**OFFERING OF THE MANDALA**

The following instruction on a special type of offering made by Buddhists consists of the edited transcripts to a series of lectures delivered by Geshe Lobsang Tharchin not long after his 1972 arrival in the United States. This second edition has been printed to satisfy requests for the now out-of-print version of 1977, which was completed through the efforts of John Brzostoski (director of the Center of Oriental Studies, where the talks were held), Steve Foster, and Artemeus Engle - who served as translator since the Geshe had not yet learned English.

Geshe Tharchin ("Geshe" is a Tibetan doctoral title) is a Buddhist monk who completed studies at Sera-Sutra (1929-1953) and Gyu-me Tantric (1953-1959) monastic universities of Lhasa, Tibet. He is one of the few remaining scholars who attained this rank, with hlarampa honors, before the loss of Tibet. Over the past nine years, the Geshe has taught Buddhist philosophy and logic, as well as Tibetan language, to interested Americans at his centers in New Jersey and Washington, D.C.

We are pleased in the glossary to introduce Tibetan script produced on a computerized typewriter designed by Geshe Tharchin's student, Steve Bruzgulis. Copies of the program, suitable for home computers, are available without charge from the MSTC address given above. We would lastly like to thank John Pettit for preparing the illustrations for reprinting.

**Offering of the Mandala**

We should praise the qualities of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. This is said to be for the purpose of generating faith towards the Three Ratnas by recalling their virtues.

Even though we may not have the true, genuine Bodhi Mind within us naturally, we must nevertheless try to change our very attitudes in such a manner that our motivations1 will correspond as closely as possible to those of the real Bodhisattvas. The way to accomplish this is to reflect that both of your parents, mother and father, of this life, have protected and cared for you out of love and kindness. All sentient beings , likewise, have been your mother and father in one of the infinite lives you have assumed in Samsara; therefore, they have all extended the same love and also the same kindness to you.

Recalling such kindness, you should generate the wish to do something in return to repay that kindness; not through a small or insignificant act, but through providing to all sentient beings the highest benefit of all - that of establishing them all in the state of Perfect Enlightenment. Thus, you should give rise to the supreme aspiration of desiring to achieve Buddhahood yourself in order that you might gain the ability to establish all sentient beings in Enlightenment.

This is the attitude which one should have in listening to the Mahayana Teachings of the Lord Buddha. If one is able to generate such a feeling, then one does hold the attitude of a Bodhisattva, even though it might have been produced artificially and only with some degree of effort. If the Spiritual Teacher presents the Teachings with an attitude of Bodhi Mind and the listeners maintain that attitude also, then the virtue which results from such an endeavor, if it were transformed into some physical form, would be too great to fit into the entire universe.

Therefore, it is of tremendous benefit for you to give rise to this attitude, before you undertake any activity.

There is a widely followed practice in Tibetan Buddhism which is called the Four Preliminary Activities.2 This practice is the accumulation of 100,000 prostrations, 100,000 acts of refuge, 100,000 Mandala Offerings, and also 100,000 recitations of the one-hundred syllable mantra of Vajrasattva. This practice has been performed innumerable times in Tibet and is still being practiced daily by a great many Buddhists in India. I am reasonably sure that it is even practiced by a number of persons in this country as well.

I have discussed at great length the practice of performing prostrations, in the past, and so I have chosen today to speak about the practice of the Mandala Offering.

Many people in the West have a keen interest in the subject of Mandalas. I have often been asked numerous questions about this subject by many different people, but until now, I have not been able to find the proper occasion to give a reply.

The Sanskrit word Mandala signifies "to take something of essence."3 The lowest level is to assume a human birth in a future life. The next level is that of achieving Nirvana. And the level above that, or the ultimate goal, is the attainment of Perfect Buddhahood. Further, there are two ways in which one can achieve this goal of Buddhahood: one is according to the path of the Sutras, while the other way is according to the path of the Tantras.

Thus, these three goals involve four different levels of practice and they also represent the types of "essence" one might possible choose to strive for. The particular level one would pursue would depend upon the individual's capacities.

