

Meditation on Equanimity

The point of this meditation is to establish a basis on which you can develop love and compassion for all beings, without discrimination. Of course, in our daily lives there are some who we are close to - this meditation is not meant to lead us to end our relationships! However, through this meditation you can develop equal concern and regard for all.

Preparation: Start with a 5-minute breathing meditation. Focus the attention on the breath (the sensation of the breath flowing in and out at the opening of the nostrils). Let all thoughts go, like clouds floating through the sky. If distractions arise, be aware of them without getting involved and without judgment, then gently bring the attention back to the breath.

Motivation: It is impossible to help others without understanding and then subduing their mind. It is impossible to understand and help others' minds without understanding and subduing my own! Therefore, I am going to do this meditation on the discriminating nature of mind, so that by becoming master of my own mind, that is by attaining the state of enlightenment, I can be of best benefit to myself and others.

Body of the meditation:

Begin by visualizing three people sitting in front of you facing you - one is a close friend, the other is a stranger, and the third is someone you dislike, someone you could label 'enemy'.

As you visualize each person, be aware of your different responses to each of them.

Then check: Why do you have these different responses to these three people? Is it just based on what these people do for you (or don't do for you) at this point in time?

Check in your experience with your friends - are there individuals who you once labeled 'friend', maybe even 'best friend', and yet they are now strangers to you, or maybe even enemies? Is it possible that the friend visualized in front of you could do or say something that would make them lose their position as your friend?

Then look at the person labeled 'enemy'. Why do they seem to you appropriate to have that label? Have they always been someone who harmed you? Can you imagine that they could change, that they could become your friend? Has that happened with others in your experience?

Then look at the stranger. How easy is it for that person to change into a friend, or an enemy? Isn't it true that all your current friends or enemies began as strangers to you, and that they could all become strangers again?

So, check - is there any real basis on which we can cling to these distinctions, a basis for us to only have warm feelings for friends, aversion or hard feelings for enemies, and indifference to those we call strangers? Isn't it true that, as we change the label we give to people around us, that we could reasonably have even feelings for all?

And isn't it true that all beings in the world fall into these three categories - friend, enemy, stranger - so there is no one to whom this meditation cannot be applied?

Then check further: Isn't it the case that all beings want happiness and want to avoid suffering, just like you - and if all beings have the capacity to be our friends, then isn't it possible to wish for the happiness of all those around us, not just our friends? To have warm feelings for all? Isn't it the case that each individual equally is struggling with delusions, and has the capacity to become enlightened?

Which attitude will bring us more happiness - to have warmth and concern for all, or only for a small number of people?

Dedication

Having made this effort to become more acquainted with my mind, may I soon become a master of mind, by regarding all sentient beings with equanimity and without bias and by generating all positive qualities and removing all negativities and obscurations. May I see all sentient beings as friends. May I swiftly awaken to the state of supreme enlightenment and lead all other beings to that supreme state.

Generating Bodhichitta 1: Equalizing and Exchanging Self with Others

Preparation: Start with a 5-minute breathing meditation. Focus the attention on the breath (the sensation of the breath flowing in and out at the opening of the nostrils). Let all thoughts go, like clouds floating through the sky. If distractions arise, be aware of them without getting involved and without judgment, then gently bring the attention back to the breath.

Motivation: When the mind is calm and quiet and you feel relaxed and focused, create an altruistic motivation for the meditation session. Think that you are meditating not just for your own individual intellectual or emotional benefit, but you are taking the time now to meditate and develop your mind to reach the state of enlightenment where you can most skillfully benefit all beings. (Spend as much time as you need to feel this motivation in your heart.)

