



Our bowing practice is deeply rooted in the Buddhist tradition. By bowing three times, we embrace the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), and endeavor to do three kinds of practice (Sila—Precepts, Samadhi—Meditation, and Prajna—Wisdom). This practice extinguishes the three poisons of desire, anger and ignorance. If we bow fifty-three times, one is bowing respectfully to the fifty-three Buddhas. Bowing one thousand times is to bow with reverence to each of the one thousand Buddhas of the present kalpa. By bowing three thousand times, we show our admiration for each of the one thousand Buddhas in the three great kalpas of the past, the present and the future.

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Ordinary people traditionally suffer from 108 different delusions of mind. These defilements of desire torment us when the six roots and the six desires meet each other. When the six roots (senses) and the six dusts (perceptions) unite with each other. When the six roots—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and consciousness—are integrated with the six desires—color, sound, smell, taste and touch realm—then the three kinds of like and dislike mind appear. In other words, when the six roots and the six desires connect, the divided mind of like/dislike, same/different, suffering/happy, and life/death appears. So the number of delusions is thirty-six ( $6 \times 6 = 36$ ). Since these delusions occur in the past, the present, and the future, the total number of delusions is 108 ( $36 \times 3 = 108$ ).

The 108 delusions of humanity expand to eighty-four thousand—a number signifying vastness. Our innumerable delusions, appearing and disappearing moment to moment, control the mind to such an extent that most people cannot avoid suffering. However, while bowing 108 times, our basic attachment to delusion is cut, our minds become one thing, which leads naturally to the infinite capability and vitality of mind. Bowing 108 times is very effective in allowing one to return to Buddha-nature, the primary point before all suffering. ☸

