

eNotes Lhabab Duchen

Teaching (with additional commentary notes) by **Geshe Tenzin Zopa**
based on the session hosted by CTCT via Webex Meeting on 27.10.21

Kindly prepared by Joanne Keet Foong Foo

Lhabab Duchen is the auspicious holy day of Buddha descending from Tushita Heaven to Southern World to continue his 12 deeds to benefit Southern World (in particularly people who have ripened Karma like ourselves), channelling us through the right path to Liberation; freedom from ocean of cyclic existence and freeing us from the control of Karma and Delusion.

Buddha's Compassion and Wisdom provide us with tools to cut the chain of endless continuation of cyclic existence.

In this session, we will be doing:

1. Introduction to Buddha's major deeds in particularly Lhabab Duchen holy day
2. Recitation of The Sutra Remembering the Three Jewels
3. Light Offering practice.

Firstly, while reciting the four-line Refuge and Bodhicitta prayers, do refresh our Refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Then, generate correct motivation of altruism while reciting the Four Immeasurable prayers to create abundance of virtuous causes for the benefit of numberless sentient beings' wellbeing. Then, we pay homage to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha.

1. Introduction to Buddha's major deeds in particularly Lhabab Duchen holy day

Lhabab Duchen is one of the four major deeds among the 12 deeds of the historical Gautama Buddha. The 12 deeds are commonly asserted deeds of Buddha of our time, among Buddha's followers within the different yanas of Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions. As for Tibetan Mahayana Vajrayana Buddhist culture, the 4 major deeds within the 12 deeds are observed every year as major events to commemorate the historical Buddha.

Those 4 major deeds are:

- 1st major deed: Buddha's miracle deeds which falls on 15th day of first month of Indian/Tibetan lunar calendar
- 2nd major deed: During Saka Dawa (Vesak) month on the 15th day of the 4th month of Tibetan calendar,

Buddha performed the deeds of being born in this world in the year of 624 BCE, attained full Enlightenment at the age of 35 and passed into Parinirvana at the age of 80. On the 8th of this month also marks the Buddha's deeds of getting ordained in

renounced life at the age of 29. Saka Dawa or Vesak month is regarded the most important month in Buddhist calendar

- 3rd major deed: Deed of Buddha's start of first turning of the wheel of Dharma on the 4th day of 6th month of Tibetan calendar at the age of 35, which he commenced right after 49 days of attaining the full Enlightenment
- 4th major deed: Deed of Lhabab Duchen; the day which Buddha descended from Tushita Heaven of 33 God realm to our human world (at the age of 41, he spent his summer retreat there to offer teaching to his mother who was reincarnated there), which falls on the 22nd day of 9th month of Tibetan calendar.

In general understanding, Theravadan Buddhist tradition mainly follows Buddha's teaching in Pali language; it's the language which Buddha used at the beginning stage, particularly when he first turned the wheel of Dharma. That tradition flourished in 4th and 5th centuries in India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, etc.

The Mahayana tradition is very much based on Sanskrit language that Buddha started to use in subsequent discourses, in particularly from the second turning of the wheel of Dharma onwards. Spreading of that tradition came sometime around late 6th, 7th and 8th centuries to China, Mongolia and spread into Tibet from the 7th century.

From the Theravadan followers' point of view, Buddha's 12 deeds are very much relative:

- Prince Siddhartha Gautama was born in the royal Shakya family; some say in the year 563 BCE, whilst some say in 624 BCE (which Geshe Zopa asserted), in a place called Lumbini located in the present-day Nepal at the foothills of the Himalayas
- At the time of his birth, seers foretold that he would either become a great king or an enlightened teacher. If the prince were to see the "four passing sights"—old age, sickness, death, and a wandering ascetic—he would renounce his royal life and seek Enlightenment
- His father, King Shuddhodana, leader of the Shakya clan in the state of Kosala was determined that his son would become a great ruler, thus tried to shield Prince Siddhartha from these four realities of life (and like typical prince, provided him with every luxury he could desire)
- However, at age of 29, Siddhartha, with his charioteer went out of the protected palace grounds, and for the first time, he encountered the sights of suffering, which he understood to be an inevitable part of life. He saw a man struggling with old age, a person afflicted with sickness, a corpse being departed for cremation, and a serene-looking wandering ascetic. It was the fourth sight, that of a wandering ascetic, that filled Siddhartha with a sense of urgency to find out what lay at the root of human suffering and the path way out from it
- He decided to follow the way of the renounced monk. He renounced the kingdom and left for search of the path. Then through great purification practice and cultivation of merits, through extensive meditation, finally he actualized Arhatship the full Liberation.

