

Invocation of The Medicine Buddha and the Bodhisattvas of Great Aspiration and She Who Contemplates the Sounds of the World

*A Monthly Ceremony to Support
Those Who Are Suffering, Sick,
Victims of Disasters, in Transition and
Their Relatives and Friends.*

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INSTRUMENT KEY:



Large Bell



Singing Bowl



Stopping Bell/Bowl



Strike Handle on Bowl



Inkin Bell



Chukpi/Clappers



Strike Mallet on Wood



Moktak/Mokugyo



Drum



Hand Bell

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Ceremony to Support those Who Are Suffering or in Transition

[OBLATE:]

This ceremony is to offer peace of mind and courage to those who suffer, the sick, to those who have been victims of disasters, are in transition, and for their relatives and friends.



1. Incense Offering & Lighting Candles

[OBLATE:]

[LIGHT ALTAR CANDLES - RIGHT TO LEFT][IF SMALL LIGHTING CANDLE IS NEEDED LIGHT IT LAST]

[LIGHT ONE STICK OF INCENSE ON MAIN ALTAR]

[UNCOVER WATER & RICE OFFERING BOWLS—RIGHT TO LEFT]

2. Three Bows

[ FOR EACH BOW] 3x

3. Homage to the Buddha Shakyamuni


[ALL TOGETHER]


[Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa] 2x


Honor to the Blessed One, the Noble One, the fully Awakened One

4. The Three Refuges

[ALL TOGETHER]

I go for refuge in the Buddha,
who is present throughout the ten directions. 

I go for refuge in the dharma,
which is present throughout the ten directions. 

I go for refuge in the sangha,
which is present throughout the ten directions. 

5. Ceremony Opening: Invocation of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas

[OFFICIANT 1]

Please listen! ■

The peace and joy of the entire world, including the worlds of the living and dead, depend on our own peace and joy in this moment. With all our heart and one-pointed mind let us offer our merit and blessings to those in need. ■

Today the community has gathered to recite scripture, chant, practice mindfulness of the Buddha, give spiritual support and offer peace to our loved ones as well as their relatives and friends who are in need of spiritual support.

6. The Medicine Buddha Ceremony Opening

[OFFICIANT 2]

This Medicine Buddha Ceremony is for those who are seeking relief from afflictions of the body and mind. Chanting together with mindfulness and respect, with one-pointed concentration and whole-hearted sincerity we can help those who are suffering from many physical ailments, those who are poor and deprived of daily necessities, those who often encounter disasters, accidents, or situations of distress and danger. ■

[OFFICIANT 3]

Reciting the Medicine Buddha Sutra, with the mind perfectly collected and pure, will help relieve any ailments and bestow blessings to the participants and to the beings for whom this ceremony is dedicated.

Additionally, for those who have broken the precepts, reciting this sutra can clear the negativity and obstacles resulting from their transgressions.

7. Scripture Recitation:

[OFFICIANT 1]

from “***The Sutra of the Medicine Buddha Lapis Lazuli Radiance Tathāgata: His Past Vows, Merits and Virtues***”



Opening Verse:

The unexcelled, most profound, and exquisitely wondrous Dharma, is difficult to encounter throughout hundreds of thousands of millions of kalpas. Since we are now able to see, hear, receive and retain it, may we comprehend the true meaning of the Tathāgata.

Discourse:

[OFFICIANT 2]

The Buddha then said to the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī: “East of this world, past countless Buddha-lands...there exists a world called Pure Lapis Lazuli¹. The Buddha of that world is called Bhaiṣajyaguru, the Medicine Buddha Lapis Lazuli Radiance Tathāgata.

“Mañjuśrī, when the World-Honored Medicine Buddha was treading the Bodhisattva path, he solemnly made Twelve Great Vows so that in a future life, when he has realized Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi, all sentient beings, if their minds be perfectly collected and pure, should they pay homage to, bow to or chant his name, they may fulfill their greatest aspirations.”

[EACH PARTICIPANT TAKES TURN READING EACH VOW ALOUD]

“The First Great Vow: May all sentient beings be brilliant and adorned in mind and body like me, and finally awaken like the Buddha.”

¹ Vaiduryanirbhasa-The Eastern Pure Land presided by Bhaiṣajyaguru, the Buddha “The Medicine Master and King of Lapis Lazuli Light”

“The Second Great Vow: May all beings strengthen their spiritual power and physical energy, in order to realize their greatest aspirations and remain on the path of liberation”.

