

The Bodhisattvas' Confession of Downfalls (Sūtra of the Three Heaps)

It is of great importance to recite this Sūtra in Three Heaps,²² taken from the Ratnakūṭa Sūtra, which will purify even the crimes with immediate retribution. First, visualize the thirty-five buddhas before you, and in their presence, with a heartfelt wish to confess your negative actions, recite the following:

semchen tamché takpar lama la kyab su chi o

With all sentient beings, I take refuge forever in the Teacher;

sangye la kyab su chi o

I take refuge in the Buddha;

chö la kyab su chi o

I take refuge in the Dharma;

22 Sūtra of the Three Heaps (Skt. Triskandhakasūtra), also known as the Sūtra of the Confession of Downfalls (Tib. tung shak) - a sūtra used in the confession and purification of transgressions of vows, especially downfalls of the bodhisattva vow. It features the thirty-five buddhas of confession. The 'three heaps' or three sections referred to in the title are 1) homage, 2) confession, and 3) rejoicing or dedication. Origin of the Sūtra: A group of thirty-five monks who had taken the bodhisattva vow and had accidentally caused the death of a child while they were out begging for alms went to Upāli, one of the closest disciples of the Buddha, and asked him to request from the Buddha a method of confessing and purifying what they had done. The Buddha then spoke this sūtra, and as he did so, light radiated from his body and thirty-four other buddhas appeared in the space all around him. The thirty-five monks prostrated before these buddhas, made offerings, confessed their misdeed, took refuge and re-awakened bodhicitta. See Bodhicharyāvatāra, Chapter 5, verse 98 for reference made to this sūtra by Śāntideva.

gendün la kyab su chi o

I take refuge in the Saṅgha.

**chomdendé deshyin shekpa drachompa yangdakpar
dzokpé sangye shakya tubpa la chaktsal lo**

I prostrate to Śākyamuni, the perfect buddha, the conqueror,
the holder, the transcendent one, the thus gone, the one
victorious over the enemy;

dorje nyingpo rabtu jompa la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to One Who Has Fully Conquered with the
Diamond Essence;

rinchen ö tro la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Jewel Radiating Light;

luwang gi gyalpo la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Sovereign King of Nāgas;

pawö dé la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Leader of the Warriors;

pal gyé la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Glorious Joy;

rinchen mé la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Jewel Fire;

rinchen da ö la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Jewel Moonlight;

tongwa dön yö la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Meaningful Vision;

rinchen dawa la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Jewel Moon;

drima mepa la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Stainless One;

pal jin la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Glorious Giving;

tsangpa la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Pure One;

tsangpé jin la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Giving of Purity;

chulha la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Water Deity;

chulhé lha la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to God of the Water Deities;

palzang la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Glorious Goodness;

tsenden pal la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Glorious Sandalwood;

ziji tayé la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Infinite Splendour;

ö pal la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Glorious Light;

nya ngen mepé pal la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Glorious One Without Sorrow;

semé kyi bu la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Son of Non-Desire;

metok pal la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Glory of Flowers;

**deshyin shekpa tsangpé özer nampar rolpa ngönpar
khyenpa la chaktsal lo**

I prostrate to Thus Gone Clearly Knowing Through Pure
Radiance;

**deshyin shekpa pemé özer nampar rolpa ngönpar khyenpa
la chaktsal lo**

I prostrate to Thus Gone Clearly Knowing Through the Play
of Lotus Radiance;

norpal la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Glory of Wealth;

drenpé pal la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Glory of Mindfulness;

tsenpal shintu yong drak la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Renowned Glorious Name;

wangpö tok gi gyaltsen gyi gyalpo la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to King of the Victory Banner that Crowns the Sovereign;

shintu nampar nönpé pal la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Glorious One Who Fully Subdues;

yul lé shintu nampar gyalwa la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Perfect Victor in Battle;

nampar nönpé shekpé pal la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to One Gone Beyond Through Complete Victory;

künné nangwa köpé pal la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Glorious Array Eternally Illuminating;

rinchen pemé nampar nönpa la chaktsal lo

I prostrate to Lotus Jewel Who Fully Subdues;

**deshyin shekpa drachompa yangdakpar dzokpé sangye
rinpoche dang pemé den la rabtu shyukpa riwang gi
gyalpo la chaktsal lo**

I prostrate to Thus Gone Conqueror of the Enemy, Perfect Buddha Who Dwells on the Lotus Jewel, King of the Sovereign Mount Meru.

