Lam-Rim Prayers

Lama Tsong Khapa and his two main disciples
Drawing by Andy Weber
Care of Dharma Books

Dharma books contain the teachings of the Buddha; they have the power to protect against lower rebirth and to point the way to liberation. Therefore, they should be treated with respect – kept off the floor and places where people sit or walk – and not stepped over. They should be covered or protected for transporting and kept in a high, clean place separate from more mundane materials. Other objects should not be placed on top of Dharma books and materials. Licking the fingers to turn pages is considered bad form as well as negative karma. If it is necessary to dispose of written Dharma materials, they should be burned rather than thrown in the trash. When burning Dharma texts, it is taught to first recite a prayer or mantra, such as OM, AH, HUM. Then, you can visualize the letters of the texts (to be burned) absorbing into the AH and the AH absorbing into you, transmitting their wisdom to your mindstream. After that, as you continue to recite OM, AH, HUM, you can burn the texts.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche has recommended that photos or images of holy beings, deities, or other holy objects not be burned. Instead, they should be placed with respect in a stupa, tree, or other high, clean place. It has been suggested to put them into a small structure like a bird house and then seal the house. In this way, the holy images do not end up on the ground.
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Calling the Lama from Afar

La ma khyen
La ma khyen
La ma khyen

Sang gyä kün gyi ye she de ehhen chu ho kur ro chig
De nyi drin chän la ma kün gyi rang zhin thar thug
La ma chu ho kyü ku la nying nā söl wa deb so
Di chu hi bar do küün tu dräl me je su zung shig

Ye she gyu māi rang nang gyal wa yān lag dùn dān
De nyi drin chän la ma kün gyi trül zhi thar thug
La ma long chu dzog kur nying nā söl wa deb so
Di chu hi bar do küün tu dräl me je su zung shig

Ji nye dūl jāi kham zhin na tshog trül pāi röl gar
De nyi drin chän la ma long chu dzog kūi nam gyu
La ma trūl pāi ku la nying nā söl wa deb so
Di chu hi bar do küün tu dräl me je su zung shig

Ku sum yer me röl pa la mái zug su shar wa
De nyi drin chän la ma kün gyi nyo wo chig nī
Ku sum yer me la mar nying nā söl wa deb so
Di chu hi bar do küün tu dräl me je su zung shig

Colophon
This glance meditation on the lam-rim was composed by Vajradhara Losang Jinpa. Translated by Ven. Thubten Dekyong. Lightly edited by Maureen O’Malley and Ven. Ailsa Cameron.
Woodblock print courtesy of ACIP Graphics Collection.
Calling the Lama from Afar

A Tormented Wail, Quickly Drawing Forth

the Blessing of the Lama, the Inseparable Three Kayas

Lama, think of me.
Lama, think of me.
Lama, think of me.

The wisdom of great bliss of all buddhas, one taste with the dharmakaya, is itself the ultimate nature of all kind lamas. I beseech you, Lama, dharmakaya, please look after me always without separation, in this life, future lives, and the bardo.

Wisdom's own illusory appearance, the conqueror with seven branches, is itself the ultimate basis of emanation of all kind lamas. I beseech you, Lama, sambhogakaya, please look after me always without separation, in this life, future lives, and the bardo.

The play of various emanations, suiting the dispositions of the many to be subdued, is itself the behavior of the sambhogakaya of the kind lamas. I beseech you, Lama, nirmanakaya, please look after me always without separation, in this life, future lives, and the bardo.

The play of the inseparable three kayas, appearing in the form of the lama, is itself one with the very essence of all kind lamas. I beseech you, Lama, the inseparable three kayas, please look after me always without separation, in this life, future lives, and the bardo.
A Glance Lam-Rim Meditation

Nature that embodies all the buddhas,  
Source of all the pure transmission and realization Dharma, 
Principal amongst all the arya Sangha:  
I take refuge in all magnificent pure gurus.