Body of the meditation:

Preliminary step 1: Equanimity

Meditate on equanimity – that all beings, whether friend, enemy, or stranger are equal in wishing to be happy and to avoid suffering. If you like, you can visualize before you 3 specific individuals – a friend, a stranger, and an enemy (someone who annoys you or creates problems for you). Contemplate that the differences we perceive between these 3 beings are merely a product of our *attitude*, rather than something inherent residing in those beings themselves. Contemplate the infinite different types of relationship that you have had with each of these beings

Preliminary step 2: The Kindness of All Sentient Beings and Repaying Their Kindness

Everything good that we have in our lives, every possession, all our food, clothing, and shelter, all our good experiences, come to us in dependence on others. Without others, we would have none of these things. They work so hard so that we can have the good things in our lives.

Also, all of our inner qualities, our good characteristics, have developed in dependence on others. Only because of others have we been able to practice morality and generosity. Only because of those who have been our enemies have we been able to practice patience. And only because of practicing these virtues have we received their good results: a human rebirth, our own qualities of ethics, generosity, and patience. It is only thanks to others that we have anything good at all in our lives.

Think deeply about all these ways that sentient beings are kind to us. Then, contemplate how important it is not to ignore their kindness but to repay their immense kindness in the best way possible – by bringing them long-lasting happiness and by alleviating their sufferings.

Step 1: Equalizing Self with Others

When we think “myself”, this has great importance in our minds. But when we think “others”, this feels like it has much less weight, much less importance. This is how our self-cherishing mind relates to the world. To correct this unbalanced view, contemplate as follows:

Think of how all sentient beings are just like you in wanting to be happy and to avoid suffering. You and every other sentient being are exactly the same in this. Contemplate this again and again.

Step 2: Shortcomings of the Self-Cherishing Thought

All the suffering in the world comes from the desire to obtain one's own happiness only. Thus, all problems, all suffering comes from the self-cherishing thought. Our rebirths in the lower realms, every time someone accuses us of something we have not done, all the harm and suffering that we experience now and have experienced for beginningless lives, have come to us because of the self-cherishing thought. Contemplate deeply the disadvantages of following the self-cherishing thought over and over again.

Step 3: The Advantages of Cherishing Others

All the happiness in the world comes from cherishing others. Cherishing others leads only to happiness, to the elimination of problems. Wealth, wonderful experiences, a good heart, liberation, enlightenment – all these come from the altruistic practice of cherishing others. Think about the benefits of cherishing others again and again.

Step 4: Exchanging Self with Others

Think about when you were a child at a birthday party. When they cut the cake, what was your first thought? To get the biggest piece of cake! We think of ourselves first and think of others second. This is the typical way that the self-cherishing thought thinks. But when we exchange self with others, then we put others into the place previously occupied by ourselves – that is, we put others first and ourselves second. Contemplate this fully. Think of all the various ways in which you can put others first and yourself second in your life, day to day, and in your thoughts.

TONG-LEN PRACTICE

Step 5a: Taking (Compassion)

Contemplate the sufferings of kind sentient beings until an unbearable feeling of sadness arises in you, wishing to be able to eliminate all their sufferings. Then, think about taking away that suffering from all sentient beings and taking it onto yourself. For example, think: May all their sufferings of heat and cold ripen on me. May all their sufferings of hunger and thirst ripen on me. May all their sufferings of pain and ignorance ripen on me. May all their illnesses, depression, difficulties and problems, sufferings of all kinds, ripen on me.

You can go one by one through the 6 realms, starting from the hell realms and moving upward to the preta realm, the animal realm, and then through the 3 higher realms. Contemplate taking on the sufferings of all the beings in each of the realms of samsara.

**This can be a difficult meditation to do, especially at the beginning. If it is too difficult to start off like this, then one can start by taking on one's own sufferings of today, tomorrow, this life, the next life, and so on. This helps to prepare the mind for thinking about taking on others' sufferings; it also helps one to become realistic and responsible for one's own sufferings and for having created the causes to experience those suffering results.

