A BUDDHIST BREVIARY



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# Introduction

As John Daido Loori Roshi said in his “Bringing the Sacred to Life”, humans are liturgical beings. Whether it’s religious services, sporting events or even just a family dinner, we surround ourselves with ritual. Buddhist practice is the same, whether you view Buddhism in general - and Pragmatic Buddhism in particular - as a religion or a philosophy for life. Ritual - when conducted with proper intent and attention - enhances our practice and leads to a more mindful approach to life.

The gatha and dharani at the back of this book can be thought of as Buddhist prayers and hymns, with the understanding that they are not directed toward a deity, but rather toward our own intentions. They are the verbal statements of our intentions for healing, for protection, of thanks, etc.

A motto of the Order of Pragmatic Buddhists (OPB) is “Life is Our Monastery” and as such, these rituals are designed to be performed in a home setting. I have also included the Formal Practice as done in our Centers, for those who may be attending a Center for Pragmatic Buddhism.

I hope that you will find these expressions of Buddhist thought appealing and that they will be beneficial to your practice. There is no right or wrong way to use them, but only ways that are beneficial to decreasing your dissatisfaction, and increasing your flourishing, and those which are detrimental to this great goal of Buddhism. May your use of them only increase your peace, happiness and compassion.

Glenn Ge Jie Gustafson, OPB

2561 BE / 2017 CE

# Morning Recitation

*Face the altar and bow, then light the incense and offer it as you say:*

I offer incense in honor of the Buddha,

I offer incense in honor of the Dharma,

I offer incense in honor of the Sangha,

**Gatha for the Sutras**

The incomparable and profoundly exquisite Dharma;

It is rare that it can be met with, even in millions of ages.

We are now permitted to see it. We are now permitted to hear it. We are now permitted to accept it. We are now permitted to hold it.

May we truly understand the meaning of these words of the Tathagata.

**Reading:**

Select a reading from the Shorter Readings, Atthakavagga or Gathas. The Heart Sutra (p 29) should be selected for either Morning or Evening Service but does not have to be included in both.

**Recitations**

**The Bodhisattva Vow**

Creations are numberless. I will strive to free them.

Delusions are inexhaustible. I will strive to transform them.

Reality is boundless. I will strive to perceive it.

The awakened way is unsurpassable. I will strive to embody it.

**The Refuges:**

I take refuge in the Buddha, the consummating personal element, our inborn contentment.

I take refuge in the Sangha, the consummating social element, our family and friends who support us.

I take refuge in the Dharma, the consummating methods and teaching, our dedication to life-long learning.

**The Precepts (laity):**

1. I undertake the training of loving-kindness.

2. I undertake the training of generosity.

3. I undertake the training of moderation and contentment.

4. I undertake the training of positive speech.

5. I undertake the training of life-affirming action.

**The Precepts (monks):**

1. I undertake the training of loving-kindness; in all possible circumstances, I will abstain from hurting sentient beings.

2. I undertake the training of generosity; I will abstain from taking that which is not needed for our survival.

3. I undertake the training of moderation and contentment; I will abstain from sexual misconduct and the abuse of sensory pleasures.

4. I undertake the training of verbal empowerment; I will abstain from useless speech.

5. I undertake the training of kind speech; I will abstain from harsh speech.

6. I undertake the training of meaningful speech; I will abstain from frivolous speech.

7. I undertake the training of harmonious speech; I will abstain from slanderous speech.

8. I undertake the training of tranquility and patience; I will abstain from cultivating greed, envy and contempt.

9. I undertake the training of altruism and equanimity; I will abstain from cultivating hatred, prejudice and fear.

10. I undertake the training of wisdom and knowledge of our world; I embrace lifelong learning and the cultivation of selflessness.

**Gatha for Work:**

May I undertake my work today and every day in the spirit of Appropriate Livelihood. May I avoid doing harm. May I do good. May I do good for others. May I be mindful of the interconnection of all beings and things. May I be mindful of the interdependence of all beings and things.

**Pragmatic Buddhist Affirmation** (p.26)

**Dedication of Merit:**

May my thoughts, words, and actions be corrective and encompassing of the Pragmatic Buddhist path. May I approach this day with deference and dignity, and may I spread peace to all those I encounter.

May all sentient beings have happiness and its causes.

May all sentient beings be free of suffering and its causes.

May all sentient beings not be separated from sorrowless bliss.

May all sentient beings abide in equanimity, free of bias, attachment, and anger.

# Daily Individual Practice

*Face the altar and bow, then light the incense and offer it as you say:*

I offer incense in honor of the Buddha,

I offer incense in honor of the Dharma,

I offer incense in honor of the Sangha,

**Formal Meditation Practice**

The formal meditation session consists of a period of sitting meditation using one or more of the primary techniques of the OPB. The session will begin and end with one strike of the bell.

**Proclamation of Renewal**

“In this moment, I am renewed; may I realize my unity with the Universe, and be at peace.”

**Dedication of Merit**

“May the fruit acquired by my practice extend to all living beings.”

**The Bodhisattva Vow**

Creations are numberless. I will strive to free them.

Delusions are inexhaustible. I will strive to transform them.

Reality is boundless. I will strive to perceive it.

The awakened way is unsurpassable. I will strive to embody it.

**Proclamation**

“May my thoughts, words, and actions be corrective and encompassing of the Pragmatic Buddhist path. May I approach this week with deference and dignity, and may I spread my personal peace to all those I encounter.

May all sentient beings have happiness and its causes.

May all sentient beings be free of suffering and its causes.

May all sentient beings not be separated from sorrowless bliss.

May all sentient beings abide in equanimity, free of bias, attachment, and anger.”

**

# Evening Recitation

*Face the altar and bow, then light the incense and offer it as you say:*

I offer incense in honor of the Buddha,

I offer incense in honor of the Dharma,

I offer incense in honor of the Sangha,

**Gatha for the Sutras**

The incomparable and profoundly exquisite Dharma;

It is rare that it can be met with, even in millions of ages.

