

A Collection of Prayers by Thang Tong Gyalpo

Gathered from various sources

*Great Compassionate One in person, self-arisen Lord of Siddhas,
You revealed many ancient treasures and concealed more for the future,
And, with your miraculous powers, you tamed the most difficult of disciples,
Immortal Thangtong Gyalpo, to you I pay homage!*

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1. Introduction

I've gathered the following prayers by the Mahasiddha Tang Tong Gyalpo from various sources for my own benefit, and for those with a connection to Buddhist traditions of prayer.

It seemed necessary to preface these prayers in some way, and so I have included a brief essay on Saints in the East and the West, outlining their nature and activity. This is followed by an account I found of the person of Tang Tong Gyalpo, who lived in Tibet in the 14th century.

I've brought these prayers together now, in September of 2017, because of the natural disasters, disharmony, and threat of wars all happening all at once at this time. It's clear to me that we need as much help now from the spiritual realms as we can bring to bear through our own individual practice, hence this collection. May it benefit as intended.

Jason Espada

San Francisco,
September 22nd, 2017

2. Saints East and West

“Man generally is not conscious of the power he has. When a man becomes conscious of that power, he is able to do things which people cannot ordinarily accomplish.” - Hazarat Inayat Khan

The mention of saints from the outset challenges our ordinary ideas of the way things are. The thought of extraordinary individuals has the power to shift what we conceive of as possible in this human realm. It also changes what we think of our teachers, ourselves, and our brothers and sisters.

A saint, both in the East and in Western traditions, is something more than a good person, or someone of exemplary character. Moving past this mundane conception, we enter into a supernatural framework for understanding the lives and influence of a saintly person.

In Western Traditions, and Catholicism in particular, we find a saint defined as someone who facilitates a connection with the Divine. They are formally recognized by the Church because they have been a factor in a miracle of some kind. Informally however there are many more people who are prayed to in times of trouble who are ‘under the radar’ of the official church.

The most frequently prayed Western mantra is the rosary, or the prayer to Mary, and a great many people over the centuries have reported experiencing her blessings.

In Judaism and Islam as well, the existence of holy men and women has been a part of their traditions of prayer and a source spiritual support.

When I was in Taiwan, I noticed that there were altars in various neighborhoods, where people prayed and left offerings. I asked the people at the school where I was working who as being prayed to there. They told me they were ‘local gods’. I asked, How many local gods are there in Taipei? and, after going back and forth in Mandarin for a couple of minutes, my co-worker turned to me and said, “Fourteen”. I later learned that in Taiwan’s blend of Buddhist and Taoist traditions, a person could, through their conduct and activity, ascend to the level where they are recognized and honored as divine. Quite different from our ordinary ideas!

As a Buddhist in the West these days, not much is said about saints, or holy people, or the help they can give a person. It’s considered for the most part to be fantasy, or

belonging to the realm of the mythological, at a remove from our actual lives in the world. And yet, the entirety of Vajrayana Buddhism as it is practiced today worldwide rests on this view that there divine beings or energies within and around us, that can be called upon, and that can help us in all kinds of ways. The well known practice of the Bodhisattva-Divinity Tara, for example, for many people has the reputation for being swift to respond, and for helping people in distress or in various forms of material or spiritual need.

In addition, some South East Buddhist schools as well have elements that can be considered magical in their working, although these are not nearly as well known about or discussed here in the West. In Thailand, in the last century in particular, there has been a subset of a tradition of monks making amulets for people's protection, and a legacy of stories of their effectiveness.

When we speak of a siddhi in Buddhism, there are two types, the ordinary, and supreme accomplishment. Ordinary siddhis could be such things as clairvoyance, a lesser or greater ability to heal, to pacify or purify a troubled environment, to control the weather, or to gather needed resources, The Supreme Siddhi, it's taught, is enlightenment, which includes all the other capacities.

