

# *Rítual for Taking the Eight Mahāyāna Precepts*

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*Compiled by Lama Zopa Rinpoche*

**FPMT**



Lama Zopa Rinpoche  
Practice Series

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***Practice Requirements:***

See *About the Eight Mahāyāna Precepts* on page 5.

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

# Contents

Technical Note	4
About the Eight Mahāyāna Precepts	5
Ritual for Taking the Eight Mahāyāna Precepts	
Preliminary Prayers	7
Actual Ritual	13
The Benefits of Protecting the Eight Mahāyāna Precepts	20
What to Do If You Degenerate the Precepts	21
Appendix: A Guide to Pronouncing Sanskrit	22
Notes	23

## Technical Note

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

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Recite these two verses three times.

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

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

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Italics and a small font size indicate instructions and comments found in the Tibetan text. Words in square brackets have been added by the translator for clarification. For example:

*This is how to correctly follow the virtuous friend, [the root of the path to full enlightenment].*

# *About the Eight Mahāyāna Precepts*

The eight Mahāyāna precepts are best taken for the first time from someone qualified to pass on the lineage of the practice. For example, Lama Zopa Rinpoche has given certain FPMT teachers permission to grant the eight Mahāyāna precepts. However, since this person becomes one's guru, if you are not ready (or confident) to make that commitment, it is permissible to take the precepts in front of an image or statue of Guru Śākyamuni Buddha. This is also the case when a qualified person is not available to pass on the lineage. However, when the opportunity arises, it would be best to receive the actual lineage.

The eight Mahāyāna precepts can also be taken before you have officially taken refuge.

The eight Mahāyāna precepts can be taken on any day of the year, but their karmic effects are particularly powerful on merit-multiplying days, such as the four annual Buddhist festivals (the first fifteen days of the first Tibetan lunar month—the Fifteen Miracle Days of Chotrul Duchen; the fifteenth day of the fourth month—Saka Dawa Duchen; the fourth day of the sixth month—Chokhor Duchen, the First Turning of the Wheel of Dharma; and the twenty-second day of the ninth month—Lhabab Duchen, Buddha's Descent from the God Realm of the Thirty-Three), full moons, new moons, and solar and lunar eclipses.

The eight Mahāyāna precepts are taken from early morning, when you can first see the lines of your palm, to sunrise the next day.

The eight Mahāyāna precepts are:

1. To not kill any sentient being, even an insect.
2. To not steal, that is, to not take what has not been given.
3. To not engage in sexual activity.
4. To not tell lies.
5. To not take intoxicants, including alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.
6. To not eat food at the wrong time, that is, after noon.\*
7. To not sit on large and high seats and beds.
8. To not wear perfume, garlands, and ornaments and to not sing, dance, and so forth.

\*According to Lama Zopa Rinpoche's root guru Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche, when taking the eight Mahāyāna precepts for a single day, it is better to be strict and to have only one meal. However, when taking them for a number of consecutive days, Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche said that it is fine to have both breakfast and lunch. Therefore, according to Lama Zopa Rinpoche, when precepts are taken on consecutive days, you can have both breakfast and lunch from the second day onward. However, people with health issues can have both breakfast and lunch even when taking the precepts for a single day.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche says that noon can either be according to the clock or according to the sun. Food should not be taken from then until sunrise the next morning.

According to Kyabje Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche, one of Lama Zopa Rinpoche's gurus, once you have finished eating a meal, you should not begin eating again as that would become eating a second meal.

According to Lama Zopa Rinpoche, milk and other drinks, such as fruit juice with pulp that produce excrement should be avoided. Rinpoche also advises that it is best to be strict and, if possible, to avoid adding milk to drinks, such as tea and coffee, or at the very least to add only a little. Rinpoche says that it is fine to take honey, sugar, and candies that melt in the mouth even after noon.

# Rítual for Taking the Eight Mahāyāna Precepts

## Preliminary Prayers

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- ❖ Either stand or sit while reciting *Taking Refuge in the Gurus* through *Extensive Power of Truth*.
- 

### *Taking Refuge in the Gurus*

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- ❖ In a group practice, read the verse once or twice in English and then chant it in Tibetan.
- 

LA MA SANG GYÄ LA MA CHHÖ<sup>1</sup>  
DE ZHIN LA MA GEN DÜN TE  
KÜN GYI JE PO LA MA YIN  
LA MA NAM LA KYAB SU CHHI (3x)

**The Guru is Buddha. The Guru is Dharma.**

**The Guru is also Saṅgha.**

**The Guru is the creator of all [happiness].<sup>2</sup>**

**In all the gurus, I take refuge. (3x)**

## Taking Refuge and Generating Bodhicitta

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❖ In a group practice, read these two verses once or twice in English and then chant them in Tibetan.

