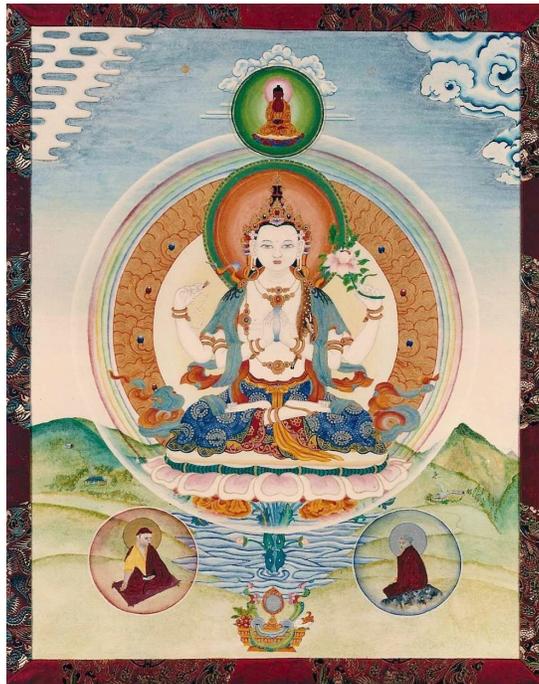


MAHAKARUNIKA – CHENREZI

'GREAT CONTINUUM SEEING'

a sadhana for realizing wisdom and compassion in the midst of ordinary living



*This short sadhana was prepared and offered along with teaching,
in the beautiful Bay of Plenty, Aotearoa, in April 2012 by Tarchin Hearn
May it bring benefit to many.*

Preliminaries

Prepare for meditation by taking up a posture of body and mind that feels easeful and alert. Then contemplate refuge and aspire to awaken for the sake of all beings.

Refuge

I take refuge in wisdom, compassion and non-clinging awareness.

I take refuge in the full richness of here.

I take refuge in the ever present immediacy of now.

Truth is all pervading.

It is the thusness of this moment,
the suchness that we are.

My refuge is to live within the truth.

I take refuge in Buddha; the natural state of complete authenticity and presence.

I take refuge in Dharma; the universal teachings and demonstrations of awakening.

I take refuge in Sangha; the unfolding community of all life.

May I actively cultivate: generosity, wholesome relating, patience, skilled use of energy, a continuity of caring and enquiry, and profound understanding.

May I and all beings awaken speedily, for the sake of everything and everyone.

We take refuge in love and clear seeing.

We live courageously in this world of birthing and dying.

Our hearts embrace all companions on this path of lucidity and freedom.

Thus contemplating refuge, feeling your ground and support; breathing with refuge, resting in refuge, and exploring this sense of how and what one might be.

Bodhisattva Aspiration

Beings and phenomena are innumerable

I aspire to meet them, with kindness and interest.

States of suffering are inexhaustible,

I aspire to touch them with patience and love.

Dharmas are immeasurable,

I aspire to explore them deeply and thoroughly.

The ever-present mystery of interbeing is beyond words and symbols,

I aspire to surrender within it fully.

Through the practice of this meditation, may I realize the clear seeing and great compassion of Arya Chenrezi that stirs the depths of *samsara*, liberating all beings from clinging and ignorance. May myself and all beings, in all times and planes, be freed from suffering.

Essential Practice

Within the flow of whatever is occurring, cultivate a continuity of profoundly nourishing ease, suffused with serene alertness and vivid discernment. Whether sitting, standing, lying down, or walking, let everything relax in its own place.

Contemplating the Spacious Openness of Interbeing

Right now, in the very midst of your current experience, contemplate the essential interbeingness of everything. Recognize how each aspect of your existence; body, speech and mind; inner and outer; micro and macro; is interweaving with everything else in the universe. Nothing stands independently on its own. Everything is created, sustained and supported by everything else. All arisings are mutually shaping.

With this understanding, where is the ongoing 'me' that, so often, seems apart from the rest of the universe? The sense of a separate self is seen as empty and illusory, as awareness opens to the fullness of the present moment. One feels clear, relaxed, and vitally awake. Breathe with this for a while. All forms, sounds and thoughts are like the wind blowing in space, emptiness moving in emptiness – spacious openness intermingling with spacious openness.