Mahasiddhas, or Great Beings in Buddhism are those individuals, such as Tang Tong Gyalpo, who have extraordinary qualities and abilities to benefit others. Their words as we have received them have power, and time and distance are not obstacles to our receiving their positive influence. We may not believe any of this, of course, until we have some experience of it ourselves, and then even then, we may have some difficulty getting our heads around it. This is only on account of the persistence and strength of our habitual mundane views, on personal and collective levels.

There have been societies in the past, and there are still a few today that honor what is called Pure Perception, or Sacred Outlook. They are not easy to find, or receive with respect, but they do exist, for those willing to make an effort to find them.

In my own experience, I have the remarkable example of my own teachers, and witnessing the effect they've had on my life. I count among them even teachers I haven't met in person, but who for some karmic reason, I have a connection. And this is what it comes down to here, it seems, when talking about the influence of holy people, and spiritual beings of all types, angels, and ancestors. When we have a connection to one or more of them, it broadens what we think of as life in this

world. We know we are not alone, and, what's more, in times of trouble we have a resource we can call on.

Dogmas often enter into into because of our differences, but it need not be that way. If we can see our connections with the divine as a personal matter, and our commonality with the others who make up our community, it opens the way to having respect beyond those names and forms and practices that work well for us.

Those great beings who have made their way onto our personal altar, or refuge tree are there for a reason. We have faith that is based on some experience of their beautiful effect in our lives, and in this world. It matters not a whit if others don't have the same experience. The spiritual life in this way is like eating. No one can do it for you, and no one can deny or debate your experience of being nourished and sustained spiritually. And so I offer this prayer:

May we all find strength and support throughout all our lives

May we share abundantly the riches we have received from our teachers and from traditions, and from the divine in all its forms in our life

and may there be peace and harmony, well being, and an abundance of blessings everywhere.

3. A brief biography

Chakzampa Thang Tong Gyalpo is one of the most significant Mahāsiddhas of Tibet who worked in the first half of the 15th century in Tibet and Bhutan.

Thangtong Gyalpo was a yogi, philosopher, poet, exorcist, teacher, architect, engineer, painter, sculptor, doctor, treasure revealer and last but not least, an iron chain suspension bridge builder, a universal genius with supernatural abilities.

The mad saint (sgrub smyon), the destroyer of illusion ('khrulzhig), the performer of miracles, the medicine man who dispelled epidemics, the protector from Hor invasions, and the mender of harmful geomantic configurations (me btsa' gso ba). He was also an accomplished master of technology, who built numerous iron bridges and ferries, erected many devotional objects symbolising body, speech and mind and allegedly pioneered the fashioning of statues out of precious stones.

He was a great propagator of the Avalokiteshvara cycle and sadhana.

2. The Outer, Inner and Secret Refuge Practice, also called The Space Refuge, of the Mahāsiddha Thangtong Gyalpo

All mother sentient beings as infinite as space take refuge in the lama, the precious buddha.

In the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha, we take refuge.

In the assembly of lamas, yidam deities and dākinīs, we take refuge.

In the dharmakāya, the inseparable emptiness and clarity of our own minds, we take refuge.

This form of “going for refuge” was given by Arya Avalokitesvara to Kanga pa Päljor Sherab, and by him to the Mahasiddha Thang Tong Gyälpo. Afterwards, it provided infinite benefits for migrating beings.

This prayer carries the blessing of Avalokiteśvara, who transmitted it to the Lord of Dharma Ka Ngapa and told him to give it to Gelong Tsöndru Zangpo (Thangtong Gyalpo), saying that if he taught it to the people of this world, it would dispel all sickness, negative influences and obstacles right now, and then also grant protection from the lower realms. Virtue!

3. A Prayer to Dispel Famine

This aspiration prayer was composed by the master mahāsiddha Thangtong Gyalpo in the presence of the Jowo Rinpoche in Lhasa. It is known as “the vajra words that radiate cloud-masses of nectar-like blessings”.