---

DRO NAM DRÄL DÖ SAM PA YI  
 SANG GYÄ CHHÖ DANG GEN DÜN LA  
 JANG CHHUB NYING POR CHHI KYI BAR  
 TAG PAR DAG NI KYAB SU CHHI

**With the thought desiring to liberate transmigratory beings,  
 I always take refuge  
 In the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha  
 Until the heart of enlightenment is achieved.**

SHE RAB NYING TSE DANG CHÄ PÄ  
 TSÖN PÄ SEM CHÄN DÖN DU DAG  
 SANG GYÄ DÜN DU NÄ GYI TE  
 DZOG PÄI JANG CHHUB SEM KYE DO (3x)

**With perseverance, acting with  
 Wisdom, compassion, and loving kindness,  
 In front of the buddhas, for the benefit of sentient beings,  
 I generate the thought of full enlightenment. (3x)**

## Purifying the Place

THAM CHÄ DU NI SA ZHI DAG  
 SEG MA LA SOG ME PA DANG  
 LAG THIL TAR NYAM BÄI DUR YÄI  
 RANG ZHIN JAM POR NÄ GYUR CHIG

**Everywhere may the ground be pure,  
 Free of pebbles and so forth,  
 As level as the palm of the hand,  
 In the nature of *vaiḍūrya* and soft.**



## Invocation<sup>3</sup>

---

While reciting this verse, hold burning incense between your folded hands.

---

MA LÜ SEM CHÄN KÜN GYI GÖN GYUR CHING

DÜ DE PUNG CHÄ MI ZÄ JOM DZÄ LHA

NGÖ NAM MA LÜ YANG DAG KHYEN GYUR PÄI

CHOM DÄN KHOR CHÄ NÄ DIR SHEG SU SÖL

**Savior of all sentient beings without exception,  
Divine destroyer of the unbearable hordes of *māras* and  
their forces,  
Perfect knower of all things without exception,  
Bhagavān, together with your retinue, please come here.**

## Blessing, Multiplying, and Presenting the Offerings

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❖ Think of all the offerings in your home, in your Dharma center, in Lama Zopa Rinpoche's houses, and in the FPMT centers; all owned and unowned offerings, such as the sun and the moon; and your own and others' body, speech, and mind, enjoyments, and three times' merits.

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### Offering Prayer

LHA DANG MI YI CHHÖ PÄI DZÄ

NGÖ SU SHAM DANG YI KYI TRÜL

KÜN ZANG CHHÖ TRIN LA NA ME

NAM KHÄI KHAM KÜN KHYAB GYUR CHIG

**May divine and human offerings,  
Both actually arranged and mentally emanated,  
Become clouds of the finest Samantabhadra offerings,  
Filling the entire realm of space.**

## Offering Cloud Mantra

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By reciting this mantra, the offerings are blessed, multiplied to become numberless, and offered.

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OM NAMO BHAGAVATE VAJRA SĀRA PRAMARDANE /  
 TATHĀGATĀYA / ARHATE SAMYAK SAṂBUDDHĀYA /  
 TADYATHĀ / OM VAJRE VAJRE / MAHĀ VAJRE / MAHĀ TEJA  
 VAJRE / MAHĀ VIDYĀ VAJRE / MAHĀ BODHICITTA VAJRE /  
 MAHĀ BODHI MAṆḌOPA SAṂKRAMAṆA VAJRE / SARVA  
 KARMĀVARAṆA VIŚODHANA VAJRE SVĀHĀ (3x)

---

Just by remembering this mantra once, you receive eight benefits: (1) You have made offerings to buddhas equaling the number of atoms of the sand grains of River Gaṅgā who are abiding in the ten directions. (2) You have prostrated at the holy feet of all those buddhas. (3) You have made offerings of flowers, incense, flower garlands, ornaments, ointments, Dharma robes, umbrellas, banners, flags, animals, cushion covers, divine dress, food, various ornaments, and so forth to all those buddhas. (4) You will become free from all negative karmas and obscurations. (5) You will have all virtue. (6) You will see all the buddhas and bodhisattvas and they will “give you breath,” meaning they will free you from the suffering of the lower realms and so forth. (7) Devas, nāga, yakṣas, smell-eaters, asuras, *garūḍas*, *kinnaras*, *mahārogas*, Vajrapāṇi (Owner of Secrets), and the Four Guardians will always follow, guard, protect, and hide you from obstacles. (8) You will be reborn in Amitābha Buddha’s pure land, Blissful Realm.

