

A Teaching on the Tashi Prayer

By Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche. Edited by Kathy Wesley.

Given as an answer to a question during his 1989 teaching on “The Guru Yoga of Marpa.”

I have been asked to give a teaching of The Prayer of the Eight Noble Auspicious Ones. We would not have enough time to speak in detail on each line of the prayer, and it would be very difficult to go through the translation of each line just now. But I will speak briefly on this text.

Shakyamuni Buddha taught what is known as the “Sutra of Auspicious Words.” This prayer consists of the names of the eight different buddhas, followed by the names of eight bodhisattvas. Then there are the names of eight female bodhisattvas and of eight dharma protectors. These are all outlined in the prayer.

The teachings of the Lord Buddha tell us to recite these thirty-two names of enlightened beings. By calling upon the names of those thirty-two enlightened beings, we can generally remove all the obstacles in this lifetime, whatever those obstacles are. Even if, in a normal sense, your life is jeopardized, you experience difficulty, lack of success, or illness, whatever negativities you face are purified and you are able to pass through the problem and become successful in anything you wish. That is the relative benefit.

The absolute benefit is especially for someone who is practicing dharma. Any obstacles that might prevent realization can be dispelled by this; therefore, it is extraordinarily strongly recommended by the Buddha for practitioners to recite this prayer at the beginning of practice.

Sometimes you may face dangerous situations, such as the threat of death by various elements or by animals, or any sort of threat to your life. If such a circumstance arises, if you instantly recite this prayer, you will definitely be able to remove that obstacle.

Even if you have bad dreams bother you at night, if you wake up and recite this prayer, the bad dream will instantaneously disappear. If you read this prayer once or twice every day, without missing a single day, you will increase all positive effects and accomplish any goal.

In addition, when you die, if you have recited this prayer on a daily basis in this lifetime, you can eliminate the illusory state of bardo and obtain enlightenment in the bardo state.

The actual sutra, which is much longer than this prayer, was condensed into its present form by the guru Jamgon Mipham Rinpoche (1846-1912). Since he composed this prayer, Lama Mipham himself, along with his disciples, as well as Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye (also called Jamgon Kongtrul the Great, the first Jamgon Kongtrul) and his followers have all recited this prayer frequently throughout their lives. The modern teachers who have visited the West, such as Ven. Kalu Rinpoche, Dezhung Rinpoche and all the present eminent rinpoches of the Kagyu lineage, wherever they have traveled, have always recited this prayer at the beginning of their trip.

Because of this strong tradition, I would like to request all our students to do this prayer as part of their daily practice. I have wanted to adopt this prayer in our students’ practice for some time, but for different reasons we could not make it available until now. Now I am introducing this prayer, which I personally feel is very auspicious, to the general community (Karma Triyana Dharmachakra, the Karma Thegsum Choling, etc.) for the first time.

One of the special reasons I want all of you to recite this prayer is that I and other teachers are constantly receiving messages from our students about losing present jobs or not being able to decide about a career or not finding a new job and various obstacles of this kind. When I am asked to help people in this situation, I immediately recite this prayer for that disciple, for his or her achievement of a good life. It would be wise for students to recite the same prayer whenever you face problems related to livelihood, such as finding a job.

