

Daily Lojong Practice

(By Kathy Wesley. Based on Jamgon Kongtrul's "The Great Path of Awakening." Last revised 12.26.12)

REFUGE and BODHICITTA

Until I reach Enlightenment
I take refuge in all the Buddhas
and in the Dharma and the Sangha
By the merit of accomplishing the six perfections
may I achieve Buddhahood
for the benefit of all sentient beings

At the beginning of every period of meditation imagine your root guru sitting on a lotus-and-moon seat above your head. His body is radiant and his face happy and smiling as he regards all beings with nonreferential compassion. In him, all the root and lineage gurus are present. With intense respect and devotion, repeat the following prayer 7, 21, or more times.

I pray for your blessing, my guru, great and completely worthy spiritual friend. I pray that you will cause love, compassion and bodhicitta to arise in my mind.

Then, imagine that your guru descends through the aperture of Brahma and sits in your heart in a pavilion of light, like an open shell. This exercise in intense respect and devotion is known as guru yoga. It is important to begin every period of meditation this way.

Then, do your shamatha practice as usual. At the conclusion of your practice, you can recite the Seven-Branch prayer as your dedication:

THE SEVEN BRANCH PRAYER

With complete faith I bow
To all the victorious ones and their sons
Who abide in the ten directions and three times.

I offer flowers, incense, light,
Perfume, food, music, and many other things,
Both in substance and with my imagination.
I ask the noble assemblage to accept them.

I confess all evil actions that I have done,
Influenced by the defilements,
From time without beginning until now;
The five that ripen immediately,
The ten nonvirtuous acts, and many others.

I rejoice in the merit of whatever virtue
Shravakas, pratyekabuddhas,

Bodhisattvas, and ordinary people
Gather throughout the three times.

I pray for the wheel of the dharma to be turned,
The teachings of the mahayana and hinayana,
In ways suitable for the different aptitudes
And motivations present in sentient beings.

I ask the buddhas not to pass into nirvana,
but, with great compassion and
Until samsara is completely empty,
To look after all sentient beings
Who drown in this ocean of sorrow.

May whatever merit I have accumulated
Become a seed for the enlightenment of all beings.
Without delay, may I become
A splendid leader for sentient beings.