Instructions on Visualization

By Various Teachers

Jason Espada, editor

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Preface

At present, I'm happy to say that I have three recent collections that focus on the practice of visualization. The first of these, *Instructions on Visualization*, was compiled in 2023, and is based on the Healing Buddha practice. The next one is called *White Tara Practice Instructions*, and the most recent is titled *Visualizations for Tara Practice*. Some time back I also edited two collections, *on Chenrezig* (Compassion), and *on Vajrasattva* (Purification) practice.

Each of these practices have elements in common that can be understood and applied to any Vajrayana practice. For this reason, I've gathered and arranged the various introductions I've written over the years as Front material, and I will include them in these volumes. This way, if someone encounters any one of these collections alone, they will also have the basis of these practices, as I've received them, and found viable.

May they be a blessing
May all that the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
and all Noble Beings wish for us
be fully accomplished!

Jason Espada
San Francisco,
April 27th, 2025

Instructions on Visualization - Introduction

Among the treasures we have received from Tibetan Buddhism are what are known as *the Tantras*. These are profound methods we can use to accomplish our purpose, and bring benefit to ourselves and to others.

Varjayana methods make use of visualization, which is something we are all familiar with, to some extent. We use this faculty all the time - when we are thinking ahead, imagining, recalling, planning or rehearsing a situation.

When we visualize as part of a meditation practice however, two things are different about it. The first is that it is done consciously, and second, any visualization we do as part of a spiritual practice is based on our world view - how we see ourselves and each other, and the world we live in.

Vajrayana practice is based on Sacred Outlook, or Pure Perception. For those who may be unfamiliar with this, I have included a summary called the Tenets of Pure Perception to begin this collection.

For more information on this subject, and for encouragement, I've also gathered a few writings that I will include here as *an appendix*.

This collection focusses on Healing Buddha practice. These methods of visualization can be used with any method, however. For those with an affinity with Tara, for example, here is a set of teachings on her practice. This is from a larger work called *A Collection of Buddhist Methods for Healing*.

Here are audio recordings of mantras.

One more note: When practicing for another, there are various ways we can visualize. We can see them with us, receiving the benefit of this practice alongside us, or we can see them in our heart in our meditations. In fact, we have this expression when we want to say we have a deep connection with someone. Surely we feel and share our lives with one another in this way.

May the teachings on visualization,
prayer, and mantra recitation,
bring benefit just as our teachers,
the Noble Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have intended.

Jason Espada,
August 17th, 2023

White Tara Practice Instructions

An Introduction for 2024

As I review my favorite teachings on White Tara practice, I can see what has been accessible, and what I have been able to use these last few years. This narrows down the material quite a bit.

I also can see what I feel like I need to bring to these practices, to understand them clearly, and make use of them. This is in comparison to the way many of the traditional teachings are presented, or come across for me.

Surprisingly, I've been feeling like I need to bring *sacred outlook* to these practices, more than what I can sense when I read about them.

That there are Holy Ones we can call on, that will respond and help…

As Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo said,

We are not alone. This universe is full of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who are on our side. And, as is known in all Buddhist countries, although it is not always emphasized in the West, we can pray to them…

And Lama Zopa Rinpoche has said,

You are not alone because all the time there are numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas surrounding you, loving you, guiding you, that is what they do….

I know this is the link between liberating teachings, and more universal, mystical themes.

So that is one difference in how I'm approaching the Vajrayana and White Tara practice now. How surprising!

Another element I feel I need to bring more of into these practices is *the wisdom aspect.* If this isn't clear to my mind, the practice continues grasping at self, other, objects, places, maybe even more strongly!

I read one commentary recently where a few of the questions were on just this point - of the need to bring together method and wisdom side of it. This is necessary to reflect on.

There are many themes in the Vajrayana that for Westerners can lend themselves to grasping even more strongly onto ideas if we are not careful here - such as those of compassion, and the nature of divinity.

For this reason, this much should also be very clear up front, so that the practice is complete, and liberating.

I will add then to the notes I have gathered so far: *Tenets of Pure Perception*, and also *Verses for generating the mind of enlightenment, including the wisdom aspect.* This is so important, I am thinking now.

Of course, all this being said, I have to add that there is also something magical about all these practices for me, far exceeding anything I could ever

say about them. They are effective, inspiring, onward leading, a comfort, strength and sustenance.

The Holy Ones are deserving my devout praise, every day, and I celebrate what we can accomplish through these practices.

May we all find our way to teachings that are effective for us,
and care for one another in the best of ways

Jason Espada
San Francisco,
October 13th, 2024

Note: There are a few themes that go to make up this practice that can be reflected on separately. Instead of including them in the main part of this collection, I've chosen to link at the end of this book to reflections that can be studied as needed. {This page is found here.}

Going through the sadhanas then, or basic instructions on this practice is then enriched by our study. They are a kind of shorthand for these themes that we then experience in our meditations.

Tenets of Pure Perception

Sacred outlook is a way of experiencing the world as essentially divine in nature, having great beauty and potential. It is seeing:

That all life is sacred;

That the Divine, freedom and peace, the Kingdom of Heaven, is within us all

That our fundamental nature is pure

and therefore,

That we all have the potential to become free from suffering and attain happiness; we can accomplish great benefit for ourselves and others

That this world is sacred, intelligent, alive and responsive, and that we are inseparably connected to it;

That we are always connected to each other, to our whole family

That there are other realms of existence

That there are past and future lives

That karma works, negative actions create suffering and positive actions create happiness, and bring light into the world

That the way we experience ourselves and each other and the world depends on our mind

That true mind sees things the way they are, and naturally has right values, and is healing

That the purpose of our lives here is to care for each other, and,

Those who show us the best ways to do this are our venerable teachers

That there are many levels of beings, seen and unseen

That we are not alone in this world

That there are powers we can call on, Saints and Saviors, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Ancestors, and divine beings that will respond and help

That we are multi-dimensional beings, and so, things such as distant viewing, absent reading, and distant healing are possible

That there are faculties beyond the ordinary that can be developed, each according to our unique temperament and gifts, but to some extent by everyone

That vows are powerful

That prayer is effective

That ritual works,
and,

That mantra works

May we all be aware of our true heritage,
and live lives of generosity,
great joy, and fulfillment,
of great peace, well being,
and benefit to all!

For more information on Sacred Outlook, and Pure Perception, see:

A Belief in the Miraculous - Buddhism, Magic, and a Sense of the Sacred (2018)

The World As It Truly Is (2021)

Opening the Door to Pure Perception (2023)

Speaking of Angels, from this collection,

and,

Devanussati - Recollecting Devas, A Guided Meditation by Ajahn Achalo

Video, and Transcript

Mantra and Words of Power

A number of ancient traditions hold the belief that certain sounds have spiritual power, and that we can accomplish particular aims through their recitation. The sacred languages of Sanskrit and Hebrew have been used by priests for millennia, and the mantras in Tibetan Buddhism have proven their efficacy across the centuries.

There is an element of karmic affinity, or course, whenever a person connects with any spiritual tradition, and the same holds true for mantra practice. A tradition or mantra may work for one person, but not for another for this reason. How can we tell if we have a connection, or if a practice is suitable for us? Traditionally a person's teacher will recommend one practice. These days though, not everyone has a teacher, and mantras are printed in books and broadcast far and wide.

We can simply experiment with an open mind and see for ourselves if a mantra helps awaken our spiritual nature, of love and understanding, if it brings us health and strength, or if it clears obstacles. Sometimes it's not obvious at first if a practice is working, the effect being quite subtle, but perhaps there is some change we can feel in our body, or some new energy we can sense.

Different mantras have different purposes. For example, they can help awaken our compassion, or wisdom, they can help to heal, to protect, to overcome fears, or restore harmony. They have a great many other wonderful uses as well, and these can be studied in the context of their

individual practices. Most of all, we can refer to our own unfolding experience to understand the meaning, power, and purpose of mantra.

There's a teaching that says certain practices are 'self-secret', which means that they are known only by the right person at the right time. I've sensed the truth of this myself over the years. It's not at all easy to describe the profound effects of mantra, or connecting with a practice, but when it's right for us, we will feel at ease, and we will make progress in our meditation, and gain tangible results.

Things that can be done with mantra

As with other universal magical practices, we can use the methods known as tantras to heal, and to prolong life, to increase resources, clear away obstacles, remove harmful influences, and to calm fears.

At a certain level, we can influence the weather, put a stop to epidemics and fires, see and act in other realms, and receive prophecy.

Here is a list I made a number of years ago

Things that can be done with mantra

heal / strengthen / relieve

purify / bring light / protect

clarify / liberate from samsara / facilitate the liberation from samsara /

comfort the lonely / bring about the manifestation of the good / rescue the crazy, the out of balance / hold back the endangered

give riches to the poor / relieve depression / cure depression
give direction / strengthen realization / eliminate maras
pacify, remove the influence of, transform maras /
increase realizations of the graduated path, and all realizations

In these and other ways, we can make use of these *magical means* to help ourselves and others. These are not difficult to understand, as both the use of verifiable working principles, and the expression of enlightened compassion.

- From On Buddhism and Magical Practice

On Self Generation and Front Generation

{The following comments apply to all the teachings in this collection}

It's traditionally taught that what's called 'self-generation' - where one visualizes oneself as the divine form, and maintains *Divine Pride*, should only be done by those who have received the initiation of a particular Bodhisattva Divinity, but that 'front generation' - where one visualizes the divine form in space above and in front of oneself - can be done by anyone.

In front generation, we visualize, and vividly see with the mind's eye above us, the Buddha or bodhisattva whose practice we are doing, and whose mantra we are reciting. At this time, it's taught that we should see the Buddha, ourselves and others, as having bodies that are made entirely of light, like a hologram. When doing this recitation and visualization, we can also see pure light and nectar streaming from the image we hold. These represent, or carry the blessings of the Buddha.

Traditionally, light goes out to the sources of benefit, making offerings out of respect, and prayerful requests, and then the light returns, bringing the blessings of these sources of healing benefit. These healing energies 'fall upon us as light and nectar', and dissolve into the front visualization and into us. We then have the thought and image clearly in our mind that all those we pray for receive this positive energy, and that they are completely healed by it, and made entirely well and strong. This form of prayer is referred to in the Tibetan Tradition as 'gathering and spreading'.

Here is a teaching on visualization I have found very useful.

Imagine that your body is made of light…and at your heart is a lotus, that is also made of light, with a moon disc, and a pure lake on it, that is your heart - mind…

The blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the form of light enter through the crown of your head, and come to your heart… and the light merges, and becomes one with you…

* 'One should imagine the merging as being like, for example, if it snows on a lake, as soon as the snowflakes hit the water, they just merge into the water…. There's nothing left over…

'So that should be how we imagine the blessings of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas merging into ourselves…

'The main point is to have a relaxed mind, and to feel the blessings being received from the Buddhas and bodhisattvas…

'One should, of course, always be aware of the fact that the lotus and lake visualized as made of pure light is itself our mind, the nature of our mind.

'So when we visualize and imagine all the good qualities within the universe merging, in fact we are visualizing all the good qualities merging into our own mind, and if this is done with strong faith, in fact it is said that one will certainly receive all the good qualities, of long life, nourishment, and so forth.'

We can then share this with others.

{From a commentary on White Tara practice, by Geshe Wangdu}

Many teachers advise, too, when doing this kind of practice, that we see ourselves and others in a Pure Land, made of light, and to make the meditation as beautiful, peaceful, perfect, and pure as we can. All this is called *Clear Appearance.*

Many people, especially when they are new to these kinds of practices, say, 'Oh, I can't visualize, I can't visualize – I don't see anything' but that's just because it's not like seeing something with our physical eyes. The teacher Thrangu Rinpoche pointed out that visualization is not like seeing – in their terminology they say it's not experienced with eye-consciousness. It's more subtle than that. It's experienced with mind-consciousness.

Venerable Jigme explained that when we are visualizing we're working with our imagination… not only are we working with imagined sights, but we're also working with imagined touch and smells and sounds, physical sensations and feelings.

Of course, all this can be as detailed or as simple as we like. We can also do the practice without any elaborate or detailed visualization. For example, we can just see a healing sun, with beautiful light streaming down from above us while reciting. Or without any visualization at all, we can just recite the mantra. We should do whatever works best for us.

As Lama Lodro teaches, even if you just practice for a short while, try and practice as purely and as perfectly as you can. This means concentrating on the visualizations, if any are used, and the sound of the mantra, keeping in mind the meaning and the purpose of what we are doing. This is called *Clear Recollection.*

On The Refuge Tree

Sometimes when doing Vajrayana practice, what is called a Refuge Tree is visualized. All of this is seen to be in the nature of light. Around the central figure, whatever practice we are doing, one can visualize other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas or holy beings that we have a connection with. For example, White Tara can have the wonderful effect of truly strengthening the constitution and the central nervous system. Among other qualities, I bring this quality of enlightened action to mind at times when doing the Medicine Buddha practice, and imagine that She is there in the retinue of the Healing Buddha, bestowing her blessings as well.

We can include any divine figures we have a connection with to the refuge tree, such as Jesus, Mary, Kuan Yin, Tara or Manjushri, Angels, and the Saints we have devotion to.

We can add to a single visualization simply, or we can just have the sense that those other Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and holy beings are there, whatever brings the best results.

At the conclusion of any practice involving visualization, we dissolve the visualization, and dedicate the merit.

A personal note here, though I've not seen this written anywhere: after doing any practices that involve visualization, I think it's a good idea to meditate quietly, and to do something non-conceptual that puts us in touch with the physical. It could be mindful walking, or sitting and breathing in and out with an awareness of our body for a while, or to do something else that is tangible with our hands and feet and body. This can keep us from 'spacing out', or from being one step removed from this level of reality. It can 'ground' us, so to speak. This can also help to more fully integrate the benefits of whatever practice we have been doing…

(2009)

A group of reflections

This life is precious, may I use it well…
May I see the truth of impermanence, and use this understanding well…
Actions bring results according to their cause, and blessings,
and there is no lasting happiness in any of the realms of samsara,
or with any samsaric mind…

Understanding this much,
I take refuge the Buddha, the Light of the World,
the Great Compassionate Teacher,
I take refuge in the Dharma, in all the Liberating Teachings
and I take refuge in the Noble Sangha,
the Accomplished Spiritual Community,
the Great Assembly of Saints and Bodhisattvas

May all share in these blessings

Especially now, may I think of all beings with great love and compassion,
and generate the supreme awakening mind…
May I think of them all as my family,
and care for them all as my own…

May the supreme jewel, bodhicitta,
arise where it has not yet arisen,
Where it has arisen, may it not diminish,
May it ever grow and flourish…

May I accomplish this one path,
and may all temporal and ultimate aims be fulfilled

Verses for generating the mind of enlightenment, with the wisdom aspect

Especially now, may I think all beings with great love and compassion,
and generate the supreme awakening mind…

May I think of them all as my family,
and care for them all as my own.

May all beings have happiness
and all the causes of true happiness flourishing…

May all beings be completely and permanently free of all suffering
and all the causes of suffering…

I celebrate all that is beautiful and right in the world,
I rejoice in all kindness, virtue, positive actions and intentions,
and in all success, happiness, and good fortune…

and abide in stable, impartial love…

Especially now, seeing the world of sentient beings,
so full of suffering, I will follow the bodhisattva's way.

May I clearly see that what I and all others so urgently need
is complete liberation of mind, perfect peace and freedom,
and that in taking care of myself, I am taking care of all of us
With an understanding of the Noble Truths,

may my love and compassion become the dedication to helping others
through my realization of this path

May I always cherish all living beings,
with the determination to accomplish for them this highest good
that is more precious than a wish-fulfilling jewel

An Awakened One has appeared in this world.
He has taught the way to freedom,
and generations of his followers to this day have realized his teachings.

Homage!

{The Bodhisattva Vow}

Just as all previous Buddhas first awakened the precious bodhimind,
and just as they then carefully followed each of the requisite stages of the
Bodhisattva disciplines,
in the same way, for the sake of living beings,
I will awaken and cultivate the bodhimind,
this all embracing intention,
and then train in every one of the essential disciplines of a Bodhisattva.

I take refuge in the Buddha, the Light of the World,
the Great Compassionate Teacher
I take refuge in the Dharma, in all the Liberating Teachings
and I take refuge in the Noble Sangha, the Accomplished Spiritual
Community, the Great Assembly of Saints and Bodhisattvas

By the merit I have accumulated by practicing Generosity, and other Virtues, {Ethics, Patience, Joyful Effort, Meditation, and Wisdom…}
May I accomplish each of the stages of liberation and enlightened understanding and activity,
and help bring all others, without a single exception,
to these very same states.

With my heart going out with great compassion
in whatever direction these most precious teachings and their result have not yet spread,
or, once spread, have declined,
there may I bring this treasure of happiness and aid!

Limitless is the extent of space,
and limitless is the number of sentient beings
Limitless are the karmas and delusions of beings
Such then are the limits of my aspirations!

For as long as space endures,
and for as long as living beings remain,
until then, may I too abide,
to dispel the misery of the world

May the supreme jewel, bodhicitta,
arise where it has not yet arisen,
Where it has arisen, may it not diminish,
May it ever grow and flourish…

May I accomplish this one path,
and may all temporal and ultimate aims be fulfilled

However many species of living beings there are, we must lead all these beings to perfect peace and freedom; And when this innumerable, immeasurable, infinite number of beings has become liberated, we do not, in truth, think that a single being has been liberated…

Why is this so? If a bodhisattva holds on to the idea that a self, a person, a living being, or a life span exists, that person is not a bodhisattva {someone who is both willing and able to lead others to freedom}

{The Diamond Sutra, verse 3}

If no beings exist [in ultimate reality], toward whom should we have compassion? To attain the result [of buddhahood, which is to be achieved only through the awakening of both great compassion and wisdom], one should direct one's compassion toward whatever it is that unenlightened beings call 'beings.' {Shantideva}

{Conventional reality exists, however, beings do not exist as they see themselves or as they are seen by other unenlightened beings.} The bodhisattva realizes that, in ultimate reality, there are no beings who exist as unenlightened beings think, but he directs his mind toward those beings as they perceive themselves.

