Prayers for the Bardos

Written down by

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PRAYERS FOR THE BARDOS

At the time of your own death, or at any time, request the Buddhas' and bodhisattvas' aid as follows: make physical and mental offerings to the Three Jewels, and, holding fragrant incense, recite with great fervor:

Shog chu na shug pe sang gye dang chang chub sem pa
You Buddhas and bodhisattvas who dwell in the ten directions,
tug je dang den pa  chen pa dan den pa chen dang den pa
endowed with compassion, endowed with wisdom, endowed with vision,
tse wa dang den pa  dro we shab su gyur pa nam
and with love; you who are the refuge of beings,
tug jei wang gi ne dir shön chig
through compassion, please come to this place!
ngö su jor pa dang yi kyi trul pe chö pa she chig
Please accept the offerings, both physical and mental!

Compassionate ones, since you have mastered, to an unimaginable extent, understanding wisdom, loving compassion,

dze pe trin le chab pe nu tu sam gyi mi chab pa nga wa lag pe and skilful action -

jig ten di ne pa rol tu ni dro is going beyond this world to another; is abandoning this world;

she chen po ni dek drog ne me dug ngal ni che is at death's door, without friends, in great suffering,

shab ni me gön ni me pung nyen ni me without refuge, without protection, without relatives or anyone close;

tse di i nang wa ni nub dro wa shen du ni dro this life's perceptions are fading away; he is going to a different realm;
mun nag tug po ni jug yang sa chen por ni tung
entering a dense darkness, falling into a great abyss.

nag trö tug por ni jug le kyi wang gi ni de
going into a thick forest; the force of his karma drives him on.

gön pa chen por ni dro gya tso chen pö ni khyer
He is off to an empty wasteland; he is tossed by a great sea.

le kyi lung gi ni de sa tsug me pe shok su ni dro
Impelled by the karmic wind, he finds himself with nowhere to stop and rest.

yul ngo chen por ni jug dön chen pö ni zin
He is thrown in the midst of a great battle; he is seized by a demon.

shin jei po nya la ni jig shing trak
The Lord of Death's henchmen fill him with terror.

le kyi si pa na yang si pa la ni jug wang ni me
From one existence he goes to yet another, helpless.
chig pur drog me par dro gö pe du la bab na
Alone and friendless, the time has come when he must go.

tug je chen che nam kyi [...che ge] shab me pa di la shab dzö chig
Compassionate ones, please give refuge to [...] here, who has no defense!

gön dzö chig  pung nyen dzö chig
Please protect him! Please be kith and kin to him!

bar dö mun nag chen po le shob shig
Please save him from the vast, pitch darkness of the bardo!

le kyi lung mar chen po le dok chig
Deflect the fierce wind of karma!

shin jei jig trag chen po le shob chig
Protect him from fear and terror of the Lord of Death!

bar dö trang ring chen po le drol chig
Deliver him from the long, dangerous defile of the bardo!

tug je chen che nam tug je ma chung shig
Compassionate ones, do not be stinting in compassion!
ra da dzö chig  ngen song sum du ma tang shig
Come to his aid! Do not send him to the three lower realms!

ngön gyi dam cha me yel war tug jei shug nyur du shung shig
Not forgetful of your previous promises, quickly show the power of your compassion!

sang gye dang chang chub sem pa nam kyi [.....che ge] di la
Buddhas and bodhisattvas, do not be stinting in the means and power

tug je tab dang nu pa ma chung shig  tug je zung shig
of your compassion for [..x...] here. Clasp him with your compassion!

sem chen le ngen pe wang du ma tang shig
Do not leave this being to the power of his negative karma!

kön chog sum gyi bar dō dug ngal le shab tu sol
Three Rare and Supreme Ones! Please save him from the suffering of the bardo!

To be recited three times with fervent devotion by yourself and everyone else.

Then recite the "Liberation on hearing in the bardo" and

"The prayer for deliverance from the bardo's narrow passage" and "The Prayer that protects from fear"
May this prayer requesting the aid of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas not come to an end until Samsara is emptied! SAMAYA

Composed by the Khenpo of Orgyen, Padma Jungne.