Step 5b: Giving (Love)

Generate a strong feeling of love toward sentient beings, wishing them to receive every happiness. Then, think about actually providing them with everything that they need to

be happy. Contemplate transforming your body into whatever sentient beings wish for and need. Think about the beings in all 6 realms, starting from the hell realm beings. Imagine, for example, that your body transforms into a wonderful, perfect cool environment for those in the hot hells; into a wonderful, perfect warm environment for those in the cold hells; into a beautiful environment with wonderful food and drink for those in the preta realms; into a lovely, safe, and perfect environment for beings in the animal realm; into a pure realm without war or disease or physical sufferings, and without depression or cruelty or other mental sufferings for those in the human realm; into an environment not of mere pleasure but of true bliss for those in the god realms; and so on.

Step 5c: Conjoining Giving and Taking with the Breath

You can do the previous 2 steps of taking and giving conjoined with the breath. When you inhale, imagine taking on the sufferings of sentient beings. With each breath, contemplate taking on a different suffering from different beings each time. As you breathe in these sufferings, imagine that these sufferings congeal into a huge meteorite that crashes into the heavy black mountain of the self-cherishing thought at your heart, destroying it completely into dust. At your heart remains only the openness, light, and space of the mind that cherishes others.

From that wonderful open space at your heart, as you exhale, imagine giving to sentient beings whatever they wish for to be happy. With each breath, contemplate giving different benefits and happiness to different beings each time.

Step 6: Extraordinary Thought

Contemplate like this: It is unbearable that sentient beings are so overwhelmed by suffering and cannot have the happiness they wish for and deserve. I cannot depend on someone else to help them to overcome their suffering and to achieve happiness. I must do this myself, by myself alone! There is no other way. Think about this again and again until it permeates your heart through and through.

Step 7: Generating Bodhichitta

Contemplate as follows: The only real and true benefit that I can give to other sentient beings is to completely take away their sufferings and to bring them perfect, everlasting happiness. This means bringing them to enlightenment. Nothing else will suffice. But in my current ordinary state, I am still controlled by delusion and karma; I cannot even liberate myself at this point, much less liberate others. The only way that I can become able to enlighten other sentient beings is to become enlightened myself first. So, for the sole purpose of liberating all other sentient beings (ALL) from suffering and leading them to perfect, complete enlightenment, I must, as quickly as possible, achieve the state of supreme enlightenment.

Generating Bodhichitta 2: Seven Techniques of Mahayana Cause and Effect

Preparation: Start with a 5-minute breathing meditation. Focus the attention on the breath (the sensation of the breath flowing in and out at the opening of the nostrils). Let all thoughts go, like clouds floating through the sky. If distractions arise, be aware of them without getting involved and without judgment, then gently bring the attention back to the breath.

Motivation: When the mind is calm and quiet and you feel relaxed and focused, create an altruistic motivation for the meditation session. Think that you are meditating not just for your own individual intellectual or emotional benefit, but you are taking the time now to meditate and develop your mind to reach the state of enlightenment where you can most skillfully benefit all beings. (Spend as much time as you need to feel this motivation in your heart.)

Body of the meditation:

Preliminary step 1: Equanimity

Meditate on equanimity – that all beings, whether friend, enemy, or stranger are equal in wishing to be happy and to avoid suffering. If you like, you can visualize before you 3 specific individuals – a friend, a stranger, and an enemy (someone who annoys you or creates problems for you). Contemplate that the differences we perceive between these 3 beings are merely a product of our *attitude*, rather than something inherent residing in those beings themselves. Contemplate the infinite different types of relationship that you have had with each of these beings

Step 1: Recognizing All Sentient Beings as Having Been My Mother

Meditate for a short time on the continuity of your mind, going back through infinite lifetimes in the past, and forward into your next lives in the future. Think about those countless past lives. In each of those lives, just as in this life, you have had a mother who gave birth to you. As you have had countless previous lifetimes, you have had countless mothers. It isn't logical to think that the same being has always been your mother in all those lives, so instead, through infinite lives, you have had infinite different mothers. Thus, it is impossible to point to any sentient beings and be able to say that that person was never your mother. *All* sentient beings have been your mother at one time or another! Contemplate this deeply until you have a strong feeling in your heart that there isn't even one sentient being who hasn't been your mother in the past.

