

Mandala Offering

OM BENZA BHUMI AH HUM, wang chen ser gyi sa zhi
 OM BENZA REKHE AH HUM, chi chak ri kor yuk gi kor
 wei ü su ri gyelpo ri rap, shar lü pak po, lho dzam bu ling,
 nup ba lang chö, chang dra mi nyen,
 lü dan lü pak, nga yap dang nga yap zhen,
 yo den dang lam chok dro, dra mi nyen dang dra mi nyen gyi da
 shar du, lang po rin po che, lhor, kyim dak rin po che,
 nup tu, ta Rimpoche, jang du, tsün mo rin po che,
 shar lhor, mak pön rin po che, lho nup tu, kor lo rin po che,
 nup jang du, nor bu rin po che, jang shar du, ter chen pöi bum pa,
 nang gi shar du, nyi ma, nup tu, da wa.

(OM indestructible base AH HUNG)

Mighty golden base

(OM indestructible wall AH HUNG)

Outside, a surrounding wall encircles it.

In the center, the king of mountains, Mt. Meru.

East, the continent ‘Noble Body’. South, Jambu Fruit Land,

West, ‘Cattle Enjoyments’, North, ‘Unpleasant Voice’,

The sub-continents of ‘Noble Body Land’:

Yak tail and Other Yak tail islands,

‘Deceitful’, and ‘Skilled in Mantra’,

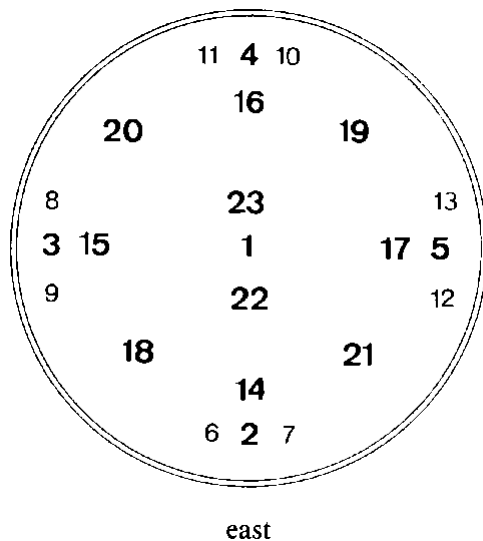
‘Unpleasant Voice’ and ‘Moon of Unpleasant Voice’ (islands)

In the East, Precious Elephant. In the South, Precious House keeper.

In the West, Precious Horse. In the North, Precious Queen.

In the South-East, Precious General. In the South-West, Precious Wheel.

In the North-West, Precious Jewel. In the North-East, Great Treasure Vase. Inside, on the East, the sun. On the West, the Moon.



This mandala is slightly different from the mandala we usually say. Usually we use the 37 heap mandala. This one is the 23¹. Basically it is the same. The mandala is very important. It is a good way to accumulate merit and purify negativities. The word *mandala* is the same that is used for the deity's mansion or for the mandala offering. Literally it means 'center', the center of the universe. The mandala of a deity, like Yamantaka or Heruka, is also the center of the universe. For that mandala that is the only universe that exists and it is the center of all activities. Likewise, here, the mandala offering is the whole collection of the universe. Talking about generosity! You give the whole universe, what else could you give! We are visualizing here, we are not really giving it, but remember, this practice is first pretending to do it.

The ground, as in other mandalas, is the great pure golden ground. So by using the most precious substances you can find you accumulate also more merit when you make the offering. Traditionally, in Tibet, a lot of pure 24 karat gold mandalas were around. Many people had one. In Tibet there were lots of thieves, but somehow they never took things like that. Particularly for teachings like this, almost everybody would bring a mandala, since before and after teachings elaborate mandala offerings were done. So everybody carried their set with them.

And somehow nobody would steal it during teachings like this. If you left it in your house and went away, with the door open,

¹ It is also sometimes called the 25-heaps mandala. In that case, ground and fence are also counted.

then thieves might take it too, but not in a teaching with a couple of thousand people, where they would leave the mandala set in between teachings and go to the bathroom or to eat and would never lose. I never heard of one being stolen. And many of them were pure gold 24 karat. By itself 24 karat gold is not stable, so they would put silver inside and cover it with 24 karat gold. So whatever you can find, use the best. However, if you don't have anything else, even a stone slate will do. When Tsongkhapa accumulated 100,000 mandala offerings in retreat he used a flat stone that was outside somewhere near his cave. He would go out and clean the stone first.

Cleaning the mandala. I would like to remind you: for cleaning the mandala you have to use your skin. You can't do it with the sleeve or your green sweater. You have to use the wrist of your right hand. Audience: What if you are left-handed? Rimpoche: I don't think it makes much difference, but the idea is that there is a wisdom channel here on the side of the forearm. I am sure that wisdom channel is also on the side of the left forearm. When cleaning you wipe it three times clockwise to accumulate merit and three times counterclockwise to purify negativities. Every time you pour a little bit of the offering material and either clean it off or collect it to yourself. Tsongkhapa used this stone and cleaned it with his forearm. After some time he started bleeding, but he continued. These were the good old days. I don't recommend to you people to do it that way. It doesn't work like that today. We are in the 21st century.

The mandala is based on a center, surrounded by eastern, western, southern and northern continents, plus the subcontinents between that.

Then (second circle) it goes to the elephant in the east, the housekeeper in the south. (Here, housekeeper means house holder or home owner. It is the master, not the servant.) In the west is the horse, in the north the queen. Further there is the minister, the wheel, the wishfulfilling jewel and the treasure vase.

Internally, on the third circle, in the east there is the sun, in the west is the moon.

And then the actual offering: without any hesitation and without hoping for anything in return you offer it the entire universe to the Lama.

*dak zhän lü ngak yi sum long chö, dü sum ge tsok chä
rin chen mandal zang po kün zang, cho päi tsok chä pa
lo yi lang nä lama yidam, kön chok sum la biil
tuk jei wang gi zhe nä dak la, jin gyi lap tu söl.*

**Body, speech, mind, wealth and virtues of the three times - my own and others' -
This fine, precious mandala and a mass of Samantabhadra offerings,
I mentally take and offer to my guru and yidam and the three jewels.
Please accept them through compassion and bestow your inspiration.**

This is the 23 or 25 heap mandala². You go along with whatever the ritual describes. You can't say that you prefer another version and do that one. You don't mix them. There is a system and you have to follow it. Here it means 23 heaps. However, they give you a choice here, saying that you can do the 7 heap mandala as in SA ZHI PO KYI... Note, the 37 heaps don't correspond with the 37 practices of Buddhadharma. You can't just put everything that has 37 parts and correlate them together

² This 23-heap mandala is described in: Tsongkhapa's *A Book of Three Inspirations*, to be found in: Glenn H. Mullin, *Tsongkhapa's Six Yogas of Naropa*, pg. 235-236. When called 25-heap mandala, the base and will are included.