

Offering, Receiving Blessing, and Reunifying with the Natural State

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This meditation, adapted from the mandala offering ritual of Tibetan Buddhism, provides a profound way to communicate with your Buddha nature. Imaging your Buddha nature before you as the Buddha provides a symbolic way to offer yourself completely to your deepest nature and become more receptive to its qualities—total openness, all-inclusive love, compassion, and wisdom. As offering and receptivity deepen, the ritual deconstructs its own symbolism by offering itself back to the reality that underlies the symbol. The mind can relax its narrow grip on dualism and reunify with its most natural state: the infinite expanse of openness and awareness, Buddha mind.

Settling: Sit in a relaxed way, with back straight, eyes gazing gently downward. Come down from the thinking mind into the body. Let the breath settle into its own natural rhythm while breathing into the abdomen so you feel it expand with each inhale. Feel the abdomen expanding and contracting with each breath. Let that feeling draw you into it more and more, breath by breath.

Envision the Buddha before you, radiant with all the qualities of enlightenment: all-pervasive wisdom, all-inclusive love and compassion and liberating energy. Think of the radiant Buddha before you as one with your Buddha nature, and one with the actualized Buddha nature of all your spiritual teachers and their teachers. *Let a strong wish arise to be completely offered up* to the Buddha's qualities—to be offered up so completely to what the Buddha embodies that you become one with the Buddha, one with your deepest spiritual nature.

Outer offering

Let that strong, sincere wish manifest as radiance from your heart like a rainbow, radiance which transforms into beautiful, luminous offerings of all the senses—the most beautiful sights, sounds, scents, tastes, and touches that you can imagine, filling all of space, the whole universe, transforming all into a radiant, pure realm of offerings. The Buddha envisioned before you joyfully receives the offerings, absorbing them as rainbow light into his radiant body.

Inner offering

- Step by step offer all of your possessions to the Buddha as radiance from the heart. And imagine that the Buddha joyfully accepts and absorbs all those offerings as radiance. Then offer all aspects of your work or activity to the Buddha as radiance from the heart, which the Buddha accepts and absorbs. Then offer all of your spiritual qualities as radiance from the heart; then your relationships. Then offer all your expectations and assumptions as radiance from the heart.

- Recall your most familiar emotions—hopes, fears, desires, joys, sorrows, self-doubts, feelings of despair, anger, envy, delight, grief, passion, etc. As you recall each emotion, let the object of the emotion, and your sense of self within the emotion, become spontaneous radiance from your heart totally offered up to the Buddha. (Slowly, one emotion at a time, offering the most familiar emotions repeatedly).

- Now offer all of your thoughts, cognitions, feelings, perceptions, and senses of self even as they arise. As soon as they arise, they become rainbow light offering from the heart, absorbed into the Buddha.

Receiving the blessings and energies of the Buddha

- Having offered so much, now receive the purifying energy and radiance of the Buddha's liberating love, compassion and wisdom deeply into your body, heart, and mind. Let the Buddha commune with your basic goodness and dignity through that radiance, beyond all limiting thoughts. Imagine a gentle shower of radiant, purifying energy coming from the Buddha into your whole body and mind.

-Receive it deeply into every part of your body, every cell.

-Receive that gentle radiant energy into all your layers of suffering, struggle, worry and anxiety, allowing all feelings and emotions to be encompassed in its healing radiance.

- Receive that radiant energy into every thought as it arises, every feeling, cognition and perception, and into the subtlest channels of body and mind.

Inmost offering: reunifying with the natural state

- Finally, let yourself dissolve within that radiant energy, which is then absorbed into the Buddha. Dropping the visualization, simply let the mind settle back into complete openness and simplicity, releasing all frames of reference. Let all phenomena of experience, sensed as insubstantial radiance, arise and dissolve by themselves in total openness: self-arising, self-dissolving, self-offered to their own luminous awareness. Rest thus, one with the Buddha's infinite mind, the natural state of all-pervasive openness and awareness undivided.

Dedicating the spiritual power of practice to full enlightenment

By the spiritual power of this practice

May the pure, brilliant sun of bodhicitta

Dawn in each and every heart and mind

Dispelling the darkness of suffering and confusion

Unstoppably—until all are fully illumined and awakened