

The Keys to Personal Deity Yoga Practice

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Translated [1] by Janny Chow

All phenomena are inherently non-existent;
Through the Tantric practice of Fire Offerings,
Thoughts of purification, enhancement, magnetization, and subjugation,
Materialize and take shape like fire.

At 10:00 a.m. on September 8th, 1996, before the commencement of the Kurukulla Fire Offering Ceremony at the Redmond Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple, His Holiness Living Buddha Lian-sheng bestowed the above verse upon all of the students present.

Since Kurukulla is a Tantric Personal Deity of love and magnetization, most of the offerings used in the fire puja were red in color. Throughout the fire puja, Living Buddha Lian-sheng performed a dance of mudras to invoke the various deities associated with the karma yogas of purification, enhancement, magnetization, and subjugation. As the mudras were being formed, a wave of strong spiritual energy radiated out to the Universe. The gloriously burning fire in the altar, together with the sea of red flowers and food offerings, transformed into a beautiful mandala of love and harmony. While the several thousand students at the fire puja chanted the Heart Mantra of Kurukulla, Living Buddha Lian-sheng repeatedly supplicated to Kurukulla to emit light on every registrant, so that their requests for purification, enhancement, magnetization, subjugation (of one's three poisons,) and deliverance from the Bardo state would be fulfilled. Living Buddha Lian-sheng told everyone that the response from the deities was swift. He did not even need to do an invocation in the inner dimension. The deities descended like lightning to the altar. With such a remarkable response from the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, he hoped everyone's wishes would soon materialize and that there would be a renewal of energies in their lives.

Living Buddha Lian-sheng revealed that, during the fire offering, he found himself entering through the Avatamsaka Sutra [Flower Garland Sutra] into the Flower Store Pure Land (the Pure Land of Vairocana, Rocana Buddha, and Shakyamuni Buddha.) There the Buddhas spoke to him, "You have already attained the Supreme Wisdom of Discernment." To which the Living Buddha replied, "My Supreme Wisdom of Discernment is completely blank!"

The Buddhas continued, "You still have one mission left. You have to use your Supreme Wisdom of Discernment to locate the hundreds of tulkus, rinpoches, and acharyas of great merit who have been born into the world, so they may continue the propagation of the True Buddha lineage and diffuse the teachings of the Tathagatas."

Therefore, Living Buddha Lian-sheng made this announcement, "Among the True Buddha students, many have been reborn from the Maha Twin Lotus Ponds, Indra Heaven, and the realms of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Dharma Protectors. With the Supreme Wisdom of Discernment, I will be able to recognize these students, for they are identified by special body marks. After they are recognized and certified, they will have to

be ordained. Then, formal study and training will start. When they successfully finish their training, they can start their important mission to propagate the Dharma."

Then His Holiness gave the following key teachings pertaining to the True Buddha Personal Deity Yoga Practice: "There are external as well as internal Personal Deities with whom one may enter communion. The external Personal Deity is a Wisdom Deity that emerges from the spiritual realm to give one empowerment and blessings. The internal Personal Deity emerges from one's inner being and is a Personal Deity of self power. When a practitioner unites with the external Personal Deity, the practitioner may call upon other beings to follow, but one needs to continue working until the internal Personal Deity is engendered. Only when the internal (self-power) Personal Deity is realized is Great Perfection and union with the Tao achieved.

"A tantric practitioner never separates himself or herself from the Guru, Personal Deity, or Dharma Protectors. This is a pledge - the Samaya Pledge. If a cultivator is unable to invoke the external Personal Deity or realize the self-power Personal Deity, then this cultivator has very little transcendental power. If a cultivator realizes the self-power Personal Deity, he or she may travel anywhere within the ten Dharma realms. Do not think that a light photograph of yourself, or any experience of psychic vision, light, or sound is proof of your realization. Such phenomena sometimes happen through the blessings of external power Personal Deities. When a practitioner succeeds in communing with an external Personal Deity, then the Personal Deity and his retinue will lend support to one and guard one. However, only through the union of the self-engendered Personal Deity and the external Personal Deity does one abide in Great Perfection.

How is the internal Personal Deity engendered? A cultivator must first be able to see his or her own light drops. Then he or she must open the central subtle energy channel, raise the inner fire to interact with the white bodhi fluid, open the heart chakra, and radiate light from the five-colored filaments in the heart chakra. The appearance of the light drops is a result of the focusing of light in the subtle energy body. The light drops are further maneuvered to form vajra chains. When one is able to form vajra chains at will, and not just during periods of retreat, one is ready to transform into a Buddha Body - first a Half-Body Buddha, then a Whole-Body Buddha, followed by the appearance of all Personal Deities. Only at this point is the manifestation of the self-power Personal Deity complete and Perfect Realization achieved.

"If, after you start your practice, you feel that you are an incarnate Rinpoche, you may write to me for confirmation. If confirmed, you have to take the ordination vow and start training as a Dharma teacher. However, an accomplished cultivator does not need anyone's confirmation. People will recognize you and, on their own accord, want to learn from you. It is my wish that all of the masters and rinpoches soon realize their fullest potential, and lead all beings in this world to be free from the endless rounds of transmigration."

The truth of Living Buddha Lian-sheng's words resonated powerfully throughout everyone's hearts. When the teaching was over, everyone clapped thunderously. Then, using the rite of rice sprinkling, His Holiness proceeded to give the students an Empowerment of the Fire Puja.

Footnotes

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Translated from an article written by Rev. Hui-jun, published on issue #114 of the True Buddha News, Sept 15-30, 1996 concerning Grand Master Lu's teaching after the 9/8/96 Kurukulla Fire Offering.

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