

Medicine Buddha Sadhana



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Colophon:

The Medicine Buddha Sadhana was translated by Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche and edited and prepared for publication by Ven. Thubten Gyatso (Adrian Feldmann) in 1982. It was first published in 1982 by Wisdom Publications. This 2001 edition has been lightly edited and prepared for publication by Ven. Constance Miller, FPMT Education Services. All errors are solely the fault of the editor.

Line drawings of the Medicine Buddhas (cover page and pp. 6, 7, 8, 9) © Andy Weber.
Other miscellaneous line drawings (cover page and pp. 10, 11, 13, 14, 15) © Robert Beer.



NOTE: In various Medicine Buddha practices, the visualization of the seven Medicine Buddhas differs. According to different traditions, their mudras and colors can change significantly. Thus, the differences between the colors and mudras in the color image and the varying visualizations described in the practice contained herein are not errors; they are simply differences among practices and traditions.



This is just a brief explanation of the benefits of the Medicine Buddha practice. This practice is especially beneficial if you are helping others, especially if you are doing healing work. It helps you to be more accurate and beneficial. You will receive much support, not only from the eight tathagatas, but from the four clairvoyant devas as well. These devas can help you to diagnose and understand the right method to heal, as they are associated with the eight tathagatas.

*Lama Zopa Rinpoche
in a letter to Taiwanese students, 1998*



Medicine Buddha Sadhana



མཛེས་ལྡན་

The actual body of the sadhana

Visualization

About four inches above the crown of my head is a lotus flower. In the center of the lotus is a white moon disk and seated on the moon disk is my root guru – the dharmakaya essence of all the buddhas – in the form of the Medicine Buddha. He is blue in color and his body radiates blue light. His right hand, in the mudra of granting sublime realizations, rests on his right knee and holds the stem of the *arura* plant between thumb and first finger. His left hand is in the mudra of concentration and holds a lapis lazuli bowl filled with nectar. He is seated in the full vajra position and is wearing the three red-colored robes of a monk. He has all the signs and qualities of a buddha.

Taking Refuge and Generating Bodhichitta

I go for refuge until I am enlightened.
To the Buddha, the Dharma, and the supreme assembly.
By my practice of giving and other perfections,
May I become a buddha in order to benefit all sentient beings. (3x)



The Four Immeasurable Thoughts

May all sentient beings have happiness and the causes of happiness.

May all sentient beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.

May all sentient beings never be separated from the happiness that is without suffering.

May all sentient beings abide in equanimity, free from both attachment and hatred, holding some close and others distant.

Cultivating Special Bodhichitta

Especially for the benefit of all sentient beings, I will quickly, very quickly, attain the precious state of perfect and complete buddhahood. For this reason I will practice the yoga method of Guru Medicine Buddha.

Seven-Limb Prayer

I prostrate to Guru Medicine Buddha.

Each and every offering, including those actually performed and those mentally transformed, I present to you.

I confess all non-virtuous actions accumulated since beginningless time.

I rejoice in the virtues of both ordinary and noble beings.

As our guide I request you, O Buddha, to please abide well and turn the wheel of Dharma until samsara ends.

All virtues, both my own and those of others, I dedicate to the ripening of the two bodhichittas and the attainment of buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings.

Mandala Offering (optional)

Brief Mandala

This ground, anointed with perfume, strewn with flowers,

Adorned with Mount Meru, four continents, the sun and the moon.

I imagine this as a buddha-field and offer it.

May all living beings enjoy this pure land!

Inner Mandala

The objects of my attachment, aversion and ignorance – friends, enemies and strangers – and my body, wealth, and enjoyments; without any sense of loss, I offer this collection. Please accept it with pleasure



rather than rejecting outright the profound teachings of the Buddha. Examine and practice this sadhana skillfully. Keep your mind steady, and you can achieve great benefits for yourself and for others without deceiving yourself.

