

Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism

ideology exploration series no. 5

# **Bathing Buddha Festival Celebration**

integrally compiled from

multiple revelations by

**Holy Zhi Ji Vimalakirti Ahdharma Buddha Patriarch Master**

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# Bathing Buddha Festival Celebration

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## About Bathing Buddha Festival Celebration

In China, bathing Buddha is held during the period of Buddha's birthday anniversary. Bathing Buddha Dharma meetings are held, according to the Chinese calendar system, on the eighth day of the fourth month on the lunar calendar – “Buddha's birthday festival”. There is no tradition of bathing Buddha on other days.

The bathing Buddha ceremony, according to the doctrine of Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism, mainly implies “attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime”. Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism especially values females. Therefore, female guests of bathing Buddha Dharma meetings are viewed as the incarnation of the Great Maha Maya Deva. It is extraordinarily solemn and sacred.

Bathing Buddha, is also called irrigating Buddha. It is a ceremony by which clean and pure holy water is used to wash and bathe the Buddha statue.

According to the Chinese tradition, during Bathing Buddha festival, whoever bathes Buddha can request Buddha for assistance in solving problems in life, to the effect of satisfying good and honest, kind and compassionate personal wishes. It has been found to be very efficacious.



There have been numerous sufferings among the Chinese folks, such as problems associated with marriage, reproduction, education, work, finances, fortune, relatives, litigation, career etc., relief to sufferings in all areas have been found to come true.

Those who have the chance to participate in Bathing Buddha Dharma meetings to put into practice “attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime”, be them lady guests who undertake to be Buddha's mother to give birth to Buddha or gentleman guests who undertake to be Buddha of multiple heavens to spray holy water, would all receive great good fortune and benefit. Therefore, extra large numbers of secular people participate in Bathing Buddha festivals.

## **The mother of Buddha, Holy Mahamaya**

According to recordings in Buddhist scriptures, when Buddha's mother, the ruling Buddha of Maha Maya Deva descended to the secular World from Maha Maya deva, His name was Mahamaya, and in history, called Madame Mahamaya.

According to recordings in Buddhist Tantric scriptures, when Mahamaya was invited to descend to Tushita heaven from Maha Maya deva, one of the Buddhagarbha heavens of Ahdharma Buddha's boundless extensive vajra Dharma realm palace, He was welcomed by Holy Maitreya Buddha and all Buddha of multiple heavens.

Holy Maitreya is the illusory Buddha of the merging of Maitreya, Amitabha and Amitayas (the Buddha of Infinite Longevity). He sacredly praised the ruler Buddha of Maha Maya deva:

“Innumerable sentient beings who are suffering, owing to the descent of Holy Mahamaya, obtained the descent of the Great Sage, Great Guiding Teacher Sakyamuni Buddha”.

“Innumerable sentient beings who are suffering, owing to the birth of the Great Sage Sakyamuni Buddha and obtained the supreme rescue and atonement of “attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime”.

The idea and interest in “attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime” is sublimated to its ultimate attainment at “Formless Tantrayana”. Amidst the holy and solemn Bathing Buddha Dharma meeting, the thinking of ordinary people establishes a formless communication with the consciousness of the Universe, the ordinary and the holy unites as one.

The participant would successfully face the sublimation of his own consciousness and achieve truthful recognition of oneself. The participant would realize that he himself is Buddha, Buddha is himself.

This is the Tantric meaning and boundless ideas and interests of “attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime”

The putting into practice of the Tantric meaning of “attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime” results in attaining the highest enlightenment of the supreme consciousness of the Universe.

According to the customary practice of ancient India, ladies have to return to their parental home to give birth. Madame Mahamaya gave birth at her parent’s palatial garden – Lumbhini grove. The ancestral Buddha was born under the *trouble-free* tree of Lumbhini grove.



## **The whole Universe joined in to celebrate the Holy birth of Buddha**

At that time, innumerable all Buddha of multiple heavens of the ten directions and three lives in Buddhagarbha heaven and the Universe altogether celebrated and hailed the beginning of the magnificent course of Sakyamuni’s descent to deliver sentient beings.

