

June 16, 2019
Fourth ngondro mandala offering
Taught by Geshe Pema Tshering

[Typist's disclaimer: all errors are my own, from not understanding the translator and not understanding specific words in Buddhism. This document is here to assist and supplement your own request to Geshela to teach this ngondro. Please kindly consider going to Geshela in person and requesting him to teach this to you in person, as he mentioned he will offer more extensive explanations].

Begin by cultivating a proper motivation as usual as you do when engaging in Dharma. The cultivation of a proper motivation is essential. It is: by receiving the teachings, may I become enlightened to benefit all sentient beings. This is the basic motivation one must cultivate.

Today, I will not go through extensive explanations of mandala offering. Rather, we focus on how to make mandala offerings and how to count the "heaps" of the mandalas. Since I have motivation to give as preliminary practice. So when and if I give it, then extensive explanation will be given on preliminary practices.

Now, making a mandala offering, what is important to understand is first you have to take the object to whom you make the mandala to. First, you need to visualize the merit field. Having visualized the merit field and then in its presence ...

When speaking about visualizing merit fields, there are 3 different ways to do so.

1. All-inclusive jewel .. tradition. Not visualize elaborate field of merits; rather, just one's root guru, who encapsulates all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. [Visualize Guru in aspect of Buddha; i.e. visualize Guru as the Buddha]
2. Visualize merit field: Guru in inner circle; encircled by meditation deities in inner circle; 2nd circle = yidam ...; 3rd circle = Bodhisattvas, Buddhas, dakas, dakinis, dharmapalas. You may not be able to visualize each. You can visualize one's root Guru as much as possible and all others are also present where Guru is.
3. Stacking: first visualize root guru at level of one's brow (in front of your brow); then above one's Guru visualize other Buddhas and so forth.

Now let's focus on making the mandala offering [to the merit field, however you visualize it]. There are different ways to do so, to make heaps. One way is the 7-heap offering, next is the 23-heap offering, and then the 37-heap offering.

Now when making a mandala offering, create heaps. It's not merely creating heaps. Rather, think about what it represents: e.g. Mount Meru, 4 continents, etc. So imagine when creating the heap, each heap represents certain offerings, but real offerings of what you imagine. Else, just creating a heap won't give much benefit.

When imagining making offering, real offering, e.g. Mount Meru, you are thinking, by creating these heaps, also that is a real offering to Buddhas, Bodhisattvas. Need proper understanding of Mount Meru.

For that, universal system: how did the universe evolve? See commentaries of mandala offerings.

Now, here, according to the Buddhist philosophy, the way in which the universal system comes into being: due to 4 elements, its evolution of universal system happens because of the 4 elements and dissolution of universal system is also because of imbalance of the 4 elements.

First universal system comes into being b/c 1st foundation of universal system is built on wind elements, or wind mandala / wind chakra. This is created by collective karma of all sentient beings.

On the basis of this wind mandala, the water mandala is created. The water basis happens because according to the text, there's believe to be very strong rain, where one giant drop of rain is like 1 pitcher of water. This is how strong rain came into being. Along with rains, many other jewels will also fall with the rain. Due to that (wind and water rain), eventually, builds the earth elements.

Due to the movement of wind and then water, this creates the earth element. The first earth element is the finest and creates Mount Meru. The middling earth elements become 7 mountains. Then other (grossest) earth elements become other subcontinents.

We talked about 7 mountains. This does not mean heap of mountain exists independently. Rather, the shape of those mountains is like a fence surrounding Mount Meru. 7 lakes are between the mountains.

The lakes are extraordinary. The water consists of 8 qualities. Therefore, extraordinary water. Unlike the oceans we have.

Now, let's focus on how to offer.

First, the basis or base of the mandala. Since it's the object of offering, you can make it out of precious qualities (gold, silver, or something of good quality). Don't think of it as part of your wealth or possessions, but to make offerings to Buddha from the depths of your heart. Some people worry they'll wear out their mandala and so keep it safe, and only expose it to showcase it when people gather. This is not the way to do it.

Size of mandala base: it's not mentioned in particular. It's good though to have it as big as possible. At least, not smaller than the cup for food or plate for food.

One thing to mention: not matter what kind of material mandala set's made of. What's important is appropriate visualizations. When create a heap on mandala, important to visualize as much as possible what each heap represents. At monastery long ago, one of our teachers when he came

to India, he sought particular wood to make the mandala base. He made particular effort. He wanted it out of the tree lumber we use for His Holiness' throne. Someone found it and made it and gave it to him. It doesn't matter the material, it's the visualization of what the mandala represents that counts.