Step 2: Recognizing the Kindness of All Mother Sentient Beings

The depth of our mother's kindness is incomparable. We would not be alive if it were not for our mother having carried us in her womb for nine long months, having taken care of us as infants when we could not take care of the smallest thing for ourselves; we would not have so much of the good fortune that we have in our lives if not for our mother having cared for us when we were ill, having seen to all of our needs throughout our childhood, making sure that we were educated so that we could become decent human beings with the opportunities that we have in life.

Also, all of our inner qualities, our good characteristics, have developed because of

the kindness of our mother. These things are true not only of our mother in this life, but of our mothers in all our lifetimes. Thus, all sentient beings, who have been our mothers in our past lives, have been unspeakably, infinitely kind to us.

Think deeply about all the ways that mother sentient beings have been kind to us until you have a strong feeling in your heart.

Step 3: Repaying the Kindness of All Mother Sentient Beings

Having gained an understanding of the kindness of mother sentient beings, now contemplate how important it is not to ignore their kindness but to repay their immense kindness in the best way possible. Think that you are in especially fortunate circumstances, mostly because of them, and that those fortunate circumstances allow you to be able to repay their kindness: You have met the Dharma, you have received teachings from wonderful, qualified teachers, you have all the right circumstances to practice the Dharma teachings. Therefore, determine that you will do as much as you can, to repay sentient beings' kindness by liberating them from their sufferings and by bringing them the true happiness that they wish for. Contemplate this again and again.

Step 4: Great Love

Reflect on the situation of sentient beings – although every sentient being only wishes to be happy, they are completely without true, pure, uncontaminated happiness. Generate a strong feeling of love toward sentient beings, the same kind of feeling that a mother feels toward her children. Generate that strong loving attitude wishing all kind mother sentient beings to receive every happiness. On top of this, determine in your mind that you yourself will bring *all* sentient beings to the happiness they wish for. (Having this wish for *all* sentient beings makes this *infinite* love; taking on the responsibility to make it happen yourself is what makes it *great* love.) Contemplate this strongly from the depths of your heart.

Step 5: Great Compassion

Contemplate the sufferings of kind sentient beings. It is said that it is especially beneficial to contemplate the example of the slaughter of an animal at the beginning of this meditation. Think about the suffering not only of the animal being slaughtered, but of the person doing the slaughtering. Think about the unbearable suffering that sentient beings experience constantly. Reflect on the fact that although they want nothing other than to be happy, they are constantly creating the causes for infinite sufferings in the future. Think about the sufferings of each individual realm of samsara, especially the lower realms. Reflect on these realities until an unbearable feeling of sadness arises in you, the overwhelming wish that all sentient beings be completely free from their sufferings. Then, on top of this, make a strong determination that you yourself will eliminate all their sufferings. (Having this wish for *all* sentient beings makes this *infinite* compassion; taking on the responsibility to make it happen yourself is what makes it *great* compassion.) Contemplate this strongly from the depths of your heart.

Step 6: The Extraordinary Thought

Contemplate like this: It is unbearable that sentient beings are so overwhelmed by suffering and cannot have the happiness they wish for and deserve. I cannot depend on someone else to help them to overcome their suffering and to achieve happiness. I must do this myself, by myself alone! Just as it is a child's responsibility to save her parents if

they are in danger, so it is my responsibility to free all mother sentient beings from their sufferings and to bring them to perfect uncontaminated happiness. There is no other way. Think about this again and again until it permeates your heart through and through.

Step 7: Generating Bodhichitta

Contemplate as follows: The only real and true benefit that I can give to other sentient beings is to completely take away their sufferings and to bring them true, everlasting happiness. This means bringing them to enlightenment. Nothing else will suffice. But in my current ordinary state, I am still controlled by delusion and karma; I cannot even liberate myself at this point, much less liberate others. The only way that I can become able to enlighten other sentient beings is to become enlightened myself first. So, for the sole purpose of liberating all other sentient beings (ALL) from suffering and leading them to perfect, complete enlightenment, I must, as quickly as possible, achieve the exalted state of supreme enlightenment, the state of a perfect, complete buddha.

