

# *Prayers and Practices to be Reborn in Sukhavatí*



*Texts by Panchen Losang Chökyi Gyältsen  
and Lama Tsongkhapa*

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Cover image: thangka of Amitabha's Pure Land that hangs at Lama Zopa Rinpoche's retreat property, Buddha Amitabha Pure Land, in Washington, U.S.A. Artist unknown.

### *Practice Requirements*

This practice may be done by anyone with faith. No empowerment is required.

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# *The Swift Path to Sukhavatí*

## *The Swift Path, the Obstacle-Free Journey to Sukhavatí*

*By Panchen Losang Chökyí Gyältsen*

Namo Guru Manjugoshaya.

Having paid homage to Amitabha, the supreme refuge,  
Who is like a magnificent coral Mount Meru, moved by compassion,  
Displaying a play of a collection of light from millions of suns,  
And established from purified refined gold.  
I will explain the instructions of the obstacle-free journey  
To the supreme pure land that liberates from the results  
of negative deeds,  
The path that prevents one from falling into  
Tormented, frightening demonic states.

It is important for persons of medium and lower capacity of the  
present time who haven't begun the path, when closer [to death,  
to observe the following:]

When the moment of death arrives,  
Having eradicated all the obscurations through purification,  
Directly seeing [Amitabha,] the One of Limitless Illuminations,  
[request:]

May I go immediately to the pure land of Sukhavati,  
And by having reached there, may all my prayers  
Be fulfilled without exception.

Born from an excellent, extremely beautiful lotus  
In the [pure land of the] auspicious delightful mandala  
of the Victorious One,  
May I receive the prediction [of my enlightenment]  
Directly from [Amitabha,] the Victorious One  
of Limitless Illuminations.<sup>1</sup>

This is the instruction of the teachings, an unbroken lineage of the instructions of the accomplished scholars like Guru Dze Tari<sup>2</sup> and Dorje Denpa.<sup>3</sup>

There are two explanations of the stages of practice for persons who wish to be reborn in the pure land of Sukhavati:

- Practicing the paths of going to the excellent supreme pure land by depending on day and night recollection;
- The application of the final activities [at the time of death].

### *Practicing the Paths of Going to the Excellent Supreme Pure Land by Depending on Day and Night Recollection*

*Display of the Pure Land Sutra:*<sup>4</sup>

Ananda, one should look at the One Gone to Bliss,<sup>5</sup>  
Take that buddha to heart again and again,  
Create immeasurable amounts of virtue,  
Generate bodhichitta, and with prayers,  
Dedicate this all completely to be reborn in that world.

Then, when death comes close, one will, in front of oneself, face the One Gone to Bliss, the Foe Destroyer, the Completely Fully Enlightened One, Amitabha, surrounded by a great

assembly of fully ordained monks. Seeing the Bhagavan Amitabha, one's mind will become clear, and when one's consciousness leaves [the body], one will take birth in the world of Sukhavati."

Likewise the Bhagavan of Boundless Life [Amitayus]<sup>6</sup> has said:

According to the words of my previous prayers,  
May whichever sentient being who hears my name  
Come to my pure land.  
By the completion of my sublime prayers,  
May sentient beings of many world systems  
All arrive in my pure land,  
And, having taken birth once, may they never fall back.

It is said that by hearing the name of the Protector of Boundless Light [Amitabha],<sup>7</sup> generating the mind of enlightenment, and making prayers to be reborn in this pure land, one will take birth in this pure land, and it will not be possible to fall back to lower states of existence.

One should generate faith in the non-deceptive true words of the promise made by the two unsurpassable, supreme teachers, [Amitayus and Amitabha]. If one makes prayers while having doubt, although being reborn in the pure land, it is said that one will have to stay in the lotus for 500 years without being able to see the Buddha and hear the Dharma. Don't have doubt and [the feeling of] uncertainty even for an instant, and read the *Display of the Pure Land Sutra* and *Opening the Door to the Supreme Pure Land with The Prayer to be Reborn in Sukhavati by the All Knowing Master* [Lama Tsongkhapa] again and again.

With the wish to be reborn in Sukhavati, and with clear faith and the faith of conviction,<sup>8</sup> one should place a statue or painted image

of the Protector of Boundless Light in the east and arrange offerings. Think that the place where one is staying is actually the real Sukhavati. The statue is indivisible with one's own root guru, [in the form of] the Bhagavan Protector of Boundless Light, vermilion red in color with a radiance of red light like a collection of hundred thousand suns. Even if there is no statue, think that one's root guru is in front of oneself, seated upon a jewel throne with lotus and moon disc. [One's Guru in the aspect of Amitabha] has one face and two arms with the hands in the mudra of concentration, holding a bowl filled with nectar. He is adorned with the marks and signs,<sup>9</sup> has an ushnisha on top of his head, and is beautified with the three saffron colored robes of a monk.

Seated in full lotus position under the tree of enlightenment, his stainless light radiates out and spreads to all world systems of the ten directions. Imagine that he is surrounded by inconceivable bodhisattvas and fully ordained Sangha members, with Avalokitesvara on his right and Vajrapani on his left.

As a preliminary practice, let one's mind merge with taking refuge, the mind of enlightenment, and the four immeasurables.<sup>10</sup> Generate these [states of mind] from the depth of one's heart. With effort, mainly focus on the accumulation [of merit] and purification [of negative deeds] by offering the seven-limbed prayer part of the *King of Prayers*<sup>11</sup> respectfully with the three doors [of body, speech, and mind]. Then, while making requests, recite many times:

I pay homage, make offerings, and go for refuge to the Guru, the Teacher, the Bhagavan, the One Gone Beyond, the Foe Destroyer, the Completely Fully Enlightened One, the Buddha of Boundless Light.



---

[Then:]

---

Guru, Victorious Ones together with your children,<sup>12</sup> and in particular, Protector of Boundless Light and Sangha of fully ordained bodhisattvas, please pay attention to me.

In order to benefit all immeasurable sentient beings beyond the limits of the sky and to lead them to the unsurpassed state of happiness, I need to attain most quickly the state of full enlightenment. For this purpose, I have to take rebirth in the pure land of Sukhavati and have to receive the complete teachings from the Protector of Boundless Light.

For this reason, may I, by the power of whatever root of virtue I have created with my three doors, by whatever perfect purification of all ordinary and noble beings of the three times that can be found, by the truth of the irreversible promise of the One Gone Beyond, and by the inconceivable pure sphere of reality, directly after death, without other rebirths interrupting, take birth in the pure land of Sukhavati. May I take miraculous birth upon a throne supported by snow lions in the midst of a lotus in front of the Protector of Boundless Light.

---

Then, recite with uncommon and strong longing desire three times:

---

Straight after taking birth, may I manifest immeasurable collections of qualities like the power of retention and concentration. May I become a vessel that receives the prediction of all the buddhas of the ten directions, like those of the unsurpassable teacher, the Teacher of Boundless Light. May I please their holy minds and in a single moment enter all the buddhas' pure lands without obstruction. (3x)

If one wishes to do more extensive prayers, one can recite and reflect on the complete *Prayer to be Reborn in Sukhavati* by the All Knowing Master [Lama Tsongkhapa]. If one wishes to do it in a more condensed way, one can summarize the essence, [see below]. The Lord of Sages<sup>13</sup> praised the supreme buddha-field many times in an excellent manner. Moved by compassion, various prayers were composed mentioning the potential to be born in Sukhavati.

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Then recite [the following verses from *The Prayer to be Reborn in Sukhavati*]:

---

Being obscured by thick ignorance, [not knowing what to] adopt  
 and [what to] discard,  
 The weapon of anger deprives me of the life of a higher rebirth.  
 Through the rope of attachment and craving, I am bound  
 to samsara's prison.  
 Carried about in the ocean of samsara due to karma,  
 Wandering around through the waves of suffering of sickness  
 and old age,  
 Entering the mouth of the terrifying sea monster, the Lord of Death,  
 Buried under loads of unwanted suffering,  
 Helplessly tormented, with an anguished voice  
 I make this prayer from my heart.  
 As witness to my yearning mind,  
 My guide and sole friend, Amitabha, draw me out  
 of this miserable [state]!  
 With respect, I also make requests to your retinue,  
 And to the bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani:  
 Please don't forget the commitment of your supreme mind  
 Made over immeasurable eons for our benefit.  
 And just as the king of birds flies through the sky, the path  
 of the gods,  
 Please come here by your miraculous power and compassion.<sup>14</sup>

When the activities of this life are spent,  
May I clearly behold in my path of vision  
Amitabha and his ocean of retinues,  
And may my mind be filled with faith and compassion.