“The Third Great Vow: May all sentient beings be healed, find comfort, practice generosity, and awaken so that all may live together in harmony.”

“The Fourth Great Vow: May all those who have gone astray find their way back upon the path to awakening.”

“The Fifth Great Vow: May all sentient beings observe the precepts for moral conduct and forgive those who disparage or violate the precepts.”

“The Sixth Great Vow: May all sentient beings suffering from illnesses and physical injuries of all sorts be blessed with good health, both physical and mental.”

“The Seventh Great Vow: May the sick be cured, the helpless be helped, the impoverished be given food and shelter.”

“The Eighth Great Vow: May all sentient beings who suffer both inwardly and outwardly, because of their gender or gender identity, find inner strength and peace.”

“The Ninth Great Vow: May all sentient beings be free of unwholesome thoughts and unskillful views and find the path to Buddhahood.”

“The Tenth Great Vow: May all sentient beings who are oppressed, imprisoned, or condemned to death be blessed and saved from duḥkha.”

“The Eleventh Great Vow: May all sentient beings who perform unwholesome actions out of desperation find forgiveness and the path to a peaceful life.”

“The Twelfth Great Vow: May all sentient beings who are utterly destitute and exposed to the elements, find the path out from duḥkha to relief.”

[OFFICIANT 3]

“Mañjuśrī, these are the twelve sublime vows made by Bhaiṣajyaguru, the World-Honored Medicine Buddha Lapis Lazuli Radiance Tathāgata, Arhat, the Perfectly Awakened, when he was cultivating the Bodhisattva path”

8. Chanting: the Medicine Buddha Dharani

[ONCE CHANTING BEGINS, EACH PERSON COMES FORWARD, BOWS BEFORE THE ALTAR, TAKES A CUP OF TEA, BOWS AND RETURNS TO THEIR SEAT.]

Namo bhagavate bhaiṣajyaguru vaiḍūrya prabharājāya tathāgatāya
arahate samyak sambuddhāya tadyathā: oṃ bhaiṣajye bhaiṣajye
bhaiṣajya-samudgate svāhā...*[REPEAT]*

[ALL TOGETHER]

Do away with illness. Do away with illness. Do away with the great illness of the ignorance of our True Nature!

[ONCE CHANT IS FINISHED THE SANGHA DRINKS THE TEA TOGETHER]

9. Prayer to The Medicine Buddha

[ALL TOGETHER]

We beseech you, Bhaiṣajyaguru, The Medicine Buddha, whose sky-colored holy body of lapis lazuli signifies omniscient wisdom and compassion as vast as limitless space, please grant us your blessings.

We beseech you, Radiant Healing Medicine Buddha, who holds in the right hand, the king of medicines symbolizing the vow to help all sentient beings who are suffering from illness, please grant us your blessings.

We beseech you, Compassionate Medicine Buddha, who holds in the left hand, a bowl of nectar symbolizing the vow to give the glorious undying nectar of the Dharma that leads to the elimination of sickness, old age, and death, please grant us your blessings.

10. Sitting Meditation

[SANGHA IS INVITED TO CONTEMPLATE THE IMAGE OF BHAIJAGURU, SILENTLY RECITE THE MEDICINE BUDDHA'S NAME OR DHARANI]



11. The Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva Ceremony Opening

[OFFICANT 1] 

Once one person is able to give rise to a deep sense of peace and joy, the whole world benefits.

We have gathered today to light the lamp of peace and joy in our hearts by chanting, practicing meditation, reciting scripture and being mindful in order to be in communion with the essence of great love, great compassion, joy, equanimity, and fearlessness.


These are the motivating forces that can transform situations from fear and danger and restore peace and joy where they have been lost. The peace and joy of this world depends on your peace and joy at this very moment.

12. Scripture Recitation

[OFFICANT 2]

from “***The Lotus of the Wonderful Dharma: Universal Door of The Bodhisattva Who Contemplates the Sounds of the World***”

Opening Verse:

*Chanting the Lotus Sutra by night, the sound shook the galaxies.
The next morning when planet Earth woke up, her lap was full of
flowers.* 

Discourse:

[OFFICIANT 3]

The bodhisattva Akṣayamati² asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One...Why did they give that bodhisattva the name Avalokiteśvara?”

