all times
have health,
long life,
clear minds,
peace and joy

Part IV: Dedication

A Dedication Prayer, by Shantideva

May all beings everywhere,
Plagued by sufferings of body and mind,
Obtain an ocean of happiness and joy
By virtue of these merits.

May no living creature suffer,
Commit evil or ever fall ill.
May no one be afraid or belittled,
With a mind weighed down by depression.

May the blind see forms,
And the deaf hear sounds.
May those whose bodies are worn with toil
Be restored on finding repose.

May the naked find clothing,
The hungry find food.
May the thirsty find water
And delicious drinks.

May the poor find wealth,
Those weak with sorrow find joy.
May the forlorn find hope,
Constant happiness and prosperity.

May there be timely rains
And bountiful harvests.
May all medicines be effective
And wholesome prayers bear fruit.

Part IV: Dedication

May all who are sick and ill
Quickly be freed from their ailments.

Whatever diseases there are in the world,
May they never occur again.

May the frightened cease to be afraid
And those bound be freed.
May the powerless find power
And may people think of benefiting each other.

Part IV: Dedication

By this virtue:

May all beings be free of suffering
may they be instantly free of whatever suffering they may have

May they have happiness
and may that happiness be lasting for them

Part IV: Dedication

By this practice
may those who have perfect health
be firmly established in that perfect health
May those who do not yet have complete and perfect health
be brought to that level of health, well being and strength
and may those who suffer in any way
be it very slight, or with great suffering
be healed
may they be brought to the highest level of health
and may they be firmly established in complete and perfect health

Part IV: Dedication

O, All my ten directions three times family,
near and distant relations,

May my life and this practice benefit us all
pervading all existences

every mind,
every body, every cell
earth and sky

May this practice surely benefit us all

May all my past, present and future selves benefit from this
and may all the past, present and future selves of all beings
benefit from this

May this bring healing wherever it is needed.

May this bring about the flourishing of true health and happiness for us all

Part IV: Dedication

By this virtue
may those who do not have happiness
have happiness

May those who do not have confidence
have confidence

May those who do not have peace
have peace

May those who do not have knowledge and joy
have knowledge and joy

Part IV: Dedication

From Shantideva

As long as diseases afflict living beings
may I be the doctor
the medicine
and also the nurse
who restores them to health

May I fall as rain
to increase the harvests
that must feed living beings
and in times of dire famine
may I, myself, be food and drink

For as long as space remains,
and for as long as sentient beings remain,
until then, may I too remain,
to dispel the suffering of the world

Part IV: Dedication

Dedication, Aspiration and Benediction, by Tulku Thondup, from the audio cd 'Boundless Healing', lightly edited

So now let us dedicate, and make aspirations of this meditation.

Let us dedicate all these merits that we have created by this meditation to *all* mother beings, as a cause of happiness, peace and joy for them, and as a cause of their attainment of Healing Buddha's blessings, peace and joy.

By the power of the Buddhas,
 Healing Buddha,
 and by the power of the infinite Buddhas that we have prayed to in the sky
 and prayed to in our body,
 by the power of all these Buddhas,
 and by the power of all the Pure Lands,
 and by the power of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha,
 by the power of the meditation we have done,
 by the power of the merits that we have created,
 and by the power of the Ultimate Nature, Absolute Truth,
 by the power of interdependent causation,

May all mother beings have happiness, peace and joy
 May they always be with Healing Buddha's blessing light,
 blessing energy, and blessing sound, without separation

And may we always be with Healing Buddha's blessing light,
 blessing energy, and blessing sound, without separation,
 day and night, awake or asleep,
 good times and bad times

And may we always be the source of Healing Buddha's blessings
 for all mother beings
 especially those with whom we have close connections,
 we have special responsibilities

Part IV: Dedication

And by the power of all the Buddhas,
May all our prayers be answered
May all our wishes be fulfilled

(Benediction)

Now think and feel that Buddhas in the sky, and Buddhas in our body, give us their benediction. In one thunderous voice, filling the universe, they say to us:

‘May your prayers be answered
May your wishes be fulfilled

‘May you be healed of your old illness
ills of your mind, and your body

‘And may you always be with Healing Buddha’s
blessing light, blessing energies, and blessing sound’

Think and feel that we have accomplished the healing activities, the blessings of the Healing Buddha.