The Benefits of Medicine Buddha Mantra



The Medicine Buddha encompasses all the buddhas. This means that when we practice the seven-limb prayer and make offerings with the seven limbs, we receive the same merit as we would if we had made offerings to all the buddhas. Similarly, when we recite the mantra of Medicine Buddha, we collect unbelievable merit just as when we offer the seven-limb practice to Medicine Buddha.

To recite the Medicine Buddha mantra brings inconceivable merit. Manjushri requested the eight tathagatas (Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and the seven Medicine Buddhas) to reveal a special mantra that would make the prayers they (the eight tathagatas) made in the past (prayers to be able to actualize the happiness of sentient beings by attaining the path to enlightenment and pacifying various problems, to be able to see all the buddhas, and for all wishes to be quickly realized) to quickly come to pass, especially for those sentient beings born in the time of the five degenerations who have small merit and who are possessed and overwhelmed by various diseases and spirit harms.

During that time, all the eight tathagatas, in one voice, taught the Medicine Buddha mantra. Therefore, if you recite the mantra every day, the buddhas and bodhisattvas will always pay attention to you, and they will guide you. Vajrapani, owner of the secrets, and the four guardians will always protect and guide you. All your negative karmas will be pacified, and you will never be born in the three lower realms. Even just hearing a recitation of the names of the eight tathagatas pacifies all diseases and spirit harms – even spirit harms that arise as a condition of disease – and all your wishes are fulfilled.



shorten the duration of their suffering in the lower realms. It is excellent if this is done with bodhichitta, renouncing self and cherishing others.

Also, by reciting this mantra, you will greatly enhance the power of the medicine that you are taking or giving to others. This can be done as follows:

Visualize the medicine in a bowl in front of you and above it a moon disk. Standing on the moon disk is the blue seed-syllable OM surrounded by the syllables of the Medicine Buddha mantra in a clockwise direction. As you recite the mantra, nectars flow from all the syllables, absorbing into the medicine. The syllables and the moon then dissolve into the medicine, which becomes extremely powerful and able to cure all physical diseases and afflictions caused by spirits together with their causes, negative karma and mental obscurations of sentient beings. If you are treating a serious disease such as cancer, visualize that the medicine has the power to cure this particular disease. The stronger one's faith and the more mantras one recites, the greater will be the power of the medicine.

All existent phenomena are objects of knowing. If something is not an object of knowledge for any being, then it does not exist: an example is the 'horns of a rabbit'. All existent phenomena are included in three categories:

- ♦ objects of a valid non-deceptive consciousness, which are easily recognized, such as vase, plate, rice, flowers, and so forth;
- ♦ objects that are difficult to realize and which require reasoning to do so, such as impermanence and emptiness;
- ♦ objects that are extremely difficult to realize, such as phenomena that are only objects of knowledge of the omniscient mind. For ordinary beings, these can only be known through dependence upon scriptural authority of the Buddha.

Since the benefits of doing this sadhana are extremely difficult to recognize, they therefore belong to the third category. Only through faith in the Buddha's explanations can one realize these benefits. For those who are intellectual but somewhat thick-skulled, this explanation of the benefits and positive karma of doing the Medicine Buddha sadhana should not be discarded because it is too expansive for such a limited intelligence. If one is unable to accept this, it is better to remain indifferent



and bless me with freedom from the three poisons.

IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI

Prayers of Request

I beseech you, Bhagavan Medicine Guru – whose sky-colored holy body of lapis lazuli signifies omniscient wisdom and compassion as vast as limitless space – please grant me your blessings.

I beseech you, compassionate Medicine Guru – who hold in your right hand the king of medicines symbolizing your vow to help all pitiful sentient beings plagued by the 424 diseases – please grant me your blessings.

I beseech you, compassionate Medicine Guru – who hold in your left hand a bowl of nectar symbolizing your vow to give the glorious undying nectar of the Dharma that eliminates the degenerations of sickness, old age, and death – please grant me your blessings.