On the ultimate level, he sees no beings, but he realizes that on the conventional level, beings think they exist and do experience suffering. Out of objectless compassion, therefore, he directs his mind toward them.

- Based on a teaching by Deshung Rinpoche

So, Subhuti, all the bodhisattva mahasattvas should give rise to a pure and clear intention in this spirit… They should give rise to an intention with their minds not dwelling anywhere…

{The Diamond Sutra, verse 10}

From The Continual Practice of Right View

We can bring to mind *our motivation and Right View* in practices that use visualization.

The following is adapted from a teaching by Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche:

(In Vajrayana) We aspire to a nonconceptually performed practice, free from grasping or clinging. This means that when we practice or meditate, we should not relate to our visualization as if it were a solid object.

Our visualization must be experienced as a dynamic display of the true nature, like a transcendent wisdom rainbow body. We must understand that the visualization is totally empty of inherent existence, yet totally full of dynamic energies of love, compassion, and wisdom…

Here is where we can use meditation to integrate our understanding.
We train in seeing the world we live in as translucent, made of light, and holy, and that we are upheld by countless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Saints and Sages, ancestors, and the sacred powers of the earth, sky, water, and fire. In this way, the tantras affirm that divine help is always available in abundance. Visualization in this way is the expression of Right View.

We can cultivate an awareness of the way things are by this practice of seeing ourselves and others and this world as transparent like a rainbow, with light shining through, appearing and yet ungraspable.

What's more, when we realize our inherent worth and the preciousness of ourselves and others and this world, we can intentionally visualize all this as being divine in nature, poetically adorned with jewels, exalted, and uplifting to behold in every way.

* * *

Creation stage practice is understanding the purity of all phenomena including yourself, so that everything is perceived within the buddha mandala. This mandala is not a solidly existent thing; it is of the nature of a reflection, a mirage, a dream or a rainbow. It is a wisdom display of clear light, the luminosity aspect of the true nature…

- Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche

I call upon my Teachers and Spiritual Ancestors,
Lord Buddha with your Retinue of Holy Ones,
please come to this place

May we all receive your blessings
May we all receive your light, inspiration, and strength

A Simple Visualization - The Refuge Tree

In this practice, we imagine the Buddha, ourselves, and others, as having bodies that are made entirely of light… and we see ourselves as being in a Paradise, or in a Pure Land, such as Sukhavati, that is also made entirely of light...

Imagine that you are in a large, open, sacred space, beautiful, adorned with flower gardens, lakes, and wonderful trees, with birds sweetly singing…

The sun is brightly shining, as a few clouds float by… It's a lovely day… perfect in every way…

We see before us now the Buddha, the Divine Form we are meditating upon, or our main teacher, at the center of what appears as a great Refuge Tree, surrounded by Bodhisattvas, and all our ancestral teachers, going back generations, right down to our very own Root Teacher or Teachers…

These holy ones are all made entirely of beautiful light, and appear in the space in front and above us, on celestial clouds, on lotuses and moon cushions… They smile upon us…

Whatever is most pleasing and uplifting, that is what we see and feel before us now…

Imagining yourself to be praying in a Paradise, or in a Pure Land, or in the Garden of Eden can be very helpful…

Imagine that you are now praying in a perfect Pure Land, together with, and in the presence of all the exalted souls of the Saints and righteous people of the past, present, and future…

*Imagine, as you are praying, that the Saints you have personally known, physically seen, or have heard about * are praying with you…*

Feel the elevated bliss, light, and power generated from such a visualization flowing through your prayers…

Have the sense that all these Noble Ones, the whole company of heaven and faithful here on earth are present…

'All should join together - one to the other and one above another - so that they all can receive the heavenly flow of blessings {shefa}, by way of those above them who are closer to the source of supernal goodness…'

{The Baal Shem Tov}

With this Right View and a pure motivation, as we recite verses of refuge and aspiration prayers, meditate, and recite mantra, we visualize that we receive blessings from the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, from all the Bodhisattvas and Devas, from all Holy Beings, and from all that is sacred and pure in the universe, in the form of light and nectar…

These dissolve into ourselves, and into all those we see as being with us now, our family and friends, those we don't know, and those who are experiencing any difficulty at all…

We visualize that the light and nectar purifies, heals and calms, nourishes, strengthens and inspires us all…

May all share in these blessings…

May all beings receive all they need to awaken and be free…

May all beings have happiness, and all the causes of happiness flourishing…

Meditate like this… Make prayers of aspiration…

To conclude, dedicate the merit to all beings.

From The Power of the Name

A word should be said here also about the place of of *silence* in the spiritual life.

See how common it is for monasteries and ashrams to be places of solitude, free of common distractions and noise, and also free of so much unnecessary talk. This naturally leads inwards, and refines the mind in ways that are too seldom known or held up as something we can and should all have as part of our lives. Without quiet, we stay on the surface of things, and then even our words, and the Names we use lose much of their potency.

One needs only take some time off from talking and from this immersion in language that is our common lot it seems, to see directly what I'm talking about here.

I used to take one day a week off from talking, and everyone I knew was aware of this. More time off from speaking will show the effect of so having many words and concepts. For the most part, we live in an ocean of language, with all the effects that has. Silence then purifies and sensitizes us to the deep effects that language can have at its best, such as we find in poetry, prayer, and sacred texts, and (such as we find) in the teachings of the Noble Ones.

Inner quiet enables us to benefit from mantra and from the Sacred Names we connect with and use, and receive sustenance, inspiration and guidance from them.

On mantra and breath meditation

To get the most out of any practice of reciting mantra, at some point during the session, meditate quietly. This can be done at any time, before, during, and after the reflections and recitation. When we do this, we communicate these beautiful, healing qualities to our body, via our conscious breathing. Then at the conclusion, dedicate the merit.

Communicating positive energy to our body with meditation

If you spend an hour meditating on love, generating the wish for ourselves and for others to be happy, and then consciously relax, and smile to each part of your body, along with your breath, your body will benefit because your mind is vibrating with love. We can give this wonderful, positive energy to our body.

In the same way, in sadhana practice, after dissolving the visualization and meditating on the true nature, it's so good to do breath meditation with an awareness of the body. Mindful breathing naturally transmits the positive energy of our practice throughout our body, feelings, and mind. Divine qualities can be integrated like this.

When on retreat, this is also a good way to practice throughout the day and into the evening hours. We can alternate reading and reflection, prayer and mantra, with a basic practice of meditation, *such as this one*.

How wonderful.

Visualization from The Medicine Buddha Sadhana,

translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Granting your request, from the heart and holy body of the King of Medicine, Guru Medicine Buddha, infinite rays of white light pour down completely filling your body from head to toe.

They purify all your diseases and afflictions due to spirits and their causes, all your negative karma and mental obscurations.

In the nature of light, your body becomes as clean and clear as crystal.

The light rays pour down twice more, each time filling your body with blissful clean clear light which you absorb.

You are thereby transformed into the holy body of Guru Medicine Buddha.

At your heart appears a lotus and moon disk. Standing at the center of the moon disk, is is the blue seed-syllable HUM surrounded by the syllables of the mantra.

As you recite the mantra, visualize rays of light radiating out in all directions from the syllable at your heart. The light rays pervade the sentient beings of all six realms.

Through your great love wishing them to have happiness, and through your great compassion wishing them to be free from all sufferings, they are

purified of all diseases and afflictions due to spirits and their causes, all their negative karma and mental obscurations.

* * *

Simplified Visualization

Purifying rays of light pour down from the Guru Medicine Buddha's heart and holy body, eliminating your sicknesses and afflictions due to spirits, and their causes, all your negative karma and mental obscurations.

Your body is completely filled with light and becomes clean-clear like crystal.

Then the rays radiate out in all directions, purifying the sicknesses and afflictions of all mother sentient beings.

On Visualization, Receiving the Healing Buddha's Blessings, by Zasep Rinpoche

April 19th, 2020

So at this time, the lapis lazuli light Buddha transforms into blue light, and this light then dissolves through my crown, and into my body. This blue light goes into my body - it goes into all the channels, and chakras, from the crown of my head to the bottoms of my feet…

The blue light pervades everywhere, and your entire body is nourished by the blue light, and the light of the seven Medicine Buddhas.

This is a protection for you - *It's the greatest protection*.

Your entire body - 72,000 channels, are filled with this light. According to tantra, we have 72,000 channels - it's unimaginable, right?

All the channels and chakras, all our body, subtle body and coarse body - everything is totally satisfied, and nourished by the light of seven Medicine Buddhas…

Now my body is very good, and healthy, strong. I am healthy. I'm strong.

If you're a senior, you should think: *For my age, I'm really healthy! Super-duper healthy, for my age…*

And if you're middle-aged, you should think, *For my middle-age, I'm very healthy;*

Even a young person - a teenaged person should say, *I'm very healthy*…

Whoever you are, you feel *I'm very healthy.*

I'm very grateful to the seven Medicine Buddhas.

I'm so fortunate, I have this blessing in my body and mind…

From Medicine Buddha Healing Meditation and Practice, by Zasep Rinpoche

So, you say the mantra first for a while, and then you do the visualization.

Now, the visualization is a very important one.

While you say the mantra, or after you say the mantra, you imagine a beautiful blue light shining from his heart…

and you visualize a small seed syllable HUM or HUNG at his heart, on the moon disc, and blue light emanating from his heart…

The blue light descends… it comes down and first touches your crown, then slowly the blue light descends to the throat, and then to the heart, then completely fills the inside of your body…

And this light is healing light, this light is holy light, this is divine light, and it purifies your entire body, completely purifies…

and your causes of suffering, pain, sickness, disease, are all gone, immediately, they are all gone…

And also you could imagine that you have received healing energy, not only purifying your body, sickness, but you receive healing energy, healing inspiration to heal yourself. You can heal yourself by reciting the mantra. You receive healing confidence in yourself, and you can also do some healing for others.

Then, you say the mantra again. You can sing it the way I did, or you can say it quietly, and this time nectar comes down…

So, Medicine Buddha is holding a bowl in his left hand, and there is white nectar inside, and as you say the mantra, or after you say the mantra, this white nectar comes down and descends from the bowl. It comes to your crown, and then enters into your body, first the crown, then the throat, then the heart, then the navel, and all throughout your body…

And this nectar is medicinal nectar. It has all the properties of medicine, to heal your body, to nourish your body, to renew your body, and to sustain your body.

Imagine white nectar flowing down like a stream of water, or like a waterfall, like water coming down from the rocks, or from the roof when it's raining - like that, visualize beautiful nectar flowing down from the bowl into your crown, and filling your entire body

and immediately you feel very nourished, and you feel very blissful - the Tibetan word is 'Dewa' - You can feel the happiness, you can feel the joy, you can feel the blessing of Medicine Buddha entering into your heart, and into your body…

Now you are also nourished, and you are also protected. Your body is protected, your mind is protected. Your body is protected from external causes of illness, like viruses, germs, or pollution, and so forth.

You have protection. You have energy inside which has resistance, or the power to neutralize any kind of cause of illness in your body. It will neutralize, and it will purify.

And now, at the very end, you imagine the Medicine Buddha becomes very small, as blue light, the size of your thumb, and the small blue light then enters through your crown and moves down into your heart…

That Divine Light, Medicine Buddha's Divine Light enters your heart. It's here with you as protection, the blessing of Medicine Buddha.

Teaching on Medicine Buddha Practice, by Zasep Rinpoche, July 26th, 2020

This complete video can be seen here.

From 36:00 to 44:12:

Sit comfortably on your cushion. Keep your back straight, and relax your body…

In front of us, in this beautiful, empty space, visualize Medicine Buddha - Lapis Lazuli Light…

He is sitting on a lotus and moon cushion. He is a lapis -lazuli color, one face, two hands, and his right hand is in the mudra of giving blessings, holding an arura plant, with fruit and leaves, and his left hand is holding a bowl with nectar inside;

He is wearing beautiful orange, saffron, and burgundy robes, and his body is surrounded by beautiful light…

Medicine Buddha is right in front of us…

While you are visualizing Medicine Buddha, Lapis Lazuli Light in front of you, at his heart, on a small moon-disc, you visualize a blue HUNG syllable, which is surrounded by the mantras of Medicine Buddha, blue mantras, clockwise,

OM BEKHANDZE BEKHANDZE MAHA BEKHANDZE BEKHANDZE RADZA SAMUNGATE SOHA

- standing.

All the mantras are of the nature of light - the HUNG syllable in the middle, and then the mantra of Medicine Buddha, all blue color, in the nature of light, visualized at his heart…

And so, light emanating from the HUNG syllable and the mantras from Medicine Buddha' heart, light emanating dissolves into your crown, throat, heart, and navel…

Your entire body is filled with light…

Also, the light goes around your body…

Your entire body is covered with the blue light of Medicine Buddha, healing light, and your body is protected by Medicine Buddha, Bhagavan Medicine Buddha, your entire body…

Wherever you go, sitting, standing, walking, lying down, daytime, night time - twenty four hours, you're always protected by Medicine Buddha, protected against viruses, against disease, and everything.

Outside, inside - light is everywhere…

Imagine that this light boosts your energy. It gives you lots of energy in your body. You have energy in your body, natural energy, but it's *boosting* your natural energy, and immune system, by this divine light of Medicine Buddha.

The blue light is boosting your immune system…

And the blue light is inside your body, and outside your body - everywhere…

From The Medicine Buddha Sadhana

As you recite the mantra, visualize as follows:

Purifying rays of light pour down from the Guru Medicine Buddha's heart and holy body, eliminating your sicknesses and afflictions due to spirits, and their causes, all your negative karma and mental obscurations. Your body is completely filled with light and becomes clean-clear like crystal. Then the rays radiate out in all directions, purifying the sicknesses and afflictions of all mother sentient beings.

Light goes out to all the sources of benefit, with reverent, and prayerful requests, and then the light returns, bringing the blessings of these sources of healing benefit.

From A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

Through radiating many-colored light rays, offerings are made to Menla in the pure realm appearing in the east as the color of lapis lazuli. These lights invoke his mind stream, whence Menla's bodies, large and small, his speech as the mantra garland, his mind as the hand symbols of the arura and the begging bowl filled with amrita, all falling like rain, dissolve into myself and the front visualization.

From The Healing Buddha, translated by Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche

Light rays of the appropriate color emanate from each of the five deities at your heart. Your heart and body are full of blissful light, which completely purifies all disease, spirit harms, and negative actions and their imprints.

Beams of five-colored light radiate from all the pores of your body, while nectar flows down from the Healing Buddha's begging bowl and the vases held by the four goddesses, completely filling your heart and body.

Generate the strong recognition that you have vanquished all disease forever and will never be sick again.

While concentrating single-pointedly on this visualization, recite the short or long Healing Buddha mantra seven, twenty-one, one hundred and eight, or more times.

From The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha, by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche (lightly edited)

When we recite the mantra, rays of light emanate from the heart of the Buddha, like a hundred rising suns, curing all the diseases and obscurations of beings, and their causes. By the power of this practice may all sufferings and problems be removed.

Recite while concentrating on the rays of light. At the end of the practice, by the power of these rays of light, sufferings are completely removed, like darkness is dispelled by light.

From The White Tara Commentary, by Geshe Wangdu

Tse Chen Ling Center For Tibetan Buddhist Studies, San Francisco, August, 1996

…One should visualize at one's heart a white lotus, and on top of the lotus a moon-disk, and on top of that the seed-syllable (or a point of light) which is white, white light.

Then after having visualized the white syllable or point of light, one visualizes light rays emanating from that syllable or point. The light rays go throughout all the ten directions, and the light invokes all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas from the ten directions, and then by invoking the Buddhas and bodhisattvas from the ten directions, the Buddhas and bodhisattvas from the ten directions return and merge into one's self…

One should imagine the merging as being like, for example, if it snows on a lake, as soon as the snowflakes hit the water, it just merges into the water. There's nothing left over. So that should be how we imagine the Buddhas and bodhisattvas all merging into ourselves, which is in the form of divinity, and we become one with all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, we merge with all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. At that moment, after we have visualized that all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas have merged into ourselves, at that very instant we should very strongly feel that we have become one with all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

It is said that when doing this visualization, where the light rays invoke all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas from all the ten directions, it is not necessary

to imagine them merging into oneself from the top of one's crown. That is not necessary. It can be merging from all directions throughout every part of our body.

Then one visualizes that the deity of initiation gives us an initiation, and after having received the initiation from the initiation deity, then on the crown of our heads, which is in the Bodhisattva-divinity's form, we imagine that the Lord of the Family (Amitabha, for Cherezig, Amitayus for White Tara, for example) resides there.

After having visualized the Lord of the Family on the top of our crown, which ornaments the crown, then again we visualize light rays emanating from the syllable or point of light at one's heart, and this time the light rays radiate into all the directions, and not particularly to all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, but all throughout the universe, and to the five elements within the universe, the fire, water, wind, earth and space elements, all the five elements, and to what we call all the riches of the kings, all the riches and beauties of the kings and queens in this universe, in fact all the jewels and any beautiful object in the universe is invoked by the light rays emanating from our heart.