Part IV: Dedication

By this virtue

may all beings benefit

may all beings be happy and at peace
and may their hearts be filled with joy

Recommended reading

The reason for the following extended recommended reading list

With the decline of both chain and independent bookstores, most of us are left buying books almost exclusively online. Websites can produce computer generated suggestions but these cannot take the place of finding a book we didn't know we were looking for (and didn't know existed) in a bookstore. Nor can it take the place of an informed person, either a friend, or a kind and knowledgeable stranger recommending a book they have read and benefitted from.

The online market will only care about things that have sold before, and so have the potential to sell again. It is a soul-less process, more or less. There is very little knowledge behind it, and little human feeling or responsiveness, but like it or not, this is the way it is going, and will continue to go for some time.

Online markets (such as Amazon) will only deal in, or refer to books they know about. For this reason, and in order to do something to counter the loss of available information that the contraction of the book market represents, I think it's very important for people with knowledge in any area to make recommended reading lists, for those who would otherwise not encounter many of the best titles in any given subject. By offering a book list, there will at least be a greater chance that excellent titles will be sought out, and will remain available for generations to come.

That said, here is my extended recommended reading list in Buddhist studies:

Sutras

A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, translated by Stephen Batchelor for chapters 1 through 8, and, translated by the Padmakara Translation Committee for chapter 9

The Dhammapada, P. Lal translation

The Prajna Paramita Sutra, in Eight Thousand Lines, translated by Edward Conze

The Platform Sutra (also called 'The Sutra of the Sixth Zen Patriarch', or 'The Sutra of Hui-Neng) translated by Wong Mou-Lam and A.F. Price

The Uttara Tantra – A Treatise on Buddha Nature; Attributed to Maitreya; translated by Ken and Katia Holmes

The Vimalakirti Nirdesa Sutra – translated by Charles Luk

An Anthology of Buddhist Prayer, edited by Jason Espada

Theravada Buddhism

Living Buddhist Masters (also published as Living Dharma), edited by Jack Kornfeld

Ajaan Chah: A Taste of Freedom; Food for the Heart; A Still Forest Pool;

Ajaan Lee: Keeping the Breath in Mind; Inner Strength

Bhikkhu Visuddhacara: Curbing Anger, Spreading Love

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu: The Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree

Shaila Catherine: Focused and Fearless; Wisdom Wide and Deep

Henepola Gunaratana: Mindfulness in Plain English; Beyond Mindfulness in Plain English

Joseph Goldstein: One Dharma; Seeking the Heart of Wisdom (with Jack Kornfeld); The Experience of Insight

Khantipalo Bhikkhu: Calm and Clear

Sayadaw U Pandita: In This Very Life

Sharon Salzberg: Loving kindness

Venerable Sujiva: Loving kindness

Venerable Weragoda Serada Maha Thero - Treasury of Truth -
A Commentary on the Dhammapada

Thich Nhat Hanh: Breathe!, You Are Alive! (also published at ‘The Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing’); The Miracle of Mindfulness; The Heart of Understanding; The Diamond that Cuts Through Illusion; Interbeing; Being Peace; Transformation and Healing; A Guide to Walking Meditation; The Energy of Prayer; For A Future to Be Possible; The Heart of the Buddha’s Teaching

Zen Buddhism

Shikantaza - An Introduction to Zen, Shohaku Okamura, editor

Shodo Harada Roshi: The Path to Bodhidharma; Morning Dewdrops of the Mind

Seikan Hasegawa: Cave of Poison Grass

The Tiger’s Cave - edited by Trevor Leggett

D.T. Suzuki: Essays in Zen Buddhism

Suzuki Roshi: Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind

Uchiyama Roshi: Opening the Hand of Thought; How to Cook Your Life – From the Zen Kitchen to Enlightenment

Thich Thien-An: Zen Philosophy, Zen Practice

Tibetan Buddhism

Teachings from Tibet: Guidance from Great Lamas, edited by Nicholas Ribush

Teachings of Tibetan Yoga, translated by Garma C.C. Chang

The Sublime Path of the Victorious Ones; A Book of Mahayana Prayers

Ani Tenzin Palmo: Reflections On A Mountain Lake; Into the Heart of Life

Bokar Rinpoche: Meditation: Advice to Beginners

Chagdud Tulku: Gates to Buddhist Practice; Lord of the Dance

Death and Dying in the Tibetan Tradition: introduced and translated by Glenn Mullin

