

Medicine Buddha

Because of Its Vastness, Offering The Entire Universe Produces Great Merit



Continuing the Very Venerable Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche's teaching on the Medicine Buddha.

This morning we went over the visualization of oneself as the Medicine Buddha, the visualization of the Medicine Buddha in front, and finally the dissolving of the actual wisdom deity into both the self and front visualizations as a remedy for one's habitual perception of things as impure or ordinary.

Having just dissolved the wisdom beings into oneself and into the front visualization—as a remedy for one's obscurations, one's wrongdoing, and one's conceptualization, we then receive empowerment. This phase of the practice is represented in the liturgy simply by the mantra:

OM HUM TRAM HRI AH ABHIKENTZA HUM

The visualization which accompanies the mantra is as follows: Once again you visualize the three syllables—OM AH HUM—in the three places of oneself as the Medicine Buddha and of the deities of the front visualization, and once again rays of light radiate from them—especially from the HUM in your heart—inviting this time the five male buddhas of the five families with their retinues from their pure realms. The buddhas are holding in their hands precious vases* filled with the ambrosia of wisdom, which they pour into you as the self-visualized Medicine Buddha through the aperture at the very center of the top of your head. The first part of this mantra—OM HUM TRAM HRI AH—represents this empowerment being administered by the five buddhas simultaneously. OM represents Vairocana; HUM, Akshobya; TRAM, Ratnasambhava; HRI, Amitabha; and AH, Amogasiddhi.** Visualizing that this pure ambrosia fills your entire body, you think that it purifies all the wrongdoing, obscurations, and defilements of any kind whatsoever of your body, speech, and mind. The words *Abhikentsa* mean empowerment.

The next section of the practice is the accumulation of merit through making offerings. As indicated earlier, the self visualization presents offerings to the front visualization. Rays of light emerge from the heart of the self visualization. On the ends of these rays of light are offerings goddesses holding various offering substances, which they present to all the deities of the front visualization.

***Editor's note:** Vases made of precious jewels and metals.

****Editor's note:** When represented in a seated posture and at rest, Vairocana is white with his hands in the teaching mudra; Akshobya is blue with his left hand in the mudra of meditation and his right hand in the earth touching mudra; Ratnasambhava is yellow with his left hand in the mudra of meditation and the right hand in the mudra of generosity; Amitabha is red with both hands in the meditation mudra; and Amogasiddhi is green with his left hand in the mudra of meditation and his right hand in the mudra of fearlessness.

HUNG
 Flowers, incense, lights, scents,
 Food, music and so forth;
 Forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, and all
 dharmas,
 I offer to the deities.
 May we perfect the two accumulations.

OM BENZA ARGHAM PADYAM PUPE
 DHUPE ALOKE GENDHE NEWIDYE
 SHABDA RUPA SHABDA GENDHE RASA
 SAPARSHE TRATITSA HUNG

First they present a set of eight related offerings. First is drinking water, which is offered to the mouths of the deities. Second is water for washing or rinsing the feet, which is offered to the feet of the deities. Third is flowers, which are offered to the eyes of the deities. Fourth is incense, the scent of which is offered to

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the nose of the deities. Fifth is lamps, which are offered again to the eyes of the deities. Sixth is perfume, which is offered to the whole body of the deities. Seventh is food, offered to the mouths of the deities. And eighth is musical instruments symbolizing the sound of music, offered to the ears of the deities.

Offered with these eight offerings are the five offerings of pleasant things which are perceived by the five senses. These are beautiful forms, pleasant sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations.

In general, offerings can be categorized into four types: outer, inner, secret, and ultimate. Outer offerings are essentially the offering of whatever is beautiful and pleasant in the external world. What is being presented to the deity here are all things in the external world that are appropriate and beautiful. By making these offerings, you gather the accumulation of merit. Therefore it says in the text, “By making these offerings to the deities, may we complete the two accumulations.” The two accumulations are the conceptual accumulation of merit and the nonconceptual accumulation of wisdom. The making of the offerings themselves gathers or

completes the conceptual accumulation of merit; when these offerings are made within the recognition of the ultimate unreality of the offerings, the offerer, and the act of offering—when there is recognition of the emptiness of the offerings, the emptiness of the offerer, and the emptiness of the act of offering—then the nonconceptual accumulation of wisdom is also completed.

