**A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF HOW TO ENGAGE IN THE CONFESSION OF DOWNFALLS TO THE THIRTY FIVE BUDDHAS**

Commentary to The Practice of Prostrations to the 35 Confession Buddhas

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**Purification in General**

There are different means through which purification practices can be done. There are six different forms of practice, which can be done in association with confessional downfall practice. These are:

1)  Performing the Three Heaps of Confessional Sutra (discussed here)

2)  Meditation on and recitation of Vajrasattva

3)  Recitation of the Sutra dealing with the subject on emptiness

4)  Actual meditation on emptiness

5)  Making offerings

6)  Making statues and tangkas

One of the well known confessional downfall practices, which is being undertaken widely, is that of The Three Heaps of Confessional Sutra, also called Prostrations to the 35 Confession Buddhas, or Confession of Downfalls to the 35 Buddhas. It is called The Three Heaps, because, just as piling up a lot of jewelry makes heaps, the contents of the confession, dedication and rejoicing in the sutra makes the heaps. It is also known by name of “Downfall Confession.” The confessional practice is done in conjunction with the four opponent powers. This confessional practice also contains the Seven Limb Practices.

**The Origin of the Practice of the Confession of Moral Downfalls**

This particular sutra is said to have originated from an instance when thirty-five awakening warriors, who were beginners, went begging and caused the death of a beer seller’s son. In order to confess this downfall, they urged the superior Upali to request a purification sutra from the enlightened one, and, thus, Shakyamuni Buddha taught it.

There are only thirty Buddhas mentioned, because it was intended for these thirty-five actual disciples of Buddha, who had intimate connections with the Buddha. Through the power of their blessings and prayers, we can swiftly cleanse away even the heaviest negative karmic deeds simply by sincerely and faithfully reciting their names.

Only humans have the precious opportunity to be able to purify non-virtuous actions. In view of the preciousness of human birth, we should make use of this rare opportunity to purify our negative karmic deeds.

When we visualize the merit field, we can imagine all the thirty five Buddhas sitting on jeweled thrones on cushions of a lotus, a moon and a sun. This assembly of thirty five confession Buddhas is surrounded by all the Buddhas and Boddhisattvas of the ten directions. It doesn't matter if we do not have a clear visualization; the main point is to cultivate deep faith and to have no doubt that we are actually in the presence of real living Buddhas.

When this sutra was first requested, the Enlightened One radiated light rays which, for the sake of those bodhisattvas, invoked the appearance of thirty four Buddhas from the ten directions, along with multitudes of others. They remained in space while the penitent Bodhisattvas, after making offerings and generating the awakening mind, went for refuge. The disciples prostrated and confessed their wrongdoings, and by doing this only once were purified of all evil and rose up to the first spiritual level as well as higher levels.

Likewise, when performing this practice, you should create a mandala and make offerings before images and paintings of these fully and perfected enlightened beings. Then proceed with the actual practice. By doing so, all negativities will be cleansed, and as a result you will get closer to the path proceeding from joy to joy.

**Advice for the Actual Practice of the Confession of Moral Downfalls**

Continue to prostrate while reciting the names of the Buddhas and the confession prayer.

Begin by visualizing the 35 confession Buddhas and infinite Buddhas of the ten directions, in space in front of you and recognizing them as the essence of all Buddha jewels, dharma jewels and Sangha jewels. Generate deep faith and go for refuge while reciting the following lines of refuge. Also imagine all the negative karma you have created in this and in all previous lives and generate the four powers in your mind (reliance, regret, remedy & resolve not to repeat the transgressions). To increase the benefit of each prostration, first prostrate three times while reciting the mantra below.

**OM NAMO MANJUSHRIYE NAMAH SUSHRIYE NAMA UTTAMA SHRIYE SWAHA (3x)**

**I (say your name) throughout all times, take refuge in the Guru;**

**I take refuge in the Buddha;**

**I take refuge in the Dharma;**

**I take refuge in the Supreme Assembly.**

[All quotes are from “The Practice of Prostration to the 35 Confession Buddhas.”]

The text begins With 'I'. Here, the term I and saying ones name is used to indicate that one admit the downfalls as downfalls. So it is you who is taking refuge in three jewels.

