

Earth Vase project coordinated by Anna Bihler.
Text based on traditional sources.

Starting off earthvases - 1(4)



RAM	YAM	LAM	KHAM	A
Fire	Air	Earth	Water	Empty Space

Earth Healing

It is increasingly obvious that major disturbances are occurring to the balance of the five elements within the constitution of all living beings and within the environment we inhabit. The water element has come under attack, and the fire element is overly increasing.

Pollution in land, sea and air affects the lives of millions of living creatures. As for human beings, more and more people are moving to the city thus losing contact with the healing power of green spaces and the harmonising effect of being in tune with the organic cycle of the year.

The speed and sharp angles of city life are harsh and demanding and this encourages ever more imperative to focus on striving to survive, and on carving out a space and resources in which to exist.

The rhythm of traditional cultures, of traditional religious structures and of traditional economic systems are severely disrupted by the modern driving forces of changing for the sake of change and hence accumulating and hoarding unessential goods. This jarring turbulence brings further destabilising moods of excitement and fear.

Feeling isolated, vulnerable and exposed, people try to protect themselves from overwhelm by erecting barriers to communication with others. This in turn contributes to a further sense of alienation. Random acts of kindness and communication become fewer and other people appear to be mere objects that get in our way.

In Buddhism there is a focus on the impermanence inherent in all phenomena. Change is the quality of appearance yet when the driving forces become unruly this change moves beyond the capacity of most beings to

integrate in their lives and within a stable sense of who they are and within the peaceful focus of their existence.

It is possible, however, to reinforce the balance of the five elements. We can do this, for example, by repeating a purifying mantra such as SHUDHE SHUDHE E YAM BAM RAM LAM and by the practice of meditation, which brings all phenomena into the mandala of Padmasambhava.

The origination

Originally, when a tertön finds a dharma treasure, (s)he feels obliged to return something precious to the spirits at the same place. (S)he usually asks the mundane landlord to contribute some old jewelry for that purpose.

Tradition has it that this treasure has been put and sealed into a vase of a particular belly shape, in Tibetan called “Sa Bum”.

The mind force, the intention with which the earth vase is being done is very important. Conjoining different people’s activities to produce the result particularly magnifies its power.

Include the making of an earth vase into your setup of dharma view and practice, and allow your action and decision-making to be guided by your in this spirit created intuition.

Earth Vases

It is possible to prepare and bury containers, such as vases and pots, that we fill with healing mantras, symbols, jewels, seeds and so on. This helps to replenish the power and balance of the earth. Our major concern is the re-balancing of elements in order to help make this planet remain habitable for the sake of all sentient beings on it. No particular empowerment is necessary to do so, apart from the basic precondition to having taken refuge in the Buddhadharma and committed to the Bodhicitta.

If you wish to do this, then you will need suitable containers. Some traditional forms of this are shown in the links of the last chapter. You can, however, use any suitable container like old sugar pots, marmalade jar or, if possible, a biodegradable one, such as a bamboo tube, a calabash or a clay pot.

Anna has potted pots that can be picked up at the Frankfurt area.

Work with what is available to you, what you connect with. If undecided, give a priority to what seals well and is eco-friendly.

Mark the vase on the outside with ཨོཾ་ཨུཎུག་ལྷོ། (OM AH HUNG) or nothing at all.

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Sources of James mentioning earth vases:

(a) The initiating spark <https://simplybeing.co.uk/audio-recordings/retreats/autumn-2017/>

Check out particularly the tracks “The five elements in the world – imbalance and rebalance” and “Mantras for the earth”

(b) Check around min. 19 [24 Questions & Answers. Zoom 11.2022 - YouTube](#) (“We are very much incapable of gratitude“!)