We are now permitted to see it. We are now permitted to hear it. We are now permitted to accept it. We are now permitted to hold it.

May we truly understand the meaning of these words of the Tathagata.

**Reading:**

Select a reading from the Shorter Readings, Atthakavagga or Gathas. The Heart Sutra (p 29) should be selected for either Morning or Evening Service but does not have to be included in both.

**Recitations**

**Confession**

All evil karma done by me since of old, on account of my beginingless greed, anger and ignorance; born of my body, mouth and thought; I now atone for them all.

**The Refuges:**

I take refuge in the Buddha, the consummating personal element, our inborn contentment.

I take refuge in the Sangha, the consummating social element, our family and friends who support us.

I take refuge in the Dharma, the consummating methods and teaching, our dedication to life-long learning.

**Gatha for Healing:**

We live in the Universe connected to all beings.

There are those who are in need of physical healing;

May they receive the care and medicines they need.

There are those who are in need of mental and emotional healing;

May they receive the care and medicines they need.

We are aware that our interconnection can extend through space and time

And we send our desire for healing to all those in need.

Like the Bodhisattva of Compassion we hear and respond to those in need.

**Pragmatic Buddhist Affirmation** (p.26)

**Four Immeasurables:**

May all sentient beings have happiness and its causes.

May all sentient beings be free of suffering and its causes.

May all sentient beings not be separated from sorrowless bliss.

May all sentient beings abide in equanimity, free of bias, attachment, and anger.

# Formal Practice

*The formal meditation session consists of sitting and/or walking meditation using one or more of the primary techniques of the OPB. The session will begin and end with one strike of the bell. Walking – if it occurs - will be designated by the wooden block.*

**Bell Gatha -** *Thich Nhat Hanh*

Body, Space and Mind in perfect harmony,

I send my heart along with the sound of this bell.

May all who listen to it be called to mindfulness,

And transcend anxiety and sorrow.

**Proclamation of Renewal**

**Leader:** “May the fruit acquired by our practice extend to all living beings.”

**All**: “Svaha!”

**Gatha for Intentions**

**Leader**: We live in the Universe connected to all beings.

There are those who are in need of physical healing;

May they receive care and medicines for their healing.

There are those who are in need of mental and emotional healing;

May they receive care and medicines for their healing.

Among this community we have the following intentions:

**Members**: *{Speak your Intention here}*

**Leader**: May we hold these thoughts in our minds throughout the coming week.

We are aware that our interconnection can extend through space and time and we send our desire for protection to all.

Like the Bodhisattva of Compassion we hear and respond to those in need.

**Gatha** (Optional)

A Gatha may be read here

**Recitation Practice: Heart Sutra and other Readings**

All recite the Heart Sutra then the Leader recites the reading for the day.

**Dedication of Merit**

**Leader**: “In this moment, we are renewed; may we realize our unity with the Universe, and be at peace.”

**All**: “In this moment, we are renewed; we realize our unity with the universe, and are at peace.”

**Leader**: “Svaha!” (In English, this means “may it be so”)

*The Leader rings the gong to signify the end of the formal practice.*

*There may be a short break before the Dharma Talk*

**Dharma Talk and Group Discussion**

*The monk will give a dharma talk followed by open discussion on the topic of the talk.*

**Bodhisattva Vow**

Shu jo mu hen sei gan do

Bo no mu jin sei gan dan

Ho mon my ryo sei gan ga ku

Butsu do mu jo sei gan jo

**English Translation:**

Creations are numberless. I will strive to free them.

Delusions are inexhaustible. I will strive to transform them.

Reality is boundless. I will strive to perceive it.

The awakened way is unsurpassable. I will strive to embody it.

**Group Leader’s Proclamation to the Sangha**

**Leader**: “May your thoughts, words, and actions be corrective and encompassing of the Pragmatic Buddhist path. May you approach this week with deference and dignity, and may you spread your personal peace to all those you encounter.

**ALL**: May all sentient beings have happiness and its causes.

May all sentient beings be free of suffering and its causes.

May all sentient beings not be separated from sorrowless bliss.

May all sentient beings abide in equanimity, free of bias, attachment, and anger.

“Svaha!”

**Social Time**

*Please stay after for tea and snacks and to visit with one another. If you would like to talk to a teacher during this time just ask and they’ll be happy to accommodate.*



# Shorter Readings

**From the Dhammapada**

*translated by Harischandra Kaviratna, Inclusive language by Glenn Ge Jie Gustafson, OPB*

*The Dhammadapada has been called ‘the New Testament of Buddhism’. It covers a multitude of topics with pithy sayings which in the original were highly poetic. Perhaps there’s no better choice for most of us if we wanted to own just one book of the Buddha’s utterances (as they were remembered by the monks).*

**Verses 1-2:** All the phenomena of existence have mind as their precursor, mind as their supreme leader, and of mind are they made. If with an impure mind one speaks or acts, suffering follows them in the same way as the wheel follows the foot of the drawer (of the chariot). All the phenomena of existence have mind as their precursor, mind as their supreme leader, and of mind are they made. If with a pure mind one speaks or acts, happiness follows them like their shadow that never leaves them.

**Verses 3-5:** The hatred of those who harbor such ill feelings as, "They reviled me, assaulted me, vanquished me and robbed me," is never appeased.

4. The hatred of those who do not harbor such ill feelings as, "They reviled me, assaulted me, vanquished me and robbed me," is easily pacified.

5. Through hatred, hatreds are never appeased; through non-hatred are hatreds always appeased — and this is a law eternal.

**Verse 6:** Most people never realize that all of us here shall one day perish. But those who do realize that truth settle their quarrels peacefully.

**Verses 11-12:** Those who take the non-real for the real and the real for the non-real and thus fall victims to erroneous notions, never reach the essence of reality. Having realized the essential as the essential and the nonessential as the nonessential, they by thus following correct thinking attain the essential.

