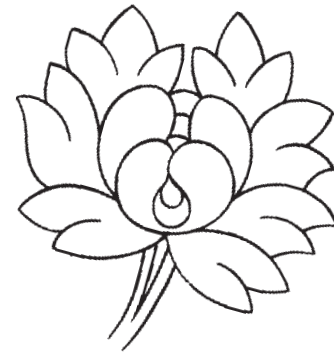


*A Prayer for the  
Beginning, Middle, and  
End of Practice*



*By Je Tsongkhapa  
Translated by Gavin Kilty*



*Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition  
Education Services*



# A Prayer for the Beginning, Middle, and End of Practice



*I bow before the conquering buddhas, bodhisattvas, and arhats of all directions and of all times.*

I offer this boundless prayer with the purest of minds  
to free countless beings from cycles of existence.  
By the power of the unfailing Three Jewels  
and of great *rishis* possessed of the force of truth,  
may these sincere words bear fruit.

Life after life, may I never be born into realms  
of great suffering or unfavorable circumstance  
but gain always a precious human form  
blessed with every conducive provision.

From the moment of birth may I never  
be lured by the pleasures of existence,  
but, guided by renunciation intent on freedom,  
be resolute in seeking the pure life.

May there be no hindrance to becoming a monk,  
from friends, family, or possessions,  
and for every conducive circumstance,  
by mere thought may it appear.

Once a monk, may I be untainted as long as I live,  
by breach of vow or natural fault,  
as promised in the presence of my preceptor.

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Education Department  
FPMT International Office  
P. O. Box 888  
Taos, New Mexico 87571 USA  
Tel: (505)758-7766  
Email: [materials@fpmt.org](mailto:materials@fpmt.org)



Whoever hears, sees, or calls these verses to mind,  
may they be undaunted in fulfilling  
the powerful prayers of the bodhisattvas.

By the power of these vast prayers  
made with the purest intention,  
may I attain the perfection of prayer  
and fulfill the hopes of every living being.



*Colophon:*

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For more poems composed by Tsongkhapa please refer to the above, which can be ordered directly from Wisdom Publications on the web at: [www.wisdompubs.org/products/0861711920.cfm](http://www.wisdompubs.org/products/0861711920.cfm).

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I pray that on such pure foundation,  
and for every mother sentient being,  
I devote myself with hardship for countless eons  
to every aspect, profound and vast, of the Mahayana.

May I be cared for by true spiritual friends,  
filled with knowledge and insight,  
senses stilled, minds controlled, loving, compassionate,  
and with courage untiring in working for others.

As Sada Prarudita devoted himself to Dharma Arya,  
may I sincerely please my spiritual master  
with body, life, and wealth,  
never disappointing him for an instant.

I pray that the Perfection of Wisdom, forever profound,  
a bringer of peace, unbound by identification,  
be taught to me as taught to Sada Prarudita,  
unsullied by the muddy waters of false views.

May I never fall under the sway  
of false teachers and misleading friends,  
their flawed views of existence and nonexistence  
well outside the Buddha's intention.

With sail hoisted of the sincerest of minds,  
driven by winds of unflagging effort,  
on this well-built ship of study, thought, and meditation,  
may I bring living beings from samsara's ocean.

As much as I excel in learning,  
as much as I give to others,  
as pure as my morality grows,  
as much as I become wise,  
by as much may I be empty of pride.

I pray that I listen insatiably  
to countless teachings at the feet of a master,  
single-handedly with logic unflawed,  
prizing open scriptures' meanings.



Having examined day and night  
with fourfold logic all that I have heard,  
may I banish every doubt  
with the discerning understanding  
that arises from such contemplation.

With conviction on dharmas profound  
gained from understanding born of contemplation,  
I pray that I retreat to solitude  
with a perseverance severing life's attachments  
to devote myself to proper practice.

When the Buddha's thoughts dawn upon me  
through study, thought, and meditation,  
I pray that things of this life forever bonded to samsara  
and thoughts of my happiness alone  
never arise in my mind.

Unattached to my possessions  
I pray that I destroy parsimony,  
gathering disciples around me  
by giving first of material wealth  
to satisfy them with Dharma.

With a mind renounced may I never transgress  
even the smallest precept, though it may cost my life,  
flying forever, therefore, the flag of freedom.

When I see, hear, or think of those  
who struck, beat, or maligned me,  
may I be without anger, speak of their virtues,  
and meditate upon patience.

I pray I will apply myself to enthusiasm,  
achieving virtues unachieved, improving those attained,  
banishing utterly threefold debilitating laziness.

I pray to abandon the meditative absorption  
that lacks the power of insight to quell samsara,



that is divorced from the moist compassion to quash nirvana's passivity,  
and that mostly throws one back to cycles of existence,  
but develop instead the meditative absorption  
that unites compassion and insight.

I pray that I banish false views of emptiness,  
mentally fabricated and partially known,  
born from fear of the most profound truth, cherished as supreme,  
and that I realize all phenomena to be forever empty.

May I bring to faultless morality  
those so-called practitioners with their wayward ethics,  
shamelessly empty of pure practice,  
rashly pursuing paths shunned by the wise.

May I bring to the path praised by buddhas  
those lost and fallen onto wrong paths,  
swayed by deluded teachers and misleading friends.

I pray that my lion-like roar  
of teaching, argument, and composition  
flattens the pride of fox-like false orators,  
and, gathering well-trained disciples about me,  
I fly the banner of the teachings forever.

In whatever life I may drink the nectar of Buddha's teachings,  
I pray to be born into a good family  
and be of handsome build, wealthy, powerful, and wise,  
blessed with long life and sound health.

May I develop the unique love of a mother  
for those who malign me  
and harbor ill designs upon my life,  
my body, or my possessions.

By growing within myself  
the pure and extraordinary bodhi-mind  
whose nature is to cherish others more than self,  
may I soon give them unsurpassable enlightenment.