As soon as the appearance of the intermediate state arrives,  
May the eight bodhisattvas show me the unmistakable path,  
And may I be reborn in Sukhavati  
To guide the transmigrators of impure worlds with emanations.

---

Then recite [the following verses from *For as Long As*<sup>15</sup>]:

---

For as long as I have not manifested  
The excellent state of the supreme Buddha,  
May I obtain a body that can establish the complete excellent path,  
Become ordained, and remember previous lives.

May I quickly complete the deeds of the bodhisattvas  
Through obtaining matchless wisdom, compassion, power,  
And a treasure of limitless qualities  
Such as recollection, courage, meditative stabilization,  
clairvoyance, and magical power.

When the signs of untimely death appear,  
Having clearly seen the protector Amitayus,  
Through destroying the Lord of Death,  
May I quickly obtain the immortality of the Knowledge Bearer.<sup>16</sup>

Throughout all future lives, may Amitayus manifest [as teachers],  
And through the power of these spiritual friends  
of the great vehicle,  
May I never, even for an instant, turn away  
From the excellent paths praised by the Victorious Ones.

Then recite [the following verses from the dedication prayers of *Opening the Door to the Supreme Pure Land with The Prayer to be Reborn in Sukhavati*]:

---

May the mind that gives up sentient beings  
And wishes to work for the benefit of oneself never arise again.  
May I take responsibility to work for others' benefit  
Through skillful means clearly seeing ways of establishing  
the purposes of others.

May all suffering results of negative karmic deeds  
[Of those who] express or recall my name  
Transform into marvelous magnificent happiness,  
And may they ascend the staircase of the supreme vehicle.

May whatever obstacles of bodhisattvas' deeds that arise  
Through practicing in line with the examples of the bodhisattvas  
Be pacified and, in accordance with [my] wishes,  
May all concordant requirements appear.

Amitabha, you powerful leader of the Shakyas  
Maitreya, Manjushri, Vajrapani, Avalokiteshvara,  
And those Gone to Bliss together with your retinues,  
[To you I make the following request:]  
Through the power of incontrovertible truth  
of dependent origination,  
May all the above prayers quickly come about.

In whichever of the four daily activities<sup>17</sup> one engages in,  
Imagine that the teacher of Sukhavati is in front of oneself;

And especially, wherever one goes, always think that one goes at  
the feet of the Protector of Boundless Light.

When going to sleep, one should [lay with] one's head toward the east, and [when sitting,] think that the Protector of Boundless Light is in front of oneself.

Think that the nature of one's consciousness is at one's heart [in the aspect] of a white [syllable] AH or HUM. Or if one is not familiar with the syllables, think [that the nature of one's consciousness is at the heart in the aspect of] white light the size of a lentil. While exhaling, think [that one's consciousness] leaves through the crown and dissolves into the heart of the Protector of Boundless Light. While inhaling, think [that one's consciousness] leaves the heart [of Amitabha], enters one's crown, and descends to one's heart. Repeat this process again and again.

If through meditation, an itching feeling is felt at the crown [of the head], then light will start to come from the nostrils. At the end of the meditation session and at the time of going to sleep, Amitabha in front comes closer and blesses one through dissolving in the heart. Oneself also [dissolves] and becomes Protector of Boundless Light. Then think that again one dissolves into light and meditate on this clear light.

Directly after the time of waking up, imagine that one arises from the clear light as the Protector [Amitabha] and meditate that one's surroundings are the pure land of Amitabha. [In order to visualize oneself as Amitabha, one should have received the initiation of Amitabha. If one has not received this initiation, one can visualize Amitabha on the crown of the head. The techniques of practicing transference of consciousness, briefly explained here, should be learned from a qualified lama before engaging in these kinds of practices.]

---

During all activities, one should recite the following two verses again and again:

---

Imagine that one has arisen from a supreme lotus,  
In [the midst] of the joyful and pleasant mandala  
of [Amitabha] the Victorious One.  
May I receive the pure prediction [for my enlightenment].  
From the Victorious One, who perceives directly  
all limitless appearances.

After having received the complete prediction,  
May I have millions of emanations  
Who, by the power of the mind, go to the ten directions  
To bring great benefit to sentient beings.

One should always remember the Teacher [Amitabha] of the supreme pure land and, in short, one should feel that one will never be separated from the Protector of Boundless Light.

### *The Application of the Final Activities [at the Time of Death]*

When the signs of death appear, don't be attached and crave for one's body, possessions, relatives or friends. Direct the mind to virtue, accumulate [merit], purify [negative deeds] with effort, and restore degenerated vows and samaya. Meditate on feeling happy, like a little child going back home. Having taken refuge and generated bodhichitta, meditate on guru yoga and make strong requesting prayers from the depth of one's heart to be reborn in Sukhavati. Offer ritual [torma] cakes to the dakinis and Dharma protectors, and request their activities to prevent any obstacle to going to Sukhavati. Apply a mixture of finely ground magnetic stone, bones, and ashes from [the cremation of] a superior lama, and honey on the crown of the head. Sit cross-legged or lay down on the right side in a remote place, and focus on what has been practiced before.

Visualize that immeasurable light rays, like iron hooks, appear from the heart of the Protector of Boundless Light and draws one's consciousness in the form of a bundle of light the size of a lentil. This dissolves in the heart of the Bhagavan [Amitabha] and emanates from his heart, and one takes miraculous birth in the center of a lotus [in Sukhavati].

Because it is difficult to be reborn among beings and in an environment of such great fortune, it is not easy to take birth in certain pure lands. Also, being reborn in some pure lands doesn't prevent one from reversing [and falling] again to the lower states of rebirth. Because the Protector of Boundless Light made prayers over many eons and completed those prayers, rebirth in Sukhavati is easy, and once born there, one will never reverse [and fall] again to lower states of rebirth. Also, our teacher Shakyamuni Buddha, with a focus on disciples who can take rebirth in the pure land [of Sukhavati], mentions in many discourses the benefits of the [recitation of the] name and mantra of the Buddha [Amitabha] as [a cause] to be reborn in Sukhavati. He also said that it would be good if beings of the present put the essence of the instructions [to be reborn there] into practice.

Like a winter's day, this life is short.

[First] there is death and the confusion of the intermediate state,  
[Then comes] fear and being unable to bear the suffering  
of the lower states.

Feeling at ease and neglecting this is like being insane.

One's hoarded accumulations exhaust themselves  
or are used by others,

Or there is separation from gatherings.

Friends become enemies and enemies become friends  
again and again.

Extreme high statuses decline and all beings die.

The time of death is uncertain and at the time of death,  
One has to go alone and leave everything behind;  
Nothing other than the Dharma will be of benefit.  
Alas, how can one be so stupid to stray away from Dharma  
through worldly activities  
And [still] remember the excellent abundance accumulated?  
That is why the small-minded have many causes for suffering.  
Don't be attached to the happiness of this life.  
Would it not be excellent to arrive in Sukhavatī,  
Where not even the name of suffering exists?

The Lord of Death is like a shadow at sunset.  
One cannot stay even for a moment; he will quickly come.  
Friends, don't act with laziness and carelessness.  
Don't get distracted, rely on mindfulness and conscientiousness.

May the supreme teacher help me to go beyond,  
And may the unequalled Shakyamuni Buddha and  
the supreme leader Amitabha  
Guide me through their compassion,  
And without obstacles, may I be reborn in Sukhavatī.