The Mahayanic followers' point of view on Buddha's 12 deeds are very much interpretive. The displayed deeds were intended deeds of the Buddha (who already enlightened countless aeons before):

- Initially he was no different than us; but through three countless aeons of lifetimes, he cultivated the entire gradual path to Enlightenment

- By training in Altruism the attitude of Bodhicitta and the Wisdom of Emptiness, he was able to accumulate the merits of Method and the merits of Wisdom to accomplish the complete accumulation of merits of three countless eons; equipping him with the most powerful antidote and able to purify the entire delusional defilements (Delusions) which is the main obstacles to actualise Liberation, and obscuration to Omniscience (the tendency of the Delusion) which is the main obstacles to actualise full Enlightenment

- He achieved two bodies of the Buddha (the Form body and Wisdom body) by completing the five paths and the ten grounds

- After achieving Buddha's Form body — Nirmanakaya and Sambhogakaya — which are the limbs of benefits of Buddha's omniscient state (that directly intended to be achieved) to bring benefits to the rest of sentient beings (including us)

- Buddha manifested into Nirmanakaya aspect of Buddha's Form body in this Southern world about 2,600 years ago and displayed 12 deeds in order to show us the way how we should cultivate the path and achieve Buddhahood

- The communication tools Buddha used to communicate with ordinary people was through his own manifested journey of life that was similar to common lay people; illustrating the teaching of renunciation by understanding the essence less in grasping of superficial worldly life (through the natural process of building family life, going through ups-and-downs of life experiences such as joy of receiving affections from loving parents, falling in love and the excitement of having first baby born in to the world, seeing success in worldly achievements such as wealth and status, etc), but along the way experiencing sufferings of dissatisfaction in needs, and witnessing that no one is spared from going through old age, sicknesses and death (which are the experiences that no one wishes to go through). Through the reality showcase of samsaric life (which is filled with experiences of uncontrollably encountering of unpleasant events and separating from what is pleasant), make a practitioner genuinely understand the essence less of this worldly life, and aspires to enter the path of Liberation

- Buddha taught us the Dharma using his own journey of life in 12 deeds, starting from conception in mother's womb up to attaining the state of full Liberation from entire samsara and its causes by eradicating the four maras of (1) Contaminated Aggregates, (2) the Mara of Delusion, (3) the Mara of Death, (4) the Mara of son of Gods

- During the display of deeds of spiritual seeking in earlier stage (right after he renounced his kingdom), he met so many esoteric teachers like sadhus from earlier

traditions of non-Buddhist during that time whose spiritual training were mainly focused on physical retreats. Though there were practices of three trainings of morality, concentration and wisdom, and have the abilities to tranquillise suffering of pain and suffering of change in particularly by overcoming the sufferings related to desire realm and able to enjoy higher peace generated from the form and formless concentrations.

Such purposes of spiritual training raised questions of whether practitioners seek rebirth in cyclic existence or seek liberation from it? The training was limited to create possible causes to achieve the highest benefits just within the experience of three world of samsara (which are the desire, form and formless realms). So the training which Gautama encountered with teachers from earlier spiritual traditions was not satisfying for his spiritual seeking.