The Buddha replied, “Because actions founded on her deep aspiration can respond to the needs of any being in any circumstance. Aspirations as wide as the oceans were made for countless lifetimes. She has attended to billions of Buddhas, her great aspiration purified by mindfulness.

Whoever calls her name or sees her image, if their mind be perfectly collected and pure, invoking the strength of Avalokiteśvara, they will overcome all duḥkha throughout all the worlds.

[EACH PARTICIPANT TAKES TURN READING EACH ASPIRATION ALOUD]

“When those with cruel intent threaten us, invoking the strength of Avalokiteśvara, all threats lose power.

“When lost or gripped by fears of the unknown, invoking the strength of Avalokiteśvara, we find our way, all fears are banished.

“Should someone intend to knock us from our center, invoking the strength of Avalokiteśvara, we remain unmoved.

² The Bodhisattva Akṣayamati, (Inexhaustable Awareness) is one of 16 bodhisattvas of the bhadrakalpa (the present kalpa). He possesses the ability to perceive and understand all actions of cause and effect.

“Chased by a cruel person, invoking the strength of Avalokiteśvara, we find our way out of danger.

“Threatened bodily harm and death, invoking the strength of Avalokiteśvara, all weapons become harmless.

“Imprisoned or bound, invoking the strength of Avalokiteśvara, we find freedom.

“Poisons, curses, and negativity putting us into danger, invoking the strength of Avalokiteśvara, harmful things return to their source.

“Attacked by spirits of all kinds, invoking the strength of Avalokiteśvara, they will do us no harm.

“Threatened by wild animals, invoking the strength of Avalokiteśvara, will cause them to run far away.

“Confronted with toxins of the air or blood, invoking the strength of Avalokiteśvara, they depart the blood, the air clears.

“Caught beneath a storm with lightning and hail stones, invoking the strength of Avalokiteśvara, the storm ends, sunlight appears.

“All living beings caught in distress, oppressed by immeasurable duḥkha are rescued in ten thousand ways by the wonderful power of Avalokiteśvara’s understanding.

“Miraculous power with no shortcoming, wisdom and skillful means throughout the ten directions, there is no place Avalokiteśvara does not appear.

“The paths to realms of duḥkha, the pain of birth, old age, sickness, and death...are all purified, brought to an end, through Avalokiteśvara’s aspiration.

“Gaze of truth, of purity, of boundless understanding, the gaze of love, of compassion, Avalokiteśvara’s gaze is to be always honored and practiced.

“Look of immaculate light and purity, the light of Wisdom dispelling darkness...illuminating the whole world.

“Heart of compassion like rolling thunder, heart of love like gentle clouds, water of Dharma nectar raining upon us, extinguishing the fire of afflictions.

“In the courtroom, the place of lawsuits, on the fields in the midst of war, invoking the strength of Avalokiteśvara, our enemies become our friends.

“Sound of wonder, noble sound, sound of one looking deeply into the world, extraordinary sound, sound of the rising tide, the sound to which we will always listen.

“With mindfulness, free from doubts, in moments of danger and affliction, our faith in the purity of Avalokiteśvara is where we go for refuge.

“We bow in gratitude to the one who has all the virtues, regarding the world with compassionate eyes, an Ocean of Well-Being beyond measure.”

13. Chanting: “Namo’valokiteshvara”

[OFFICANT 1]

The river of attachment carries living beings away to the sea of duḥkha, where waves of afflictions rise by the thousands to submerge us. In order to transcend the wheel of samsara, with all our concentration and one-point mind, let us now chant to Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion:


[AT THE SOUND OF THE BELL EACH PERSON COMES FORWARD, BOWS BEFORE THE ALTAR, OFFERS INCENSE FOR A LOVED ONE, BOWS AND RETURNS TO HIS OR HER SEAT.]

Namo'valokiteśvara....[REPEAT]



14. Prayer to Avalokiteśvara

[ALL TOGETHER]

We bow respectfully to Avalokiteśvara, 
to your great vow always to be there for all beings,
your capacity to look deeply at the world with compassion,
listen deeply to understand and to relieve duḥkha,
and with your holy willow branch,
to sprinkle the nectar of immortality,
cleansing our minds of all impurities.