## Notes:

1. These verses are from the *The King of Prayers, The Extraordinary Aspiration of the Practice of Samantabhadra* (*'phags pa bzang po spyod pa'i smon lam gyi rgyal po*).
2. Dze Tari (*dze ta' ri*) was a Buddhist saint of Bengal, India.
3. Dorje Denpa (*rdo rje gdan pa*) was a tenth century Indian paṇḍita.
4. A translation of parts of the *Display of the Pure Land Sutra* (*zhing bkod kyi mdo*) in this text is done by the translator. The complete translation of this sutra can be found at: <http://read.84000.co/#!ReadingRoom/UT22084-051-003/4>, (as translated by 84000 Translating the Words of the Buddha).
5. The buddha mentioned here is Amitabha.
6. Amitabha is called the called the The Bhagavan of Boundless Life (Amitayus) because his life cannot be measured. He can stay from hundreds of eons until a multitude of hundreds of thousands of eons.
7. Amitabha is also called the Protector of Boundless Light because his radiance pervades a multitude of hundreds of thousands of buddhafiels in the ten directions, equaling the particles of sand of the river Ganga, and therefore, his light rays cannot be measured.
8. Clear faith (*dang ba'i dad pa*) refers to a clear mind produced by seeing the excellent qualities of the pure land. When this faith is generated, the cloudiness of the mind is cleared away, whereupon all excellent qualities of the mind become suitable to arise. Faith of conviction (*vid ches pa'i dad pa*) is a mind that gains conviction through contemplating the modes of karma, cause and result, and so forth that are taught by the Buddha.
9. The thirty-two major marks and eighty minor signs of a buddha.
10. The four immeasurables are the four minds of immeasurable love, immeasurable compassion, immeasurable joy, and immeasurable equanimity. As they are minds that are in reference to sentient beings, and sentient beings are immeasurable, they are called immeasurable.
11. The seven-limbed prayer part of *The King of Prayers, The Extraordinary Aspiration of the Practice of Samantabhadra* (*'phags pa bzang po spyod pa'i smon lam gyi rgyal po*) is referring to the first twelve verses of this prayer. See *Essential Buddhist Prayers, an FPMT Prayer Book, Volume 1, Basic Prayers and Practices*.
12. "The children of the buddhas" is a reference to bodhisattvas.
13. "The Lord of Sages" is an epithet of the Buddha.
14. These are the first verses of *The Prayer to be Reborn in Sukhavati, the Land of Bliss*, (*bde ba can du skye bai' smon lam*) composed by Lama Tsongkhapa.
15. The following four verses come from the prayer *For as Long As* (*ji srid thub mchog*) composed by Lama Tsongkhapa.

16. “Knowledge Bearer” is referring to the Buddha Vajradhara.
17. The four of daily activities are: walking, moving about, lying down, and sitting.
18. Please note that the author of this text uses a different title in the colophon than in the beginning of the text.

### *Original Colophon:*

*The Swift Path, the Obstacle-Free Entry to Sukhavati*<sup>18</sup> follows the instructions of adepts like Master Dze Tari and Guru Dorje Denpa and the lineage of Bari Lotsawa. This text is based on the writings of the Lord of Dharma Sakya Pandita and *The Prayer to be Reborn in Sukhavati*, together with related instructions by the All Knowing Master [Lama Tsongkhapa]. By means of generating the special intention like giving a medication, I give this as a gift to benefit fortunate disciples. This text was composed by the holder of the instructions of sutra and tantra, the monastic Losang Chökyi Gyältsen. May all migrators be born in Sukhavati. Mangalam.

### *Colophon for this translation:*

The most compassionate and kind lama, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, asked me to translate this text. By any merit created through this translation, may His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, and all of our other precious gurus have long and healthy lives. May their holy wishes be spontaneously fulfilled, and may they, at the time of our deaths, lead us to the pure land of Sukhavati. May we quickly obtain the state of full enlightenment for the benefit of all mother sentient beings.

Translated by Gelong Tenzin Namdak, Sera Je Monastery, Saka Dawa, June, 2014. With many thanks to Ven. Gyalten Lekden for proofreading this text.

Being unrealized, low in acquired knowledge and learning,  
Saturated with wrong views and defilements,  
Taking the lamas and deities as my witness, I confess my mistakes to the wise.

Lightly edited by Sarah Shifferd for FPMT Education Services, July 2014.

# *The Benefits of the Pure Land Sukhavatī*

*Opening the Door to the Supreme Pure Land  
with “The Prayer to be Reborn in Sukhavatī”*

*By Lama Tsongkhapa*

Namah Shri Guru Manjugoshaya.

I prostate to Amitabha, leader of humans and gods.  
Through compassion you always see each migrator  
as your own child;  
Remembering you just once leaves the fear of the Lord of Death  
far behind;  
May your eminent activities for migrators be glorious  
and without end.

The Buddha praised the supreme buddhafiield  
Many times in an excellent manner.  
Moved by compassion, various prayers were composed  
Mentioning the potential to be born in Sukhavati.

Many stainless scriptures explain that the lords of the victorious ones<sup>1</sup> manifested pure lands from their completely established emanation bodies. These buddhafiields came about in accordance with the exalted minds generated and prayers made at the time [the buddhas] were still bodhisattvas, practicing the vast deeds of

bodhisattvas. Due to the Buddha, who taught extensively about the qualities of the pure land of Sukhavati, and to the ones gone to bliss,<sup>2</sup> who often praised their own individual, immeasurable pure lands, it is said that immeasurable bodhisattvas take rebirth in Sukhavati. It is also said that one should make strong aspirations that persons of the present and future times can go to this pure land. Various chapters in sutras and dharanis<sup>3</sup> mention, while explaining the benefits, instructions for different methods to be reborn in Sukhavati.

It is not impossible for persons of the present time to take rebirth in this pure land. Some say that the saturation of the five degenerations<sup>4</sup> has rapidly decreased the amount of beings born in this pure land. Others say that [pure lands] are only filled with those who are in the retinue of bodhisattvas and that it is difficult to be reborn there because the enormous wealth of those beings and their environment [requires great merit]. Those who are born in Sukhavati have definitely gathered some accumulation of pure [merit]. In short, the greater the aspiration for a particular pure land is, the quicker one will be reborn in that pure land, and [in general,] people are more inclined to being born in Sukhavati. When reciting prayers to be reborn in the pure lands of the buddhas, one should mainly focus on being reborn in Sukhavati.

Which causes should one create in order to be reborn in this pure land? It is said in the *Display of the Pure Land Sutra*:<sup>5</sup>

Ananda, one should look at the One Gone to Bliss,<sup>6</sup>  
 Take that buddha to heart again and again,  
 Create immeasurable amounts of virtue,  
 Generate bodhichitta, and with prayers,  
 Dedicate this all completely to be reborn in that world.

Then, at the time when death comes close, one will, in front of oneself, face the One Gone to Bliss, the Foe Destroyer, the Completely Fully Enlightened One, Amitabha, surrounded by a great

assembly of fully ordained monks. Seeing the Bhagavan Amitabha, one's mind will become clear, and when one's consciousness leaves [the body], one will take birth in the world of Sukhavati.

Ananda, any son or daughter of the lineage should, during one's life, perfectly generate the intention to be reborn in this buddhfield. One should generate the mind of the unsurpassed, complete enlightenment for this purpose, while thinking how wonderful it would be if one could see Amitabha. One should dedicate one's root of virtue for this purpose.

Ananda, one should take the One Gone to Bliss to mind again and again, generate immeasurable amounts of roots of virtue in one's mental continuum, and perfectly direct one's mind to be reborn in this buddhfield. When one is close to death, one comes into the presence of the One Gone to Bliss, the Foe Destroyer, the Completely Fully Enlightened One, Amitabha, and sees his color, shape, complexion, and his retinue of fully ordained Sangha, being emanations of the Buddha. By seeing the One Gone to Bliss, one will have stable, serene faith, have the mindfulness of never forgetting [Amitabha], and when one dies, one will be reborn in his buddhfield.

The first section of this sutra mentions four points that cause one to be reborn in the pure land [of Amitabha]: Remembering the Victorious One Amitabha again and again; accumulating immeasurable amounts of roots of virtue; generating the mind of enlightenment; and making prayers that dedicate the accumulated virtue toward being reborn in this pure land. Although one can find persons of both Hinayana and Mahayana vehicles in this pure land, this first section [of this sutra] is related to those who have generated the lineage of the Mahayana. The last section is common [to both vehicles]. The third section explains, as mentioned before, that one should perfectly generate the intention to be reborn in the pure land. This means that one should, after reflecting on the pure land's qualities again and again, generate from the depth of one's heart the wish to be reborn there.