First, you generated the supreme mind of unsurpassable awakening
 Firmly set upon the liberation of sentient beings in their infinitude,
 Then, you perfected the two accumulations, O compassionate Victorious One,
 You whose love embraces beings bereft of any protector in these degenerate times:
 Protect them without fail!

For these beings plagued by hunger, thirst, difficulties, and suffering,
 Release upon the world and the Land of Snows
 A rain of all the pleasant things the senses can enjoy,
 Including jewels, food, wealth, grain, and bedding!

Pacify harm among the four elements,
 Untimely wind and fire, or inauspicious rains and waters!

Let grains, plants, harvests and the like
 Mature fully, just as in the golden age!

Through the strength of aspirations such as these,
 Inspired by loving-kindness and compassion,
 May sicknesses, weapons, and famines be thoroughly pacified
 And beings enjoy long life, good health, well-being and happiness!

Through the power of the compassion of the victorious ones and their heirs,
 And the infallible power of the interdependence of causes and results,
 May the teachings of the Victorious One spread and flourish,
 And all beings swiftly reach unsurpassable awakening!

This aspiration prayer was made by the realized master Thangtong Gyalpo in the presence of the Jowo Rinpoche in Lhasa at a time when Tibet— particularly Kham —was struck by a great famine. The power of this prayer saved the Tibetan people from sufferings brought on by hunger and thirst, for at that time the noble Avalokiteśvara poured down a rain of grains from the sky.

Translated by Gyurmé Avertin, Rigpa Translations, 2014.

4. A Prayer for Protection from Earthquakes and Natural Calamities

Associated with Thang Tong Gyalpo

Attributed as a selection from A Prayer Which Spontaneously Fulfills All Wishes, a treasure (gter) discovered by Rigdzin Goddem (1337-1408)

Here is an Earthquake Protection Amulet with Thangon Gyalpo and an image of him with the Kalachakra symbol and powerful mantra surrounding it. With all aspects into one the image is now called Thangton Sayo Sungwai Khorlo from the Dudjom lineage. An incarnation of Guru Rinpoche and Chenrezig inseparable.

Wherever it is, it is intended to avert or reduce the effects of earthquakes. Please feel free to spread it far and wide.

In the past in Tibet, Tibetans have strong faith in this particular image to prevent and protect the inhabitants of a household from earthquake. It was considered so important that it was the first image moved from one shrine to another.

On the right with Tibetan script and English translation is the Natural Calamities mantra. Recite it along with having the powerful image of Thangon Gyalpo in the house.



ས་རྩ་མེ་རྩུང་འབྲུང་བའི་བར་ཆད་ཀྱིས།

When the obstacles from earth, water, fire or air

སྐྱུ་ལུས་ཉེན་ཅིང་འཇིག་པའི་དུས་བྱུང་ཚེ།

Endanger or destroy our illusory bodies,

ཡིད་གཉིས་ཐེ་ཚོམ་མེད་པར་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས།

Without hesitation or divided mind we pray to you;

ཨོ་རྒྱན་འབྲུང་བ་བཞི་ཡི་ལྷ་མོར་བཅས།

Orgyen with the female deities of the four elements,

འབྲུང་བ་རང་སར་ཞི་བར་ཐེ་ཚོམ་མེད།

Without doubt will pacify the elements instantly.

ཨོ་རྒྱན་པརྩ་འབྲུང་གནས་ལ་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས།

Padmasambava of Orgyen, to you we pray;

བསམ་པ་ལྷུན་གྱིས་འགྲུབ་པར་བྱིན་གྱིས་རྫོབས།

Please bestow the blessing of spontaneous fulfillment of our wishes.

The Prayer for Protection from Earthquakes and Natural Calamities:

When the obstacles from earth, water, fire or air
Endanger or destroy our illusory bodies,
Without hesitation or divided mind we pray to you;
Orgyen with the female deities of the four elements,
Without doubt will pacify the elements instantly.
Padmasambhava of Orgyen, to you we pray;
Please bestow the blessing of spontaneous fulfillment of our wishes.

