

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—pervasive love, compassion, openness, 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 natural state: the infinite expanse of openness and awareness, Buddha Mind.

(1) Abdominal breathing: Sit in a relaxed, comfortable way with back straight, eyes gazing gently downward. Begin with a slow, deep breath, inhaling into the abdomen so it gently expands, then exhaling *slowly* and *completely*, releasing all worries as you exhale. Pause for a moment at the end of the exhale before inhaling again. *Repeat several times.* Then, while continuing to breathe from the abdomen, let the breath settle into its own natural rhythm.

Envision the Buddha before you in the form most inspiring for you (such as Shakyamuni, Tara, or Chenrezig), radiant with all the qualities of enlightenment: unchanging, unconditional love and compassion, all-penetrating wisdom, and liberating energy. Think of the Buddha before you as one with the heart of all your spiritual benefactors and one with your own deepest nature. Let a strong wish arise to be totally 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.

(2) 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 sense—the most beautiful sights, sounds, scents, tastes, and touchables that you can imagine, filling all of space, the whole universe, transforming all into a radiant, pure realm of offerings. The Buddha before you joyfully receives the offerings, absorbing them as radiance into his/her luminous body.

(3) Inner Offering: Step by step offer your body, all your possessions, all your spiritual qualities and merit, your relationships, and all aspects of your work as radiance from the heart to the Buddha, who joyfully receives and absorbs the radiance. Similarly offer all your assumptions, expectations, hopes, and fears.

—**Recall** your most familiar emotions—worries, anxieties, fears, desires, angers, feelings of inadequacy, jealousies, depressive tendencies, despair, sexual passions, etc. As you recall each familiar 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).*

—**Offer** all of your cognitions, feelings, thoughts, perceptions even as they arise. As soon as they arise, they become rainbow light offering from the heart, absorbed into the Buddha.

(4) Receiving the blessings and energies of the Buddha: Having offered so deeply, now deeply receive the liberating energy and radiance of the Buddha's love, compassion, and wisdom deeply into your body, heart, and mind. Let the Buddha commune with you through that radiant energy, beyond all limiting thoughts. Imagine a shower of radiant energy coming from the Buddha into your whole body.

—**Receive** it deeply into every part, every cell.

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

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

(5) Inmost Offering, Reunifying with the Natural State: Finally, let the energy sweep you away, so you merge into complete oneness with the Buddha. Dropping the visualization, simply let the mind fall completely open, releasing all points of reference. Let all phenomena of experience, sensed as insubstantial radiance, arise and dissolve of themselves in total openness: self-arising, self-dissolving, self-offered to their own radiant awareness. Rest thus, one with the Buddha's infinite mind, the natural state of all-pervading openness and awareness undivided.

Dedicating the Spiritual Power of Practice to Fullest Enlightenment

By the power of this spiritual practice
May we swiftly realize and fully embody
The Natural Great Perfection
And thereby bring all, without exception, to its complete realization.

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

