



INTRODUCTION TO THE BUDDHIST PATH

“Within great bliss I manifest as Guru Yiddam. From my clear body, profusions of light rays radiate forth to the ten directions. Blessing the environment and the beings therein. All becomes most perfectly arrayed with only excellent qualities, infinitely pure.”

from Lama Tsong Khapa Guru Yoga,
composed by Great Tibetan Master Panchen Lama Losang Chö Gyen

THE FIVE DHYANA BUDDHAS

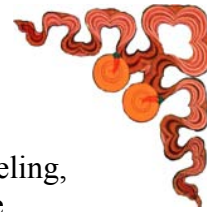
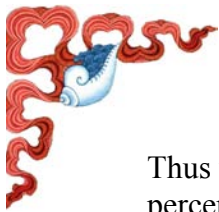
The five Dhyana Buddhas play an important role in Buddhist Tantra, especially in relation to the creation of sacred mandalas. Mandala is a Sanskrit word meaning circle, and in Tibetan they are called *kyil-khor*, which means essence and circle. There are four common forms of mandalas: painted mandalas, particle mandalas, body mandalas and concentration mandalas. Although each is a beautiful work of art, it is important to remember that they represent profound spiritual teachings. In Buddhism, Buddhist mandalas reflect the four directions and contain five colors. Each of the colors and the symbol that is depicted on the colors represent the five Dhyana Buddhas. For example, in the mandala of compassion, the central circle is red and holds within it the symbol of the lotus with the syllable HRIH. The lotus symbolizes Amitabha, with one face and two arms, holding the lotus and the bell with his consort, Pandaravasini, holding the curved knife and a skull. They purify attachment and transform ordinary perception to achieve wisdom of discernment.

In the east of the mandala is the color blue, with the symbol of the vajra (dorje) and represents the syllable HUNG. The vajra symbolizes Akshobhya, who is holding a bell and dorje. His consort, Vajravahari is holding a curved knife and skull. They purify anger (hatred) and transform ordinary consciousness to achieve the wisdom of reality.

In the south of the mandala of compassion is the color yellow, with the symbol of the jewel, and representing the syllable TAM. The jewel symbolizes Ratnasambhava, who is holding the jewel and the bell. His consort, Mamaki, is holding a curved knife and skull. They purify negative pride and miserliness and transform ordinary feeling into wisdom of equality.

In the west of the mandala is the color white, with the symbol of the wheel and represents the syllable OM. The wheel symbolizes Vairochana, who holds a wheel and a bell. His consort, Lochana, is holding a curved knife and a skull. They purify ignorance and transform ordinary form to achieve mirror-like wisdom.

The north of the mandala is green, with the symbol of the sword and represents the syllable KAM. The sword symbolizes Amoghasiddha, who holds a sword and a bell. His consort, Samaya Tara, is holding a curved knife and a skull. This purifies jealousy and transforms ordinary formation to achieve wisdom of accomplishment.



Thus we can see how each of the Dhyana Buddhas relate to the five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness), the purification of the five poisons (ignorance, negative pride and miserliness, attachment, jealousy, and anger/hatred) and transforming the five aggregates to achieve various aspects of wisdom. Thus, the five wisdoms, the five aggregates and the five poisons, the five symbols, five colors, and five syllables are all represented by the five Dhyana Buddhas and found within each mandala.

Every living being contains five contaminated aggregates, and through the practice of Tantra, these aggregates are purified (become uncontaminated), increasingly reflecting the enlightened qualities of the Dhyana Buddhas.