5. The Prayer Liberating Sakya from Disease

The Vajra¹ Speech of the Mahasiddha Thang Tong Gyälpo

Translated and edited by Bhikshu Thubten Tsültrim (George Churinoff)

All sentient beings equal to space go for refuge to the precious Guru-Buddha. We go for refuge to the Buddha², we go for refuge to the Dharma, and we go for refuge to the Sangha³.

We go for refuge to the assembly of Gurus, meditational deities, dakas and dakinis.

We go for refuge to the empty clarity of our own minds, the Dharmakaya.

Recite these verses as many times as you are able.

OM MANI PADME HUM

Recite this mantra hundreds of times, as many as you are able.

Then:

May all the diseases that sadden the minds of sentient beings and that result from karma and temporary conditions, such as the harm of spirits, illnesses and the elements, not occur in the realms of the world.

May whatever suffering that comes from life-threatening diseases—which, like a butcher leading an animal to be slaughtered, separate the body from the mind in a mere instant—not occur in the realms of the world.

May all embodied beings be unharmed by acute, chronic⁴ and other infectious diseases, the mere sound of whose name terrifies beings as though they were placed inside the mouth of Yama, the lord of death.

May all embodied beings be unharmed by the 80,000 classes of harmful interferers⁵, the 360 evil spirits⁶ that harm suddenly, the 424 diseases and so forth.

May whatever suffering that comes from disturbances of the four elements, depriving the body and mind of every pleasure, be totally pacified, and may the body and mind have radiance and power and be endowed with long life, good health and well-being.

By the compassion of the Gurus and Triple Gem, the power of the dakas and dakinis, the Dharma protectors and guardians, and by the strength of the infallibility of karma and its results, may these many dedications and prayers be fulfilled as soon as they are made.

Colophon:

Once an epidemic was spreading from one person to another at the great monastery of the Glorious Sakya (tradition). Whatever the mantric masters tried – effigies, tormas, medicines, mantras, protection amulets, and so forth – had no effect, and the monastery was in danger of annihilation. At that time the master Mahasiddha (T’ang T’ong Gyalpo) performed the ‘Space’ refuge⁷, recited a number of Manis⁸, and proclaimed this prayer called ‘Attainment’, during which the entire epidemic immediately ceased in dependence upon its performance. Thereby, it became renowned as the vajra speech radiating masses of clouds of blessing entitled ‘The Prayer Liberating Sakya from Disease’.

Sarvamangalam⁹.

Notes:

1. The vajra (Tib: *rdo-rje*) is a symbol of immutability, the unchanging union of wisdom and method.
2. The guru (Tib: *bla-ma*) is the spiritual guide who in esoteric practice is understood to be an emanation of the Buddha and directs our practice. The Buddha is a fully enlightened being and represents our ultimate potential of spiritual growth and healing. The Dharma is that which protects us from suffering – the spiritual teachings and their realization in practice. The Sangha is the spiritual community who, through example and guidance, help us practice Dharma. Thus, the Three Jewels of Refuge – Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha – are the spiritual equivalents of doctor, medicine and nurse.

3. This form of “going for refuge” was given by Arya Avalokitesvara to Ka nga pa Päljor Sherab, and by him to the Mahasiddha Thang Tong Gyälpo. Afterwards, it provided infinite benefits for migrating beings. (Note: *dka-lnga-pa* is Tibetan for a person who has mastered the five (*lnga*) difficult (*dka*) teachings: the perfection of wisdom (*prajña-paramita*), the middle way philosophy (*madhyamaka*), higher knowledge (*abhidharma*), epistemology (*pramana*), and discipline (*vinaya*.)

4. Acute infectious diseases affect the patient for a short time, whereas chronic diseases last for months or years. Many types of infectious disease are mentioned in certain prayers to the tantric deity White Parasol (Tib: sDugs-dkar, Skt: Sitatapatra).