Generating Bodhichitta 3: How to Practice the Eleven-Point Method of Generating Bodhichitta

*(Combining the two methods of Equalizing and Exchanging Self with Others, and the
Seven-point Technique of Mahayana Cause and Effect)*

Preparation: Start with a 5-minute breathing meditation. Focus the attention on the breath (the sensation of the breath flowing in and out at the opening of the nostrils). Let all thoughts go, like clouds floating through the sky. If distractions arise, be aware of them without getting involved and without judgment, then gently bring the attention back to the breath.

Motivation: When the mind is calm and quiet and you feel relaxed and focused, create an altruistic motivation for the meditation session. Think that you are meditating not just for your own individual intellectual or emotional benefit, but you are taking the time now to meditate and develop your mind to reach the state of enlightenment where you can most skillfully benefit all beings. (Spend as much time as you need to feel this motivation in your heart.)

Body of the meditation:

Use the meditations of Generating Bodhichitta 1 and Generating Bodhichitta 2 of this unit, and combine them in the following way:

1. Equanimity meditation
2. Recognizing all sentient beings as having been your mother
3. Recognizing the kindness of sentient beings when they were your mother
4. Recognizing the kindness of sentient beings at all times
5. Equalizing self and others
6. The disadvantages of the self-cherishing thought
7. The advantages of cherishing others
8. Taking (Great compassion)
9. Giving (Great love)
10. The extraordinary thought
11. Generating bodhichitta

Dedicate the merits to enlightenment with an understanding of emptiness.

Meditation: Remembering the kindness of all sentient beings

Prepared by: Ven Kaye Miner

Find a comfortable posture and bring your awareness to the natural rhythm of the breathing in order to calm and focus the mind.

And develop a positive motivation for doing this meditation, thinking that I wish to experience Enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings, and to be able to do this I need to realise the kindness of all sentient beings.

Body of the meditation:

I'd like you to contemplate, to think, that the fact that you are able to be aware of your breath, is because you're human; because you have the special intelligence that a human has; the ability of the mind to concentrate on whatever object it wants. But also think you only can be aware of the breath because you're still alive. Being alive depends on so many causes and conditions. The fact that you are still alive is also thanks to your parents, especially to the mother, or the person who cared for you, who looked after you from the time you were born, when you were completely helpless. So think how, if it wasn't for people taking care of you, cleaning you, feeding you, dressing you; if it wasn't for them, you wouldn't be alive now. So think about this.

And if you think about your life from the time you were born up to now; how many beings have supported your life?

There were those that gave you an education, that guided you. Everything you have; the house you live in, the comforts, the clothes you are wearing. Even the food that you eat comes from others; it comes from their effort in growing and preparing the food; comes from their energy, even from their lives! So just think of your life and think of the way other have supported you.

Also think how you depend on others, all the good things you have.

Even having a human life is a result of positive actions that you've done in the past.

Positive actions that are based on not harming and, in fact, trying to help others. So think how, if it wasn't for them, you wouldn't have been able to create the causes for happiness. Without others, these days we can't even have a glass of water.

And all these others, just like you, really want to be happy, want to be free from problems. We're exactly the same in this way. The only difference, if you can even call it a difference, is knowing and pursuing the means, the methods, that will lead to this happiness and freedom from suffering. So just try to get an idea, to feel this equanimity; the fact that we're all the same in wishing happiness and freedom from suffering. And think also about the fact that we're so interconnected.

And see if you can generate a feeling of love and concern, compassion, recognising that all beings, in order to grow, all beings need affection and how that also is what makes us all the same. And so, since we're all the same and since we're all interconnected, and since everything that you have comes from others; develop the resolve to stop harming others and in fact where possible try to benefit them.

Dedication:

Then dedicate the positive energy from meditating in this way to developing the qualities to be able to benefit all sentient beings, especially the qualities of a fully Enlightened Buddha. Then when you feel ready begin breathing more deeply.

