

# Mantras and Mudras

Meditations for the hands and voice to  
bring peace and inner calm



Lillian Too

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# **Mantras and Mudras**

**Meditations for the hands and voice to bring peace and inner calm**

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# Dedication

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This book is written with the motivation of sharing beautiful mantras and mudras with as many people as possible that they may experience the matchless bliss of spiritual awakening . . . and is dedicated to the long life of my most precious and dearest kind lama, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche. I also gratefully acknowledge the support of the FPMT (Federation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition), and in particular the venerable Connie Miller, who has assisted with the checking of the precious mantras included in this book. All royalties from this book will be donated to specific Buddhist charities.

*My lama's teachings are vast and profound  
When an ordinary person like me  
reflects, thinks, meditates, and communicates,  
there is always some error in understanding.  
Learned scholars,  
If you find my words err  
and my meanings mislead,  
Please be compassionate and set me right.  
Only Buddha is completely without error,  
like the sun, the sky's radiant jewel,  
dispelling the darkness of night.*

LILLIAN TOO

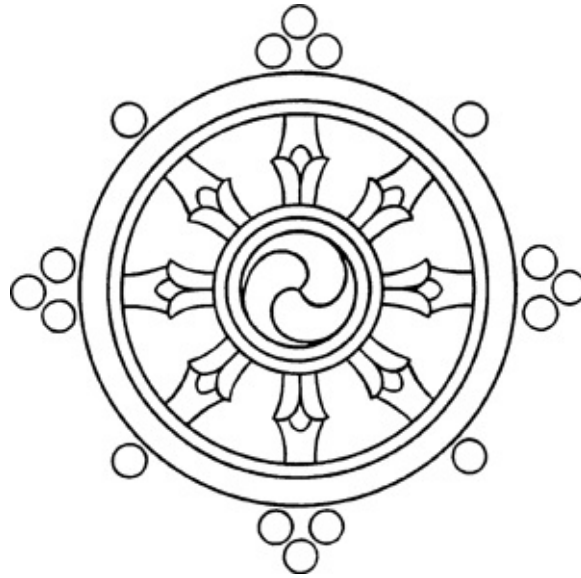


*Happiness and suffering  
Are dependent  
upon your own mind,  
upon your interpretation.  
They do not come from outside,  
from others.  
All of your happiness and  
all of your suffering  
are created by you,  
your own mind.*

**KYABJE LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE**

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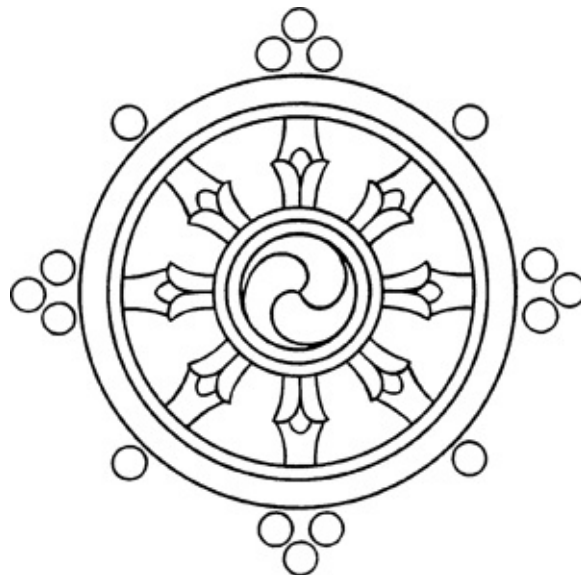
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# Introduction

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When we recite special mantras, or prayers, and use hand mudras (gestures) to aid our concentration, we are engaging our body, speech, and mind with the motivation of transforming our mind to develop our Buddha potential. Mantras are chanted repeatedly, because transforming the mind takes time; it is a gradual process. Practiced regularly and with sincere motivation, mantras are powerful catalysts for effecting mind transformation, which opens up wonderful pathways to gaining blessings and realizations.

Reciting mantras is not the mere vocal repetition of speech syllables. Meditators know from experience that chanting mantras transcends external sounds and words. It is like listening to a subtle inner sound that has been inside us since beginningless time.

When you receive a mantra, transmitted by a qualified teacher, the integration of that mantra and wisdom into your consciousness is greatly facilitated. The wisdom-power of mantras enables you to communicate more easily with your own true, inner wisdom, even as you remain detached from external distractions. These distractions impede concentration, thereby creating obstacles. When you recite mantras this agitation of the mind subsides, leaving the mind more at peace. So mantras bring out a special kind of concentration that is strong and integrated. This is known as “single-pointed concentration.”

