

Essential Phowa Practice for Buddhists

- **Ring bell three times.**

Note: Spend a few moments generating Bodhichitta – the wish to become enlightened in order to help others attain enlightenment – all sentient (responsive to or conscious of sense impressions) beings without exception.

The practice begins:

*Homage to the Buddha
Homage to the Dharma
Homage to the Sangha*

The blessings of love and respect we offer to all in times past and present who have opened the doors of wisdom, reuniting all beings with their intrinsic purity.

*Now that the bardo of dying dawns upon me,
I will abandon all grasping, yearning, and attachment,
Enter undistracted into clear awareness of the teaching,
And eject my consciousness into the space of unborn Rigpa,
As I leave this compound body of flesh and blood
I will know it to be a transitory illusion.*

- ❖ *In the sky in front of you, invoke the embodiment of truth, _____, in the form of radiant light.*
- ❖ (NOTE: Fill in the blank above, choosing whichever divine being or saint you feel close to. If you are a Buddhist, invoke a Buddha or Bodhisattva with whom you feel an intimate connection. If you are a practicing Christian, feel with all your heart the vivid, immediate presence of God, the Holy Spirit, Jesus, or the Virgin Mary. If you don't feel linked with any particular spiritual figure, simply imagine a form of pure golden light in the sky in front of you. The important point is that you consider the being you are visualizing or whose presence you feel IS the embodiment of the truth, wisdom, and compassion of all Buddhas, saints, masters, and enlightened beings).
- ❖ *Do not worry if you cannot visualize them very clearly, just fill your heart with their presence and trust that they are there.*
- ❖ *Then focus your mind, heart, and soul on the presence you have invoked, and pray:*

- *Through your blessing, grace, and guidance, through the power of the light that streams from you:*
- *May all my negative karma, destructive emotions, obscurations, and blockages be purified and removed,*
- *May I know myself forgiven for all the harm I may have thought and done,*
- *May I accomplish this profound practice of phowa, and die a good and peaceful death,*
- *And through the triumph of my death, may I be able to benefit all other beings, living or dead.*
- ❖ *Now imagine that the presence of light you have invoked is so moved by your sincere and heartfelt prayer that he or she responds with a loving smile and sends out love and compassion in a stream of rays of light from his or her heart. As these touch and penetrate you, they cleanse and purify all your negative karma, destructive emotions, and obscurations, which are the causes of suffering. You see and feel that you are totally immersed in light.*
- ❖ *Now you are completely filled and completely healed by the light streaming from the presence. Consider that your very body, itself created by karma, now dissolves completely into light.*
- ❖ *The body of light you are now soars through your crown chakra, up into the sky and merges, inseparably, with the blissful presence of light.*
- ❖ *There is no self and other as the awareness of pure undisturbed consciousness slips into all consciousness.*
- ❖ *Offering gratitude and dedication, pray thus: "I have arrived at the time of death, so now, by means of this death, I will adopt only the attitude of the enlightened state of mind, loving kindness and compassion, and attain perfect enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings that are as limitless as space..."*
- ❖ *Remain in that state of oneness with the presence for as long as possible.*
- ❖ *Allow 10-15 minutes.*
- *Ring bell two times.*
- ❖ *The merit for all good acts we do freely offer to all beings. Dutiyaampi, tatiyaampi, savaha. Again and yet again, may it be so.*