Meditation on Tong len

Prepared by: Ven Kaye Miner

Find a comfortable posture and become aware of the natural rhythm of your breathing, focusing and quietening the mind.

And then developing a positive motivation for doing this meditation thinking that may it be a cause to experience Enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Body of the meditation:

And now, let's begin this meditation, on taking and giving, by working with the abstract quality of this practice. So we can imagine the suffering, pain, difficulties, being like black, heavy, perhaps hot kind of light. And we can imagine the pleasure and happiness is white, cool light. So still with the natural rhythm of our breathing. we imagine that as we breathe in, we breathe in this black, heavy pain and suffering and as we breathe out we breathe out everything that is good, in the form of white, bright light, happiness. Breathing in the black, breathing out the white. Just the natural rhythm of the breathing.

Imagine opening up to the reality of the suffering existence of yourself and all other beings. Acknowledging that there's pain, that there's suffering and that you're not alone. But also acknowledging that there's happiness, freedom, goodness.

Still with the awareness of breathing in the black pain and breathing out the white goodness, combined with the awareness of the reality of the situation, imagine that as you breathe in the black, it destroys the protective shell of the self cherishing, enabling your heart to open and allowing the true nature of yourself, the love and the compassion, enabling you to share your goodness with others. This flows out on the out breath. Goodness, happiness, love, white light. Taking with the in breath, giving with the out, taking and giving.

If you feel comfortable with this, you can visualise or imagine a specific situation and connect with that. Perhaps it's imagining taking away the suffering and pain of the people in Iraq and giving them happiness and well being. Perhaps it could be some sickness or pain that you're experiencing now yourself.

And you can connect with that pain and sickness and suffering that so many others are experiencing. All the suffering of beings within cyclic existence. Imagine their sufferings. Imagine taking it away. Imagine giving them happiness. Taking and giving, on the breath.

Dedication:

And now as we bring this meditation to a close we dedicate all the positive energy that we've created, that we may be able to destroy the self cherishing and perfectly practise tong

len. May we be able to develop the quality of Bodhicitta so that we may be able to realise our greatest potential for enlightenment in order to free all beings from their suffering and to place them in perfect peace and happiness.

So now when you feel ready begin breathing more deeply, slowly begin to move the body and then open your eyes.

This really is a very powerful meditation, thank you all very much. Try thinking of Bodhicitta and try thinking of tong len as you go about your daily life, that's your home work.

Meditation on Compassion

Prepared by: Ven Connie Miller

Preparation: Start by taking just a minute or two to focus on your physical body, finding the most beneficial position with your spine straight and erect, a position in which you can be aware and awake, but not stiff or rigid. Feel the weight of your body, its substantial, earthy character. Become present in the moment and place where you are.

Now continue with a 5-minute breathing meditation. Focus the attention on the breath (the sensation of the breath flowing in and out at the opening of the nostrils). Let all thoughts go, like clouds in the sky. If distractions arise, be aware of them without getting involved and without judgment, then gently bring the attention back to the breath.

Motivation: Create an altruistic motivation for the meditation session. Think that you are meditating not just for your own well-being or peace of mind or good reputation, but you are taking the time now to meditate and develop a compassionate mind to reach the state of enlightenment where you can most skillfully benefit all beings.

The main body of the meditation:

Start by imagining that you are surrounded by all sentient beings, who are in the form of human beings. Your father is seated on your right, your mother on your left. Behind you are all your friends and family members ... those you are close to. In front of you are all the sentient beings that you have difficulty with or that you dislike ... your "enemies." Surrounding you in all directions as far as you can see are all remaining sentient beings. They are all seated and facing you.