He realised he needed the training of retreating the Mind in the three higher trainings of morality, concentration and wisdom directing for the higher purposes of liberation not only from the entire three world, but also from the entire defilements that guarantee the full liberation of Enlightenment

- Thus, Siddhartha Gautama left that esoteric learning environment and went into inner cultivation of retreat for 6 years near Nairanjana River in Gaya district of India
- After the retreat, he saw the importance of physical strength in order to complete his path, so he broke his fasting. During this transition, his close five companions of ascetic Brahmins (who karmically going to be his most important disciples of his first turning of wheel of Dharma after he attained Enlightenment), decided to go separate paths
- It is beneficial to know the historical relationship between Gautama Buddha and his former five ascetic companions:

- - The relationship started soon after Siddhartha Gautama renounced his kingdom and broke off right after his six years of strict retreat. Siddhartha Gautama had been travelling with the five ascetic companions in search for spiritual benefits. Together they sought for Enlightenment through extreme deprivation and self-mortification such as fasting, sleeping on stones, living outdoors with little clothing, etc. in the belief that physical hardships would cause a spiritual breakthrough

- - Siddhartha Gautama eventually realized that Enlightenment would be found through mental cultivation (not through punishing his body)

- - When he gave up the harsh ascetic practices to prepare himself for further meditation with Middle Way approach, his five companions left him in disgust. The reason for that was due to witnessing Siddhartha Gautama leaving the extreme austerity life (that he observed for the past six years and before)

- - - When he went to Nairanjana River to wash away the plaque of his body, he fell down due to extremely weak body. Sujata the daughter of local farmer who was passing by, saw him and fed him some yoghurt. When the five companions saw him accepted Sujata's offering of yoghurt and broke the fasting, they felt let down by him (to whom they used to regard as the inspiration of dedicated esoteric practitioner), so they left him

- After Siddhartha Gautama had the yoghurt, he regained his physical strength. Then, he crossed the river and travelled to the bush

- He settled at the Bodhi tree, sat on a pile of grass on the ground and made a vow: "If not for full Enlightenment, I would not rise from this seat on the ground." Then in the evening, he settled in deep Absorption Meditation on absolute truth of the path (Emptiness). By midnight, he overcame the four maras (the Mara of Contaminated Aggregates - the samsara, the Mara of Delusions/Defilements - the obscurations to liberation and omniscience, the Mara of son of the Gods - the conceptual distractions and the Mara of Death - the mortality from karma).

And in the dawn of full moon day of 4th lunar month, he performed the deeds of attaining full Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree (where the current Bodhgaya Mahabodhi Temple is, The holy place which even today, we can see, touch and feel the enlightened energy)

- After that, Buddha again went into retreat for 49 days before he rose from meditation as a result of sincere requests made by Brahma by blowing right-turning conch shell and offering eight-spoked golden wheel chakra. Gautama Buddha taught the first wheel of Dharma the sutric teachings on Four Noble Truth at Deer Park in Sarnath (near Varanasi in the state of Uttar Pradesh) to five karmic affinity ascetics disciples of 1) Kaundinya, 2) Asvajit, 3) Vaspa, 4) Mahanama, and 5) Bhadraka who had been his former meditation companions.

The Buddha taught:

"This is the truth of suffering. The truth of suffering is to be understood.
This is the truth of the origin. The truth of the origin is to be abandoned.
This is the truth of cessation. The truth of cessation is to be attained.
This is the truth of the path. The truth of the path is to be relied upon".

- The teaching which would be the foundational or primary conceptual framework of Buddhism. Everything he taught after that tied back to the **Four Noble Truths**.

- He also taught other elements of teachings the Tripitaka – the Abhidharma, Sutrapitaka and Vinaya, etc. which were the principal source of the Hinayana, or the Theravada traditions of Buddhism

- About one year later, Buddha taught at the second turning of wheels of Dharma on **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** (Heart Sutra) the Emptiness to the large gathering of disciples of fortunate humans ordinary and royals, gods and goddesses, ordinary and Arya Bodhisattvas and sravakas Arhats at Vulture Peak Mountain in Rajagriha, Bihar state of India.

The main component of these teachings is Sunyata (Emptiness). This represents a deeper understanding of the nature of existence than the first turning of the wheel of Dharma.

The teaching also moved away from the focus on individual Liberation as the ultimate aim of the path and have emphasis of main practice of the path on Altruism.

The ultimate aim of the path is to bring all beings to full Enlightenment.

The second turning wheel of Dharma also marked the emergence of Mahayana Buddhism

Then, third turning of wheel of Dharma at Vaishali in Bihar state happened soon after the second discourse in Vulture Peak. The discourse is on sutra clarifying the intention of the first two turnings of wheel of the Dharma.