In every act we undertake, we are impelled by a specific motivation. It is very important to be aware of what one's motivations are, because they are, in fact, the determining factor with regard to the consequences or results which follow from any given act. For example, if one offers the Mandala with a motivation that is the desire to assume a human birth in a future life, then this act will be a cause for bringing about that result. Similarly, if one offers the Mandala with a motivation which is a desire to achieve Nirvana, although the act itself is identical, the motivation will direct that same act to become, then, a cause for the attainment of Nirvana.

Regarding the two forms of Mahayana practice, that of the Sutras and that of the Tantras, the ultimate goal of both is exactly the same. The only difference between them, then, lies in the methods which are used in pursuit of that goal. According to the Sutras, it is necessary that one accumulate merit for a period of Three "Countless Kalpas." One the other hand, according to the Path of the Tantras the same quantity of merit can be accumulated, at the very longest, with the comparatively short period of sixteen human lifetimes. The above was stated explicitly by Buddha, in one of the Tantra scriptures.

In fact, it is possible to achieve Buddhahood in much less time than that. Specifically one can achieve Buddhahood immediately after one's death while in the Bardo state. Or it is even possible that one might be able to achieve Buddhahood within this very lifetime prior to one's death.

Many great beings have been able to accomplish this, both in India and Tibet. I'm sure that most of you have heard of the Saint Milarepa who, although he had accumulated great sin during the earlier years of his life, was still able to attain Perfect Enlightenment in the later part.

In more recent times, a Tibetan Lama named Trehor Kyorpon, who escaped Tibet the same year as the Dalai Lama, was able to attain Perfect Enlightenment during his lifetime. This Geshe from Drepung Monastery passed away only a few years ago in Dalhousie.

Also, presently living in Dharamsala, India, is His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who is the reincarnation of Bodhisattva Arya Avalokiteshvara (Chenrezik). With him are the Senior Tutor of the Dalai Lama, Ling Rinpoche, who is in his actual nature the Buddha Yamantaka (Shinje She), and the Junior Tutor, or Trichang Rinpoche, actually the Buddha Chakra Samvara (Khorlo Dompa). So there are really such people alive in the world today. Because we cannot see the actual nature of their wisdom through looking at the outer appearance we are not aware of this. They are living examples of what we can aspire to; for through our own sincere efforts we, too, can achieve Enlightenment within this very lifetime. Further, it is even possible to attain this goal in the short period of twelve years. Also, it is possible to attain Enlightenment within an even shorter period, of three years and three months. In fact, there is even a practice for achieving Enlightenment by determining not to rise from your meditation posture until your goal is attained. If you entertain doubts about whether it is really possible to achieve this ideal, you need not have that uncertainty, because through your own determination and efforts you can achieve Perfection in any of these ways.

The latter methods of practice I have discussed involve the Path of the Tantras. However, no matter what path you follow, the only way that you can actually achieve Enlightenment is through accumulating merit, and the Mandala Offering is one very good way for you to do this. Indeed, it is one of the most effective practices which one can undertake for this purpose.

There are many unique properties about the Mandala Offering. For instance, if one offers one's own material riches to the Three Ratnas for the purpose of paying homage to them, regardless of what the face value of the offering might be, it is most important for one to make the offering without feeling the slightest reluctance or unwillingness. However, it is usually the case that in making of any such offering, there usually does arise a degree of reluctance. Or, if you do not experience such a feeling, you quite possibly will feel some degree of attachment to fame. That is, you might be thinking of yourself, as you are making the offering: "This is, indeed a wonderful thing that I am doing. How virtuous other people will consider me for making this valuable offering!" Due to such an attitude, what would otherwise have been a truly virtuous act becomes robbed of much of its worth.

However, in making a Mandala Offering, you will hardly be able to experience an ungenerous thought. And there is actually no reason for feeling any desire for fame, either.

When making an offering of material riches one must do so in such a way that this offering will not lead to the accumulation of a bad deed. Not only is the manner in which you make this offering important but, also, an object being offered should not have been acquired through any devious means, such as by theft. Here too it is not actually possible for a Mandala Offering to have such a fault.