The middle section mentions the cause to be reborn in this pure land when passing away, this being the generation of the wish to see Amitabha in this life. Having generated the mind of enlightenment and continuously accumulated various amounts of roots of virtue, take the Victorious One Amitabha to mind again and again, and pray from the depth of one's heart that one may be reborn in the Mahayana lineage only, within the pure land of Sukhavati.

This is just a small explanation. An important point is to remember the array of qualities of the beings in [this pure land] and the environment of this pure land as has been mentioned in the sutras. In particular, initially when one makes prayers, one should remember the qualities of this pure land. While focusing on the Victorious Amitabha together with his retinue, generate serene, stable faith, and have a strong aspiration to be reborn there by reflecting on the marvelous array of qualities of this pure land. The last important point is the need for generating a strong intention that thinks, "How wonderful it would be if one could witness the object of one's prayers easily, without obstacles." The main cause for rebirth in this pure land is a strong aspiration to be reborn in the Land of Bliss, which combines the wish to witness [this pure land] with the expression of the qualities of this pure land.

Initially, it is important to praise this pure land because all of what is said [above] depends on a mind that knows the qualities of this pure land.

### *The Qualities of the Trees, Beautifully Adorning the Fields*

In the western side of this world system  
Is a multitude of hundreds of thousands of buddhas,  
Each with their own pure land,  
All surpassed by marvelous Sukhavati.  
The grounds are adorned with precious jewels,  
Smooth as the palm of one's hand and pleasant to the touch.  
All mountains and hills, made of precious jewels,

Are beautiful, clean, and free of dark colors,  
Resplendent, pleasant, pure, and surrounded by a garland  
Of celestial trees made of seven precious jewels,  
And of precious palm trees,  
Like the moon surrounded by a constellation of stars.

In this way the grounds are beautified with various celestial trees. Each of these trees has seven roots, seven trunks, seven branches, seven leaves, seven petals, seven flowers, and seven fruits. Some say that [the tree has] golden roots, silver trunks, lapis lazuli branches, crystal leaves, cat-eye stone petals, red pearl flowers, and diamond fruits. Some say that the seven parts [of the trees], like the roots and so forth, are each made of one of the seven precious jewels. Some say that each [of the seven parts of the tree] are made of two, three, four, five, or six different precious jewels; or each of the parts, like the roots and so forth, are made of the seven precious jewels. These kind of celestial trees have crown ornaments, earrings, necklaces, wrist and upper arm bracelets, rings, golden belts, golden dresses, dresses made out of pearl, and an arrangement of bells made out of precious jewels. In this way, the buddhafiield is totally filled with an embellishment of [as many] hundreds of thousands of various precious jewels as one could wish for.

In the morning, a breeze arises from the four directions, bringing a variety of extremely nicely scented incense of the gods, blossoming everywhere. This pleasant, fragrant breeze moves the various-colored celestial trees, and by looking at [the trees], one sees a variety of beautiful flowers falling on the ground of precious jewels. These flowers pervade this buddhafiield, [spreading around each tree for] seven human measures. These flowers are soft like Kantsalitha<sup>7</sup> cloth and generate bliss when touched. One's feet will sink in the flowers for about four fingers' width [when standing on them] and by raising one's feet [the flowers] will come up [again].

Directly after the morning passes, all of the old flowers disappear, and the ground of the buddhafield becomes a solitary, delightful, and pure place. Again, like before, a breeze arises from the four directions, spreading new and pure flowers. This process of [old flowers disappearing and the arising of fresh flowers] in the morning also happens in the afternoon, at twilight, at nightfall, and at dawn.

The celestial trees, made of the seven precious jewels – gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, cat-eye stone, red pearl, and diamond – have immeasurable attractive, beautiful ornaments hanging from them. They possess everything one wishes for.

The roots, trunks, and branches of the trees are smooth, soft, generate bliss upon touching, and possess a pleasant fragrance. One never tires of listening to the explanations of the pleasant [qualities] of the fragrance being spread around.

### *The Qualities of the Streams, Beautifully Adorning the Fields*

Further, different valleys in the fields are beautified with fragrant waters, measuring depths of around twelve yojanas<sup>8</sup> and widths of one, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or even a hundred thousand yojanas. Entering [these waters] is easy. [The banks], free of mud, are spread with golden sand and covered with nicely scented flowers of the gods, like utpala flowers, red and white lotuses, and water lilies. When one moves the water, various birds, like swans, cranes, geese, ducks, parrots, egrets, cuckoos, kunalas, white garudas, and peacocks, fly up and make pleasant sounds. The two embankments [on both sides] of these waters are filled with precious celestial incense trees. These [fields], possessing pleasant sounding water streams with lovely pictorius<sup>9</sup> trees, agaru<sup>10</sup> trees, incense and the best of sandalwood trees, are the foundation for the spiritual life of pure sentient beings.



### *The Qualities of the Lotuses, Beautifully Adorning the Fields*

Further, these fields are totally covered with a golden maze of lotus flowers resembling the seven precious jewels. Some lotuses are one, two, three, four, five, or even ten yojanas tall. Each of these precious jewel-like lotuses emanates 360,000,000,000 rays of light. At the end of all these light rays are 360,000,000,000 bodies of buddhas, gold in color, possessing the thirty-two signs of a great being,<sup>11</sup> going to countless, immeasurable world systems teaching the Dharma to sentient beings.

Through the power of the highest prayers,  
Precious jewel-like lotuses emanating light rays arise,  
At the ends of which are emanation bodies satisfying  
the [swarming] bees of trainees  
With the festival of the honey-like noble Dharma.

### *The Qualities of the Mansions and Enjoyments, Beautifully Adorning the Fields*

Further, these fields are beautified with wonderful mansions. There are numerous hundred-thousand-storied high celestial mansions, made of various precious jewels, adorned with precious thrones having variegated divine cushions and calicos spread out on them. The fields are also completely filled with everything one wishes for: incense, garlands, ointments, [fragrant] powders, parasols, victory banners, pennants, musical instruments, and cloths of a hundred thousand colors. In a similar way, nicely scented incense appears everywhere, and from time to time there arise clouds of the incense of the gods, bringing scented rains. Likewise, divine flowers, the seven precious jewels, sandalwood powders, parasols, victory banners, and pennants fall like rain. Divine canopies, parasols [made] of the seven precious jewels, roofs of the mansions of the gods, and celestial fans fill the skies.

Instruments of the gods make melodious sounds  
 While daughters of the gods perform a play of dances.  
 It has all the enjoyments one could wish for,  
 Marvelous treasures pervading grounds and sky.  
 Without decline, everything is filled,  
 Like an ocean of treasures blanketing the golden ground.

This concludes a concise explanation of how to take the qualities of the environment of Sukhavati to mind.

### *The Common Qualities of the Residents, Beautifully Adorning the Fields*

Further, without making a differentiation between the beings of the three lower states of rebirth and demigods, whoever is reborn in this [pure land] will never fall back into those four types of rebirth. One will also not have the remaining [four] non-leisures.<sup>12</sup> Sentient beings [born in this pure land] will not be indefinite<sup>13</sup> in nor be able to lose [the Mahayana lineage].<sup>14</sup> This is reality and definite by itself.

One will only be reborn by the power of prayer and not by the power of karma and afflictions. Sentient beings in this [pure land] are only born miraculously from a precious lotus and belong to the rebirths of humans and gods. This is only a mere conventional expression of “humans and gods” because the enjoyments are miraculously made manifest like those in the god realms. All the bodies of the beings are adorned with the thirty-two signs. [When born in this pure land,] one will obtain all the five types of clairvoyance. One will have the miraculous clairvoyance, knowing a multitude of more than hundreds of thousands of buddhafi elds in one single moment of mind. One will have clairvoyance of previous lives, remembering a multitude of hundreds of thousands of eons of previous births. One will have the clairvoyance of the divine eye, seeing a multitude of hundreds of thousands of world systems. One will have divine ear, hearing the Dharma of a multitude of hundreds of thousands

of buddhafiels in one moment. One will have the clairvoyance of others' thoughts, knowing the minds of sentient beings in the multitude of hundreds of thousands of buddhafiels.