The main teaching is on Buddha Nature (Tathagatagarba).

This wheel of Dharma declares that the fundamental nature of any being's mind is utterly pure and primordially in the nature of Buddha.

This absolute nature of Buddha within all beings have never changed from beginningless time. Its essence is profound Wisdom and pure Compassion. The samsara and defilements are temporary obscurations only. With the right antidote of the path, both samsara and defilements can be purified completely and gain fully awakened state of Dharmakaya of the Buddha

While Buddha was teaching the second discourse in the monk's form in Vulture Peak, he simultaneously emanated and manifested in Kalachakra the central deity of its mandala in Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh India where Buddha first time turned the wheel of Tantra and taught the Kalachakra Root Tantra on the request of King Suchandra

Both the second and third turning of sutric teachings including of Tantra are the source of the Mahayana or Great Vehicle of Buddhism

Though the teachings of all three turnings including of Tantra had been spoken by the historical Buddha, the second and third turnings and including the Tantra, (those characterized as Mahayana) were not publicly known until centuries after the passing of Gautama Buddha

So here came the significance of great Indian pandits like Nagarjuna and Asanga who came to existence around 500 years after Buddha passed away and played the major roles in illuminating the Mahayanic teachings in this world.

Nagarjuna together with Asanga were the two great pioneers of the Mahayana lineage. Nagarjuna transmitted the lineage teachings of the profound view of Emptiness from Manjushri, while Asanga transmitted the lineage teachings of the extensive Bodhisattva practices from Maitreya

- Another way to understand how and why there were three turnings of wheels of Dharma came into existence:

When the historical Buddha appeared in the world, there was something special about him in his enlightened appearances that made people asked him to teach them. People would ask him, "Why do you look so serene and joyful?" So, the Buddha, with his intention to liberate all suffering beings to full Enlightenment, interacted with people skilfully in consideration of different mental dispositions and perspectives. He had to speak in a language that the people listening to him could understand. Clear examples of that were the three turnings of wheel of Dharma that

consisted of 84,000 different methods to deal with any obstacles to Nirvana and full Enlightenment

In third turning of wheel of Dharma in the sutra, the Bodhisattvas asked the Buddha:

“You taught this way, the first turning way, and then you taught the second turning way. When you were teaching the second turning, what was your intention?”

Then the Buddha explained his intentions in three turnings:

The first turning was an analytical, conceptual approach, teaching the five aggregates, the eighteen elements, the Four Noble Truths, the twelve links of Dependent Origination, and so on. All these different kinds of teachings aimed to help people see phenomena in such a way that they would be relieved of the belief in the independent existence of the self

Then in the second turning, the Buddha taught that everything, including the teachings, the state of Nirvana, the samsara all are lacking inherent existence, is unproduced, unceasing, and naturally in a state of Nirvana. After he gave those teachings, the Bodhisattvas said: “That sounds very different from the early teaching. What did you have in mind?” So, he told us what he really had in mind in both cases, which then became part of the third turning teaching, which was a deeper revelation of the nature of ultimate truth

By then, Buddha had many followers of sangha’s, lay people including kings of many states.

In short, it is because of the great kindness of Buddha in three turnings of the wheel of Dharma that the people of this world have the opportunity to follow a spiritual path to the permanent inner peace of Enlightenment.

Without these teachings, there would be no path for us to follow and so no possibility of bringing our suffering to an end.

How Lhabab Duchon came about:

According to Vinaya Practices of Dharma, there are three main monastic practices of bi-monthly confession ceremony (Sojong), 3 months of exclusive summer retreats (yarne) and conclusion of summer retreat ceremony (gaye), which are regarded the most important practices for the preservation of Buddha Dharma. During this time, two main practices of learning through rigorous studies and actualising the path through strict meditation retreats are the focus in Sangha community.

