

Thousand-Armed Chenrezig Dance



(Key of Am, Open Tuning, Capo 5)

Om Ma - ni Pe - me Hung, Om Ma - ni Pe - me Hung.

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Om Mani Padme Hum pronounced ‘Om mani peme hung.’ Literally, though superficially, this mantra can be translated as ‘Hail to the jewel in the lotus.’ Much more can be said, however. Referred to as ‘the mantra of compassion,’ each of the six syllables in the mantra is said to have a purifying effect on different areas of one’s being and on the six realms of existence, ‘samsara.’ It can also be seen as the essence of the Tibetan Tantric path - the journey from Om to Hum is the realization of the universal in the individual.

Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, is often depicted as having one thousand arms in the form of a mandala and hands each with an eye in the palm. This represents this Bodhisattva’s ceaseless activity for the benefit of all beings. Make a point of looking at a picture of the Thousand Armed Chenrezig and see how this form inspires the Dance.

The possibility of Pluto energy is strong in this Dance. It can help if the dancers are encouraged to be aware of the whole circle and to move as one being representing the thousand arms of Chenrezig particularly in the second part of the Dance.

Thousand-Armed Chenrezig Dance

1. Om Mani Peme Hung
2. Om Mani Peme Hung
3. Om Mani Peme Hung
4. Om Mani Peme Hung

There are three sets of movements. Line of direction is clockwise starting on left foot. Four steps for one repetition of the mantra.

First set

1. Facing to the left, hold palms together in prayer position at the heart centre.
2. Raise hands to space above crown where they separate. With palms facing up, hands slowly come out and down to sides at hip level. Arms describe a large arc. Visualize the thousand arms of Chenrezig: arm upon arm upon arm.
3. Raise hands slowly in reverse movement to 2.
4. Hands return to heart centre.

Second set

Place left hand on right shoulder of person in front where it remains throughout.

1. Right hand is on own heart.
2. Right hand slowly first raises and then lowers, palm up, toward the centre of the circle, in an arc. Everyone looks toward the centre.
3. Right hand slowly raises in reverse of 2, making an arc to bring the hand back to the heart.
4. Right hand returns to heart.

Third set

1. All join hands (slightly raised) in the circle and take four steps out slowly lowering hands.
2. Take four steps in slightly raising hands.
3. Turn in place clockwise with palms facing upwards, at the sides and at heart level.
4. Slowly bow towards the centre with both hands in prayer position at the heart centre.

Words and music: traditional

Movements: Philip Tansen O'Donohoe