**Verses 19-20:** A heedless person, though they utter much of the Canon, but do not act accordingly, is like unto a cowherd who counts the cattle of others. They are, verily, not a sharer of the fruit of the dhamma. A person, though they recite only a little of the Canon, but act according to the precepts of the Sacred Law, who, having got rid of lust, hatred and delusion, has firmly established themselves in liberated thought, and clinging to no worldly possessions here or hereafter — such a one becomes indeed a sharer of the true fruit of the dhamma.

**Verse 100:** A single word full of meaning, hearing which one becomes at peace, is better than a thousand words which are empty of meaning.

**Verse 168:** Awake! Be not heedless. Follow the truth (dhamma). Those who embark upon the path of truth lives happily in this world and in the hereafter.

**Verse 172:** Those who formerly were heedless, but, after due consideration, become vigilant, illumines the world as the moon freed from a cloud.

**Verse 183:** Abstention from all evil, the doing of good deeds, and the purification of the mind, is the admonition of the Enlightened Ones.

**Shakyamuni Buddha’s last words to his followers (from the Mahaparinirvana Sutta):**

“All compounded things are subject to vanish. Strive on with earnestness!”

**From the Bodhi Sutta**

*Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu*

I have heard that on one occasion, the Blessed One was staying at Uruvelā on the bank of the Nerañjarā River at the root of the Bodhi tree — the tree of awakening — newly awakened. And on that occasion he sat at the root of the Bodhi tree for seven days in one session, sensitive to the bliss of release. Then, with the passing of seven days, after emerging from that concentration, in the third watch of the night, he gave close attention to dependent co-arising in forward and reverse order, thus:

When this is, that is.
From the arising of this comes the arising of that.
When this isn't, that isn't.
From the cessation of this comes the cessation of that.

**From the Therigatha (Verses of the Elder Nuns).** *This collection of verses included in the Khuddaka Nikaya presents the writings of nuns from early Buddhism. The translations here are from www.accesstoinsight.com*

**An Anonymous Bhikkhuni** (v 1)

Sleep, little theri, sleep comfortably,

wrapped in the robe that you've made,

for your passion is stilled —

 like a pot of pickled greens

 boiled dry.

**Punna** (v 3)

Punna, grow full with good qualities

like the moon on the fifteenth day.

With discernment at total fullness, burst

 the mass

 of darkness.

**Mutta** (v 11)

So freed! So thoroughly freed am I! —

from three crooked things set free:

 from mortar, pestle,

 & crooked old husband.

Having uprooted the craving

that leads to becoming,

I'm set free from aging & death.

**Sumangala's Mother** {vv. 23-24}

So freed! So freed!

So thoroughly freed am I —

 from my pestle,

 my shameless husband

 & his sun-shade making,

 my moldy old pot

 with its water-snake smell.

Aversion & passion

I cut with a *chop.*

Having come to the foot of a tree,

I meditate, absorbed in the bliss:

 "What bliss!"

**Uttama** (vv42-44)

Four times, five, I ran amok from my dwelling,

 having gained no peace of awareness,

 my thoughts out of control.

So I went to a trustworthy nun.

She taught me the Dhamma:

 aggregates, sense spheres, & elements.

Hearing the Dhamma,

 I did as she said.

For seven days I sat in one spot,

absorbed in rapture & bliss.

On the eighth, I stretched out my legs,

 having burst the mass

 of darkness.

**Dantika and the Elephant**

Coming out from my day's abiding

on Vulture Peak Mountain,

I saw on the bank of a river

 an elephant

emerged from its plunge.

A man holding a hook requested:

 "Give me your foot."

The elephant

 extended its foot.

The man

 got up on the elephant.

Seeing what was untrained now tamed

brought under human control,

with that I centered my mind —

 why I'd gone to the woods

 in the first place.

**Ubbiri**

Pulling out

 — completely out —

the arrow so hard to see,

embedded in my heart,

he expelled from me

 — overcome with grief —

the grief

over my daughter.

Today — with arrow removed,

 without hunger, entirely

 Unbound —

to the Buddha, Dhamma, & Sangha I go,

 for refuge to

 the Sage.

**From the Theragatha (Verses of the Elder Monks).** *This collection of verses included in the Khuddaka Nikaya presents the writings of monks from early Buddhism. The translations here are from www.accesstoinsight.com*

**Subhuti**

My hut is roofed, comfortable,

 free of drafts;

my mind, well-centered,

 set free.

I remain ardent.

 So, rain-deva.

 Go ahead & rain.

**Vanavaccha**

The color of blue-dark clouds,

 glistening,

cooled with the waters

of clear-flowing streams

covered with ladybugs:

 those rocky crags

 refresh me.

**Belatthasisa**

Just as a fine thoroughbred steed,

with swishing tail & mane

runs with next-to-no effort,

so my days & nights

run with next-to-no effort

now that I've gained a happiness

 not of the flesh.

**Vimala**

The earth's sprinkled

with rain, wind

is blowing, lightning

wanders the sky,

but my thoughts are stilled,

 well-centered

 my mind.

**Kutiviharin**

This was your old hut,

 and you aspire to another,

 new hut.

Discard your hope for a hut, monk.

A new hut will be

 painful all over again.

#  The Fourfold Task

*Stephen Batchelor*

Suffering is to be comprehended.

The arising of suffering is to be let go of.

The cessation of suffering is to be beheld.

The path is to be cultivated.

# Four Ennobling Realities and Eightfold Path

*Sensei Ryugen Christopher Fisher*

* Unsatisfactoriness is a universal condition, which binds us in our human experience.
* Seeing separation, we crave for and attach to those things which we believe will make us whole again. Thinking dualistically, we ignore the reality of dependent origination. In acknowledging the sources of our fears, frustrations and disconnection from our world; we can see the causes of unsatisfactoriness.
* Bodhisattvas past, present and future have demonstrated that a path leading to the cessation of craving and unnatural attachment is obtainable by all. We may positively transform unsatisfactoriness and make ourselves whole through the realization of interconnection and interdependence.
* The path we follow which leads us out of unsatisfactoriness and into wholeness is characterized as Eightfold.
* In our intellectual understanding we embrace Appropriate View and Appropriate Intention.
* In our moral understanding we embrace Appropriate Speech, Appropriate Action, Appropriate Action, Appropriate Livelihood and Appropriate Effort.
* In our meditative understanding we embrace Appropriate Mindfulness and Appropriate Concentration.