- When Buddha was age of 41 (before one of the summer retreats), Buddha travelled to the God Realm Heaven of the 33 (where his mother Mayadevi was reborn there, after she passed away just a week after Buddha was born) as Buddha saw the ripening of time to meet his mother’s reincarnation (to repay her kindness of conditioning Buddha to be born in Southern World) by providing the best gift of Dharma

- At the same time, Lord Indra the King of God Realm Heaven of the 33 and other 8,000 Gods also had the karma ripened to receive and followed Buddha's precious teaching
- Buddha extensively turned the wheel of Dharma and remained in the God Realm one full summer retreat (3 months), together with Buddha's entourage of Arhats including one of his heart disciples Shariputra
- Then at the end of summer retreat, King Bimbisara from the Southern World (who followed and admired dedication of virtues of Siddhartha Gautama, even before he/Buddha displayed the deeds of Enlightenment, whom he then became Buddha's great supporter and major benefactor) missed Buddha and his teaching, as Buddha had already spent the entire summer retreat at Heaven of the 33
- However, King Bimbisara didn't have the ability to directly request Buddha to return to the Southern World. He then requested Maudgalyayana (another Buddha's close disciple who had the miracle power) to go up to Heaven of the 33 to convince Buddha and his attendants (including Shariputra) to return to Southern World (earth) to continue with his teaching. Buddha accepted his request
- Upon hearing this news, Vishwakarma, the special smith from Heaven of the 33 God realm, immediately built a long jewel staircase with triple ladders (three parts of stairs) made of gold, silver and sapphire precious gems for Buddha and entourage to descend from the Heaven of the 33 back to the Southern World (earth)
- **Remarks:** Though Buddha and entourage of Gods and Arhats didn't really need staircase for the descent; however, this story illustrated actualization through miracles and create auspiciousness to commemorate today's date of **Lhabab Duchen**
- Actual place where Buddha descended (landed) was at Sankasya (at the modern Uttar Pradesh of India; about 5-6 hours drive away from Delhi). King Ashoka (who was very devoted to Buddha's teaching) built a stone pillar to mark that exact site. In fact, most of the holy places of Buddha in India were marked by King Ashoka to remember the exact holy places (that benefitted many, up to today and for long future)
- The importance of Buddha's events (four great holy days) are all about actualizing the highest virtues activities and enlightened Buddha blessed that particular time/day/event (holy day). According to the Vinaya text 'Treasure of Quotations and Logic' sutra, even one merit from virtuous deeds (actions) performed on Merit Multiplying Days will multiply by 100 million times, compared to other days.
Lhabab Duchen is one of the four Merit Multiplying Days.
- If Buddha didn't descend into this world and if Buddha didn't turn the wheel of Dharma, where would our position would be ?
- Dharma is the only way out from this problematic samsaric aggregates (samsaric existence)

- Dharma is the only antidote to overcome delusions and defilement such as Self-Grasping Ignorance and Self-Cherishing attitude, to enable us to experience fully awakened state of Buddhahood

- Except the Emptiness Wisdom, none of the ordinary wisdoms work as the direct and complete antidote to all the defilements.

The wisdom expounded by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha on Emptiness of self and phenomena is the only wisdom that is direct and most powerful antidote to the entire samsara and its root

- Preciousness of Buddha and his teaching can be understood very clearly if you refer to the text :

“Dependent Arising: A Praise of the Buddha” composed by Lama Tsongkhapa.

Even with just these few verses quoted in the text clear the understanding of who Buddha really is and what it means of his turnings of wheel of Dharma to the world:

“Since this teaching is not seen elsewhere, You alone are the Teacher.
Like calling fox a lion, for a Tirthika It would be a word of flattery.
Wondrous teacher! Wondrous refuge! Wondrous speaker! Wondrous saviour!
I pay homage to that teacher
Who taught well dependent origination
To help heal sentient beings,
O Benefactor, you have taught
The peerless reason to ascertain Emptiness, the heart of the teaching.
Among teachers, the teacher of dependent origination,
Amongst wisdoms, the knowledge of dependent origination
You, who’re most excellent like the kings in the worlds,
Know this perfectly well, not others.
All that you have taught
Proceeds by way of dependent origination.
That too is done for the sake of nirvana.
You have no deeds that do not bring peace. Alas!
Your teaching is such,
In whosoever’s ears it falls,
They all attain peace; so who would not be Honoured to uphold your teaching?
It overcomes all opposing challenges.
It’s free from contradictions between earlier and latter parts.
It grants fulfilment of beings’ two aims
For this system my joy increases ever more.
Here too, as I reflect on your words,
I think, Blazing with the glory of noble marks
And hallowed in a net of light rays,
This teacher, in a voice of pristine melody,
Spoke thus in such a way. The instant such a reflection of the Sage’s form Appears
in my mind it soothes me,
Just as the moon-rays heal fever’s pains.
Of all your deeds, your speech is supreme.
Within that too it is this very speech.
So the wise should remember the Buddha through this teaching of dependent
origination.”

