

From the Teachings on Mahamudra and Medicine Buddha, by Lama Lodu Rinpoche, Healing Arts Center, St. Louis, August 30th, 2012

A video of this teaching can be found [here](#), and a longer transcript can be found [here](#).

So I'll review a little bit about Medicine Buddha.

Medicine Buddha is the Buddha who has dedicated his enlightenment to healing sentient beings from physical and mental disease. And especially in a dark age, when people are afflicted with more (negative) emotions, that make them mentally sick, and when the mind gets sick, unknown to them, that becomes the cause of their physical sickness - so the Buddha has dedicated himself to enlightenment in order to benefit, healing the sentient beings those who have such health and mental sickness.

So that is his dedication. So he worked hard for many lifetimes as a bodhisattva.

He didn't become a Medicine Buddha instantly, but he was a human being, just like us, and he motivated and took the bodhisattva vow. He dedicated his mind to be completely perfect with bodhicitta, with the enlightened attitude.

Then he trained his mind in love and kindness and compassion, and trained his mind in selflessness. So, with all these trainings, he went on many aeons as a bodhsattva but his dedication was always that he wished to heal sentient beings of temporary sickness and disease, and actually, the absolute, ultimate disease, with egolessness.

So, in this way, he finally attained enlightenment as the Medicine Buddha, the Healing Buddha.

So, Lord Shakyamuni Buddha has a sutra - the Medicine Buddha Sutra... there are so many Medicine Buddha Sutras, and Medicine Buddha Tantras, for different levels of practice. And Tibetan Medical Doctors, most of them, memorize the Sutra, or Root Text, and then they have to receive a commentary from their professor, and they study the Medicine Buddha for 12 years. At the same time, they have to have the empowerment, and they take this as a daily practice.

Before they complete their education as a doctor, they have to go on retreat where they focus on the Medicine Buddha, to accomplish the mantra recitation, then also they have to have some kind of experience of the Medicine Buddha, and they have to accomplish all these different things before they become a doctor and treat people.

Basically, a Tibetan Medical doctor trains very well in bodhicitta, a sense compassion and loving kindness. Before they treat patients, they meditate on Medicine Buddha and recite the mantra, and then after the practice session, in the post-meditation session of the Medicine Buddha, the activity is the treatment of patients. While they are doing the treatments, they have to carry on the practice.

So that way, they are curing not only the sick people's disease, but also their karmic impurities. And this will greatly benefit the patients.

So the doctor-patient relationship is one where the doctor has compassion, and the patient has devotion, trust and confidence, and whatever the doctor tells them, they listen. For example, if they say, you should not eat such and such a food, or, this is how you should take care of yourself in warm weather, or cold weather, they have to listen to them.

So, at the same time, they have a sense of devotion. If they don't believe in the doctor, they won't listen, and if they won't listen then they won't be effected. In Tibetan medicine, the patient has to have a sense of devotion,

and the medical doctor needs to have a sense of love and compassion too. These, devotion and compassion, work together, then the Medicine Buddha can heal. And this is complete healing - not like you heal this year, and next year the illness comes back... This is what the Medicine Sutra says. Anyway, what we have here is a short sadhana. The Medicine Buddha has so many sadhanas, so many practices, but this is a combination of Tantra and Sutra. It is a very powerful healing practice.

In the beginning we take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and generate bodhicitta:

Taking Refuge first: The Buddha is my destination, the Dharma is my Path, and the Sangha are my companions.

So I have a sense of respect and devotion to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and this is a kind of protection, in general against any obstacles or hindrances on my path.

Secondly, you have to generate bodhicitta:

You want to practice Medicine Buddha to accomplish the Medicine Buddha's qualities and perfections, so you can free all sentient beings forever from their physical and mental disease; and also bring them everlasting happiness

And this is why you wish to practice Medicine Buddha - to gain the Medicine Buddha's healing power, to benefit other sentient beings.

In the beginning of your practice, this is very important to cultivate.

So, Taking Refuge and generating bodhicitta is the preliminary practice of the Medicine Buddha. This is basic. Without these two, Taking Refuge, and generating bodhicitta, if you practice Medicine Buddha, it's not Buddhist practice. It will be non-Buddhist practice, and it won't be effective either.

Taking Refuge is very important so that the actual practice is intensified, and and can collect great healing power from the whole universe.

Also, you're generating bodhicitta, and that will contribute another power - that of your compassion, and for that reason Medicine Buddha can heal all sentient beings, of whatever disease they have, physical or mental. Because of your compassion, your caring for other sentient beings, it gives great power... You want to free all sentient beings...