And we should imagine that the light rays are extracting all the qualities from the five elements, from all the riches and all the beauties within the universe, and it extracts it and brings forth what we call the essence back into us, in the form of light rays.

An example would be like when a magnet, a powerful magnet is put in the middle, and you have small pieces of iron all around. When the magnet is

put amongst those pieces of iron, it suddenly draws in all the small pieces. That would be how we should imagine the essences, all the good qualities, the compassion and the good qualities of all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and also the good qualities of the riches and beauties of all the different parts of the universe are extracted and brought to us. And they merge into the syllable or point of light that is our heart / mind on the lotus and moon cushion…

Also at the same time we imagine that the essence of what we call the life force, the essence of merit, and the essence of all the nourishment from all the different sources in the universe are all merging into ourselves, particularly into the syllable or light within our heart.

One should, of course, always be aware of the fact that the syllable or point of light visualized is itself our mind, the nature of our mind.

So when we visualize and imagine all the good qualities within the universe merging into the syllable, in fact we are visualizing all the good qualities merging into our own mind, and if this is done with strong faith, in fact it is said that one will certainly receive all the good qualities, of long life, nourishment, and so forth.

I feel that extracting the essence from the five elements is actually a very factual practice. Whenever we get sick, or are unwell in any way it is said that it is because of the five elements being out of balance, or being not sufficient in our bodies. So when we visualize that we are receiving the essence of all five elements, in fact that in itself is the proper way to think of

how we should be healthy, having the essence of the five elements in balance within ourselves.

So at this point, when we do this visualization, while we are still contemplating the visualization of the light rays going out in all the directions and then invoking all the good qualities, bringing them back and merging them into the syllable, while we are doing this visualization, then at this point we start doing the recitation of the mantra…

If I were to relate from my own experience of doing a retreat, it is my own experience that I find it difficult to continue to focus on the visualization, and sometimes it can become too stressful for the mind. So I find it useful, beneficial, before beginning the recitation to try to focus very attentively on the visualization as explained in the texts, and when I come to the point of the recitation, because I have focused very attentively on the visualization initially, because I have imagined that I'm doing the process of invoking the good qualities from all the different directions, then I try to relax the mind a bit from the actual visualization and just contemplate on the recitation itself.

Then, after I reach a number of recitations, I can go back into doing the visualization, while still reciting, but focusing more on the visualization - of sending out the light from the syllable or point of light, and the light radiating out to all the directions and invoking the good qualities of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and the five elements, and all the riches and long life, and so forth, and bringing that back in the form of light rays, and merging them into the syllable, doing that visualization, as explained previously.

You know, I feel that after doing some recitation, one feels that, 'I've done enough work to be able to receive more blessings'. (laughter) It's like even the visualization at that point becomes stronger.

So if one finds it difficult to maintain the visualization all throughout, then, not to be too stressful, but to remember that the main point is to have a relaxed mind, and to feel the blessings being received from all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

An introduction to the four elements

Shortly before leaving Taiwan, where I had taught English for 5 years, a friend of mine noticed that I had with me a deck of tarot cards, and she asked me about them. When I told her I had been studying the tarot for some time, she asked me to teach her what I knew about them. I decided to offer a class that would meet once a week for eight weeks in a local cafe. The question I had to bring to mind then was, where to begin?

I decided that the four elements would be a good place to start, as fifty six of the seventy eight cards were of one of the four suits, that relate to the four elements. I recommended my friends think about the elements of earth, fire, water and air in nature that first week, so we'd have something to refer to the next time we met.

When we begin to look at these elements as we experience them in our daily lives, we start to see them more and more clearly. The solidity of the earth, the qualities of its weight and texture is something we can know directly, walking down the street where there's some construction going on, for example.

Crossing over to the park, we can see this same quality, of strength and stability in the trunk of a tree, and feel it in the weight of our steps.

The earth is also green and vital. Meeting this naturally brings up joy in us, and the feeling of belonging to this beautiful earth. Its rich scents and range of colors nourish us, body and soul. We feel our cheeks flush and the warmth return to our hands.

Watching the wind move the trees, breathing in that same fresh air, we know we are part of this world. If we are swift in our step, and in our thought, we may feel allied to the wind on this day. Messengers carry our communication to others, fleet of foot. Our breath sings, the flute plays, and we move.

Whether the sun is out or not, on this day, we see the life of the sun in color, in the passion we feel, in the warmth in our heart when we think of someone we care for. This fire is something we tend, so we can cook food, so we can see far, so we can share light in our world.

At the park across the street from where I live, there are lakes that reflect the sky. The water moves with the wind, and it is soothing, so soothing to watch.

The rain today is also known in the way it washes everything clean, and brings new life to the surface, in people's outdoor planter boxes, on the branches of trees.

We meet the elements first in our natural world, and then we can start to see them in ourselves as well.

We can see the solidity and stability of the earth, when we have it, or when it's lacking; we can see when we are sensitive like water, or fiery and inspired, or quick as wind and agile in our thinking.

When we look, and have a way of thinking and speaking about it, we can also see in ourselves when one or more of these elements are out of balance:

We can have too much earth, and feel heavy and dull, listless or uninspired; this element can also be lacking for a time in us, and we are ungrounded, too easily swayed by the news of the day or others opinions, or our own memories and thoughts. We can feel a lack of that rootedness, stability, and strength;

We can also have too much water, feeling too much, or being without focus and definition when we need to be; or this quality can be lacking in us, as when we are 'hard of feeling' or without the heart-knowledge we have when we are at our best. We can call this the feeling quality of love, and it fits here.

Too much air would be easy to see as too many thoughts going everywhere, without connection to the body, heart, or enough order; its lack would be when things don't move, being without inspiration on the level of mind or thought.

Excess of fire would be passion, excitement, or energy that is too much for us, or undirected, not given form or direction, or simply too much for our system, body, mind and feeling to handle at the time. Too little of this elemental quality, of fire, would result in such experiences as low energy, timidity, boredom, or a lack of creativity.

The good news in all of this, once we learn to recognize the elements in the world and in ourselves, is that we can see how we are doing from day to day, hour by hour, and in our meditations, and adjust ourselves however we may need to for balance. This is done by first seeing our present state, and then bringing to mind the quality we need to cultivate. We can reduce what is in excess in us, and increase whatever we need.

I use this way of looking and adjusting at times in sitting meditation. I can see if I'm settled, or not, if my mind is clear and bright, and appreciative, or if these are qualities I need more of. When things are balanced too, I recognize it, and appreciate what that state is made of. I can see if my mind is quiet and my feelings calm, and if there is joy and inspiration. On any given day, I can notice the patience and persistence I have, as well as the energy, and the love. Once we have the vocabulary for it, and some ability to think along these lines, experiences such as these can be seen in terms of the elements.

From the time I was first began studying the tarot in my teens, I connected with a body of teachings on the elements that I have found very useful for self understanding and cultivation. The teachings on the four elements have long been a shared in the Western Esoteric Tradition, and this is a great gift to us all. What I didn't know until relatively recently was that there are traditional teachings from the East as well on the elements.

In 2010 I found the book 'Healing with Form, Energy and Light; The Five Elements in Tibetan Shamanism, Tantra, and Dzogchen', by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and was delighted to discover a full and rich body of teachings on the subject. I would recommend especially the first section of

this book to anyone wishing to study the elements in nature and in ourselves, with the aim of cultivating greater health and balance in life. It is simply the most complete and engaging study of the subject I have come across.

{My notes from that book can be found here.}

The nature of mind, the elements, and health

The subtle aspect of what we know as the four elements, of earth, water, air, and fire, are present as intrinsic properties in the nature of mind. They are there, tangibly, as an abiding unity.

In the unmodified nature of mind itself, moreover, these four elements are always in a state of perfect balance, and therefore, returning to resting in the nature of mind (called Mahamudra, or Rigpa, which is our original, unconditioned, natural awareness) is the best way to restore balance to the elements, on psychological and physical levels. It serves a healing function.

By resting in the nature of mind, clearly awake and appreciative, we can have the experience again of the innate balance of the elements. This is the way to bring about health and harmony, adjusting in a completely natural way, from our intrinsic intelligence, augmenting what is lacking, and reducing what is in excess.

This is the way to strengthen ourselves, and also to embody, emanate, and demonstrate health, strength and balance directly to others, thereby helping them to achieve the same state.

The balance of the elements in us is, in fact, communicated wordlessly, by our very presence, and also through our voice and our words.

(By the way, that I'm not making this up myself – I've read it somewhere this last year, and can't find the reference right now. However, what I've

written here does seem both apparent, and necessary for me at this time, and so, these few words.)

From Teachings from the Medicine Buddha Retreat, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Visualization during mantra recitation

The blessings and qualities of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions, in the form of numberless replicas of Medicine Buddha's holy body, some as huge as mountains and others as small as atoms, come from all the directions like snowfall and absorb into you through your pores to your heart, where there are the mantras and the heart syllable hum. Concentrate on this…

This includes all the qualities of the buddhas' holy body, holy speech and holy mind. While strongly concentrating on this, recite the mantra…

Feel that you have received omniscient mind. You have received all the buddhas' qualities, including the holy mind, omniscient mind…

Think that numberless Medicine Buddhas have absorbed into you and focus on their various qualities. You have received not only clairvoyance, which enables you to help other sentient beings, but the ultimate complete understanding of omniscient mind…

Now concentrate on receiving the quality of great compassion. Put the main emphasis on receiving the great compassion of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Your whole being is completely filled with great compassion for each and every sentient being without discrimination…

Now particularly concentrate on the quality of power. You are receiving Medicine Buddha's perfect power to benefit sentient beings. Think, "I have received this perfect power." Focus particularly on this quality of the perfect power to benefit other sentient beings; think that you have received it within you…

As you continuously absorb numberless Medicine Buddhas from all directions, all the buddhas' qualities absorb within you in Medicine Buddha's form. You have the power to work perfectly for others without making the slightest mistake, exactly in accord with each sentient being's wishes, level of mind, karma and intelligence…

Now send beams to sentient beings from the heart of yourself as Medicine Buddha, who is endowed with all these qualities….

From Ultimate Healing, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

The Healing Power of the Mind - The Nature of the Mind

Since healing essentially comes from our mind, not from our body, it is important to understand the nature of the mind.

The intrinsic nature of the mind is pure in the sense that it is not one with the faults of the mind… and since the cause of our suffering, our disturbing thoughts and obscurations, is temporary, our suffering is also temporary.

The quality of mind, known as Buddha-nature, gives us the potential to free ourselves completely from all suffering, including disease, and the causes of suffering and to achieve any happiness we wish, including the peerless happiness of enlightenment.

Since the mind has all this potential…we have incredible freedom to develop our mind in any way that we wish…

Simple Healing Meditations

Even though the psychological aspect, transformation of the mind, is much more important in healing, visualization of Buddhas, stupas, and other powerful holy objects does have power to heal.

Simply seeing a holy object has much power to benefit the mind and brings great purification. This is why I recommend using a stupa or Buddha as the meditation object in the white light healing meditation.

In the sutra teachings Guru Shakyamuni Buddha explains that even looking with anger at a drawing of a Buddha causes a person to eventually meet ten million Buddhas. This comes about mainly through the power of the holy mind of a Buddha.

The figure of a Buddha symbolizes a holy being with a pure mind that is completely free from gross and even subtle obscurations and that has infinite compassion for all living beings.

The only thought in such a being's mind is to benefit all living beings.

Such a holy mind has healing power because its omniscient wisdom is bound by infinite compassion.

Because of the power of the object, looking at a drawing of a Buddha, even with anger or an impure motivation, purifies much obscuration, and the purification of obscuration enables the person to eventually see many Buddhas.

Obscurations obscure our mind just as clouds temporarily obscure the sun. Just like clouds, our obscurations are temporary; they can be purified. Clouds become thinner and thinner as they disappear, revealing the sun shining in a clear blue sky.

In a similar way, our obscurations become thinner and thinner, revealing more and more phenomena to us. Though not actually new phenomena, they are new to us, since previously we couldn't see them because of our obscurations.

We are then able to see fully enlightened beings in their pure form and to hear teachings and receive guidance directly from them, as described in the life stories of advanced practitioners.

If you cannot accept the visualization of a Buddha because of your faith in your own religion, you can instead visualize Jesus Christ or your particular object of faith…

The main point is that when you visualize your object of faith - Jesus Christ, for example - you should believe that Jesus has the qualities of an enlightened being: omniscient mind, compassion for all living beings, and the power to work perfectly for all beings.

Even though you label the figure "Jesus Christ" rather than "Buddha," you should imagine that Jesus has the same qualities as Buddha. You are then taking refuge in an unmistaken object.

Since meditating on any object with these qualities is the same as meditating on Buddha, you receive the blessings of an enlightened being when you do the visualizations of purification.

This is much more meaningful than looking at your object of faith as an ordinary being…

Even if you do not accept any religion at all, you can still do the meditations on white light healing, compassion, and taking and giving.

If you like, you can visualize universal healing power coming in the form of white light from all ten directions to heal you of your disease and the causes of disease, the negative imprints on your mind.

Simply concentrate on the universal healing power illuminating your body and purifying you.

Your body is transformed into the nature of light and your mind becomes completely pure.

Alternatively, you can visualize the healing light coming from a crystal.

First visualize that universal healing power in the form of white light absorbs into the crystal. White light then radiates from the crystal to completely heal your disease.

* * *

White Light Healing Meditation

During the White Light healing meditation, four things are purified: disease, spirit harm, negative actions, and the imprints of negative actions. Spirit harm is a condition for disease but not its main cause.

The main cause of disease - and of every other problem we experience - is the negative imprints left on our mental continuum by negative thoughts and actions. These negative imprints then materialize as problems.

Imprints are left on the mind similar to the way images are left on the negative of a film. The scenes of a movie are recorded as imprints on the negative of a film; the film is then put in a projector, the electricity is turned on, and the scenes of the movie are projected onto a screen.

The happiness and problems in our life come from our own mind in a similar way. Happiness comes from our positive thoughts, and problems come from our negative thoughts. All our positive and negative thoughts and actions basically come from imprints left on our mental continuum, or consciousness.

There are six consciousnesses: consciousness of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body, plus mental consciousness. It is this sixth consciousness, mental consciousness, that goes from life to life, that reincarnates. The five sense consciousnesses cease at the time of death, but this sixth consciousness continues, carrying all the imprints left by our past thoughts and actions.

This mental consciousness carries all the imprints from yesterday to today, from last year to this year, from our childhood to now, and from other lives to this life.

Because of the mental consciousness, we can remember now the things that we did this morning, yesterday, last year, or when we were a child.

Negative thoughts and actions and the imprints they leave on our mental continuum are the cause not only of disease but of all the problems in our life; therefore, to purify ourselves of the cause of disease, we have to purify our mind of these three factors.

But we should not think of purifying ourselves of only disease, because disease is just one of the thousands of problems in samsara.

Samsara refers to our aggregates, our present association of body and mind; it is also known as cyclic existence, because our aggregates cycle from one life to another.

Like crops growing from a field, many problems come from our present association of body and mind: rebirth, sickness, old age, death, separation from desirable objects, meeting undesirable objects, not finding satisfaction even after finding desirable objects.

Why does our present association of body and mind produce so many problems? Because it came from impure causes, from karma and ignorance of the ultimate nature of the I and other phenomena.

Because its cause is impure, this present association of body and mind is suffering in nature and produces many problems, one of which is disease.

We are concentrating here particularly on purifying ourselves of the cause of disease, but at the same time we are purifying the cause of all the many other problems in our life.

Motivation

Before the meditation, first generate a positive motivation. Ask yourself, What is the purpose of my life? The purpose of my life is not just to solve my own problems and find happiness only for myself.

The purpose of my life is to free everyone who is suffering from all problems and their causes and to bring them happiness, especially the ultimate, everlasting happiness of full enlightenment. This is the purpose of my life. This is the meaning of my being alive.

The purpose of my life is as vast as infinite space. It is my responsibility to free everyone from all problems and their causes and to bring them temporary and, especially, ultimate happiness.

To offer this extensive service to all other living beings, I need to develop wisdom and compassion for all beings. Therefore, I need to be healthy and to have a long life. It is for this reason that I am going to do this white light healing meditation.

Meditation

Relax in whatever position you feel physically comfortable. If you need to, you can even lie down. The most important point is not your physical posture but that your mind should be meditating.

First breathe in slowly, then breathe out slowly. As you breathe out, visualize that all your present and future disease and all the causes of problems - your negative actions and thoughts and their imprints on your mind - come out through your nostrils in the form of black smoke, just like from a factory chimney…

All your disease, spirit harm, negative thoughts and actions, and their imprints come out in the form of black smoke, which completely disappears far beyond this earth…

Feel that you have become healthy both physically and mentally.

As you breathe in, visualize light coming like sunbeams from a stupa, {or other Holy object, or Being} which symbolize the pure holy mind of a Buddha.

Think that the omniscient mind of a fully enlightened being has taken {this} form… and that the strong white light emitted goes straight into your heart and completely illuminates your body…

Think that all your disease, spirit harm, negative thoughts and actions, and their imprints are instantly purified…

Think especially that any disease you have is gone…

Your whole body becomes in the nature of white light.

{perfectly clear, like a crystal…}

You have no suffering at all…

Feel much joy…

From the top of your head down to your toes, your whole body is filled with bliss…

Think also that your life has been prolonged and that your positive energy, the cause of happiness and success, has been increased…

Wisdom, compassion, and the understanding and realizations of the path to enlightenment are fully developed within you…

Again do the meditation of purifying yourself and then receiving light…

Breathe {in and} out and purify; breathe in, receive healing white light, and free yourself from all problems and their causes…

Your body becomes filled with light and bliss…

Repeat this meditation over and over again.