Only Guru Shakyamuni Buddha expounded ultimate Wisdom of Emptiness (teaching of Dependent Origination) which is the direct and complete antidote to the root cause of our entire samsara and its causes (the karma and the delusion of Self-Grasping Ignorance on self and phenomenon as inherent existence)

- Only Guru Shakyamuni Buddha expounded the teaching on Altruism and taught us the highest attitude of Bodhicitta

- Self-Cherishing attitude is another major problem where the suffering we experience comes from. Buddha understood the fact and taught us that “All the suffering comes from cherishing only on our own happiness. All the happiness comes from cherishing others’ happiness.” And this can be understood just by looking at the differences between Buddha and sentient being like ourselves.

Buddha who worked only for the benefits of others’ happiness, had actualized Enlightenment. Then, look at ourselves still suffering, and yet our main focus in life is still our own (alone) happiness. We very much fully dedicate our entire energy to serve and fulfil the demand of Self-Cherishing ego

There are so many teachings which we can relate to see why Buddha and his Dharma is so special. The benefits that we receive is unbelievable to bring us to absolute state of Enlightenment which are so beneficial to ourselves and the rest of sentient beings.

The Sutra Remembering the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha) are the qualities of Buddha, his teachings (the Dharma) and the community that he built who possessed these qualities (the Sangha).

Note: Due to session time limit, we won’t be able to do detailed commentary on this text, so please refer to the recording by Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche on the detailed word-by-word extensive explanation of the sutra

And also just by reading the lines as it is in the sutra is very clear to understand the meaning too

We have to practice Dharma correctly through proper learning by relying on qualified teachers until we gain the Wisdom of learning. It’s beneficial to understand the Dharma from different angles of presentations, such as:

Philosophical presentations, especially for the understanding on views of Emptiness

Lamrim (particularly The Great Lamrim/Lamrim Chenmo) by Lama Tsongkhapa; the treatise of entire teaching, which is structured, complete and concise with clear and correct interpretation of Buddha’s intent

Lojong (Mind Training) teachings; an experiential instructional teaching of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas that are so effective to deal with every kind of afflictions and obstacles on the path.

These are the relevant guidance for a meaningful life. Every word carries pith instructions and blessings

Whatever Buddha's teachings available including teachings by Nalanda pandits and Kadampa masters were composed from their realizations on the path through rigorous studies, thorough analysis and application of these Wisdom in practices for lifelong, day and night.

All Buddha's teachings are for the purposes of gaining realizations on the path; these masters practised until they gained the realizations on the path (thus the teachings really make sense in the actual realizations)

So, we too should practice until it is carved into our continuum the path as realization so that nothing can be wiped away. So first actualise the Wisdom of learning, then contemplate on that Wisdom, then apply the Wisdom from contemplation into Meditation until one achieves the realizations on the Wisdom of Meditation (exactly like how Buddha himself had achieved)

Buddhahood (which Buddha had achieved) is an experiential teaching that he himself applied from his own experience, not just philosophical views

When we achieve the state of Buddhahood, we'll experience uninterrupted everlasting happiness. Within ourselves (even in this contaminated physical aggregates), the moment we're able to eradicate Delusion and Karma — that is the Liberation —we experience everlasting peace and everlasting happiness

Buddha Dharma is a perfect way of Life; it's the perfect day-to-day protection and it's the guide for our day-to-day safe travels without falling into trouble

With Dharma, we'll not be affected by physical external challenges (such as disasters and health diseases) which are causing us meaningless suffering

With Dharma, we'll find meaning in everything that comes our way; we can travel safely as everything becomes the path to develop our heart.

2. Recitations of The Sutra Remembering the Three Jewels

(with brief explanations & recitations in English and Tibetan by Geshe Zopa)

In Sanskrit: Ārya-ratnatraya-anusmṛti-sūtra.