# The Great Heart Sutra:

*Translated by Ryugen Fisher Sensei*

* Avallokitesvara, Bodhisattva of Compassion, observing deeply the refinement of wisdom, prajna paramita, clearly saw the emptiness of personality, thus enduring adversity and pain.
* O, Sariputra, form is no other than emptiness, emptiness no other than form; form is exactly emptiness, emptiness exactly form. The same is true of feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness.
* O, Sariputra, all dharmas are forms of emptiness, not born, not destroyed, not tainted, not pure, not increasing, not decreasing; and so in emptiness there is no form, no feeling, no perception, no mental formations, no consciousness.
* No eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind;
* No color, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no thought;
* No realm of sight and so forth until no realm of consciousness; No ignorance, no end to ignorance and so forth until no old age and death and no end to old age and death;
* No suffering, no desire, no cessation, no path, no wisdom, no attainment.
* And so the Bodhisattva relies on the prajna paramita with no hindrance in the mind. No hindrance therefore no fear. Far beyond deluded thoughts, this is Nirvana.
* All past, present and future Buddhas rely on the refinement of wisdom and thus attain the cultivated enlightenment. Therefore, know that the prajna paramita is the interdependent mantra, the interconnected mantra, the mantra of world making, the mantra which relieves all suffering.
* So proclaim the prajna paramita mantra; proclaim the mantra and say:
* GATE! GATE! PARAGATE! PARASAMGATE! BODHI, SVAHA!

# Alternate Heart Sutra #1

*Glenn Ge Jie Gustafson, OPB*

Great Kanzeon Bodhisattva knew

That all of personality was receptivity

Form is only openness, openness only form;

The same is also true of all sensations, thought, activity

And even consciousness itself.

All reality we know is receptivity

Never beginning nor wholly ending

Neither stained nor pure, increasing nor shrinking.

Receptive only are form, sensation, thought and action

And even consciousness itself.

Receptive are eye and ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.

Receptive are color and sound, smell, taste, touch and thought.

Ignorance and knowledge; aging, death and their negation;

All of these are waiting to be filled.

Empty of meaning is suffering, desire, blowing out and

Noble Eightfold Path.

Every bodhisattva lives this Wisdom and living sees

That they are Nirvana now.

Buddhas past and present and in the future

All rely on this Great Wisdom;

Know this Wisdom is the highest mantra,

The mantra which relieves all suffering,

The mantra which builds the world anew.

So, tell the Great Wisdom:

Going, Going, Going on Beyond, Always Becoming.

Wisdom! So May It Be!

# Alternate Heart Sutra #2

*Dave Buchanan*

* All things are insubstantial and fleeting.
* My body is insubstantial and fleeting.
* My mind, my perceptions, my thoughts, my consciousness:
* All these are insubstantial and fleeting.
* This is the Perfect Wisdom.
* This is the release from suffering.
* To reside in receptive emptiness:
* Fixed on nothing.
* Secure in nothing.
* Clinging to nothing.
* Assuming nothing.
* Believing nothing.
* Expecting nothing.
* Excluding nothing.
* Fearing nothing.
* Resisting nothing.
* Isolated from nothing.
* Independent of nothing.
* Always moving,
* Moving forward with the ceaseless flow of the present.
* This is Nirvana.

# Alternate Heart Sutra #3

*DeDe Chuan Guo Parker, OPB*

You are made of ego, and since that ego can be raw and wounded, it is empty.

Things have form, and since forms can be broken and burned, they are empty.

Feelings can be hurt, perception can be flawed, mental formations can be wrong.

Our entire consciousness changes moment to moment, and therefore it is empty.

Belief systems can be challenged and proven wrong. They are built on soft clay, and so are empty. Doctrines are written by those with changing minds, and so are empty.

But listen, see that they are empty and do not mourn, for in emptiness there is space for possibility. There is no need to claim anything as solid and immutable. For everything comes from something. Everything is changing, in each moment.

There is no need to struggle, for you’ve attained everything in your sitting, in your proclamation of the mantra. You need not fear, or feel held back, for you have already attained liberation.

Sit, be still and feel the earth and heavens spin slowly around you, with all its inhabitants who rely on one another for everything. In that moment, there is no suffering or fear.

You are empty like the sky, which holds so much, winds and birds and storms, but is always the sky.

In growing, in acceptance, in sitting, in breathing, here is liberation.

# Pragmatic Buddhist Affirmation:

* Harmony is my mantra. All things reside in the ceaseless flow of balanced becoming; they are impermanent and selfless.
* Knowledge of interconnection is made known through my mindfulness of the dependent origination of all things. I sit, I watch. The Universe is limitless; my awareness is expanding.
* Knowledge of interdependence is made known through my mindfulness of the dependent origination of all things. I sit, I watch. The Universe is infinite; my awareness is nonjudgmental.
* My awareness, thoughts, words and actions arise and fall by the dictates of causality. Emerging from the process of dependent origination, I am an expression of the Universe.
* I have no fear, for I can never be separated from anything. Mutability is the foundation from which I am built. Seeing the need wherever it may be, I am here to fulfill it.
* The anguish of another is my anguish also. My obligation is to all sentient beings. My altruistic hand embraces everyone with equanimity. I am a Social Self.
* I reside in the present and embrace liberation. Putting my best foot forward, I resolve to realize the best world for all sentient beings.
* I am the way of the Universe.

# Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo

Kan ze on

Na mu Butsu

Yo Butsu u in

Yo Butsu u en

Bup po so en

Jo raku ga jo

Cho nen Kan ze on

Bo nen Kan ze on

Nen nen ju shin ki

Nen nen fu ri shin

**English:**

Bodhisattva of Compassion!

I give veneration to the Buddha!

Sharing in the Buddha Nature

I take refuge with the Buddha;

I take refuge with the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.

Constancy, joy, and purity-of-self fill me.

Mornings, my thought is on the Bodhisattva of Compassion;

Evenings, my thought is on the Bodhisattva of Compassion.

Thought after thought this arises in my mind.

Thought after thought this is not separate from my mind.

**Dedication:**

May we awaken in each of us the Buddha’s compassion and wisdom.

With full awareness we have *said/chanted* the Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo for protecting and healing, we dedicate the merit to the well-being, comfort and healing of all our dear friends

May they be deeply supported in the dharma, peaceful and free from suffering, and may we together with all beings realize the Buddha way.

# Song of Zazen

All beings by nature are Buddhas,

as ice by nature is water.

Apart from water there is no ice;

apart from beings, no Buddhas.

How sad that people ignore the near

and search for truth afar;

like someone in the midst of water

crying out in thirst;

like a child of wealthy home

wandering among the poor.

Lost on a dark path of ignorance,

we wander through the Six Worlds;

from dark path to dark path-

when shall we be freed from birth and death?

Oh! The zazen of the Mahayana!

To this the highest praise!

Devotion, repentance, training,

The many paramitas-

all have their source in zazen.

Those who try zazen even once

wipe away beginningless crimes.

Where are all the dark paths then?

The Pure Land itself is near.

Those who hear this truth even once

and listen with a grateful heart,

treasuring it, revering it,

gain blessing without end.

Much more those who turn about

and bear witness to self- nature,

self-nature that is no-nature,

going far beyond mere doctrine.

Here effect and cause are the same;

The Way is neither two nor three.

with form that is no-form,

going and coming, we are never astray;

with thought that is no-thought,

even singing and dancing are the voice of the Law.

How boundless and free is the sky of Samadhi!

How bright the full moon of wisdom!

Truly, is anything missing now?

Nirvana is right here, before ours eyes;

this very place is the Lotus Land;

this very body, the Buddha.

# The Sutra of Loving-Kindness

This is what should be done by one who is skilled in goodness and who knows the path of peace:

Let them be able and upright, Straightforward and gentle in speech, Humble and not conceited, Contented and easily satisfied, unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways. Peaceful and calm and wise and skillful, Not proud and demanding in nature. Let them not do the slightest thing that the wise would later reprove.

Wishing: in gladness and in safety may all beings be at ease.

Whatever living beings there may be,

Whether they are weak or strong,

The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,

The seen and the unseen,

Those living near and far away,

Those born and to be born, omitting none,

May all beings be at ease.

Let none deceive another or despise any being in any state.

Let none, through anger of ill-will wish harm upon another.

Like a mother protects her child, her only child with her life,

So with a boundless heart should one cherish all living beings.

Radiating kindness over the entire world:

Spreading upwards to the skies and downwards to the depths,

Outwards and unbounded, free from hatred and ill-will.

Whether standing or walking, seated or lying down

Free from drowsiness, one should sustain this recollection.

This is said to be the sublime abiding.

By not holding to fixed views,

The pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision,

Being freed from all sense desires,

Is not born again into this world.

# From the Mahaparinibbana Sutra

*The below is a selection from the Mahaparinirvana Sutra - the account of the last days and death of the Buddha. This modern version is by De De Chuan Guo Parker, OPB.*

Our friend and teacher, Siddartha the awakened one was very ill. We knew that he was leaving us. He raised his head and said “My friends, please listen! There is nothing that is permanent and unchanging. Work hard with compassion and wisdom.” Then he lay down his head and was gone.

With his last breath a storm blew up, and thunder shook the earth just as our sobs shook our bodies. The rain lashed our faces, like our tears.

Our grief shook us badly; it felt as if the earth shook with us, and for us, as if the gods themselves were speaking. They seemed to be saying:

“The enlightened one has passed away as must all beings that live. You are not alone”

With his last breath, our hearts were torn from our chests, and I felt as if even the king of the gods were saying to us:

“Everything comes, then goes. Arises, then falls, leaving only peace”

With his last breath, Siddhartha’s cousin Ananda said to us:

“My sisters and brothers, I feel so afraid!”

With his last breath, some of us raised our hands and cried out, some fell to the earth weeping, saying:

“It is too soon! We’re not ready, it is too soon!”

We hoped against hope that it were not so, even as we surrounded his lifeless body.

But our friends and mentors who were free from delusion, who were mindful, and who saw with clear eyes, clear hearts, they said to us:

“Oh, dear friends! Do not needlessly increase your own suffering. Don’t you see, he’s been preparing us for this day, even as he’s been teaching us. ALL things change and age and die. It can’t be otherwise.
Come, let us sit together and celebrate our brother.”

# Verse in Homage to the Buddha’s Relics

*(May be used to bless statues and other items as well as in funerals or with the dead or dying as we are each the Buddha)*

With wholehearted reverence we bow

* to the relics of the true body of the Tathagata,

who is endowed with myriad virtues;

* to the dharma body which is the fundamental ground;
* and to his stupa, which is the whole universe.

With deep respect we venerate the fully human Buddha.

Through the sustaining power of the Buddha,

which we all share in our inherent nature, we participate in awakening.

By means of the Buddha's spiritual power,

we benefit all living beings,

arouse the thought of awakening,

cultivate bodhisattva practice,

and together enter perfect peace and

the knowledge of the equality of all things.

Now let us reverently bow.

# For the Dead and Dying

Oh, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas abiding in all directions,
Endowed with great compassion,
Endowed with discerning eye,
Endowed with love,
Offering protection to all sentient beings,
Please come forth through the power of your great compassion,
Please accept these offerings, both actually presented and mentally created.