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## Extensive Power of Truth

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With this verse, the offerings that you have visualized as numberless actually appear to the buddhas and bodhisattvas and are received.

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KÖN CHHOG SUM GYI DEN PA DANG / SANG GYÄ DANG JANG CHHUB  
SEM PA THAM CHÄ KYI JIN GYI LAB DANG / TSHOG NYI YONG SU DZOG  
PÄI NGA THANG CHHEN PO DANG / CHHÖ KYI YING NAM PAR DAG  
CHING / SAM GYI MI KHYAB PÄI TOB KYI

**By the power of truth of the Three Rare Sublime Ones,  
The blessings of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas,  
The great wealth of the completed two types of merits,  
And the pure and inconceivable sphere of phenomena,**

CHHOG CHU NA ZHUG PÄI SANG GYÄ DANG / JANG CHHUB SEM PA  
THAM CHÄ KYI CHÄN NGAR / PHAG PA JAM PÄL DANG KUN TU ZANG  
PO LA SOG PÄI / NAM PAR CHHÖ PÄI TRIN GYI PHUNG PO SAM GYI  
MI KHYAB PA ZÄ MI SHE PA / NAM KHA DANG NYAM PAR JUNG WAR  
GYUR CHIG (3x)

**May these piles of clouds of offerings arising through transfor-  
mation by the bodhisattvas Ārya Samantabhadra, Mañjuśrī,  
and so forth—unimaginable and inexhaustible, equaling the  
sky—arise and, in the presence of the buddhas and bodhisat-  
tvas of the ten directions, be received. (3x)**

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If the previous prayers were done while standing, you can sit  
down now.

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### *Seven-Limb Prayer*

GO SUM GÜ PÄI GO NÄ CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
NGÖ SHAM YI TRÜL CHHÖ TRIN MA LÜ BÜL  
THOG ME NÄ SAG DIG TUNG THAM CHÄ SHAG  
KYE PHAG GE WA NAM LA JE YI RANG

**I prostrate reverently with my body, speech, and mind.  
I present clouds of every type of offering, both actually  
arranged and mentally emanated.  
I confess all my negative actions and downfalls collected  
from beginningless time.  
I rejoice in the virtues of ordinary beings and āryas.**

KHOR WA MA TONG BAR DU LEG ZHUG NÄ  
 DRO LA CHHÖ KYI KHOR LO KOR WA DANG  
 DAG ZHÄN GE NAM JANG CHHUB CHHEN POR NGO

**Please remain until the end of cyclic existence  
 And turn the wheel of Dharma for transmigratory beings.  
 I dedicate my own and others' virtues to great enlightenment.**

## *Maṇḍala Offering*

### *Short Maṇḍala Offering*

SA ZHI PÖ KYI JUG SHING ME TOG TRAM  
 RI RAB LING ZHI NYI DÄ GYÄN PA DI  
 SANG GYÄ ZHING DU MIG TE ÜL WA YI  
 DRO KÜN NAM DAG ZHING LA CHÖ PAR SHOG

**This ground, anointed with perfume, strewn with flowers,  
 Adorned with Mount Meru, the four continents, the sun, and  
 the moon,  
 I imagine as a buddha land and offer it.  
 May all transmigratory beings enjoy this pure land.**

### *Offering the Objects of the Three Poisonous Minds*

DAG GI CHHAG DANG MONG SUM KYE WÄI YÜL  
 DRA NYEN BAR SUM LÜ DANG LONG CHÖ CHÄ  
 PHANG PA ME PAR BÜL GYI LEG ZHE NÄ  
 DUG SUM RANG SAR DRÖL WAR JIN GYI LOB

**The objects of my attachment, anger, and ignorance—  
 Friends, enemies, strangers, body, and enjoyments—  
 Without any sense of loss I offer them. Please kindly accept  
 them,  
 And bless me to pacify the three poisons in dependence on  
 their own objects.<sup>4</sup>**

IDAṂ GURU RATNA MAṆḌALAKAṂ NIRYĀTAYĀMI

# Actual Rítual

## Inspiration

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- ❖ Stand up and do three prostrations without reciting any particular mantras.
  - ❖ Kneel on your right knee with your hands together in the mudrā of prostration. Recite these verses of the Buddha's words from *Sūtra of the King of Concentration* a few times as inspiration for taking the eight Mahāyāna precepts.
- 

Though you offer service with a calm mind to  
One hundred billion times ten million buddhas,  
With food and drink, umbrellas, flags, and garlands of light offerings,  
For ten million eons equaling the number of sand grains in  
the Pacific Ocean,

The merit of someone enjoying living in one vow for one day  
and night,  
When the holy Dharma is degenerating  
And the teachings of the One Gone to Bliss are ceasing,  
Is particularly more exalted than that.

