

This new section of Mandala will highlight a featured practice in each issue. Through shared practice we aim to further connect the worldwide FPMT community.

100 Million Mani Retreat

Lama Zopa Rinpoche has taught extensively on the benefits of reciting OM MANI PADME HUM, the mantra of Chenrezig, the Buddha of Compassion. *Mandala* recognizes the 100 Million Mani Retreat, which Rinpoche has encouraged centers to organize as part of a collective effort to accumulate extensive merit, as this issue's Featured Practice.



In 2000, Lama Zopa Rinpoche requested that Chenrezig Institute (CI) in Queensland, Australia conduct a 100 Million Mani Retreat on an annual basis, as was the traditional custom of Tibet. With enthusiasm and the blessings of Rinpoche's presence, the first Mani Retreat at CI commenced later that year. With Rinpoche's permission, CI opened up the retreat to "home retreaters" in an effort to

have already registered for this event with many others opting into the home retreat option. Students can participate at any level to receive the blessings of millions of mantras.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche has put together a sadhana specifically for the 100 Million Mani Retreat. The sadhana comes in a long retreat format for those participating in the actual retreat and a shorter daily practice format for those who would like to do the retreat from home and contribute to the official count.

The long sadhana draws from the Nyung Nä practice, using the preliminary practices and both the front- and self-generation practices, visualizations of Chenrezig and the six deities (the ultimate deity, deity of sound, deity of syllables, deity of form, deity of mudra, and deity of sign). Interspersed with these meditations are requesting prayers, both from the Nyung Nä and written by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, and of course the recitation of Chenrezig's mantra, *OM MANI PADME HUM*. Other sessions of the long retreat sadhana were written by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, and contain lam-rim meditation and multiple visualizations for reciting the mantra. The short "at home" sadhana contains the abbreviated version written by Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

FPMT Education Services is offering a free download of the short sadhana, *A Brief Sadhana of the Compassion Buddha, Arya Chenrezig*, to *Mandala* readers wishing to participate in the retreat from home. You can find the sadhana at: www.mandalamagazine.org

To register, participate or pledge a daily number of mantras to Chenrezig Institute's Home Mani Retreat visit: www.chenrezig.com.au/content/view/174/269/ or contact Caroline Crossman at: carolinecrossman@gmail.com

To register or participate in Institut Vajra Yogini's May Mani Retreat please visit: www.institutvajrayogini.fr

adapt the retreat to busy Western lifestyles and time constraints and to ensure that the maximum involvement of practitioners could occur. The retreat would still continue as a formal retreat at the center, and could now include people from the Dharma community who couldn't physically be there, but who wished to be involved. During eight years of annual retreats, the Mani recitations received by CI has totaled over 428 million, eighty percent coming from the pledges of home retreaters. The next Mani Retreat scheduled for CI is April 14-30, 2009. The ninth Home Retreat began on November 19, 2008 and will continue through until Saka Dawa on June 7, 2009.

This May, Lama Zopa Rinpoche will lead the 100 Million Mani Retreat at Institut Vajra Yogini in France for the first time. Hundreds of students from all over the world

Lama Zopa Rinpoche on the benefits of the 100 Million Mani Retreat:

The benefits of reciting the Compassion Buddha mantra are infinite, like the limitless sky. Even if you don't have much intellectual understanding of Dharma, even if the only thing you know is *OM MANI PADME HUM*, still the happiest life is one lived with an attitude free of the eight worldly concerns. If you live your life with that pure attitude free of attachment clinging to this life and spend your life just chanting *OM MANI PADME HUM* – this six-syllable mantra that is the essence of all Dharma – that's the purest Dharma. It looks very simple, very easy to recite, but when you think of the benefits, it's not simple at all. Here I'm going to mention just the essence of its infinite benefits.

Reciting this Compassion Buddha mantra once completely purifies the four defeats of breaking the four root vows of self-liberation [*pratimoksha* vows] and the five uninterrupted negative karmas. It is said in the tantra *Padmatrawa* that it purifies the four root downfalls and the five uninterrupted negative karmas, and that all other negative karma without exception also gets purified.

It is also said in the discourse called *Exalted Eleven-Faced One*, "Bhagawan [Destroyed, Qualified, Gone Beyond], my heart mantra has such great miracle power that by reciting it just once, the four root downfalls of self-liberation are purified." If you recite this mantra precisely, as explained in the text, there is no question that you will receive all these benefits.

Because we have met the Buddhadharmas, and especially this method – the practice of the Compassion Buddha and recitation of his mantra – it is easy to purify negative karma and collect extensive merit and thus to achieve enlightenment. We are unbelievably fortunate. Therefore, there is nothing more foolish than not taking advantage of this great opportunity. Normally, we get continuously distracted and waste our lives. Not only that, but all actions done with ego and the three poisonous minds of anger, attachment and ignorance create negative karma, the cause of suffering. In all existence, there is nothing more foolish than using this perfect human body to create only suffering.

If you're feeling guilt in your life, you can overcome it through the purification of attending this retreat. The retreat is not just chanting mantras with sadhanas, but also includes taking the Eight Mahayana Precepts, if not every day, at least frequently. Whatever merit you collect that day increases 100,000 times. This becomes such a quick and easy way to

purify, collect extensive merit, achieve enlightenment and liberate sentient beings from unimaginable suffering and bring them to enlightenment quickly.

Even if you know the teachings on how to meditate on bodhichitta, you still need to receive the special blessings of the deity, Compassion Buddha. You receive these by doing the meditation and recitation that we practice in the Mani Retreat. Therefore, recitation of *OM MANI PADME HUM* is one way to actualize bodhichitta – to transform your mind into bodhichitta and make your meditation on bodhichitta effective.

Without bodhichitta, you cannot cause all happiness for all sentient beings. You cannot do perfect work for all sentient beings, and you cannot achieve the complete qualities of the realizations and cessation, even for yourself.

Thus, everyone is most welcome to join the one hundred million *OM MANI PADME HUM* mantra retreat. 🌀

Excerpted from the prologue of Teachings from the Mani Retreat by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, published by Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive and available for free download here: www.lamayeshe.com/index.php?sect=article&id=395

UPCOMING AUSPICIOUS DAYS FOR PRACTICE

On Buddha Days and full and new moons, the merit of virtuous activities is multiplied. On these days Lama Zopa Rinpoche recommends taking the Eight Mahayana Precepts in addition to any prayers and practices we engage in.

BUDDHA DAYS

May 30, the day of Lord Buddha's conception

June 7, the day of Lord Buddha's birth, enlightenment and parinirvana

FULL AND NEW MOONS

(Tibetan 15th and 30th days)

April 9, 25

May 9, 24

June 7, 22

The FPMT Foundation Store offers for sale the LIBERATION calendar, a traditional Tibetan lunar calendar including auspicious days and more, produced by Liberation Prison Project: www.fpmt.org/shop