Oh Compassionate Ones, you who possess
The wisdom of understanding,
The love of compassion,
And of protecting in incomprehensible measure;
[...................................] is passing from this world to the next,
They are taking a great leap,
The light of this world has faded for them,
They have entered solitude with their karmic forces,
They have gone into a vast silence,
They are borne away by the great ocean of birth and death ..…

Oh Compassionate Ones, protect [......................] who is defenseless. Be to them like a mother and father.

Oh Compassionate Ones, let not the force of your compassion be weak, but aid them.

Do not forget your ancient vows. Be with them in their time of transition.

# Verses of Offering for Those Who Have Died

*Can be used when making offerings of food in honor of those who have died which will be shared with those present.*

* Calling all you who have passed beyond
* Everywhere through endless time
* You who guided, you who gave
* We offer you this bodhi mind.
* Calling all you who influenced us
* All those we remember in our lives
* Calling all you who have passed beyond
* Everywhere through endless time
* Gather round and share this meal
* Your memory we invoke and bring alive.

# The Atthakavagga

*Selections from the Atthakavagga translated by Glenn Ge Jie Gustafson, OPB*

**I - Discourse on Sense Desires**

1. If a person attains the sense pleasures they desire they will be happy, having attained what they desire.

2. If those sense pleasures slip away, however; they will feel pain as if pierced by an arrow.

3. The person who avoids craving after sense pleasures as they would avoid treading on a snake; that person, being mindful, transcends worldly attachments.

4. Whatever person greedily pursues possessions and sense pleasures, people and things;

5. That person will be burdened with troubles and unease will overwhelm them like water entering a broken boat.

6. That person, always mindful will avoid greedily seeking sense pleasures. Having avoided it they will cross over the flood like one who has bailed out their boat and reaches the further shore.

**II - Octet on the Cave**

1. The person who lives, stuck fast in their body, forever unseeing; that person is mired in delusion and far from detachment. Sense pleasures in this world are hard to abandon.

2. Bound by desires, craving the pleasures of the senses; people are difficult to liberate, and indeed no one else can liberate them but themselves. Hoping for what was or will be, they long for both current and past pleasures.

3. Those who are greedy - engrossed or confounded by sense pleasures or miserly - are caught in the web of desires. When they are brought to an uneasy end they will worry, “What will become of us when we have passed away from here?”

4. Therefore a person should train themselves right here and now to avoid that which is wicked and unskillful and not practice those ways; for the sages tell us, “This life is short”.

5. I see in this world mankind thrashing about in the desire for existence; these people cry out in the jaws of death, not being free from the desire for continued existence.

6. See them thrashing about in selfishness, like fish in a stream with little water; seeing this we should follow the way of the unselfish, not holding on to a craving for existence.

7. Rejecting the extremes, understanding having without greed, not doing those things which they reproach in others; a wise person does not cling to what is seen or heard.

8. Having understood perception the wise will cross over the flood; they are not mired in desire. Having controlled passion they do not cling to a desire for either this life or another.

**III - Octet on the Corrupt**

1. Some corrupt minded people engage in arguments; but then again, some just people engage in arguments also; only the wise refuse to be drawn into arguments that arise; for this reason there are no discontented among the wise.

2. How can one see the error of their views when they are led on by their preferences and clinging to their own inclinations? A person argues from their own needs and desires.

3. The person who, unasked, speaks of their own morality and good works; the wise call ignoble.

4. But a practitioner at peace in mindfulness who does not boast of their own morality; this person, with no attachments, the wise call noble.

5. Those whose philosophies are arbitrarily contrived and formulated to give themselves a good feeling about how they live; these people exist in a peace that is conditioned by instability.

6. It is hard to get past the dogmas of philosophies; thus a person seeking to choose amongst these dogmas may pick and discard many philosophies.

7. For one who has shaken off attachment there is nowhere in the world a prejudiced view of different philosophies; having abandoned all illusion and conceit, this person has no need to be called by any dogma. This one is unattached.

8. A person being attached to a dogma has need to argue its value; but one being unattached to any dogma has no reason to be drawn into argument. For this person indeed there is nothing either grasped or rejected. All dogmatic views have been shaken off.

**IV - Octet on the Pure**

1. Some say: ‘I have seen pure people and I say that by their views people are made pure.’ Holding this opinion the seer of purity returns to study dharmas, hoping to see purity there.

2. If a person is purified by their philosophical views or released from pain through knowledge, they have gained their purification by way of another and they are marked by that path.

3. The wise person does not acknowledge purification that comes from another; for this one does not cling to what is seen or heard or to morality or good works and neither to good nor evil. This person leaves behind what had been grasped and builds up nothing in this world.

4. Moving from teacher to teacher, from philosophy to philosophy many cling to one thing and then another. Following their disturbed passions they never let go of attachments.

5. Clinging to religious dogma and observance a person swings from joy to sorrow led by their passions; but the wise person being freed from attachments does not swing from joy to sorrow, from one thing to another.

6. The wise person is a peace with all philosophies and does not cling to what is seen or heard or felt. This person, going about with clear sight is not changed by this world.

7. They do not advance any view or utter any preferences; they don’t say, “I have the only way”; having cut the knotted cord of attachments they seek for nothing in this world.

8. The wise person goes beyond all boundaries and clings to nothing seen nor heard nor felt. This person seizes on neither passion nor dispassion; places nothing in the world as first among many.

**V - Octet on the Ultimate**

1. Holding to a philosophy, thinking “this is the ultimate”, a person places it above all others; therefore all others are seen as inferior. This person has not passed beyond contention.

2. Because this philosophy makes them feel good about themselves and what they do; this person views all others as inferior.

3. The adept calls this a tie – dependent on which is viewed as superior and which as inferior. The wise person does not depend on what is seen or heard or felt, neither on morality nor good deeds.