[If accumulating 100,000 mandala offerings, at the start of each session, do 1 long mandala offering (37 heaps), and then it's the short mandala offering that we're accumulating 100,000, for which we do 7 heaps. Can't miss a day. If traveling, set the mandala up and leave it at home; when away, can use hands to make Mount Meru, 4 continents, and visualize sun and moon ...]

Long mandala offering (37 heaps)

[See end of this document for diagram for where 37 heaps go]

Take mandala base in Right hand and pass to Left hand and hold it with **Left** hand.

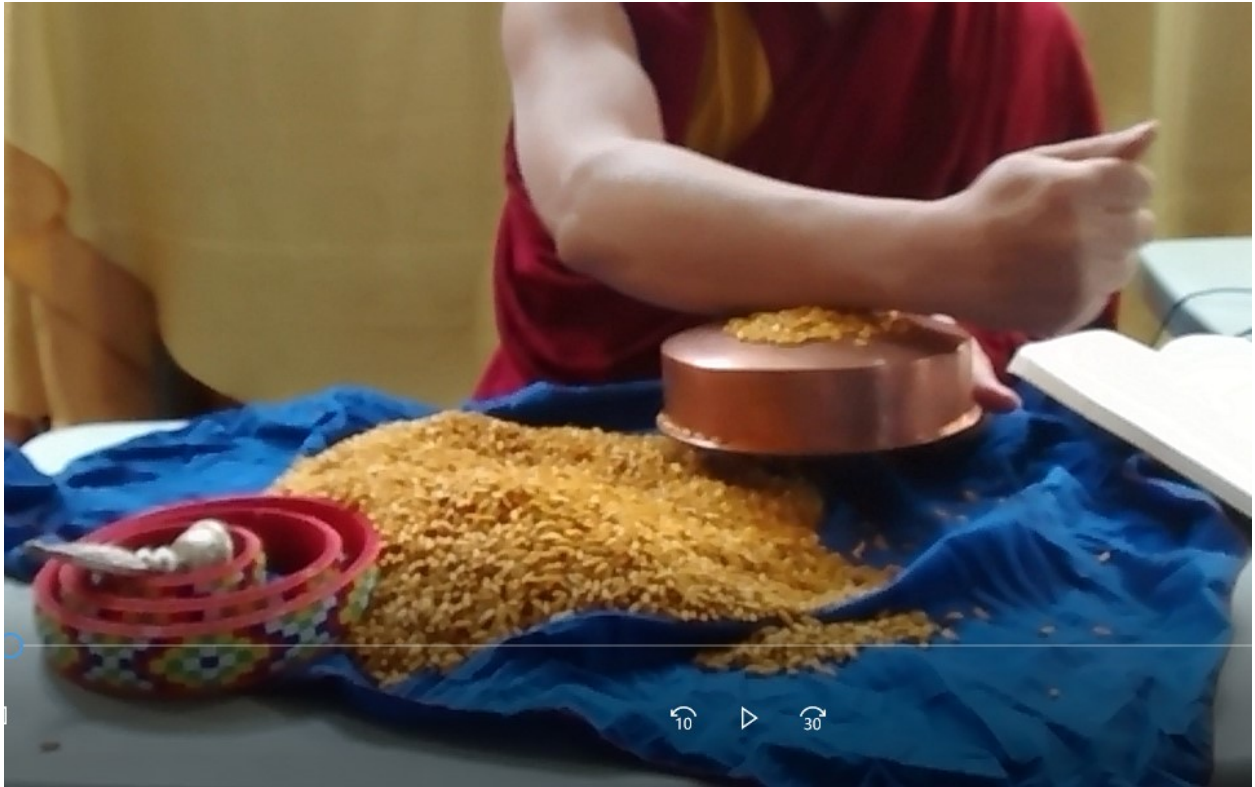


Grains: if you have instead precious jewels (quartz, turquoise, lapis lazuli, pearls) but if not possible, can use grain.

If you can acquire those materials, it's important you don't think it's your possession / wealth. Don't get attached to those materials. Therefore, it can be better if you have grain, e.g. barley.