In the morning, one can visit other buddhafiels, and one has the opportunity to offer respect and make offerings of all the offering substances [available in those pure lands], created by the power of the buddhas, to a multitude of many hundreds of thousands of buddhas. This is not possible for sentient beings who have doubt [about the rebirth in this pure land]. Those beings, because of such doubt, are not able to go to other pure lands and offer to the Ones Gone to Bliss, they don't have clairvoyance, and they have to stay for a long time in the lotus [in which they are miraculously born] due to the power of their karma.

The sentient beings [in this pure land] don't take coarse food, like that made of the elements; whatever the beings wish for [appears] and can be taken. As has been explained before, the different cloths and ornaments can be found by mere wish, and wearing them gives satisfaction. Being adorned with cloths and ornaments, one enjoys a multitude of hundreds of thousands of pleasant melodies of divine songs, beyond satisfaction, coming from the musical instruments of expert musicians who have arisen out of great streams. An assembly of emanations in the form of birds [arisen from these waters] spread similar sounds in the directions of this buddhafielf. These [sounds, which are sounds of the Dharma,] cause the bodhisattvas to always remember and never be separated from the buddhas.

As explained before, sentient beings are pleased with meeting everything they wish for, and when in front of celestial mansions, retinues of 7,000 sons and daughters of the gods show them a divine play that pleases beings. Initially, qualities of the residents in these pure lands are expressed in order to generate strong aspiration for rebirth in these [lands] so that the different prayers for rebirth in these places can come [to fruition].

The pure sentient beings [in this land] are emanated  
 from good karma.  
 Their bodies are extremely beautiful, adorned  
 with the [thirty-two] signs.  
 They have perfectly generated various qualities  
 in their mindstreams,  
 And are always taken care of by the enjoyment of the Dharma.  
 Their magical [bodies] travel as fast as lightning  
 without obstruction,  
 They can travel to many buddhafiels, and they have  
 the five [wisdom] eyes of the victorious ones.  
 Moreover, having generated the boundless two accumulations,  
 They perform the play of happiness and bliss in the pure lands.

### *The Qualities of the Retinues*

The victorious ones in this buddhafiels have a retinue of shravakas and bodhisattvas. There are three different assemblies [of shravakas]. The qualities of the first retinue of the shravakas [is as follows]: While a son of the gods can calculate all the stars of a 3,000-fold world system in a day and a night, the immeasurable magical emanations of [a shravaka] such as Maudgalyāyana cannot even be counted in a multitude of hundreds of thousands of years. If counted, only a mere portion can be determined; [one can] never determine the fixed number. If this is true for the first assembly, how then can the second and third assembly be counted? In this way, the retinues of the shravakas are uncountable. Each emanation possesses an aura of light the width of one arm span.

The retinues of the bodhisattvas are immeasurable, and their qualities are boundless and limitless. They have equanimity, a wish to benefit, and loving-kindness toward all sentient beings. They have a mind like Mount Meru and wisdom as vast as an ocean, thoroughly engaged in the nature of the illusion of consciousness itself.

They have an accumulation of various qualities and a direct exalted wisdom of the noble ones, which is like Mount Meru. [Their consciousness] being unmistaken, they are like great oceans. They are like [stable] grounds, having patience with the virtue and nonvirtue of sentient beings.<sup>15</sup> Washing away the stains of the afflictions, they are like waterfalls. They are like kings of fire, burning away all afflictions and conceited minds toward all phenomena. Not attached to the worldly, they are like wind. They are like the sky, free of concepts and penetrating all phenomena thoroughly. Without being polluted with the faults of the world, they are like lotuses. By clearly proclaiming [the difference of what is] Dharma and not Dharma at particular times, they are like great thunder dragons. They are like large clouds directly letting the rain of Dharma fall. They are like chief leaders of humans, surpassing great difficulties. They are like elephants, supremely subdued, and like precious horses, having an utmost subdued mind. They are like forceful, powerful, and fearless lions, kings of animals. And like trees, they give complete refuge to all sentient beings. They are like Mount Meru, immovable, not moved by the wrong arguments of others. Like the sky, they meditate on immeasurable loving-kindness, and like the great Brahma, they have accumulated all virtue. Giving up the accumulation of abodes, they are like birds, and having conquered all wrong arguments, they are like eagles, the king of birds. Because they are a rare occurrence, they are like the udumbara flower.<sup>16</sup> They beat Dharma drums, blow Dharma conches, lift up victorious banners of the Dharma, hold Dharma pendants, and light great Dharma lamps. They cause delight in the minds of a multitude of many hundreds of thousands of buddhas and are praised by all the victorious ones. With great effort in faultless morality, they have pure minds, being like lapis lazuli, and, like oceans, they have heard all the Dharma. Each bodhisattva possesses a radiance of a multitude of a hundred thousand yojanas. The two chief disciples, the mahasattvas, the great bodhisattvas, Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani, have a radiance pervading whole world systems.

You are like exalted wisdom oceans, oceans for sentient beings.  
 Having the armor of an ocean, like courage lacking cowardice,  
 You generated bodhi-mind in the presence of an ocean  
     of victorious ones,  
 Then searched for an ocean of learning without contentment,  
 And, having examined the complete Dharma, you became  
     excellent scholars.  
 You realized the essence of the instructions of the supramundane,  
 Fearlessly practiced the Dharma instructions,  
 And through effort, you always liberate sentient beings.  
 With your principle guide, Amitabha,  
 You entered the lineage of the Supreme Sage,  
 You are great heroes, renowned successors of the victorious ones,  
 Bodhisattvas of the pure lands.

### *The Main Qualities of the Pure Land*

The supreme pure land has marvelous qualities of beings and their environment. In its center is a tree of enlightenment, a large bodhi tree<sup>17</sup> with a height of 1,600 yojanas. Its branches, leaves, and petals spread out for 800 yojanas, and the circumference at the root is 500 yojanas. Its leaves, flowers, and fruits spread throughout, and the tree has a variety of a hundred thousand different colors with a diversity of leaves, flowers, and fruits. It has a clear moon-like appearance of precious jewels. It is adorned with precious jewels like those held by Indra.<sup>18</sup> Golden strings, beautiful ornaments made of pearls, bouquets of precious jewels, separate necklaces, ornament garlands of blue and red pearl, and ribbons are hanging from the mouths of [decorative] lions. All the precious jewels are decorated with a network of small bells and canopies, perfectly adorned with sea monster heads, crescent-shaped auspicious signs, and coiling swastikas.<sup>19</sup> In brief, it is adorned with the objects desired by sentient beings. When this

tree of enlightenment is moved by the wind, a melodious sound arises that can be heard in infinite world systems. If one hears this sound or sees [its form], inhales its fragrance, tastes its fruits, or is touched by its lights, one will never have an illness of the ear, eye, nose, tongue, or body until enlightenment is achieved. If one takes the tree to mind, then until enlightenment is achieved, one's mind will never be distracted. Amitabha the Bhagavan, the One Gone to Bliss, the Foe Destroyer, the Complete Fully Enlightened Being, the Pure One Free from Passion, is sitting in front of this tree, teaching the Dharma in the midst of an ocean of retinuees, who foster and respect him. He is called the Victorious One of Boundless Life (*Ami-tayus*) because his life cannot be measured, and he can stay [there] from hundreds of eons until a multitude of hundreds of thousands of eons. Amitabha is also called the Victorious One of Boundless Light because his radiance pervades in a multitude of hundreds of thousands of buddhafi elds in the ten directions, equaling the particles of sand of the river Ganga, and therefore, his light rays cannot be measured. This is true, but he can also show the aspect of having only an arm span of light rays, depending on the need for [subduing] sentient beings.