---

Generate a profound bodhicitta motivation for taking the precepts and then repeat *Prayer for Taking the Precepts* three times.

---

## Prayer for Taking the Precepts

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❖ In general, visualize Guru Śākyamuni Buddha. However, when doing the practice of a particular deity, for example, Chenrezig in the context of a nyung ne, visualize that deity.

Recite “LOB PÖN GONG SU SÖL” or “Master, please pay attention to me” only when you are actually taking the lineage of the precepts from a precept master.

---

CHHOG CHU NA ZHUG PÄI SANG GYÄ DANG / JANG CHHUB SEM PA  
THAM CHÄ DAG LA GONG SU SÖL

**All buddhas and bodhisattvas dwelling in the ten directions,  
please pay attention to me.**

(LOB PÖN DAG LA GONG SU SÖL)

**(Master, please pay attention to me.)**

JI TAR NGÖN GYI DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR  
DZOG PÄI SANG GYÄ / TA CHANG SHE TA BU / LANG PO CHHEN PO / JA  
WA JÄ SHING / JE PA JÄ PA

**Just as the previous tathāgata, arhat, perfectly complete bud-  
dhas who, like the divine wise horse and the great elephant,  
did what had to be done, performed actions,**

KHUR BOR WA / RANG GI DÖN JE SU THOB PA / SI PAR KÜN TU JOR WA  
YONG SU ZÄ PA / YANG DAG PÄI KA / LEG PAR NAM PAR DRÖL WÄI  
THUG / LEG PAR NAM PAR DRÖL WÄI SHE RAB CHÄN

**Laid down the burden, subsequently attained their own  
welfare, completely exhausted the fetters to existence, and  
had perfect speech, well-liberated minds, and well-liberated  
wisdom,**

DE DAG GI / SEM CHÄN THAM CHÄ KYI DÖN GYI CHHIR DANG / PHÄN  
PAR JA WÄI CHHIR DANG / DRÖL WAR JA WÄI CHHIR DANG / MU GE ME  
PAR JA WÄI CHHIR DANG / NÄ ME PAR JA WÄI CHHIR DANG

**For the welfare of all sentient beings, in order to benefit, in order to liberate, in order to eliminate famine, [in order to eliminate war, in order to stop the harm of the four elements,]<sup>5</sup> in order to eliminate sickness,**

JANG CHHUB KYI CHHOG KYI CHHÖ NAM YONG SU DZOG PAR JA WÄI CHHIR DANG / LA NA ME PA YANG DAG PAR DZOG PÄI JANG CHHUB NGE PAR TOG PAR JA WÄI CHHIR / SO JONG YANG DAG PAR DZÄ PA

**In order to fully complete the thirty-seven practices harmonious with enlightenment, and in order to definitely actualize the unsurpassed result of perfect, complete enlightenment, perfectly performed the restoring and purifying ordination;**

DE ZHIN DU DAG [say your name] ZHE GYI WÄ KYANG / DÜ DI NÄ ZUNG TE / JI SI SANG NYI MA MA SHAR GYI BAR DU / SEM CHÄN THAM CHÄ KYI DÖN GYI CHHIR DANG / PHÄN PAR JA WÄI CHHIR DANG / DRÖL WAR JA WÄI CHHIR DANG / MU GE ME PAR JA WÄI CHHIR DANG / NÄ ME PAR JA WÄI CHHIR DANG

**Similarly, also I, who am called [say your name], from this time until sunrise tomorrow, for the welfare of all sentient beings, in order to benefit, in order to liberate, in order to eliminate famine, [in order to eliminate war, in order to stop the harm of the four elements,] in order to eliminate sickness,**

JANG CHHUB KYI CHHOG KYI CHHÖ NAM YONG SU DZOG PAR JA WÄI CHHIR DANG / LA NA ME PA YANG DAG PAR DZOG PÄI JANG CHHUB NGE PAR TOG PAR JA WÄI CHHIR / SO JONG YANG DAG PAR LANG WAR GYI O (3x)

**In order to fully complete the thirty-seven practices harmonious with enlightenment, and in order to definitely actualize the unsurpassed result of perfect, complete enlightenment, will perfectly undertake the restoring and purifying ordination.**

(3x)

*Upon completing the third recitation, think that you have received the vows in your continuum and rejoice.*

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If you are taking the precepts from a precept master, the master will say “TAB YIN NO” (“This is the method”), after which you should say “LEG SO” (“Excellent”).

