

Daily Lojong Practice - Guru Yoga and Contemplations

(By Kathy Wesley. Based on Jamgon Kongtrul's "The Great Path of Awakening." Last revised 9.20.14)

Refuge & 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

Guru Yoga

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 non-referential 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 breath-awareness meditation (shamatha), observing the breath coming and going, counting 21 breaths over and over again. When you are ready to move on:

Contemplation of the Four Thoughts that Turn the Mind toward Dharma

1. The Precious Human Birth
2. Impermanence
3. Karma - Action, Cause, and Result
4. The Defects of Samsara

*For example, if we contemplate the Precious Human Birth, we might begin by thinking of all the unfortunate states of birth we *could* have experienced, but did not. **This step is called "Review."** As we think about our current state of relative freedom and relative resources, we might feel a pang of gratitude - a feeling of, "I am so fortunate to have been born here and now ..." or similar thoughts. **This second step is called "Recognition."** Once we reach Recognition, **we consciously move our attention to the third step: "Resolution."** We think, "I am so fortunate to have been born human, in the current time and place. I have taken hold of the dharma and can make good use of my life. Therefore, I resolve to practice dharma to the best of my ability from now onward, so that I may make use of this precious human life."*

Ultimate Bodhicitta Meditation

1. 1. Regard everything you perceive (all phenomena) as being dream-like. [a. First, consider your surroundings. Attempt to see that all external things are made of smaller parts - molecules, atoms - and that all of these are impermanent. b. Second, consider that, regardless of whether external objects actually exist, your experience of them is completely mental experience - in other words, they are an experience of the mind, just like appearances in a dream.]
- 2.
3. 2. Examine the nature of unborn awareness [After contemplating that all things are experienced by mind, turn your attention to mind itself. Examine your mind, asking: a. Does it have a color? b. Does it have a shape? c. Does it have a form, e.g. gas, liquid, solid)? d. Can you find where your mind begins? e. Can you find where your mind ends? f. Does it have a location?]

Finding nothing, rest in the not-finding

1. 3. Even the remedy (this formal meditation) is free to subside (let go of the meditation practice)
Look the directly at the analytical questions themselves ... when you do, they sometimes disappear. If they do ...
1. 4. Rest in the all basis of everything (When there is no involvement in the 7 mundane consciousnesses - the 5 sense consciousnesses, the 6th mental consciousness & the 7th self-sense consciousness - there is still what remains: the 8th consciousness. "Let go and rest, without the slightest idea of a nature existing as some thing, with absolutely no mental clinging, in a state distinguished by non-discursive clarity and pure simplicity. In summary, for as long as you are able, follow no train of thought, but rest evenly in a state in which mind in itself is clear and free of discursiveness." This will only last for a few moments.)

When discursiveness returns, your short session of Ultimate Bodhicitta analysis is complete. Please recite the Seven-Branch prayer as your dedication. Then, if you have time, you can return to the beginning and repeat the entire practice again.

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.

Post-Meditation Practice for Ultimate Bodhicitta Meditation

“In post-meditation practice, be a child of illusion”

“After meditation, do not allow the experience of resting evenly to dissipate, no matter what form of activity you engage in. Continually foster the feeling of knowing that all appearances, yourself, others, animate or inanimate, appear though they seem to be nothing - be like a child of illusion.” - Jamgon Kongtrul