The mantras you chant should come directly from highly realized beings, from enlightened Masters and from the Buddha himself. Many of the most powerful Buddhist mantras continue to be chanted in their original Sanskrit, the language of the Buddha, simply because they sound so beautiful and inspiring, and contain such stunning empowerments. But mantras chanted in any language have the same power when recited with strong concentration and sincere motivation.

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**My teacher Rinpoche once told me this story. A monk visited a hermit, who lived alone on an island doing retreat. The hermit had given himself three years to complete chanting ten million of the powerful six-syllable mantra of the Compassionate Buddha. The hermit had been told that attaining this level of practice would awaken his yogic powers. The mantra was OM MANI PADME HUM.**

**The monk listened as the hermit did his mantra and, with the best intention in the world, leaned over to him and whispered, “I think you have got the pronunciation wrong. This mantra should be chanted this way . . .” and he proceeded to demonstrate. The hermit listened attentively and then watched as the monk walked back to his boat to leave the island. Ten minutes later, when the boat was halfway across the river, the monk heard his name being called and, looking around, he spied the hermit and heard him call, “Listen to this, have I got it right now?” and the hermit proceeded to chant the same mantra, but with the monk’s intonation. Astounded, the monk turned around and saw the hermit walking on the water next to the boat. In that instant he realized that the hermit’s faith and sincerity had given his mantra recitation far more power than he had realized. Getting the intonation correct seemed almost irrelevant.**



~~The mantras selected for inclusion in this book are intended to act as wonderful aids to living and life.~~  
These mantras have incredible power to awaken us to the spiritual path in different ways. I learned many of these mantras from my most precious guru, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, who also gave me permission to write this book and to include them here.

I have a truly kind, humble and most perfect teacher in Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, and I have strived diligently to present the mantras, and their explanations, as accurately as possible for the benefit of as many people as possible.

I must stress again and again, however, that any, and all mistakes, misrepresentations, or inadequate explanations of these precious mantras are entirely and completely due to my own imperfect skills.

If reciting these mantras awakens your inner hunger to know more, I strongly urge you to seek out a perfectly qualified teacher. It will simply be the most magnificent thing you will have done in your life.

Personally, the most life-transforming thing that ever happened to me was when I discovered there are Buddhas and Bodhisattvas living among us. They come into the world wearing different disguises. Most of the time they manifest as highly realized Masters who enter our lives and transform us forever. In today's modern world, there are Masters who speak our language and communicate with us like they have known us for a thousand years. They devote their whole existence to passing on the wonderful teachings of the Buddha, and because they are themselves emanations of the Enlightened One, they glow with a radiance of purity that is totally irresistible.

These holy lamas are extremely humble and are extraordinarily kind. They are also highly skilled at leading us to fields of bliss, explaining the meanings of mantras, prayers, and practices. Most importantly, these Masters have the power and lineages to grant refuge and give precious initiations that will empower your practice of mantra recitation a million times over. The transmission of mantras, prayers, and practices from such holy beings is what will bring you mountains of blessings, light up paths to new learning, and eventually reveal to you the true nature of reality. It is good karma indeed to meet just such a living Buddha. Chant your mantras and dedicate them sincerely to having such a meeting, and then watch events unfold in your life.

I make two heartfelt dedications.

Firstly, may anyone who sees, touches, reads, remembers, or recites any of the mantras in this book meet perfectly qualified spiritual masters, develop the bodhichitta heart, and immediately attain the strong wish to seek Enlightenment for the sake of all living beings. Secondly, by the merit thus created may my most precious guru, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, whose life is so precious to hundreds of thousands of students worldwide, live a long and stable life. May all his holy wishes be fulfilled and actualized immediately, including the building of the Buddha Maitreya statue in Bodhgaya, India.

With love and many mantra prayers,

Lillian Too, June 2001



*The mantra functions in many ways. The reciting of a mantra a given number of times, combined with concentration, opens our mind instinctively to supernormal powers and insights. Mantras can be also be used as therapy for the sick, and can bring peace to the mentally disturbed. This has been the experience of many meditators.*

**LAMA THUBTEN YESHE**



**1**

# **First Steps**

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# Taking refuge mantras

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This is the first step on the Buddhist path to inner freedom. It is not anything new. Most of us take refuge already, but in external things. We seek security in money, food, marriage, and even drugs, hoping to find happiness and satisfaction. In the end we realize that all of this is temporary and short-term – taking refuge in material pleasures is transient and cannot last.