In Tibetan: 'phags pa dkon mchog gsum rjes su dran pa'i mdo

“Homage to the Omniscient One! Purified and consummate, Victorious, Virtuous and Transcendent, thus-gone, foe-destroying, entirely perfect Buddha, full of wisdom, the blissfully proceeding, the knower of the world, charioteer and subduer of beings, the

unsurpassable, and teacher of gods and men: such is Buddha, Victorious, Virtuous and Transcendent.”

Firstly on Qualities of Buddha Refuge: Victorious, Virtuous and Transcendent

“He who is thus-gone exemplifies the merit which is his cause; in him no root of virtue is ever worn away; through his manifold patience he is exceedingly beautiful. He is the treasure-ground of merit; adorned with the tokens of enlightenment, he is graced with the flowers of the marks of Buddhahood.”

Buddha carried the major marks and minor marks of the enlightened qualities

“All he does is seasonable and opportune and nothing inharmonious mars the sight of him. True joy indeed he gives to those who open up their hearts to him in faith. Through the brilliance of his wisdom, he is unconfounded, and against his power there is no victory.”

Buddha is the object of our veneration and object of our merits. Everything that we relate to Buddha, we'll get the benefits of accumulating merits and benefits of purification

Taking ultimate refuge under the guidance of Guru Buddha is like the wishfulfilling gem to grant our wishes. When we take Buddha as our Guru (or guide), our wishes will be fulfilled; there's no betrayal, no disappointment, no faults

“He is the teacher of all living beings, the father of all bodhisattvas, the king of all superior ones; he is the guide of those who journey to the city of Beyond Affliction.”

Buddha is the teacher of all living beings. Buddha is not just teacher to ordinary people, he's also teacher to Gods and Bodhisattvas (even to Bodhisattvas of the Ten Bhumis). Buddha is the Supreme Teacher

“His wisdom is unbounded; his assurance is beyond imagining. His speech is altogether pure, well-tuned and sweet to hear. Gazing on him one is never sated; his body is beyond compare.”

When Buddha speaks in one single language, everyone/whoever listens to Buddha will hear it in one's own language (no need translation)

Worth admiring Buddha's perfected qualities; you won't gain attachment, only bring benefits (even admiring one time/moment brings you unbelievable merits)

“By the realm of desire, he is unstained, and by the realm of form is wholly uncontaminated; he is not mingled with the formless. He is altogether free from misery, and from the aggregates he is utterly and altogether free. The elements have no hold on him; he has mastery of the sense powers. All bonds he has completely severed and from all pain he is perfectly and totally released.”

Buddha is beyond the beings of the three worlds (realms)
In Desire world (realm), we've suffering in relation to desire
Even if we're born in the Form realm and Formless world,
still we're not free from the cyclic existence.

Even though the higher realms (such as Formless realm) are achieved through Meditative Absorption; but it's not an exalted meditation and is still contaminated, therefore no ultimate liberation can be obtained from that
Buddha had fully actualized 10 Perfections of generosity, morality, patience, perseverance, concentration, wisdom, skilful means, aspirational prayers, power, primordial wisdom

“No craving does he have; he has passed beyond the stream. Perfect is his wisdom; and in the wisdom of the Buddhas past, present and to come he has made his dwelling.”

Buddha the Fully Enlightened One is omniscient (even when someone achieves Arhatship, one has not achieved the omniscience, there's limitation)

“In nirvana where all suffering is transcended, he does not abide; his abode is in the very summit of perfection residing in that place where he perceives all living beings. Such are the sublime qualities that are the greatness of the Buddha, Victorious, Virtuous and Transcendent.”

Even though Buddha had achieved the greatest perfected peace (but he did not reside just himself being in peace like those Arhats in Nirvana Peace), he used those perfected qualities to alleviate sentient beings from sufferings. So Buddha surpassed those others who had achieved stage of Nirvana

“The sacred Doctrine is righteous in the outset, righteous in the middle, righteous in the end, in its meaning excellent and in its words and syllables likewise. It is integral and unalloyed; it is all-sufficing, altogether pure and purifying.”

