

Notes on Meditation (Guru Yoga Practice)

*Pages referring to the Guru Yoga text book

7 POSTURES FOR MEDITATION

1. 7 Postures for Meditation



- i. Crossed legs, with the left leg inside
- ii. Straight back, like a stack of coins
- iii. Shoulders spread out, like the wings of an eagle
- iv. Neck slightly bent
- v. Eyes open, focused and downcast to about one metre in front
- vi. Mouth slightly open with the tip of the tongue touching the upper palate
- vii. Hands in equanimity position (Hands on the lap, right palm over the left, with thumbs gently touching like Buddha Nampar Nangzey)

CONCENTRATION MEDITATION

2. Breathing Meditation (Concentration Meditation)

- i. Begin with a long exhalation through both nostrils visualizing all anger, hatred, negative action, disappointment and stress coming out in the form of black smoke.

The following to be repeated for 3 sets

- ii. **Subtly (non-gender wind)**, inhale and exhale through both nostrils – visualizing blessings of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas flowing into our body in the form of white light during inhaling, and all the bad and negative thoughts (desire, ignorance, anger, etc.) going out in the form of black smoke during exhaling.
- iii. **With a little force (female wind)**, inhale and exhale through both nostrils – with the same thought as above.
- iv. **Deeply (male wind)**, inhale and exhale through both nostrils – with the same thought as above.

THE MIND OF ENLIGHTENMENT

3. Prelude: Generating Motivation: The Mind of Enlightenment
(Page 7)

- i. Essence of the practice is to reduce the ego of “I”.
- ii. Selflessness and compassion are not just to benefit others but these are also what we need to have a happy mind, and ultimately free ourselves from the cycle of suffering.
- iii. If our negative emotions and moods are left untreated, these will become our personality with time.
- iv. Through the aspiration to benefit other beings, we create inner equality.
- v. Through meditation, we train our mind to have more consideration for others and to see other people’s point of view, which is key to develop understanding and forbearance. This helps us to forgive and prevent us from getting upset. Thus, our mind will be at peace.
- vi. Generate the motivation of becoming the source of happiness for oneself and all other beings as a result of one’s meditation and actions of everyday.

PREAMBLE

4. Preamble (Page 8)

- i. Do it with folded hands.
- ii. Visualize Guru Vajradhara inseparable from our own Guru on our crown seated on a lotus, sun and moon.
- iii. Recite the prayer
- iv. As a result of our devotion, Guru Vajradhara becomes a ball of light, happily and joyously dissolves into our body through our crown, blessing our body, speech and mind.
- v. Guru’s body, speech and mind becomes one with us.
- vi. Devotion to the Three Jewels (The Buddha, Dharma and Sangha) and by the blessing of the Guru’s body, speech and mind help us to transform our life.

5. Meditation on the Difficulty of Obtaining a Precious Human Life (Page 9)

Appreciation Meditation helps to bring light to the present

After bringing your focus on your breath, concentrate and contemplate.

APPRECIATE:

- Your body and whatever degree of health you have;
- The wonderful people in your life, who are kind to you, support you, help you;
- What you do, your career, your lifestyle, your community and beyond;
- Ability and opportunity to receive dharma teachings from great Masters
- To be a part of a Sangha supporting our practice

On alternate days, one should also appreciate the fact that we are born as humans with the 18 qualities¹.

Develop your sense of satisfaction. Appreciation gives satisfaction and satisfaction gives happiness.

“Draw happiness from what we have now!”

¹ The 8 freedoms (delwa gye) are when one is not born: (i) in hell; (ii) in hungry ghost realm; (iii) in animal realm; (iv) god realm; (v) in a place where there is no Buddha; (vi) in a place where people do not believe in Buddha dharma and cause & effect; (vii) deaf and mute; (viii) in a place where you do not hear of Buddha Dharma.

The 10 endowments (jorpa chu) are divided into 2 categories.

The first five endowments which are dependent on the kindness of others are: (i) birth of Buddha in this world; (ii) Buddha has taught the dharma; (iii) existence of Buddha's teachings; (iv) there are spiritual Masters and lay people practicing the dharma which encourages one's practice; (v) existence of spiritual masters with the loving kindness to guide you on the dharma path.

