

## The Offering of the Mandala

(Notes from conversations between Parami and Bhante in 2015 and 2016: This is basically a practice about Gratitude and Generosity. We are making offerings because we have found the dharma and so we are grateful to Buddha Sakyamuni. He must be the explicit centre of the practice. So, we should include verses of praise to the Buddha. It is also a practice about giving everything - including ourselves. There is nothing held back. Bhante wanted included verses that he had translated from the Tibetan. I include these as a kind of intention verse before beginning the creation of the mandala. We can see this practice as a transference of Merit practice, mainly devotional rather than meditative although, of course, there is a meditative element)

The mandala may be offered in the following three ways:

1. Using a traditional 'mandala set' (base, three rings and top ornament) with rice, grain, jewels or shells representing the visualised elements of the mandala.
2. Using a large shallow bowl with rice etc., to represent the elements of the mandala along with a jewel to represent the top ornament.
3. Offering the mandala mudra.

One needs the following materials:

1. Some rice in a jar (the rice should either be fresh each time or a small portion of the rice removed each time and a portion of new rice added.)
2. A Mandala consisting of a base, three rings, and a jewelled top (or else a fat bottomed bowl / plate and a 'jewel').
3. A cloth to put on one's lap whilst doing the practice, and to wrap the bowl and rice in afterwards.

### VISUALIZATION

One visualizes oneself seated in the midst of the clear blue sky.

One then sees appearing before one, the Buddha Shakyamuni, flanked by Dipankara and Maitreya, representing all the Nirmanakaya Buddhas of the past, present and future.

Above them is the mandala of the Five Buddhas, representing all the Sambhogakaya Buddhas.

Above them is Vajrasattva as the embodiment of the Dharmakaya.

All other beings are seated there with one.

Matriceta's VERSES OF PRAISE to the Buddha (read by the person leading the practice):

No faults in any way are found in him;

All virtues in every way dwell in him.

To go to him for Refuge, to sing his praise,  
to do him honour and to abide in his Dharma  
is proper for one with understanding.

The only protector

his faults are gone without residue

the All Knowing One,

his virtues are present without fail.

Even the most spiteful man

cannot with justice find fault

in the thoughts, words and deeds of the Lord.

To be born human and encounter the great joy  
of the good Dharma is a chance  
rarer than a turtle thrusting its neck  
through a yoke  
floating freely in the great ocean.  
So, how could I not put voice to good use now,  
for it is impermanent and may soon be liable to change.  
Though I know that the Sage's virtues  
are beyond all human calculation,  
still I will recount a portion of them,  
if only for my own delight.  
Homage to you. O Self Developed One  
whose good works are many and wondrous,  
whose virtues are too numerous and awesome to define.  
Their number? They are infinite.  
Their nature? Words must fail.  
But to speak of them bestows great good, so I shall speak much.

VERSES OF INTENTION (verse translated by Bhante from Tibetan): recited in call  
and response 3 times (or more if time permits)

Meru, king of mountains,  
on a ground of incense,  
sun and moon and continents four,  
I offer up to the exalted one,  
together with the pure land's radiant store.  
Oh may all beings, free from pain  
'Ere long supreme Enlightenment gain.

#### PURIFICATION

Holding the Mandala in the left hand one rubs the base with the heel and wrist of  
the right hand in a clockwise motion. One recites the Vajrasattva mantra while  
doing so and imagines that one is purifying the world, oneself and all beings.

#### CREATING THE MANDALA

Recite: OM VAJRABHUMI AH HUM

Building from the base upwards:

earth water fire air space

sun moon planets stars day and night

plants creatures parents family friends

our teachers Bhante his teachers the other people on this retreat

the whole Order the whole Triratna community worldwide

our work our precepts meditation Bodhisattva aspiration

the Three Jewels (*represented by our Jewel, precious object placed on the top*)

#### OFFERING THE MANDALA

Recite the following verses: (in call and response)

This world is purified with scented water and strewn with flowers,

It is adorned with the Continents

with the stars and the Sun and the Moon;

It is covered with the beauties of nature

and embellished with the works of sentient beings;

On it is our work for the Dharma,  
surmounted by the Precious Three Jewels;  
Thinking of it as the entire Universe transformed into a Buddha Realm

*At this point, offer the mandala by raising it to one's heart*

I offer it now to all the Buddhas throughout all space and time.

By virtue of this offering

may all beings attain to the Realm of Bliss.

*One tilts the mandala towards oneself so the grain falls in one's lap, reciting:*

I send forth this Jewelled Mandala to you precious Buddhas. Out of kindness for all beings, please accept this offering. Having accepted, please grant us your blessings.

IDAM BUDDHA RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI

(This, Buddha, Jewelled-mandala I offer up!)

*Light goes forth from the offerings to all beings dispelling all their sins and bringing them to the Pure Land.*

#### CONCLUSION

When one has completed the Mandala Offerings during this session of practice, the Buddhas of the Trikaya dissolve into Sakyamuni who fades into the blue sky.

Finally the blue sky fades away.