**dedak lasokpa chok chü jikten gyi kham tamché na
deshyin shekpa drachompa yangdakpar dzokpé sangye
chomdendé gang jinyé chik shyuk té tso shying shyepé
sangye chomdendé dedak tamché dak la gong su sol**

You, all these Buddhas—together with however many other
Tathāgatas, Arhats, fully and perfectly enlightened Bhagavāns
there may be, in all realms and in all ten directions of the
universe—all of you watchfully dwelling Bhagavān Buddhas,
think upon me, I pray.

**dak gi kyewa di dang kyewa tokma dang tama machipa né
khorwa na khorwé kyené tamché du**

In this my present life, and in all my lives without beginning
or end, wherever I have been born as I circled in saṃsāra,

dikpé lé gyipa dang

All the negative actions I have done,

gyi du tsalwa dang

Connived in

gyipa la jesu yirangwa am

Or rejoiced in—

chörten gyi kor ram

Plundering donated wealth from stupas,

gendün gyi kor ram

Wealth donated to the Saṅgha,

chok chü gendün gyi kor trokpa dang

Wealth donated to the Saṅgha of all ten directions,

trok tu tsalwa dang

Or conniving in such plundering,

trokpa la jesu yirangwa am

Or rejoicing in such plundering;

tsam machipa ngé lé gyipa dang

Committing the five crimes with immediate retribution,

gyi du tsalwa dang

Or conniving in them,

gyipa la jesu yirangwa am

Or rejoicing in them;

migewa chü lé kyī lam yangdakpar langpa la shyukpa dang

Completely adopting and undertaking the path of negative actions,

juk tu tsalwa dang

Or conniving in others' doing so,

shyukpa la jesu yirangwa am

Or rejoicing when they have done so;

**lé kyī dribpa gang gi drib né dak semchen nyalwar chiwa
am**

Defilement with whatever actions whose defilement has led
myself and others to be born in the hells,

düdrö kyené su chiwa am

Or to be born in the animal realms,

yidak kyī yul du chiwa am

Or to be born in the land of the pretas,

yul takhob tu kyewa am

Or to be born in border countries,

lalom kyewa am

Or to be born as a barbarian,

lha tseringpo nam su kyewa am

Or to be born in the form of long-lived gods,

wangpo matsangwar gyurwa am

Or to have impaired sense faculties,

tawa lokpar dzinpar gyurwa am

Or to believe in wrong views,

**sangye jungwa la nyepar mi gyipar gyurwé lé kyī dribpa
gang lakpa dedak tamché sangye chomdendé yeshe su
gyurpa**

Or to have been unable to be present when a Buddha appears
—all actions whatsoever causing such defilements, in the
presence of the Bhagavān Buddhas, with their primordial
wisdom,

chen du gyurpa

Their eyes,

pang du gyurpa

Their bearing witness,

tsemar gyurpa

Their validity,

khyenpé zikpa dedak gi chen ngar tol lo chak so

Whose omniscience sees all, I acknowledge and confess,

michab bo

Concealing nothing,

mibé do

Hiding nothing,

lenché kyang chö ching dompa gyi lak so

And promising, too, to refrain from them henceforth.

sangye chomdendé dedak tamché dak la gong su sol

All of you Bhagavān Buddhas, think upon me, I pray.

dak gi kyewa di dang kyewa tokma dang tama chipa né

In this my present life, and in all my lives without beginning
or end,

**khörwa na khörwé kyené shyendak tu jinpa tana dündrö
kyené su kyepa la zé kham chik tsam tsalwé gewé tsawa
gang lakpa dang**

