

# The power of the Medicine Buddha

By Lama Zopa Rinpoche

The yoga method of the Medicine Buddha was taught by Guru Padmasambhava in the collection of teachings called Jewel Treasure. It was taught to enable those who practiced it to diagnose and treat their patients perfectly, particularly in times when the five degenerations were flourishing.

Because the pure wisdom of the omniscient mind, the dharmakaya, is bound by infinite compassion for living beings, it manifested in various aspects to eliminate different obstacles of living beings. Such deities as the seven Medicine Buddhas manifested in order to pacify the obstacles to the achievement of even temporary happiness, and especially the ultimate happiness of full enlightenment.

The seven Medicine Buddhas are not only very powerful in healing disease, but in purification, for both the living and the dead. The Medicine Buddha practice can purify even those who have already died and liberate them from suffering. It is also powerful in bringing success, both temporary and ultimate.

The reason they also bring success is that in the past when they were bodhisattvas practicing the path to enlightenment, they promised and made extensive prayers to actualize all the prayers of living beings of the degenerate time, when the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha are in decline. They generated a very strong intention to become enlightened for this reason; this was their motivation for meditating on and actualizing the path. This is why it is important to pray every day to Medicine Buddha, not only for the healing of disease, but also for the success of our Dharma practice and other activities.

As the Buddha's holy speech is irrevocable, we can trust the power of the Medicine Buddhas to quickly grant blessings to sentient beings in these degenerate times. If we pray to the Medicine Buddhas we will quickly be able to accomplish everything that we wish. Merely hearing the name of the Medicine Buddha or the Medicine Buddha mantra closes the door to rebirth in the lower realms.

We should not have any doubt in regard to these benefits.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha said in the sutra Medicine Buddha, Beams of Lapis Lazuli: “Ananda, do you believe my explanation of the qualities of this Tathagata?” Kungawo replied, “I do not doubt the teachings of you, the Bhagawan. Why not? Because the actions of a Tathagata’s holy body, speech, and mind are always pure and faultless.” Guru Shakyamuni Buddha then advised, “Ananda, whoever hears the holy name of this Tathagata will not fall into the evil realms of the suffering transmigratory beings.”

When someone is seriously ill, elaborate meditation practices containing the dedicated purposes of each of the Medicine Buddhas are done. It is commonly found that this puja decides whether the person lives or dies. They either recover immediately or die within one or two days with a peaceful mind rather than living with a lot of pain.

Medicine Buddha practice is very powerful. While the Medicine Buddha puja is very effective in cases of serious illness, it is also performed to bring success generally.

It is good to do a Medicine Buddha retreat for one or two months. By practicing these methods, we can gain clairvoyance. A sign of attainment is that patients come to you in your dreams and you diagnose their illness; the next day they actually do come to see you and you can prescribe the exact treatment they need. Another sign is that when you concentrate on the patient’s pulse, you can immediately recognize the disease and prescribe the correct treatment. Also, as you are examining the pulse, many goddesses may appear in space around you and tell you the nature of the disease and its treatment.

Because of the flourishing of the five degenerations, the diagnosis of sickness has changed and new disease patterns have emerged. Doctors have difficulty in recognizing the new diseases and do not know the treatment. These patterns are just as Padmasambhava predicted.

In the presence of the eight Medicine Buddhas – when we refer to eight, we are including Shakyamuni Buddha – Manjushri requested, “As you have promised in the past, please grant a special mantra to bring success quickly to sentient beings of the degenerate time, who have little merit and who are overwhelmed by many sufferings, including diseases and spirit harms. May these sentient beings see all the Buddhas and accomplish all their wishes.”

Together in one voice the eight Medicine Buddhas granted the mantra in response to Manjushri's request.

If we recite the Medicine Buddha mantra as a daily practice, all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas pay attention to us, just as a mother pays attention to her beloved child, and always guide us. Vajrapani, the embodiment of all the Buddhas' power, the four guardians, and other protectors always protect us and guide us. It also purifies all our negative karmas and quickly pacifies diseases and spirit harms. It also brings success; everything succeeds exactly according to our wishes.