Tsogyal learnt, wrote down, and concealed it as a treasure text.

Karma Lingpa revealed it at Gampopal Mountain.

Root verses of the Bardo Tödral

kye ma dag la she ne bar do char du dir
Ah! now that the bardo of birth is arising for me,

tse la long me le lo pang she ne
abandoning laziness for which there's no time in life

tö sam gom sum ma yeng lam la jug
I shall enter the undistracted path of listening, reflecting and meditating;

nang sem lam long ku sum ngön gyur sha
developing appearances and mind as the path, I shall actualize the Three Kayas.


devolving appearances and mind as the path, I shall actualize the Three Kayas.

mi lu len chig tob pe du tsö dir
Now when, for once, I've obtained a human body,

yeng ma lam dö pe du tsö min
is not the time to rest on the path of distraction!

kye ma dag la mi lam bar do char du dir
Ah! Now that the Bardo of Dreams is arising for me,

ti mug ro nyal bag me pang she ne
abandoning the careless, sleeping corpse of ignorance,

dren pa yeng me ne lug ngang la jug
I shall guide my undistracted mindfulness into the natural state;

mi lam zung ne trul gyur ö sal jang
taking control of my dreams, I shall purify delusion into clear light.

dun dro shin du nyal war ma she chig
Do not sleep like an animal!

nyi dang ngön sum dre pe nyam len che
It is important to practise mixing sleep and direct perception of reality.

Kye ma dag la sam ten bar do char du dir
Ah! Now that the Bardo of Meditation is arising for me,

nam yeng trul pe tsog nam pang she ne
abandoning the mass of distractions and confusion,

yeng me dzin me ta dral ngang la jog
I shall enter the state free of the extremes of distraction and grasping;

she dzog nyi la ten pa tob par sha
I shall attain stability in the Development and Completion Stages.

sha wa pang ne tse chig gom du dir
Having abandoned activity, at this time of one-pointed meditation

nyön mong trul pe wang du ma tong shig
do not fall into the power of delusions and negative emotions!

kye ma dag la chi kha bar do char du der
Ah! Now that the Bardo of Dying is arising for me,

kun la chag sem shen dzin pang she ne
having abandoned all attachment, grasping and clinging

dam ngag sal we ngang la ma yeng jug
I shall enter undistractedly into clear understanding of the oral instructions

rang rig she me nam khe ying su po
and transfer my own Awareness into the sphere of unborn space.

du she sha trag lu dang tral la khe
When just about to be parted from this composite body of flesh and blood,

mi tag gyu ma yin par she par sha
realise that it is impermanent and illusory!

kye ma dag la chö nyi bar do char du dir
Ah! Now that the Bardo of Dharmata is arising for me

kun la ngang trag jig nang pang she ne
having abandoned all panic and terrified perceptions

gang shar rang nang rig pa ngo she jug
I shall recognise whatever arises as the natural manifestation of my own awareness,

bar dö nang tsul yin par she par sha
realising that this is the way the bardo appears.

dön chen gag la tug pe du shig ong
A vital moment will come, when cessation is possible -

rang nang shi trö tsog la ma jig shig
do not fear the throng of peaceful and wrathful deities, your own manifestation!

kye ma  dag la si pa bar do char du dir
Ah!  Now that the Bardo of Becoming is arising for me,

dun pa tse chig sem la zung she ne
holding in mind my one-pointed longing

zang po le kyi tro la nen gyi tud
I shall try hard to prolong my good karma;

ngal go gag ne ru log dren par sha
stopping up the entrance to the womb, I shall remember to turn away from it.

nying ru dag nang gö pe du shig yin
Now is the time I must have courage and pure perception.
mig ser pang la la ma yab yum gom
Abandoning jealousy, I will meditate on the teacher and his consort in union.

chi wa ong nyam me pe lo ring po
Not thinking death will come, but that I'll live long.

dön me tse dii sha wa drub drub ne
having accomplished only the pointless activities of this life

ta re tong log she na shin tu trul
I would be truly stupid to return now empty-handed.

gō ngo she pa dam pe lha chō yin
Recognise that what is needed is the Holy Dharma

sa ta nyid du lha chō mi she dam
So why don't I practise the Dharma at this very moment?

drub chen nam kyi shal ne di ked sung
As the great siddhas have said:

la me dam ngag sem la ma shag na
If we do not keep the lama's instructions in our mind
rang gi rang nyi lhu war mi gyur ram
we are betraying ourselves, are we not?