Dedication

Now sincerely dedicate to the happiness of all living beings the positive energy you have created by doing this meditation.

Due to the positive actions and imprints I have created now, those I have created in the past, and also those I will create in the future, may I develop the ultimate good heart of bodhicitta and achieve the peerless happiness of full enlightenment.

May I then lead every living being to the complete peace of mind of full enlightenment.

Due to all the merit created by generating a positive motivation and by doing this positive action of meditating, may any living being just by seeing, hearing, touching, remembering, or talking about me immediately be freed from all obstacles to happiness - from disease, spirit harm, negative actions, and obscurations - and quickly achieve the highest happiness of full enlightenment.

Healing Buddha Practice

The Healing {Bodhisattva - Divinity, Celestial Buddha} practice that is best for a particular person is determined by their individual karma and should be checked with a qualified lama.

The person should then receive the initiation of or permission to practice that {Divine Name and Form}, which also includes an oral transmission of the mantra.

Because the oral transmission of the mantra comes down in an unbroken lineage, it carries the blessings of the bodhisattva divinity, the Celestial Buddha and of all the highly qualified lineage lamas down to the guru from whom the lineage is received.

The purpose of receiving the lineage of the blessing is to give more power to the meditation and the recitation of mantra.

When we do {Bodhisattva-Divinity} meditation and mantra recitation, the main healing power comes from our motivation of loving kindness, compassion, and bodhicitta. The motivation is the important factor; the mantra recitation and other practices are secondary.

Of course, the additional factors of visualizing holy objects and reciting mantras do increase the healing power of the practice. My advice to the people who have recovered from illness was not only to do meditation practices and recitation of mantras, but also to generate a positive, altruistic motivation. However, it seems that some people have recovered from

cancer simply by visualizing white light and having strong faith that it is healing them…

To heal others we should use the practice of a bodhisattva-divinity, a Celestial Buddha with whom we have strong karmic connection, because our close relationship with the divinity will bring success more quickly, but the healing power comes more from our faith than from visualizing the divine form clearly or reciting the mantra correctly.

The most important point is to feel that the healing Awakened One has an omniscient mind, infinite compassion for you and all other living beings, and perfect power to guide you.

This is the essence of the practice. Visualizing the aspect clearly does not make much difference, but you must not miss the essence of the practice.

Generating strong faith that you have been completely purified of your disease and its causes is extremely important because it is this mind of faith that is the real healing mind.

Wisdom and compassion are important in other practices, but in practices involving meditation on a deity and recitation of mantra, healing has a lot to do with generating strong faith that you have been purified.

This mind of faith is the actual healer.

From The Profound Cure, by Karma Chakme

From my heart, shoot forth dark blue rays of light,
Which flood towards the east, to the buddhafield of Lapis Lazuli,
Where they touch the heart of Bhagavat Bhaiṣajya-Guru,
blessed Lord of Physicians,
Who is thus reminded of his former pledges, his prayers and aspirations.

In turn, he sends back further rays of lapis lazuli coloured light,
Which dissolve into my own body and all those who need protection.
Thus, I imagine all diseases evaporating,
Dwindling to nothing like frost in sunlight.

Homage to the Buddha Bhaiṣajya-Guru,
Lord of Physicians, Radiant Lapis Lazuli King!

From Medicine Buddha Meditation, by Losang Samten

Healing for Yourself

Visualization and Mantra Recitation

In response to your request, infinite blue rays of light stream down from the heart and body of the King of Medicine. The light completely fills your body from head to toe, purifying all diseases. If you have any pain or any specific illnesses, focus the blue light directly to this spot and visualize the light burning away the pain and disease. All ailments due to interfering forces and the negative karma and mental obscurations that cause these, as well as anxiety, fear and negative emotions are also purified. These leave you in the form of dirty liquid which then completely disappears. Your body becomes the nature of light, clean and clear like a crystal.

Light from the Medicine Buddha again fills your body, bringing with it the realizations of the path and all the good qualities of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Your mind is transformed into love, compassion and wisdom.

While doing the visualizations, recite the mantra as much as possible:

TAYATA OM BHEKANDZE BHEKANDZE MAHA BHEKANDZE RANDZA SAMUNGATE SOHA

Absorption

After reciting the mantra, the Medicine Buddha melts into light and

absorbs into your heart. Your mind becomes non-dual with the Buddha's dharmakaya mind.

Healing for Others

Visualize the Medicine Buddha on the crown of each living being's head. You may think specifically of those who are suffering and in need of healing. Do the visualization with the light first purifying their diseases and their causes, and then bringing them the realizations of the path to enlightenment.

While doing the visualizations, recite the mantra as much as possible:

TAYATA OM BHEKANDZE BHEKANDZE MAHA BHEKANDZE RANDZA SAMUNGATE SOHA

Absorption

Imagine the Medicine Buddha on the crown of each sentient being's head melting into light and being absorbed into their hearts, bringing infinite peace, compassion and wisdom.

From The Medicine Buddha Sadhana and Meditation, from The Bahai Center

Visualization of blessing

At the heart of Medicine Buddha appears a lotus and moon disc. Standing at the centre of the moon disc, is the blue seed-syllable HUM surrounded by the syllables of the mantra. As you recite the mantra, visualize the rays of light radiating out in all directions from the syllables at his heart…

The light rays pervade the sentient beings of the six realms obscurations, and go to all parts of your body and drive out all your physical, energetic and mental disorders in the form of black smoke, fire, water or insects, etc.

Through your great love, wishing all sentient beings to have happiness and, through your great compassion, wishing them to be free from all sufferings, they are purified of all diseases and afflictions due to spirits and their causes, all their negative karma and mental obscurations.

The Medicine Buddha Mantra

Om namo bhagavate bekhaze guru bedurya prabharazaya
tathagataya arhate samyaksambuddhaya
Tayatha Om bekhaze bekhaze mahabekhaze bekhaze raza samungate soha

(7, 21, 108 times)

The Short mantra of Medicine Buddha

Tayatha om bekhaze bekhaze mahabekhaze bekhaze raza samungate soha

During the mantra reciting, your request is granted, infinite rays of light pour down from the heart of Medicine Buddha, the supreme healer, completely filling your body from head to toe…

They purify all your diseases and afflictions due to spirits, negative karma and mental obscurations…

By the power of the light, your body becomes as clean and clear as crystal…

The light pours down twice more, each time filling your body with blissful light that you absorb and which cures all physical and mental disorders…

Absorption and dissolution meditation

After the proper visualization and transformation of your body/mind, all Medicine Buddhas dissolve one by one into the Medicine Buddha Bedurya. The lineage gurus of Medicine and the protectors dissolve into him as well…

At the end, Medicine Buddha himself also dissolves into a white light and enters into your crown chakra, then into your heart…

A great blissfulness increases, and the ignorant mind is consumed, and the attachment and anger of the self-centered ego are consumed…

Develop wisdom and compassion, and meditate beyond thoughts and words. Stay at that level as much as you can.

(Then dedicate the merit.)

From The Medicine Buddha Sadhana, from The Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation

From the teachings of Venerable Zasep Rinpoche, Venerable Geshe Sonam Rinpoche and Venerable Jampa Gendun

Imagine that the Medicine Buddha is delighted by your practice, offerings and requests and he emanates and radiates white light from his heart and the pores of his skin and begging bowl. The light pours like rain into your crown and completely fills your body and mind. The light completely purifies all your diseases, afflictions, negative karma and mental obscurations. In the nature of light and radiance, your body becomes as clean, clear and pure as crystal[1].

Whilst visualising this purification, recite the Medicine Buddha mantra 21 or 108 times:

Long mantra:

OM NAMO BHAGAWATE BHEKANDZE , GURU BENDURYA PRABHA RANDZA, TATHAGATAYA ARHATE SAMYAKSAM BUDDHAYA, TAYATA OM BHEKHANDZE BHEKHANDZE MAHA BHEKHANDZE BHEKHANDZE RANDZA SAMUNGATE SOHA.

Short mantra:

[1] We can imagine all other sentient beings, or someone to whom we want to send purifying and healing energy seated around us and receiving this light in the same way.

TAYATA OM BHEKHANDZE BHEKHANDZE MAHA BHEKANDZE BHEKANDZE RANDZA SAMUNGATE SOHA

Then visualise the Medicine Buddha emanating blue light from his heart, the pores of his skin and begging bowl, which pours like rain into the crown of your head, completely filling your body and mind. The light completely destroys all illness and disease and energises your whole being. In the nature of light and radiance, your body becomes energised, strong and clear[2].

While visualising this transmission of energy, recite the Medicine Buddha mantra 21 or 108 times.

Now, remembering our comittment to heal others, from our radiant, energised and completely healed being, visualise purifying white light and energizing, healing blue light going out from us in the ten directions and entering every single being in the universe. Imagine that this healing energy completely purifies all negative karma, obscurations and illness, then completely heals and energises every sentient being.

Hold this visualisation whilst again reciting the mantra 21 or 108 times.

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[2] If we are using or giving medicine, we can imagine that this blue light from the Medicine Buddha's begging bowl flows into the medicine and empowers it, transforming the medicine into a nectar that bestows freedom from illness. This blesses the medicine and we can give it, or take it with the thought that it has the added qualities of the ambrosia of immortality and exhalted wisdom, bestowing freedom from illness.

We can also visualise when taking medicine, that it transforms into the nectar of the Medicine Buddha, and as we take it, the nectar fills our body purifying our illness and healing our body.

* * *

While doing massage or other healing practice, we can think that the Medicine Buddha is in me and light goes from my heart through my hands into the person. We can also do this long distance by visualising the Medicine Buddha in front or above the crown of that person and visualise nectar flowing into the person whilst reciting the mantra.

May all beings be well, happy and peaceful.

With love, thanks and appreciation to: Venerable Zasep Tulku Rinpoche, Venerable Geshe Sonam Rinchen, and Venerable Jampa Gendun.

From A Drop of Ambrosia - The Medicine Buddha Sadhana

Visualization during mantra recitation

The recitation of mantra invokes the vows of the Eight Sugatas

Limitless light shines from their bodies to all beings, myself and others, mainly on those of greatest concern…

It purifies all past bad karma collected from beginningless time, and all the afflictive emotions, illness, and demonic possession, all past sins and all obscurations, and broken tantric samaya vows

Instantly we gain realization of the stages of meditation of the Sugatas and their children…

(Mantra recitation)

Dissolution

The assembly of the Mandala melts into light and dissolves into the central figure. From the three special places of the body, speech, and mind of the Medicine Buddha, white, red, and blue transcendent awareness light radiates and dissolves into my three special places, purifying the three obscurations.

The Medicine Buddha melts into light and dissolves into me through the crown of my head. I become inseparable from the great embodiment of all the Victorious One's wisdom and compassion.

I rest in the state of Mahamudra - all pervading emptiness.

(Then dedicate the merit.)

King of Clear Knowing

Stainless Excellent Gold

Supreme Glory Free From Sorrow

King of Excellent Signs

Ocean of Proclaimed Dharma

Ocean of Melody

The Healing Buddha

{and Shakyamuni Buddha}

From Medicine Buddha Teachings, by Thrangu Rinpoche

Lightly edited

We supplement the visualization of ourselves as the divine form with visualizations such as imagining the actual wisdom divinities themselves dissolving into ourselves again and again, by means of which we receive their blessing…

Sometimes we visualize the Celestial Buddha or Bodhisattva in front of us, separate from ourselves, thinking that rays of light from the divinity's heart engulf and pervade us, granting the blessing of the Healing Buddha. And sometimes we visualize that rays of light, which embody the blessing of that divinity in front of us, strike all beings, removing their obstacles, increasing their longevity, wisdom, and so on. All of these visualizations are methods by which we arouse the compassion of all buddhas and cause their blessings to enter into ourselves and others…

* * *

Next we come to the visualization that accompanies the repetition of the mantra. In the text it says to visualize in the center of the heart of oneself as the Medicine Buddha, and in the heart of the front visualization of the Medicine Buddha, the seed syllable HUM surrounded by the garland of the mantra.

In detail, one visualizes a moon disc- a disc of white light that represents the moon- lying flat in the very center of one's body at the level of the

heart. Standing upright upon this disk is visualized the seed syllable of the Celestial Buddha, a blue HUM, which represents the divinity's mind or wisdom. Surrounding the HUM is visualized the garland of the mantra from which rays of light will emanate and so forth. The HUNG in the heart of the self and front visualizations is surrounded by the mantra garland.

TAYATA OM BEKENDZE BEKENDZE MAHA BEKENDZE
RADZA SAMUDGATE SO HA

Having visualized the moon disc, the HUM syllable, and the mantra garland in the heart of both the self and front visualizations, you then think that from the syllable HUM and the mantra garland in the heart of the self-visualization rays of multicolored light shoot out towards the front visualization.

These rays of light strike the heart of the front visualization, arousing its nonconceptual compassion and causing rays of multicolored light to emerge from the mantra garland and syllable HUM in its heart, which proceed to the eastern pure realm of the Medicine Buddha, called the Light of Vaidurya.

On the tips of each of these multicolored rays of light are offering goddesses who make innumerable offerings to the Medicine Buddha, the seven other medicine buddhas, the sixteen bodhisattvas, and so on. These offerings serve to arouse their compassion; to remind them of their promises, vows, and aspirations to benefit beings; and to cause them to release their blessings.

The blessings of their body take the form of innumerable forms of the Medicine Buddha and his retinue - huge ones, tiny ones, and every size in between. These innumerable forms of the principal Medicine Buddha, the other medicine buddhas, and the bodhisattvas, rain down and dissolve into the front visualization, and into you as the self-visualization, granting you the blessings of the body of the Medicine Buddha and his retinue…

At the same time, the blessing of their speech is emitted in the form of the mantra garlands, which in this case are multicolored. Mantra garlands of various colors rain down from the pure realms of the Medicine Buddha and dissolve into the front visualization, and into you as the Medicine Buddha, granting you the blessings of their speech…

Finally, the blessing of their mind, which strictly speaking has no form, is for the purpose of this visualization embodied in the form of what is held in the Medicine Buddha's hands - the arura and the begging bowls filled with ambrosia. These are emitted and rain down and dissolve into the front visualization, and into you as the Medicine Buddha, granting you the blessing of their mind…

If you can visualize clearly, it is best to do all of this very slowly and gradually. While you continue to say the mantra, you think that rays of light emerge from the self-visualization, go to the front visualization, and then from the front visualization outwards to the pure realms, proceeding gradually and slowly.

Especially when the blessings of body, speech, and mind rain down upon and dissolve into you, you can do the visualizations in sequence: first,

visualizing the blessings of body raining down, without being in any kind of a hurry and so quite distinctly; and then visualizing the blessings of speech and then the blessings of mind…

If you find that the visualization is extremely unclear, if you wish, you can do it all at once, but if you do it gradually and slowly, you will find that you will get a much stronger sense of the blessings actually entering into you. By taking your time with the visualization, you will develop real confidence, a real feeling of the blessings entering into you.

When you receive the blessing of the Medicine Buddha, and of buddhas and bodhisattvas in general, various unpleasant things - obstacles, sickness, demonic disturbances - will be pacified, and compassion, faith, devotion, insight, and so on will flourish and increase.

In order to practice the descent of blessing most effectively, it is a good idea to focus the blessings on whatever is afflicting you most at that time. For example, if you are having a particular physical problem - an illness or some other physical problem - or a particular mental problem- a particular klesha, a particular type of stress, or particular worries - you can focus the absorption of the blessings of the buddhas and bodhisattvas on that.

You can focus it on the removal of wrongdoing and obscurations in general, but focus it especially on what you regard as your greatest concern at the moment. For example, you may feel that you lack a specific quality: If you feel that you lack insight or you lack compassion or you lack faith, then think that the blessing serves to promote that quality that you feel you are most lacking, and feel that through the absorption of these blessings you

actually become filled with that quality as though it were a substance that were actually filling your whole body.

Those visualizations are for the usual, formal practice of the Medicine Buddha.

In his book *Mountain Dharma: Instructions for Retreat*, Karma Chakme Rinpoche recommends the following visualization for the actual alleviation of sickness.

You can visualize yourself as the Medicine Buddha, if you wish, but the main focus is to actually visualize a small form of the Medicine Buddha, no larger than four finger-widths in height, in the actual part of your body that is afflicted. So if it is an illness or pain in the head, visualize a small Medicine Buddha in the head; if it is in the hand, visualize a small Medicine Buddha in the hand; if it is in the foot, then visualize a small Medicine Buddha in the foot.

Visualize the Medicine Buddha in that place, and think that from this small but vivid form of the Medicine Buddha rays of light are emitted. These rays of light are not simply light, which is dry, but liquid light having a quality of ambrosia. This luminous ambrosia or liquid light actually cleanses and removes the sickness and pain - whatever it is.

You can do this not only for yourself, by visualizing the Medicine Buddha in the appropriate part of your own body, but you can do it for others as well by visualizing the Medicine Buddha in the appropriate part of their

body or bodies. The emanation of rays of light of ambrosia and so on is the same.

This can be applied not only to physical sickness but to mental problems as well. If you want to get rid of a particular type of anxiety or stress or depression or fear or any other kind of unpleasant mental experience, you can visualize the Medicine Buddha seated above the top of your head and think in the same way as before that luminous ambrosia or liquid light emerges from his body, filling your body and cleansing you of any problem, whatever it is…

Following the repetition of the mantra comes the conclusion of the practice.

