

The Offering of Butter Lamps

Offering butter lamps is the most powerful offering because their light symbolizes wisdom. Just as a lamp dispels darkness, offering light from a butter lamp represents removing the darkness of ignorance in order to attain Buddha's luminous clear wisdom. The lamp offering is a sense offering to the Buddha's eyes. Because Buddha's eyes are wisdom eyes, they do not have the extremes of clarity or non-clarity. Our ordinary eyes, however, are obscured by the darkness of the two defilements – gross afflictive emotional defilements and subtle habitual defilements. While the Buddha does not have desire for offerings, we make offerings for the purpose of our own accumulation of merit and wisdom. Through the power of this accumulation, we can remove the cataracts of our ignorance eyes in order to gain Buddha's supreme luminous wisdom eyes.

When we offer light, the results are the realization of Clear Light wisdom phenomena in this life; the clarification of dualistic mind and the dispersal of confusion and realization of Clear Light in the bardo; and the increase of wisdom in each lifetime until one has reached enlightenment.

Traditionally, butter lamps are also offered as a dedication to the dead in order to guide them through the bardo by wisdom light. We can pray as well that this light guide all beings of the six realms, removing their obscurations so that they may awaken to their true wisdom nature. With genuine faith and devotion, visualize that with your offerings, countless offering goddesses offer immeasurable light to all enlightened beings.

- Lama Tharchin Rinpoche