So this is a big contribution. One session of actual practice can bring infinite benefit, and you will receive the blessing and power.

So this is important as a preliminary, cultivating devotion, with Refuge, and compassion, bodhicitta, to develop kindness and compassion towards all sentient beings, dedicating your practice for the benefit of other beings.

In the actual practice, simply, you visualize Medicine Buddha in front.

You can look at a picture carefully....

Simply, you can visualize just Medicine Buddha, on a multi-colored fully blooming lotus, on a sun and moon disc, and then Medicine Buddha...

He is sitting in the Lotus Position, his body is blue in color, and he is wearing the monastic robes. In his left hand, he is holding a begging bowl, full of healing nectar, and in his right hand he holds the branch of an arura plant, which is the king of medicine. He holds this with the giving gesture...

Like Buddha Shakyamuni, he is wearing monastic robes, and his expression is very gentle and peaceful. You can see that he is made of clear blue light, transparent, and not substantial... it is like rainbow light, but full

of wisdom and compassion. Actually *all* the qualities of the Buddha's perfection are in that form of the Medicine Buddha.

The form of the Medicine Buddha is blue, as described, but actually the healing energy of all divine beings appears in this form of the Medicine Buddha. He appears very gentle and compassionate, and he is looking towards you.

When you visualize that way, you can focus on this. Just place your mind one-pointedly on the Medicine Buddha, without wavering. Not thinking of the past, not thinking of the future. In the present time, just focus your mind on the Medicine Buddha...

Then at a certain point, you can begin to think of the medicine in his heart. There is a moon disc, and the Tibetan letter *hung*, blue in color. This is the essence of all Buddhas' Mind...

So this blue *hung*, at the heart center of the Medicine Buddha, radiates light - white, yellow, blue, green and red... This is glowing from the *hung* at his heart center, and also from his body, from his aura, emanating from him...

Keep your mind on that.

The white light is the pure form of anger - the Mirror-Like Wisdom, that is radiating from the Medicine Buddha...

The yellow light is the mental poison of pride, transformed into the Wisdom of Equanimity, bright and shining...

The red light, bright and shining, is the pure form of our attachment, transformed into the aspect of Discriminating Wisdom...

The green light is the pure form of our jealousy, transformed into All Accomplishing Wisdom...

These poisons are completely dispelled...

Now blue light is shining, coming from his heart, and that is the purified ignorance, or stupidity, in the aspect of wisdom called Dharmata Wisdom, transcending all ego, and all afflictions. That's called Dharmadhatu Wisdom, or Primordial Wisdom, or Self-Arising Wisdom...

These are Wisdoms the Healing Buddha has accomplished, and he is completely free of these five poisons...

Now, we, ourselves, we have anger, and that brings some disease; desire, and that brings some disease; jealousy, that brings some disease... Pride, that brings some disease, and stupidity, that brings disease...

These poisons are in our mind. All of us have these poisons - no one can say, 'No, I don't have these...' We all do. So, these poisons are the causes of our diseases... We all have some dis-ease, because the source is there. When the conditions come, the dis-ease comes... Then we are sick, and possibly die too...

But this is different than who we are. Our diseases come from our poisons.

All the Buddhist systems - all practice, whether Hinayana, Mahayana, or Vajrayana, all the practices the Buddha taught are the remedy for the ego. Our ego is the big enemy for us, keeping us in samsara, keeping us confused...

If we have ego, then we have these poisons, no choice. We'll have these five poisons continually in our life, whatever we do. And they accumulate more and more, and develop... This is how we live...

So now, we have to know, the Medicine Buddha, the energy of all Buddhas healing - his quality and perfection *is* the Five Wisdoms.

This wisdom is permanently there, no matter where we are. The Buddha's wisdom is with us all the time...

And the Buddha's wisdom is without discriminating, saying, 'You're a devotee, I will give you wisdom and blessing... You're not a devotee' - that's not the way. The Buddha's wisdom is equally for all sentient beings, it pervades all sentient beings...

Wisdom is there already, but we need the cause, the condition. What is the cause, the condition? We need some sense of devotion...

We may not have devotion to anything, but we do have some sense of what we admire... Someone who has no anger at all, no desire at all, no jealousy at all, no pride, no ignorance,

when we see someone like that in the world, we admire their quality and perfection. We think, *'That's great, that someone can be like this!'*

- when we're thinking *'That's great!'*, that's a sense of devotion.

When we think, *'That's great'*, then you're longing to have this wisdom.

This devotion is the cause for the Medicine Buddha's healing blessings to be received.

Your sincere devotion invokes the blessings, as you recite the mantra:

*Tayata Om Bekhandze Bekhandze Maha Bekhanze Radza Samungate Soha*

It's great, this mantra.

When you recite the mantra, you can see it around the seed syllable hung shining more brightly...

The light is basically blue, but the light manifests five lights and these come from the Buddha to you.

They come to your head, throat, heart, navel and secret place, and they purify the five poisons, it dispels them, it heals them...

These five poisons, and mental dis-ease, first the light pacifies, and purifies them, and then, with the light coming continually, the physical dis-ease is also pacified. Physical discomfort is slowly dispelled...

This light not only temporarily, but completely cuts off the kleshas and sickness coming back and causing you to suffer again. You can be completely liberated, because this is not a temporary practice, this is the practice of the Buddha, and a true Mahayana practice.

So your practice is dedicated to liberation from samsara and attaining enlightenment. The Healing Buddha can serve this purpose at the same time.

In this way, you become clean and pure yourself, also, and, at a certain point reciting the mantra, you become completely transparent, in your visualization, and you become Medicine Buddha also.

After you become Medicine Buddha, identical to the one in front of you, you purify and dispel all these impurities yourself.

You can send light from your heart, shining, and from all around your body, as an aura, and as you keep reciting mantra, this light goes to all sentient beings, whoever needs it:



the realms of hell beings, the realms of hungry ghosts, the realm of animals, the human realm, the demi god realm and the god realm -

all these different realms, the poisons are the cause for being born there.

So, light shines towards them, and dispels their mental poisons and physical discomfort, wherever there are problems.

Specifically, we are in the human world, in the human realm, so we think of the human realm's suffering, the physical and mental problems, particularly those things that you see.

These people, light goes to them, and cures whatever discomfort they may have, it dispels it completely, and removes it completely.

While you visualize that, you keep saying the mantra, and you keep the mind focussed on the visualization in front, and also yourself as the Medicine Buddha.

In the beginning, if you have a hard time visualizing both, focus on the one in front, because that's easy, you can do it.

When you visualize yourself, sometimes it's difficult, but if it's not difficult, visualize yourself as the Medicine Buddha at the same time.

So this is one way we can practice healing. You can help people by reciting mantra and meditating on the Medicine Buddha.

And if you have some kind of medical training, when you are treating someone, for example if you are a masseuse, before you see your patient, you can do this practice.

Your patient has different afflictions. And the result of this practice, in the first place, will be that you will be offering them peace, mentally, and in the second place, what you do for them will really be effective in healing them.

So this is one way you can practice Medicine Buddha.

Another way is you can visualize yourself as Medicine Buddha. You focus on yourself as Medicine Buddha, completely, but then it's important you don't think 'I am Medicine Buddha', because then if you see your body, which is not Medicine Buddha, it will contribute to disbelief.

So what you do is, you have to think, *My mind is Medicine Buddha* not my body.

When you visualize, thinking 'My mind is the Medicine Buddha', then you are making this distinction between body and mind.

Thinking of Medicine Buddha, when you have this kind of sense of confidence that you *are* Medicine Buddha, through the blessing of the Buddha, and through the blessing of the lineage passed down to you, then you can say

*I am the Medicine Buddha, I have blessing, and I'm empowered myself to visualize and to think of myself as the Medicine Buddha - in this case you actually, really are Medicine Buddha...*

And again, when we talk about Mahamudra, in that case, Medicine Buddha is *within you*. Wherever you are, you are Medicine Buddha. What we are talking about here as the true nature of mind, that is Medicine Buddha. True nature of mind is Mahamudra. You see?

Mahamudra and Medicine Buddha are the same essence, but different technique.

In this case, your mind is here, now. Examine your mind right now. Where is your mind? Is your mind your body? Your body is so many things, lips, hands, arms, head, nose, eyes, feet, fingers, flesh, bones... so are all of these my mind? Then I would have so many minds. That's not possible...

Then I could remove every part, asking, where is my mind? Can I find it inside my body? I've never found it. I've never located it...

Is it outside my body? I haven't found it there either.

So what happens? My mind is... nothing...

My mind is nothing from beginningless time. What is that?

That is Medicine Buddha. That is Mahamudra.

So, nothingness, no matter where you are, in the hell realm, hungry ghost realm, animal realm, human realm, god realm, no matter where, *even enlightenment*, that emptiness will be there. That is Medicine Buddha. That is the Healing Buddha.

