

The Seven Branch Offering:
Commentary by His Holiness Penor Rinpoche



The following commentary was extracted from a teaching given by His Holiness Penor Rinpoche at **Kunzang Palyul Choling** in 2001 on the occasion of offering the Bodhisattva Vow. To see the verses of the ceremony for the Bodhisattva Vow to which His Holiness was referring you can [click here](#).

From **Words of My Perfect Teacher**:

The Vajrayana path includes many methods and is without great hardships. It is intended for those with sharp faculties. If we constantly train ourselves to accumulate merit and wisdom with a strong mind, everything that would otherwise take a whole great kalpa to accumulate through the six paramitas can be accomplished in an instant, and liberation can be attained in a single lifetime.

There can be no doubt that the single most excellent, secret and unsurpassable field of merit is the vajra master. This is why the practice of accumulating merit is combined with the Guru Yoga. The seven parts of the Offering of the Seven Branches include all the innumerable methods for accumulation of merit and wisdom.

Prostrations:

The branch of prostrations is a remedy for arrogance. Sometimes we have arrogance; we feel we are more qualified than the masters and teachers. So, this is a remedy to remove the arrogance.

Offering:

After the prostrations to the Buddhas, bodhisattvas and all disciples, you now have to make offerings to them.. Imagine all the things in the universe as an offering, which is a very good offering. All the offerings will be the sacred flowers and the sacred garlands and musical instruments, perfumes, superior parasols, superior butter lamps, superior incense. All these things will be the offering. Just imagine you are offering them. So, this is the offering. This is the remedy for attachment to our belongings.

Confession:

Now comes purification of negative actions. We have to purify the negative actions by thinking negative actions are like poisons that are inside your stomach. Also, you make a commitment that you will not do those mistakes or bad negative actions again. Also, you think that in order to purify all the negative actions that are in this world that are done by other sentient beings, I am doing these purification prayers. This is the remedy for removing anger.

Rejoicing:

We have to rejoice in the accumulations of merits done by other beings. This is the antidote for jealousy. Sometimes we feel jealous of other beings that practice. In order to remove the jealousy, we have to rejoice in whatever practice they are doing. This is the remedy for that action.

Requesting Enlightened Beings to Teach:

The next stanza is requesting the enlightened beings to teach. We request them to teach because sometimes when they come here for the purpose of teachings, they feel kind of upset when they find the bad reactions of the people. So they feel upset and don't want to teach. So we have to request them to teach. That is how we are requesting it.

This is the remedy for ignorance, thinking the teaching is nothing, thinking the teaching will not have any result. This chanting will remove the ignorance.

Enlightenment depends on the understanding of the teachings. Without teachings, there is no way of getting enlightened. But some people, those who don't know, who aren't in favor of the teachings, then they don't really see the teaching as worthwhile. They criticize the teachings and those who do the teaching.

Requesting Enlightened Beings to Remain:

The reason why enlightened beings pass away is that they want to show human beings that enlightened beings are very real and they don't last long if we are not very careful. So, we have to request them to remain as long as possible to turn the Wheel of the Dharma. This is the request to remain with a long life.

This is the remedy of wrong view of Buddhas. Some people think the Buddha is nothing, just a liar. So, they have a lot of wrong views of Buddhas. This way of chanting will remove the wrong view of Buddha.

Dedication:

The last one is a short form of all the seven branches of practice. It's an offering. This is the dedication of the merit that you have accumulated. You have to dedicate all the merit accumulated by other beings to other beings. In order to get enlightened you have to dedicate the merit.

This is the remedy for doubt. Sometimes we have doubt whether it is true or not. This way of chanting will remove or clarify our doubt.