In a Buddhist sense, taking refuge means turning inward to discover your own mind and your unlimited potential to realize the peerless happiness of a permanent kind – that which comes from giving voice and liberation to your inherent “inner wisdom” energy. The way to realize this inner mind liberation is to take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, also known as the “Guru-Triple Gem.”

**Buddha Refuge** means accepting the guidance of enlightened beings as the only solution to the continuing cycle of temporary happiness and suffering.

**Dharma Refuge** is the wisdom that understands our own true nature. So it means using our inner wisdom immediately, now! Dharma means understanding the true nature of reality.

**Sangha Refuge** means seeking security in the company of those endowed with wisdom, such as ordained monks and nuns, and also spiritual friends who inspire and support us in our quest for the flowering of our inner-mind wisdom.

This is the mantra of taking refuge in the Guru, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha:



**NAMO GURU BHYE  
NAMO BUDDHAYA  
NAMO DHARMAYA  
NAMO SANGHAYAH**



Saying this refuge mantra seven times each morning when you wake up, and seven times at night before you sleep, brings you under the care of the Buddhas; if you have a guru, it brings you under the care of the guru. This simple mantra is extremely powerful because it plants the imprint of taking refuge in the Guru-Triple Gem.

## **HOMAGE MANTRA TO THE BUDDHA**

You can say this longer homage mantra to the Buddha, and incorporate a simple “receiving blessing”

visualization. Chant this mantra three times each morning:

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**LAMA TON PA CHOM DEN DAY  
DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA  
YANG DAG PAR DZOG PAY SANG GYAY  
PEL GYEL WA, SHAKYA TUB PA LA  
CHAG TSEL ZHING, KYAB SU CHI WO  
CHO DO JIN GYI LAB TU SOL**



**TRANSLATION:**

**To the founder, the endowed transcendent destroyer, the one gone beyond, the foe destroyer, the completely perfect, fully awakened being, the subduer from the Shakya clan, I prostrate. Please grant me your blessings.**

As you chant this mantra, feel the presence of the Buddha and take refuge in him. Visualize his body as golden light. He is seated in the Vajra position; his face is very beautiful, and his gaze is very compassionate. Rays of light emanate from each pore of the Buddha's body and reach every corner of the world. Feel the rays waft completely over you, entering the top of your head and filling your whole body. Feel very blessed.



***Shakyamuni Buddha, or historical Buddha.***

# Making prostrations

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One of the first things that Rinpoche taught me when I met him in Bodhgaya, India, was how beneficial it was to learn how to make prostrations to the holy objects, and especially to images of Buddha. Rinpoche said, “The merit is greater than all the grains of sand on the bed of the river Ganga . . .”

Rinpoche explained that because most of us have minds that are not purified of karmic obstacles, even if numberless Buddhas were to come in front of us, we would not be able to “see” the aspect of the Buddha, or that which is the pure aspect. We can only see the image of the Buddha shown as in a painting, or as a statue. So when we prostrate to an image of Buddha, in our minds and our hearts we are prostrating to Buddha. The image helps us to visualize. Those of us who have the good karma to meet a perfectly qualified guru can see Buddha emanating as an ordinary being who appears in the form of a humble monk and teacher. This explains why Tibetan Buddhists see His Holiness the Dalai Lama as the Buddha of Compassion. Although he takes the form of an ordinary human being, those who revere him see him as an emanation of the Buddha Chenrezig, the Compassionate Buddha (see page 34). So making prostrations to images of the Buddhas (or holy objects) and to our precious guru is an act of reverence that precedes all prayers. Making prostrations helps the mind to develop genuine humility, and is a perfect way of overcoming arrogance and pride.

## **PROSTRATION MANTRA**

Prostrate three times while reciting the mantra below. This multiplies it one thousand times. Prostrations purify the negative karma of the body. Verbally reciting mantras exalts the Buddha, purifying the negative karma of speech. The mental action of remembering the supreme power of the Buddha purifies the negative karma of the mind, thereby arousing faith.



