

I often used to think, “How does turning the prayer wheel become Dharma practice?” I had this question in my mind, simply because I was ignorant as to the benefits of the practice. I didn’t know how beneficial it is in terms of purification. Just touching and turning a prayer wheel brings incredible purification and accumulates unbelievable merit. One day I saw one old text with a short explanation of the lineage of the prayer wheel practice and a few lines on how to visualize and meditate when you do the practice. After reading this, I developed faith that the practice had valid references and was meaningful.

If you have a mani prayer wheel in your house, your house is the same as the Potala, the pure land of the Compassion Buddha. Simply touching a prayer wheel brings great purification of negative karmas and obscurations. Turning a prayer wheel containing 100 million om mani padme hum mantras accumulates the same merit as having recited 100 million om mani padme hums. In that few seconds, you perform so much powerful purification and accumulate so much merit. Turning the prayer wheel once is the same as having done many years of retreat. Prayer wheels stop harm from spirits and other beings and also stop disease. Anyone with a disease such as AIDS or cancer, whether or not they have any understanding of Dharma, can use the prayer wheel for meditation and healing.

If someone with AIDS, cancer or some other disease meditated on the visualizations below for as many hours as possible, there would definitely be some effect. I know quite a few people who have completely recovered from terminal cancer through meditation. Even though the person might not know about Dharma, about reincarnation or karma; because they want to have peace of mind now and a peaceful death; because they care about having a healthy body and a healthy mind,

they should use this extremely powerful and meaningful method of healing.

I would like to emphasize that every prayer wheel can be used by sick people for healing. This practice is very practical and very meaningful. A prayer wheel makes the place very holy and precious, like a pure land.

Visualizations to do while turning the wheel or turning and circumambulating at the same time:

Visualize light beams coming from the mantras in the prayer wheel, illuminating you and purifying you of all your disease and the causes of disease, your negative thoughts and the imprints of these left on your mental continuum. Then visualize the light illuminating all sentient beings and purifying all their sufferings, as well as their negative karmas and obscurations.

Or you can visualize that beams are emitted from the mantras and, like a vacuum sucking up dust, they hook all the disease and spirit harms and, most importantly, the cause of disease, which is negative karmas and obscurations. All these are absorbed or sucked into the prayer wheel. While reciting five or ten malas of the mantra, visualize purifying yourself in this way.

At the end recite some mantra while visualizing that the beams emitted from the prayer wheel purify all the sufferings and obscurations of the sentient beings of the six realms. These absorb into the prayer wheel and all sentient beings, including you, are then liberated, actualizing the whole path and becoming the Compassion Buddha.

Excerpted from a teaching given by Lama Zopa Rinpoche at Land of Medicine Buddha, June 1994. This version shortened from the original by Venerable Gyalten Mindrol, FPMT Education Services, June 2010.