We vow to take refuge in you with all our heart
Respectfully, we offer you our vows:

Namo Avalokiteśvara, 

We vow to look deeply into the Five Skandhas³.

We vow to see the true nature of Śūnyatā.

We vow to soon reach the shore of awakening.

We vow to overcome all obstacles.

We vow to realize anuttarā samyak-saṃbodhi⁴.

Namo Avalokiteśvara, 

We vow to be present in all three bodies of the Trikaya⁵.

³ The Five Skandhas: form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness.

⁴ Unexcelled Perfect Awakening: the state of being of an awakened Buddha

⁵ Trikaya: three bodies of a Buddha—Dharmakāya,(essence body), the Saṃbhogakāya (enjoyment body), and Nirmāṇakāya (physical body)

We vow to realize the fruits of liberation.

We vow to cultivate great compassion.

We vow to understand Buddha-Nature deeply.

We vow to purify our minds.

Namo Avalokiteśvara, 

Please help us be free from craving.

Please help us dissolve the worries in our minds.

Please give us skillful means.

Please help us build sangha.

Please help us transform anger and hatred.

Please help us uproot our ignorance..

Please give us the clarity of skillful view and thought.

Namo Avalokiteśvara, 

We vow to nurture the golden lotus of awakening.

We vow to practice ahimsa.

We vow to build brotherhood and sisterhood.

We vow to show gratitude to our spiritual lineage.

We vow to use skillful speech.

We vow to look with loving eyes.

Namo Avalokiteśvara, 

We vow to practice deep listening

We vow to live mindfully and with clarity.

We vow to realize one-pointed concentration.

We vow to walk gently upon the earth.

We vow to abide peacefully in the ground of reality.

Namo Avalokiteśvara, 

Please come with us to the war zones, to stop the killing.

Please walk with us to the places of sickness and duḥkha, bringing compassionate nectar and medicine.

Please walk with us to the realm of the hungry ghosts, bringing the dharma food of understanding and love

Please walk with us to the realm of hell in order to cool the heat of afflictions.

Please walk with us to places of conflict in order to remove hatred and anger and help the source of love to flow again.

Homage to Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion



15. Sitting Meditation


[SANGHA IS INVITED TO CONTEMPLATE THE IMAGE OF ĀVALOKITEŚVARA, OR SILENTLY RECITE THE BODHISATTVA'S NAME]



16. The Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva Ceremony Opening

[OFFICIANT 2]

With deep sincerity we offer an invitation to all beings:

Please come and listen! 

In this world of impermanence, we offer this ceremony to those who have passed on. Further we make dharma offerings to all spirits—those who have found rest and those who are still wandering.

[OFFICIANT 3]

True nature is before thinking. Dharmakāya has no form. Conditions and relationships appear and disappear like reflections in a mirror. The effects of karma rise and fall like a water bucket rising and falling in a well. We cannot understand this miraculously changing mind. The four

elements disperse as in a dream. The six senses, six sense organs and consciousnesses are originally Śūnyatā. To understand that, the Buddha and the eminent teachers return to the place of light.



[OFFICIANT 3]

The sun is setting over the western mountains, the moon is rising in the east.

17. Scripture Recitation

[OFFICIANT 1]

from “*Sutra of the Fundamental Vows of the Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha*”

Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva’s Vow:

“Even if the good deeds of beings are as little as a hair, a drop of water, a grain of sand, a mote of dust, or a bit of down, I shall gradually help living beings to liberation. World-Honored One, do not feel distressed over beings in generations to come. Only after the hells are empty will I become a Buddha.”



[OFFICIANT 2]

Discourse:

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva asked the Buddha: “Please World-Honored One tell us in more detail the ways and means by which invoking Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva brings joy and blessings to sentient beings, so that the future generations may understand and practice the dharma.

The Buddha offered this reply: “Whoever recites Kṣitigarbha’s name or sees his image, if their mind be perfectly collected and pure, they will be freed from wrongs committed even thirty kalpas ago.

[ALL TOGETHER OR READ EACH VERSE ALOUD INDIVIDUALLY]

“Whoever plays music to or chants Kṣitigarbha’s mantra or if they encourage one or more persons to follow them by doing the same, and if their minds be perfectly collected and pure, they will be freed from all intruding evils.