The light rays are like stainless crystal, as vast as the sky, and they generate bliss in the body and happiness in the mind, supreme happiness in the mind, of whichever sentient being is touched by them. The play of this limitless collection of light is like a golden mountain surrounded [by this brightness]. In a similar way, the glorious body of the great sage Amitabha is completely surrounded [by this light]. He surpasses the complete assembly of bodhisattvas and shravakas who are in his retinue. He is beyond samsara, luminous and clear, like a jewel, shining bright light in all directions, similar to the victorious mountain Mount Meru, being in the center of all other mountains. Merely seeing this great and supreme buddha, an eminent being with the thirty-two major and eighty minor marks, pleases one's mind. These major and minor marks

came into being through countless roots of virtue accumulated over immeasurable eons. Having created these causes, Amitabha established this complete beautified body beyond all dimensions. During autumn nights, the sky is free of clouds and totally pervaded by moonlight in the midst of constellations of glittering pearl-like stars. Similarly, [Amitabha] is in the midst of an immeasurable retinue of bodhisattvas with brilliant appearance and mindstreams and senses completely matured through a vast accumulation of roots of virtue. Amitabha is also in the center of hundreds of thousands of compassionate arhats, leaders of humans, followed by their disciples, all acting with great tranquility, possessing divine eyes, magical powers, and clairvoyance.

[Amitabha, you] know all objects of knowledge without obstruction, courageously and indefatigably teaching the Dharma in accordance with the need of trainees. Heroically, you depend on great compassion and work only for the benefit of limitless sentient beings. Being fearless like a powerful lion, king of animals, in the midst of a great assembly of living beings, you spread the sound of the lion's roar<sup>20</sup> in all directions. Similarly, in the center of immeasurable retinues, [you] free beings from all fears of enemies, spreading the lion-like sound of the vast and profound [teachings] without interruption.

I pay homage to Amitabha!

You, who sit in front of the tree of enlightenment.

With a magnificent body [arisen from] limitless merit, surrounded  
by a great assembly,

You are the refuge for those who wish to go to Sukhavati.

Lord, your mass of light fills world systems.

Ah, the buddhafield of the victorious ones

Is extremely vast with spacious dimensions.

Having the complete qualities of all the victorious ones,

Your activities are fearless,



Working only for the purpose of all sentient beings  
Who are saturated with the wrong doings of the five degenerations.  
You are like an enormous, powerful mountain.  
Your supreme vigorous [face] is like a moon  
With extremely beautiful blue eyes like utpala flowers.  
Whatever has the most excellence is similar to you.  
You blaze with splendor, having all the qualities of knowledge  
and compassion.  
Your eloquent speech is a delight for the assembly surrounding you.  
Staying until the end of existence for the purpose of others,  
In all circumstances you are the protector of all migrators.

This is a brief explanation of how to take the qualities of the beings [in the pure land] to mind. If one does it more elaborately, think that one is in front of the Victorious One [Amitabha], the Master of the World, and make prayers related to this pure land. Complete the vast practices of the bodhisattvas, and conclude by reflecting on all the qualities of this pure land as referred to in prayers by studying the clear explanations of the sutras. It is very important to have strong aspiration to be born there. One should try to generate this strong aspiration again and again by focusing on the qualities of the pure land as has been explained briefly above. The benefits of this are explained in the *Display of the Pure Land Sutra*.<sup>21</sup>

If all the subtle particles that can be found in the world  
Are cut and broken down into smaller particles,  
And if world systems greater in number than this  
Are filled with jewels [and offered],  
The merit of the practice of generosity of such [an amount  
of] precious jewels  
Never becomes equal to the amount of merit that is created  
By joyfully listening with folded hands  
To the immeasurable characteristics of the light  
And all other special qualities of Sukhavatī.

Therefore, one should generate the strong aspiration to go  
 To the supreme world of Sukhavatī  
 By generating devotion and faith through listening to the qualities  
 Of [Amitabha,] the One Gone to Bliss.

Whoever hears the name of the world of Sukhavatī  
 [Creates] more merit than the parts of this supreme vast pure land;  
 The [magnitude] can never be illustrated with examples.  
 Knowing the perfect teachings of the Buddha,  
     which possess wisdom,  
 One's merit will increase.  
 Therefore, one should listen and clear away all doubts,  
 And with the root of faith, obtain the ultimate.

The Buddha explained the qualities of the pure land and how to create causes to be reborn there, witnessed by the exalted wisdom of the victorious ones. It is important to generate strong faith without the slightest doubt. It is said that if one has doubt and establishes the causes to be reborn there, one will have the great misfortune to be reborn in this pure land, but with obstruction, and one will have to stay in the womb of the lotus for 500 years without being able to see the buddhas or listen to the Dharma.

The mere [expression of the] remarks of the qualities of the pure land, seen as an object of aspiration, as explained once before is more than enough for the intelligent ones, who easily understand [the need and way to be reborn there]. But for people like us, who are of lesser intelligence, it is said that if there is no [elaborate] explanation, one will not generate the wish to be reborn there and will not see this object of aspiration. If one doesn't observe this [pure land] well by [merely] seeing some of its qualities, one will never generate a strong and vast aspiration, and [one's awareness of] it will only remain as a mere minor thought.

The way to supplicate the Conqueror in order to easily establish [the rebirth] in the dwelling of the ripening result of the victorious ones and their retinue is as follows:<sup>22</sup>

**[Prayer of Bliss, Prayer to Be Reborn in Sukhavatī, the Land of Bliss:]**

Being obscured by thick ignorance, [not knowing what to] adopt  
and [what to] discard,

The weapon of anger deprives me of the life of a higher rebirth.  
Through the rope of attachment and craving, I am bound  
to samsara's prison.

Carried about in the ocean of samsara due to karma,  
Wandering around through the waves of suffering of sickness  
and old age,

Entering the mouth of the terrifying sea monster, the Lord of Death,  
Buried under loads of unwanted suffering,  
Helplessly tormented, with an anguished voice  
I make this prayer from my heart.

As witness to my yearning mind,  
My guide and sole friend, Amitabha, draw me out  
of this miserable [state]!

With respect, I also make requests to your retinue,  
And to the bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani:  
Please don't forget the commitment of your supreme mind  
Made over immeasurable eons for our benefit.

And just as the king of birds flies through the sky, the path  
of the gods,

Please come here by your miraculous power and compassion.

By the power of combining oceans of the two accumulations created in the three times by self and others, may I, at the time of death, directly see the guide Amitabha together with his retinue, his two chief disciples, and so forth. At that time, may I generate intense strong faith by focusing on the Victorious One and his retinue. May I not experience the suffering of death, and may I remember the object of faith when death draws near. As soon as my consciousness has left [this body,] may the eight bodhisattvas come in a magical way, show me the path to Sukhavati, and may I

be reborn with great intelligence in a precious lotus in the lineage of the great vehicle.

Directly after birth, may I hold up a collection of immeasurable qualities such as retention, meditative stabilization, bodhichitta of non-apprehension,<sup>23</sup> and inextinguishable courage. Having pleased the unsurpassed teachers such as Amitabha, the victorious ones, and the bodhisattvas of the ten directions, may I receive the pure teachings and transmissions of the great vehicle. Realizing the true meaning of these [teachings], may I be able to go, during every moment, to boundless buddhafi elds using magical power without obstruction and complete all the great deeds of the bodhisattvas.

After birth in the pure land, may I also be motivated by resilient compassion, and with magical power without obstruction, mainly go to impure worlds and establish the pure paths praised by the victorious ones through teaching the Dharma to all sentient beings in accordance with their dispositions. May I, for the purpose of all limitless transmigrators, quickly obtain the state of the Victorious One by completing all these marvelous deeds without delay.

When the activities of this life are spent,  
May I clearly behold in my path of vision  
Amitabha and his ocean of retinues,  
And may my mind be filled with faith and compassion.

As soon as the appearance of the intermediate state arrives,  
May the eight bodhisattvas show me the unmistakable path,  
And may I be reborn in Sukhavati  
To guide the transmigrators of impure worlds with my emanations.

Even if I do not achieve such a supreme state, may I, through all my lives, always obtain the perfect basis for hearing, contemplation, and meditation upon the Victorious One's teachings of scriptures

and realizations. May I never be separated from this basis, ornamented with the seven qualities of the higher realms.<sup>24</sup> May I, in all those circumstances, achieve the recollection of remembering all previous states [of rebirth].