5. In general, harmful interferers (Tib: *bgegs*; Skt: *vighna*) are sentient beings, but they may also be events, such as famines.

6. Evil spirits (Tib: *ye-'drog*) are non-humans who interrupt virtuous practice and connect one with what is unwanted. The term is synonymous with demon (Tib: *gdön*; Skt: *graha*).

7. Tib: *Nam-mka'-mai skyab-'dro*, so-called because the verse has the words “equal to space.”

8. Short for the mantra OM MANI PÄDME HUM.

9. Sanskrit for “May all be auspicious!”

For the Benefit of All Beings as Vast as the Skies, by Tang Tong Gyalpo

A Chenrezig Sadhana

This book contains the recitation for the meditation of the Great Compassionate One called 'For the Benefit of All Beings as Vast as the Skies', Tib. 'Dro.don.Kha.khyab.Ma.'

(Begin with REFUGE.)

From this moment until the Heart of Enlightenment is reached, I and all sentient beings as limitless as the sky * go for refuge to all the glorious Holy Lamas; we go for refuge to all the Yidams, the Dieties gathered in the Mandalas; we go for refuge to all the Buddhas, those that have conquered and gone beyond; we go for refuge to all the Supreme Dharma; we go for refuge to all the Noble Sangha; we go for refuge to all the Dakas, Dakinis, Protectors and Defenders of Dharma who possess the eye of Transcending Awareness.

(Repeat three times from *.)

(Finishing the Refuge, the recitation for the Chenrezig meditation follows. First, the REFUGE and the Raising of BODHICITTA:)

* To the Buddhas, Dharma, and Supreme Assembly I go for refuge until Enlightenment. May I, through merit gained by gifts and so on, accomplish Buddhahood for the sake of all beings.

(Repeat three times from *.)

(VISUALIZATION of the DIETY)

On the crown of my head and all sentient beings pervading space, there rests a white lotus and moon seat. From HRI (on the lotus and moon seat) appears Noble All-Seeing One, white, bright, and radiating five-colored light rays, smiling charmingly and gazing with Eyes of Compassion.

He has four arms, the upper two joined together and the lower two holding a white lotus and crystal rosary. He is adorned by precious jewels and silks; a deer skin covers his upper part (left shoulder). The Buddha of Boundless Light adorns his

head. He sits in the vajra asana. His back is supported by a stainless moon; he is the essence of all sources of refuge.

(Make the following prayer thinking all beings are making it with you as if in a single voice.)

* Lord, whose white body is not clothed by fault, whose head is adorned by a Perfect Buddha, who looks upon all beings with Eyes of Compassion, to you Chenrezig I pay homage.

(Repeat as least three times from *.)

(The SEVEN BRANCH PRAYER)

To the Sublime One, the Mighty Chenrezig, to the Buddhas and their Sons, who reside in the ten directions and the three times, with complete sincerity I pay homage.

I offer flowers, incense, butter-lamps, perfume, food, music, and other real and imaginary offerings and so on, and beseech the Noble Assembly to accept them.

I confess all the unskillful actions caused by the power of conflicting emotions, the ten unvirtuous deeds and the five sins of limitless consequence done from beginningless time until now.

I rejoice in the spiritual merit of whatever virtue Sravakas, Pratyeka Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and ordinary beings gather throughout the three times.

I pray that the Dharma Wheel of the Mahayana, Hinayana, and of the Teachings common to both be turned in accordance with the wishes and aptitudes of beings.

I beseech the Buddhas not to pass into Nirvana as long as samsara is not emptied, but to look with compassion upon sentient beings who wallow in the ocean of suffering.

May whatever merit I have accumulated be the cause for the Enlightenment of Beings; may I quickly become a splendid leader of beings.

(The Vajra words of prayer to the Excellent Chenrezig composed by the Great Mahasiddha, Tang tong Gyalpo, in his incarnation as Gelong Pema Karpo:)

I pray to you Lama Chenrezig.
 I pray to you Yidam Chenrezig.
 I pray to you Perfect Noble Chenrezig.
 I pray to you Lord Protector Chenrezig.
 I pray to you Lord of Love Chenrezig.

