

Buddha's Birthday Ceremony

LIGHTING OF CANDLES & INCENSE

OPENING BELL

[BELL, BELL, BELL]

HOMAGE TO THE THREE JEWELS

[OFFICIANT 1]

With a one-point mind we bow before all the Buddhas throughout the ten directions and three worlds.

[BOWL] [SEATED BOW]

With a one-point mind we bow before all 84,000 Dharmas throughout the ten directions and three worlds.

[BOWL] [SEATED BOW]

With a one-point mind we bow before all the Sanghas throughout the ten directions and three worlds.

[BOWL] [SEATED BOW]

OPENING OF THE CEREMONY

[OFFICIANT 2]

Rejoice at the glad tidings! The Buddha has found the root of all *Duḥkha*; he has shown us the way of liberation. The Buddha shows us the path that dispels the illusions of our mind and frees us from *saṃsāra*—the cycle of birth and death.

The Buddha brings comfort to the weary and sorrow-laden; the path restores peace to those who are broken down under the burden of life. His words gives courage to the weak when they would willingly give up self-reliance and hope. You who suffer from the tribulations of life, you who struggle and has to endure, you who yearn for a life of truth, rejoice at the glad tidings! There is balm for the wounded, and there is bread for the hungry. There is water for the thirsty, and there is hope for

the despairing. There is light for those in darkness, and there is inexhaustible blessings for the upright.

Heal your wounds, you who are wounded, and eat your fill, you who are hungry. Rest, you who are weary, and you who are thirsty quench your thirst. Look up to the light, you who sit in darkness; be full of good cheer, you who are forlorn.

Trust in truth, You who love the truth, for Sukhāvātī—the land of bliss—is founded upon earth, right this moment. The darkness of ignorance is dispelled by the light of truth. We can see our way and take firm and certain steps.

The Buddha has revealed the truth. The truth cures our delusions and frees us from afflictions; the truth strengthens us in life and in death; the truth alone can conquer the misery of error. Rejoice at the glad tidings!

[OFFICIANT 3]

Today the community has gathered to celebrate the birth of the Buddha and to bathe the baby Buddha. Please, will the community listen:

[OFFICIANT 4]

Two thousand six hundred years ago in Lumbini, a man known as Siddhārtha Gautama was born into the Shakya clan. He was a human being, just as we are, but in him wisdom and compassion were developed to a very high degree, and he became a fully awakened being. He was a beautiful and preciously rare flower in the garden of humanity.

BATHING THE BABY BUDDHA

[OFFICIANT 1]

Today we bathe the Tathāgata. Deep wisdom and clarity bring great happiness. May all living beings who are overwhelmed by *duḥkha* see

in this very world, the *dharmakāya*—reality itself, in which all teachings and things are *Śūnyatā*—devoid of a permanent and separate existence.

[OFFICIANT 2]

Together we will chant “**Namo Śakyamuni Buddha**”, in honor of the Buddha of our era, Śakyamuni. As we chant, please, one by one, go up to the altar, bow, light incense, offer a flower to the altar, then pour water over the baby Buddha three times, bow and then return to your seat. We will continue chanting “Namo Śakyamuni Buddha” until everyone has an opportunity to go to the altar.

PRAISING THE BUDDHA

[OFFICIANT 3]

The Buddha is a precious flower of humanity. He appeared on this earth as Siddhartha Gautama, a member of a family of a good situation, but he became unsatisfied, despite his comfortable life. He left a life of comfort and high station to understand suffering and seek a solution to life’s dissatisfactions. Six years of learning lead him to practice beneath the Bodhi tree. When the morning star arose, he realized the great path of awakening and turned the wheel of the dharma to benefit us all.

[BELL]

[ALL TOGETHER]

With single-mindedness, all sentient species aspire to experience the path of liberation, free from duḥkha.

[BELL, BELL, BELL]

[OFFICIANT 4]

The Buddha is like the fresh, full moon that moves across the vast sky. When the river of mind is truly serene, the moon is reflected perfectly upon the calm surface of the water. The countenance of the World-Honored One, shines with the light of clarity, a halo of wisdom spreading out in every direction, enveloping all with compassion, joy

and equanimity. The inexhaustible virtues of the World-Honored One cannot be adequately praised.