Finally the offerings are presented at the end of the stanza with the offering mantras that denote them. The word *vajra* at the beginning of the mantra indicates that the nature of the offering substances is emptiness. Then the individual offerings are named in order, and finally *tra ti tsa*, or *pra ti cha*, means individually to each. So to each of the deities the offerings are presented.

At this point in most vajrayana practices the outer offerings would be followed by the inner, secret, and ultimate offerings. The inner offering is generally the offering of some kind of tormā. Tormā is referred to in this context as an inner offering because the offering of it is a way to increase your samādhi, your meditative absorption, which is an internal phenomenon. The secret offering is the offering of the unity of bliss and emptiness, which is made in order to induce or stabilize this recognition in the practitioner. In the same way, the ultimate offering, the offering of the recognition of the ultimate nature itself, is made in order to stabilize that recognition in the practitioner. Here these offerings are not given because this practice, while it is vajrayana in tradition, tends to follow the sutras in style. Therefore, the offerings that follow are those which are commonly presented in the sutras themselves.

The next two sets of offerings presented are the eight auspicious substances and the eight auspicious signs or marks.

HUNG

The eight foremost auspicious substances,
The best royal white mustard seed, and the
others,

I offer to the deity.

May the two accumulations be perfected.

MANGALAM ARTHA SIDDHI HUNG

The eight auspicious substances are so called because they are eight substances or things which are connected with the arising of dharma in this world. They are considered auspicious because they were significant in bringing about the arising of the teachings. The eight auspicious signs or designs appear on the body of a buddha

and are therefore considered auspicious. The eight auspicious substances include such things as the conch shell with the swirl going clockwise, which the god Indra offered to the Buddha when he requested him to turn the wheel of the dharma. Based on Indra's offering, the Buddha first taught the dharma, as a consequence of which beings have the opportunity to encounter the dharma and attain its results. For that reason, the conch shell with its clockwise swirl, is considered auspicious.

Another of the substances is

durva grass, which a grass cutter and seller, whose name was also auspicious, offered the Buddha when he encountered him just before the Buddha's awakening. The Buddha used the durva grass to make a seat, on which he sat while he attained awakening. Therefore, because it is connected with the Buddha's awakening, which is the event that transformed this period of history from a period of darkness into a period of illumination, durva grass is also considered an auspicious substance.*

Thus, you offer the eight auspicious substances to the Medicine Buddha and his retinue,

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substances . . .
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because they
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in bringing about
the arising of the
teachings

***Editor's note:** Rinpoche discusses these and other offerings in greater detail in the next teaching.

making the aspiration to complete the two accumulations by offering them. The mantra at the end of that stanza is *mangalam*, which means auspicious, and *artha siddhi*, which makes it the accomplishment of auspiciousness.

The next set of offerings are the eight auspicious signs or marks.

HUNG

The eight foremost auspicious symbols,
The peerless royal vase and all others,
I offer to the deity.

May sentient beings perfect the two
accumulations.

MANGALAM KUMBHA HUNG

In general, every buddha is adorned with the thirty-two marks and the eighty signs, but of all of these, eight are foremost. These eight are actually the shapes of particular parts of his body, which are reminiscent of certain emblems. For example, the shape of the top of the Buddha's head is reminiscent of a parasol, so the precious parasol is one of these auspicious signs. The shape of his eyes is like the shape of a certain golden fish, so the golden fish is another one. The shape of his throat is like a certain kind of vase, so the precious vase is yet another, and so on. Again, one offers these eight shapes or signs to the deities in order to bring about the auspiciousness of them, making the aspiration that by making these offerings all beings without exception will perfect the two accumulations: the conceptual accumulation of merit and the non-conceptual accumulation of wisdom. The mantra at the end of this stanza is *mangalam kumbha hum*. *Mangalam* means auspicious; *kumbaha* means vase. The vase is used here to indicate all eight of these signs or shapes. Because it represents the shape of the Buddha's throat, and because it was out of the Buddha's throat originally that the dharma issued forth, the vase is considered of foremost importance.

The next offering is the offering of the seven articles of royalty, which are seven possessions* unique to a certain type of monarch called a chakravartin.

HUNG The foremost desirable qualities, the
seven precious articles,
The most excellent royal one, the jewel, and the
others,
I offer to the deity.
May I perfect the two accumulations.
OM MANI RATNA HUNG

A chakravartin appears during the best or finest periods of history, during what is called a fortunate eon or period. These seven articles distinguish a chakravartin from any other monarch; however the true internal meaning of these seven articles is that they represent the seven aspects of the path to awakening, which is traversed by all buddhas and bodhisattvas. So when you make this offering to the deities, you think that externally you are offering the seven articles of royalty as representations of the seven aspects of the path to awakening.