May there be the auspiciousness of freedom from sickness,
harmful spirits, and suffering.

Three Qualities in Vajrayana Practice - Vajra Pride, Clear Appearance, and Pure Recollection

Notes from the teachings of Lama Lodro

How can I think of myself as a Deity?(a divine name and form, a Celestial Buddha or Bodhisattva) If you say 'My body is the deity' that makes it difficult - in that case, you're not getting the blessing of the deity, but the deity actually is my mind, if I can cultivate it…

The visualization of the deity's body is very different. The physical body is dependently originated, made of the five elements. To visualize, 'My mind is the deity - perfect enlightened quality' this is possible.

Vajra Pride means, My mind's quality is the Buddha - the Buddha's wisdom is always there. My mind is like a diamond, that can cut through everything. This is the meaning of Vajra - indestructible.

When I truly recognize Buddha, then I can destroy the ego. Even if the ego has been there for million years, or a billion years, it doesn't matter, because this mind is so strong. That is what my mind actually is, enlightened from the beginning.

Just pride is negative. Vajra Pride is very positive, the ultimate positive, and this is very necessary to understand, very necessary to know. You have to keep this awareness.

It is said:

Your mind is Buddha -
there is no need to dispel any impurity

It is spontaneously perfect
There is no need to add anything

Next,

Why don't I see this? - that's the next point.

The relative mind can't see this. It is obscured.

It is so perfect,
it needs the perfect mind to see it

How to see this? We need the wisdoms of listening, and reflection, and meditation.

It is ultimate wisdom.

You need to see this, then you are liberated.

It's said:

You don't need to meditate,
You just need to become accustomed to it

Keep the brightness within you.

There is no need to remove anything,
and no need to add anything

Pride means you are holding something in mind. *Vajra* in Vajra Pride makes the meaning whole, complete. It indicates what kind of pride this is.

This is the antidote to the ego. It is becoming more familiar with selflessness, and your true qualities of enlightenment.

The next one is steadfast *Clear Appearance*

This means that, whether we are seeing our own body as the divine form, or visualizing the divine form of the Celestial Buddha or Bodhisattva in front, every detail of color, arm, face, and ornament is very clear in your mind.

This is very important to know. This is how we develop vajrayana samatha meditation.

With Clear Appearance, keeping the divine form in mind for the entire session of meditation, this will improve your concentration. Keeping your mind full of the divinity's quality - this also acts as a purification.

The Celestial Buddha's bodies each have implements, and each have meaning, such as the Six Paramitas, purification, merit, wisdom, and so on.

These are the opposite of the mental poisons. They are the remedy to the mental poisons. This practice will uproot all these habitual patterns.

Samatha practice (by itself) doesn't get to the root of the problems. It can calm the mind down, but it doesn't remove the poisons. But this kind of Deity yoga practice can remove them from the root, because you are visualizing full enlightenment. You are giving full concentration to fully enlightened qualities.

While you are reciting mantras especially, you have to keep your mind there, on the visualization.

When the visualization isn't so clear, also, mindfulness recognizes it. You know, 'Alright, now it's not so strong', and you re-focus, and try to make it more strong.

That is Clear Appearance.

The third one we call *Pure Recollection*.

This is similar to Clear Appearance. Here we are focussing *on the meaning* of what is visualized, for example, one face, three eyes for the three times; a wrathful face showing extraordinary compassion, as a remedy to the ego;

the color blue being a symbol of the Dharmakaya;

{and so on…}

You bring these enlightened qualities to mind by remembering the meaning of what is visualized - each implement, each color.

That is called Pure Recollection.

Bringing these three together when you recite mantra is very powerful. They make the practice very effective.

This applies to all Vajrayana practice.

From Teachings on Mahamudra and Medicine Buddha, by Lama Lodro Rinpoche I

So now, we have to know, the Medicine Buddha, the energy of all Buddhas healing - his quality and perfection *is* the Wisdom that counters the poisons.

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 are longing to have this wisdom.

This devotion is the condition, 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 comes from the Buddha to you.

Light comes to your head, throat, heart, navel and secret place, and purifies the poisons, it dispels them, it heals them…

These 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 simply 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 first, and also, 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, that you can help…

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.

From Teachings on Mahamudra and Medicine Buddha, by Lama Lodro Rinpoche II

Gathering elemental energies

Visualize Medicine Buddha, and in his heart, 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)

From A Commentary on the Medicine Buddha Sadhana

Eight lions hold a golden throne, upon which is a lotus, sun and moon seat, upon which is your own mind in the form of a blue HUNG, the essence of the Medicine Buddha.

(Visualize two - one in front and one as oneself, one's own mind)

Visualize front and self generation at the same time.

Light goes out and returns and each becomes Medicine Buddha, sitting in cross-legged posture, wearing the three robes, holding a bowl of medicinal nectars in his left hand and an arura plant in his right.

Arura is a divine fruit. In Tibetan medicine, all medicine has that.

It is also called myrobalan.

The begging bowl is filled with the nectar of immortality.

Initially the Medicine Buddha has objectless compassion, then instantly he appears with the 32 major and 80 minor marks adorning his physical body. These represent all the Buddha's perfect qualities.

Focus on the Medicine Buddha.

If you can bring Medicine Buddha to your mind, you get all the help.

Think:

All the retinue is present there.

Alternate focussing on oneself and on the Medicine Buddha in front of one.

From the syllable OM on his forehead, white light goes out

From the syllable AH at his throat, red light

and from the syllable HUNG at his heart, blue light goes out to the Eastern Pure Lands, to the Pure Land of Medicine Buddha.

Light returns in the form of Medicine Buddha in front of one, and into the Medicine Buddha who is oneself.

'remove the obstacles that shorten life…

NAMO MAHA BEKADZE SA PA RI WA RO BENZA SAMAYA DZA DZA / BENZA SAMAYA TIKTRA LHEN / OM HUNG TRAM HRI / AH ABIKENTSA HUNG

Medicine Buddhas dissolve into oneself, and into the Medicine Buddha that is in front of one, '*like water poured into water…'*

This purifies all obstacles and impurities.

The Five Dhyana Buddhas are empowering Deities

(OM HUNG TRAM HRI AH)

Buddha Akshobya is on the crown of your head.

Offerings

The five desirable things, we offer. All that we get attached to, we offer.

As you offer these things to the Medicine Buddha, it cuts off clinging to those objects that make you suffer.

The two accumulations - of merit and wisdom - these bring you to enlightenment.

With each set of offerings, the prayer is offered,

May the two accumulations be perfected

Now, universal offerings: We offer, Mount Meru, the Four Continents, Sun and Moon, as in the Ngondro, preliminary practices.

The Bathing Ritual

We have impurities. By offering this, we purify our own impurities.

Imagine divine goddesses, perfect and pure, beyond human qualities, pouring waters from a vase, and this completely purifies our own impurities, and the impurities of all sentient beings.
Prayers

Then we pray to the Three Jewels, to Supernatural Beings, to high, Divine Beings, *to all beings who have the healing power…*

Visualization:

Light goes out to all those who have healing power:

including the four elements, earth, wind, water, and fire,

(the light returns and) transforms all the world into a completely perfect and pure land, bringing only pleasure, but without grasping and holding…

(At our heart, and the heart of the Medicine Buddha in front, on a lotus moon seat)

there is a blue HUNG in the center, and the mantra circles this.

Recitation makes the HUNG become more vivid and clear.

From the HUNG and the mantra, light comes out and the body becomes filled with this healing light.

(The light and blessings returning in the form of light, and Medicine Buddhas)

goes to the Medicine Buddha in front of oneself, and then from there the light then fills your body completely;

light goes to the lineage, the past, present, and future Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Mahasiddhas, and Dharma Protectors…

this gathers all the energy, and power from the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Dakas and Dakinis…

The Medicine Buddha sends light first to all who have the healing power, (making prayers and requests) then the light returns and dissolves into you…

Gather all energy and blessings,

(and then)

(from the Medicine Buddha in front of oneself, or from oneself as the Medicine Buddha)

send light and energy to those who are sick, to those who are dying, to those who are mentally confused;

This light heals them. It doesn't matter the distance. They are completely healed…

When sending light to one person, we think, That person is the example…

The light goes to anyone who is suffering at the same time…

And we think

They are all healed by this…

Worldly beings, whoever has healing power, we invoke to help us, and then, at the end of the ceremony, we request them to return to their home (snap).

Dissolution - the Completion Stage

Wisdom beings from their Pure Lands dissolve into me… and I dissolve into a rainbow body, dissolving into space…

beyond intellect, beyond concept, bring your mind naked into the pure dimension

Then silently dedicate.

Visualizations for Medicine Buddha practice, at taught by Lama Lodro Rinpoche

From his teaching on the Medicine Buddha Sadhana, January 12th, 2021

123:19 to 142:24

I.

To recharge your healing energy from the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

{and send this out}

Light goes to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, especially to Medicine Buddha's Pure Land, Akanisha- sending light there -

{to} Medicine Buddha and all his retinue

Light reaches there.

And there {his} speech, mind, body, healing power, wisdom, compassion merge.

{And} It comes down as the blue light, and then {this} merges into your heart center with {the} Hung and mantra.

That part is devotion, you know?

And then {the} sending light outside part is the compassion.

So, you are not missing this, devotion and compassion.
Wisdom and skillful means is together there work to benefit sentient beings.

While visualizing the deities and you are reciting mantra at this moment, then when you are reciting mantra, then you have yourself {as} Medicine Buddha, as we are visualizing, and your heart center has the moon disc there.

Then you have the blue Hung in your heart center, very bright and shining, {with the} mantra rosary going around.

Tayata Om Bekhandze Bekhandze Maha Bekhandze Radza Samungate Soha...

Clockwise, the mantra will be around the Hung.

So, focusing your mind one pointedly there, that's very important.

So, then you are focusing more {on} the rays of light coming from the mantra and Hung, and that will come in to the fill up the Medicine Buddha, {either yourself as Medicine Buddha, and / or the front visualization} and {then} the rays of light come shining out,

And that light goes to all the realms - the hell realm, hungry ghost, animal, and God realm, the Demigod realm, and especially now in the human realm, COVID-19 has become scary.

Many people are losing their loved ones, and they are crying, and they worry about missing them, and losing them.

And then also some people are sick themselves, and they also try to protect themselves, some of them, not to get in this.

So, human realm {has} the most suffering {of} anywhere now, {with} that suffering.

So, that light goes from you to go to those people, {to} whoever suffers.

Not only my mother, father, my loved one, my girlfriend, {it doesn't} work that way.

If you focus only on your girlfriend, then the blessing {does} not {have} too much benefit there, because rather, you have clinging attachment.

The clinging attachment will cover your strength and blessing. {Instead} of benefiting, you know, this will not work. {It's} not benefiting.

So, in order to {bring} this powerful benefit, *you need compassion.*

The light goes to all sentient beings - that is very necessary.

Not clinging. Clinging is the worst thing, you know. When clinging, suffering comes. You know,

One of the great Bodhisattvas said,

All the suffering comes from I - clinging to myself.

Clinging to myself makes all the suffering.

{whereas}

All Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are born from love and compassion.

So, now it is time for me to exchange,

{self centeredness for the benefit of others}

benefit, be kind, {and} loving towards other beings.

So, then he said, that is the way.

See that.

So, we should know - {have} more care other sentient beings, {and} less care {about} yourself. Then, that way, suffering will {be} reduced, {and will} subside.

So, therefore, compassion is very necessary. You know, lovingkindness is necessary, relatively.

So, {it} is important to generate compassion, while you are reciting mantra, focusing on the Medicine Buddha.

And then, also, *devotion* {on the} Buddha's quality and perfection. Omniscience, mercy, nobility - you recall that.

And then, focus your mind on devotion on the Buddhas' quality and perfection, gathering their blessing, wisdom, compassion, loving kindness. {and these} merging {in}to you.

So, then you recharge.

Then, you send out light again with your compassion, loving kindness. So, that is {while} you are reciting mantra. {for as} long as you are reciting.

As long {as} you are reciting, keep your mind on that way.

So, now you are reciting the mantra together. Keep your visualization on that. Then, I will have another comment on the visualization.

So, this is the first time. You recite mantra together, then, visualize as I am {saying}. I already have given some idea.

Tayata Om Bekhandze Bekhandze Maha Bekhandze Radza Samungate Soha...

II.

Gathering the four or five elements, and balancing them

Now, you can visualize in another way.

So, you know, you focus your mind continually on the moon disc and the Hung at your heart, with the mantra. The mantra is circling around.

And so, this light can go to all the world, again, once more.

So, in this case, {when} we are sick, we have some disease. So, this is more to contribute inside ourselves {rather} than outside, because, we are bodies composed of the four elements, {or the} five elements.

{In} your body, you know, flesh is earth, heat is fire, blood is like water, {breath is air} and then, {in the} whole of the body is space, ether.

So, these are the four elements {or five} that compose our body.

And also, we live in this body {depending on} the four elements of this world.

We need air to breathe;

We need warmth to keep the body from being cold;

And then, we need earth where I can live;

And we need space to breathe through nose, mouth, and all this space, {or} ether.

So, these four elements we need externally, but internally we are composed of these four elements, or five elements.

So, these elements are very much related to our disease, to our problems on a physical {level}.

When you are too hot, {a person} will be sick.

When too cold, {they can be} sick also.

And the same thing with earth, water and fire, ether -

It there's too much {of any of these}, this kind of condition can make your body become uncomfortable.

And then, of course, mentally possess{ing} this body, the mind becomes uncomfortable too. So, this is the way we are.

The imbalance of the elements causes all the sickness.

The sickness is then easy to become contagious.

And if the contagion is terribly painful, the sickness will become hard to cure, because our elements are {not balanced}.

These have to be healthy.

A good healthy person has to have the four elements, or five elements balanced in order to be healthy.

So, there can also be some kind of problem with the elements where we are losing our heat.

Not enough heat is {a kind of being} sick, you know. Less cold can be sick too. There has to be balance.

And also, then, when the air becomes unbalanced, breathing becomes shorter.

So, {the imbalance of} all these different elements contribute {to} having different kinds of sickness.

Then also in addition to that, we have three poisons. {The} mental poisons, {of} anger, desire, and stupidity - these three things are the source of the disease. They contribute by causing the elements {to become unbalanced, and} then there comes the real disease, with mental and physical discomfort.

So, that is what is happening too.

So, this Medicine Buddha method is also very good to balance our elements.

And light sending to the all of the earth -

the essence of the earth, in the form of the yellow light, {goes out and} returns back and dissolves into your HUNG and mantra.

You see.

So, that earth element is balancing and healing any problem caused by the earth element.

So, when light goes to earth, gathering the essence of all the earth, the yellow light, {returns and} dissolves into your heart.

When you recite the mantra you can do that.

And then also, you can send light to all the fire.

And the essence of the fire, the essence of the heat, you're gathering that together with the red light,

and it returns back and dissolves into your heart center.

That balances the fire element, and any problem with the fire element will be dispelled, {and} subside.

Then also, with white light, sent from your heart, gather all the water - anywhere there is water essence, gathering this together with white light and {then this} returns back to your heart center and dissolves into your heart, the HUNG and the mantra.

Then the wind {or air} is green light. It is {sent} out {to} all the essence of the wind in the world, and this returns back with the green light that dissolves in the heart.

And then blue light from ether, the essence of the, ether, space, {this goes out and returns} {and is} gathered in the heart center.

So these four elements, whenever {there is} a disease, one of these four elements is causing a problem.

So gathering these four elements, and equalizing {or balancing them}, this subsides and dispels all your discomfort of mind and body.

So in this case, again, in another session, we recite the mantra, collecting these five colored lights from the five elements.

Recite mantra with this same mantra, with {the} same visualization from the Medicine Buddha {as before}, but {this time with} the heart sending out {light} to the different elements, {returning} and dissolving {them into oneself}.

So please do that.

Of course, you try to go one color at a time, then all the lights can go {out} together, and return together.

So we recite this again, a few times, you know, because we don't have too much time, but we will do our best.

Okay. Recite now together with these visualizations.

Tayata Om Bekhandze Bekhandze Maha Bekhandze Radza Samungate Soha...

A list of things that are healing

Beauty is healing
and love is healing
and peace is healing

and laughter,
and kindness is healing

the friendliness and warmth in a voice
and gratitude and wonder are healing

friendship is healing
and human touch, when there is love,
is healing

drawing on the strength of our ancestors is healing

natural light is healing
enjoying the peace, freshness
and joy of a new day

Our blue sky, and the magnificent oceans,
and the trees,
and flowering plants,
all the wonderful colors and scents of the earth,
these are healing

and all our family in the natural world,
mammal, bird, insect and fish-
all these precious ones -
these are healing…

fresh fruit, and vegetables, grains and bread, and homemade soup
give to our bodies and to our souls the power of the sun,
and the pure rain

all of these are
healthy and beautiful
and if needed, they are healing

food cooked with love is healthy, life giving
gifts given generously with love are divine,
they are health and life itself
and if need be, they are healing to us all,
the whole circle

children are healing
with their beauty, and purity,
and playfulness and wonder,
with their overflowing joy
they are angels among us
infinitely precious… infinitely precious…

Friends and family, kindred spirits,
beautiful souls, delight of the world, wherever they go

these are healing

Grandmothers and Grandfathers,
with their kindness and gentleness and wisdom are healing

Mothers and Fathers with us even now
these are healing

Having balance in our lives is healing

optimism, looking up,
and having a great aim
this is healing

patience and gentleness,
smiling to ourselves,
and to each other
this is healing

our dreams are healing
our visions, and our sacred songs,
our dances,

the awe and wonder we feel,
knowing the Divine
this is supremely beneficial,
this is supremely healing

and art is healing
need I say it? -

all of these gifts,
the loveliness of one thing done well,
with great care, and with boldness too…

drawing,
and
painting
what wonders!

sculpture
dance
photography,

poetry
architecture
needlepoint
dress
and on and on it goes…

music is healing

these and more
all of it,
all of it, healing

make your own lists today from these bright oceans…
from all this wonder and joy…

the artist's vision
is health
it is life
it is healing

sacred places, such as this one, healing

loving animal companions, healing

angels and ancestors,
friendships,
now and recalled to mind
these are healing

learning about people of good will,
and stories of heroes and heroines,
famous or less known
these are healing
and how these gifts continue – oh!