Visualization

Above the crown of Guru Medicine Buddha is a wish-granting jewel, which is in essence my guru. Above that is the Buddha Delightful King of Clear Knowing (*Ngön khyen gyäl po*), whose body is coral red in color, his right hand in the mudra of bestowing sublime realizations and his left hand in the mudra of concentration. Above him is the Buddha Melodious Ocean of Proclaimed Dharma (*Chö drag gya tso yang*), with a dark pink-colored body, his right hand in the mudra of bestowing sublime realizations and his left hand in the mudra of concentration. Above him is the Buddha Supreme Glory Free from Sorrow (*Nya ngän me chog*), light pink in color with both hands in the mudra of concentration. Above him is the Buddha Stainless Excellent Gold (*Ser zang dri me*), gold in color, his right hand in the mudra of expounding the Dharma and his left hand in the mudra of concentration. Above him is the Buddha King of Melodious Sound, Brilliant Radiance of Skill, Adorned with Jewels, Moon, and Lotus (*Rin chen da wa dang pä ma rab tu gyän pa kyä pa zi ji dra yang gyi gyäl po*), yellow in color with his right hand in the mudra of expounding the Dharma and his left hand in the mudra of concentration. Above him is the Buddha Renowned Glorious King of Excellent Signs (*Tshän leg yang drag*), gold in color with his right hand in the mudra of expounding the Dharma and his left hand in the mudra of concentration.



Requests to the Medicine Buddhas

Repeat each verse seven times. After the seventh recitation as you repeat “May your vow to benefit... “ the Medicine Buddha to whom the request is made absorbs into the one below.

To you, Buddha Renowned Glorious King of Excellent Signs, fully realized destroyer of all defilements, fully accomplished buddha having thoroughly realized the absolute truth of all phenomena, I prostrate, go for refuge, and make offerings. May your vow to benefit all sentient beings now ripen for myself and others. (7x)



To you, Buddha King of Melodious Sound, Brilliant Radiance of Skill, Adorned with Jewels, Moon, and Lotus, fully realized destroyer of all defilements, fully accomplished buddha who has fully realized the absolute truth of all phenomena, I prostrate, go for refuge, and make offerings. May your vow to benefit all sentient beings now ripen for myself and others. (7x)

To you, Buddha Stainless Excellent Gold, Great Jewel Who Accomplishes All Vows, fully realized destroyer of all defilements, fully accomplished buddha who has fully realized the absolute truth of all phenomena, I prostrate, go for refuge, and make offerings. May your vow to benefit all sentient beings now ripen for myself and others. (7x)



The Benefits of This Practice



The seven Medicine Buddhas, attainers of bliss, strongly prayed for the temporal and ultimate happiness of yourself and all sentient beings. They vowed that their prayers would be actualized during these degenerate times when the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha are in decline. As the buddhas’ holy speech is irrevocable, you can wholly trust in their power to quickly grant blessings to help all sentient beings in these degenerate times. If you pray to Guru Medicine Buddha, you will quickly accomplish all that you wish. Just hearing the holy name of Guru Medicine Buddha and the sound of his mantra closes the door to rebirth in the suffering lower realms. It is written in the scriptures that you should not have a two-pointed mind (doubt) with regard to these benefits.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha said in the sutra entitled *Medicine Guru Beams of Lapis Lazuli*: “Kungawo, do you believe my explanation of the qualities of that tathagata [Medicine Buddha]?”

Kungawo replied to the Bhagavan: “I do not have a two-pointed mind with regard to the teachings of you, the celibate Bhagavan. Why? Because the actions of the tathagata’s holy body, holy speech, and holy mind are always pure, without a single mistake.”

Then Guru Shakyamuni Buddha gave this advice: “Kungawo, whoever hears the holy name of that tathagata will not fall into the evil realms of the suffering transmigratory beings.”

Therefore, at the time of death, it is excellent to recite both Tathagata Medicine Buddha’s holy name and his mantra in the ear of the dying person. It is extremely beneficial to recite the mantra and blow it upon meat that you are eating, or even on old bones or the dead bodies of animals or humans. This action purifies the karmic obscurations of those sentient beings. It can cause someone who has been reborn in the suffering lower realms to immediately pass away and be reborn in a pure realm or amongst happy transmigrators. At the very least, it will



As you recite the Medicine Buddha 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.

