
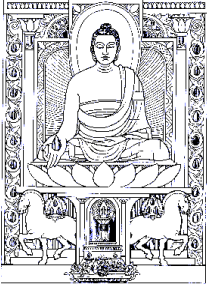

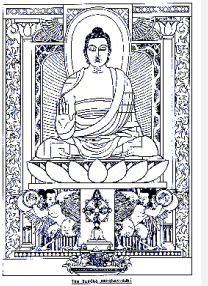



Week 6 – The Five Buddha Mandala

Buddhism Level 2 – Buddhist Wisdom – symbolic Dharma

	Akshobya the Imperturbable	Ratnasambhava the Jewel-born	Amitabha Infinite Light	Amoghasiddhi Infallible Success	Vairocana The Illuminator
Family	Vajra	Jewel / Ratna	Lotus / Padma	Action / Karma	Buddha
Quality	Clarity / wisdom	Generosity, Beauty	Love	Fearlessness	Spaciousness
Colour	Blue	Yellow	Red	Green	White
Wisdom	Mirror-like: objective, unsentimental	Sameness, equanimity, appreciative	Discriminating: notices the uniqueness of all	All accomplishing	All encompassing space
Poison	Hatred	Pride	Greed	Envy	Ignorance
Realm	Hells	Humans	Preta	Asura	Gods/ animals
Emblem	Diamond thunderbolt – Vajra	Jewel	Lotus	Double vajra	Dharmacakra wheel
Element	Water	Earth	Fire	Air	Space
Time of day	Dawn	Noon	Sunset	Midnight	-
Direction	East	South	West	North	Central
Animal	Elephant	Horse	Peacock	Garuda	Lion
Mudra	Earth-touching	Giving	Meditation	Fearlessness	Teaching
					

The point is to slowly forming associations with the five Buddhas, getting an intuitive feel for their qualities, and how that pattern plays out in our own consciousness.

Similes of the 5 Buddha mandala

[The five Buddha mandala represents] a gradual filling out of the original Buddha ideal. It is as though you had an uncut diamond: it's surface would not easily catch and reflect the light, and consequently its true beauty would easily be missed. But worked upon by a master jeweller, its facets would sparkle with reflected light and iridescent colour, and its beauty would be revealed.

Sangharakshita, Creative Symbols of Tantric Buddhism

Or like splitting white light – the central principle – into its constituent colours via a prism or rainbow.

Buddha families

Each Buddha is head of a family, with associated consort (standing for the wisdom), protectors, bodhisattvas, wrathful figures etc. It's a complex picture. The Buddha families are named after the Buddha qualities (eg. Vajra, Lotus, Jewel).

SYMBOLISM OF MANDALAS

“a harmonious arrangement around a central point, a symbol of the harmony & integration of the different levels and aspects of our being”

Vessantara, Meeting the Buddhas

Jung found that his patients spontaneously produced or dreamt of mandalas when undergoing a significant integration (“individuation” in his language). It is a way of organising patterns of consciousness, especially Enlightened consciousness. It helps us to view, assimilate, integrate. Contemplating mandalas has a balancing & harmonising effect.

Letting the pattern and details of the mandala sink into your consciousness, the deeper energies of our mind being to take on the pattern, like iron filings arranging themselves around a magnet. It is a basic principle of Buddhism that whatever you set your heart and mind upon, that you become. So if you repeatedly meditate on an ideal mandala, your mind increasingly takes on that harmonious pattern.

Vessantara, Meeting the Buddhas

We drew our own personal mandala – what’s most important in the middle, rest organised around the centre. Some will be simple, some complex. OK to have a full mandala, but need to keep focussing in on the centre, what’s most important, make sure it doesn’t get crowded out by the periphery; assign things to correct place.

The task for each of us is to reorganise and rearrange everything in our mandalas around what is most important. You may have to leave certain things aside for the time being; perhaps you can’t quite see where they are going to fit. There are some things you will have to throw out because they are unskillful and there can be no place for them. But it is important to be quite careful about what you throw out. In many cases it is just a matter of assigning everything its appropriate place.

Sangharakshita, Creative Symbols of Tibetan Buddhism.

HOME PRACTICE

Continue last weeks practice; ie. Colour in line drawing of Buddhas if you wish. Notice your emotional response to colours; in noticing colours see if you can bring to mind the appropriate Buddha or something of their qualities. Notice & reflect on the affinities between different qualities that we’ve talked about

FURTHER READING

The Symbolism of the five Buddhas ‘Male & Female’, Sangharakshita, CD 110 or in The Creative Symbols of Tantric Buddhism

Meeting the Buddhas, Vessantara, Windhorse (Part Two) – rich descriptions, and an invaluable reference work for Buddhist symbolism.

The World Beyond Thought chapter in *Secret of the Vajra World*, Reginald Ray, Shambala (mindblowing description of mandalas and the qualities of the five families).