Throughout all future lives, may I see samsara as being completely without essence and be attracted to nirvana's qualities. With this state of mind, and through the Bhagavan's excellent teachings on vinaya, may I go forth for ordination. When ordained, may I not even commit the smallest downfall or misdeed, and just as the Bhikshu Mitrugpa did, achieve great enlightenment by completing the collection of morality.

Furthermore, throughout all future lives, may I realize the correct ways of knowing how afflictions arise and how to purify [them], and obtain the marvelous recollection of the apprehension of never forgetting all the words and meanings of the Dharma, the branch of perfection. May I obtain the perfect courage of teaching others that which I apprehend without obstruction.

Furthermore, throughout all future lives, may I obtain and never be parted from the doors of meditative stabilizations such as the brave-like one,<sup>25</sup> the supernatural eyes, the fleshy eye, and clairvoyance, and the ability to perform miraculous deeds.

Furthermore, throughout all future lives, may I obtain great wisdom, the ability to self-reliantly differentiate between what to adopt and what to discard. May I obtain clear wisdom, the ability to differentiate between the diversity of the most subtle points, without joining them, of the way afflictions arise and how to purify [them]. May I obtain quick wisdom, the ability to stop as soon as they arise, all incomprehension, wrong views, and doubts. May I obtain profound wisdom, which penetrates inexhaustibly the words and meaning of scripture unfathomable to others.

In short, may I become like the foremost Manjushri, reaching the perfection of all the bodhisattvas' deeds with skillful wisdom differentiating words and meanings of the scriptures without the fault of imperfect knowledge. Having easily gained great, clear, quick, and profound wisdom, may I, in order to gather the fortunate, crush false expounders, and to please the wise, may I perfect the skill of teaching, debating, and composition that focuses upon the entire scripture of the Victorious One.

Furthermore, throughout all future lives, may I stop all apprehension that is primarily concerned with self and all laziness of inadequacy<sup>26</sup> and weaknesses regarding great deeds of the bodhisattvas. May I become like the foremost Avalokiteshvara, reaching the perfection of all the bodhisattvas' deeds with skillful bodhichitta, perfecting supreme courage and taking responsibility for others.

Furthermore, throughout all future lives, whenever engaging in the welfare of self and others, may I become like the foremost Vajrapani, reaching perfection of all the bodhisattvas' deeds with skillful abilities to destroy maras, those with extreme views, and opponents having wrong views.

Throughout all future lives, may I become like the unequalled King of the Shakyas, reaching great enlightenment. And in order to complete the bodhisattvas' deeds with effort lacking laziness, may I, after generating bodhichitta without being distracted for even an instant, work with great fervor.

Throughout all future lives, may I become like the one gone to bliss, the King of Medicine Buddhas, and in order to destroy all illness of body and mind, the obstacles to the achievement of enlightenment, may I have the ability to pacify all suffering of body, speech, and mind through merely mentioning his name.

Furthermore, throughout all future lives, may I become like the victorious Amitayus, having the ability to destroy untimely death, to have a lifespan as I would wish, by merely mentioning his name. When life-threatening obstacles approach, by seeing the appearance of the body of the protector Amitayus that subdues through the four activities,<sup>27</sup> may all life obstacles be completely pacified.

Throughout all future lives, may I, through the power of having generated uncontrived stable faith in recognizing teachers as being the protector Amitayus himself, whose body appears in accordance with whoever needs to be subdued, never be separated from the victorious Amitayus, who directly acts as spiritual teachers.

Furthermore, throughout all future lives, may I be fostered by spiritual teachers of the Mahayana vehicle, the root of all mundane and supramundane qualities. During this care, may I only please them with all my [three] doors through stable, unshakable faith and never, even for an instant, displease them. May spiritual teachers instruct me with all teaching in its entirety, and may I have the ability to realize the complete meaning as intended and bring my practice to perfection. May I never, even for an instant, fall under misleading teachers and harmful friends.

Throughout all future lives, may I have faith in the law of cause and effect, and enter a continuous, effortless experience of the realizations of renunciation, bodhichitta, and the complete, pure view. Throughout all future lives, may all my virtuous activities of body, speech, and mind be causes solely for the benefit of others and perfect enlightenment.<sup>28</sup>

*[For as Long As:]*<sup>29</sup>

For as long as I have not manifested  
The excellent state of the supreme Buddha,  
May I obtain a body that can establish the complete  
    excellent paths,  
Become ordained, and remember previous lives.

May I quickly complete the deeds of the bodhisattvas  
Through obtaining matchless wisdom, compassion, power,  
And a treasure of limitless qualities  
Such as recollection, courage, meditative stabilization,  
    clairvoyance, and magical power.

When the signs of untimely death appear,  
Having clearly seen the protector Amitayus,  
Through destroying the Lord of Death,  
May I quickly obtain the immortality of the Knowledge Bearer.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout all future lives, may Amitayus manifest [as teachers],  
And through the power of these spiritual friends  
    of the great vehicle,  
May I never, even for an instant, turn away  
From the excellent paths praised by the victorious ones.

By the roots of virtue of having purely recited this prayer<sup>31</sup> to  
be reborn in the pure land Sukhavatī and with the power of all  
the contaminated and uncontaminated virtue<sup>32</sup> combined, may I  
quickly attain the state of an all-knowing Dharma king to benefit  
all sentient beings, as many in number as the sky is vast.

May the buddhafield that I manifest at the time of buddhahood in  
the future have great bodhisattvas like Youthful Manjushri and the  
Victorious One called All Seeing, and may it be surrounded with



precious jewels as high as the peak of cyclic existence. May it be filled with precious jewels of which, when verbalizing the qualities of each, one will need billions of years to express them. May it have all the qualities of the environment. May the ground be filled with the seven precious jewels equal to the wishes of the persons who take rebirth there, of different colors, appearing all at once. May there be 30,000 bodhi trees with 84,000 natural bodies of the Victorious All-Seeing One in front, emanating immeasurable emanations, pure and natural [in form], in the ten directions. May they have retinues of 42,000 natural bodies. May there be undetermined lifespans and, by the inconceivable power of the qualities [of this land], may there be no sentient beings other than shravakas, pratyekas, and ordained bodhisattvas. May all these [beings], by taking the Buddha the All-Seeing One to mind, coming in front of him and by seeing him together with his retinue, instantaneously eliminate all doubts without the need for depending on the teachings of the Dharma. By manifesting the qualities of these beings, may this pure land be more supreme than others. May the qualities be extremely vast, wide, and sublime, without any shortcomings.

May all bodhisattvas who are born in this pure land have limitless supernatural eyes and clairvoyance, and while looking at world systems, see afflictions, karma, and the resultant three types of suffering of impure realms' sentient beings. May they, by seeing those sentient beings' suffering, be overpowered with compassion and incited to work for their benefit. May they become like a mother for those suffering child-like beings, and may they take to heart those who have fallen in the middle of a suffering fire pit. May they become like a mother for those beloved children – petty, unfortunate sentient beings of the impure realms – who are overpowered by afflictions, like having taken good food mixed with horrific poison.

May they, by seeing all those immeasurable child-like sentient beings of the impure realms, who due to heavy negative karma have fallen into lower states like having fallen from a precipice, become like a mother, without considering if those beings harm or benefit them.

By seeing sentient beings of impure realms tightly bound by afflictions and karma, held in the iron prison of a great powerful enemy lacking compassion without the possibility of escape, may they become like a mother for those child-like beings who receive so much harm.

May they, by seeing sentient beings of impure realms being tormented by the sickness of strong and powerful afflictions, generate a wish to free them. Likewise, may they, by seeing beings lacking temporary and ultimate happiness, generate a wish to free them. May they, by seeing the sufferings at the time of the deaths of gods and young children of the gods of high status in the pleasure grove, generate a wish to free them.