Traditions are a source of healing
Saints and great teachers are healing
and our faith and devotion connects us to them

And, Oh Great Song!,

Ethics, meditation and wisdom,
prayer, mantra, and samadhi,
these are healing

wonder, joy and celebration,
and gratitude
these are healing

stillness, and quieting the mind,
and thinking, rightly used too
these are healing

honoring the tremendous richness of oneself and others
this is healing

breathing in and out
and smiling
peacefully
with an awareness of our body and our feelings
with gentleness,
and with great love
this is healing

I believe

I believe in the power of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to benefit living beings, in relative and in ultimate ways;

I believe the great kindness and compassion of my teachers is healing;

I know there are healing angels that will come if we call on them,

and that there are benefactors in the world who offer their prayers on behalf of others;

I believe in the great benefit that comes about because of dedicated souls who are praying for us;

I believe the sacred name of Jesus always has the power to heal;

I believe the blessings of the saviors of mankind are always available to us all;

I believe in the healing power of the Three Jewels;

I believe that prayer and mantra can heal,
comfort, nourish,
and assist us in our lives,
awakening the enlightened aspect of our nature;

I believe the world is rich with health and healing conditions;

I believe sky, earth, animal, plant, flower,
wind, fire, sunlight, music, Traditions, ancestry,
and all the love this world has known
is health for us all

A healing meditation – adapted from 'Boundless Healing', by Tulku Thondup, pages 93 and 94

Take your time with this, relax, and be comfortable… This is a kindness to yourself…

First, bring your awareness to your breath…

Let your breath be however it wants to be… if it wants to be long, then let it be long, if it wants to be short, then let it be short….

Breathe in and out a few times like this, and let yourself settle….

Take your time…

Now, gradually, slowly and gently, as you breathe in and out, feel that your whole body is breathing…

Feel your breath moving, like a gentle wave, through your whole body, from the top of your head, to the soles of your feet…

Feel that your whole body is inhaling, and exhaling continuously…

Now see and feel that the breathing is not just of air, but that you are breathing in and out beautiful healing light and healing energy…

Smile to yourself, and see and feel yourself breathing in and out a wonderful healing light…

Feel that your every breath is touching this warmth and joy…

Feel that this healing light becomes one with your breath energy, and that it moves through your whole body as clear and powerful healing energy….

See and feel this, as you breathe in and out…

See and feel now that every part of your body is gradually being filled with this healing light and healing energy…

Think, see, feel and believe that this beautiful light is made entirely of love, and of peace, and joy…

See and feel this wonderful clean clear light fill your entire body, from the soles of your feet to the top of your head, and every part of your body…

Smile, and see and feel this, healing and strengthening you in every way….

Now, see, think, feel and believe that this healing light and healing warmth that has filled your body is emanating a healing warmth, just as a warm stone would send out gentle waves of warmth…

See and feel the pure positive healing energy in your whole body in this way….

Think and feel that all the parts of your whole body are joyfully connected, and are functioning together harmoniously, illuminated and unified in this experience of health, strength and well being…

See and feel this amazing awakening of beautiful, clear, peaceful and strong healing energy in you….

This healing light totally fills every part of your body, such that it is overflowing with joy, pure light, shining from you, like the sun in all directions….

Now see, feel, think and believe that all parts of your body have been restored to full health, strength, and well being, refreshed, revitalized, and rejuvenated by this healing light, just as water revives flowers, so that they blossom and shine beautifully for us all to enjoy…

Think, see, feel and believe that this wonderful, powerful, bright and clear healing light has brought health and healing to every part of your body, feelings and mind….

Celebrate this…

Feel that, whatever was stiff before has become flexible, that any and all blockages have been cleared, and that a hearty joy, vitality and well being have been awakened in you…

Everything's been restored perfectly by this powerful healing light and energy…

All the parts of your whole self are now again functioning harmoniously, joyfully, and perfectly as one in this experience of total health, happiness and well being…

As your breathing continues to move this healing light and bright, clear and pure healing energy throughout your entire being, see and feel that whatever there was of coldness is melted in a gentle stream of warmth and joyful light, flowing through you…

See, think, feel and believe that your whole body, mind, and feelings, all of you is cleansed, and is now blossoming with joy, and with feelings of comfort, peace and well being….

Feel the blissful warmth of this healing light that fills you…

Again and again, bring your awareness to this experience of yourself as a bright and shining, pure and powerful body of light…

Keep that in mind…

Again and again, bring your awareness to this healing light, and healing energy moving throughout every part of your body, connecting all the parts of your body, so they function together perfectly, joyfully, and harmoniously….

Enjoy this feeling of health in your body, and the healing light and energy circulating in you, flowing smoothly and continuously, such that it emanates from you in all you do….

Celebrate and enjoy the feeling that your entire body is a body of healing energy, amazing health and well being….

When you feel complete in this meditation, relax comfortably, and at your ease….

Again, bring your attention to your breathing, in and out, however you please…

In a relaxed way, be aware again of your whole body breathing…

This is an act of loving kindness and goodwill to yourself, of care, and appreciation….

Smile to yourself….

You can do this for as long as you like…

Be one with the delightful experience of peace and joy, strength and well being…

Finally, to both conclude, and to continue enjoying this experience of health and well being, share the positive energy of this meditation with others…

May all benefit!

May all have happiness, health and peace!

Dedication, Aspiration and Benediction, by Tulku Thondup, from the audio cd 'Boundless Healing', lightly edited.

So now let us dedicate, and make aspirations of this meditation.

Let us dedicate all these merits that we have created by this meditation to all mother beings, as a cause of happiness, peace and joy for them, and as a cause of their attainment of Healing Buddha's blessings, peace and joy.

By the power of the Buddhas,
Healing Buddha,
and by the power of the infinite Buddhas
that we have prayed to in the sky
and prayed to in our body,

by the power of all these Buddhas,
and by the power of all the Pure Lands,

and by the power of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha,

by the power of the meditation we have done,

by the power of the merits that we have created,

and by the power of the Ultimate Nature, Absolute Truth,
by the power of interdependent causation,

May all mother beings have happiness, peace and joy

May they always be with Healing Buddha's blessing light,
blessing energy, and blessing sound, without separation

And may we always be with Healing Buddha's blessing light,
blessing energy, and blessing sound, without separation,
day and night, awake or asleep,
good times and bad times

And may we always be the source of Healing Buddha's blessings
for all mother beings especially those with whom we have close
connections, we have special responsibilities

And by the power of all the Buddhas,
May all our prayers be answered
May all our wishes be fulfilled

(Benediction)

Now think and feel that Buddhas in the sky, and Buddhas in our body, give us their benediction. In one thunderous voice, filling the universe, they say to us:

'May your prayers be answered
May your wishes be fulfilled

'May you be healed of your old illness
ills of your mind, and your body

‘And may you always be with Healing Buddha’s
blessing light, blessing energies, and blessing sound’

Think and feel that we have accomplished the healing activities, the blessings of the Healing Buddha.

In the Healing Buddha's Pure Land

In the Healing Buddha's Pure Land, there is an amazing blue sky, just like this one. Multi-colored birds sing and take wing. The warm sun reaches everywhere, and brings us all life, health and strength. It brings joy to all it reaches, and helps us all to open and to share our unique gifts.

In the Healing Buddha's Pure Land, there is music played on divine instruments; music that is ever new lifts our hearts. There is a profusion of creativity, spilling everywhere, a cornucopia on every block. There are gardens and varieties of flowers growing, and there is painting and dance, poetry and prose, play and people's dreams unfolded for us all to see and delight in.

Here, friends and neighbors smile and greet each other, with and without words, and care and concern are naturally the rule, sharing in each others joys and trials. We may not know each other, but in this place we support and encourage one another.

And we are fed. Delicious healing herbs grow from the ground, amazing ripe fruits that grow everywhere are shared widely, and the baker's skill and love is handed directly to us; recipes from our grandmothers, bearing their love down through the generations are prepared, and the house is rich with the fragrance, nourishing our body and our heart most of all.

We are fed by our family who love and look after us, even after their passing, as well as our spiritual ancestors, and the great benefactors of us

all. We are all kept company on our paths, guarded, guided, and encouraged by them.

Here in the Healing Buddha's Pure Land, there is beauty all around, and streams of kindness are flowing everywhere. We are upheld by the light, by the courage and commitment of our brothers and sisters, the boldness of our parents, and the heroes and heroines of these and other times.

The beauty of our children today, our dreams made manifest, delights and inspires us more and more, day by day. Here, we have loving pets that heal us, and ritual and remembrance, and traditions and sacred objects we call books that sing with healing energy.

Here in the Medicine Buddha's Pure Land, we watch as our old afflictions fade away and a full day wakes in each of us, reaching from East to West. Here, therefore, every day is a celebration, a sacrament, a holy day.

We all live in this Pure Land right now, but only few actually see how this is so. The rays of light, the ancestors and protectors, the food and love and friendship is here, but a person can shield themselves from it, or cover themselves over and miss the music of our being here. You can tell because they have no dance in their step, and the look on their face is not one of satisfied desire, but instead is pinched and sour. Tragically, they neither give nor receive much of the spirit food that really is everywhere.

It is remarkable, but in their abysmal confusion, people turn instead and become addicted to shadows that offer no sustenance. Barking like mad dogs, or building weapons and organizing armies to fight imagined

enemies, they miss all the beauty, they arrive and depart empty handed from this isle of jewels. What's worse, deprived themselves, they harm others.

And this brings me to the greatest joy of this divine place I call home, which is that it awakens in us compassion, and the resourcefulness to work to free others from their confusion, and help them to awaken to and enjoy the pristine perfection that is all around and within them.

Here in the Medicine Buddha's Pure Land, everywhere I see there are countless workers and teachers and spiritual friends teaching in ever evolving ways, at once speaking new languages as needed, engaging, struggling along side us, and celebrating with us every great and small victory. This work is ongoing and will be until all of us realize just what we have here, just where we are, and what we are all heirs to. As they say in Zen, This very land is the Pure Land, and this very body is the Buddha.

The Staff of Wisdom and Healing Waters - A Parable

The way I figure it, either this story will be told, or it won't. Better that it gets told, so here goes.

Once there was a healer who walked from town to town, and village to village. No one could tell you how old he was, really, though when pressed they'd say he had some grey hair, but looked youthful. As far as where he was from, everyone claimed them for their own, and it helped that he spoke the language of the people wherever he was, right down to their dialect. Elders always welcomed him, with gladness, and so immediately he was accepted, and taken to wherever someone needed help.

Sometimes you'd hear sighs of relief when he showed up, with tears and whispers that now everything would be alright.

If he was seen in the distance, with his shoulder bag and walking stick, someone would be sent out to welcome him, and guide him through the narrow paths, though he seemed to know where he was all the time. Sometimes a whole group would go down the mountain to escort him. At other times, he'd just… show up. Whenever either of these happened, word went out quickly, and quite soon those who were suffering or who were taking care of a loved one would hurry to meet him. He never failed them, and somehow he always had with him just what was needed.

By day and candlelight and torch light he'd work, and then just as quickly as he appeared, he'd be gone again. People would be healed, and he'd be

brought to mind and kept in traditions as a story that was told, with respect, and wonder.

He has had many names, but the stories about him are very similar, in every language. Here is one.

Once there was a drought that lasted for years. Nothing new was growing for the longest time, and people were getting by on the meager stores they'd managed to save up in normal times. Worst of all though was the thirst and what it did to people. They were oppressed and mad with it, and taking to all kinds of drugs and distractions that ended badly.

It's told that one day, a lean man was seen entering town. He took his walking stick and struck a rock, and water began to flow from it. He directed someone nearby to drink and quench their thirst, which they did, and quickly others gathered and did the same. Soon the whole town was hearing about it, and coming to that one place. Remarkably though, it didn't get crowded, because springs started appearing all over, with plenty to drink for everyone.

Now, something needs to be said about this water itself. If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I wouldn't have believed it, but, having seen it, I feel like I have to at least try to say how it was. The best I could describe it is to say it looked and felt like there was bright sunlight sparkling all throughout the water, even if it was in the shade. It was pure and cool, and it eased whatever tension or need was felt right down to the soles of your feet. It brought a smile to your face.

I have to say, some tried to set up shops and sell the water, but it appeared in too many places that day for those schemes to take off. People'd just laugh when someone offered to sell them what was flowing from another rock or coming up from the ground right next to where they were standing. Everyone was satiated that day, and more than that, this water could be used to clean and to heal the body and soul.

It flowed from one bolder into a natural pool, and there a person could wash in it, washing away first the topmost layer of grime they had on them, and then surface scabs, and then the water moved over and through them and purified them on deeper levels. It carried away layers of hurt and made bodies new again.

If you had eyes to see such things, you could see ancestors lining up to be washed in these sacred places, that appeared wherever they were needed.

One of the remarkable things, if I do say so, is that villages and small towns didn't exactly get any bigger when all this was happening, but there was fresh water springing up, and healing pools with these shining currents washing away new and old hurts. When asked about it, our friend said it was because this event was happening on the level of myth or story, or dream, and that it was not any less real and effective because of that.

As much as some few tried to market these waters, more appeared to foil their narrow plans. Instead, some people became the very embodiment of this freshness themselves, such that everywhere they went and whatever they did was refreshing and had a cleansing current to it, just as there was that day, in those celebrated places.

Word went out, and people started traveling whenever they heard a drought was broken someplace, and that ancient sufferings were being eased and washed away. Some arrived and were astonished and joined in the celebration, slaking their thirst, and washing clean their new and old wounds. With subtle sight, on their bodies you could see first the visible marks and injuries, and then the less visible fading away and fading away until it was no more, thanks to the blissful touch of the cool, fresh current. It got so that even oldest ancestral hurts were soothed and healed, and they again had their original body.

We all know that traveling from town to town could be dangerous, with wild animals stalking those who'd venture into the thicket. I heard that this person was never harmed though. In fact, the animals would see whoever he was going to cure as their very own children, and they would fiercely guard and protect him, wherever he went.

One day, someone asked the teacher how it was that he came to them, revealing such gifts. He told them how it happened that one day high in the mountains, he had found himself quite lost. After long prayers and with divine help, his staff struck solid rock and water started to flow from it. At first, it was just a trickle, barely noticeable, and then it was quite clear. He said, I drank from it, and for the first time in memory, I felt filled. I rested and watched how bathing myself restored my youth, so I could continue journeying. And that's how I got here.

He was asked, what of those who don't believe in these things? Is there any hope for them?

And he said, no matter. We'll just go on breaking open fresh springs in timeless time for those who thirst, and who need to wash away whatever hurts they carry. We'll continue, no matter what, learning languages and opening vision in new ways whenever and wherever we can.

And those who refuse still? There is still so much thirst and injury. Is there any way at all we can assuage others' pain, and bring them comfort and rest?

And he said, Their need is our own, and it will ever be so. In a way though, it doesn't matter to our determination if they see it today, and this hour as we do. We will just continue finding new methods to reach them, like clear water appearing unexpectedly in our waking life and in our dreams and visions. The essence is the same in all our ways of communicating. Drink deep so that the whole place where you live and study and work, and cook and meet others can become dewey, so that your cheeks are moist and your eyes fresh as roses after the rain. Your voice and words and hands can carry this stream of delight, and your arts, and city design, and architecture. Once anyone has taken their fill, and washed their bodies, and become indestructible like diamond light, then everything they do recreates this bright, fresh current, however it's needed.

I've written this so that others will recognize when they are close to a pure stream, so they too can ease all their thirst and become new again. It can come to us in so many ways, and if we're on the lookout for it, we'll receive it into our lives wherever we are.

Looking back on our world and personal histories, I can see now that vital water has always been available, and, in spite of the time lost, and the harms we've endured, our consolation and our joy can be is that this bright, clear truth will always be with us too. This is what we will draw from, surely, to make our lives and this world fresh again.

A Concise Healing Buddha Practice

I call upon my Teachers and Spiritual Ancestors,
Lord Buddha with your Retinue of Holy Ones,
please come to this place

May we all receive your blessings
May we all receive your light, inspiration, and strength

May the Great Healing Light of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
of all Holy Beings,
and all that is sacred and pure in the universe,
pacify, completely pacify,
and fully remove the sufferings of living beings,
each according to their needs,
and bring us all true and lasting health and happiness

OM TRA SÖ CHU SÖ TUR TA SÖ TUR MI SÖ NYING GO LA CHÖ KHA LA JAH KAM SHAM TRAM BÄ PHAT SVAHA

{OM NAMO BHAGAVATE BEKHANDZE / GURU BAIDURYA / PRABHA RADZAYA / TATHAGATA / ARHATE / SAMYAKSAM BUDDHAYA // TADYATHA / OM BEKHANDZE BEKHANDZE / MAHA BEKHANDZE {BEKHANDZE} / RADZA SAMUNGATE SOHA / / }

TADYATHA / OM BEKHANDZE BEKHANDZE / MAHA BEKHANDZE {BEKHANDZE} / RADZA SAMUNGATE SOHA

May all the sufferings of all living beings
be completely and permanently cleared away,
and may an abundance of health and well being be enjoyed by all,
now, and always

May all beings benefit in every way that is needed by them,
and may each of our temporal and ultimate aims be fulfilled.