You present these offerings to all the deities of the mandala visualized in front, making the aspiration that by doing so you will complete the two accumulations—the conceptual accumulation of merit and the nonconceptual accumulation of wisdom. The mantra used to complete this offering refers to the first of the seven articles, the precious jewel. *Mani* means jewel and *ratna* means precious.

The next offering, which completes the main section of the offerings, is the offering of a mandala.

***Editor's note:** Though these seven "articles of royalty" or seven "possessions" may appear as such—as articles or possessions—to an observer lost in dualistic perception who sees everything as "my and mine," "her and hers," "him and his," etc., they are better understood by adhering more closely to the actual meaning of the Tibetan words used here, *död yön*. *Död* means desirable, and *yön* means quality, skill or attribute. Thus, if one understands these seven "whatevers" as seven qualities or attributes of a chakravartin's mind—whether the chakravartin is thought of as male or female—it will be easier to understand that these "articles" or "possessions," to the extent that they appear to be external phenomena, appear naturally and effortlessly and totally without coercion in his or her mandala or world. Without this understanding, the notion of precious queen might appear as nothing more than another aspect of an androcentric universe. This misunderstanding is further undermined by understanding them as aspects of the path, as Rinpoche explains.

HUNG The foremost of all, Mount Meru
With its four continents and subcontinents
I offer to the deity.
May the two accumulations be perfected.
OM RATNA MANDALA HUNG

In general, of course, we make these offerings in order to gather and complete the accumulation of merit. We do not make them for the benefit of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, who are their ostensible recipients. Buddhas and bodhisattvas are not particularly pleased by the presentation of offerings or displeased by their absence. The only real reason for making offerings is that the person making them gathers the accumulation of merit by doing so. We make offerings for our own benefit,* and it is how it affects us that is important. Offerings are not limited to that which you can actually physically assemble around you as offering substances. Offerings can be of any of three types,

***Editor's note:** And, by extension, for the benefit of all beings. In the view of the practice of vajrayana, which is rooted in the mahayana aspiration to attain budhahood in order to liberate all sentient beings, the mandala of the yogin or yogini's body, speech, and mind is the entirety of animate and inanimate existence, and whatever affects the one beneficially affects the other beneficially as well. Specifically, offerings are made as an antidote to desire and attachment and the self-clinging that underlies them. As one continues to make these offerings to enlightened sources of refuge, there begins to develop the understanding and then the direct experience of the emptiness or lack of inherent existence of all that to which one has been clinging, and one's desire and attachment and self-clinging begin to dissolve and give rise to the wisdom of discriminating awareness, to the transparent self-liberating kaleidoscopic vision of what is as the mere interdependent appearances of the clear light nature of mind, and to a palpable blessing that benefits beings. It is not in order to become a good person that one makes offerings; at root, one is already a good person. One makes offerings in order to discover the truth of reality or the truth of things, and in order to access the profound effectiveness in helping others that arises from that discovery.

Buddhas and bodhisattvas are not particularly pleased by the presentation of offerings or displeased by their absence. The only real reason for making offerings is that the person making them gathers the accumulation of merit

which are called actually assembled, mentally emanated, and produced through the power of aspiration. Actually assembled offerings are physically present and under your power to offer. Mentally emanated offerings are offerings that you imagine, that you do not actually have physically present before you, but that you can imagine clearly enough to offer in your mind. Offerings offered through the power of aspiration are things that are so vast and limitless that you cannot even encompass them in your mind or imagine them, but you can at least make the aspiration to offer them to the buddhas and bodhisattvas. It is said that any of these three

types of offerings will all produce the accumulation of merit. We use the offering of the entire universe as a mandala because the vastness of it produces great merit.