These are a few of the unique qualities of this practice which make it especially valuable. The Mandala Offering is, also, very easy to practice because there is very little physical effort required to perform it.

In any description of the many benefits of the Mandala Offering, one usually is told the story of the Bikshuni Padma. She had been an Indian princess before she became a nun and, through the practice of the Mandala Offering, she was able to meet directly the Bodhisattva Arya Avalokiteshvara (Chenrizik), as clearly as we can see one another here in this room. And by asking for and receiving instruction from this great Bodhisattva she, as a result, was able to attain Enlightenment.

Also, the great Tzongkapa was able to meet many Buddhas by practicing the Mandala Offering. In particular, this practice was extremely helpful to him in his efforts to realize in a direct way the most profound of all meanings, the Shunyata Nature of all things.

Another illustration of the great importance of this practice is the story about a meeting between two of the disciples of Atisha. Atisha's closest Tibetan disciple, who was an Upasaka named Dromtonpa, one day visited the place where another disciple, named Gonpawa, was staying. It happened that the latter's ritual instrument for practicing the Mandala Offering was covered with dust, as it had not been used for some time. Dromtonpa asked the reason why he had not been practicing the Mandala offering. Gonpawa answered, "I spend all my time meditating so I have not been able to find time to offer the Mandala." Upon hearing this, Dromtonpa criticized him strongly saying that even Atisha, their Guru, whose spiritual development was vastly greater than Gonpawa's, and whose meditation was much more profuound than his, offered the Mandala three times every day. After this, Gonpawa practiced the Mandala Offering more assiduously and so as a result the depth of his understanding was greatly furthered.

These accounts are mentioned for the purpose of inspiring you to take up this practice of the Mandala Offering.

The proper motivation that one should have for making the Mandala Offering was mentioned earlier. The practice consists of the ritual offering of the world, and all its wealth, to the Object of Refuge as an act of veneration. The Mandala itself is a symbolic representation of the world and the most valuable things that are contained in it. There are actually three forms to the practice: the Offering of the Outer Mandala, the Offering of the Inner Mandala, and the Offering of the Secret Mandala. The last of these is a practice that is done by followers of the Tantra Path.

First, I will describe to you how to perform the Practice of the Outer Mandala. To begin with, the base of the Mandala, called the Vajra Bhumi, or Indestructible Ground of Gold, is held with the left hand. It must never be held with an empty hand. Therefore, you must also have some grain in your hand as you hold it. At the same time, holding some more grain in your right hand, begin alternately sprinkling grain on the surface of the base and wiping it with your right forearm. At first you should rub the base in a clockwise direction, quite a few times.

There is great significance to these ritual gestures. It might appear that you are doing nothing more than, simply, wiping a round flat piece of metal with your forearm and intermittently scattering grain upon it. However, these acts have great meaning with regard to pursuing the Path. You should consider the dirt and tarnish, which are on the metal base of the Mandala, to be a representation of all the misdeeds of body, speech, and mind which have ever been committed by you, since beginningless time. The seeds of such acts remain within your being, their abiding force obscuring your mind with respect to the understanding of the true nature of reality.

The weight caused by such misdeeds can only be removed by relying upon the proper antidote to them. And of all the many types of antidotes to that bad karma, the one which is by far the most powerful is a mind which realizes the meaning of Shunyata. Thus, consider your right forearm as representing that mind, and the act of rubbing the foundation as symbolizing the application of that powerful antidote to your past misdeeds, thereby effecting a neutralization of their negative force.

Also, the grain that is sprinkled upon the surface of the base should be considered a symbol of the Six Paramitas of Dana (Generosity), Shila (Morality), Kshanti (Patience), Virya (Fortitude), Dhyana (Meditation), and lastly, Prajna (Wisdom). The practice of these Paramitas, likewise, represents a formidable antidote to one's bad karma. Thus, these gestures are meant to signify the process of purifying one's past misdeeds.

The following short verse is a formula for taking refuge and also for generating the Bodhi Mind. It is to be recited while you perform these gestures.