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*Then, having recollected the bodhicitta motivation, think: “Just as the arhats of the past abandoned all misconduct of body and speech, such as killing and so forth, and mentally turned away from it, I too, for the sake of all beings, will abandon for one day these wrong actions and devote myself to the pure practice of the precepts.”*

---

While still kneeling, recite:

---

### **Commitment Prayer to Keep the Precepts**

DENG NÄ SOG CHÖ MI JA ZHING  
 ZHÄN GYI NOR YANG LANG MI JA  
 THRIG PÄI CHHÖ KYANG MI CHÖ CHING  
 DZÜN GYI TSHIG KYANG MI MA O  
 KYÖN NI MANG PO NYER TEN PÄI  
 CHHANG NI YONG SU PANG WAR JA

**From now on I will not kill.**

**I will not steal others’ possessions.**

**I will not engage in sexual activity.**

**I will not tell lies.**

**I will avoid intoxicants**

**From which many mistakes arise.**

THRI TÄN CHHE THO MI JA ZHING  
 DE ZHIN DÜ MA YIN PÄI ZÄ  
 DRI DANG THRENG WA GYÄN DANG NI  
 GAR DANG LU SOG PANG WAR JA

**I will not sit on large and high seats and beds.**

**I will not eat food at the wrong times.**

**I will avoid perfumes, garlands, and ornaments**

**As well as dancing, singing, and so forth.**



JI TAR DRA CHOM TAG TU NI  
 SOG CHÖ LA SOG MI JE TAR  
 DE ZHIN SOG CHÖ LA SOG PANG  
 LA ME JANG CHHUB NYUR THOB SHOG  
 DUG NGÄL MANG THRUG JIG TEN DI  
 SI PÄI TSHO LÄ DRÖL WAR SHOG

**Just as arhats**

**Never kill and so forth,**

**So too will I abandon killing and so forth.**

**May I quickly attain supreme enlightenment.**

**May I free this world, disturbed by much suffering,**

**From the ocean of existence.**

Sit down to do the following mantra and prayer.

### *Mantra of Pure Morality*

OM AMOGHA ŚĪLA / SAṀBHARA SAṀBHARA / BHARA BHARA /  
 MAHĀ ŚUDDHA SATVA PADMA VIBHŪṢITA BHUJA DHARA  
 DHARA / SAMANTA / AVALOKITE / HŪṀ PHAṬ SVĀHĀ (21x)

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

### *Prayer to Keep Pure Morality*

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

**By abiding in faultless morality of the Dharma rules,**

**Completely pure morality,**

**And morality free from conceit,**

**May I complete the perfection of morality.**

---

❖ Think or recite: “This is my contribution to the peace and happiness of all sentient beings and, in particular, to the peace and happiness of all the sentient beings of this world.”

---

*Adorn the end with dedication prayers.*

### ***Dedication to Seal the Merits with Emptiness***

Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me and all the merits of the three times collected by the numberless buddhas and numberless sentient beings, which are completely empty of existing from their own side, may I, who am completely empty of existing from my own side, achieve buddhahood, which is completely empty of existing from its own side, and lead all sentient beings, who are completely empty of existing from their own side, to that buddhahood, which is completely empty of existing from its own side, by myself alone, who am completely empty of existing from my own side.

### ***Dedication Verses from Śāntideva’s Bodhicaryāvatāra***

---

His Holiness the Dalai Lama states that reading about the eight Mahāyāna precepts, taking them, or even rejoicing when others take them creates great merit. In order for this merit to be of greatest benefit to yourself and others, dedicate it by following the example of the conquerors’ son Śāntideva in *Bodhicaryāvatāra*:

---

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

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.

As long as space remains,  
 As long as transmigratory beings remain,  
 Until then may I too remain  
 To dispel the suffering of transmigratory beings.

---

❖ Do three prostrations to conclude the ritual for taking the eight Mahāyāna precepts.