**The Power of Reliance (Refuge & Bodhichitta)**

Taking refuge in the three jewels indicates the power of reliance. In addition to going for refuge, generation of the awakening mind is also part of the power of reliance. Although verses for the generation of the mind of enlightenment have not been indicated here in this confessional text, taking refuge in the three precious gems shows the generation of awakening mind. The process of going for refuge in the three jewels clearly indicates the importance of the generation of the altruistic mind of enlightenment.

The sense of renunciation is developed on seeing the suffering of oneself and great compassion is cultivated on seeing the suffering of others. In order to make an end to the suffering of oneself as well as of others, the state of full enlightenment is to be achieved. And this possibility comes only through the development of the mind of enlightenment.

The plight of your situation at present stage is something very pathetic. If you can't help yourself get free from the mud of suffering, how can you expect to pull out others from the mud of suffering. Realizing such a pathetic situation, one then goes for refuge in the three jewels, believing in their true potential for liberating oneself.

This is how going for refuge and the generation of an altruistic mind helps purify neurosis and negative impulses. All the negative deeds that one accrues are either directed towards Buddha, holy beings or sentient beings. To purify the negativities directed towards those supreme beings, one goes for refuge in the three precious gems. And the generation of awakening mind helps purify the negative deeds directed towards sentient beings.

**The Power of Remedy (Antidote)**

Making prostrations to each of the thirty five Buddhas is the power of the antidote.

**To the founder Bhagawan tathagata, arhat, completed perfectly glorious conquered Shakyamuni Buddha, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata thoroughly destroying with Vajra Essence, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Radiant Jewel,**

**To Tathagata king, Lord of the Nagas, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Army of Heroes, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Delighted Hero, I prostrate,**

**To Tathagata Jewel Fire, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Jewel Moonlight, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Meaningful to Behold, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Jewel Moon, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Stainless One, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Bestowed with Courage, I prostate.**

**To Tathagata Pure One, I prostate.**

**To Tathagata Bestowed with Purity, I prostate.**

**To Tathagata Bater God, I prostate.**

**To Tathagata Deity of the Water God, I prostate.**

**To Tathagata Glorious Goodness, I prostate.**

**To Tathagata Glorious Sandalwood, I prostate.**

**To Tathagata Infinite Splendor, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Glorious Light, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Sorrow less Glory, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Son of Non- craving, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Glorious Flower, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Pure Light Rays Clearly Knowing by Play, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Lotus Light Rays Clearly Knowing by Play, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Glorious Wealth, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Glorious Mindfulness, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Glorious Name Widely Renowned, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata King Holding the Victory Banner of Foremost Power, I prostate.**

**To Tathagata Glorious One Totally Subduing, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Utterly Victorious in Battle, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Glorious Transcendence through Subduing, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Glorious Manifestation Illuminating All, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata All Subduing Jewel Lotus, I prostrate.**

**To Tathagata Arhat, Perfectly Completed Awakened Buddha, King of the Lord of Mountains, firmly seated on jewel and lotus, I prostrate.**

The second part involves the recitation of the name of each of the thirty five Buddhas. Merely reciting the names, without proper motivation, will not yield any significant benefit. The degree to which you exhaust negative tendencies, depends upon your pure motivation.

Each of the thirty five Buddhas made their own respective prayers in their previous lives to help sentient beings. If the devotees have a ring of faith; then the Buddhas are ready to put their hook of help into that ring of faith.

When you make a prostration to each of the thirty five Buddhas, you imagine that all these Buddhas re gazing at you with great love and compassion. Engaging in the prostration comprises of physical, verbal and mental. Short length or full length prostration is a bodily prostration. Reciting the names of the tathagatas is verbal prostration, and having faith in your mind during the prostration is mental prostration.

You also visualize your body as limitless in number. And that all these limitless manifested bodies make prostrations to the thirty five tathagatas. It is also important to think that all sentient beings join you in making their prostrations to the thirty five tathagatas.

**The Unique Qualities of these 35 Buddhas**

The nature and the unique qualities of each of the thirty five Buddhas are as follows:

1. Tathagata means that Buddha teaches that suchness, the true nature of reality, and he has gone to that state and is above all others. The foe destroyer means that Buddha has slain the enemy of conflicting emotions. Completely means that he has completed the two accumulations and has attained the two perfect bodies. Perfected means that he will not lead you towards wrong views. The one who is characteristic of that fully awakened state is Shakyamuni. “Sha” refers to his primordial awareness that understands all things without exception; “kya” refers to his insight, and “muni” means that he bound himself to truth without duality.