Great Compassionate Victor, please hold us with your compassion, numberless beings who wander in endless samsara experiencing unbearable suffering. There is no other refuge than you, Protector! Please bestow the blessing to obtain omniscient Buddhahood.

By the power of accumulating negative Karma from beginningless time, sentient beings, through the force of anger, are born as hell beings and experience the suffering of heat and cold. May they all be born in your presence, Perfect Diety.
 OM MANI PADME HUNG

By the power of accumulating negative Karma from beginningless time, sentient beings, through the force of greed, are born in the realm of pretas and experience the suffering of hunger and thirst. May they all be born in your perfect realm, the Potala. OM MANI PADME HUNG

By the power of accumulating negative Karma from beginningless time, sentient beings, through the force of stupidity, are born as animals and experience the suffering of dullness and stupidity. May they all be born in your presence, Protector. OM MANI PADME HUNG

By the power of accumulating negative Karma from beginningless time, sentient beings, through the force of desire, are born in the human realm and experience the suffering of excessive activity and constant frustration. May they all be born in the Pure Land of Dewachen. OM MANI PADME HUNG

(This prayer, the vajra words of prayer to the Sublime Chenrezig, was composed by the Mahasiddha, Tang tong Gyalpo, who remembered them from a previous incarnation when he had been the monk Pema Karpo, who addressed this prayer one-pointedly to the Sublime Chenrezig while doing the Nyung Ne practice from his twentieth to his eightieth year.)

By the power of accumulating negative Karma from beginningless time, sentient beings, through the force of jealousy, are born in the realm of the demi-gods and experience the suffering of fighting and quarreling.

May they all be born in your realm, the Potala. OM MANI PADME HUNG

By the power of accumulating negative Karma from beginningless time, sentient beings, through the force of pride, are born in the realm of the gods and experience the suffering of change and falling. May they all be born in your realm, the Potala. OM MANI PADME HUNG

Wherever I am born may my deeds, by equalling Chenrezig's, liberate beings from impure realms and spread the perfect sound of the six syllables in the ten directions. Through the power of praying to you Perfect Noble One, may beings who I am to discipline pay the greatest attention to action and result, and diligently practice virtue and the Dharma for the benefit of beings.

(And then:)

Through this one-pointed prayer, light radiates from the body of the Sublime One and purifies impure Karma, impure appearances, and the deluded mind. The outer realm is the Pure Land of Dewachen, and the body, speech, and mind of beings therein are the perfect form, sublime speech, and pure mind of Mighty Chenrezig, the indivisible union of appearance, sound, and vivid intelligence with voidness.

(Meditate like this as you recite the mantra.)

OM MANI PADME HUNG

(Recite as many times as you are able. Finally, let the mind remain absorbed in its own essence without making distinction between subject, object, and act. Then repeat:)

My body, the bodies of others and all appearances are the perfect form of the Sublime One, all sounds the melody of the Six Syllables, and all thoughts the vastness of the Great Jnana.

(DEDICATING the MERIT)

Through this virtue, may I quickly achieve the realization of Mighty Chenrezig and may I bring every single being to that same state.

(This text, called 'The Recitation for the Meditation of the Great Compassionate One for the Benefit of Beings as Vast as the Skies', was composed by the Mahasiddha Tang tong Gyalpo and bears the blessing of his speech.)

Through the merit of reciting and meditating may I and every being to whom I am connected, when these imperfect forms are left behind, be miraculously born in Dewachen. May I then immediately cross the ten levels and send out emanations for the benefit of others.

Through this virtue, may all beings perfect the accumulation of spiritual merit and awareness. May they attain the Two Supreme Bodies which arise from merit and awareness.

Bodhicitta is precious; may it arise in those who have not cultivated it. In those who have cultivated it, may it not diminish; may it ever grow and flourish.