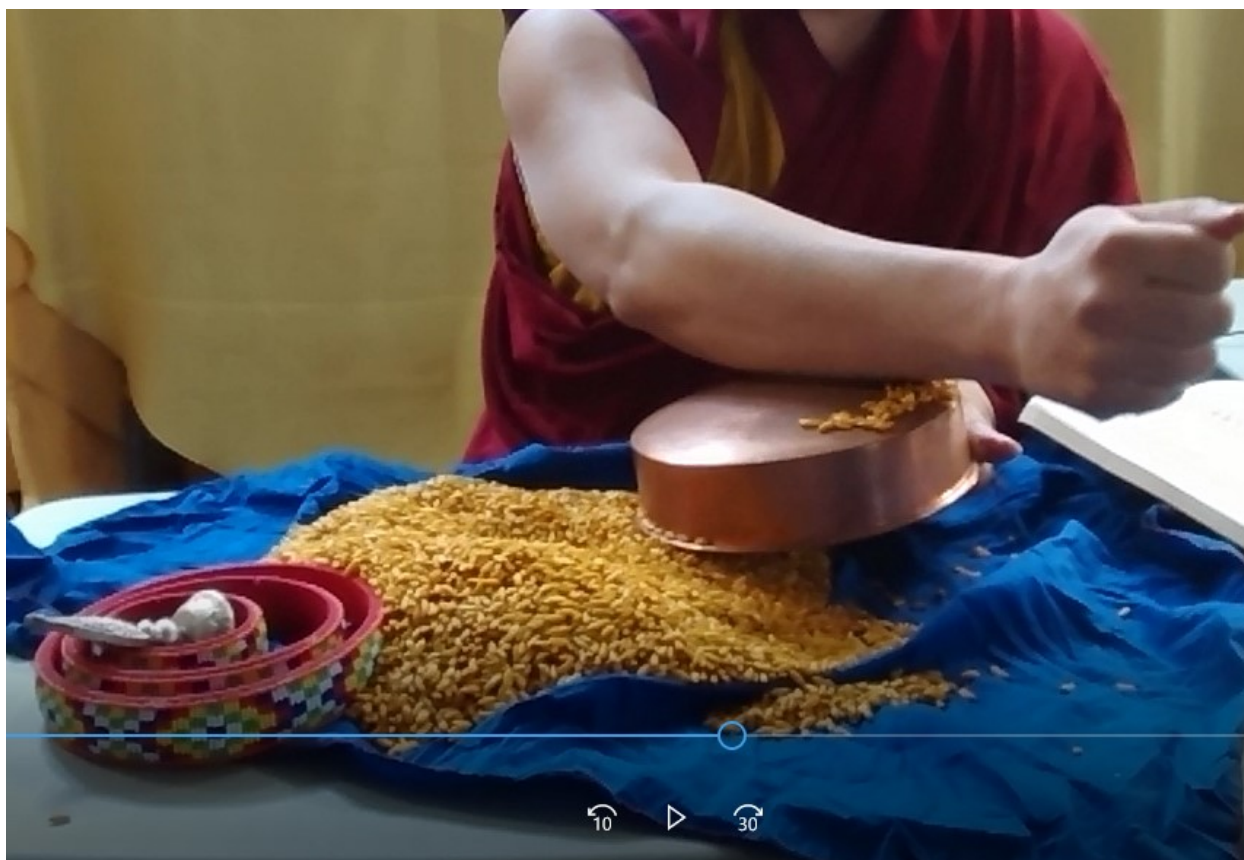
Cleaning the base

Now: take handful of grain using Right hand, release grain onto base. Use inside of Right arm between wrist and elbow, wipe the base clockwise (from your perspective) 3 times. Imagine: purify all negativities of body, speech, and mind.



[This photo only shows 1 part; keep going clockwise].

Then, put some more grain on the base. Wipe counter-clockwise (from the perspective of you) 3 times. Imagine attain the body, speech, and mind of the merit field you've visualized earlier.



[This picture only shows 1 part; keep going counter-clockwise].

Better to visualize all sentient beings with you to make mandala offerings to merit field. It benefits yourself to think to purify negativities of body, speech, and mind of all sentient beings, without exception, and receive merit of body, speech, and mind for all sentient beings. This is more beneficial.

Recite the Long mandala offering: “zhing kam bur cho” [phonetic – spelling could be wrong]. When say this, clean the mandala base. Let’s offer to Buddha field.

Before make mandala offerings, I can also apply saffron water onto the mandala base. If you do the number of mandala offerings at one time to accumulate, you can’t put water on saffron base. Some time, when you have time, take saffron water and apply.

Recite the long mandala offering:

Om vajra bhumi ah hum / wang chen ser ghi sa zhi/

Om vajra rehke ah hum / chi chag ri kor yug gi kor way usu /

[Om vajra ground Ah Hum, great powerful golden ground;

Om vajra fence Ah Hum,

At the outermost limit, a circular iron mountain chain surrounds....]

[can say either Tibetan or English; what's important is the visualization]

As you recite these lines, ensure you've cleaned the base 3X clockwise and 3X counterclockwise 1st. When you say "usu",

Heap 1: place the 1st ring onto the mandala base, now place 1 heap on the mandala base with your right hand. This is Mount Meru.

Say: "ri gyal po ri rab" or
"Mt. Meru, king of mountains".



Heaps 2-5:

Before we create the 4 continents, it is up to you which direction you imagine as the Eastern direction.

If you do mandala offerings for attainments, you choose the side closest to you as Eastern.
If you do to accumulate merit, as offering to merit field, then the side farthest from you (opposite you) is Eastern.

Let's consider you're doing this to accumulate merit. So the Eastern continent is the side farthest from you.

Heap 2: place a heap on the side farthest from you (Eastern continent in this case).

Say: "shar lu pag po" or
"In the east, the continent Lupapo"



Heap 3: place a heap 90% from the last continent, clockwise.
Say: “lho dzam bhu ling” or
“In the south, Dzambuling”

Heap 4: place a heap 90% from the last continent, clockwise.
Say: “nub ba lang ch” or
“In the west, Balangcho”

Heap 5: place a heap 90% from the last, clockwise.
Say: “jang dra mi nyen” or
“in the north, Drami-nyan”

After Heap 5, it should look like this:



Heaps 6-13: the 8 subcontinents

There are 2 subcontinents on each side of the 4 continents, on the Right and Left of each continent (imagine looking at each continent from the centre to find which is Right and which is Left). [it turns out to be following the *clockwise* in this case of accumulating merit]

Heaps 6-7: place heaps on the Right and Left of the Eastern continent

Say “lu dang lu pag” or

“At the two sides of the east, the subcontinents of Lu and Lupag”.

Heaps 8-9: place heaps on the Right and Left of the Southern continent

Say “nga yab dang nga yab zhen” or

“the south, Ngayab and Ngayabzhen”

Heaps 10-11: place heaps on the Right and Left of the Western continent

Say “yo dan dang lam chog dro” or

“the west, Yodan and Lanchod Dro”

Heaps 12-13: place heaps on the Right and Left of the Northern continent

Say “dra mi nyen dang dra mi nyen gyi da” or

“the north, Drami-nyan and Drami-nyan Gyi Da”.

Heaps 14-17: 4 jewels

Heap 14: create another heap in front of the Eastern continent

Imagine creating a jewel in front of it

Say “rin po che yi ri wo” or
“In the east, the treasure mountain”

Heap 15: create another heap in front of the Southern continent
Say “pag sam gyi shing” or
“in the south, the wish-granting tree”

Heap 16: create another heap in front of the Western continent
Say “do joi ba” or
“in the west, the wish-granting cow”

Heap 17: create another heap in front of the Northern continent
Say “ma mo pa yi lo tog” or
“in the north, the uncultivated crops” [the crops that don’t need cultivating; i.e. they can grow on their own]

Heaps 18-25: the 7 royal emblems and the treasure vase

Heap 18: visualize a precious wheel above the Eastern continent; add heap
Say “kor lo rin po che” or
“here, the Precious Wheel”

Heap 19: add heap at Southern continent; visualize
Say “nor bu rin po che” or
“the Precious Jewel”

Heap 20: add heap at Western continent, visualize
Say “tsun mo rin po che” or
“the precious Queen”

Heap 21: add heap at Northern continent, visualize
Say “lon po rin po che” or
“the precious Minister”

Now the 4 other directions:

Heap 22: add heap at Southeast
Say “lang po rin po che” or
“precious Elephant”

Heap 23: add heap at Southwest
Say “ta chog rin po che” or
“precious horse”

Heap 24: add heap at Northwest
Say “mag pon rin po che” or

“precious general”

Heap 25: add heap at Northeast

Say “ter chen poi bum pa” or

“the great Treasure Vase”

Now add next ring (so 2nd ring)



Heaps 26-33: 8 offering goddesses

Visualize 8 offering goddesses.