1. Vajra means pristine awareness, awareness as non conceptual. Essence indicates that his excellent qualities are the essential source of all things. Thoroughly destroying signifies that his functioning is to destroy everything such as emotional afflictions.
2. Jewel indicates his excellent qualities are like precious jewels, which are the source of all excellent powers. Reliant refers to his functioning of eliminating the ignorance of every sentient being.
3. Nagas refers to his primordial awareness, which is cooling and is linked to a naga, because, superheated from disturbing emotions, it destroys grasping.
4. Hero refers to his primordial awareness, which is matchless and undefeatable.
5. Delighted refers to his excellence of mind, which, because of its compassionate nature, is pleased to engage in activities for the benefit of sentient beings.
6. Jewel refers to his primordial awareness, which fulfills his purpose without discursive thoughts. Fire refers to his great energy, which burns away sentient beings emotional afflictions.
7. Jewel refers to his excellence as before. Moon refers to his pristine awareness that is full, bright and cool; light indicate his function to clear away contaminated action and afflictions.
8. Meaningful refers to leading all sentient beings to partake in the fruit of definite goodness and higher status.
9. Jewel refers to his excellent quality as noted before and moon refers to his pristine awareness and function as stated earlier.
10. Stainless indicates his pristine awareness without obscurations; and that his excellent qualities, such as his power to brilliantly illuminate beings, distinguishes them from traces of beings affected by unexpected occurrences.
11. Courage refers to his primordial awareness that put an end to all discursive thoughts; and bestow indicates that his function is to bestow pleasure or whatever is wished for on all sentient beings.
12. His pristine wisdom is pure, because it is free from all obscurations. Furthermore, his excellent qualities are pure because, through the strength of his immeasurable excellence, he cleanses both himself and others.
13. Purity refers to his pristine awareness and excellence and his function is to bestow all sentient beings pure happiness.
14. Water refers to his pristine awareness which is extremely clear and unstained; God refers to his marvelous quality of having magical powers by which he is able to conjure up emanations.
15. Water refers to his pristine awareness as noted before; deity indicates his function which is to work for all the sentient beings thorough performing activities such as miraculous emanations.
16. Glorious refers to his excellence of possessing complete perfection for the sake of himself and others; goodness refers to his primordial awareness which is extremely supreme.
17. Glorious indicates his function as noted before; sandalwood refers to his primordial awareness since it cools and cleanses the pain of emotional afflictions.
18. Infinite refers that his function is to benefit innumerable sentient beings and that his preeminent qualities are infinite. Splendor refers to his pristine awareness which is clear and is able to suppress and bring others to clarity.
19. Light refers to his pristine awareness which, like the sun, dispels the gloom of both the obscurations. Glorious refers to his function as noted before.
20. Sorrow less refers to his primordial awareness, which has transcended cyclic existence and is separated from all obscurations, and also it indicates his power to help free all sentient beings from the sorrows of suffering and misery. And glorious refers to his excellence as noted before.
21. Non craving refers to his primordial awareness, which is separated from discursive thought, and he also functions to free sentient beings from their passion for cyclic existence. Son indicates his excellent quality of being born like a son from the fully awakened state, and it also refers to his good qualities such as loving kindness.
22. Flower indicates that his excellent qualities are blossoming and beautiful and that his primordial awareness is like a flower because it is unfolding; and glorious refers to his function of endowing everyone with complete perfection like himself.
23. Pure refers to his primordial awareness as noted before; light rays refers to his excellence, his great ability that is extremely clear. Playing indicates his function of benefiting sentient beings through such feats as miraculous emanations. Through his primordial awareness of mind he clearly understands such things as the means for being of benefit.
24. Lotus refers to his primordial awareness, which blossoms and is not attracted to worldly faults; and 'clearly knowing' refers to his function and good qualities as noted before.
25. Wealth refers to his pristine awareness which is great and unceasing; it also indicates his function of fulfilling all desires by being endowed with great marvelous attributes like the qualities of wealth. His excellence is indicated by glorious.
26. Mindful refers to his great primordial awareness, which never forgets; it also indicates his excellence which is inconceivably ability to remember his previous life.  And glorious refers to his function as before.
27. Name refers to his primordial awareness that can't be expended; glorious refers to his function; and 'widely renowned' indicates his excellent quality is such that his great fame pervades throughout the three realms of existence.
28. Foremost power refers to his primordial awareness because, just as we perceive objects through our sensory powers, he perceives the truth of reality through his pristine awareness; and it is like a foremost since it beautifies reality. Victory banner refers to his excellent quality of being victorious over cyclic existence; king indicates that his function is to do what is needed to be done.
29. Perfectly refers to his primordial awareness which is perfect; subduing indicates that his function is to destroy the emotional afflictions and malevolent forces within all sentient beings, and glorious refers to his excellences as noted before.
30. Victorious in battle indicates his function of turning back inner enemies, which are the conflicting emotions and contaminated actions of all sentient beings; utterly refers to his primordial awareness and victorious refers to his excellent quality of being endowed with the ability to gain victory over cyclic existence for the sake of himself or others.
31. Subduing refers to vanquish the inner enemies of conflicting emotions and contaminated actions and glorious refers to his excellence as noted before.
32. Illuminating all refers to his function which is to eliminate the ignorance of sentient beings through his pristine awareness; glorious refers to his excellence.
33. Jewel refers to his excellence; lotus indicates that his primordial awareness is stainless; and subduing refers to his function as noted before.
34. King of the lord of mountains refers to his primordial awareness and excellent qualities. His primordial wariness is unshakable like the king of the mountains, and his excellent quality is like king of the mountain. King indicates his function of doing what is needed.