The personal mount of Ahdharma Buddha in heaven, the two king dragons led nine dragons, from upper space, sprayed Holy water to bathe the holy body. The eleven dragons, in bathing Buddha, entreated the Great Sage Sakyamuni Buddha to help them “attain Buddhahood within the current lifetime”. They received Buddha’s praise, approval and endorsement.

The eleven dragons wished that on attaining Buddhahood, they would come to the human world to extensively deliver sentient beings. Their wishes were realized and

they became the eleven best Tantrayana disciples of the Great Sage Sakyamuni Buddha.

The eleven dragon Buddha, after their descent, with miraculous powers, presented as arhants, externally Exoteric Buddhist but internally Esoteric, and assisted in delivering the holy teachings.

Since then, there has been the holding of solemn ceremonies of washing and bathing Buddha's statue, for commemorating the birthday of Buddha. Also started was the customary practice of making wishes by Buddha bathers.

With Mahayana Exoteric Buddhism, to bathe Buddha at Buddha's birthday mainly emphasize the significance in the Universe of the birth of Holy Buddha.



That is why, at the *Irrigating and washing the image of Buddha Sutra*, is recorded:

“On the birth of Buddha, He took seven steps, raised the right arm and said: Up above and below heaven, only I alone, act as the supreme teacher for deva and human beings”.

“Rulers of all heavens irrigated the crown prince's body with fragrant liquid and flowers. Thereafter, the Buddha image for bathing is a statue of the crown prince with the right arm pointing upwards and the left pointing downwards, always exposed and bathed in a basin.”

Different sects and schools of Buddhism are not united in relation to the bathing Buddha ceremony [note 1]. Hinayana, Mahayana and Tantrayana are all different in their related rituals, they all proceed according to their own doctrines. We for now do not wish to discuss the rituals for bathing Buddha at other Buddhist schools, we only discuss and present Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism's traditional doctrine and ritual of bathing Buddha festival.



## **The basis of “attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime”**

The doctrine of Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism is to guide sentient beings to “attain Buddhahood within the current lifetime”. That is, one can attain Buddhahood with this life’s practice alone.

This doctrine differs greatly from that of Hinayana Buddhism. Hinayana holy beings hold that there is only one Buddha, Sakyamuni. Ordinary people can only practise to reach arhantship which is the highest fruition status and it is definitely impossible for them to attain Buddhahood.

The doctrine of “attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime” also differs greatly with that of Mahayana Exoteric Buddhism. Mahayana Exoteric Buddhism holds that ordinary people can also practise to attain Buddhahood with three great aeons’ accumulated practice. “Three great aeons” was a quantitative term of time in ancient India. The three great aeons, if year is being used as the unit, would represent a 142 number figure. It is a near inconceivable astronomical figure. The doctrine of Exoteric Buddhism is pointing out the difficulty and scarcity of attaining Buddhahood.

The doctrine of the nine Tantrayana (vehicles of Esoteric Buddhism) holds that as long as the practitioner himself possesses pure Bodhicitta, devoutly practises correct Tantric Dharma with the guidance of a guru who possesses complete virtue, and, with “three Tantra blessing”, would be able to attain Buddhahood within the current lifetime.

According to the recording in Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism’s root scripture the *Vajrashekhara Sutra*:

The meaning of “attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime” is that one does not need to practise and accumulate merits in repeated lives, one is able to attain Buddhahood within the current lifetime.

*Bodhicitta Shastra* of the *Vajrashekhara Sutra* series says:

“If one beseeches Buddha wisdom,  
reaches thorough Bodhicitta,  
with the body born by parents,

speedily attains the great enlightened status.”

The great enlightened status is the supreme correct enlightenment of a Buddha.  
The great enlightened status is attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime.