“Whoever bows repeatedly to or chants aloud Kṣitigarbha’s name and states *"on behalf of those who are long in the beds of duḥkha, whose illnesses are very great, we make these offerings and pay homage,"* repeating the offering in front of the sick or suffering person or within their hearing, if their mind be perfectly collected and pure, they will be freed from all negative karma.

“Whoever bows or chants aloud Kṣitigarbha’s name continuously for forty-nine days on behalf of those who have died, if their minds be perfectly collected and pure, such benefited persons will be assured a favorable rebirth and the pain of loss will be eased.

“Whoever chants the name Kṣitigarbha, or who has even one thought of praise for him, or shows respect for him, please persuade them to persevere in such efforts, and if their minds be perfectly collected and pure, they will achieve inconceivable merits in the present and in future.

“Please tell those who have frightening visions to chant to Kṣitigarbha before images of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas for three or seven times. If they cannot do this themselves, ask someone else to act for them, and if their minds be perfectly collected and pure, all unsettled energies will be relieved and liberated.

“If parents at the advent of newly born children, chant Kṣitigarbha’s name ten thousand times, with minds perfectly collected and pure, then

the newly-born children will gather love and compassion throughout their lives.

“Dwellers on earth who act unmindfully in their daily life in such a way to cause harm, steal, commit adultery, lie or become intoxicated are advised to chant Kṣitigarbha’s name before images of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas for ten days within a month, once a day, with minds perfectly collected and pure, their duḥkha will ease within seven to ten miles of distance throughout the ten directions.

[OFFICIANT 3]

“Since Kṣitigarbha made such great vows many kalpas ago to bring joy and blessings to sentient beings, it is the duty of all to harmonize with those vows and to spread them.”

[OFFICIANT 1]

After listening to what the Buddha said, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva replied: “I prostrate, go for refuge, and make offerings to the Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha who has immeasurable compassion for me and all sentient beings who are suffering and whose minds are obscured, who has qualities like the sky and liberates sentient beings from all duḥkha and gives every happiness.”

18. Invocation of The Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha

[ALL TOGETHER]

We invoke your name, Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva. We aspire to learn your way so as to be present where there is darkness, duḥkha, oppression, and despair, so that we may bring light, hope, relief, and liberation to those places.

We are determined not to forget about or abandon those who are in desperate situations. We will do our best to establish contact with them when they cannot find a way out of their suffering and when their cries for help, justice, equality, and human rights are not heard.

Hell can be found in many places on earth; we do not want to make more hells on earth; we will help unmake the hells that already exist. We will practice to realize the qualities of perseverance and stability that belong to the earth so that, like the earth, we can always be supportive and faithful to all those in need.

[OFFICIANT 2]

If you suffer in the painful realms, please listen so that the fire of karma may be extinguished and that you may be freed from duḥkha. With all our concentration and one-point mind, let us chant to Kṣitigarbha, Bodhisattva of Great Aspiration:



19. Chanting: Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva Mantra

[ONCE CHANT BEGINS EACH PERSON COMES FORWARD, BOWS BEFORE THE ALTAR, OFFERS INCENSE FOR A LOVED ONE, BOWS AND RETURNS TO HIS OR HER SEAT.]

[ALL TOGETHER]

oṃ pra mani dhani soha....*[REPEAT]*

20. Sitting Meditation

[SANGHA IS INVITED TO CONTEMPLATE THE IMAGE OF KṢITIGARBHA, OR SILENTLY RECITE THE BODHISATTVA'S NAME OR MANTRA]



21. Closing Prayer

[ALL TOGETHER]

This body is not me. I am not limited by this body. I am life without boundaries. I have never been born, and I have never died.

Look at the ocean and the sky filled with stars—manifestations from my wondrous true mind.

Since before time, I have been free. Birth and death are only doors through which we pass, sacred thresholds on our journey. Birth and death are a game of hide-and-seek.

So smile with me, hold my hand, let us say good-bye, say good-bye, in order to meet again soon. We meet today. We will meet again tomorrow. We will meet at the source of every moment. We meet each other in all forms of life.

22. Sharing the 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.

23. Extinguish Candles

[EXTINGUISH ALTAR CANDLES - LEFT TO RIGHT] [EXTINGUISH SMALL LIGHTING CANDLE IF IT IS LIT]

[COVER WATER & RICE OFFERING BOWLS—LEFT TO RIGHT]

24. Three Bows

[ FOR EACH BOW] 3x

END OF SERVICE