The second five endowments dependent on oneself are: (i) being born as human; (ii) being born in a place where there is dharma; (iii) being born with complete faculties in place; (iv) not having committed the extreme five negative deeds; (v) having faith in Buddha dharma

6. Meditation on Change / Impermanence (Page 11)

Major changes are visible to our eyes. Example: death, divorce, destruction of a building, etc.

Be aware of the minute changes, that go unnoticed, happening each and every second that lead up to these major changes. Example: relationships, ageing, etc.

It is important to know and be aware of the facts that:

- Anyone that is born must die
- Anything that is accumulated will finish
- Any gathering will disperse
- Any building will one-day crumble
- Any person in the most powerful and famous position will one day have to step down
- Friends can change
- Enemies can change
- Happiness will change
- Suffering and pain will change
- Concepts will change
- Emotions will change
- Whatever happened yesterday is today's dream
- Whatever we experience today will be tomorrow's dream

Appreciation meditation and meditation on change always go together.

Appreciation gives us a sense of joy and meditation on change prepares us for the uncertainties in this life with the understanding that nothing in this life is permanent. Whether we accept it or not, change is a natural phenomenon. We should not hold on to or be attached to our belongings, people, status, etc. Rather utilize them to benefit all beings without clinging. These two meditations when practiced together, complement each other resulting in a very positive understanding of the preciousness of this human life and change being an inevitable fact. Thus, reminding us to use every moment to benefit all beings.

7. Meditation on the Law of Karma (Self- Reflection Meditation): Cause and Effect of our Actions (Page 13)

- Think of the people who have an impact on our life (both good and bad).
- Remove the labels and see the beings (people) behind the labels with eyes of equality.
- Ask ourselves, how do we want them to treat us?
- We want respect, love, consideration, caring, attention, understanding, etc.
- Then ask ourselves, how have we treated them?
- Do we treat them the same way as we expect them to treat us?
- If you feel that you have been quite positive, you should rejoice and continue.
- If you have been unappreciative and unkind to others, by accepting this, we can then take action to repair our mistake, rather than shy away from it, worried that we are bad or somehow wrong.
- While you may regret your actions, but remember that there is no benefit in replaying it over and over again in your mind because there is no point in worrying about what cannot be changed. Henceforth, concentrate on how can we transform for the better.
- Develop compassion and wisdom which can transform our mind and our attitude to be a better human being.

Four qualities of purification:

- Deeply regret the negative deeds we have committed
 - Commit not to do it again
 - Take refuge in Three Jewels, The Buddha, Dharma and Sangha
 - Perform specific positive deeds to purify specific negative deeds
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8. Meditation on the Shortcomings of Samsara (Page 15)

- Samsara is because of Karma (Actions)
- Karma is because of Desire
- Desire is because of Ignorance & Labelling
- Our concepts are like a mirror and our experiences are like the reflection in the mirror.
 - Outer ignorance: Thinking that one's happiness, sadness, all emotions are dependent on factors outside oneself;
 - Inner ignorance: Not realizing the non-dualistic nature of mind
- **Labelling gives rise to Desire; Desire leads to Actions; Actions bring about Results**
- To be free of samsara, one must understand that everything comes from the projection of one's own mind.

Whatever appears to be truly existent is merely what mind in delusion creates; this mind of ours is also from the beginning devoid of any existence inherently real. Thus, realizing the Truth is beyond conceptions we have of the known and the knower as well, dispel the belief in external existence. - *The Sons of the Buddha's all practice this way*

For Level 1, directly go to Para 10 (Guru Yoga - Refuge and Bodhichitta, Page 18)

PROSTRATION

9. Prostration (Level 2)

- Visualize the lineage tree
 - Visualize a clear lake in front of us with the lineage tree in the middle of the lake with a central branch and four branches in four directions
 - On the central branch - Guru Vajradhara with all the Gurus on top till the lineage Guru Vajradhara and Vajra yogini (Dorji Pham) Yab Yum (*Lama Sangay Rinpoche*)
 - On the back branch - Prajña Paramita (Yumchen Sherub gi Pharultu-chenpa) surrounded by the stacks of spiritual scriptures (*Choe gi ku*)
 - On the left branch – Chenrigzig in the center with the eight Bodhisattvas and Arhats (*Longchey zog pei ku*)
 - On the front branch, Dechog khorlo dompa yab yum surrounded by the deities, yidams, choechong sum (*Longchey zog pei ku*)
 - On the right branch – Buddha Shakyamuni surrounded by thousand Buddhas (*Trul-peï ku*)
- Visualize all your fathers on your right side and all your mothers on your left side; You are the chanting Master; All the sentient beings including myself take refuge in the Buddha, dharma and sangha to free from samsara, karma, negative emotions and realize the non-dualistic nature of my mind
- Do prostrations with the above visualization