The six major elements (earth, water, fire, wind, sunyata, consciousness) are the fundamental system of the Universe. Buddha does not differ from sentient beings, that is “the six major elements are the Dharmakaya of Vairocana Tathagata, and are the fundamental system constructing everything of the World”. Both Buddha and sentient being are formed from the six major elements. Based on this principle, if a sentient being practises correct path Tantra Dharma, with the “three Tantra blessing”, would be able to correspond with Vairocana Tathagatha, and attain Buddhahood within the current lifetime.



*Vajrashekhara Sutra* tells sentient beings the esoteric principle of the Universe of “attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime” and those who possess full complement of conditions would receive various “Generation Tantrayana” Universal Grand Dharma. “Supreme Tantrayana” applies Tantrayana’s supreme yoga grand Dharma in the strict form of “initiation”, “mandala”, “homa” and “offering” thus leads to meditative practice activities of practitioners themselves uniting with all Buddha of multiple heavens.

Holy Zhi-Ji Vimalakirti, the holy ancestral master of ancient India, disseminated the “Formless Tantrayana” which delivered and benefited the most extensive range of sentient beings. He imparts to sentient beings Formless Tantrayana’s ultimate ideology which is in command of multiple total control of the Universe [note 2], freely exhibits miraculous powers, and is described as illusory sunyata blossoms and is endlessly perfecting and fulfilling. He also passes on to sentient beings the ultimate great bliss of the Universe and humanity.



“Formless Tantrayana” conducts all nine vehicles of Tantra Dharma, homogeneously utilizing both the doctrines of Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism, and imparts corresponding holy Dharma according to various root capacities.

Thereby developing and enhancing Tantrayana Buddhism to the utmost and highest thirteen levels of consciousness of “Holy Tantra Buddha realm” and “Holy Buddha Tantra realm”, that is the realm of immediate realization of nirvana – “consciousness only without realm”.

## **Three Karma converted to Three Tantra on practice**

Thus, all things in the World, those forms and substances which can be seen and cannot be seen are the “body tantra” of Vairocana, all sounds belong to His “mouth tantra”, all ideas are His “mind tantra”. Sentient beings are formed from the six major elements, their nature does not differ with and is equal to that of Vairocana Tathagata. However, due to body, mouth and mind karma, and when these three karma maneuver and confuse erroneously, the result is transmigration in the cycle of births and deaths. Therefore, so long as the three karma are converted into three tantra, with practice according to the Dharma, one can attain Buddhahood within the current lifetime.

“Three karma converting to the three tantra”, meaning body karma, mouth karma and mind karma, through pure mind practice, are converted to body tantra, mouth tantra and mind tantra.

That means, under the teaching and discipline of the guru with full complement of virtues and Dharma nature lineage transmission, one’s “hands form mudra, body effects connection”, “mouth recites mantra and chants bright cosmic speech”, and “the consciousness visualizes Vairocana Tathagata”. Tantrayana disciples of various root capacities, specially applying various corresponding levels of Tantric Dharma and Tantric rituals, visualize the three Dharma nature body Buddha. They would purify themselves of the three karma, undergo yoga corresponding with Vairocana Tathagata with the body, mouth and mind, and thereby attain Buddhahood within the current lifetime.

Based on this notion, the purpose of Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism celebrating Buddha's birthday is to offer sentient beings who participate in bathing Buddha the opportunity to put into practice the interesting exercise of "attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime".

The implication of Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism teaching the song *Light of the Universe* at the Buddha's birthday assembly is very sacred.

"Hands forming the lotus mudra", lotus grows out of dirty mud yet undefiled, this is used to illustrate that the mind generates Bodhi pure thinking of peace, kindness, compassion and non-violence.

"Mouth reciting the six syllable mantra", the six syllable mantra is the seed language of the Universe, It possesses gigantic and sacred power of the Universe.

"Consciousness visualizing Dharmakaya", that is Vairocana Buddha, Samantabhadra Tathagata and Ahdharma Buddha.



With the Dharma nature blessing of Vairocana Buddha, Samantabhadra tathagata and Ahdharma Buddha, with yoga corresponding, this is the "three tantra blessing" and is the initial stage and foundation practice to attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime.