 **Sanggye chudang tsokkyi choknam la**

 **Jangchup bardu dakni kyabsu chi**

 **Dakgi jinsok gyipa didak gi**

 **Drola penchir sanggye drubpar shok.**

 **I go to refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha**

 **Until Enlightenment is attained.**

 **By these acts of Dana, etc., performed by me,**

 **May I achieve Buddhahood for the benefit of all living beings.**

After wiping the base of the Mandala numerous times in this clockwise fashion and reciting the formula for taking refuge and generating the Bodhi Mind, you should now do the following: Wipe the base three more times, but now in a counter-clockwise direction. As you are doing this, you should reflect either that this represents a receiving of the blessings of the body, speech, and mind of all the Buddhas or that it symbolizes the attainment of all the three fundamental attitudes of the Path: Renunciation,4 Bodhi Mind,5 and Right View.6

In addition to the symbolic meaning of the gestures, there is also another most significant reason for this rubbing of the base with the right forearm. It is taught in the Tantras that the human body contains 72,000 channels - or arteries7 - and that, through these channels (which are hollow in structure), pass vital airs.8 The nature of the mind is such that it will follow the movement of the vital airs, and the relationship between the two is often described a similar to that between a horse and its rider, the horse representing these vital airs of the body, and the rider representing the mind.

By coordinating the movement of this vital air, one is able to generate nobler attitudes and prevent baser ones from arising with much effectiveness. However, unless one is accomplished at this, the vital airs will not move easily through the proper channels. All these channels are connected to the heart. In particular, the one which has a direct influence on the arising of the Bodhi Mind is know to extend through the right forearm. Therefore, the external stimulus applied to that channel by rubbing the right forearm upon the base of the Mandala can serve to improve the movement of the vital air which flows along that channel and, as a result, one will be able to give rise to the Bodhi Mind with greater ease.

After these preparatory exercises one will at last be ready to arrange the Mandala Offering itself. It is explained in the Buddhist scriptures that - when the earth formed at the beginning of the present Kalpa - Mt. Sumeru,9 which is the greatest of all mountains, arose in the center. The outer rim of the world is said to consist of a wall-like mountain, which is made of iron.10 Thus you should, first, form a thin circular line of grain on the outer edge of the Mandala base to represent the iron mountain, and then place a heap of grain in the center to represent Mt. Sumeru.

Next, in the quarter which is facing you, place a heap of grain to represent the Continent of the Eastern Direction, which is named Purva Videha.11 Proceeding now in a clockwise direction place another heap of grain in the second quarter, to represent the Southern Continent, Jambudvipa.12 In the third quarter, place another heap to represent the Western Continent, Godaniya,13 and in the final, fourth quarter, place a heap to represent the Northern Continent, Uttarakuru.14

Then, in the same order, place one heap on either side of each of the four continents to represent the eight sub-continents.

Each of these four continents also has a special treasure which is its greatest asset. In the Eastern Continent, it is a mountain of jewels;15 in the Southern Continent, it is the wish-fulfilling tree;16 in the Western Continent, it is a cow which gives an endless supply of gold;17 and in the Northern Continent, it is crops which grow naturally, requiring no cultivation.18 Thus you should place additional grain on top of each of the heaps which represent the various continents, in order to represent these four treasures.

The next part of the Mandala Offering concerns the wealth of sovereign authority. Traditionally, this is represented by the Seven Ratnas19 of the Chakravartin,20 or the Wheel-Wielding Monarch. The Chakravartin is the monarch of highest sovereignty, and it is said that he appears in the world only during an age of very great fortune. The Seven Ratnas are his possessions, and they are as follows. The first is the Chakra Ratna,21 or Precious Wheel, with which the Monarch is able to control the four continents. The second is the Mani Ratna,22 which is endowed with marvelous properties. Third is the Stri Ratna,23 his queen. The fourth is the Parinayaka Ratna,24 the Monarch's minister of state. Next we have the fifth, the Hasti Ratna,25 which is the elephant of great power and courage. Sixth is the Ashva Ratna26 the Monarch's white horse of great stamina and discipline. Seventh is the Grihapati Ratna,27 the chief of military forces. These seven Ratnas constitute the most important natural properties of a sovereign. In addition to these Seven Ratnas, the Vessel of Inexhaustible Wealth28 is also to be included. Therefore, one should place another eight heaps of grain, in a circular fashion, just inside the circle of grain formed by the heaps representing the continents and the subcontinents.