GURU YOGA

10. Guru Yoga - Refuge and Bodhichitta (Page 18)

- Recite 3 times
- For Level 1², visualize a Buddha familiar to yourself.
- For Level 2, continue with the visualization of the lineage tree.

² For Level 1, main focus is on the breathing meditation and the four analytical meditations. Then recite the (i) Refuge and Bodhichitta; (ii) Four Immeasurable Thoughts; (iii) After that dissolve the Buddha into yourself and remain in the non-fabricated nature of your mind for about 5 minutes and slowly 10 minutes. End your practice by doing the dedication of merit. Do this for first 3 months or cumulatively 60 hours by doing 15 to 20 minutes every day

IMMEASURABLE THOUGHTS

11. The Four Immeasurable Thoughts

- It is called immeasurable because the want for unlimited happiness is for all sentient beings and not just for a few loved ones.
- In terms of sequence of texts, equanimity comes at last but when we practice, it has to come first. First and foremost, we should have the eyes of equanimity, understanding that all sentient beings want happiness and does not want suffering, just like ourselves.
- Recite the prayer three times

The four immeasurable thoughts are:

May all beings obtain happiness and be very happy
May all remain free from sorrow and the cause of sorrow
May all never be separated form authentic happiness
May all remain in a state of equanimity, free of attachment and aversion.

DISSOLUTION

12. Dissolution of the Lineage Tree

Visualize:

- All the female dharma protectors dissolve into Mahakali
- Mahakali dissolves into one of the male protectors
- Then male protectors dissolve into Mahakala
- Mahakala into the yidams.
- Then Yidams dissolve into Dorji Pham which then dissolves into Dechogkhorlo dompa (Chakrasamvara)
- Dechogkhorlo dompa dissolves into Sangay Shakyathupa
- Sangay Shakyathupa dissolves into scripts and then into Prajña paramita
- Prajña paramita dissolves into Arhat and then slowly dissolves in to the Bodhisattvas and then dissolves into Chenrizig
- Chenrizig dissolves into Guru Vajradhara
- All lineage teachers starting from the Yab-yum Vajradhara and Vajra yogini dissolve into Tilopa, then Naropa and coming down slowly dissolve into Guru Vajradhara
- Finally, Guru Vajradhara as the Tsawai Lam dissolves into oneself merging its body with one's body, speech with one's speech and mind with one's mind.

The important thing to remember when we practice lineage tree dissolution is that although we see many different forms such as Sangay, Drolma and Chenrizig on the outside, always remember that my Tsawai Lama is always within my heart inseparable from oneself.

CALM ABIDING MEDITATION

13. Calm Abiding Meditation

- Merge body, speech and mind with the Guru Vajradhara.
- Be in the 7 postures of meditation
- Make sure to keep your eyes open and breathe from the mouth
- Remember two things - Awareness and Non-fabrication.
- Don't fabricate your thoughts- let your mind be as it is but be conscious of its activities. Neither reject your thoughts nor accept them.
- Do not think of the past or reflect on it. Thinking of a past thought is an effort.
- Do not think of the future. Thinking of what you are going to do is also an effort.
- Whatever thoughts at the present, do not discriminate the thought as bad or good, do not analyse
- Do not grasp; do not take ownership of the thought.
- Do not label the thoughts - happiness, sadness, devotion, fear. Do not control your mind - it is more about letting go.
- Awareness is knowing when anger is rising in you, happiness is coming.
- Clinging on the happy thoughts is fabrication of mind. Awareness should let you know what you are feeling right now right at this moment.

For Level 2: continue with Vajrasattva recitation, Mandala offering, Guru Yoga...till the Dedication of Merit on page 44.

DEDICATION

14. Dedication of Merit (Page 44)

At the end of this practice, dedicate the merit accumulated for the benefit of all beings.

These are the minimum basis of everyday practice. In order to develop inner transformation, daily practice is very much needed.