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## *The Benefits of Protecting the Eight Mahāyāna Precepts*

*The benefits of abandoning killing:* In this life and in all future lives, your life will be long, magnificent, and free from illness.

*The benefits of abandoning stealing:* In this life and in all future lives, you will have perfect enjoyments (wealth) and others will not harm them.

*The benefits of abandoning sexual activity:* In this life and in all future lives, you will have a good body with a beautiful complexion and complete sense organs.

*The benefits of abandoning telling lies:* In this life and in all future lives, you will not be cheated and others will listen to what you say.

*The benefits of abandoning intoxicants (including alcohol, cigarettes, and mind-altering drugs that loosen voluntary reserve):* In this life and in all future lives, you will have stable mindfulness and awareness, clear senses, and perfect wisdom.

*The benefits of abandoning large and high seats and beds:* In this life and in all future lives, you will receive praise and respect from others, and will have proper bedding (soft, warm, whatever is needed) and vehicles and animals for traveling.

*The benefits of abandoning food at improper times:* In this life and in all future lives, you will have abundant and perfect crops and will obtain food and drink without effort.

*The benefits of abandoning perfume, ornaments, and so forth:* In this life and in all future lives, your body will have a pleasant smell, color, and shape, and many auspicious marks.

*The benefits of abandoning singing and dancing:* In this life and in all future lives, you will have a subdued body and mind, and your speech will continually make the sound of Dharma.

## *What to Do If You Degenerate the Precepts*

If, having committed yourself to observing these precepts, you conduct yourself carelessly, you will accumulate not only the shortcomings of not observing them but also those of telling lies. Therefore, you must protect these precepts with mindfulness and awareness. If, through carelessness, you degenerate any of the precepts, you should recite the Mantra of Pure Morality (page 17) three times to purify and restore it.

### *Colophons*

*Ritual for Taking the Eight Mahāyāna Precepts (theg chen gso sbyong gi sdom pa len pa'i chog ga)*: Compiled on the basis of preliminary prayers extracted from *Kopan Monastery Prayers and Practices*, 1990, and *The Direct and Unmistaken Method: The Practice and Benefits of the Eight Mahayana Precepts*, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche (Wisdom Publications). The English versions of the prayers were lightly edited using the translations in *The Direct and Unmistaken Method* and those of Ven. George Churinoff; further editing by Ven. Thubten Dondrub and Jampa Lamsang for the Nalanda Prayer Book; further editing by Ven. Constance Miller, FPMT Education Services, February 2001. Revised in 2003, 2004. New lines for *Generating Bodhicitta* as per instructions from Lama Zopa Rinpoche, April 2006; translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche and scribed by Kendall Magnussen. Lightly edited by Ven. Joan Nicell, FPMT Translation Services, 2016. *Prayer to Take the Precepts* and *Commitment Prayer to Keep the Precepts* changed according to the advice of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Lamp of the Path Retreat, September, 2009. New translation of the *Commitment Prayer* by Geshe Gelek Chodak, Kadampa Center, USA, 2009; revised based on the Tibetan by Ven. Joan Nicell, May 2016. Instructions revised by Vens. Steve Carlier and Joan Nicell, 2016. Some parts of the translation reviewed and edited by Ven. Joan Nicell and Joona Repo, FPMT Translation Services, 2016.

*The Benefits of Protecting the Eight Mahāyāna Precepts*: Extracted from *The Direct and Unmistaken Method*, Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive ([www.lamayeshe.com](http://www.lamayeshe.com)). Reprinted here with permission.

Sanskrit terms transliterated by FPMT Education Services, December 2020.

# Appendix

## A Guide to Pronouncing Sanskrit

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

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

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

# Notes

- 1 This verse is found in *Samvarodaya Tantra*.
- 2 Lama Zopa Rinpoche also translates this line as: “The Guru is the doer of all Buddhas, Dharma, and Saṅgha.”
- 3 By reciting the *Offering Cloud Mantra*, the buddhas and bodhisattvas actually receive the offerings. Lama Zopa Rinpoche, therefore, moved the verse of invocation to before *Blessing, Multiplying, and Presenting the Offerings*, so that the buddhas and bodhisattvas would actually be present to receive the offerings.
- 4 This last line was translated according to an explanation given by Geshe Ngawang Dakpa.
- 5 The phrases “in order to eliminate war” and “in order to stop the harm of the four elements” were added by Lama Zopa Rinpoche.



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