The next part of the offering consists of the eight goddesses bearing offerings, intended to please the one to whom they are being presented. First is the goddess who performs pleasing gesticulation;29 second, the goddess who bears garlands;30 third is the goddess of song;31 fourth, the goddess of drama,32 fifth is the goddess of flowers;33 sixth, the goddess of perfume;34 seventh is the goddess who bears offerings of light;35 and, lastly, the goddess bearing scented water.36 These eight goddesses are represented by eight more heaps of grain, also arranged in the form of a circle forming a ring inside the previous two.

Then, slightly to the right of the center as you face the Mandala Offering, you should place one heap of grain as a representation of the Sun37 and another heap on the left side to represent the Moon.38 After this, place one more on the far side of the Mandala, as a representation of a jewel-studded parasol;39 and one on the side nearest you, to represent the victory banner symbolizing a triumph over the mental obscurations.40

Finally, over the entire Mandala Offering, you should pile still more grain, which represents all the remaining forms of riches41 and objects of enjoyment42 found in the world, and indulged in by both humans and deities alike.

If one uses the traditional ritual instrument for arranging the Mandala Offering, then one should complete the offering by adding on the three rings and top ornament to the mound of grain which has been constructed. With the rings, we signify the lower levels of Mt. Sumeru which, it is written, is made up of four levels, which reach to the awesome height of 80,000 Yojanas.43 On the very top of Sumeru lies the palace of the Lord of Deities, who name is Shakra.44 This palace is represented by the crown ornament.

In short, this Mandala Offering is a symbolic representation of our world as it is described in the Buddhist scriptures. That entire world, together with all its many riches, is offered then to one's Guru and the Three Ratnas as a form of homage and worship.

As I mentioned before, the purpose of this practice is to accumulate merit. If we are in fact able to accumulate merit by offering an object as small as a single stick of incense, than an offering of the entire world with all of its riches should certainly accumulate merit of an inconceivably great amount. Since, then, all the riches to be found in the world including both those which are human and also those which are divine could not be measured by the ordinary mind, one can surmise that an offering of such immensely great value would, likewise, result in the accumulation of a correspondingly immense degree of merit.

Some of you may feel uncertainty about the true value of this practice. Perhaps you wonder how it could be of any real value to imagine that a mound of grain heaped up in front of you is actually the entire world. However, such a thought reflects a lack of understanding of what merit is, and how it is accumulated.

All karma, good or bad, is of three fundamental types: karma of body, karma of speech, or karma of mind. The last of these three, or karma of mind, is the strongest, yielding the greatest results.

Thus both good and bad karma can come from mental activity alone. If you should, for example, give rise to the desire to kill every single human being on the face of this earth, with all sincerity, it is easy for you to see how this would constitute a great misdeed even if you did not initiate any physical, or verbal, activity to carry out this desire. If, similarly, through faith and devotion to your Guru and the Three Ratnas, you should generate the desire to offer the entire world and all its wealth to them, constructing a model of this world and all its wealth to give your thoughts a more definite order and structure, then surely such activity would constitute a great virtue. You should have no doubts that a very great amount of powerful karma can be accumulated through such activities.

Not only are you to think that the Mandala contains the entire world; you must also submit it to a process of transmutation, whereby you convert it from a mundane, impure world into a Pure Buddha-Field. By doing so, the amount of merit is increased by 1,000, or even by 100,000 times.