You should pay homage to these thirty five fully awakened Buddhas through the three gates of your body speech and mind. The thirty five Buddhas didn't actually have any negativity to confess, but this practice was intended for use by people in later times. Thinking that this prayer is primarily meant for you, you should make deep sincere confessions so that your downfalls can be cleansed away.

**Power of Regret or Remorse**

Power of remorse is accomplished when we ask them to give us their attention and witness our confession.

**All those (you thirty five Buddhas) and others, as many tathagatas, arhats, completely perfected Buddhas as there are existing, sustaining and residing in all the world systems of the ten directions; all you Buddha Bhagwan's, please pay attention to me.**

**We now admit that in the past we have committed great deal of unwholesome deeds, and with great regret confess them as follows:**

**In this life and in all states of rebirth in which I have circled in samsara throughout beginning-less lives, whatever negative actions I have created, made others create, or rejoice in the creation of; whatever possessions of stupas, possessions of the Sangha, or possessions of the Sangha of the ten directions that I have appropriated, made others appropriate, or rejoice in the appropriation of; whichever among the five actions of immediate (retribution) I have done, caused to be done or, rejoice in the doing of; whichever part of the ten non virtuous actions I have engaged in, caused others to engage in, or rejoicing in the engaging in: whatever I have created, being obscured by these karmas causes me and sentient beings to be born in the hell  realm, in the animal realm, and in the preta realm; in Barbarian lands or as long life gods; with imperfect faculties, holding wrong views, or not bring pleased with Buddhas descent. In the presence of Buddha Bhagwan's, who are transcendental wisdom, who are eyes, who are witnesses, who are valid, and who see with omniscient minds, I am admitting …**

These few lines indicate the power of regret/remorse. Of the four powers, the power of regret is perhaps the most important. Because, if there is a power of repentance, then the other remaining powers come automatically, and the sincerity of applying the three other opponent powers depends on how strong one can make a deep sense of remorse over the negativities. To develop a deep and heartfelt sense of regret, the understanding and belief in the law of karmic causation becomes an important factor. The grosser workings of karmic principle can be explained and understood by means of reasoning. And those subtle mechanisms of karmic law are beyond the scope of ordinary minds.

**The understanding of karmic causality can be reflected through the four essential points.**

1) The result of karma can increase.

2) The result of the karma is definite.

3) Had the action not been committed, the result wouldn't come into fruition.

4) The karmic result can never be wasted.

**The karmic action increases**

If the negative action having been committed is not purified, then it will continue to increase in strength. Likewise, positive actions, if not destroyed by strong afflictions, will then continue to increase. It is like a sprout growing into a full grown tree. Those dedicated merits supported by wisdom can't easily be destroyed by any other factors.