## **The exercise of female guests attaining Buddhahood**

At the Buddha holy birthday Dharma meeting, Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism's traditional ritual reflects that Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism especially value females. Thus, bathing Buddha Dharma meetings specially commemorate the mother of the Great Sage Sakyamuni Buddha.

Using the background of the ruling Buddha of Maha Maya deva, Madame Mahamaya, who descended from Maha Maya deva, and gave birth to the Great Sage Sakyamuni Buddha, all female guests participating in the Dharma meeting are also the incarnations of Maha Maya deva, this demonstrates “attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime”.

Buddhism, at the stage of Hinayana Buddhism, in related scriptures, tends to belittling females. This discriminating tendency, is still not totally eliminated at the stage of Mahayana Exoteric Buddhism.

However, at the highest stage of Mahayana: the Tantrayana level, the discrimination towards females is thoroughly eliminated. Females are particularly valued.

Female Holy Tantra practitioners, at their various level of practice, within Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism, are respectfully addressed as *yu jia mu*, *kong xing mu*, *ming fei*, *nu fo* (female Buddha) etc.

Therefore, at the Buddha birthday festival of Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism, female guests are invited to be ancestral Buddha's mother and to give birth to the Great Sage Sakyamuni Buddha. To carry out this magnificent and glorious historic heavy responsibility is an exercise of females attaining Buddhahood, females attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime. Therefore, this ritual is sacred and glorious.



The first programme of traditional bathing Buddha is “dancing dragon” (meaning the nine dragon sprinkling water). The next is all female guests “attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime”, they represent the ruling Buddha of Maha Maya deva, descend to Lumbhini grove, and give birth to Buddha.

There is also a “*xing xiang*”, *xing xiang* is to carry the Buddha statue for a parade, in order to signify “the whole Universe celebrates”.

## **The exercise of male guests attaining Buddhahood**

The bathing Buddha festival of Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism also arranges for a demonstration of male guests attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime.

Male guests “attain Buddhahood within the current lifetime”, representing all Buddha of multiple heavens of the ten directions and three lives, they effect the descent of holy water from the heaven. It was hot and arid in ancient India, water was very difficult to come by. When the ancestral Buddha was born, ponds and springs sprang up from the earth.

Madame Mahamaya’s paternal kingdom was Devadaha, her father Suprabuddha together with the father of the Great Sage Sakyamuni Buddha, Suddhodana, the king of Kapilavastu led large groups of the royal families and courtiers to bathe the Buddha. Two noble families assembled together, these are all our guests here.

Scroll 4 of Yi Jing’s *Nan Hai Ji Gui Nei Fa Zhuan* says: “The bathing holy ceremony was in fact a relief for all. Although the form of the great master has vanished, the image still exists, the higher consciousness is still there, we should therefore still pay deep respect. We might offer flowers to generate a pure mind, or we could irrigate or bathe Buddha in order to rid of the karma which confuse us. Using this to mark the spirit, we ourselves would reap benefits unseen to others. This motivates and encourages other people, resulting in mutual benefit. It is hoped that those with good fortune, would pay attention to the above.”