**OM NAMO MANJUSHRIYE  
NAMA SUSHRIYE  
NAMA UTTAMA SHRIYE SVAHA**



## **PROSTRATION MUDRA**

If for some reason you find it difficult to make the full-length or even the short prostrations (see opposite), you can visualize yourself prostrating while reciting the mantra. Use your hands to make the Prostration mudra. This mudra is almost universally accepted as the Prayer mudra, symbolizing

reverence and respect. Fold your palms together upright, leaving some space in between. Bend the two thumbs inward to signify that the space between the palms is filled with offerings. This makes the mudra more auspicious.



***The Prayer mudra, or Namaskara mudra. This is also the Prostration mudra.***



*Whether a life situation is wonderful or not depends on the way your mind perceives and interprets it. You can choose to label an experience “wonderful” or “a problem.” It depends completely upon your mind, upon your interpretation.*

**KYABJE LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE**

## **HOW TO MAKE PROSTRATIONS**

There is a short prostration and a full-length prostration. Here is how to practice each one.

First, calm your mind and generate devotional thoughts. Think, “Reverently I prostrate with my body, speech, and mind, and take refuge in the Guru-Triple Gem – Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.” Next, place your palms together, touching the top of your head; then bring them down to touch your forehead; then down again to touch your throat; and then touch your heart (see a, b, c, and d on page 8). Then bend down. Kneel on the floor and place your hands, palms down, on the floor (see e). If you are making the short prostration, lower your forehead until it touches the ground, and then get up. Repeat three times.

For the long prostration, stretch yourself full length on the floor after you have lowered yourself (see



f). Raise your palms above your head (see g) and then get up (see h). Do not stay too long on the floor and make your prostrations with focused concentration. Think reverential thoughts and dedicate the merit created to your own spiritual awakening. Keep your feet together and your fingers closed as you prostrate. The merit gained is simply enormous. As Rinpoche would say, “the merit is like sky!”







# Generating motivation

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*The sun of real happiness shines in your life when you start to cherish others.*

**KYABJE LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE**

The chanting of mantras becomes extremely powerful when it is practiced with the pure motivation helping or benefiting others. This altruistic intention develops what Buddhists refer to as “bodhichitta,” or the spontaneous kind heart. When you chant this mantra three times to generate powerful motivation before any kind of act or prayers, the mantra becomes very meaningful:








**DAG DANG ZHEN DON DRUP LAY DU  
DAG GI JANG CHUB SEM KYAY DO**



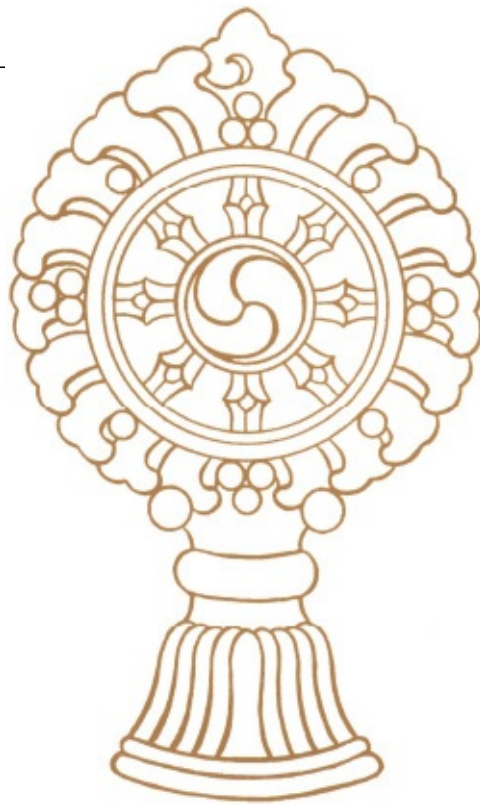
**TRANSLATION:**

**To accomplish my own and others’ aims I generate the mind seeking Enlightenment.**

Alternatively, you can meditate on the Four Immeasurable Thoughts – your heartfelt wishes for all beings:

-  *Immeasurable equanimity*  
*May all beings abide in equanimity, free of hatred, anger, and attachment*
-  *Immeasurable compassion*  
*May all beings be free of sufferings and the causes of suffering*
-  *Immeasurable love*  
*May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness*
-  *Immeasurable joy*  
*May all beings never lose the joys of high rebirth*
-  *And may I cause all of these things to happen.*

The meditation on the Four Immeasurable Thoughts is considered to be a classic in mastering motivations. Meditate on it.



*This is the image of the Dharmachakra, which signifies the teachings of the Buddha. It is placed at the top of Mandala Offerings and is most auspicious.*

## **OVERCOMING ANGER**

Anger obscures your mind and makes your everyday life unhappy. Anger causes you and others great problems from day to day. Anger is extremely harmful.