Thus, actions which may seem insignificant have the potential to mature into significant and huge results. This is to be understood by taking into account many factors, such as the intention behind the action, as well as the object towards which the action is directed. Some people are seen leading a virtuous and meaningful life, but experience great difficulties While negative people may be seen presently leading a successful life. This has to do with multitudes of different accrued karmic actions in former lives. The actions of this life will likely ripen later in life or in future lives.

**The karmic result as definite**

If one plants a hot pepper sprout, you will have hot pepper fruit as a result. If you plant an apple seed, you can't have mango as a result. Likewise, good action produces a good result and evil deeds bring an evil result. It is a natural law. Nobody has made it. This is the reality that the Buddha has taught. This is dependent origination. This is the way it is. Therefore, this reality is beyond the distortions, fabrications, projections; beyond eternalism and absolutism.

One is not punished for anger but punished by anger. And one is not rewarded for loving kindness but rewarded by loving kindness. The troubled world comes into being because of the rejection of cause and effect. A peaceful world comes into being because of the acceptance of the realities, which is beyond dogma.

**If the action is not committed and accrued, then there would be no karmic result at all.**

If one hasn't studied mathematics how can one become an engineer?  A foolish man can become a philosopher in his or her own stupidity. Without understanding the foundational Buddhist teachings and practices, aspiring to become a profound practitioner is like erecting a building on thin ice. Two children of the same family are seen spending different livelihoods. Likewise, some soldiers during their very first experience on the battle field get killed, while some others, in-spite of repeated deployments to the war-zone, return back safely.

Similarly, before a tsunami occurs, some are seen going to enjoy the beach while others are seen leaving the area. And in multiple different other cases, strange, rather unexplainable things happen. According to Buddhist understanding, all these point to the relation with one’s own karmic fruition. The Buddha clearly stated - one can be one’s own savior and there can be no one else to be the savior. Because, one has created one’s own world filled with misery, and it is in the hand of oneself to eternally make an end to that disturbing world. Buddhas can't come inside our mental world and fix all our monkey minds once and for all. Finally, one is one’s own master. And self discipline is the best discipline.

**The result of the karmic deeds will not be wasted.**

If one pours water into a leaky container, the water can't be held, simply because of the leakage in the container.  Similarly, the basis on which the karmic imprints are being stored must be stable and firm. All the karmic propensities are being stored, so to speak, in the mental continuum, which is the temporal storage and the self which is an ultimate storage. By self, we mean the mere designated self, which is functional and therefore, posit, as experiencer of karmic fruition.

It is the mental continuum and mere designated self, which then goes and continue life after life. If the mere designated self and continuity of the mind can't be destroyed then the imprints which carries along with them also can't be wasted either. To gain a deeper conviction in the law of causality, understanding in the disintegration of karmic actions and twelve links of dependent origination helps to see the infallibility of karmic functioning.

However, it is equally important to understand that the virtue of positive deeds is possible to destroy by afflictions such as anger. Likewise, positive thoughts can destroy negative deeds. Destroying here means affecting the potency of karmic maturation.

In the text, 'as there are existing' indicates that there is no space which is not pervaded by Buddha’s mind and body. Sustaining indicates that with their eyes of compassion they protect sentient beings from fear; residing means that they will remain for as long as samsara continues; arhats means that they have destroyed the four malevolent forces and are endowed with good fortune. In this life throughout indicates the time during which wrongdoings have been committed.

In the presence of Buddha Bhagwan's, who are transcendental wisdom - refers to the enlightened mind of the Buddhas who know the entire expanse of knowledge.

Who are eyes - refers to seeing the migratory beings all the time, with the eyes of compassion, or it implies that they clearly discriminate between skillful and unskillful deeds.

Who are witnesses, indicates the enlightened minds knowing all the karmic deeds precisely as they are.

Who are valid, means that words that have been spoken are non deceptive and without error; and who see with omniscient mind refers that by knowing everything of the mind, they see everything through the eye of intelligent awareness.

It is in the presence of these qualities, that one admits and confesses the negativities. 'I am admitting' refers to declaring your faults verbally; confessing means that you think of each of them. 'Will not conceal' means that you promise to make your faults known; and 'Nor hide' means that you will actually keep none secret. If you confess your faults in these four ways you will become purified. This is the force of remorse in the confessional practice.