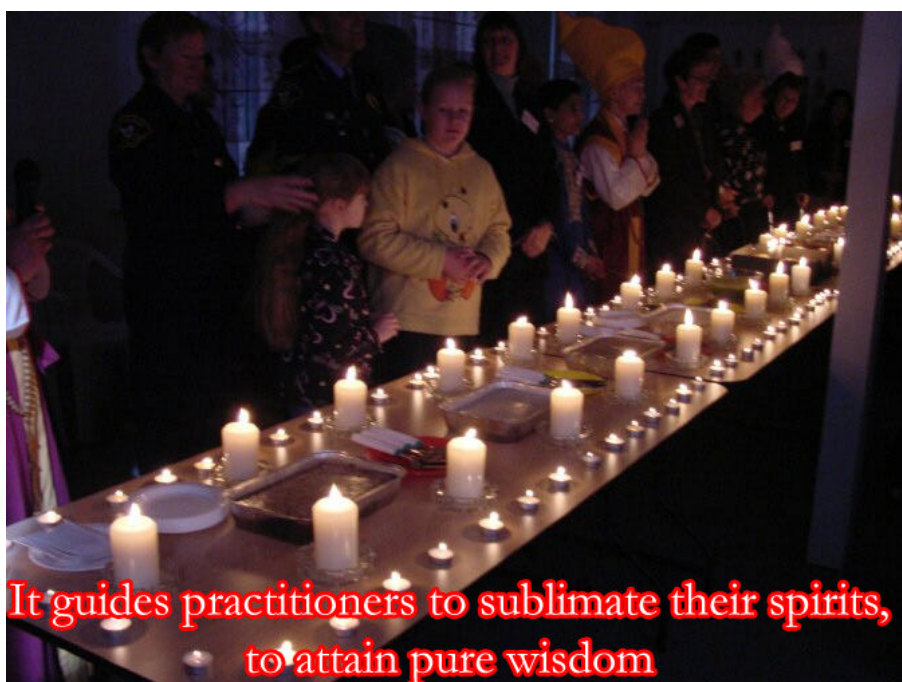
The theme of traditional bathing Buddha Dharma meeting held by Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism is “attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime”.

The doctrine of Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism is “attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime”.

“To attain Buddhahood within the current lifetime” is also the fundamental thinking of Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism in the rescue and deliverance of sentient beings. “To attain Buddhahood within the current lifetime” is also the fundamental thinking of the nine vehicles of Tantrayana Buddhism.

All doctrines of Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism revolve around “to relieve sentient beings from their immediate and eternal sufferings”. While “to attain Buddhahood within the current lifetime” is the most fundamental teaching. This philosophical topic is embodied in traditional bathing Buddha Dharma meetings.

Contemporary bathing Buddha Dharma meetings, whether they are Hinayana, Mahayana or Tantrayana, are all reformed, e.g. there would be variety gatherings, dances, plays etc. as part of the bathing Buddha festival.



The final part of Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism’s Buddha birthday festival is arranged for all guests to join together to sing the western *happy birthday* song. This raises the joyful bathing Buddha holy assembly celebrating Buddha’s birthday to the highest climax.

As for new comers to the bathing Buddha holy assembly, the experience of “attaining Buddhahood within the current lifetime” perhaps merely serves as a road sign pointing and leading to the path to a total nirvana enlightenment and liberation.

Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism is the Formless Tantrayana excelling in both teachings and realizations and which effects immediate realization of nirvana.



It guides practitioners to sublimate their spirits, to attain pure wisdom, and to unite as one with the holy supreme consciousness of the Universe.

We wish that the Bathing Buddha Dharma meeting at Buddha's birthday would be the new starting point for your spiritual life.

We wish all to have a wonderful memory.

### Note 1

There are other descriptions of the origin of Buddha bathing, some says: bathing statues of worshipping objects is the custom of ancient India, Buddhism follows the practice and bathes the Buddha.

Another says that India's weather is hot, Buddhist Sangha liked to be clean and bathed daily. Thereby, Buddha statues were also bathed.



Another Chinese ancient history on Sangha records, the famous *Abridged Sangha history of the Great Song dynasty*:

Question: What is the purpose of bathing Buddha?

Answer: When Buddha was born, dragons sprayed fragrant rain to bathe the body of Buddha.

Afterwards, the daily irrigation and washing bear no reference to the birthday. It is suspected that most areas of the five regions of India were quite hot. While the Sangha members frequently bathed, so were Buddha statues.

According to the recording of *Abridged Sangha history of the Great Song dynasty*, the significance of Buddha bathing is not restricted to the issue of commemorating the birthday of Buddha.

### Note 2

Holy *Vimalakirti Sutra*: one of the root scriptures of Holy Tantra Jin Gang Dhyana Buddhism.