[Officiant 1]

The Sangha gathers together to meditate, chant, and offer this prayer:

[ALL TOGETHER]

May the path of the Buddha grow brighter.

May the way of Dharma become clearer.

May all of nature be protected and in harmony.

May there be peace and compassion in the cities and rural areas.

May all people in society be free and equal.

May all follow the way of skillful practice.

May compassion enter into this world, allowing the light of wisdom to shine clearly so the path of liberation is visible to everyone, benefitting all species.

May the Sangha, gathered here today, practice diligently, showing concern and love for each other as they would for their own family, transforming their consciousness.

We aspire to follow the example of the Bodhisattvas Samantabhadra of Great Effort and Avalokiteśvara, of Great Compassion, and all other Bodhisattvas Mahāsattvas, and the Mahā Prajñā Pāramitā.

[BOWL, BOWL, BOWL]

HOMAGE TO THE BUDDHA

[ALL TOGETHER]

[Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa] 3x

[BOWL, BOWL, BOWL]

DHARMA TALKS

[OFFICIANT 2]

The unsurpassed, profound, and sublime dharma, is difficult to meet even in a billion eons. Today we will hear, will see, will receive, and will retain, vowing to realize the true meaning of the Tathāgatas.

Ven. Myogyeong

Ven. Dr. Geungsan

[OFFICIANT 3]

The merit accruing from speaking the dharma is an extremely rare act, we dedicate this boundless, superior merit to all sentient beings, we vow that all beings, immersed in *samsāra*—the cycle of birth and death—will transform this, the Saha world, to that of Sukhavati—the realm of Amitābha, the Infinite Light and Infinite Life Buddha. We bow to all Buddhas of the ten directions, the three worlds, all the venerable Bodhisattvas-Mahāsattvas, and the Mahā Prajñā Pāramitā.

[SITTING BOW]

SITTING MEDITATION

SANGHA SHARING

[MEMBERS OF THE SANGHA CAN SHARE POEMS OR THOUGHTS REGARDING THE BUDDHA AND THE PATH OF PRACTICE]

CHANTING THE PRAJÑĀ PARAMITA HRDAYA SUTRA

[CHANT LEADER] **The Maha**

[ALL TOGETHER] *Prajñā Paramita Hrdaya*

Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, when practicing deeply the *prajñā paramita* perceives that all five skandhas are empty and is saved from all *duḥkha* and distress.

Śariputra, form does not differ from *śūnyatā*, *śūnyatā* does not differ from form. That which is form is *śūnyatā*, that which is *śūnyatā* form. The same is true of feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness.

Śariputra, all dharmas are marked with *śūnyatā*; they do not appear or disappear, are not tainted or pure, do not increase or decrease. Therefore, in *śūnyatā* no form, no feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness.

No eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no color, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no object of mind; no realm of eyes...and so forth until no realm of mind consciousness.

No ignorance and also no extinction of it...and so forth until no old age and death and also no extinction of them.

No *duḥkha*, no origination, no stopping, no path, no cognition, also no realization with nothing to realize.

The bodhisattva depends on *prajña paramita* and the mind is no hindrance; without any hindrance no fears exist. Far apart from every deluded view one dwells in nirvana. In the three worlds all Buddhas depend on *prajña paramita* and realize *anuttarā-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

Therefore know that *prajña paramita* is the great transcendent mantra, is the great bright mantra, is the utmost mantra, is the supreme mantra which is able to relieve all *duḥkha*, and is truth not delusion. So proclaim the *prajña paramita* mantra, proclaim the mantra which says:

[*gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā*] 3x

[*BELL, BELL, BELL*]

CONCLUDING VOWS

[*ALL TOGETHER*]

[*BOWL*] **THE BODHISATTVA VOWS**

Sentient beings are numberless, I vow to save them all.

Delusions are endless, I vow to cut through them all.

The Teachings are infinite, I vow to learn them all.

The Buddha-way is inconceivable, I vow to realize it.

OFFERING OF MERIT

[ALL TOGETHER]

Reciting the sutras, practicing the way of awareness gives rise to benefits without limit.

We vow to share these benefits with all beings.

We vow to offer tribute to parents, teachers, friends, and the numerous beings who give guidance and support along the path.

May we in this life find awakening and together all become Buddhas.

EXTINGUISHING OF CANDLES

End of Buddha's Birthday Ceremony

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS

GROUP PHOTO