After the mantra recitation visualize as follows:

The Guru Medicine Buddha melts into light and absorbs into your heart. Your mind becomes completely one with the dharmakaya, the essence of all buddhas.

Dedication

Due to these merits, may I complete the ocean-like actions of the sons of the victorious ones. May I become the holy savior, refuge, and helper for sentient beings, who have repeatedly been kind to me in past lives.

By the virtues received from attempting this practice, may all living beings who see, hear, touch, or remember me – even those who merely say my name – in that very moment be released from their miseries and experience happiness forever.*

As all sentient beings, infinite as space, are encompassed by Guru Medicine Buddha's compassion, may I too become the guide for sentient beings existing throughout all ten directions of the universe.

Because of these virtues, may I quickly become Guru Medicine Buddha and lead each and every sentient being into his enlightened realm.



* This dedication verse includes your enemies, even when they repeat your name with anger.



To you, Buddha Supreme Glory Free from Sorrow, fully realized destroyer of all defilements, fully accomplished buddha who has fully realized the absolute truth of all phenomena, I prostrate, go for refuge, and make offerings. May your vow to benefit all sentient beings now ripen for myself and others. (7x)

To you, Buddha Melodious Ocean of Proclaimed Dharma, fully realized destroyer of all defilements, fully accomplished buddha who has fully realized the absolute truth of all phenomena, I prostrate, go for refuge, and make offerings. May your vow to benefit sentient beings now ripen for myself and others. (7x)



To you, Buddha Delightful King of Clear Knowing, Supreme Wisdom of an Ocean of Dharma, fully realized destroyer of all defilements, fully accomplished buddha who has fully realized the absolute truth of all phenomena, I prostrate, go for refuge, and make offerings. May your vow to benefit sentient beings now ripen for myself and others. (7x)



To you, Buddha Medicine Guru, King of Lapis Light, fully realized destroyer of all defilements, fully accomplished buddha who has fully realized the absolute truth of all phenomena, I prostrate, go for refuge, and make offerings. May your vow to benefit sentient beings now ripen for myself and others. (7x)



Visualization

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 the blue seed-syllable OM 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.

Mantra Recitation

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE BHEKHANDZYE / GURU BAIDURYA / PRABHA RADZAYA / TATHAGATAYA / ARHATE SAMYAKSAM BUDDHAYA / TADYATHA / OM BHEKHANDZYE BHEKHANDZYE MAHA BHEKHANDZYE [BHEKHANDZYE]** / RADZA SAMUDGATE SVAHA

**NOTE: The syllables in the mantras in brackets [] are optional. The Medicine Buddha mantra is recited both with and without the optional syllables.



Short Mantra

TADYATHA / OM BHEKHANDZYE BHEKHANDZYE MAHA BHEKHANDZYE [BHEKHANDZYE] / RADZA SAMUDGATE SVAHA

ཏདཡའཐ་ཨོཾ་བློ་པ་རྩོ་བློ་པ་རྩོ་མཁུ་བློ་པ་རྩོ་[བློ་པ་རྩོ་]**།

རུ་རྩོ་ས་མུ་རྩོ་ཏི་ལྷ་རྩོ།

Feel great joy and think:

All sentient beings are transformed into the aspect of the Medicine Buddha Guru. How wonderful that I am now able to lead all sentient beings into the Medicine Buddha's enlightenment.

Simplified Visualization

If you wish to do a shorter version instead, visualize Guru Medicine Buddha above the crown of your head and make the following prayer of request seven times:

The fully realized destroyer of all defilements, fully completed buddha having fully realized the absolute truth of all phenomena, Guru Medicine Buddha, King of Lapis Light, to you I prostrate, go for refuge, and make offerings. May your vow to benefit sentient beings now ripen for myself and others. (7x)

