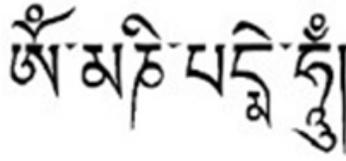


TIBETAN MANTRA AND MALA-BEADS

2018-19 USA Tour and Presentation by Monks of the Labrang Tashi Kyil Monastery in Dehra Dun, India



OM MA NI PAD ME HUM

One can transform impure body, speech, and mind into the pure, exalted body, speech, and mind of a Buddha by practicing the path. The path consists of an indivisible union of method and wisdom.

At its core, a mantra is a method and the basis of a number of religious traditions, scriptures, and prayers. Carefully chosen and used silently, mantras are said to have the ability to help alter subconscious impulses, habits, and afflictions. When spoken or chanted, mantras direct the healing power of Prana, life force energy. In Vedic practices, mantras can be used to energize and access spiritual states of consciousness.

A mantra needs to be done on a regular basis for several months for its desired effects to take place. Living in this complex world can easily lead to getting lost in detail. Mantras are a reminder of the simpler approach to life and to focus on those things that inspire and create happiness.



The famous mantra, *Om Mani Padme Hum*, invokes Chenrezig, the bodhisattva of compassion. When said with fervor and mindfulness, this mantra will bestow blessings on all sentient beings. The meaning of the six syllables is great and vast.

OM is composed of three sounds: "Ah," "O," and "M." which symbolize the practitioner's impure body, speech, and mind. They also symbolize the pure exalted body, speech, and mind of a Buddha.

An impure body, speech, and mind can be transformed into a pure body, speech, and mind. We know we can transform them because all the Buddhas are examples of beings who were once like ourselves. But then, in dependence on the path, they became enlightened. From Buddha's point of view, there is no one who was free from fault and possessed all good qualities from birth. The development of a pure body, speech, and mind comes from gradually leaving impure states and becoming transformed into the pure. The next four symbols indicate the path to attain a pure body, speech, and mind be attained.

MA-NI means "jewel," symbol of love and compassion. A jewel is capable of removing poverty. It resembles the altruistic mind of enlightenment. i.e., love and compassion, which may remove the difficulties of cyclic existence. A jewel also fulfills the wishes of sentient beings. Similarly, the altruistic mind that becomes enlightened fulfills the wishes of sentient beings.

PAD-ME means "lotus," symbol of wisdom. A lotus grows from mud, but it is not sullied by the fault of the mud. Thus, wisdom may place one into a situation of non-contradiction. Without this wisdom, there would be contradiction. There are many different types of wisdom. For example, the wisdom of realizing impermanence, the wisdom of realizing emptiness; the wisdom of realizing that persons are empty of being self-sufficient or substantially existent. The main wisdom is the wisdom of realizing emptiness.

HUM symbolizes the unity of method and wisdom, which is necessary to achieve the purity of body, speech, and mind.

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MALA • BEADS

Beads are mainly used to count mantras, which can be recited for four different purposes: to appease, increase, overcome, tame by forceful means.

<p>To Appease. Crystal, pearl, or mother-of-pearl, clear or white in color. The mantra serves to clear away obstacles, such as illness and other calamities, and to purify oneself of unwholesomeness. (100 beads).</p>	
<p>To Increase. Gold, silver, copper or lotus seeds. The mantra serves to increase lifespan, knowledge and merit. (108 beads).</p>	
<p>To Overcome. A compound of ground sandal-wood, saffron, and other fragrant substances. The mantra is meant to tame others, but the motivation for doing so should be the pure wish to help other sentient beings and not to benefit oneself. (25 beads).</p>	
<p>To Tame by Forceful Means. Raksha seeds or human bones. The purpose needs to be absolutely altruistic. The one person capable of performing such a feat is a Bodhisattva motivated by great compassion for a being who can be tamed through no other means, e.g., extremely malicious spirits or general afflictions, visualized as a dense black ball. (60 beads).</p>	

Beads made of Bodhi seed or wood can be used for many purposes, for counting all kinds of mantras, as well as other prayers, prostration, circumambulations, etc.

The string common to all beads consists of nine threads, which symbolize Buddha Vajradhara and the eight Bodhisattvas. A large bead at one end stands for the wisdom which realizes emptiness. A cylindrical bead, surmounting the larger bead, symbolizes emptiness itself. Both symbolize having vanquished all opponents.