AMITABHA MANDALA

There are many ancient mandalas and images of enlightened Buddhas, but among all of the images of the Buddhas, that of Amitabha Buddha is the most important for transcending your consciousness into *The Pure Land* (*Sukhavati* in Sanskrit). The mandala of Amitabha represents the home of Amitabha Buddha and has the power to guide people to the Pure Land. Amitabha means *Infinite Light,* and he is one of the five Dhyani Buddhas. The Dhyani Buddhas also include Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddi, and Vairochana. The five Dhyani Buddhas are the antidote to the five negative emotions: attachment, anger, negative pride, ignorance, and jealousy. Within the Amitabha Mandala, the five Dhyani Buddhas are also a reflection of Amitabha himself and in each direction of the mandala these facets of the Amitaba Dhyani Buddhas can be found.

In the center of the mandala is Amitabha, who is red in color, represents the fire element and cures attachment. Amitabha Akshobhya is found in the east, is blue in color, represents the space element and cures anger. Amitabha Ratnasambhava is found in the south, is yellow in color, represents the earth element, and cures negative pride. Amitabha Vairochana is in the west, is white in color, represents the water element, and cures ignorance. Amitabha Amoghasiddhi is to the north, is green in color, represents the air element, and cures jealousy. Creating or viewing the Amitaba mandala and reciting the mantra is said to offer great benefits in this lifetime, as well as future lives.

Amitabha's Mantra is *Om Ami Deva Hri*, which is a request to Amitabha to bring an end to rebirth in Samsara (cyclic existence) and transcend into the Pure Land.

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There are many levels of meaning, but this mantra is most commonly understood as:

Om = Enlightened Body, Speech, and Mind
Ami = Amitabha Buddha
Deva = the Deva Realms, six Desire Realms, and Brahma Realms
Hri = the seed syllable of compassion

Amitabha was believed to be a real person and a king, who existed many aeons ago. He renounced his throne and became a monk at which time, he received the name Dharmakara (Treasury of Dharma) and studied the teachings of the Buddha of that time, Lokesvaraja Buddha. Dharmakara made forty-eight great vows for saving sentient beings, of which the Eighteenth Vow is the basis of the Pure Land for which he is best known. In the Eighteenth Vow he states, "*If upon the attainment of Buddhahood all sentient beings in the ten quarters who aspire in sincerity and faith to be reborn in my land, recite my name up to ten times and fail to be born there, then may I not attain the Perfect Enlightenment."* After five aeons of self-cultivation, Dharmakara attained Enlightenment and became the Buddha Amitabha, and the paradise known as Pure Land or Sukhavati came into existence.