After you have done all the above, you will have completed the arrangement of the object to be offered, and are now ready to perform the act of offering it. To do so, first you should invite the Guru and, also, the Three Ratnas to appear before you. Then, holding up the Mandala which you have prepared, recite the following verse:

**Sashi pukyi jukshing metok tram**

**Rirab lingshi nyinde gyenpa di**

**Sanggye shingdu mikte oolwar gyi**

**Drokun namdak shingla chupar shok.**

**This earth anointed with incense and strewn with flowers,**

**And Mt. Sumeru, adorned by the four continents, the Sun and Moon,**

**I transmute into a Buddha-Field and offer:**

**May all beings partake of the Field of Supreme Purity.**

**Idam Guru Ratna Mandalakam Niryatayami.**

Contained in every grain of this offering there is a fertile seed for the attainment of Perfect Enlightenment. This is because of the sincere aspiration for Perfect Enlightenment, which has motivated you to perform the offering. One strives for Enlightenment in order to become able to benefit all sentient beings in the universe. Thus, as the number of living beings in the universe in infinite, the virtue which is derived from this act is also without limit.

Once the offering has been completed, than you should dismantle it. There are two different variations of how this may be done. One way is to tilt the offering forward away from you, and in doing so, to reflect that those to whom you offer the Mandala have happily accepted it. Or you can instead, tilt the offering toward you and dedicate the merit to receiving the blessings of your Guru and the Three Ratnas.

This concludes the explanation of the practice of offering the Outer Mandala.

You can see that the instrument which has been used in this demonstration is made from copper and beads and the mound itself is composed of grain.45 The one on the altar, however, is made of silver, and in Tibet many Buddhists used Mandalas made of gold, decorated with precious stones.

In making an offering of any kind, you should always keep in mind that what you offer to the Object of Refuge should be of the best quality that you can afford. In doing so, the act becomes more meaningful. However, if you are unable to make the Mandala instrument of precious metal such as gold, silver, or even copper, then it would be adequate for you to use one which is made from ordinary stone, wood, or china. In fact, if you are unable to acquire this instrument at all, you can still do this practice simply by making the symbolic gesture of the Mandala Offering with your hands.46 The configuration of your hands, then, contain the same meaning as the Mandala just described. The two fingers raised upwards in the center represent Mt. Sumeru. The four corners, formed by interlocking the other fingers, represent the four continents - and you should imagine, as before, that all the wealth contained in the entire world is present in your hands. When the offering is completed, if you would like to visualize those to whom you have offered the Mandala as happily accepting it, then you should proceed to unfold your hands away from you. If, on the other hand, you feel it is more appropriate to receive the blessings of the Object of Refuge, to whom the offering is made, then you unfold your hands toward you.

A practice of even deeper meaning than the Outer Mandala is that of offering the Inner Mandala. In this offering of the Inner Mandala, there is no need whatsoever for external movement or symbolic gestures of any kind. The entire practice takes place in the realm of the mind. You make this offering by conceiving of your own body as being, in reality, a complete Mandala of the world.

You would begin by reflecting that the outermost portion of your body, or the external layers of skin, are of the nature of the purest gold. This is the same thing as the Golden Foundation described in the discussion of the Outer Mandala. Then you should focus your attention upon your blood and on the flesh of your body. You should conceive of your blood as a divine ambrosia which covers this Golden Foundation and keeps all impurities down. Your flesh, in turn, should be conceived of as being flowers, such as the ones which you would find in a heavenly garden.

The trunk or main part of your body is to be viewed as Mt. Sumeru, which is not simply a large mountain but is the highest, most majestic mountain of the world, and which is composed of four different kinds of precious materials: Sapphire, Ruby, Gold, and Silver. You should conceive of your four limbs (arms and legs) as being the four continents of the world, and the smaller appendages (toes, fingers, ears, nose, tongue, etc.) as being the subcontinents.

You should conceive of your head as being the mansion of the Lord of Deities, which is located on the peak of Mt. Sumeru. The Sun and the Moon, also included in the Outer Mandala, should be represented by your two eyes. Your heart should be viewed as the most valuable jewel of the entire universe, and the other internal organs - such as the lungs, liver, etc. - are to be viewed as being all of the remaining wealth, or fortune, of both humans and deities.

When you have finally succeeded in completing the above you will have formed a Mandala of the entire world with your body. Once this Mandala has been prepared, you should transmute it into a Pure Buddha-Field and then offer it to your Guru, and the Three Ratnas, by reciting the verse of offering as before. After you have made the offering you should reflect that this act of veneration has brought great pleasure to the Object of Refuge, which in turn results in not only you, but also all living beings, receiving the blessings of the Guru, Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

The essential difference between the Outer Mandala and the Inner Mandala is the material used to construct the offering. In the Outer Mandala it consists of external objects, while in the Inner Mandala it is one's own body, or the Rupa Skhanda.