4. The wise one does not advance a philosophy as superior, no matter if it is built on what is seen or heard or on morality or good works or religious observance. This person does not present themselves as equal to others but neither do they present themselves as inferior nor superior. They are without attachment.

5. Having abandoned what was acquired, not grasping anything, the wise person does not cling even to knowledge. This person does take part in debates on the merits of philosophies and does not cling to any view.

6. For the one to whom there is no desire for either of two extremes, for this world or another, now or yet to be; for this person there are no entrenchments among the doctrines that have been investigated.

7. By this person there is not the least prejudice among what is seen or heard or felt. The wise person does not cling to a view; therefore nothing in this world can move them.

8. They do not advance any view as superior, nor do they make a choice among philosophies; the wise person is not swayed by morality or good deeds or religious observances. This is a person who is free and wise.

**VI - Discourse on Aging and Death**

1. This life is a brief span; one dies within a hundred years; or even if one surpasses that they will surely die of old age.

2. People suffer because of selfishness, yet there are no permanent possessions; this life is a state of loss and change, therefore let no one cling to anything as “mine”.

3. Everything that one calls “mine” is left behind at death; having realized this, a follower of the Way will let go of “mine-ness”.

4. Just as a person awakening does not see those things they met in dreams; so a beloved person will no longer be seen when they have died.

5. We can see and hear the people we call by name; yet only the name remains of those who have died.

6. Those who are greedy for possessions do not leave behind suffering because of the fear of loss; therefore the wise person lets go of greediness and finds security in Nirvana.

7. For a practitioner who is unattached to things and abides in sitting; they will say of this one, “They no longer cling to existence”.

8. Everywhere the wise person is independent, neither seeking to please nor displease; therefore suffering from fear of loss – like water on a leaf – does not cling to this one.

9. As moisture does not stick to a water lily, as water does not cling to a lotus; even so the wise person is not mired in what is seen or heard or felt.

10. Thus the wise person does not cling to anything that is seen or heard or felt. This person does not seek after purity that comes from another and is neither ruled by passions nor unaffected by them.

**X - Discourse on Those at Peace**

1. Tell us, O Gautama, with what philosophy and what morality may one be called at peace when speaking of the supreme person?

2. The one whose desires have departed before death; who depends on neither the past nor the present nor the future.

3. Neither angry nor intimidated; neither boastful nor anxious; when such a one speaks it is with discretion and not pompous. These are the marks of a wise person of restraint.

4. With no attachment to the future the person at peace does not sorrow for the past. They view their contacts with dispassion and are not confined to any one philosophy.

5. The person at peace is unattached, not deceitful nor envious; neither impudent nor contemptuous and not given to slander.

6. Not clinging to pleasures and having no conceit; the person at peace is mild and possessed of ready wit. They are neither devout nor impassive.

7. The wise person does not train with the hope of gain nor are they upset by loss; untroubled by greed they do not crave sense pleasures.

8. Equable and always mindful, the wise person does not see themselves as either equal to, nor superior nor inferior to any other. For the person at peace there are no distinguished positions.

9. For the person at peace there is nothing on which to be dependent; being unattached they desire neither existence nor nonexistence.

10. The person I call ‘at peace’ is this: They do not crave after anything for they have crossed over from attachment.

11. For this person there is no craving for family or possessions; nothing to be either grasped or rejected.

12. The person at peace knows that they don’t possess the traits for which ordinary people or philosophers or religious leaders might criticize them and so are unmoved by slander.

13. Without greed for gain or fear of loss the person at peace does not claim to be superior, nor equal, nor inferior. Being separated from time they are not possessed by time.

14. The one who claims nothing in the world and does not grieve over loss; the one who does not cling to one among philosophies; this is the one I call at peace.

**XII - Small Discourse on Arguments**

1. Those who cling to their own view take joy in presenting themselves as being the only expert. They say, ‘If you believe this you are wise, but if you deny it you are a fool’.

2. Arguing, they say of each other, ‘that one is a fool’. What can be the truth since all these present themselves as they only expert?

3. If by not agreeing with another’s philosophies you’re a fool; aren’t they all fools, since each clings to their own view?

4. For they each think themselves purified by their own view, perfected and without fault.

5. I never declare, ‘This is the Truth’, which others do to each other. Being unable to agree on the truth they dispute with one another.

6. What one says is truth another says is void or false; never able to come to an agreement. Why can’t philosophers agree on a single truth?

7. Truth is one, there is no second. There cannot be dispute between intelligent people about it. Yet, they dispute about these views so they cannot be the truth.

8. Why do these people dispute about the truth? Have many different truths appeared or do they follow their own speculations?

9. There are not many different truths in the world – except by means of perception. Having built their truth from speculations they speak of a duality – truth and falsehood.

10. Because of what they have seen or heard or their morality or religious observances they each think highly of themselves and think others are fools.

11. It is because they hold others to be foolish that they think themselves as experts, yet they all say the same of each other.

12. Only in clinging to their view are they perfect. Drunk with conceit they see themselves as holy and anointed and their way as the only truth.

13. If by the word of another we are fools then all are fools; and if by our own views alone are the wise determined then then everyone is wise.

14. ‘Those who preach a doctrine other than this are impure and imperfect’ the sectarians proclaim; for they are inflamed by their passion for their own view.

15. ‘Only here is purity’ they argue. They cling so tightly to their own view as something that is firm and unchanging.

16. Holding that one view only is firm and pure and all others are foolish, these people give rise only to strife and argument.

17. Measuring all people by their own fixed view they give rise to contention; but those who leave behind all fixed views make no conflict in the world.



# Gathas

**Gatha of the Bodhisattvas**

The Bodhisattva of Compassion

 Inspires us to be aware of the suffering all beings;

 Inspires us to accept the reality of that suffering in their lives;

 Inspires us to take action to alleviate that suffering.

 May we take Avallokitesvara’s inspiration to heart.

The Bodhisattva of Wisdom

 Inspires us to be aware of all the teachings that guide us in compassion;

 Inspires us to accept that ours is not the only dharma;

 Inspires us to the action of teaching others the dharmas of compassion.