Specifically mentioned are the central mountain, Mount Meru, together with the continents surrounding it. These together, along with everything that goes with them, make up the mandala, which is considered the principal among all offerings. In detail, the offering consists of Mount Meru, which includes on top of Mount Meru the second of the desire god realms—enumerated from the bottom up—called the heaven or god-realm of the thirty-three. Surrounding Mount Meru are seven concentric rings** of golden mountains with lakes in between them. In these seven golden mountains and on their lakes live the gods of the first realm of the desire god realms and the four great kings—the same four kings

who are guardians in the mandala of the Medicine Buddha. When you offer Mount Meru, you also think that you are offering all of the wealth

****Editor's note:** These are usually represented as concentric squares.

of those god's realms. Outside those seven golden mountains are the four main continents with their eight subcontinents, which are the habitation of humans—all of the wealth, possessions, splendor, and beauty of which you offer as well. In short, you offer the world, indeed the whole universe, and all it contains to all of the deities, and you make the aspiration that by so doing, you complete the two accumulations and that you and the whole world be free from sickness.

After the fundamental offerings—the eight traditional offerings of water, flowers, incense, and so forth, and the offering of everything that is pleasing to the five senses—there have occurred four different sets of offerings: the eight auspicious substances, the eight auspicious signs, the seven articles of royalty, and finally the offering of the mandala. The next offering is the offering of ablution—of washing the bodies of the deities. This is done in order to create the auspicious basis for the removal of your own wrongdoing, your own defilements, and your own obscurations—the afflictive obscurations and the cognitive obscurations.

HUNG

With scented water

I bathe the sugata's body.

Although the deity is flawless,

**This creates the auspicious connection for
purifying all wrongs and obscurations.**

**OM SARWA TATHAGATA ABIKEKATE
SAMAYA SHRIYE HUNG**

Here you think that from the heart of yourself visualized as the Medicine Buddha rays of light are emanated. On the tips of each of these rays are offering goddesses holding precious vases filled with ambrosia. With the ambrosia from these vases, they bathe the bodies of the primary Medicine Buddha, the seven other Medicine Buddhas, the sixteen bodhisattvas, and all of the other deities in the mandala. The words of the text say, “With scented water I bathe the sugata's body; although the deity is without stain, this creates the auspicious basis for purifying all wrongdoing and obscurations.”

This offering of ablution is culminated with the mantra, *Om Sarwa Tathagata Abikekate Samaya Shriye Hung*. *Sarva* means all. *Tathagata* means tathagatas or buddhas. And *abikekate* refers to this process which in some contexts means empowerment, but in this context means ablution. Through this offering you increase the splendor and majesty of the deities; therefore, there is the words *shriye*, which means splendid, majestic, or glorious.

The next offering, which goes along with ablution, is drying the bodies of the deities, which is done by visualized offering goddesses holding fine white cotton towels scented with perfume.

HUNG

With a scented, soft white cloth

I dry the victor's body.

Though your body is flawless,

**This creates the auspicious connection for
freedom from suffering.**

OM KAYA BISHODHANI HUNG

You state in these two stanzas that you are not washing and drying the deities because they are dirty or have stains that need to be washed away, and so on; you are drying the bodies of the deities after washing them because it creates the interdependent cause of drying up or removing the suffering of all beings. Therefore, you make the aspiration that the suffering of all beings—especially the sufferings of physical sickness and mental affliction—be removed. *Kaya vishodani* means the purification of the body.

Next is the offering of clothes or robes to the deities of the mandala.

HUNG With these beautiful saffron robes

I clothe the victor's body.

Although your body is never cold,

**This creates the auspicious connection for vitality
to flourish.**

OM BENZA WAYTRA AH HUNG

Having bathed and dried them, next we have to offer them appropriate robes. The robes that are actually mentioned in the first line of this stanza are those that are offered to the Medicine Buddha and to the seven buddhas in his retinue,

all of whom, since they are manifesting in supreme nirmanakaya form, wear only the beautiful saffron red and yellow robes which are worn by buddhas. As the visualized goddesses offer the robes, you recite, “With these I clothe the Victor’s body.” As in the previous offerings, you are making this offering, not because the Medicine Buddha is in any danger of becoming cold, but in order to create the auspicious basis for benefitting yourself and others. Therefore, you say, “Although your body is never cold, this creates the auspicious basis for the flourishing of vitality and physical splendor.” As a result of this offering vitality and physical splendor will arise in you and others through the power of your aspiration. Although not mentioned specifically in the liturgy, the clothing offered to the bodhisattvas is appropriate to their appearance [in sambhogakaya form]: elegant garments of multicolored silk and jewelry made of gold and jewels, and so on. The bodhisattvas are offered fine clothes and jewelry not because they are particularly attached to them, but because by offering them you create the auspicious basis for the increase of vitality. The word *vastra* in the mantra means robes or clothing or fabric.