We have committed actions such as these many times in our former lives and may even have done them in this life. Acknowledging this, we should try to generate strong remorse by reflecting the fate that awaits us if we fail to purify these negative actions.

**Visualization**

At this stage, visualize the rays of moon emanating from the bodies of the thirty five Buddhas, touching one’s tongue. As soon as it touches the tongue, negativities in the form of black rays, disappear and vanish completely leaving behind nothing. We firmly believe that all our negative karma that we have created since beginningless time has been purified. The wisdom lights pervade our body and mind, increasing our life span, our good fortune, our physical and mental power, and our spiritual attainments.

**Power of Resolve**

The fourth part of the text which begins with -

**From now on in the future, I will abstain and refrain from committing them again**

This refers to the power of resolve, or promise. If one confesses without making a resolve, then carelessness is involved and there is a danger for deceiving the enlightened beings who you invited as your eye witness in this practice.

You may think it's not a big deal to commit negativity in the future, because you have a method for purifying them. This indicates that we do not understand purification. A 'lion's roar sutra' says that acting or thinking in such a way is a foolish.

If you don't make a promise to refrain from committing harmful actions, no matter how powerful and forceful other opponent powers are, you will not be able to completely purify the negative deeds.

How should one make the power of promise? When you make the power of promise, you should resolve to refrain from engaging in negative deeds in the best possible way and as much as one could. By engaging in this gradual process, one will then begin to see the signs of progress. The accomplishment of great visions needs the firm determination and the development of strong determination lies in the skillfulness of the dealings. The smooth running of the joyous effort like the flowing river, is the reliable and more stable approach for beginners.

**Dedication**

With this, the dedication is then made. The dedication lines proceed with:

**All Buddha Bhagwan's, please pay attention to me. In this life and in all other states of rebirth in which I have circled in cyclic existence throughout begin guess lifetimes, whatever roots of virtue I have created by generosity even as little as giving just one mouthful of food to a being born in the animal realm; whatever roots of virtue I have created by guarding morality; whatever roots of virtue I have created by following pure conduct; whatever roots of virtue I have created by fully ripening sentient beings; whatever roots of virtue I have created by generating bodhichitta; and whatever roots of virtue I have created by my unsurpassed transcendental wisdom: all these assembled and gathered, combined together, I fully dedicate to then surpassed, the unexcelled, that higher than the high, that superior to the superior. Thus, I completely dedicated to the highest, perfectly complete enlightenment.**

The dedication part contains those acts belonging to the six perfections. These practices should be incorporated within your dedication. In this life and in all other state of rebirths refers to a favorable birth, which implies birth in the three realms of existence. Although the actual thing given, just one mouthful of food is small, you should understand that something larger form of giving is implied.

The practice of morality implies vows, the bringing together of virtuous practices and working for the sake of sentient beings. It is the source of virtue because it produces positive actions.

The practice of patience is related to pure conduct, which means parting yourself from wrongs and abiding in pure love. This refers to not returning harsh words; not retaliating if someone beats you; not speaking of the fault of others who speak of yours; and not returning anger.

The practice of joyous effort is indicated by the words 'fully ripening sentient beings'. Through joyous effort, you turn all sentient beings from the wrong view and path.

The practice of meditative concentration is included in generating bodhichitta.

The practice of wisdom is incorporated within the unsurpassed transcendental wisdom. This indicates the realization of the dharmakaya brought about by the accumulation of primordial wisdom. With regards to the six perfections, the first four involve the accumulation of physical merit; the sixth the accumulation of primordial awareness while the fifth applies to both. Thus, all six perfections are included within these two accumulations. These accumulations of merit are all brought together and dedicated to the 'unsurpassable'; enlightened brings.

Here, the term unsurpassed is referred to as form body, which is the creation of collective merits. The unexcelled refers to the wisdom merit. And the wisdom body is the resultant of the wisdom merit. The higher are those of solitary and hearer realizes. And the higher than the high are those emanation bodies expounding the dharma to those above beings. The superior are those Bodhisattvas, and superior to the superior are those complete enjoyment bodies expounding the teachings on the Bodhisattvas.

The very purpose of making the dedication is to increase the merit and not to destroy the merits by anger or perverted view.