 May we take Manjusri’s inspiration to heart.

The Bodhisattva of Dharma Practice

 Inspires us to be aware during our practice;

 Inspires us to accept that the practice of others may be just as valid as ours;

 Inspired us to the action of regular and dedicated practice.

 May we take Samantabhadra’s inspiration to heart.

The Bodhisattva of Great Vows

 Inspires us to be aware that we undertake our practice for the benefit of all beings;

 Inspires us to accept all who follow the multiple paths of compassion as members of the Sangha;

 Inspires us to the action of helping the Sangha to flourish.

 May we take Ksitigarbha’s inspiration to heart.

**Gatha of Interconnection**

We each carry the seeds of the galaxies and stars,

Planets and beings that came before us.

The similarities we share are greater by far

Than the differences that separate us.

We are each a unique expression of the Universe,

May our presentation of it be the best it can be.

We each arise from a unique set of causes and

Give rise to unique events, actions and beings in our turn;

May our lives be such that those things arising from us

 Grow from our compassionate nature.

We do not live in isolation;

 Our actions affect others beings and

 We are affected by the actions of others.

May our actions be done considering how they may affect other beings.

May we recognize that sometimes the actions of others Are done without intention.

**Dharani for Healing**

**I.**

Just as the soft rains fill the streams,

Pour into the rivers, and join together in the oceans,

So may the power of every moment of your goodness

Flow forth to awaken and heal all beings:

Those here now, those gone before, those yet to come.

By the power of every moment of your goodness,

May your heart's wishes be soon fulfilled

As completely shining as the bright full moon,

As magically as by a wish-fulfilling gem.

By the power of every moment of your goodness,

May all dangers be averted and all disease be gone.

May no obstacle come across your way.

May you enjoy fulfillment and long life.

For all those in whose heart dwells respect,

Who follow the wisdom and compassion, of the Way,

May your life prosper in the four blessings

Of old age, beauty, happiness and strength.

**II.**

We live in the Universe connected to all beings.

There are those who are in need of physical healing;

May they receive the care and medicines they need.

There are those who are in need of mental and emotional healing;

May they receive the care and medicines they need.

In our lives Name is in need of healing;

May he/she receive the care and medicines he/she needs.

We are aware that our interconnection can extend through space and time

And we send our desire for healing to all those in need.

**III.**

May all beings everywhere plagued with sufferings of body and mind quickly be freed from their illnesses.

May those frightened cease to be afraid, and may those bound be free.

May the powerless find power, and may people think of befriending one another.

May those who find themselves in trackless, fearful wilderness--

the children, the aged, the unprotected--be guarded by beneficent intentions,

and may they swiftly realize their Buddha Nature.

**Gatha for Work**

May I undertake my work today and every day in the spirit of Appropriate Livelihood.

May I avoid doing harm.

May I do good.

May I do good for others.

May I be mindful of the interconnection of all beings and things.

May I be mindful of the interdependence of all beings and things.

**Gatha Before Eating**

**I.**

We receive this food in gratitude for the contributions and sacrifices of all those beings that have brought this meal into being, and vow to respond with compassion to all those in need.

**II.**

The joys and pains of all beings are present in the gift of this food.

Let us receive it in love and gratitude...

And in mindfulness of our sisters and brothers among living beings of every kind who are hungry or homeless, sick or injured, or suffering in any way.

**Gatha on Going to Bed**

I lay down to take my rest. May I embrace the darkness and the silence and find in them refreshment and rejuvenation so that I may awake and be ready to be mindful and offer compassion to all beings that I encounter in the new day.

**Gatha on Awakening**

I will strive to be awake with every breath I take today. I will strive to take every step with a grateful heart. I will strive to see with the eyes of love into every heart I encounter so that I may ease their burdens and touch them with a sense of peace.

**Gatha for Peace**

May peace harmonious bless this land;

May it be ever free from maladies and war;

May there be rich harvests and increased yields of grain;

May everyone delight in righteousness;

May no perverted thought enter our minds;

May all our thoughts be pious and lead to the cessation of suffering. --*Milarepa*

**A Precious Human Life**

Today I am fortunate to be alive. May I awaken fully to the possibilities of this precious human life.

I will not waste it!

I will to use my energies to develop all the virtues.

I will live this day fully, with body, speech and mind dedicated to my own benefit and the benefit of all sentient beings.

I will meet anger, cruelty, abuse of power & indifference with love: kindness, compassion, appreciation and justice.

And when I fail to live by my highest values, or see the failings of others, I will be understanding, generous and forgiving, living for the well-being of all.

**The Golden Chain of Love**

I am a link in the golden chain of love that stretches around the world.

I will strive to keep my link bright and strong.

I will try to be kind and gentle to every living thing and protect all who are weaker than myself.

I will try to think pure and beautiful thoughts,

 to say pure and beautiful words,

 and to do pure and beautiful deeds,

knowing that my own happiness and misery depend on what I do.

May every link in the golden chain of love become bright and strong and may we all attain perfect peace.

**Bodhisattva Prayer for Humanity**

May I be a guard for those who need protection

A guide for those on the path

A boat, a raft, a bridge for those who wish to cross the flood

May I be a lamp in the darkness

A resting place for the weary

A healing medicine for all who are sick

A vase of plenty, a tree of miracles

And for the boundless multitudes of living beings

May I bring sustenance and awakening

Enduring like the earth and sky

Until all beings are freed from sorrow

And all are awakened. -- *Shantideva*

# Afterward

May these verses be useful to you in your practice. May they help you increase the awareness of your interconnection with the whole universe, your acceptance of impermanence and your joy in the dependent origination of all compounded things.

*May you be happy.*

*May you have peace.*

*May you be free from dissatisfaction.*

*May you strive to follow the Buddha Way and realize your own Buddha Nature and that of all beings.*

Glenn Ge Jie Gustafson, OPB

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