The meaning of the short mantra

TA YA THA / OM BEKANDZE BEKANDZE / MAHA BEKANDZE RANDZA  
/ SAMUDGATE SOHA

Bekandze means eliminating pain, maha bekandze means great eliminating of pain. One explanation of the meaning of the first bekandze is that it refers to eliminating the pain of true suffering, not just of disease but of all problems. It eliminates the pain of death and rebirth that are caused by karma and disturbing thoughts. The first bekandze eliminates all the problems of body and mind, including old age and sickness.

The second bekandze eliminates all the true cause of suffering, which is not external but within the mind. This refers to karma and disturbing thoughts. It is the inner cause that enables external factors such as food and exposure to sunlight become conditions for disease.

Scientists claim that sunbaking causes skin cancer. However, without the cause in the mind, there is nothing to make external factors become conditions for disease. Exposure to sunlight is a condition for skin cancer, but it is not the main cause. For those who have created the cause to get skin cancer, the external phenomenon of sunlight can become a condition for skin cancer.

For example, not everyone who sunbakes on the beach gets skin cancer. Also, human beings have been exposing themselves to the sun for many thousands of years, but skin cancer is a comparatively recent phenomenon. The important question is: Why doesn't everyone who is exposed to the sun get skin cancer? The proof that sunlight is not the main cause of skin cancer is that not everyone who is exposed to the sun gets skin cancer.

If someone has created the cause, as long as they do not do anything to purify it, the cause will definitely bring its own result, just as a seed that is planted will definitely result in a sprout as long as it is not eaten by birds and so forth.

Once there is a cause, as long as there is no obstacle to the cause, it is natural to experience its result.

So, the second bekaṇḍze refers to eliminating the cause of problems, karma motivated by disturbing thoughts.

The third phrase, maha bekaṇḍze, or “great eliminating,” refers to eliminating even the subtle imprints left on the consciousness by disturbing thoughts.

The Medicine Buddha mantra actually contains the remedy of the whole graduated path to enlightenment. The first bekaṇḍze contains the graduated path of the lower capable being in general; the second bekaṇḍze, the graduated path of the middle capable being in general; and maha bekaṇḍze, the graduated path of the higher capable being. The whole graduated path from the beginning up to the peerless happiness of full enlightenment is contained in the Medicine Buddha mantra.

Reciting the mantra leaves imprints on our mind, so that we are also able to actualize the path contained in the mantra. It establishes the blessing of the whole path within our heart; we can then generate the whole graduated path to enlightenment, which is signified by bekaṇḍze bekaṇḍze maha bekaṇḍze.

The om is composed of three sounds, ah, o, and ma, which signify the Medicine Buddha’s completely pure holy body, holy speech, and holy mind. Actualizing the whole path to enlightenment purifies our impure body, speech, and mind and transforms them into the Medicine Buddha’s pure holy body, holy speech, and holy mind. We then become a perfect guide for living beings.

With our omniscient mind we are able to effortlessly, directly, and see without mistake the level of mind of every living being and all the methods that fit them in order to bring them from happiness to happiness, to the peerless happiness of full enlightenment.

We also have the perfect power to manifest in various forms to suit every living being and reveal the necessary methods to guide them, such as giving material help, education, or Dharma teachings. Whenever the positive imprint left by

their past positive actions ripens, without delay of even a second, we can reveal various means to guide the living being to enlightenment.

#### How to use the mantra at the time of death

It is important to pray to the Medicine Buddha and to recite the names of the Medicine Buddhas and the Medicine Buddha's mantra. It is excellent, with a bodhicitta motivation, to recite the Medicine Buddha's holy name and mantra in the ear of a dying person or animal, because it will prevent their rebirth in the lower realms. If the dying person can no longer hear the mantras, you can recite them and then blow on their body or on talcum powder or perfume, which you then apply to the body.