Please bless my mind to become Dharma,  
That Dharma to become the path,  
And that path to be free of all hindrances.  
Until I achieve enlightenment, may I,  
Just like the bodhisattvas, Shönnu Norsang and Taktungu,  
Practice pure devotion to my guru in thought and action,  
See all the actions of my guru as excellent,  
And fulfill whatever he advises.  
Please bless me with the potential to accomplish this.  
[This is relying on the spiritual friend.]

Knowing that this highly meaningful perfect human rebirth  
is difficult to obtain and easily lost,  
Realizing the profundity of cause and effect  
And the unbearable sufferings of the lower realms,  
From my heart I take refuge in the three precious sublime ones,  
Abandon negativity, and practice virtue in accordance with the  
Dharma.  
Please bless me with the potential to accomplish this.  
[This is the path of the being of lower capacity.]
All the infinite peaceful and wrathful yidams are also the lama’s nature, and since no yidam exists apart from the kind lama himself, I beseech you, Lama, who comprises all yidams, please look after me always without separation, in this life, future lives, and the bardo.

The ordinary form of all buddhas arises in the aspect of the lama, therefore no buddhas are observed apart from the kind lama himself. I beseech you, Lama, who comprises all buddhas, please look after me always without separation, in this life, future lives, and the bardo.

The very form of all conquerors’ wisdom, compassion, and power arises as the lama, therefore the supreme aryalords of the three families are also the kind lama himself. I beseech you, Lama, who combines three families in one, please look after me always without separation, in this life, future lives, and the bardo.

The hundred, five, and three families, however many elaborated, are the lama. The pervasive master himself in whom they are all included is also the lama. I beseech you, Lama, as master of all the families, please look after me always without separation, in this life, future lives, and the bardo.

The creator of all buddhas, Dharma, and Sangha is the lama. The one who combines all three refuges is the kind lama himself. I beseech you, Lama, whose presence combines all refuges, please look after me always without separation, in this life, future lives, and the bardo.

Thinking of how the actual form of all buddhas arises in the aspect of the lama and mercifully looks after me – reminds me of you, Lama.

Thinking of how you show the excellent unmistaken path to me, an unfortunate wretched being, abandoned by all the buddhas – reminds me of you, Lama.

Thinking of this excellent body, highly meaningful and difficult to obtain, and wishing to take its essence with unerring choice between gain and loss, happiness and suffering – reminds me of you, Lama.

Thinking of the experience of not knowing what to do when the great fear of death suddenly descends upon me – reminds me of you, Lama.

Thinking of the experience of just now suddenly separating from all the perfections of this life, and going on alone – reminds me of you, Lama.
Practicing Guru Devotion with the Nine Attitudes

I am requesting the kind lord root guru,
Who is more extraordinary than all the buddhas:
Please bless me to be able to devote myself to the qualified lord guru with great respect in all my future lifetimes.

By realizing that correctly devoting myself to the kind lord guru—who is the foundation of all good qualities—is the root of happiness and goodness, I shall devote myself to him with great respect, not forsaking him even at the cost of my life.

Thinking of the importance of the qualified guru, allow yourself to enter under his control.

Be like an obedient son, acting exactly in accordance with the guru’s advice.
Even when maras, evil friends and the like try to split you from the guru, be like a vajra, inseparable forever.
When the guru gives you work, whatever the burden, be like the earth, carrying all.
When you devote yourself to the guru, whatever suffering occurs (hardships or problems), be like a mountain, immovable. (The mind should not be upset or discouraged.)
Thinking of the experience of my naked body falling into the terrifying fires of hell and being unable to bear it – reminds me of you, Lama.

Thinking of how the suffering of hunger and thirst, without a drop of water, is directly experienced in the unfortunate preta realm – reminds me of you, Lama.

Thinking of how very repulsive and wretched it is to become a foolish stupid animal and what it would be like to experience it myself – reminds me of you, Lama.

Thinking of a refuge to protect me from this, since I am now about to fall into the wretched states of bad migration – reminds me of you, Lama.