May I also generate these kinds of intentions. May I not even have the slightest attachment to the pure land's special bliss, but have the wish to take birth in lower realms of sentient beings. And by the power of compassion and skillful prayers, may I teach these beings in accordance with their capacities, like giving water to the thirsty. Through seeing the need to work for their benefit, may I courageously enter the Avici hell, as easily as the king of swans enters a clear lake adorned with lotus flowers. May I courageously take sentient beings out of their hundreds of types of various sufferings, like a heroic father who, out of compassion, saves his child from a battle. May I, through generating common and supreme great bliss due to working for the benefit of sentient beings, be-

come like a beggar who has found a treasure. May I, in order to eliminate the suffering of afflictions of sentient beings, happily enter the ocean of sufferings, just as elephants enter water during the summer heat of midday.

In brief, at the time when I manifest buddhahood, may collections of light of many qualities and various bright, clear, shining bodies of those gone to bliss appear in front of whoever merely expresses or recollects that name I have as a buddha. May the buddhas that appear be surrounded by bodhisattvas, shravakas, and pratyeka buddhas showing the different limitless activities such as flying through space, standing, sitting, laying, and subduing maras. May gods, nagas, wealth goddesses, spirits, gandharvas, kinnaras, and demi-gods appear, and may they hold up immeasurable special offerings and offer them to infinite buddhas. May whoever merely sees this eliminate from the root all the faults of inclinations toward samsara and the peace of nirvana, and purely establish the complete, unsurpassed enlightenment.

Among many pure lands, the one of the All-Seeing One  
is the most eminent.

May whatever qualities that exist in this pure land  
Be gathered in my pure land as well,  
And may I establish a far superior, supreme pure land.

In order to purify the difficulties of establishing such a pure land,  
May I never, even for an instant, be discouraged  
With making countless offerings of limitless supreme substances  
In various ways, without exception,  
To all the victorious ones and bodhisattvas filling  
Pure lands equal to the amount of the smallest particles  
[in the world].

However many eons there have been since beginningless time  
Until the end of samsara,  
May I, through courageous [effort], work for eons  
To establish such a supreme pure land.

In all types of existence and for as long as space remains,  
Until I achieve the all-knowing mind of knowing all beings,  
May I see the need for training in the bodhisattvas' deeds,  
And in order to achieve the supreme state, may my effort  
[in this training] never degenerate.

May the mind that gives up sentient beings  
And wishes to work for the benefit of oneself never arise again.  
May I take responsibility to work for others' benefit  
Through skillful means clearly seeing ways of establishing  
the purposes of others.

May all bodhisattvas who adorn my pure land  
Be deeply moved by compassion that feels unbearable when  
Seeing sentient beings of impure realms.  
Through skillful deeds, may they become protectors of beings.

May all suffering results of negative karmic deeds  
[Of those who] express or recall my name  
Transform into marvelous magnificent happiness,  
And may they ascend the staircase of the supreme vehicle.

May whatever obstacles of bodhisattvas' deeds that arise  
Through practicing in line with the examples of the bodhisattvas  
Be pacified and, in accordance with [my] wishes,  
May all concordant requirements appear.

Amitabha, you powerful leader of the Shakyas  
Maitreya, Manjushri, Vajrapani, Avalokiteshvara,

And those Gone to Bliss together with your retinue,  
 [To you I make the following request:]  
 Through the power of incontrovertible truth  
 of dependent origination,  
 May all the above prayers quickly come about.

Notes:

1. An epithet of a buddha.
2. An epithet of a buddha.
3. Compilation of mantra from the *Words of the Buddha (kangyur)*.
4. The five degenerations are the degenerations of: life, view, afflictions, sentient beings, and time.
5. A translation of parts of the *Display of the Pure Land Sutra (zhing bkod kyi mdo)* in this text is done by the translator. The complete translation of this sutra can be found at: <http://read.84000.co/#!ReadingRoom/UT22084-051-003/4>, (as translated by 84000 Translating the Words of the Buddha).
6. The buddha mentioned here is Amithaba.
7. Kantsalitha is a soft Kashmiri silk.
8. One yojana is around 4.5 miles/7.4 km. according to the Abhidharma literature.
9. *Xanthochymus*, mangosteen tree, pictorius tree.
10. *Dalbergia sisson*, the Indian Rosewood Tree, also called agarwood tree, *Aquilaria agallocha*. Agarwood is known for being a resinous tree used for incense and perfumes.
11. Thirty-two major marks of a Buddha.
12. “The four (remaining) pleasures of humans” are: 1) Not having wrong views, 2) Not being born in a place without the teachings of the Buddha, 3) Not being born in a barbaric country, and 4) Not being mentally impaired.
13. “Not indefinite” or definite in the Mahayana lineage means that one will enter the Mahayana vehicle without having entered the Shravaka or Pratyeka vehicles first.
14. “Nor be able to lose” refers to never falling back from the Mahayana lineage into the lesser vehicles.
15. “Having patience with the virtue and nonvirtue of sentient beings” means that they don’t generate jealousy toward those who accumulate virtue nor get angry with those who accumulate nonvirtue.
16. *Ficus racemosa*: the flowers of the udumbara plant are enclosed within its fruit. Because the flower is hidden inside the fruit, a legend developed to explain the absence (and supposed rarity) of the visual flower; it was said

to bloom only once every 3,000 years, and thus came to symbolize events of rare occurrence.

17. *Ficus religiosa*, pipal tree (*shing gi dbang po*).
18. Indra is the king of the gods in Hindu mythology.
19. The swastika is an auspicious symbol of good fortune. The word itself comes from the Sanskrit “sutvas” which means “go well.”
20. The Buddha’s voice is like a lion’s roar because when a lioness roars, her cubs become alert and wild animals instinctively feel fear, thus giving protection.
21. *Display of the Pure Land Sutra*, *Zhing bkod kyi mdo*.
22. Here starts the prayer *Prayer of Bliss, Prayer to Be Reborn in Sukhavati, the Land of Bliss*, (*bde ba can du skye bai’ smon lam*) composed by Lama Tsongkhapa.
23. “Bodhichitta of non-apprehension” refers to a bodhichitta that is conjoined with the realization of emptiness.
24. The seven qualities of a higher (human) realm are: 1) Born into a good caste, 2) have a complete form, 3) have a long life, 4) without sickness, 5) have fortunate activities, 6) have wealth, and 7) have wisdom.
25. Meditative stabilizations like the brave-like one, shurangama samadhi, (*dpa’ bar ‘gro ba*).
26. “Laziness of inadequacy” (*sgyid lugs pa’i le lo*) is the laziness of having a low self-esteem and using that as an excuse to not engage in Dharma practice.
27. The four activities are activities of: 1) peace, 2) increase, 3) control, and 4) wrath.
28. This concludes the prayer *Prayer of Bliss, Prayer to Be Reborn in Sukhavati, the Land of Bliss*, (*bde ba can du skye bai’ smon lam*) composed by Lama Tsongkhapa.
29. The following four verses come from the prayer *For as Long As* (*ji srid thub mchog*) composed by Lama Tsongkhapa.
30. “Knowledge Bearer” is referring to the Buddha Vajradhara.
31. The prayers: *Prayer of Bliss, Prayer to Be Reborn in Sukhavati, the Land of Bliss* and *For as Long As*, are both composed by Lama Tsongkhapa.
32. Uncontaminated virtue is the virtue created with the direct realization of emptiness; contaminated virtue is the virtue created without the direct realization of emptiness.

### **Original Colophon:**

*Opening the Door to the Supreme Pure Land with the Prayer to be Reborn in Sukhavati* was composed by the Glorious Losang Dragpa in the temple of Dzing Jhi and written down by Sang Gyong.

***Colophon for this translation:***

The most compassionate and kind lama, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, asked me to translate this text.

By any merit created through this translation, may His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, and all of our other precious gurus have long and healthy lives. May their holy wishes be spontaneously fulfilled. May they, at the time of our deaths, lead us to the pure land of Sukhavati, and may we quickly obtain the state of full enlightenment for the benefit of all mother sentient beings.

Translated by Gelong Tenzin Namdak, Sera Je Monastery, Saka Dawa, June, 2014. With many thanks to Ven. Gyalten Lekden for proofreading this text.

Being unrealized, low in acquired knowledge and learning,  
Saturated with wrong views and defilements,  
Taking the lamas and deities as my witness, I confess my mistakes to the wise.

Lightly edited by Sarah Shifferd for FPMT Education Services, July 2014.



Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition