

Meditation of the Medicine Buddha

The Radiant Lord of Healing



The lunar month lasts from one new moon to the next. Many Oriental and Eastern traditions mark the eighth day of the lunar month as special. For instance, Mahayana Buddhists celebrate Shakyamuni Buddha's death on the 8th day of the second lunar month, His birthday on the 8th day of the fourth lunar month, and His enlightenment on the 8th day of the twelfth lunar month. It is traditional that the eighth day after the new moon in any month is when the specific rituals for the Medicine Buddha are performed. This is also the time when medicines are compounded that require specific preparation and invocation of spiritual properties.

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For more than a year, more off than on, I worked on writing a meditation about the Medicine Buddha. My goal was to take a relatively traditional form and make it into something that could be a personal transformational prayer, a teaching narrative, or a guided meditation. I made progress on this when I was working on other writing projects because I would use it either as a means of “warming up” or else as a way to distract myself when I became bored with the other work. The intention was always aimed at creating a small pamphlet or chap-book, but the final product never seemed to materialize. Not long ago, I decided that I should finish this project as a way to prompt completion of a larger writing activity. I finished editing the text, and found a public-domain line drawing of the Medicine Buddha to use on the cover. On the internet I found a simple program to create the printed booklets, and made rough mock-ups to get the text and graphic in the right place. Finally, one night I went to sleep with the certain intention that the next day I would finish the project and have booklets ready to mail out to friends by the end of the day. I awoke with a feeling of total focus on the work and made final corrections to punctuation, being very pleased that I had taken wording and ideas from several traditional texts and distilled them into a few hundred words.

Late in the morning I went to the office supply store to purchase the paper for printing the final booklets. As I was driving home, I had the thought that through force of will I was bringing the project to completion, but that in order for it to have true meaning something needed to change within me. I turned on the car radio as the local National Public Radio station was making an announcement that this was the last day of a traveling worldwide exhibit of Buddhist relics sponsored by Lama Zopa, of whose work towards compassion and peace I was very familiar. What was most interesting was that the exhibit of relics was being held at UH-Kapiolani College, which is walking distance from where I live and next to where I work. Needless to say, I felt that visiting this exhibit might bring about the necessary change within me important for manifesting whatever *real* meaning was inherent in my project.

I drove directly to the college, where the exhibit was in the library. The exhibit was of relics of various notable Buddhists going back to the first movement of the philosophy from India into China over 1,500 years ago. The relics were generally very tiny pieces of bone in small glass containers with notation about their origin (i.e., whose bones) and sometimes their

provenance; more recent saints had photographs. All of this around a very colorful and brightly happy large altar covered with flowers and surrounded by offerings of fruit. There were perhaps twenty visitors there, almost all Asian women. There were also about as many people supervising the exhibit including several who were very obviously Tibetan. We all circumambulated the altar/exhibit clockwise. I paused to look at the relics and thought about the changes this philosophy has made in the world. For the most part, Buddhists can disagree about many things, but they generally don't end up killing each other over their differences in belief like Christians or Muslims have over the centuries. Even with the exceptions, this is still remarkable.

After the tour around the relics, I waited in line for a blessing by one of the two lamas. These men, looking much younger than I suspect that they are, had the characteristics that I have come to associate with the "real deal" of spiritual Tibetans: No actions of "holiness" or pomposity, they were smiling at everyone, being genuinely happy. Both had almost feminine features, although one had a manner and shaped beard that made me suspect he could have been a real hit with the ladies if he so chose. What I have found as the giveaway among truly spiritual Tibetan men was present here: a peaceful and happy manner, gentle and slow movements, and the incredibly muscular forearms of someone unafraid of extreme physical work.

I approached the lama with the beard and knelt in front of him. He held a small *stupa*-shaped reliquary in his right hand and placed this on top of my head, while holding the side of my head with his left hand. He then intoned a droning preamble different from what I had heard him use with those before me. After a moment of this, he recited a portion of what sounded like the *Diamond Sutra*. When he was finished, I thanked him and he smiled. As I left, an assistant gave me a red envelope with a small token inside.

Will I have good luck and was I transformed by thousand year old bones being held against my head while someone chants a thousand year old poem? I don't know about the good luck. I do know that I left there changed in a way that not so much *gave me permission* to finish the Medicine Buddha booklet, but rather *made me worthy* to do so within the context of the philosophy. Of course, I am far beyond marveling at the power of synchronicity; I just accept and expect it.

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Sangye Menla, Bhaisajyaguru, Yao Shi-Fu, Yakushi

The eighth day of the lunar month is the day of the Medicine Buddha.

This is the day when rituals for healing and medicine are preferred.

Sit quietly in a meditation posture appropriate for you:

Imagine a time when your potential existence was a single pinpoint of light that arose in the consciousness of the Ultimate Mind. This single thought can be expressed as a sound in your own consciousness right now. Create a pure high-pitched sound in your imagination that represents the initial thought of your existence becoming a unique expression of Ultimate Mind.

Imagine that in front of you there is an invisible doorway between a perfect spiritual realm and your immediate physical presence. The highest forms of creative energy and force can flow through this opening. Create an image of this doorway with your eyes either open or closed. Make it ancient, complete in detail, and real. See this doorway swing open, and looking through it see a beautiful wide meadow filled with numerous plants that have the power to heal all diseases of the physical body. Also see many happy small animals running about; these animals have no fear and can heal all disharmonies of consciousness.

Imagine that through this doorway two brilliant white letters suddenly appear and hover in front of your heart area. The letters are A and H. Hear the sound “ah” as they float in front of you. In your consciousness, hear the high-pitched sound that you created to represent your existence; then hear the sound of the letters. Hear the pure sound in your head and feel the “ah” sound in your throat. Alternate between these two sounds several times. After you have done this, move the idea of both of these sounds to your heart and feel them there. Make these sounds resonant and pleasing. When both of these sounds are in your heart, create a tube of white light going upwards from your heart, through your throat, to the top of your head.

Experience the sudden appearance of the Medicine Buddha in the doorway. He is a mental being radiating light; He is almost translucent and is entirely colored a brilliant blue. He wears the robes of a simple monk and sits in the full lotus posture. The fingers of His right hand gently hold a small plant that He has just picked from the meadow beyond the doorway. This plant symbolizes the healing powers of all physical medicine. The fingers of His left hand point to a small bowl placed in front of Him. This bowl is filled with glowing golden colored sweet smelling nectar. This symbolizes all of the healing powers that can occur through psychological and spiritual change.

Imagine that the place where you are sitting right now is an immense green field surrounded by beautiful trees, spectacular cliffs, and clear blue sky. Feel a warm wind gently moving across your face.

Now, imagine placed around and in front of you every gift of value that one person can give to another. Imagine jewels symbolizing the loving radiance produced by all the kind deeds performed for your benefit. There are chests of gold and silver coins representing all of the physical wealth accumulated by millions of people over hundreds of lifetimes. See the aged leather bound books, rolled scrolls, and handwritten manuscripts representing the entire knowledge that exists. See beautiful flowers and plants symbolizing the life giving and life preserving aspects of Nature. See anything else that, to you personally, represents a gift of great value. After you have seen all of these things in your mind's eye, allow yourself to feel the Love coming to you that you have always desired.

Mentally present all of these things and feelings as gifts to the Medicine Buddha purely as an offering of gratitude. Invite Him to move to a location floating in the air directly above your head. Ask Him to bestow His Love and blessings and healing powers upon you and all creation. Feel the Medicine Buddha floating above you, radiating blue light outwards and downwards. Experience His blue light moving down the tube of white light that you created from the top of your head into your heart.

Hear yourself repeating the following mantra:

*May the deep blue light of the Medicine Buddha
transform my ignorance into wisdom.*

See, hear, and feel yourself reciting this mantra with single-minded concentration and love for the Medicine Buddha. Recite the mantra with the intention that delusion will disappear from your life and that necessary healing will occur.

Imagine that the sound and words of this mantra transform into a spinning wheel of energy on the chest of the Medicine Buddha at His Heart. See rays of bright blue and white light radiating from this Heart-center. Imagine that these rays go outwards to all people, dispelling suffering and disease, and healing even the unknown causes of suffering. Imagine this radiant light touching you and all beings. Have the certainty that this light is going into all beings because of your meditation. Have the knowledge that this light from the Medicine Buddha is healing this Earth, His planet, and all aspects of consciousness.

Close the meditation by finding that your entire body is now the same brilliant blue color as the Medicine Buddha. Imagine that the Medicine Buddha suddenly becomes so translucent that He is no longer visible. Although His image is gone, experience the fact that His presence remains as a glowing blue light around your body. Know that you can always call upon Him to float above you, providing unspoken loving guidance and healing.

Take a deep breath, exhale slowly, and resume your path.