So therefore, you, Healing Buddha yourself, even now, each of you are capable of being healed yourself, and healing others. Why? You have protection. You have the true nature of mind. It's powerful! The mind can be powerful.

So that mind, what we are labelling as mind, there's nothing tangible, with shape, or color, There's nothing that can be pointed to, saying 'this is the mind'. So the mind is not really existent. Mind is beyond intellect, beyond concept.

So what you visualize as Medicine Buddha, that is what we are visualizing. When the mind is empty, it's called dharmakaya.

Much less ordinary people, when the Buddha stays completely in the state of the dharmata, even bodhisattvas don't have any communication with that. It's beyond any intellectual concept. But they attain such a state, while being full of love and compassion.

So therefore, out of this emptiness, what you are visualizing - yourself as Medicine Buddha - *is compassion and loving kindness.*

Medicine Buddha's form is compassion and loving kindness.

Out of love and compassion for all sentient beings, Medicine Buddha appears to heal all sentient beings.

So that is what we are visualizing as ourselves - compassion and loving kindness, *boundless* compassion, *boundless* loving kindness...

And you are not removed from the dharmata, total enlightenment, full total awakening, yet you are manifesting yourself as the Medicine Buddha. Ordinary people have to visualize, but this is visible to bodhisattvas. They can talk to them and receive their blessing...

Through the Buddha, appears the Medicine Buddha. Medicine Buddhas appears to other Medicine Buddhas, for the benefit of sentient beings, countless manifestations. This is due to compassion. Extreme, intense compassion comes in the form of the Medicine Buddha, to heal all sentient beings. That is why we can say *We are* Medicine Buddha, because we have the ability to heal sentient beings. *We do have* the potential for the five wisdoms.

The potential for the five wisdoms, right now, is in the deluded state, the negative state. We are ignorant, we are angry, we have desire, we are jealous, we have greed, we are proud... so these five wisdom, hallucinating the wrong things - this is not the original state...

When these poisons come, we act negatively in body, speech and mind. And this negative continuity obscures our Medicine Buddha more and more. Then Medicine Buddha doesn't effect healing, because we are obscured. The more poisons we have, the more we obscure the purity of our original being.

So, that is the reason, having received the empowerment and instructions, if you are confident for a moment of the session that you *are* the true Medicine Buddha, it can be greatly beneficial to yourself, and greatly beneficial to others. That's why you visualize yourself as Medicine Buddha.

So, in this case, you visualize Medicine Buddha completely, and in his heart there is the syllable hung, on a moon disc.

From the syllable, first we send out yellow light, which gathers the energy of the earth, which returns, and dissolves into you;

Then, second, you sent out white light, which gathers the pure water energies;

Third, sending out red light, it gathers fire energy;

Then sending out green light, this gathers wind energy, which returns and dissolves into the hung at your heart center.

This is also very important, because when we have sickness, or disease, at that time, our elements are imbalanced. Sometimes the fire element is too much, and that makes for discomfort in us; sometimes the water element is too much, and that makes another kind of disease. Sometimes the earth element is too much, or sometimes not enough also. When these elements are out of balance, it causes suffering, discomfort in our health.

So, this way of gathering the four elements, for example, sending out yellow light to gather all of the earth energies - from the top of Mount Meru to the center of the earth - all the energies of the earth you gather and dissolve them into you. Then, if the earth element is not enough, it will augment that, and if it's too much, it will reduce that, or balance it out.

The same can be done with the wind, water and fire elements. White light gathers all the energies of the water element - from the ocean, river, creek,

wherever there is water all over the universe, and this light comes back to you and balances your water element.

Same with the fire element - light goes out to all the fire energies, and the light returns back and dissolves into you, and balances out your fire element.

Also, the wind element - the green light goes out and returns and dissolves into you, balancing out the wind element in you.

This will help with healing also.

Like that, in one session, you can recite the mantra, and visualize yourself as Medicine Buddha, and one by one you can send out these lights and gather the energies of the elements that merge with you.

Do this while reciting *Tayata Om Bekhandze Bekhandze Maha Bekhanze Radza Samungate Soha*.

This can also be very helpful.

After you practice this, what you do is then dismiss the visualization. You can dismiss it all suddenly, like a rainbow disappearing in to space, completely gone. There is no Medicine Buddha, no me, nothing on the outside. Everything is empty, spacious, totally relaxed.

At that time you can do anything you are capable of practicing, like mahamudra, or mahasandi. You can practice there, relax, as long as you want. Let your mind quiet down.

(Then dedicate the merit)