

Om Mani Padme Hum: Meaning and Some Mindful Strategies When Chanting ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 We're going to chant what is probably the most famous mantra in the world, OM MANI

00:00:16 PADME HUM.

00:00:19 OM and HUM don't have a literal meaning.

00:00:23 They are sort of energy words.

00:00:26 Mani means a jewel or a gem and Padma means lotus.

00:00:31 Padme is the locative case in the lotus.

00:00:35 So it means something like hail to the jewel in the lotus.

00:00:39 You're free to interpret jewel and lotus any way you want.

00:00:44 Maybe the whole spiritual path.

00:00:47 The jewel is the wisdom, the liberating insight, and the lotus is the compassion, the spontaneous

00:00:59 service to others, insight for yourself, service to others.

00:01:05 But there's other possible interpretations.

00:01:08 This mantra is associated with the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara.

00:01:13 A Bodhisattva is someone who practices with the twin goals that I just mentioned, that

00:01:20 their practice not only liberate themselves, but that they be able to serve others at all

00:01:28 the levels of meaning that are implied by that word.

00:01:34 So Avalokiteshvara is called Jemresi in Tibetan, Guan Shiyin or Guan Yin in Chinese.

00:01:43 Similarly in Japanese, Kanzeon or Kannon, Guan Taem in Vietnamese or Guan Am in Korean.

00:01:53 In India he was a he, but in East Asia morphed archetypally into the compassionate mother

00:02:01 form.

00:02:03 We like to start off the day with energy and concentration so that help people wake up

00:02:08 and so forth.

00:02:10 So at 5.30 we do this chant.

00:02:16 And the idea is to chant with the totality of your being.

00:02:21 Chant with gusto and abandon, which is the expansive side of nature, but also chant with

00:02:29 your ears.

00:02:31 Listen to the sounds that you're making, how are they matching the chant

leader, which

00:02:37 is me in this case, and broadly everyone else in the room.

00:02:42 So I will vary the pace, this is called Moku-gyo in Japanese or Moktak in Korean.

00:02:52 And I will vary the pace, sometimes fast, sometimes slow, so you have to listen for

00:02:58 that.

00:02:59 I will also vary the tone.

00:03:02 I'll reset the tone of the room.

00:03:05 If you hear me go a little bit higher, then try to match that.

00:03:09 I'm trying to gather everybody.

00:03:12 You don't have to chant exactly the tone of the leader or of the group, but you do have

00:03:21 to chant harmonic to that.

00:03:23 So it's in rhythm and in harmony.

00:03:27 So that's the chanting with your ear basis.

00:03:31 And then the rest, the chanting with your whole being, is just totally give yourself

00:03:37 to it.

00:03:38 Now, I like to look upon chanting as a formal meditation period.

00:03:44 So it's a good thing to organize in your mind, well, what am I going to be focusing on during

00:03:55 the chant to make it a useful meditation period?

00:04:02 And there's lots of possibilities.

00:04:05 Pick what's appealing to you.

00:04:09 One thing you could do is just focus on the pure sound of the chant.

00:04:14 A lot of our distractions are into internal conversations.

00:04:22 When external sound space expands, internal talk space may contract.

00:04:29 So you can listen to just the pure sound of the chant.

00:04:35 You can focus on the physical sensations associated with chanting.

00:04:42 There's the breath sensations and so forth associated with the chant.

00:04:51 If you are focusing on just the sound and just the physical impact of the chant, we

00:04:56 would say that you're sort of losing yourself in the chant.

00:05:03 Other possibilities are to work with restful states.

00:05:08 The chant tends to quiet internal talk, so you can listen to the quieting effect.

00:05:15 Tends to relax the body, so you can focus on restful experiences, relaxation, if you

00:05:24 know how to work with these.

00:05:25 If you don't now, you will by the end of the retreat.

00:05:29 Physical relaxation, emotional peace in the body, blank screen, quiet head,

you can defocus

00:05:41 your eyes.

00:05:44 Some people even focus on silence while they're chanting.

00:05:47 You say, well, the sound is dominant.

00:05:49 How is that possible?

00:05:50 Well, some people know how to listen through or around sound to a background silence.

00:05:56 So some people like to explore the restful impact of the chant.

00:06:01 Or you can, as I say, explore an ordinary experience.

00:06:05 It hits, you've got the sound, you've got the physical touch of the chanting.

00:06:12 Lots of times people will get energy flows associated with the chanting process.

00:06:18 So you get like vibratory energy in your body, and that can start to pervade all parts of

00:06:26 your experience.

00:06:27 You sort of hear it in your talk space, see it in your image space, and so forth.

00:06:32 So some people like to explore the focusing on flow, energy, and so forth that the chant

00:06:41 induces.

00:06:42 That's another possibility.

00:06:44 Traditionally when people did chanting, they actually visualized, in this case, they visualized

00:06:52 the deity associated with the mantra.

00:06:55 In this case, it's Avalokiteshvara.

00:06:57 So they actually did a sort of focus on positive.

00:07:00 They would visualize the deity, listen to the chant externally, but also internally

00:07:07 as a mantra, and access emotions of joy, compassion, and so forth.

00:07:16 So they use it that way.

00:07:18 So you might want to work with one or a combination of those.

00:07:22 Lots of possibilities.

00:07:23 You can choose whatever appeals to you.

00:07:27 But do have a clear idea and explore that.

00:07:32 Now, when we do the mindfulness practice, we do noting, which involves often mental

00:07:42 labeling as an option.

00:07:44 Usually people find it unproductive to attempt to label things while they're chanting.

00:07:48 It sort of takes you away from that full involvement with the activity of chanting.

00:07:54 But if you get really, really spaced out, then you can implement a mental labeling process.

00:08:02 So that's sort of a few basic guidelines for how to make the chant a meditative process

00:08:13 for you.

00:08:14 GIROURNAM GADJIGAR – CHANTING

00:08:40 Om.

00:08:44 Om.

00:08:48 Om.

00:08:52 Om.

00:08:56 Om.

00:09:00 Om.

00:09:04 Om.

00:09:08 Om

00:09:12 Nyi

00:09:16 Nyi

00:09:20 Nyi

00:09:24 Tha

00:09:28 Tha

00:09:32 Tha

00:09:36 Nyi

00:09:46 Om

00:09:50 Om

00:09:54 Om

00:09:56 Nyi