Wherever I have been born as I circled in saṃsāra, whatever
sources of good I have from generosity to others, even in
giving just a mouthful of food to those born as animals;

dak gi tsultrim sungpé gewé tsawa gang lakpa dang

Whatever sources of good I have from keeping discipline;

dak gi tsangpar chöpa la nepé gewé tsawa gang lakpa dang

Whatever sources of good I have from observing celibacy;

**dak gi semchen yongsu minpar gyipé gewé tsawa gang
lakpa dang**

Whatever sources of good I have from bringing beings to
complete maturity;

**dak gi changchub chok tu sem kyepé gewé tsawa gang
lakpa dang**

Whatever sources of good I have from generating the mind set
on supreme enlightenment;

**dak gi lanamepa yeshe kyi gewé tsawa gang lakpa dedak
tamché chik tu dü shing dum té dom né lana machipa
dang**

Whatever sources of good I have from unsurpassable
primordial wisdom—all such sources of good I gather into
one, combine and add together, and dedicate it all entirely to
what is unsurpassable,

gong na machipa dang

Unexcelled,

gongmé gongma

Highest of the high,

**lamé lamar yongsu ngowé lanamepa yangdakpar dzokpé
changchub tu yongsu ngowar gyi o**

Most unsurpassable of the unsurpassable; I dedicate it all
entirely to unsurpassable, utterly perfect enlightenment.

jitar depé sangye chomdendé nam kyi yongsu ngöpa dang

Just as the Bhagavān Buddhas of the past have entirely
dedicated it all,

**jitar majönpé sangye chomdendé nam kyi yongsu ngowar
gyurwa dang**

Just as the Bhagavān Buddhas yet to come will entirely
dedicate it all,

**jitar dantar shyukpé sangye chomdendé nam kyi yongsu
ngowar dzepa deshyindu dak gi kyang yongsu ngowar gyi
o**

And just as the Bhagavān Buddhas remaining in the present
are entirely dedicating it all, so do I, too, entirely dedicate it
all.

dikpa tamché ni sosor shak so

Of all my negative actions, I confess each one;

sönam tamché la ni jesu yi rang ngo

In all that is meritorious, I rejoice.

sangye tamché la ni kul shyng solwa deb so

Invoking all the Buddhas, I make this prayer:

dak gi lanamepa yeshe kyi chok dampa tobpar gyur chik

May I attain the supreme and sacred state of unsurpassed primordial wisdom.

mi chok gyalwa gangdak dantar shyukpa dang

In the greatest of all humans, the Victorious Ones—those now living,

gangdak depa dak dang deshyin gang majön

Those of the past, and likewise all those still to come,

yönten ngakpa tayé gyatso dra kün la

Whose qualities merit praise as infinite as the oceans—in all of them,

talmo jarwar gyi té kyab su nyewar chi o

With folded hands, I confidently take full refuge.

Thus ends the mahāyāna sūtra called Sūtra of the Three Heaps.

**changchub sempa gangdak nyingjé tob den shying
pawo semchen kün la pen shying kyob jepa
dedak nam kyi kyabmé dikchen dak la kyob
changchub sempa dedak nam la ang dak kyab chi**

dak su lü kyi lé ni nampa sum

The three different actions of the body,

ngak gi nampa shyi dak dang

The four that are done with speech,

gangyang yi kyi nam sumpo

And so, too, the three belonging to mind,

migé chupo sosor shak

I confess each one of these ten negative actions.

tokma mé né danté bar

From time without beginning until now,

mi gé chu dang tsammé nga

The ten negative acts and five crimes with immediate result

sem ni nyönmong wang gyurpé

Done with a mind governed by the negative emotions—

dikpa tamché shakpar gyi

All of my evil actions I do now confess.

Dedication ²³

chaktsalwa dang chö ching shakpa dang

What little virtue I have gathered through my homage

jesu yi rang kul shying solwa yi

Through offering, confession, and rejoicing,

gewa chungzé dak gi chi sakpa

Through exhortation and prayer—all of it

tamché dak gi changchub chir ngo o

I dedicate to the enlightenment of beings!

23 from Zangchö Mönlam