By all this virtue, may all beings live always in safety, and in peace
May all beings have lasting happiness

A Healing Buddha Practice

O, my ten directions three times family,
all my relations,
may I make a gift of my life

May my life, and this practice benefit us all completely,
bringing health wherever it is needed,
the purification and the balance of the elements,
and the firm establishment of true health and well being,
long life, and happiness for us all

May this lead us all to safety
May this lead us all to the end of every kind of suffering,
and to the enjoyment of all that is good

I call upon my Teachers and Spiritual Ancestors,
Lord Buddha with your Retinue of Holy Ones,
please come to this place

May we all receive your blessings
May we all receive your light, inspiration, and strength

Homage to the Supreme Healer, Universal Medicine
Homage to the Victorious One, Shakyamuni Buddha,
and to all of His Heirs
Homage to my Spiritual Teacher, the Holy Exemplar,
in whom all Enlightened Qualities are found

I take refuge in the Buddha, the Light of the World,
the Great Compassionate Teacher,
I take refuge in the Dharma,
in all the Liberating Teachings,
and I take refuge in the Noble Sangha,
the Accomplished Spiritual Community,
the Great Assembly of Saints and Bodhisattvas

May all share in these blessings

May all beings have happiness
and all the causes of true happiness flourishing…

May all beings be completely and permanently liberated from all suffering
and the causes of suffering…

I rejoice in all that is beautiful and right in this world,
in all kindness, virtue, positive intentions and actions,
and in all success, happiness, and good fortune…

and abide in stable, impartial love…

Especially now, may I think of all beings with wisdom,
and with great love and compassion,
and generate the supreme awakening mind
May I think of them all as my family,
and care for them all as my own…

May the supreme jewel, bodhicitta, in both its aspects,
arise where it has not yet arisen,
Where it has arisen, may it not diminish,
May it ever grow and flourish

Just as my teachers before me have done,
may I accomplish the realization of a healing buddha
and may I and all beings together know the true happiness
that is the complete cessation of all suffering,
and the full realization of all health and peace

May the Great Healing Light of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
of all Holy Beings,
and of all that is sacred and pure in the universe,
pacify, completely pacify,
and fully remove the sufferings of living beings,
each according to their needs,
and bring them all true and lasting health and happiness

OM TRA SÖ CHU SÖ TUR TA SÖ TUR MI SÖ NYING GO LA CHÖ KHA LA JAH KAM SHAM TRAM BÄ PHAT SVAHA

{The Black Manjushri Mantra}

{The Healing Buddha Mantras}

{OM NAMO BHAGAVATE BEKHANDZE / GURU BAIDURYA / PRABHA RADZAYA / TATHAGATA / ARHATE / SAMYAKSAM

BUDDHAYA // TADYATHA / OM BEKHANDZE BEKHANDZE /
MAHA BEKHANDZE {BEKHANDZE} / RADZA SAMUNGATE
SOHA / / }

TADYATHA / OM BEKHANDZE BEKHANDZE / MAHA BEKHANDZE
{BEKHANDZE} / RADZA SAMUNGATE SOHA

May the Great Healing Light of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
of all Holy Beings,
and of all that is sacred and pure in the universe,
pacify, completely pacify,
and fully remove the sufferings of living beings,
each according to their needs,
and bring them all true and lasting health and happiness

Homage to all effective spiritual means…

{Meditation}

By the virtue and positive energy of this practice…
and by the merit of all the other good I have done in this lifetime…
and in all my lifetimes…

gathered together with all the blessings I have received
from my teachers, from the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
Saints and Sages, Arhats and Ajahns,
Lamas, monks and nuns,
and all Holy Beings…

and all the blessings I have received from kind hearted people,
and excellent practitioners…

By all this merit…

May all our good purposes be accomplished…

May all the sufferings of all living beings
be completely and permanently cleared away,
and may an abundance of health and well being be enjoyed by all,
now, and always
May all beings benefit in every way that is needed by them,
and may each of our temporal and ultimate aims be fulfilled.

By all this virtue, may all beings live always in safety, and in peace
May all beings enjoy lasting happiness

By all the blessings we have received,
and by the strength of our own efforts, awakened insight,
courage, and love, from this point forward,
may we all create only the causes to have fortunate conditions,
to realize higher rebirth,
and to accomplish each of the stages of liberation and enlightened
understanding and activity

May I and all others attain only these.

May we always care for ourselves and for one another
in the best of ways.

May the supreme jewel, bodhicitta, in both its aspects,
arise where it has not yet arisen,
Where it has arisen, may it not diminish,
May it ever grow and flourish

For myself and for all others,
may the complete Right View awaken where it has not yet done so
Where it has been known, may it remain stable,
and may its power increase in our lives, and in the world, more and more
Just as Samantabhadra and Manjushri have dedicated,
in the same way do I make this dedication,
in the way that is praised as best

May this bring peace.
May this bring healing wherever it is needed,
on outer, inner, and innermost secret levels

May this bring about the health and balance of the elements,
and the firm establishment of true health and well being,
long life, and happiness for us all

By all this virtue,
may all the environments where we live be purified and renewed,
and may we all together accomplish the full realization
of the Noble healing buddha

By this merit,
wherever I am, and wherever I may go,
may I further the work of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
the awakening of light, complete freedom and peace.

By all this virtue,
may all holy teachers live long, and guide us until samsara ends,
and may there be peace and joy in all the world.

Appendix

The Power of the Name

Blessings, Faith, and Devotion

In Praise of the Vajrayana

Knowing the World As a Sacred Place

The Resonance of the Saints

Things to rejoice in today

A Prayer

The Power of the Name

Why is it that a name has deep meaning for one person, and not another? Why is it that hearing a word, or remembering an image can re-awaken strength and inspiration for some, but not for others? What is in the heart of these two different kinds of individuals is of a different nature, surely, and this is a fruitful subject to go into, for reasons I hope will soon become clear.

If you look up 'the power of the name' especially here in the West, the first references are mostly to the name of Jesus, which I will say something about in a bit, but first I want to explore this phenomena - that of *a word* or *a name* having power, as a universally recognized and applied truth.

We find this recognition in indigenous spirituality, where learning something's name requires deep respect and attention, and makes it possible to use call on that being as an ally;

The power of the name is also traditionally honored in Judaism and Islam, and is re-awakened through remembrance in Hinduism and Buddhism as well.

From the Hindu Tradition, we've received Divinities' mantra and dharani, that are *sacred words with the power to protect and redeem…*

And in the Theravada countries, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia and Burma, Protective Discourses, or *Paritta* are traditionally recited, including

one called *The Banner Sutta*, that encourages the devotional recollection of the Buddha, saying,

If you think of me,
any fear, terror,
or standing of hair on end that may arise in you will pass away…

Consider how it is when a devout student brings his teacher to mind - tears may come to his or her eyes. *They are moved with gratitude* when they sense again all they have been given, and how much they have been helped, upheld, supported and encouraged.

Another person by comparison, especially the overly-intellectual, or the jaded materialist, tragically, would not know the gifts that are offered by our saints and the Holy Ones. Those who would decry this as 'magical thinking' are missing the point, and the benefit. For a time, their minds are closed.

The qualities that are there in a person when we see the power of the name at work are, universally: *reverence, humility, deep gratitude, and inner quiet, faith and devotion.* Without these, the name loses its deep significance, and it can stop working for a people. This is in spite of the fact that sacred words do have a certain power 'from their own side'. This only goes so far.

The Third Commandment in the Bible is usually translated into English as *Do not use the Lord's Name in vain*, and although I've heard this for decades, it never really occurred to me what this meant. Of course, we may relate it

to cussing, but that's just our common, superficial reading. Take this precept apart however and its' great significance begins to reveal itself.

To *do something in vain* is to act, but not get any result from it. Take for example, *I went to the store looking for soda crackers, but my efforts were in vain*, or, like it says in the blues song, *All my love in vain*…

In each of these there was something hoped for, but not received in the end. What then could using the Lord's Name in vain mean, or *have promised*? Or, to put it another way, What was *not* received? I would say that *the meaning*, or *the power* of the name was not received.

With a callous mind, such as one that would use the Name of Jesus or the Divine or the Lord merely as a cuss word, what is absent is - the glory, or *the life enhancing power* of that is manifested as that Name. Such a debased mind came first, and was expressed, and the great loss continued on. Such is the meaning of this precept 'Do not use the Lord's Name in vain' as I understand it now.

When we connect with a divine being, such as the Bodhisattva Avalotikeshvara, or Tara, and we do so with reverence, a power comes to us, and this is what we are uplifted and healed by. It is of another order altogether than what the mundane mind, or ordinary perception usually thinks possible, or even existing, but there it is.

The same happens I see now when people cherish the sacred Name of Jesus, or Mary, or a Saint. I know that truly these have the power to heal, and to uplift and illuminate a person's whole life.

Those qualities that enable the sacred to be known deserve to be spoken about, and unfolded in each of us, so that the fullness of life can be received and given:

Reverence contains humility and awe, and through it we are uplifted. We may feel this for our precious teachers, or for Divine Beings, such as Jesus and Kuan Yin, or the Buddha; we may feel this for our sacred earth, for one another, and and for our Noble Ancestors.

In each instance, feeling reverence for even a moment is enough to empower us and to guide our steps. We are not alone, despite what our ordinary mind tells us. We have not been left on our own, to struggle and to suffer here. The Ones we feel are our Companions in the spiritual life are *always* with us, as angels and ancestors, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Saints and Saviors, and Great World Teachers.

Humility is often singled out, emphasized and encouraged in spiritual teachings across traditions for good reason, because arrogance or pride, even in very subtle forms, closes us off from divine support and deeper nourishment - how much more so the blatant, closed minded egotism that is so common among materialists?

The great thing about humility though is how easily we may again open to deep truths, if we are not attached to our views, even for a short time. Many things can open a person, a loss, or personal suffering, a crisis in the family or in our world.

We may find again in a flash, and with thankfulness, that we are part of something far greater than ourselves in our striving. That divine help is always available, when we recall a name or recite a mantra, if we only knew it. We can awaken greater compassion, healing energy, wisdom and strength though mantra and through remembering the Sacred power of the Name.

Thinley Norbu said:

Because sublime beings are miraculous, their histories do not fit within non-spiritual reality and ordinary, intellectual reasoning.

Our usual way of thinking is so narrow, and it excludes so much that we need new language to speak of our experience when we open to the greater truths about our being here. We speak then of *mundane view* and *sacred outlook*, or *ordinary perception* and *pure perception*.

This is in the realm now of Right View, and where it leads, naturally.

At the end of many Vajrayana (Tibetan Buddhist) practice texts, the last instruction we're given to meditate on and to carry out with us into the world are that 'this very world is the Pure Land' we've been visualizing, 'all forms truly are divine, and all sounds are sacred sound - mantra'. That we don't see ourselves and others and this world this way is precisely the reason for our regular sadhana practice. It opens our vision to the truth and the enduring qualities of our being here.

The third of these mentioned highlights the sacred nature of of the word, or speech, and of the Name.

This is something that's been for the most part lost in our times, and so the effect of our prayers and mantra, the Holy Names are used in vain, ie to little or no effect, but this can change. We can again re-awaken the sense of the sacred, through our reverence, humility, inner quiet, gratitude, faith and devotion.

A word should be said here also about the place of of *silence* in the spiritual life.

See how common it is for monasteries and ashrams to be places of solitude, free of common distractions and noise, and also free of so much unnecessary talk. This naturally leads inwards, and refines the mind in ways that are too seldom known or held up as something we can and should all have as part of our lives. Without quiet, we stay on the surface of things, and then even our words, and the Names we use lose much of their potency.

One needs only take some time off from talking and from this immersion in language that is our common lot it seems, to see directly what I'm talking about here.

I used to take one day a week off from talking, and everyone I knew was aware of this. More time off from speaking will show the effect of so having many words and concepts. For the most part, we live in an ocean of language, with all the effects that has. Silence then purifies and sensitizes

us to the deep effects that language can have at its best, such as we find in poetry, prayer, and sacred texts, and in the teachings of the Noble Ones. Inner quiet enables us to benefit from mantras, the Sacred Names, the teachers and Traditions we connect with. In this way, we receive sustenance, guidance and inspiration from them.

Faith can lead us then where the intellect alone cannot go. What we know in our heart, by faith, is far greater than conceptual understanding, useful as that is in its own domain. With faith, we trust in our Sources of guidance, and healing. We can rest in that, and there is Peace found there, for our whole lives.

The way we experience this is ultimately most personal, and yet we can communicate. Now, how extraordinary is that? Here, we know our unity. We are of one family.

The power of a Sacred Name, when we are awake to its significance and what it represents, can transform our sorrow and pain, our loneliness and despair. Faith and devotion follow and increase naturally, and by the spiritual potency of the Name, the Way is opened again to peace and fulfillment.

Now we may reasonably ask, are all Names equal? A dogmatic person of course would say no, and insist we use only the names they alone claim to have received and understood, but we can see all the disastrous effects over time that such ignorance has had. My guide here is: *By their fruit you will know them.*

When we see the results of virtue and harmony, healing and respect for elders and traditions, both our own and beyond our own, that is a True Name, one that leads to the realization of Universal Truth.

May our faith in the Divine deepen
and may that holy strength nourish and guide us all our days

May all beings everywhere awaken to the beauty of this world,
our ancestry, and our precious children

And may there be joy and the fullness of health everywhere and always

Blessings, Faith, and Devotion

The blessings of the Divine, of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Saints, and liberated Sages encircle the globe at all times. Whether or not we are receptive to them, however, or draw these currents to ourselves, depends on our own inner state. This is where faith and devotion come in.

One kind of faith is receptivity. With it, we are open to something greater than ourselves reaching our lives, healing, illuminating, and guiding us.

Disbelief or spiritual pride block the receptivity we could have. Once we've made up our minds that things are a certain way, and that we are without support from the subtle realms, we've removed ourselves from the benevolence that is always here, at least consciously; And whether or not we put it in words, if we hold ourselves as equal to, or better than our wise spiritual guides, ancestors and teachers, we place ourselves above them, and can't receive very much from them. Humility is a prerequisite for learning anything, and never is this more true than when it comes to connecting with the divine in human form, or from the unseen, archetypal levels.

Alone one night, out of distress and shorn of pride, crying out, the hook of our faith can, in that moment, catch a pure force at work everywhere in the world, and our lives can change just like that. We may fluctuate, or even fall away from practice altogether for a time, but a seed of transformation has been planted. The world can become luminous again, larger by an untold measure, as new possibilities dawn.

Once faith has opened the way, and an intimation of a greater love and wisdom has reached us personally, the devotion that is then born is best described as a depth of love and trust that acts as a magnet for blessings. We begin to orient our lives around the sense of the divine wisdom that speaks to us in our own innermost language.

Faith then matures in us to a deep peace that comes from being held in tender, divine care, and from knowing our capacity to grow and change. Such trust in our teacher is also responsive. It strives to be ever more awake, learning the language of the heart that is becoming more sensitive to being guided.

The path develops in this way. We are not alone in our reaching for happiness. On the contrary, this world abounds with grace and blessings. If we are receptive to it, we can know this for ourselves, manifesting beautifully in our lives.

In Praise of the Vajrayana - A Brief Introduction to Buddhist Tantra

I.

The Skillful Means of the Mahayana

The Stages of the Path teachings cover the entire range of Buddhist teachings, from refuge, to teachings on liberation, to the Mahayana motivation and Wisdom. They conclude with reference to the Vajrayana, the 'lightning' or 'diamond thunderbolt' vehicle. We may wonder, if we have a compassionate motivation and right view, why we would need anything more. The answer that is offered is that Tantra is faster. It's out of a sense of urgency that we would seek out and make use of these methods.

The wonderful teacher, Lama Lodro Rinpoche, always emphasizes in his commentaries on different practices that the Vajrayana are the skillful means of the Mahayana, and should not be considered apart from them.

Alexander Berzin writes that 'Tantra is the method for putting all of the sutra practices together in an extremely efficient, holistic manner.'

and Beda Fredi said, 'Mahayana is the philosophy, and Vajrayana is the practice.'

If we understand the view, and the powerful motivation of someone who wants to help others through awakening, then these prayers and practices make complete sense. They come naturally.

II.

Sacred Outlook

Part of accessing these teachings, I know, involves a change in world view, from ordinary perception to what is called Sacred Outlook, or Pure Perception. If Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are unknown to a person, and if they have a mundane view of themselves, and cling to that, then there's not much of an entry point, but when we have some openness and faith, our experience changes, we begin to see the divine nature of this world, of ourselves and all others. These methods work just as the traditions say they do. They help us to awaken greater wisdom and compassion, and the ability to help others.

III.

Prerequisites - the foundations for practicing Buddhist Tantra

Traditionally, in Sutrayana it's said that there are different levels of motivation for those who want to get the most out of Buddhism. They are - aiming for *higher rebirth*, for *liberation from samsara,* and for *enlightenment*. Specifically then in the Vajrayana, renunciation, bodhicitta and right view are the basis for practice. *All of these are based on ethical living*. Without one of these moving our mind and activity, our usual ego motivations are a cause of eventual suffering for ourselves and others. This is why the renunciation of samsara, otherwise known as aiming for freedom, has been emphasized by compassionate teachers in general, but *especially* before taking up these methods. Their reason is simply that if we only follow what

our ego wants, and are not abandoning the common eight worldly dharmas, we're just making trouble for ourselves, and in fact these techniques can make things even worse for us.