Now, in a relaxed manner, repeat the following mantra while contemplating its heart meaning. Recognize that the mantra, yourself, and the act of saying it, are the magical play of emptiness/awareness – the spacious openness of interbeing.

OM SÚNYATA JÑANA VAJRA SVABHAVA ATMAKHO 'HAM

OM,
Enter through interbeing,
Ultimate diamond state,
May this become firm, 'HAM
3x's or more

Breathe with this for a few moments while touching, (and being touched by) a sense of the profound purity and mysterious completeness of all phenomena.

Yoga of Skilful Fabrication

Now, spacious, clear and unimpeded, imagine on the crown of your head, a shimmer of energy. It coalesces into a white lotus in full bloom, radiant and beautiful.

In the center of the lotus there appears a moon-disc, lying flat and radiating moon-colored light which swirls above the moon disc gradually forming into a white HRIH letter.

Rainbow light of five colors, white, red, yellow, green and blue – altogether appearing as white – radiates out from the HRIH as an offering to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas throughout space and time. It returns with their blessings. *(in the form of light dissolving back into the HRIH)*

Again the light of profound understanding radiates throughout the universe, illumining all beings and revealing their true interbeing nature. As the light returns, all the seeds of karma, the motivations for activity, are purified.

Then, in a flash, the HRIH dissolves into light and transforms into Chenrezi, the essence of all Refuge.

Sitting in the vajra position upon a white moon-disc and lotus, Chenrezi is radiant with a pure white body, the color of newly fallen snow in bright sunlight.

Of four arms, two are held in prayer and contain a wish fulfilling gem, the second right hand holds a crystal rosary, and the second left hand holds the stem of a beautiful white lotus.

Clothed in the finest of silk garments embroidered with gold, and adorned with many superbly jeweled bracelets and necklaces, a golden-brown skin of an antelope drapes the left shoulder.

On Chenrezi's head is a many-jeweled crown and, above this, sits Amitabha, the red Buddha of boundless light and boundless love.

A stainless full moon supports the back. The three jewels reside in Chenrezi who emerges as the unity of all refuges in essence.

Now, with great reverence and sincerity, one prays and pays homage to Chenrezi. As one prays, through one's interbeing, sense that all sentient beings are praying together.

With a vivid sense of the presence of Chenrezi, pray until you feel moved in the depths of your being. You could use the words below or any other words or prayers that inspire you.

Faultless one of pure white color
With Buddha Amitabha
Adorning your head,
Looking with greatly merciful eyes on all that live
To 'Great Continuum Seeing', Mahakarunika, Chenrezi,
We reverently bow down.

Having prayed, from the sacred body of the Most Compassionate One, there emanates a white (rainbow) light. This light comes from Chenrezi's whole body, including Amitabha, and especially from the heart.

The light, immeasurable and inconceivable, pervades the entire universe – inner and outer – purifying all beings and all manifestation.

The outer realms become *Deva Chen*, Amitabha's Pure Land Paradise – an immeasurable interbeing of responsive knowing. All the beauty – sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches – of nature is here.

Now one begins to repeat Chenrezi's mantra. When saying the mantra, imagine that all sentient beings are repeating it together, sounding like thousands of bees.

OM MANI PADME HUM

The rainbow light – especially from Chenrezi's heart – pours down through the crown of your head and the heads of all sentient creatures. It cleanses your body, permeating the entire of your being. As the light streams into you and through you, all unwholesomeness resulting from the activities of body, speech and mind is healed and oneself, along with all sentient beings, becomes the body, speech, and mind of greatly compassionate Chenrezi.

As Chenrezi, one is radiant, clear and utterly present. All manifestation appears insubstantial and translucent, from the smallest particle to the vastness of cosmic space. What before may have been experienced as impure is now seen as wondrous and worthy of investigation. Form, sound and awareness are inseparable from emptiness in their true interbeing nature. All is jewel-like luminosity. The entire body of experience feels like a rainbow.