The benefits of this dedication can be understood by considering the effects of a simple action such as giving. If we do not make any dedication at all, it is probable that the potential to yield happiness created by our wholesome deed of giving will soon be destroyed by anger or perverted views.

If we dedicate the virtue for some worldly purpose, we will experience a beneficial effect such as wealth in the future, but as soon as this is used up, the positive potential of our original action will have been exhausted as well. However, if we make supreme dedication as mentioned in this sutra, the potential power of that simple act of giving will never be exhausted, no matter how much we enjoy its temporary fruits. For example, if a drop of water is put into an ocean it will not dried up until ocean itself dries up. Similarly, if we dedicate our virtue of giving or any other good actions, to full enlightenment, it will not be exhausted until full Buddhahood is achieved. Therefore, its results are infinite as space.

In short, by reciting this dedication prayer we dedicate all the virtues of our self and others to the accomplishment of a Buddha’s form body and a Buddha’s truth body so that we shall be able to bring fullest benefit to all living creatures.

There are three types of dedications:

1.The dedication of merits towards the achievement of Buddha-hood for the sake of all sentient beings.

2.The dedication of merits towards the flourishing of the Buddha’s doctrine.

3.The dedication of merit towards the spiritual guidance by spiritual masters.

Here in this text, the dedication of the first type is presented. The dedication of both the physical and primordial awareness merit of one’s self and others are dedicated collectively to the thirty five Buddhas and all the enlightened beings of the ten directions. There is slight difference between the nature of dedications and prayers. The dedication is associated with something to be dedicated while prayers are offered as wishes.

The text then made the elaboration on the manner of dedication:

**just as the previous Buddha Bhagwan's have fully dedicated, just as the future Buddha Bhagwan's will fully dedicate, and just as the presently abiding Buddha- Bhagwan's are fully dedicating, like that I too dedicate fully.**

This particular line shows that, because it is difficult for beginners to make their dedications pure, this is one way of making dedications be as equaled to the dedications made by the previous Buddhas. And 'I completely dedicate' implies that your dedication is made with complete purity of the three circles -- the object of dedication, the act and the actor -- not apprehending the three of them as having inherent existence. All the Buddhas of the past dedicated in this way while were beginners, and now they are enjoying the beneficial results of their supreme dedication. We should follow their good example and dedicate in the similar manner.

**Rejoicing**

The last part of the confession sutra is concluded by rejoicing. Finally, one should feel a sense of rejoicing over the undertaking of the purification and dedicational practices. The text presents:

**I confess all negativities individually, I rejoice in all the merits. I urge and implore all the Buddhas to grant my request: may I receive the highest, most sublime transcendental wisdom.**

**To the conquerors, the best of humans- those who are living in the present time, those who have lived in the past, and those who will likewise come- to all those who have qualities as vast as an infinite ocean, with hands folded, I approach for refuge.**

The essential meaning of these lines is that the practice of the three superior heaps -- confession, dedication and rejoicing -- should be combined with refuge in the three jewels.

There is another way for counting the three heaps: prostration, purification and dedication. Here, I confess all negativities individually is a summary of confession. I rejoice in all the merits, present the rejoicing part. I urge all the Buddhas to grant my request presents urging all the Buddhas especially newly enlightened emanation bodies to turn the wheel of dharma. And I implore all the Buddhas to grant my request indicates begging all the Buddhas especially newly enlightened emanation bodies not to enter into sorrowless state. May I receive the highest, most sublime transcendental wisdom is a summary of rejoicing limb.

**Seven Limbs Included Within the Confession of Moral Downfalls**

This confession of moral downfalls presents the Seven Limbs. The prostration limb serves as an antidote to the arrogance or pride. The making offering limb is an antidote to miserliness. The confession limb is an antidote to all the three poisonous states of the mind -- aversion, desire and ignorance. The rejoicing limb is an antidote to jealousy. The beseeching limb is an antidote to abandoning the dharma. The Requesting limb is an antidote to the actions shortening the life of the guru.

**Conclusion**

With the completion of this practice, one strongly needs to develop a deep sense of satisfaction that one has cleansed away all negative tendencies.

The best way to avoid committing negative actions or incurring downfalls is always to maintain a good heart, and one of the best methods for purifying negative actions and downfalls already committed is to practice the Confession of Downfalls to the 35 Buddhas as explained with the four opponent powers.

VGT/gd