



**Om Mani Padme Hum**  
(*Om Mani Padme Hung* in Tibetan)

The meaning of these six syllables is great and vast. First, "OM" is composed of three letters: "Ah," "O," and "M." These three letters symbolize the practitioner's impure body, speech, and mind. They also symbolize the pure exalted body, speech, and mind of a Buddha.

An impure body, speech, and mind can be transformed into a pure body, speech, and mind. We know we are able to transform them because all of the Buddhas are examples of beings who were like ourselves, but then--in dependence on the path--became enlightened. In Buddha's point of view, there is no one who from the beginning was free from fault and possessed all good qualities. The development of a pure body, speech, and mind comes from their gradually leaving the impure states and becoming transformed into the pure.

How can we attain a pure body, speech, and mind? The path is indicated by the next four symbols. "MA NI" means "Jewel" which symbolizes love and compassion. For example, a jewel is capable of removing poverty. It resembles the altruistic mind of enlightenment: love and compassion, and so forth which are capable of removing the difficulties of cyclic existence. Also, a jewel fulfills the wishes of sentient beings. Similarly, the altruistic mind that becomes enlightened fulfills the wishes of sentient beings.

The next two syllables are PAD ME. They mean "Lotus" which symbolizes wisdom. A lotus grows from mud, but is not sullied by the fault of the mud. Similarly, wisdom is capable of putting you in a situation of non-contradiction, whereas there would be contradiction if you did not have this wisdom. Wisdom! There are many different types of wisdom: for example, the wisdom of realizing impermanence, the wisdom of realizing emptiness; the wisdom of realizing that persons are empty of being self-sufficient or substantially existent, and so forth. But the main wisdom is the wisdom of realizing emptiness.

The last syllable, "HUM," symbolizes the unity of method and wisdom. This is necessary to achieve the purity of body, speech, and mind.

**Summary**

**OM MA NI PAD ME HUM:** These six syllables mean that in dependence on the practice of the path which consists of an indivisible union of method and wisdom, you can transform your impure body, speech, and mind into the pure, exalted body, speech, and mind of a Buddha.