Inner Yoga

One imagines in one's heart a moon disc and a six petalled lotus. In the centre is a beautiful white HRIH. Around the HRIH are the six syllables of the mantra. White rainbow light radiates from the HRIH revealing and illumining all beings and all manifestations throughout the universe.

As you inhale, imagine that all illness and suffering is drawn through your nostrils, into the mandala in your heart where it is transformed in the light of clear seeing and deep understanding. As you exhale with the mantra, the clear light of compassion radiates out, nurturing and supporting all beings. *Breathe with this for a while. This is the practice of Tonglen.*

When the Tonglen practice comes to its natural conclusion, imagine the HRIH syllable in the centre of your heart mandala is shining even more brightly, with a diamond white radiance. Any remaining illness throughout the universe dissolves in this light and is absorbed back into the HRIH and is purified. *One now ceases saying the mantra.*

Yoga of Effortless Naturalness

In the all pervading stillness of profound completeness, sense yourself and the purified outer realms as being one with the body of Chenrezi – a living matrix of great continuum seeing. Everything is experienced as a dynamic embodiment of wisdom/compassion. All is included. Nothing is left out.

Chenrezi's body (*which is your body*) dissolves, simultaneously from the head down and the feet up, into the lotus in your heart. The lotus and the six syllables dissolve into the HRIH letter. Then, the HRIH dissolves, a part at a time, until nothing but a dot is left and it too is dissolved into the essential, natural emptiness – the ungraspable spacious openness of interbeing.

One rests without visualization or concepts. Simply remain alert without distraction, without either following the thoughts that arise or attempting to stop them; without accepting or rejecting; without hoping or fearing. Appreciate this *rigpa*, this dancing of awareness that knows no clinging.

At this stage, if your attention needs to fix on something, focus on breathing and let go of everything else. One meditates in this manner as long as one wishes.)

Having rested, for some time, as the primordially pure state – spacious, clear, naturally occurring, ever fresh awareness – Chenrezi reappears in the form of yourself, just as you are.

All forms are expressions of Great Continuum Seeing.

All sounds the melody of suchness.

All thoughts the blissful unity of wisdom and compassion.

Everything is the heart-breath presence of Chenrezi.

(Carry this way of perceiving into all the activities of your life.)

Sharing the Merit

Considering the lack of clarity and the confusion that is still manifesting in the world, consciously share the wholesomeness of this practice with all sentient beings and reaffirm your heartfelt pledge to strive to deepen in wisdom and compassion, for the sake of everything and everyone.

May myself
and all sentient beings
realize the enlightenment of Chenrezi,
the living presence of great continuum seeing,
the natural union of wisdom and compassion.

Conclude by doing a brief review, reflecting on the practice without doubt, skepticism or undue embellishment.

By the power of these wholesome activities,
May our lives be rich with awakening.
Living thus, may we abandon all unwholesomeness.
Through the endless storm of birth, illness, old age and death,
May we help all beings to be free from suffering.

SARVA MANGALAM

ENDNOTES

In the deep practice-traditions of Buddhadharma, it is often said that Wholeness and Truth is beyond words and symbols. In spite of this, spoken language is often used to point out the many rich dynamic inter-layerings of lived experience, or perhaps we should say, on-going living process. A word or phrase is not the same as the actual thing it refers to, in fact, in a deep sense it doesn't even 'represent' a thing. A word is a complex resonance between two beings, involving body, speech and mind, that gives rise to a degree of shared experience. The meaning of the word has something to do with one's own embodied sensing of this shared experience. In the process of two beings coupling together through the medium of sound we might say they are 'linguaging' together. With this in mind, we can begin to appreciate the difficulties that arise in any process of translation, especially if our motivation is to nail down some exact and objectively correct meaning. Meaning is richer, more fluid and multilayered. Having said this, here are a few possibilities for extending your experience of this sadhana.