Finally, in the offering of the Secret Mandala, there are ten different levels of explanation to the meaning. As with all Tantric practices, it is strictly prohibited for one who has knowledge of these practices to speak of them to one who is not a "mature" individual. Maturity, here, is not meant in the general sense. Rather, a mature individual is one who is thoroughly proficient in all the basic practices of Mahayana Buddhism which are common to both the Sutras and the Tantras, and is therefore completely qualified - and ready - to enter the Path of the Tantras. Such an individual who is desirous of following this path must first receive the power needed to practice the Tantras, and that is conferred through a special initiation rite.

Therefore, I can only discuss the practice of the Secret Mandala by touching on a few of the basic concepts which it involves.

The Sutras describe the nature of the Buddha in great detail. In explaining the bodies of the Buddha four bodies are mentioned. However, these four bodies can be considered as two basic bodies which are - first - the mental body, know as the Dharmakaya,47 and - second - the form body, called the Rupakaya.48

The mental body of the Buddha consists of the Jnyana49 of Omniscience. This Jnyana can be said to be Transcending Wisdom. If an ordinary person holds a handful of grain in his hand, he can clearly see the shape, the color, size, and amount of grain which he is holding. However, the Jnyana of Omniscience of the Buddha is able to perceive - with this same degree of clarity - all knowable things which exist in the Universe: mental, physical, neither mental nor physical, permanent, and also those of the past, the present, and the future. And it perceives all of them at once.

The form body of the Buddha, the Rupakaya, is of absolute purity and is luminescent like a rainbow. This body is also adorned with the thirty-two major, and the eighty minor, signs of excellence.

These two bodies are the ultimate goals we are trying to achieve when we strive for Buddhahood or Perfect Enlightenment. And, furthermore, there are two unique causes which are the principal factors for the achievement of each of these two bodies. The body called the Dharmakaya is produced by what is termed the Accumulation of Wisdom51 and the Rupakaya is produced by what is termed the Accumulation of Merit.51 The Accumulations are amassed by the development of two specific elements. One is the Bodhi Mind, which accomplishes the Accumulation of Merit and, ultimately, produces the Rupakaya. The other one is Wisdom, which is the direct perception of Shunyata and accomplishes the Accumulation of Wisdom that, ultimately, produces the Dharmakaya body of the Buddha.

These two types of mind are the foundation of the Secret Mandala. Bodhi Mind consists of mind-consciousness,52 which is accompanied by two aspirations.53 One is the desire to be of benefit to all sentient beings in the highest possible sense, which means to establish them in the state of Enlightenment. The other aspiration is the desire to attain Perfect Enlightenment yourself, so that you will be able to fulfil the former desire.

The Wisdom which perceives, directly, the meaning of Shunyata54 is the knowledge that penetrates the true condition of all things - that of being empty of any independent, self-existent nature.

In the practice of the Secret Mandala, one offers the two minds we have just discussed, the Bodhi Mind and the Wisdom which perceives Shunyata, in the form of a Mandala to the Object of Refuge. That is, one takes what is in actuality these two minds and, conceiving them in the form of a Mandala, offers them to the Guru, Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

Since these two types of mind are the primary causes for attaining the highest goal we could possible strive for, it is only natural that their true meaning is not immediately evident to us. Nevertheless, we are living in an extremely fortunate age in that it is possible to meet great Spiritual Teachers.

Through their benevolent grace and our own faith and determination, the opportunity for us to achieve the deepest wisdom is very much open to us.

In teaching you these practices of the Mandala Offering I have shown you a very effective practice for accumulating merit. These three forms of the Outer Mandala, Inner Mandala, and Secret Mandala could very easily be included in one's everyday devotions. Thus, it is my sincere wish that you will not merely have listened to what I said, but that you will also become inspired enough to adopt the practice for yourself.