May these root verses of the Bardo Tödral (Liberation on hearing in the Bardo) not come to an end until Samsara is emptied!

Prayer for deliverance from the bardo's narrow passage

la ma yi dam khan drö tsok la sha tsal lo
I pay homage to the lama, to the yidam, and to the host of dakinis.

tse wa chen pö lam na trang du sol
Through your great love, please guide me!

dag ni trul pe khor war cham pe tse
When I wander due to great delusion through Samsara

tö sam gom sum ma yeng ö lam la
lamas of the oral lineage, please guide me

ka gyu la ma nam kyi lam na trong
on the luminous, undistracted path of listening, reflecting, and meditating!

yum chog khan drö tsok kyi gyab ne shor
Supported by throngs of dakinis, supreme mothers,
bar do jig pe trang le dral du sol
deliver me from the bardo's terrifying, narrow passage!

yang dag dzog pe sang gye sa ru shol
Escort me to the land of totally pure, perfect Buddhahood!

ti mug trag pö khor war cham pe tse
When I wander due to intense ignorance through Samsara

chö ying ye she sal we ö lam la
Buddha Vairocana, please guide me

chom den nam par nang dze lam na trong
on the luminous path of the Wisdom of Dharmadhatu!

yum chog ying shug ma yi gyab ne shor
Supported by Dhatisvari, your supreme consort

bar do jig pe trang le dral du sol
deliver me from the bardo's terrifying, narrow passage!

yang dag dzog pe sang gye sa ru shol
Escort me to the land of totally pure, perfect Buddhahood!

she dang trag pö khor war cham pe tse
When due to fierce aggression I wander in Samsara

me long ye she sal we ö lam la
Buddha Vajrasattva, please guide me

chom hen dor je sem pe lam na trong
on the luminous path of Mirror-like Wisdom!

yum chog sang gye shen me gyab ne shor
Supported by Buddhalocana, your supreme consort,

bar do jig pe trang le dral du sol
deliver me from the bardo's terrifying, narrow passage!

yang dag dzog pe sang gye sa ru shol
Escort me to the land of totally pure, perfect Buddhahood!

nga gyal trag pö khor war cham pe tse
When due to intense pride I wander in Samsara
nyam nyid ye she sal we ö lam la
Buddha Ratnasambhava, please guide me

chom den rin chen jung ne lam na trong
on the luminous path of Equalising Wisdom!

yum chog ma ma ki yi gyab ne shor
Supported by Mamaki, your supreme consort

bar do jig pe trang le dral du sol
deliver me from the bardo's terrifying, narrow passage!

yang dag dzog pe sang gye sa ru shol
Escort me to the land of totally pure, perfect Buddhahood!

do chag trag pö khor war cham pe tse
When due to intense desire and attachment I wander in Samsara

sor tog ye she sal we ö lam la
Buddha Amitabha, please guide me
chom den nang wa ta ye lam na trong  
*on the luminous path of the Wisdom of Discernment!*

yum chog gö kar mo yi gyab ne shor  
*Supported by Pandavarasini your supreme consort,*

bar do jig pe trang le dral du sol  
*deliver me from the bardo's terrifying, narrow passage!*

yang dag dzog pe sang gye sa ru shol  
*Escort me to the land of totally pure, perfect Buddhahood!*

tra dog trag pö khor war cham pe tse  
*When due to intense jealousy I wander in Samsara*

sha drup ye she sal we ö lam la  
*Buddha Amoghasiddhi, please guide me*

chom den dön yö drub pe lam na trong  
*on the luminous path of All-accomplishing Wisdom!*

yum chog dam tsig drol me gyab ne shor  
*Supported by Samaya-tara, your supreme consort,*
bar do jig pe trang le dral du sol
deliver me from the bardo's terrifying, narrow passage!

