

**A LITURGY FOR MAKING
THE DAILY SHRINE OFFERINGS
TOGETHER WITH
SAMANTABHADRA'S
SEVEN-FOLD PRACTICE**

**COMPOSED BY TONY DUFF
PADMA KARPO TRANSLATION COMMITTEE**

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INTRODUCTION

Many followers of Great Vehicle Buddhism, for example followers of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, perform the ritual of making offerings to the shrine each day. It can be hard for those with busy lives to stay focussed on the offerings whilst making them. Moreover, those who have not had a chance to study extensively usually stumble a little, feeling that they need more substance with the offering than just filling bowls of water. One way to solve such problems is to put the practice of making the offerings into a liturgy.

There is a practice called “the seven-fold practice” that is short and easy to do but potent. It was first taught by Samantabhadra, the greatest of Shakyamuni Buddha’s bodhisatva disciples. He taught it as the opening to a prayer for developing the excellent conduct of a bodhisatva, so it is also called “the seven-fold practice of Samantabhadra”. As the name suggests, the seven-fold practice is a set of seven different practices drawn together into one practice that has long been regarded as something that a Great Vehicle practitioner should do each day, for it encapsulates seven very important practices of the Great Vehicle path.

Of the seven practices, the second is offering. It works out very well to make a liturgy out of the seven-fold practice and

then to replace the offering section with the daily shrine offering. The liturgy for the seven-fold practice is very short and does not make the daily shrine offerings into a time-consuming affair, something that is important for people with busy lives. However, it does add structure to the practice of making the shrine offering, structure that makes it easier to stay focussed when making the shrine offering and which makes the practice much more meaningful and potent than simply making the offerings. Therefore, I wrote a short but complete liturgy for incorporating the daily shrine offerings into the seven-fold practice with the thought that it would be very helpful to those wanting a nice but quick way to make the daily shrine offerings.

The verses for the liturgy are based on the verses of the seven-fold practice in Samantabhadra's Prayer, but are not a copy of them. The original verses were in Sanskrit and then later on in Tibetan, and when literally translated into English are not always easy to recite. Therefore, I have written the verses out in a way that is easier to recite in English but without losing any of the meaning of the original verses.

If you would like to see the whole of Samantabhadra's prayer, including the actual verses of the seven-fold liturgy, have a look at our two-volume exposition of Samantabhadra's prayer. It includes everything you need to know about the whole prayer including the seven-fold liturgy. It also gives clear explanations of the different types of offering and volume II has an especially long and detailed explanation of all the types of offering used in Buddhist practice. You can get the details of the books from our web-site, the address of which is on the publishing data page opposite the contents page. The two-volume set will be available from September 2015.

Note that this e-book has a binding offset built in so that you can easily print and bind it if desired.

Lama Tony Duff,
Swayambunath,
Nepal,
July 2015

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First, clean your room and assemble the materials for making the offering. Next, if you wish, make three prostrations before the shrine. Then hold your hands at your heart with your palms joined whilst saying the following verses.

Say this to take refuge and arouse the enlightenment mind:

I take refuge in the Three Jewels
And arouse the enlightenment mind.
To benefit beings I will do the shrine offerings
Together with the seven limbed practice.

Say this to make a general prostration with all three doors:

There are all the lions of men gone to buddhahood
As many as are in the worlds in every direction;
I prostrate to all of them without exception,
With admiring body, speech, and mind.

Say this to make a prostration with body:

The forces of prayers for excellent conduct that I've made
 in the past
 Allow me to see with mind all those conquerors actually
 before me;
 Manifesting bodies as many as the atoms in the worlds,
 I prostrate in the greatest way to all those conquerors.

Say this to make a prostration with mind:

I imagine that on a single atom buddhas as many as
 Atoms are seated at the centre of buddha sons and
 In that way that all the realms of phenomena
 In their entirety are filled with conquerors.

Say this to make a prostration with speech:

Those oceans of conquerors whose unending good
 qualities
 Are worthy of commendation have their good qualities
 Expressed with all the intonations of the buddha voice
 And I too praise all the ones gone well to ease.

Now, make the offerings to the shrine while keeping all of those buddhas and their bodhisatva sons in mind. As you make each offering, say "I offer such and such to you".