Each of these sections—ablution, drying, and offering clothing—has its own particular significance. The fundamental significance of all three of them is indicated in connection with the second, where it says, “I make this offering in order to establish the auspicious basis for the removal of suffering.” The point of making these offerings is to remove the suffering of beings, which is primarily accomplished on the level of auspicious interdependence by the second offering, drying. But to remove the suffering of beings you must first remove the causes of suffering, which are wrongdoing and obscurations. So therefore, drying is preceded by ablution, the symbolic function of which is to purify the wrongdoing and obscurations of all beings. Finally, once the suffering has been removed, what develops in its place is a state of mental and physical well-being—including physical vitality, splendor and health—and a state of wisdom and peace within the mind, the interde-

pendent cause of the arising of which is established by the offering of robes and clothing, which is the third part.

Following the offerings come the praises. The praises are performed by imagining that offering goddesses emanated from the light rays from your heart sing the praises of the deities in the words of the liturgy with beautiful melodies. Praised are the qualities of body, speech, and mind of the Medicine Buddha and his retinue. These praises are not done in order to please the Medicine Buddha; buddhas and bodhisattvas are not pleased by praise nor displeased by its absence. One performs the praises to remind oneself, the practitioner, of the qualities of the deities. This increases one’s devotion and one’s resolve or desire to attain the state of the deities, which increases one’s diligence in practice.

The praises consist of three stanzas. The first is a praise of the Medicine Buddha. The second is a praise of the other seven medicine buddhas and the sixteen bodhisattvas. And the third is a praise of the remaining deities of the mandala, including the ten protectors of the ten directions, the twelve yaksha chieftains, and so forth.

The first stanza is addressed to the Medicine Buddha.

HUNG

Your body is like a mountain, the color of lapis lazuli.

You dispel the suffering of illness in sentient beings.

Surrounded by a retinue of eight bodhisattvas, Holder of Medicine, precious deity, I praise and prostrate to you.

The first line praises the appearance of his body or form: “The color of your body is like a mountain of lapis or vaidurya,” which is to say that in appearance his body is like the stainless mass of a blue jewel, like a lapis or vaidurya, and radiant with rays of light. So that is a praise of the majesty of his appearance. The second line is praise of his activity, and it says, “You remove the sufferings of sickness of all beings.” Sufferings of sickness here refer expressly to the literal suffering of physical illnesses, but also by

implication ultimately to the sickness and the suffering of the sickness of samsara itself, which the Medicine Buddha also dispels.

Having praised his appearance and activity, you then praise his retinue. Here the retinue referred to in the liturgy is not the retinue of the mandala; what is referred to here are the eight great bodhisattvas who exemplify the mahayana sangha. These are not the same as the sixteen bodhisattvas in the mandala; in fact, not all eight of these eight primary bodhisattvas are among the sixteen, although some of them are. Generally speaking, when we talk about the sangha, there is the ordinary sangha of the common vehicle and the exalted sangha of the mahayana, which is made up of bodhisattvas. These are exemplified by what are called the eight close offspring of the Buddha, eight great bodhisattvas such as Manjusri, Avalokiteshvara, Vajrapani, and so on.* Then in the last line you say, “I pay homage to and praise that deity who holds the precious medicine,” which is another way of referring to the Medicine Buddha himself.

The second stanza of praise praises the three jewels in general, exemplified by the buddhas, dharma, and sangha found in this mandala.

**Excellent Name, Precious Moon, Fine Gold, Free
of Misery,
Resounding Dharma Ocean, Dharma Mind,
Shakyamuni,
The genuine dharma, the sixteen bodhisattvas
and others,
To the precious three jewels, I offer praise and
prostrate.**

First mentioned are the seven other medicine buddhas—Excellent Name, Precious Moon, Fine Gold, Free of Misery, Resounding Dharma Ocean, Dharma Mind, and Buddha Sakyamuni. Then, following that, is mentioned the dharma itself, visually represented in the mandala by the sutras and commentaries but also understood as being the essence of the path. Finally, for the sangha it mentions “the sixteen

bodhisattvas, and so forth,” which means all of the mahayana sangha, as exemplified by the sixteen bodhisattvas found within this mandala. Then one completes the praise by saying, “I pay homage to and praise the three precious jewels.”

