

Deity Mantra and Wisdom

DEVELOPMENT STAGE MEDITATION IN TIBETAN BUDDHIST TANTRA

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space and wisdom. As a respectful gesture, envision the activities of homage and so forth taking place in the same way that the gods in the Heaven of Delightful Emanations are pleased by their own magically created enjoyments. Visualizing yourself as the main deity, imagine replicas of yourself emanating out from your heart center, like one candle being lit from another. Next, visualize them paying homage while you recite the relevant verses from the text you are using. The purpose of paying homage is to experience the indivisibility of the host of maṇḍala deities you are paying homage to and your own awareness. As a mere symbol of this, you can gather the accumulations by paying homage to the extraordinary qualities of the deities with a deeply respectful attitude.

ii. OFFERING

There are four different types of offering: outer offerings, inner offerings, secret offerings, and the offering of reality itself. First are the common outer and inner offerings.

1) THE OUTER OFFERING

Visualizing yourself as the main deity, imagine innumerable offering goddesses streaming forth from your heart center and making offerings in the manner of deities offering to other deities. The offerings they make surpass the imagination, completely filling every single place and realm of experience with outer and inner offerings. As you recite the verses of offering found in your text, visualize the offering goddesses holding their offerings and giving them to the senses of each of the deities. Clear, cool, and delicious water is offered to drink; clean water is offered to cool and rinse the hands and feet; multicolored flowers grown on meadows and in ponds are offered to the head; natural and produced pleasant-smelling incense is offered to the nose; jewels, oil lamps, and other illuminating sources of light are offered to the eyes; cool water scented with sandalwood and saffron is offered to the heart; delicious and healthy food is offered to the tongue; and various types of music played by cymbals, horns, drums, sitars, and other instruments are offered to the ears. To conclude, imagine the goddesses themselves dissolving into the sense faculties they are offering to.

1) THE INNER OFFERING

Second is the inner offering of medicine, torma, and rakta.

a) MEDICINE

The offering of medicine involves offering the original purity of uncontrived, naturally-existing nectar, which is the essence of all phenomena in *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. This is symbolized by either the outer, inner, and secret aspect of the eight primary medicinal ingredients or the four outer and four inner primary medicinal ingredients related to each of the five primary nectars. Each of these eight divisions can be further divided into one hundred twenty-five medicinal subcategories so that there are one thousand in total. The sacred substance that is made from such ingredients appears from the realization that all phenomena are equality, beyond acceptance or rejection. In form, it is nectar that dispels the demon of dualistic thinking.

At this point, you will already have consecrated the nectar as the essence of the five wisdoms and five buddha families. Next, continue on with this notion and recite the verses for the offering of medicine from your scripture while maintaining the appropriate visualization. At the same time, stir the ocean of nectar with the sun and moon sphere of the thumb and ring finger and then scatter the nectar. Visualize these drops dissolving into the mouths of the deities, such that the entire host of deities is sated with the taste of great bliss.

b) TORMA

Next is the torma offering. On a torma plate as vast and open as the basic space of phenomena, imagine a torma made of wonderful, sacred substances. Its appearance is that of food and drink—a mass of all the most pleasurable and desirable objects that please the senses. In essence, it consists of wisdom nectar. While you recite the verses for the torma offering, visualize it being offered to the deities. With great delight, they consume the torma, taking it in through a tube of light that emerges from their vajra-shaped tongues. This all takes place within the expanse of luminosity; the foods that are enjoyed are actually the five sense objects, while drinks are the consciousnesses.

c) RAKTA

For the offering of rakta, imagine that attachment and clinging—the root of suffering—coalesce in the form of blood and dissolve into the expanse of great bliss devoid of attachment. This is then offered to the maṇḍala deities as a great sacred substance that liberates saṃsāra into basic, unborn space. The definitive meaning, however, is that the course of the sun is arrested at the peak of the secret space, whereby the continuity of saṃsāra is cut. With this intent and mind-set, imagine that saṃsāra itself is offered as an ocean of blood and consumed rapidly by the deities, to the point where nothing remains.

3) THE SECRET OFFERING

The third section pertains to the secret offerings and has two parts. The first of these is the offering of union. Subjective appearances relate to the masculine principle of skillful means. In contrast, the object, emptiness, relates to knowledge, the feminine principle. The indivisible unity of these two is the great primordial union of everything.

In the present context, the taste of great bliss that appears from this union satisfies the entire maṇḍala. This is symbolized by the male and female consorts being joined together as individual couples in union. Single female deities are also joined in union with the symbolic form of the lord of the family, the concealed masculine principle, which takes the form of a khaṭvāṅga. Through this union, an extraordinary blissful melting occurs in which a descending flow and an ascending stabilization are gradually perfected. Once the mind settles on the wisdom of great bliss, all the deities give rise to the pride of being inseparable from this passion.

Second is the offering of liberation. That which is to be liberated here is the belief in a self—the concepts associated with apprehended phenomena and apprehending thoughts. Insofar as this belief propels one into saṃsāra and prevents the realization of nondual wisdom, it is the enemy. Liberation is performed with a sharp weapon, the wisdom devoid of dualistic thoughts. It liberates dualistic fixation and desirous thoughts into unborn space. This is the meaning of the great primordial universal liberation.

Generate great compassion from within that state so that you can protect all sentient beings within the ten fields from the unbearable suffering that results from the negative karma they accumulate. In essence, the self

and that which is to be liberated do not have even a shred of true existence, just like a trick or an optical illusion. With this realization, you will free them and purify all your thoughts into the basic space of phenomena. Imagine that you perform this offering within the state of the single flavor of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

4) THE OFFERING OF REALITY

The fourth type of offering is the offering of reality itself. All that appears and exists, the entire range of phenomena found in saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, is naturally and innately pure, spontaneously present as the great maṇḍala of the victorious ones. As this is the case, do not focus on the recipient of the offerings, the person making the offerings, or the offering itself. Instead, recall the meaning of the Great Perfection, the fact that these three, in terms of their true nature, do not have the slightest bit of concrete existence. The most superior offering is precisely this—the Great Seal, freedom from the concepts of subject, object, and action.

The actual verses for the offerings of union, liberation, and suchness may not always be included in the practice text. In a number of abbreviated texts these three are shortened down to just one line each, so you need to know the meaning of these practices.

iii. PRAISE

The third section addresses the topic of praise. Having completed the offerings, proceed by recalling the superior qualities of the maṇḍala deities and give rise to a most inspired frame of mind. The basic space of phenomena is free of all complexities and pervades all knowable phenomena throughout the three times. It manifests as great bliss in all aspects of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

While never straying from the dharmakāya—the unimpeded and unattached wisdom that understands all existing phenomena precisely as they are—the play of the two rūpakāyas still works for the benefit of the limitless beings in need of guidance. These forms manifest in various peaceful, passionate, and wrathful expressions and are perfectly adorned with the marks and signs of enlightenment. Their melodious and majestic speech is endowed with sixty aspects, while their nonconceptual minds are free from complexity and always delighted with great bliss. Possessing inconceivable qualities of abandonment and realization, their effortless