

Ritual for Taking the Eight Mahayana Precepts



The Meaning of Buddha Purnima and Vesak day

Purnima means full moon day in Sanskrit. Buddha Purnima is the annual celebration of the birth of Buddha that is widely celebrated across the world. This day is also called as Vesak.

On Vesak Day, Buddhists from all over the world commemorate events of significance or the great auspicious deeds to Buddhists of all traditions: The birth, the enlightenment and the passing away of Buddha.

The Vesak is celebrated in many different ways on over the world. The celebration of Buddha's birthday stands as a reminder for people to go back to Buddha's Teachings and find solutions to their problems in the daily life.

We must recall the three great auspicious deeds of Buddha and learn lessons from those three:

1. "Entering the mother's womb". From this auspicious deed we must learn the existence of past and future lives and so based on that we must cultivate accordingly.
2. Enlightenment. This great auspicious deeds shows that we all have Buddha nature and we all have potential to achieve enlightenment and the negative emotions can be completely eliminated.
3. PariNirvana. This show the nature of impermanence. Regardless of who we are and what we are doing, we all will have to leave this world one day, and practice of dharma will only be of help when we leave this life.

The Benefits of Protecting the Eight Mahayana Precepts

The eight Mahayana precepts are:

1. To not kill any sentient being, even an insect.

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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.

Taking the eight Mahayana precepts on the upcoming Buddha multiplying day, Saga Dawa, is a very auspicious, and we are also welcome to take it anytime. The practice of these eight precepts can bring the benefits as follows:

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.

Ritual for Taking the Eight Mahayana Precepts
Preliminary Prayers

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

Taking Refuge in the Gurus

- ❖ In a group practice, read the verse once or twice in English and then chant it in Tibetan.
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LA MA SANG GYÄ LA MA CHHÖ
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 Sangha.
The Guru is the creator of all [happiness].
In all the gurus, I take refuge. (3x)**

Taking Refuge and Generating Bodhichitta

- ❖ In a group practice, read these two verses once or twice in English and then chant them in Tibetan.
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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 trans-migratory beings,
I always take refuge
In the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha
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)**

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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 *vaidurya* and soft.**

Invocation

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 maras and their forces,
Perfect knower of all things without exception,
Bhagavan, 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

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

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE VAJRA SĀRA PRAMARDANE / TATHĀGATĀYA / ARHATE SAMYAK
SAMBUDDHĀYA / TADYATHĀ / OM VAJRA VAJRE / MAHĀ VAJRE / MAHĀ TEJA VAJRE /
MAHĀ VIDYĀ VAJRE / MAHĀ BODHICHITTA VAJRE / MAHĀ BODHI MAṄḌOPA
SAMKRAMAṄA VAJRE / SARVA KARMĀVARAṄA VIŚHODHANA 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 Ganga 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, nagas, yakshas, smell-eaters, asuras, garudas, kinnaras, maharogas, Vajrapani (Owner of Secrets), and the Four Guardians will always follow, guard, protect, and hide you from obstacles. (8) You will be reborn in Amitabha Buddha’s pure land, Blissful Realm.

Extensive Power of Truth

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

KÖN CHHOG SUM GYI DEN PA DANG / SANG GYÄ DANG JANG CHUB SEM PA THAM CHÄ
KYI YIN 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 NGA / 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 transformation by the bodhisattvas Arya Samantabhadra, Manjushri, and so forth—unimaginable and inexhaustible, equaling the sky—arise and, in the presence of the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions, be received. (3x)

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

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 aryas.

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 trans-migratory beings.

I dedicate my own and others' virtues to great enlightenment.

Mandala Offering

Short Mandala 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 trans-migratory 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.

IDAM GURU RATNA MAṄḌALAKAṂ NIRYĀTAYĀMI

Actual Ritual
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 mudra of prostration. Recite these verses of the Buddha's words from *Sutra of the King of Concentration* a few times as inspiration for taking the eight Mahayana precepts.
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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 bodhichitta motivation for taking the precepts and then repeat *Prayer for Taking the Precepts* three times

Prayer for Taking the Precepts

- ❖ In general, visualize Guru Shakyamuni 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 Bodhisatvas 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 tathagata, arhat, perfectly complete buddhas who, like the divine wise horse and the great elephant, did what had to be done, performed actions,

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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,]⁴ in order to eliminate sickness,

JANG CHHUB KYI CHHOG KYI CHHÖ NAM YONG SU DZOG PAR PA 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”).

Then, having recollected the bodhichita 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 JIN 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.

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**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 ŚHĪLA SAṂBHARA SAṂBHARA⁵ / BHARA BHARA / MAHĀ ŚHUDDHA
SATVA PADMA VIBHŪṢHITA BHUJA / DHARA DHARA SAMANTA / AVALOKITE HŪṢ 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
bodhisatvas.

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 Shantideva's Bodhicharyavatara

His Holiness the Dalai Lama states that reading about the eight Mahayana 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 Shantideva in *Bodhicharyavatara*:

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 trans-migratory beings remain,
Until then may I too remain
To dispel the suffering of trans-migratory beings.(3x)

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Then, do three prostrations to conclude the ritual for taking the eight Mahayana precepts.

The 5th Dalai Lama said this is: do you just have to take care of 8 vows and that also for just one day, so if you preserve on practice this for one day vow, for one day and night, maybe you will be accumulated much more merits and millions of people bring some charities out there, because this is something that you're directly dealing with the negative emotions and the habituation where you have been engaging in many previous lives.

Now you are being mindful each and every second in a domain way, you continue these things for about 24 hours that you are not supposed to do this, you are not suppose to do that. So that we live very strong we bring and that help us to refrain from such activities, like killing and like all these things by practicing this for one day and this will leave us very strong in bring . And that will help us in many future lives because the wish, this mantra is a coincidence and very powerful, and very wonderful practice.

So this day, try to engage in as positive activities as possible, it can be including in reading some sutras, in some prayers, remembering the kindness of Buddha. We have this loving compassion, releasing this world this is also Buddha, we have the temples to visit, the sutras, again because of Buddha, we respect the animals and we respect other living beings equally, again, because of Buddha, we have a nice rebirth because of the merits then we're accumulating the merits because of the guiding of the teachers, again because of Buddha, so everything is the blessing of Buddha.

Because of that, it is very important to spend a wonderful time into remembering the kindness of Buddha, into engaging as positive actions as possible for today.

*Writing based on The Guide of Ritual for Taking the Eight Mahayana Precepts on 26 May 2021
by Lama Nawang Kunphel*

Source

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