The final stanza is a praise to the remaining deities of the mandala and to all others who are associated with the mandala.

**To Brahma, Indra, the Great Kings, the Protectors
of the Ten Directions,
The twelve yaksha chiefs and all their assistants,
Vidyadharas and rishis of medicine, divine and
human,
To the deities of ambrosial medicine, I offer
praise and prostrate.**

First mentioned are Brahma and Indra, who are two among the ten protectors of the ten directions; and then the four great kings; the twelve yaksha generals or chieftains, together with their retinues; and then finally all of the holders of the knowledge of medicine and those who have mastered medicine, who here are referred to as vidyadaras and rishis of medicine, both those living in the realms of the gods and those living in the realms of humans. In short, one pays homage to and praises all of the deities of this mandala of ambrosial medicine.

All of the stages of the practice we have gone through today—the visualization of the bodies of the deities, the dissolution of the wisdom deities into them, the presentation of offerings and of praises to the deities—are aspects of the practice of the generation stage. In general, generation stage practice needs to have three characteristics: clear appearance or clarity of appearance, stable pride, and recollection of purity. What is meant by clear appearance is simply that there be a clear and distinct visualization of whatever it is you are visualizing. Whether you are visualizing the Medicine Buddha alone, that is to say yourself as the Medicine Buddha and the Medicine Buddha in front of you, or in addition to that you are visualizing the seven other medicine buddhas surrounding the front visualization, or in addition to that you are visualizing the sixteen bodhisattvas, or in addition to that

***Editor’s note:** The other five are Kshitigarbha, Sarvanivaranavishkambhi, Akashagarbha, Maitreya, and Samantabhadra.

you are visualizing the entire mandala with the ten protectors and the twelve chieftains, and so on, in any case, whatever you are visualizing, clear appearance means that the appearance of the deities—the color, the shape, the ornaments and costumes and robes, the scepters and other things that are held in the hands, and so on—should be visualized in a way that allows your mind to remain stable and calm while nevertheless generating a clear and vivid image.

The second characteristic of generation stage practice is stable pride. Generally speaking, of course, pride is something we want to get rid of—it is a *klesha*. But here the word pride means something that is very necessary in vajrayana practices. Pride means being free of the misconception that, in visualizing yourself as the Medicine Buddha or in visualizing the Medicine Buddha in front of you, you are pretending that things are other than what they are. Stable pride here means recognizing that, although you are meditating on the Medicine Buddha as a conscious act, nevertheless, that is what you actually are. It is acknowledging that you actually are the Medicine Buddha. In the case of the front visualization it is acknowledging or recognizing that the front visualization is the actual presence of the Medicine Buddha, right in front of you. So stable pride really refers to an attitude of confidence, trust and belief. It is important to recognize that when you do the self visualization and the front visualization you are not merely imagining something that is fictitious. You are not pretending that things are other than they are. When you make these offerings—admittedly mentally emanated—to the deities, you should reflect upon the fact that these offerings are actually occurring, they are actually taking their effect. By making these offerings, you are actually gathering the accumulation of merit. To the extent that you have this confidence in the

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validity and accuracy of the practice, you will have that much delight in it, that much devotion, and that much benefit.

The third characteristic of the generation stage is the recollection of purity. This has several meanings. Most obviously it means the recognition that the forms of the deities are wondrous and splendid, that the deities are not unpleasant in appearance, that they are not strange or of an inappropriate form; they are beautiful and pleasing in every way. But beyond that, it is the recognition that the nature of the deity's form is the embodiment of the deity's wisdom. The deities'

bodies are not flesh and blood—coarse bodies like our own—nor are they inanimate solid objects, as though made of earth and stone or wood. They are the pure embodiment of wisdom, which means that they are the expression of emptiness in the form of a clear, vivid appearance. Practically speaking, when visualizing them, you should see them or imagine them as being a vivid appearance—with their distinct colors, ornaments, scepters and so on—that is nevertheless without any coarse substantiality. Their appearance is luminous and vivid but insubstantial, like that of a rainbow. The fundamental meaning of this third point is that the deities are the embodiment in form of wisdom, and therefore their form is not samsaric in any way—it is not produced in any way by samsaric causes and conditions.

We are going to stop here for this afternoon and conclude with the dedication of merit. When performing the dedication of merit, think that you dedicate the merit of this session to the awakening of all beings in general and especially in the short term to the freedom of this world from all forms of sickness. 