Heap 26: add heap to Eastern continent

Say “geg ma” or

“Goddess of Grace”

Heap 27: add heap to Southern continent

Say “treng wa ma” or

“Goddess of Garlands”

Heap 28: add heap to Western continent

Say “lu ma” or

“Goddess of Song”

Heap 29: add heap to Northern continent

Say “gar ma” or

“Goddess of Dance”

Heap 30: add heap to Southeast

Say “me tog ma” or

“Goddess of Flowers”

Heap 31: add heap to Southwest

Say “dug po ma” or

“Goddess of Incense”

Heap 32: add heap to Northwest

Say “nang sal ma” or

“Goddess of Light”

Heap 33: add heap to Northeast

Say “dri chab ma” or

“Goddess of Perfume”

Add 3rd ring to mandala.

Heaps 34-37

Heap 34: put on Eastern continent

Say “nyi ma” or

Sun

Heap 35: put on WESTERN continent (opposite Eastern – not follow clockwise for these 4)

Say “da wa” or

Moon

Heap 36: put on Southern

Say “rin po che yi dug” or

“the Umbrella of all that is precious”

Heap 37: put on Northern

Say “chog la nam par gyal way gyal tsan”

“and the Banner of Victory in Every Direction”



Add top.

Say “u su lha dang mi yi pal jor” or

“Here in the center are all the possessions precious to gods and men”.



[I think: say the rest of the Long Mandala offering here?]

“pun sum tsog pa ma tsang wa me pa/
Tsang zhing yi du ong wa di dag drin chen tsa wa
Dang gyu par che pe pal den lama dam pa nam dang/
Kye par du yang Lama Losang Thubwang Dor je Chang /
Chen po lha tsong kor dang che pa nam la zhing kham bul war sho/
Tug je dro we don du zhe su sol /
Zhe nay dag dang dro wa mar gyur nyam ke tha dang
nyam pe sem chen tam che la /
tug tse wa chen po go ne jin gyi lab tu sol” or

“This magnificent collection, lacking in nothing, I offer to you, Oh Glorious and Holy Gurus.
To my glorious, holy and most kind root guru, the lineage gurus and in particular to the great
Vajradhara, the entire assembly of deities, we offer these as a Buddha-field that we may receive
from your mouth the precious teachings that will show us the unmistakable path to liberation and
ultimate enlightenment.

Please accept them with compassion, for the sake of migrating beings.

Having accepted them, please bestow on me and on all mother sentient beings abiding as far as
the limits of space, your inspiration with loving compassion”.

Very important part is to visualize: not object, rather, as universal system, actual universal
system, make actual offering to merit field. Not only 1 universal system, but imagine billions of
universal systems.

Imagine all your virtues of body, speech, and mind accumulated since beginningless time of all
sentient beings and all possessions are offered in form of mandala to merit field.

If you do it to receive attainment, create Eastern from your side (closest to you and go
clockwise).

Short mandala offering (7 heaps)

When accumulate 100,000, just do short. Use 7 heaps only. Not need 3 rings; just base.

Same start.

Then need to do cleaning. Still 3X clockwise, 3X counterclockwise.

Now recite 1st line of Short mandala offering:

“sa zhi po kyi jug shing may tog tram” or

“The ground with scent is blessed, and with flowers strewn,”

Then Heap 1 in the middle: Mount Meru

Say “ adorned with Mount Meru”

Then Heaps 2 – 5: Eastern, Southern, Western, Northern

Say “the Four Lands”

Then Heap 6 = Sun at Eastern

Heap 7 = Moon at Western

Say “the sun and the moon,”

... [don't need to sync saying and heaping like this; can say rest of 4-line prayer:

“ri rab ling zhi nyi day gyen pa di
Sang gye zhing du mig tay ul war gyi
Dro kun nam dag zhing la cho par shog”

Or

“adorned with Mount Meru, the Four lands, the sun and the moon,
Transformed into a Buddha Land and then offered.
May all wandering beings enjoy this pure realm”.



Since there's only 1 verse, and need to create 7 heaps and clean 3X and 3X, therefore, 1 verse is too short. Therefore, when cleaning, recite the Refuge formula (sang gye cho dang ...) so then can accumulate 100,000 for both together.

Although physically doing 7 heaps, visualize all 37 heaps are there. Don't just visualize 7, but all 37.

If travel, and not have set, set up mandala at home; can use hand to make Mount Meru and the 4 continents and then visualize the sun and moon and then the other heaps too.

Questions to ask:

1 What's zhing kam bur cho?

2 after 7 heaps, do you clean it again, or just heap? [The answer is after 7 heaps, clean it again, because Geshela taught one can accumulate both the refuge and the mandala offerings together, so you have to clean it after each]