The antidote to anger is patience; as soon as anger begins to arise, you should immediately recognize it and remember its shortcomings. Practice patience and at once there is tranquillity, relaxation, and happiness.



*The pain of anger is like red-hot coals in your heart. Anger transforms even a beautiful person into someone ugly and terrifying. What was happy, peaceful, and beautiful completely changes and becomes dark, ugly, and terrifying. As soon as you apply patience, however, anger stops, and as soon as it stops, even your appearance suddenly changes . . .*

**KYABJE LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE**



# Making mandala offerings

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The mandala is a representation of the universe, in its conventional form or as a completely purified realm of existence. There are many different mandalas with distinct concepts and for different purposes. Cosmic mandalas represent our universe and its development; deity mandalas represent our universe as an Enlightened Being's pure realm. In Tibetan Buddhism, deity mandalas are visualized in meditation. They are also painted or created from colored sand as three-dimensional representations for special pujas (ritual offering ceremonies) or initiations; those made of sand are dismantled and dispersed after completion to signify the impermanence of all phenomena.

The mandala offering is one of the most engaging and uplifting of Tibetan Buddhist rituals. During pujas, or to precede teachings and practices, one makes a mandala offering. This is a powerful symbolic prayer offering of the entire universe to all the Buddhas of the ten directions. A mandala offering can be performed either long or short. Also, one can offer a mandala either using a mandala offering set, comprised of a base, rings, and substances that are piled up like a mountain, or with the mandala hand mudra. The mantra that goes with the ritual can either be long or short, depending on which ritual you wish to perform.



*Practice making this mandala offering mudra. Place your hands in this mudra in front of you and you recite the mandala offering mantras (either long or short). The two upright fingers in the center signify Mount Meru (the Buddhist axis of the cosmos), while the four corners signify the four continents.*

## THE SHORT MANDALA OFFERING



**SA ZHI PO KYI JUG SHING MAY TOG TRAM  
RI RAB LING ZHI NYI DAY GYAN PA DI  
SANG GYAY, ZHING DU MIG TAY UL WAR GYI  
DRO KUN NAM DAG ZHING LA CHO PAR SHOG**



TRANSLATION:

**This ground anointed with perfume, and strewn with flowers. In the center is Mount Meru, around it the four continents, the sun and the moon. I imagine this as a Buddha Pure Land of bliss and I offer it. May all beings enjoy this Pure Land.**



**DAG GI CHAG DANG MONG SUM KYAY WAY YUL,  
DRA NYEN BAR SUM LU DANG LONG CHO CHAY  
PANG PA MAY PAR BUL GYI LEG ZHAY NAY  
DUG SUM RANG SAR DROL WAR JIN GYI LOB**



**TRANSLATION:**

**The objects of attachment, aversion, and ignorance – my friends, my enemies, and strangers. My body, my wealth, and my enjoyments. I offer these with no sense of loss. Please accept them with pleasure and bless me with freedom from the three poisons of anger, attachment, and ignorance.**

## **THE LONG MANDALA OFFERING**

To perform this very auspicious and powerful ritual you need the mandala offering set, which comprises a base and three rings. Mandala sets can be purchased in India, Nepal, Tibet, and many Buddhist meditation centers around the world. They are usually made of silver and plated with gold. The belief is that the more valuable your mandala offering base, the more auspicious the effects of the ritual. For the filling, you can use rice, wheat, or other grains, and you can place as many precious things as you wish with the grain. I use a mixture of semi-precious stones – crystal, amethyst, tiger eye, jade, citrine, quartz, lapis lazuli, malachite, amber, coral, and so forth. To add greater value to my offering, I also include a few precious stones. You should use beads and colored stones, or anything that symbolizes something of value to you. Always keep your mandala set wrapped up in soft velvet or silk when you are not using it.

### **The Method**

Take some grain in your left hand and hold the mandala base. With your right hand, sprinkle some grain on the base. Wipe the base clockwise three times with your right forearm, tipping the grain away from you. Visualize purifying incorrect motivation. Put more grain on the base. Wipe anti-clockwise three times with your right forearm, tipping the grain toward yourself. Visualize receiving great blessings from the merit field (the buddhas, gurus, or both, whose visualization bestows merit) offer the mandala from your heart. Spread more grain to symbolize precious jewels.



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