In Tibetan language, *Chenrezi* is the name of the bodhisattva of compassion, an unfolding manifestation of wisdom and compassion or, put in another way, the ineffable union of emptiness (*sunyata*) and compassion. In some traditions, Chenrezi is also known as *Avalokitesvaro* (Skt.) which is commonly translated as "Knower of Worlds" or "All Seeing One". In Chinese traditions, Chenrezi is known as *Kuan-yin*, the Goddess of Mercy, in Chinese.

Mahakarunika (Skt.) means 'Great Compassion' and is sometimes used as an epithet for Chenrezi. 'Chenrezi' is really a phonetic spelling. In Tibetan scholastic script it is correctly spelled *Spyan ras gzigs*, which wouldn't give you much of a clue as to how to say it. The *Spyan* part is actually pronounced *chen* and it literally means eye. The Tibetan word that is scholastically spelt '*Chen*', means great, large and powerful. *Ras* or "*re*" is related to the idea of continuum or continuity. The great dynamic continuity of reality just as it is, is sometimes referred to in Buddhism as '*suchness*'. *Gzigs* or "*zi*" is a root for the verb to see. It also means to shine, brightness, clearness and splendor. One could play with these derivations and come to a richer more multi-leveled understanding.

Chenrezi, the bodhisattva of wisdom/compassion, is the play of great continuum seeing; a powerful continuity of seeing/knowing/experiencing. Chenrezi is the state of greatly seeing the continuum of Being; or a continuous seeing of greatness, or suchness seeing or shining – radiant suchness, clear suchness.

Compassion, the capacity to sensitively respond to others in life supporting ways, is deeply intertwined with deep seeing/understanding. From the perspective of *Mahamudra*, a great wisdom tradition within Tibetan Buddhism, 'great continuum seeing' or 'vast continuity of clarity' is the very nature of mind itself.

OM SUNYATA JNANA VAJRA SVABHAVA ATMAKHO 'HAM

SUNYATA => emptiness, spaciousness, openness, unpindownableness.

JNANA => knowledge, wisdom, ever-fresh awareness.

VAJRA => diamond, unshakable, firm, utterly grounded.

SVABHAVA => essence of being.

ATMAKHO 'HAM => roughly paraphrased as; 'May I realize everything to be . . .'

ATMAN => oneself; essence, nature, character; the body, intellect, mind.

Putting it altogether, we might arrive at something like,

OM, may I realize everything, to be spacious, ever-fresh awareness, the unshakable essence of all being.

Or, in a modern way;

OM, enter through interbeing, ultimate diamond state, may this become firm, HAM

OM MANI PADME HUM

This mantra of Chenrezi is popularly, but I think unhelpfully, translated as 'Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus.'

Om is a *bija* or seed syllable which invokes a sense of totality and all encompassing completeness.

Mani is popularly translated as jewel or gem, inferring something beautiful and precious, multifaceted and clear. In its Sanskrit roots it is related to mind, thinking, intelligence, discernment.

Padme (often pronounced *pehma* or *peh-meh*) is lotus, flowering, unfolding, blossoming; a lotus flower lifts itself clear from the often swampy water, in which it flourishes.

Hum is another essentially untranslatable *bija* which invokes a sense of bringing this realization home, or, realization within oneself.

As you say the mantra, you might contemplate the whole universe and all the parts that make it up, as a flowering (*padme*) of intelligence (*mani*). Your very being is a union of something clear and discerning, soft and supporting, which nurtures the realization of wholeness in your own lived field of experience, and that of others.

HRIH

HRIH is a *bija* that invokes the sense of heart, core or essence. It derives from the Sanskrit word *hridaya* which means heart, not the muscular pump in your chest, but heart as in the heart of the matter, core, truth, ground or root. In Buddhist traditions the heart is the centre for the mind, not the head. So the heart of the matter is mind – 'that which knows'.

The pronunciation of HRIH can emphasize the 'r' in a rolling and explosive way. Or it can be a soft 'r' with lots of escaping air as if one were speaking, not from the mouth but directly from the heart. With this pronunciation the feeling can be very internal and intimate.

Rigpa (tib.) => the state of naturally present, ever fresh awareness, devoid of ignorance and dualistic fixation