Thinking of how white and black actions are experienced and of how to practice thorough and precise engagement and restraint – reminds me of you, Lama.

Thinking of a method to escape this prison of endless existences, the source of all suffering – reminds me of you, Lama.

Thinking of the plight of my pitiful old mothers, pervasive as space, fallen amidst the fearful ocean of samsara and tormented there – reminds me of you, Lama.

Therefore, Lama, please bless me to generate in my mental continuum effortless experience of the profound three principles of the path and the two stages.

Please bless me to strive in one-pointed practice of the three trainings with the intense thought of renunciation, in order to reach the secure state of liberation.

Please bless me to train in the precious supreme bodhichitta with the special attitude taking responsibility to liberate all migrators by myself alone.

Please bless me to follow after the ocean of conquerors with the will to cross to the very end of the great waves of deeds of the conquerors’ children.

Please bless me to realize the supreme view, free of extremes, in which emptiness and dependent arising, appearance and emptiness, complement each other.
When you understand the arising of cause and effect from the viewpoint of voidness,
You are not captivated by either extreme view.

Child, when you realize the keys
Of the three principles of the path,
Depend on solitude and strong effort,
And quickly reach the final goal!

Colophon:
Please bless me quickly to generate the experience of taking the three kayas into the path, ripening the bases of birth, death, and bardo.

Please bless me to arise as the illusory divine body itself, the play of the four joys and four emptinesses when the wind and mind absorb in the central channel.

Please bless me to meet the ultimate lama – the bare face of my innate mind with the covering of perception (of true existence) and perceiving (it as true) removed.

Please bless me to be one with your three secrets, Lama, in the vast dharmakaya of great bliss, which has exhausted the elaborations of the two obscurations.

In short, please abide inseparably in the center of my heart until the great enlightenment, and mercifully bless me, the child, to follow after you, the father.

Lama, think of me.

Lama, think of me.

Lama, think of me.

Colophon:
“Calling the Lama from Afar: A Tormented Wail, Quickly Drawing Forth the Blessing of the Lama, the Inseparable Three Kayas” was composed by Pabongka Tulku at the great insistent request with the offering of three hundred silver coins of Gelong Losang Rabgye of Bompa in the faraway area of Tsawa. The scribing was done by the monk Losang Dorje from the area of Den.

Calling the Guru from Afar

(abbreviated version)

La ma kyen
La ma kyen
La ma kyen

Ma rig mün sel päl dän la ma
Tar päl lam tön päl dän la ma
Kor wäi chu dröl päl dän la ma
Dug ngäl nä sel päl dän la ma
Yi zhün nor bu päl dän la ma
Kye la söl deb jin gyi lob shig
Mi tag chi wa ying nä dren pa
Päl dän la mäi jin gyi lob shig
Gö me lo na gyu la kye pa
Päl dän la mäi jin gyi lob shig
Ben par tse chig drub la nä pa
Päl dän la mäi jin gyi lob shig
Drub la che gang yang me pa
Päl dän la mäi jin gyi lob shig
Kyen ngän tam chä drog su char wa
Päl dän la mäi jin gyi lob shig
Dag zhen dön nyi lhün gyi drub pa
Päl dän la mäi jin gyi lob shig
Dan ta nyur du jin gyi lob shig
Nyur wa nyur du jin gyi lob shig
Den tog dir ru jin gyi lob shig
Tün tog dir ru jin gyi lob shig

Päl dän la mäi nam par tar pa la
Kä chig tsam yang log ta mi kye shing

The Three Principles of the Path

I bow down to the venerable lamas.
I will explain as well as I am able
The essence of all the teachings of the conqueror,
The path praised by the conqueror’s offspring,
The entrance for the fortunate ones who desire liberation.

Listen with clear minds, you fortunate ones
Who direct your minds to the path pleasing to Buddha,
Who strive to make good use of leisure and opportunity
And are not attached to the joys of samsara.