The usual eight offerings derived from Indian culture are: liquid for drinking; foot water for washing the feet; flowers, incense or other aromatics to sweeten the air; light; lotions for the body; foods; and sound. The usual seven offerings are the eight without the foot water. These come from the Indian way of making offerings to guests. You can use your common sense to understand the appropriate thing for another culture. For example, Westerners would not offer foot water but might offer a towel and bathroom so that the guest can wash and freshen up. Incense

was one of several means used to freshen the air in ancient Indian houses; in a Western house, the equivalent would be a pleasant-smelling air freshener or something of that nature.

Some people will also make offerings to one or more protectors. That should be done here, while asking aloud for their assistance, and so on.

When you have made the offerings, return to the front of the shrine and, with your palms again joined at your heart, do the remaining five of the seven practices.

Say this to lay aside, meaning divorcing yourself from, the karmically bad deeds you have done in the past:

I lay aside the evils I have done, whether
Under the influence of desire, anger, and delusion,
Whether through body, speech, and likewise mind,
Laying all of them aside, each one individually.

Say this to rejoicing in all merits:

I rejoice in all the merits whoever has them,
Those of all the conquerors of the ten directions and
The buddha sons, of the pratyekabuddhas, of those
In training and not in training, and of all migrators.

Say this to urge those who have become truly complete buddhas by their attainment of the highest type of enlightenment, enlightenment in which there is not the slightest samsaric defilement, to turn the dharma wheel at all levels, including the highest:

The lamps of the worlds of the ten directions are those
who
Have become buddhas at the enlightenment stage and
gained the undefiled state;

I urge all of those guardian buddhas
To turn the unsurpassed wheel of dharma.

Supplicating those lamps of the world not to pass into the final nirvana but to remain and work unceasingly to bring both temporal benefit and the ultimate ease of enlightenment to the beings of the samsaric world:

I also will supplicate with palms joined together those
Who have asserted they will show passage into nirvana
To stay for aeons as many as the atoms in the worlds
In order to bring benefit and ease to all migrators.

Finish with the dedication of the various trifles of merit accumulated through the foregoing seven branch practice which included making the daily offerings:

I dedicate every trifle of virtue that
I have accumulated in prostrating, offering,
Laying aside, rejoicing, urging, and supplicating
For the purpose of enlightenment.

If you would like to accumulate more merit or if you would like to create the cause for being able to do such a practice every day without fail, simply stop there in front of the shrine and take a minute to reflect on the value of what you have just done and then truly take deep joy in that. Rejoicing in that way creates the conditions for the expansion of merit that has been gathered and also creates a swell of energy for wanting to do such a practice again.

Composed by the Western Buddhist teacher and translator, Tony Duff, July 2015. May the value of this translate into truly complete enlightenment for every being.



Tony Duff has spent a lifetime pursuing the Buddha's teaching and transmitting it to others. In the early 1970's, during his post-graduate studies in molecular biology, he went to Asia and met the Buddhist teachings of various South-east Asian countries. He met Tibetan Buddhism in Nepal and has followed it since. After his trip he abandoned worldly life and was the first monk ordained in his home country of Australia. Together with several others, he founded the monastery called Chenrezig Institute for Wisdom Culture where he studied and practised the Gelugpa teachings for several years under the guidance of Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa, Geshe Lodan, and Zasep Tulku. After that, he offered back his ordination and left for the USA to study the Kagyu teachings with the incomparable Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. Tony was very active in the community and went through all possible levels of training that were available during his twelve year stay. He was also a core member of the Nalanda Translation Committee. After Chogyam Trungpa died, Tony went to live in Nepal where he worked as the personal translator for Tsoknyi Rinpoche and also translated for several other well-known teachers. He also founded and directed the largest Tibetan text preservation project in Asia, the Drukpa Kagyu Heritage Project, which he oversaw for eight years. He also established the Padma Karpo Translation Committee which has produced many fine translations and made many resources for translators such as the highly acclaimed *Illuminator Tibetan-English Dictionary*. After the year 2000, Tony focussed primarily on obtaining Dzogchen teachings from the best teachers available, especially within Tibet, and translating and teaching them. He has received much approval from many teachers and has been given the titles "lotsawa" and "lama" and been strongly encouraged by them to teach Westerners. One way he does that is by producing these fine translations.

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