

Extensive Practice for Reciting or Reading the Sanghāta

Lama Zopa Rinpoche has outlined the following extensive practice, which can be done when either reciting or reading the holy *Arya Sanghāta Sutra*.

Before reciting or reading:

Taking Refuge and Generating Bodhichitta

I go for refuge until I am enlightened
To the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Supreme Assembly.
By my practice of giving and other perfections,
May I become a buddha to benefit all sentient beings. (3x)

Seven-Limb Prayer

Reverently, I prostrate with my body, speech, and mind;
I present clouds of every type of offering, actual and imagined;
I declare all my negative actions accumulated since beginningless time
And rejoice in the merit of all holy and ordinary beings.
Please, remain until the end of cyclic existence
And turn the wheel of Dharma for living beings.
I dedicate my own merits and those of all others to the great enlightenment.

Short Mandala Offering

This ground, anointed with perfume, strewn with flowers,
Adorned with Mount Meru, four continents, the sun and the moon:
I imagine this as a buddha-field and offer it.
May all living beings enjoy this pure land!

Special request for the three great purposes

I prostrate and go for refuge to the guru and the Three Precious Gems: Please bless my mind. I am requesting you to immediately pacify all the wrong conceptions, from incorrect devotion to the guru up to the subtle dual view of the white, red, and dark visions, that exist in my mind and in the minds of all mother sentient beings.

I am requesting you to immediately generate all the right realizations from guru devotion up to enlightenment in my mind and in the minds of all mother sentient beings.

I am requesting you to pacify all outer and inner obstacles to actualizing the entire graduated path to enlightenment in my mind and in the minds of all mother sentient beings. (3x)

IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI

Then recite this mantra to multiply the merit of reciting the sutra to multiply the merit by a million:

OM DHARE DHARE BENDHARE SVAHA (7x)

While reciting or reading the sutra:

There are two ways to visualize while reading sutras, and both can be done at the same time:

Visualize that Buddha is giving you the teaching directly while you read the sutra, and you actualize realizations in your heart while you are reciting.

When reciting, visualize that you are giving the teachings to sentient beings as you read the sutra out loud. Since dogs, cats, birds, spirits, and other beings can hear you as you recite, you can invite the spirits and devas to listen as well. The sutra is medicine for the mind's delusions, where all sufferings come from. When you read the sutra, visualize that you are giving teachings to the beings of all six realms, offering them the opportunity to actualize the path and be liberated from their delusions, defilements, karma and suffering. As you recite or read, and when you have finished, visualize that you and all beings — the hell beings, animals and so on — are purified by unfathomable numbers of nectar beams coming from unfathomable numbers of bodhisattvas. On this basis, visualize clearly that you and all the beings receiving teachings are generating extraordinary bliss and emptiness.

After you finish:

When you finish reading the sutra, visualize that the sentient beings you have been reciting the sutra to are all liberated from the causes of suffering. Their causes of delusions are purified, and they all become enlightened.

Then rejoice! Reciting sutras for these extensive benefits is how the bodhisattva Samantabhadra practiced, using extensive visualizations.

These instructions come from Lama Zopa Rinpoche, as explained to Ven. Wongmo in February of 2005. They were edited for publication at www.sanghatasutra.net.