Those with bodies are bound by the craving for existence.
Without pure renunciation, there is no way to still
The attraction to the pleasures of samsara:
Thus, from the outset, seek renunciation.

Leisure and opportunity are difficult to find.
There is no time to waste: reverse attraction to this life.
Reverse attraction to future lives: think repeatedly
Of the infallible effects of karma and the misery of this world.

Contemplating this, when you do not for an instant
Wish the pleasures of samsara,
And day and night remain intent on liberation
You have then produced renunciation.
Calling the Guru from Afar

(abbreviated version)

Lama, think of me!
Lama, think of me!
Lama, think of me!

Magnificently glorious guru, dispelling the darkness of ignorance;
Magnificently glorious guru, revealing the path of liberation;
Magnificently glorious guru, liberating from the waters of samsara;
Magnificently glorious guru, eliminating the diseases of the five poisons;
Magnificently glorious guru who is the wish-granting jewel;
I beseech you:
Please grant me blessings to remember impermanence and death from my heart
And to generate the thought of no-need in my mind.

Magnificently glorious guru, please bless me to abide one-pointedly in practice in isolated places, not having any hindrances to my practice.
Magnificently glorious guru, please bless me so that all bad conditions appear encouraging.
Magnificently glorious guru, please bless me to accomplish effortlessly the two works of self and others.
Magnificently glorious guru, please bless me soon, very soon.
Please grant me blessings on this very cushion.
Please grant me blessings in this very session.

After reciting these verses, recite any requesting prayers to your own guru that you wish.

May I not arise heresy even for a second
In the actions of the glorious guru.
Like that, may the gurus who show the noble path
And the spiritual friends who practice it have long lives.
Please bless me to pacify completely
All outer and inner hindrances.

In all my lives, never separated from perfect gurus,
May I enjoy the magnificent Dharma.
By completing the qualities of the stages and paths,
May I quickly attain the state of Vajradhara.

Colophon:
Recognizing these shortcomings,
Please bless me to generate the strong wish for the bliss of liberation.

Led by this pure thought,
Mindfulness, alertness, and great caution arise.
The root of the teachings is keeping the pratimoksha vows:
Please bless me to accomplish this essential practice.

Just as I have fallen into the sea of samsara,
So have all mother migratory beings.
Please bless me to see this, train in supreme bodhichitta,
And bear the responsibility of freeing migratory beings.

Even if I develop only bodhichitta, but I don’t practice the three types of morality,
I will not achieve enlightenment.
With my clear recognition of this,
Please bless me to practice the bodhisattva vows with great energy.

Once I have pacified distractions to wrong objects
And correctly analyzed the meaning of reality,
Please bless me to generate quickly within my mindstream
The unified path of calm abiding and special insight.

Having become a pure vessel by training in the general path,
Please bless me to enter
The holy gateway of the fortunate ones:
The supreme vajra vehicle.

At that time, the basis of accomplishing the two attainments
Is keeping pure vows and samaya.
As I have become firmly convinced of this,
Please bless me to protect these vows and pledges like my life.

Then, having realized the importance of the two stages,
The essence of the Vajrayana,
By practicing with great energy, never giving up the four sessions,
Please bless me to realize the teachings of the holy guru.
The foundation of all good qualities is the kind and venerable guru;  
Correct devotion to him is the root of the path.  
By clearly seeing this and applying great effort,  
Please bless me to rely upon him with great respect.

Understanding that the precious freedom of this rebirth is found only once,  
Is greatly meaningful, and is difficult to find again,  
Please bless me to generate the mind that unceasingly,  
Day and night, takes its essence.

This life is as impermanent as a water bubble;  
Remember how quickly it decays and death comes.  
After death, just like a shadow follows the body,  
The results of black and white karma follow.

Finding firm and definite conviction in this,  
Please bless me always to be careful  
To abandon even the slightest negativities  
And accomplish all virtuous deeds.  

Seeking samsaric pleasures is the door to all suffering:  
They are uncertain and cannot be relied upon.