Deshung Rinpoche: The Three Levels of Spiritual Perception

Dilgo Khyentse: The Heart Treasure of the Enlightened Ones;
The Heart of Compassion

Gen Lamrimpa: Calming the mind (also published as 'Samatha Meditation)

Geshe Wangyal: The Door of Liberation

His Holiness The Fourteenth Dalai Lama: The Way to Freedom; Becoming Enlightened; The Mind in Comfort and Ease; For the Benefit of All Beings - A Commentary on the Way of the Bodhisattva; The Meaning of Life from A Buddhist Perspective; Advice on Dying and Living a Better Life

Kathleen Macdonald: How to Meditate

Kenpo Kathar: Dharma Paths

Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche: Opening the Door to Inconceivable Wisdom and Compassion; and, Opening to Our Primordial Nature; Ceaseless Echoes of the Great Silence; Discovering Infinite Freedom; Lion's Gaze; Prajana Paramita - The Six Perfections

Lama Lodro Rinpoche: The Quintessence of the Animate and Inanimate; Bardo Teachings

Lama Yeshe: Wisdom Energy I and II; The Essence of Tibetan Buddhism; Make Your Mind an Ocean; Becoming Your Own Therapist; The Peaceful Stillness of the Silent Mind; Life, Death, and After Death; Freedom Through Understanding;; Ego, Attachment, and Liberation; Silent Mind, Holy Mind

Lama Zopa Rinpoche: The Door to Satisfaction; Transforming Problems into Happiness; Virtue and Reality; The Joy of Compassion; Making Life Meaningful; How Things Exist - Teachings on Emptiness; Kadampa Teachings; The Heart of the Path; Heart Sutra Practices and Instructions for Retreat; Heart Advice - The Bodhisattva Attitude

Matthieu Ricard: The Monk and the Philosopher; Why Meditate? – Working with Thoughts and Emotions; Happiness - A Guide to Developing Life's Most Important Skill

Mingyur Rinpoche: The Joy of Living; Joyful Wisdom

Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche: Natural Great Perfection; Rest in Natural Great Peace

Pabonkha Rinpoche: Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand; with Lama Zopa Rinpoche: Heart Advice for Retreat

Robert Thurman: Infinite Life; The Jewel Tree of Tibet

Sogyal Rinpoche: The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying

Tenzin Wangal Rinpoche: The Five Elements in Tibetan Shamanism, Tantra, and Dzongchen

The Seventh Dalai Lama: Songs of Spiritual Change, translated by Glenn Mullin

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama: The Path of the Bodhisattva Warrior

Tulku Urgyen: Rainbow Painting; Repeating the Words of the Buddha; As It Is, volumes I and II

On The Seven Point Mind Training teachings:

Geshe Rabten: Advice From A Spiritual Friend

Dilgo Khyentse: Enlightened Compassion

Jamgon Kongtrul: The Great Path of Awakening – A Commentary on the Seven-Point Mind Training

On the transition between the Middle Way View, and Buddha Nature teachings

Nagarjuna: In Praise of the Dharmadatu, with a commentary by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso

Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche: Opening the Wisdom Door of the Rangtong and Shentong Views: A Brief Explanation of the One Taste of the Second and Third Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma

On Vajrayana:

Lama Yeshe: An Introduction to Tantra;

Dilgo Khyentse: Pure Appearance

Gyatrul Rinpoche: Generating the Deity

His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama: Tantra in Tibet; Deity Yoga; Yoga Tantra

Jamgon Kongtrul: Creation and Completion (with a commentary by Thrangu Rinpoche)

Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche: Opening the Wisdom Door of the Outer Tantras

On particular practices:

Bokar Rinpoche: Chenrezig, Lord of Love

Tulku Thondup: The Healing Power of Loving Kindness

Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche: Tara's Enlightened Activity

Lama Yeshe: Becoming the Compassion Buddha; Becoming Vajrasattva; Universal Love - The Yoga Method of Buddha Maitreya

On healing practices:

Jason Espada: A Collection of Buddhist Healing Prayers and Practices

Khenpo Kathar Rinpoche: White Tara - the Wish Fulfilling Wheel

Lama Zopa Rinpoche: Ultimate Healing; Teachings from the Medicine Buddha Retreat

Thrangu Rinpoche: Medicine Buddha Teachings

Tulku Thondup: The Healing Power of the Mind; Boundless Healing

Venerable Hsuan Hua: The Medicine Master Sutra, with commentary