It's been this way since the beginnings of ritual and people accessing forces beyond their usual sense of self - such methods have always been open to misinterpretation and misuse, but then they are not Buddhist practice.

It's really tragic that by far the most common association with tantra these days is with the manipulation of sexual energies. I can't speak to the traditions that teach this, except to refer to what Lama Yeshe says in his classic book, Introduction to Tantra, that

'We may feel that since tantra is advertised as a way of utilizing desire, all we have to do is indulge our uncontrolled appetites or increase the number of desires we already have and we will be following the path of a true practitioner. Some people do have this attitude, but it is completely mistaken. We should never forget that if wallowing in desire were the same as practicing tantra, we would all be highly evolved tantric yogis and yoginis by now!'

The Vajrayana introduces us to levels of being and to a world view that are completely beyond our ordinary conceptions, and to our innate capacities. This is radically different from anything we may undertake from our ego's perspective.

IV.

Self Power and Other Power

Even before we get to Vajrayana methods, in the Zen and Pure Land schools of Buddhism, the question of relying either on oneself, or on Another for spiritual development was worked with, and for some with receptivity, a way of combining the two has been taught. They say that we can do our own work on ourselves, greatly aided and inspired by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the saints and our own teachers. This is especially true when we practice Tantra, also known as Mantrayana.

V.

Beyond Binary Thinking

The most common questions when it comes to the divine in the Vajrayana is whether these Bodhisattvas are within us, or outside, and whether they are our own true nature, or independent of us. Such binary thinking - to say - if it is this way, it can't be that, and if it is that way, it can't be this - in my view doesn't apply when it comes to the activity of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. From what I can tell, all the ways of receiving their benefit are true, without any contradiction.

VI.

All this becomes more clear in the practice.

I would say that all of the Buddhist teachings are what they call 'self-revealing'. Without practicing, we may think we understand them, or speculate that something is or is not valid, but when we meditate and

contemplate, pray and recite mantra, *the results are self evident*, both simpler and richer than anything we may have ever thought about them. The proof comes from the practice itself, and not otherwise.

VII.

The characteristics of Buddhist tantra

The Vajrayana is taught as 'having few hardships, many methods, and for those with sharp faculties'. When I think of all that people have accomplished using these methods, to heal and support people's freedom from samsaric sufferings, I'm amazed, and filled with gratitude.

We are all so different, and there are different methods to meet our own needs and temperament. For some, at times Tara or Quan Yin is most accessible, comforting and inspiring; for others, Manjushri, or the Healing Buddha; Vajrasattva practice is one of the profound means of purification, and Avalokiteshvara or Chenrezig can help us in wonderful ways, throughout all of our lives.

VIII.

Elements joined together

The Vajrayana makes use of:

the power of love and compassion

the power of liberating insight

the power of devotion

the power of concentration - samadhi

the power of the imagination, visualizing Pure Lands, and Buddhas

the power of sacred speech, prayer and mantra

and,

the blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, saints and sages,
our lineage, and our teachers.

These are found in other ways of practicing, but in Buddhist Tantra they are joined together.

IX.

Empowerment

In addition, in the Vajrayana, we connect with a practice through rituals that are called *initiations*. The word tantra means thread, and refers to this transmission of enlightened energy, as well as to the continuum of our original nature.

I asked my teacher early on if a person could do a purification practice such as that of Vajrasattva without an initiation, and he said yes, but that it would help to have one, and I have found what he said to be true. Initiations are also called '*the ripening empowerments*'.

X.

In times such as these

It's taught that in times of great need that Vajrayana practice is especially powerful. I can also attest to this being true. It really does feel this way to me now.

We are living in what they call a time of the degeneration, characterized by more wars, famine, threats to the environment and natural disasters; more addictions, loneliness and isolation; new and seemingly intractable diseases; more wrong views and deeply ignorant people, and an overall increase in disturbing emotions.

In times such as these we are very much in need of powerful methods to heal, purify, strengthen, nourish, protect, and benefit ourselves and our loved ones, and communities. For those with an affinity to these teachings, the tantras offer just such methods.

I praise all the healing and comfort people have received,
all the light that's dawned,
and all the freedom that's been secured through these methods
May these increase more and more

I praise all the illuminating and liberating Activities
of the all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas
May we all receive their blessings

* * *

This is from the collection of essays titled *In Praise of the Vajrayana*

Knowing the World As a Sacred Place - An Invitation to the Vajrayana View

We are not here on Earth to be alone, but to be a part of a living community, a web of life in which all is sacred… this is something we each need to rediscover and honor anew…

- Llewelyn Vaughn-Lee

I.

If we begin with the view that this world is sacred, then everything that spiritual traditions teach us follows naturally.

This earth, and all that is in it is sacred: the trees, the mountains, and the rivers;

the fertile soil, the flowering plants, and the forests;

the air we breathe, and the sunlight, and the rain;

{Indigenous peoples, and all those who follow wisdom traditions have always known this, and it has sustained them}

Our bodies, breath, and movement are sacred, and those of all other people;

Our senses, our music and art, and silence;

And other species too- all these can be known without a doubt as sacred…

Knowing this brings great equality, solidarity, and affection, and we can begin to use words to describe our experience in this world such as

wonder, and awe, and exultation; reverence; holiness, divinity, blessings, and miracles.

A person with an ordinary view would not even dream of using such terms. For the time being at least, they are not in his or her vocabulary.

Spiritual traditions are here for us to know the sacred fully, and to share our knowledge.

We can see how life is when we are without this essential spiritual view- witness all the exploitation, and neglect, prejudice, and despair there is in the world. Beginning with an enlightened world view, by comparison, there are more possibilities, as well as the energy and inspiration to accomplish our aims on this earth.

To say it plainly, our world view is expressed in what we value, and what we feel is possible.

The prevalent world view at this time, tragically, is that of an impoverished scientific materialism, that excludes beauty and poetry, and so many aspects of our lives here. Remarkably, even the Buddhist traditions that have made their way to the West during the last century are mostly based on this limited view of ourselves and our world. It seems almost as though

we walk on a different earth. We are all a part of something *magnificent* here, if only we knew it!

Once you see the sacred nature of this world, and all that is in it, you'll wonder how you could have missed it for so long; you'll grieve the loss, but then quickly turn to encourage others as much as you can, and you'll find you have abundant resources at hand for your work.

II. The Vajrayana Perspective

The starting point in Vajrayana Buddhism is an enlightened world view, one that affirms our spiritual nature, and the spiritual nature of all of our ancestry, and our world. This is how it can function as a spiritual path.

It is a view that includes the understanding of samsara and liberation, delusion, the six realms, and enlightenment, and Buddha Activity;

There are angels, and saints, and Buddhas and bodhisattvas everywhere, pervading all conscious life;

Our inherent Buddha Nature has traditionally been described as being 'like oil in sesame', or 'like butter in milk', as it's said, 'only needing to be churned' to reveal what is within. The meaning is that we need only practice the teachings to know these things for ourselves.

If you ask, *What is a Buddha?* and, *What is Buddha Activity?* we can look at mythology, art and iconography-

Manjushri illumines, and cuts through illusion

Avalokiteshvara with one thousand arms, each with a different implement, shows us something of the innate creativity of our compassion;

The Healing Buddha cures all sorrow and affliction;

And *Tara*, ever youthful, quick to respond, fearless, bold, protects us like a mother, and awakens fresh energy and enthusiasm

- all these bodhisattvas, and more, inspire faith.

As I see it, the difference between the Mahayana and the Vajrayana then, is that in the Varjayana these are not just stories. They are realities we can know and actualize. We ourselves can *become* Manjushri. We can *become* Tara.

In the Theravada and in the Mahayana, wrong view is defined as self grasping ignorance. By comparison, in the Vajrayana, wrong view is referred to as mundane view, or ordinary perception. There is this great difference. Sacred Outlook, or Pure Perception is in direct opposition to the narrow, materialistic perspective, and it overcomes it, because it is verifiable for anyone who takes up the invitation.

There are these fresh streams, flowing in the night, and at dawn,
where love is the light we see by…

We take to be ordinary here what is in fact extraordinary in ourselves, and each other, and in the world all around us.

As the Saint Niguma said,

On an island of gold,
You search in vain for common earth and stones…

Now, we may ask, Why don't we see ourselves and our world this way? This is such an important question- in fact, I'd say it is *the* urgent question of our time, and of all times. Traditions tell us that it is because of our obscurations, and that these can be cleared away.

Stay away from anything
that obscures the place it is in.

There are no unsacred places;
there are only sacred places
and desecrated places…

- Wendell Berry

Our view can change, as when we wake up and become aware in a new way, and celebrate a fuller understanding. Then all that follows changes as well. This view will then become the basis for a new life, in a new world, with all our family.

For those who would make use of the miraculous in their experience, helping themselves and others, the teachings on Sacred Outlook offer a complete way of life and thought.

Every man, woman, and child, every animal, whoever has mind, has this great, indestructible potential for liberation and enlightenment. We each have an innate richness to draw from, and ever-present Divine help.

The Vajrayana then also makes use of its View, and its Meditation, and Action. It takes up the practices of Sila, Samadhi, and Prajna, calm and insight, and compared to other traditions, to my thinking, it does so with a deeper understanding, and with far more resources to draw from.

In Buddhism at its best, of course, there is no one size fits all, and no dogmatism. This is simply honoring fact that our spiritual lives here are unique, and most personal. In Buddhism, in truth, we should be warmly met right where we are. When we find a functional world view, we'll know it for ourselves. We can say, *'It works for me to think this way'*. It is practical, and onward leading.

This much can be said as an invitation…

The Resonance of the Saints

Even though a holy man or woman may have laid down their earthly form, their influence remains as a blessing to all who know them. This is hard or impossible to believe for the average materialist, and even in some circles where spiritual or religious matters are discussed, many have trouble accepting this idea.

In modern life, our senses are turned outwards. We may have grown numb and jaded, and disillusioned with false promises. We seldom register the slight changes that happen as a result of a written word, or an image; a voice, a melody, a color, or movement in the world. Still, if we were to train our attention to pick up on the usually small changes, they may lead us to discover marvelous things about our being here, and our connections to one another.

Usually when we think of some miracle happening, we assume it would be a gigantic change, something so out of the ordinary that it startles us awake into a new level of awareness. We imagine that something like a levitation, or an object materializing, or some illness suddenly vanishing without a trace would convince us we live in a miraculous world, however, it doesn't usually happen that way. There are great and small miracles happening, and we remain unconvinced.

I try to remember a line I thought of a few years back: 'The problem with a miracle on Monday is that by Tuesday we've forgotten about it.' Coarse and jaded we are, oh yes indeed.

The problem is that those dramatic moments so easily fade into memory, and disbelief. It would seem we would need to witness ever new and more impressive miracles to keep our faith going, and even then, I doubt we'd believe.

There is a tradition established in the time of the Buddha of not displaying any powers that were developed through concentration, such as clairvoyance. The reason was plain. The Buddha wanted to teach people the way to freedom. We can only imagine how crowds would gather wanting to see some unusual event, and if some display was made, that's what they would remember. They would go home having learned nothing.

When we speak of a holy man or woman, or a divine being, what we are referring to is someone who has reached the truth to an exceptional degree. Saints of any tradition can be known by their spontaneously ethical and deeply loving nature. They often have an elevating quality to them as well - we may feel blissful for hours or even days after meeting one. Witness the response many people have had to the Dalai Lama, or to Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, or to Amma.

That a holy person's influence remains after their body returns to the elements brings another level to it altogether, however. It means that, wherever we are, if we have faith and some connection to that teacher, or seer, or prophet, we can be enriched, uplifted, healed, and guided by them. This is not unheard of in the Indian Tradition. They realize that a saint transcends the limitations of his or her form even while they are alive, and that their blessings remain ever fresh and vital.

Often the reason people go on pilgrimage is to connect with the energy of a saint or divinity. Although a their presence is not limited to any one place, owing to the conditions of our senses, for some people it is easier to connect with that energy on an etheric level in a place where a saint has physically been.

People's respect and devotion to a holy person, or a teacher or divinity can also help us to connect with them. Devotees can consecrate a place or an object. They can literally help to imbue it with a particular spiritual power. More than once, I have seen and experienced how people's devotion can open a channel between the worlds, so to speak, between these different levels of being.

Even just hearing someone speak of their teacher with great faith and devotion can open up access for us, for a time, and we can see and feel and receive something of what they are so moved and inspired by.

I have thought that we need to develop our language to talk about spiritual things, as ordinary words and concepts do not reach into the mystery, as Rumi says. They often have a way of excluding from our vision and senses those deeper sources of nourishment, strength and guidance.

When we speak of the resonance of the saints, it is their being that continues, and that communicates through their works, and through their students and devotees. At any time, we can pick up on the energy of a healer, a humble, wise scholar, a lesser or more well known protector and benefactor, or a great world teacher. Knowing this for ourselves comes as a supreme gift.

We are encouraged to avail ourselves as much as needed of the energy of the saints and the divine life, for our own sake, and for the sake of our family, community and world. The problem is only that we are distracted, that our senses are so covered over, and that we so strongly disbelieve anything out of the ordinary, but even some slight opening on our part, some remembrance, and all our faith can be vindicated, all of our faith-lessness destroyed. After connecting to a saint, our old habitual sense of the world begins to fade. Our lives are blessed, and they become that much more of a gift to others.

Medicine Songs - I

Things to rejoice in today, 12/15/2021; 2/2/2022; 3/13/2022; and 5/15/2022; 12/27/2022; 8/10/2023

The human heart

There are people helping others today
in ways that are less often talked about,
and that deserve to be praised:

Parents wake early,
made breakfast for their children,
help them to get dressed,
and take them to school,
before going to work

And then, after school, they take them to soccer practice,
or to their music lesson,
or shopping for clothes, or for a gift,
and then they take them to get something to eat

This happens every day,
many thousands of times a day,
and I celebrate all of this love and generosity

There are those who are opening their hearts and their homes to refugees

There are people helping the homeless

There are hospice workers with great love embracing those they care for so well

There are countless wonderful teachers in the arts,
encouraging their students so beautifully

And there are artists, everywhere, creating beauty that is uplifting,
with color, and sound, and movement, and words,
and nourishing and sustaining us all

Today there are people using the strength of their limbs,
and their intelligence, and good will,
who are building roads, bridges, schools,
hospitals, and clinics

There are people today, right now, working on clean water projects,
bringing health to people, and extending their lives

There are strangers helping others today, right now,
without wanting anything at all from them in return

offering free gifts!

There are people giving purely, wanting only the happiness of others

I think of my parents, and my sister…
and of all the generosity of spirit there is in this world

I think of all those involved in publishing good books,
enriching the world,
and illumining the world by
that
much

and of lineages of researchers finding cures for illnesses-
we will never know most of their names,
and all of this is happening *now, today*
I celebrate all the work that doctors, and nurses, and healers do every hour
of every day-

I rejoice in everything from their very first intention to help others,
and all the years of study they have done,
to the actualization of all of their beautiful, noble aims

I think of the work of those men and women in the Himalayan Eye Institute
offering cataract surgery in the third world,
helping so many people to see their loved ones again

I think of the people who created treated mosquito nets,
and those who produce them,
and those who distribute them, saving lives, relieving suffering

I think of entire countries changing their stance on addiction,

and helping countless thousands to free themselves -

I think of all the networks of helpers,
and people supporting each other with great love and commitment;

and all those involved with animal liberation -

and vegetarians, and vegans,
veterinarians, and keepers of sanctuaries
who lovingly caring for the animals we share this world with

And activists and poets and visionaries and workers…
I hold them all in my heart, all of them!

And I think of of people who are taking vows for the first time,
and those who are now renewing and strengthening their vows

I celebrate people *even thinking* of going on a retreat,
and then, actually *doing* it

And I celebrate group retreats,
bringing more light into the world

I celebrate all the vast activities of my glorious teachers

May they live long,
and may all their noble aims be completely fulfilled

I celebrate the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
the angels, devas, and shining ones
and all their miraculous, divine help…

A Prayer

May all the suffering we are aware of
only clarify and strengthen our vows

May it cause us to give rise to even greater courage and commitment,
fearlessness in the face of delusion, and affliction,
and power to our limbs and to our thoughts and prayers

May it cause each of us to awaken to the preciousness of this time,
and every life,
and work day and night to heal the sick,
to rescue the lost,
to comfort the stricken,
to encourage the fearful,
to give food to the hungry,

to clothe those exposed to bitter elements,
to liberate those caught in addictions of all kinds
to hold a mirror to the beauty of the world
to be a song of remembrance
to rekindle the sense of our innate dignity,
our belonging,
and our joy

May the fullness of love and wisdom manifest in each of us now

May we take up the gifts of our spiritual ancestors

May all our prayers for each other pour forth
May we find every action meaningful,
and may we create the world that from within longs to be born

Tirelessly, compassionately, for all who struggle and are lost,
for all who are closed in on themselves,
and for all those who know only violence,
whose world is already hell

May I go there without hesitation,
forever,
and lead them out

For all who do not know the treasures we hold within
or who do not know the beauty of our children, and our elders,
and our brothers and our sisters everywhere -

May there be nothing less than a full awakening for them

With gratitude for all my family
and for all my near and distant relations

With abundant gratitude for our teachers,
and for all the healers of the world,
for our ancestors,
and for this our natural home

I too dedicate all positive energy today

to the comfort and healing of all who need it.

May peace awaken.
May greater love awaken in me,
and in all my family and friends,
and in all the world.

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