Secondly on Dharma Refuge; very much referring to Emptiness

“Well-spoken is this Dharma by the Victorious, Virtuous and Transcendent. It is a perfect way of seeing and is devoid of ailment; it is perennial and leads us onward. To see this Dharma is to fulfill one's purpose; the wise will see in it their self-cognizing wisdom.”

The Dharma spoken by the Victorious, Virtuous and Transcendent is shown to be well-tempered to the instruction and the needs of all.

It drives us from saṃsāra and causes us to go to perfect Buddhahood.

It is free from contradiction and in it all is summarised. It is totally to be relied upon; it is a cutting of the root

Wisdom of the Altruistic Emptiness

Refuge in Dharma with capabilities to cut delusions, defilements and bring about absolute eradication of entire obscuration's and actualize state of Enlightenment

“The Saṅgha of the Mahāyāna comprises those who have well entered, wisely entered, entered with straightforwardness and aptitude. Right, it is to join our hands before them, and right to make prostration.”

They are the glorious field of merit. They are the perfect recipients of gifts; they are the object of offering; everywhere and always they are the worthy object of all offering.

Thus ends the Sublime Sūtra of Remembering the Three Jewels

3. Refuge to Sangha:

Sangha is so precious; they're objects of our merits as they've actualized the Wisdom that emphasized the preciousness of the Dharma (they have realized that and they live in that cultivation), therefore Sangha becomes the object of Refuge

When we relate to Sangha, we will be effected by all the virtuous qualities and inspirations, then affect us to free ourselves from all the stains/faults

Venerating Sangha (even the conventional Sangha like monks and nuns who hold the vows) by venerating them, making offerings/prostrations and offering praises create all the meritorious benefits/merits; with that eventually ourselves will also actualize the resultant Refuge of the Sangha (ourselves will be Sangha)

Then, we'll actualize the resultant Dharma equipped with direct Wisdom realization of Emptiness

Then, we'll eventually actualize the resultant Buddha equipped with omniscience state of Buddhahood.

Note: Before eating meals, Sangha in the monasteries and nunneries in Himalayas recite The Sutra of Remembering the Three Jewels, followed by meditation remembering the Three Jewels, then making offerings before they have their meals.

3. Light Offering practice:

With lights in your hand, you visualize making light offerings in front of the wish-fulfilling jewel stupa Boudha Stupa in Nepal, and all the light offerings by Buddhist communities around the world, also visualize offering the light from the sun and light from the moon, all the lights in your house/cities and everything that you can offer

- Understand that externally/conventionally the lights dispel the darkness, and ultimately the lights act as antidotes to dispel darkness of Ignorance/Delusions

- You are making infinite light offering to each of the Ten Directions past present future Guru Buddha Dharma Sangha Deities Dakas Dakinis Dharmapalas, which the merit field starts central with Guru Shakyamuni Buddha

- You can also engage this as Guru Yoga practice (and you're making offering) that Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is the embodiment of your spiritual Gurus, all the past present future Buddhas

- Then, you visualize that directly impact yourself, your family, the world and the rest of sentient beings bringing about purification of all the negativities (sicknesses, etc) to pacify all the impurities/sufferings

- Before we do the light offering, we recite prayers to purify any impure substance, impure motivation and any form of impurities

- Then, recite prayer that invoke the merit field to receive our offering

Then, we'll do the recitations of:

- Samantabhadra mantra
- Eight offerings, particularly offering of the light mantra
- Mandala offering:

Offer your own Body, Speech and Mind, your merits, your wealth and everything to the merit field, also offer Body, Speech and Mind of your family members and the rest of the sentient beings, so that we receive blessing of abundance of merits, so that we can ever enjoy abundance of virtues and all the conducive conditions to bring happiness to everyone

Then, also offer your three partial attitudes of attachment grasping, aversion and ignorance to transform that into Mandala offering like in the form of lights, to offer to Buddhas

Then, offer objects of three partial attitude (loved ones, enemies and strangers) and everything so that by making offering to the Triple Gems bring purification of three partial attitude and bring about all the benefits in relation to all sentient beings, all the way up to the state of Enlightenment

- **Dedication of collective merits and Dedication Prayer**