yang dag dzog pe sang gye sa ru shol
Escort me to the land of totally pure, perfect Buddhahood!

bag chag trag pö khor war cham pe tse
When due to strong habitual tendencies I wander in Samsara

lhen she ye she sal we ö lam la
dakas and Vidyadharas, please guide me

pa wo rig dzin nam kyi lam na trong
on the luminous path of Co-emergent Wisdom!

yum chog khan drö tsok kyi gyab ne shor
Supported by a throng of dakinis, your supreme consorts,

bar do jig pe trang le dral du sol
deliver me from the bardo's terrifying, narrow passage!
yang dag dzog pe sang gye sa ru shol
Escort me to the land of totally pure, perfect Buddhahood!

trul nang trag pö khor war cham pe tse
When due to intense delusion I wander in Samsara

nang trak jig nang pang pe ö lam la
throng of Peaceful and Wrathful Buddhas, please guide me

chom den shi trö tsok kyi lam na trong
on the luminous path that abandons panic and terrifying appearances!

ying shug khan drö tsok kyi gyab be shor
Supported by a host of dakinis, who control space,

bar do jig pe trang le dral du sol
deliver me from the bardo's terrifying, narrow passage!

yang dag dzog pe sang gye sa ru shol
Escort me to the land of totally pure, perfect Buddhahood!
Ah! May the Space element not arise as an enemy.

and may I see it as the Pure Realm of the Blue Buddha.

May the Water element not arise as an enemy,

and may I see it as the Pure Realm of the White Buddha.

May the Earth element not arise as an enemy,

and may I see it as the Pure Realm of the Yellow Buddha.

May the Fire element not arise as an enemy,
sang gye mar pö shing kham tong war shok
and may I see it as the Pure Realm of the Red Buddha.

lung gi kham nam dra ru mi dang shing
May the Wind element not arise as an enemy,

sang gye jang kui shing kham tong war shok
and may I see it as the Pure Realm of the Green Buddha.

ja tsön kham nam dra ru mi dang shing
May the Rainbow element not arise as an enemy,

sang gye na tsog shing kham tong war shok
and may I see it as the Pure Realms of the various Buddhas.

dra ö zer sum dra ru mi dang shing
May the sounds, lights, and light-rays not arise as enemies

shi tro rab jam shing kham tong war shok
and may I see them as the Pure Realm of the all-encompassing Peaceful and Wrathful Deities.
dra nam tam che rang drar she par shok
May I realise all sounds to be my own sounds,

ö nam tam che rang ö she par shok
may I realise all lights to be my own lights,

zer nam tam che rang zer she par shok
may I realise all rays to be my own rays.

bar do rang ngo rang gi she par shok
May I recognise the Bardo to be my own appearance,

ku sum shing kham gnön du gyur par shok
and may I actualise it as the Pure Realm of the Three Kayas!

This Prayer for Deliverance from the Bardo's Narrow Passage was composed by the Khenpo of Orgyen, Padmasambhava. May it not come to an end until Samsara is emptied!

The Bardo Prayer that protects from fear in the Bardos

kye ma dag ni tse yi pen pa ze pe tse
Ah! When this life of mine falls apart

jig ten di ne nye du mi tong te
recent time does not vanish from this world.

rang nyi chig pur bar dor cham tsa na
When I wander alone in the Bardo

may the Victorious Peaceful and Wrathful Deities show the power of their compassion

ma rig mun pe mug rum sel war shok
and so dispel the darkness of ignorance!

When, parted from friends I love, I wander alone

and the Empty reflections of my own perceptions arise

may the Buddhas show the power of their compassion

ngang trak bar dö jig pa mi jung shok
so that the panic and terror of the bardo do not occur.

ye she sal we ö nga char du der
When the Five Lights of the clearWisdoms arise

mi jig mi trak rang ngo she par shok
may I be fearless and undaunted, recognising them as my own appearance.

shi dang tro wö ku zug char du der
When the forms of the Peaceful and Wrathful deities arise

mi jig deng tob bar do ngo she shok
may I be fearless and confident, recognising that it is the Bardo.