#### How to use the mantra to bless meat or dead bodies

It is beneficial to recite the mantra and blow upon meat that you are eating, and even on dead bodies or old bones, because it purifies karmic obscurations and allows the being to be reborn in a pure realm or in the upper realms. If you eat meat, you should make it beneficial for the animal that has been killed by reciting this powerful, purifying mantra before eating it and dedicating strongly for the animal to be transferred immediately from the lower realms to a pure realm or an upper realm and to never be born in the lower realms again.

Even if the animal or human being died hundreds or thousands of years ago and their consciousness is in the lower realms, reciting the mantra and blowing on their bones can transfer the consciousness to an upper realm or to a pure realm. We can also blow on water, sand, sand, or talcum powder and sprinkle it on the bones or skin of a dead animal or person. At the very least, it will shorten the duration of their suffering in the lower realms.

#### How to use the mantra to increase the power of medicine

After they have made medicine, Tibetan doctors use Medicine Buddha meditation and mantras to bless it. The medicine is then more effective because besides the power of all the medicinal plants and other substances it contains, it has additional spiritual power that can help bring a quick recovery and purification of the mind.

By reciting this mantra, we can increase the power of medicine that we are taking or giving to others. Place the medicine in a bowl in front of you and visualize a moon disc above it. Standing on the moon disc is a blue om

surrounded by the syllables of the Medicine Buddha mantra in a clockwise direction. As you recite the mantra, nectars flow down from all the syllables and absorb into the medicine. The syllables and the moon then dissolve into the medicine, which becomes very powerful and able to cure all diseases and spirit harms, as well as their causes, negative karma and delusions. If you are treating someone with cancer, for example, imagine that the medicine has the specific power to cure cancer. The more faith you have and the more mantras you recite, the more power the medicine will have.

How to do the Medicine Buddha practice for a sick or dying person or animal

When you do the Medicine Buddha practice for an animal or person who is sick or dying, visualize the seven Medicine Buddhas (Renowned Glory of Excellent Signs; King of Melodious Sound, Brilliant Radiance of Ability; King of Immaculate Excellent Gold, Radiant Jewel Who Fulfills All His Vows; King of Supreme Glory Who Frees from All Suffering; Melodious Ocean of Proclaimed Dharma; King of Clear Light, He Who Totally Delights in Supreme Wisdom of the Ocean of Dharma; Medicine Guru, King of Lapis Light) one on top of the other, above the animal or person.

First visualize that nectars are emitted from the first Buddha and purify the being of all their negative karmas and obscurations. Recite the name of each Medicine Buddha seven times, then allow it to absorb into the each Medicine Buddha in turn.

With the final Medicine Buddha, recite however many mantras you wish and again visualize strong purification. Think that the animal or person has been completely purified; no negative karma at all exists in their mental continuum, and their body becomes as calm and clear as crystal.

The Medicine Buddha then melts into light, absorbs within the animal or person, and blesses their body, speech, and mind so that they become one with the Medicine Buddha. Their mind is transformed into Medicine Buddha's holy mind. Meditate strongly on that oneness.

You can think that the beams are also emitted to all other sentient beings, especially those who are sick with cancer, AIDS, and other diseases, and purify them. Or you can visualize the seven Medicine Buddhas above the crown of

each sentient being and purify them in that way. Focus particularly on the person you are praying for, but think that there are also seven Medicine Buddhas above the crown of every other sentient being.

Also, if the person is dying, visualize that a tube-like beam is emitted from Medicine Buddha's heart and becomes a channel inside the person. The channel is shaped like an umbrella handle, hollow inside but with no hole at the end, and extends to just below the navel. Red beams shaped like a hook are sent from Medicine Buddha's heart and hook the person's consciousness, which is visualized the size of a mustard seed, but in the nature of white light. It is not concrete or heavy, but is extremely light. The red hook-like beams hooked the consciousness, and it flies up through the channel to Medicine Buddha's heart. After being absorbed into Medicine Buddha's heart, the consciousness emerges from the heart to take place in a lotus in the pure realm of Medicine Buddha. The person then receives teachings from or predictions about their enlightenment from the Medicine Buddha.

If you have strong compassion and stable concentration during this meditation, you might help to prevent the person being born in the lower realms.