**The Extensive Mandala Offering**

**Om vajra Bhumi Ah Hum, wang-chen ser-gyi sa-shi, Om Vajra Reke Ah Hum, chi chak-ri kor-yuk-ki kor-we u-su, rii-gyal-po ri-rab,shar lu-pak-po, hlo dzam-bu-ling, nub ba-lang-chu, chang dra-mi-nyen.**

**Lu-dang lu-pak, nga-yab dang nga-yab-shen, yon-den danglam-chok-ndro, dra-mi-nyen dang dra-mi-nyen-gyin-da.**

**Rin-po-chei ri-wo, pak-sam-gyi-shing, du-joi-ba, ma-mu-pa-yi lo-tok.**

**Kor-lo rin-po-che, nor-bu rin-po-che, tzun-mo rin-po-che, lun-po rin-po-che, lang-po rin-po-che, ta-chok rin-po-che, mak-pun rin-po-che, ter-chen-poi-bum-pa.**

**Gek-mo-ma, treng-wa-ma, lu-ma, kar-ma, me-tok-ma, duk-pu-ma, nang-sel-ma, dri-chab-ma.**

**Nyi-ma, da-wa, rin-po-chei duk, chok-le-nam-par-gyal-we gyel-tsen.**

**U-su hla-dang-mii peln-jor pun-sum-tsok-pa ma-tsang-wa me-pa tzang-shing yi-du-ong-wa di-dak drin-chen tza-wa-dang gyu-par che-pe peln-den la-ma dam-pa nam-dang, kye-par-du yang la-ma lo-sang tub-wang dor-je-chang chen-pu hla-tsok kor-dang che-pa nam-la shing-kam ul-war-gyi-o. Tuk-je dro-we dun-du she-su sol.**

**She-ne-kyang dak-sok dro-wa mar-gyur nam-ke ta-dang nyam-pe sem-chen tam-che-la tuk-tze-wa chen-pu go-ne jin-gyi lab-tu-sol.**

**Sa-shi pu-kyi juk-shing me-tok tram,**

**Ri-rab ling-shi nyin-de gyen-pa di,**

**Sang-gye shing-du mik-te ool-war gyi,**

**Dro-kun nam-dak shing-la chu-par shok.**

**Idam Guru Ratna Mandalakam Niryatayami.**

**Om Vajra Bhumi Ah Hum, adamantine golden ground. Om Vajra Reke Ah Hum, Encircled by an outer fence. In the center is located Mt. Meru, king of mountains. In the easterly direction is the continent called Videha, in the south is Jambudvipa, in the west Godaniya, in the north Kuru.**

**[A pair of sub-continents straddles each of these continents. They are:] Deha and Videha, Chamara and Aparachamara, Shata and Uttarmantrina, Kurava and Kaurava.**

**[Each of the continents has a unique asset. They are:] The jewel-mountain, the wish- granting tree, the cow supplying one's wants, the crop not needing cultivation.**

**[Eight articles possessed by royalty are:] the Precious Wheel, the Precious Gem. the Precious Queen, the Precious Minister, the Precious Elephant, the Precious Horse, the Precious General and the Treasure-filled Vessel.**

**[The eight offering goddesses are:] the Actress, the Garland Bearer, the Songstress, the Dancer, the Flower Bearer, the Incense Bearer, the Lamp Bearer, and the Perfume Bearer.**

**[Also included are:] the Sun, the Moon a bejewelled umbrella, and a victory banner.**

**Adding to this all the abundant riches of gods and men - complete, pure, and lovely - I offer this paradise to the Divine Assemblage of the most kind, glorious, holy root and lineage Gurus - especially to the Guru, Great Sumati Munendra Vajradhara - together with their retinue. In your compassion may you accept it for the sake of all beings.**

**And, having accepted it, may you in your great love bless all beings, myself and others, mothers equal in extent to space.**

**This earth anointed with incense and strewn with flowers,**

**And Mt. Sumeru, adorned by the four continents, the Sun and Moon,**

**I transmute into a Buddha-Field and offer:**

**May all beings partake of the Field of Supreme Purity.**

**[The offering mantra:] Idam Guru Ratna Mandalakam Niryatayami.**