le ngen wang gi dug ngal nyong tsa na
When due to negative karma I experience suffering

gyal wa shi trö dug ngal sel war shok
may the Victorious Peaceful and Wrathful deities dispel the suffering.

chö nyi rang dra drug tong dir tsa na
When the natural sound of Dharmata roars like a thousand thunderclaps

teg chen chö kyi dra ru gyur war shok
may it be transformed into the sound of the Dharma of the Great Vehicle.

shab me le kyi je su drang du der
When, without refuge, I am pursued by karma,

gyal wa shi trö dag sok shab tu sol
Victorious Peaceful and Wrathful deities, please be a refuge for myself and others!

bag chag le kyi dug ngal nyong tsa na
When I experience the karmic suffering of my habitual tendencies

ö sal de we ting dzin char war shok
may the blissful Clear Light samadhi arise.

si pa bar dor dzu te she tsa na
At the moment of seeming rebirth in the Bardo of Becoming,

shir log du kyi lung ten mi jung shok
may no negative signs arise to turn me back to Samsara.

gang du sam pa wang gi leb tsa na
When I am transported anywhere by the power of thought

le ngen trul pe jig trag mi jung shok
may the delusory terrors of negative karma not occur.

chen zen tro wö ngar ke dön pe tse

When wild beasts roar ferociously,

yi ge trug pe chö drar gyur war shok

may it be transformed into the sound of Dharma, the 6 Syllable Mantra.

kha char lung dang mun pe de pe tse

When I am driven on by snow, rain, wind and darkness,

ye she sal we lha mig tob par shok

may I obtain the divine eye of clear wisdom.

rig tun nang tsen bar dö sem chen nam

May the different kinds of beings in the bardo, with their various experiences

mig ser me ching to ri she war shok

be without jealousy and be born in the higher realms.

shin tu nyön mong tre shing kom pe tse

When extreme negative emotions cause hunger and thirst

tog kom tsa trang dug ngal mi jung shok
may the suffering of hunger, thirst, heat and cold not occur.

As soon as I see my future parents in sexual intercourse

may I see them as the Victorious Peaceful and Wrathful deities in union.

Having obtained control over where I will be born, for the sake of others

may I obtain a supreme body, graced with the marks and signs.

Having been born with a supreme body,

may all who see or hear me quickly be liberated.

May I not be pursued by all my negative karma,

may I not be pursued by all my negative karma.
and may whatever merit I have increase and follow me.

gang dang gang du she wa de dang der
Wherever and whoever I may be born as,

tse rab yi dam lha dang jal war shok
may I encounter the yidam deity of my previous life.

she ma tak tu mha shing dro she te
As soon as I am born, may I be able to speak and walk,

she wa dren ching mi je zung tob shok
and regain, without forgetting again, the memory of my past lives.

yön ten che chung dring dang na tsok pa
May I learn great, small, and medium things

tö sam tong wa tsam gyi she gyur chig
by studying or even just seeing them.

gang du she pe yul der ta shi shok
May whatever place I am born in be auspicious.

sem chen tam che de dang den gyur chig

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May all sentient beings become happy!

May all sentient beings become happy!

Victorious Peaceful and Wrathful deities! Just as your bodies,

your entourage, your lifespan, and your Pure Realm,

and just as your supreme and excellent marks all are,

may I and others become exactly like that!

By the compassion of the all-pervading Perfect Peaceful and Wrathful Deities

and by the power and truth of the completely pure Dharmata,

and by the blessing of accomplishing single-pointed mantra practice

and by the blessing of accomplishing single-pointed mantra practice

and by the power and truth of the completely pure Dharmata,
may the wishes of this prayer thus be accomplished!

May this prayer that protects from fear in the bardos not come to an end until Samsara is emptied!

SARVA DHARMA MANGALAM SHRI YO BHAVANTU

Nama Sarva Tathagata Hridaya Anu Ga Te

OM KU RUM GI NI SO HA

By reciting this just once even the obscurations accumulated during hundreds of thousands of aeons will be worn out, without any remaining.

OM BENZA SATO HUM A AH SHA SA MA HA OM SUTRA TIKHTA BENZA YE SOHA