Now spend some time thinking of the sufferings of sentient beings. Contemplate the gross level sufferings of sentient beings in the human realm and in the other realms of cyclic existence. These include sufferings of the body: illness, injury, torture, death, pain, and so on; sufferings of the mind: anxiety, depression, grief, anguish, as well as the sufferings of the mind's delusions: anger, pride, attachment, jealousy, rage, hatred, obsession, and so on; the sufferings of being born in each realm of samsara, especially in the lower realms: as a hell being, as a hungry ghost, as an animal; the general sufferings of samsara, such as meeting with unpleasant circumstances and people; not encountering desirable people and circumstances; having the things you desire taken away from you; being given things you do not want. Also, remember the subtle suffering of simply being born in cyclic existence, that is, with a body and mind pervaded by the causes of suffering so that suffering is indeed inevitable.

As you contemplate these sufferings of others, remember at the same time the kindness of sentient beings, that is, how there is nothing good or desirable that you have that did not come to you from the kindness of sentient beings. Food, clothing, shelter, all the physical things you have only came to you in dependence on others. That you are alive is thanks to the kindness of your mother and your family. Your education and, therefore, your achievements in life due to your education and skills ... you only have these because of the kindness of others who taught you, who helped you, who enabled you to go to school,

and so on. And the kindness of other sentient beings is something that you have received during infinite lifetimes from countless sentient beings. There is not one sentient being who has not been kind to you in many, many lives.

Now think:

All sentient beings, including myself, are suffering tremendously. And because of our ignorance, we are forever seeking happiness in our lives, but we are continuously creating the causes of suffering for ourselves and others. Each sentient being has been unspeakably kind to me in all my past lives.

First, generate compassion for yourself:

How wonderful it would be if I were free of all suffering for now and forever. May I cause myself to be free of all my suffering. Contemplate this thought strongly in your mind.

Place your attention at your heart-center. Don't "look" at your heart-center as if from above (as if you are your eyes). Instead, actually "become" your heart-center. You are "in" your heart. Now imagine that the compassionate thought you have been contemplating manifests in the form of radiant golden light at your heart-center. As you contemplate the thought of compassion toward yourself, your compassion in the form of this radiant golden light fills your heart-center and your entire body. You are completely enveloped, filled, and purified by your compassion.

Now, generate compassion for all other sentient beings in the same way:

How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings were free of all suffering for now and forever. May I cause them to be free of all their suffering. Contemplate this thought strongly in your mind.

Again, place your attention at your heart-center. You are your heart-center. Now imagine that your compassionate thought that has manifested in the form of radiant golden light at your heart-center radiates outward, encompassing all sentient beings. Imagine this gradually: first the light pervades those who are immediately around you. Then it expands to pervade your entire community ... then your country ... your hemisphere ... your entire planet ... the entire universe ... All sentient beings in all realms of existence anywhere are completely enveloped by the golden radiating light of your compassion.

Contemplate this as long as you can with a concentrated mind.

When your concentration begins to wane, gradually reabsorb the golden light of your compassion back into your heart. It remains there as a small golden seed, always activated, always alive within you.

Make this determination: may all sentient beings be free of every suffering, both gross and subtle, and may I cause them to be free of all suffering, from today forward. Having genuinely generated this thought within you, stop all thinking processes and simply remain concentrated on this determination with single-pointed focus, allowing it to absorb into the deeper levels of your mind.

Dedication

Having made this effort to achieve a more compassionate attitude, may I quickly generate all positive qualities of kindness and compassion and remove all negativities and

obscurations of self-cherishing from my mind. May I swiftly awaken to the state of supreme enlightenment and lead all other beings to that supreme state.

10. How to Develop Bodhicitta

Transcript of meditation on Loving Kindness

Prepared by: Ven Kaye Miner

(CD seven)

Introduction: The meditation I want to do now is a meditation on loving kindness. This is meditation, using visualisation and may seem a bit “touchy feely”.

The point with to understand with meditation is that they’re training you to become more familiar with particular techniques and ways of thinking. So in this meditation we actually generate, within us, a loving kind of energy which we visualise or imagine as warm light energy. And we imagine that loving energy flowing out to others. It’s easy to do that, when you’re sitting on your meditation cushion and you’re using your imagination. It might just seem like some nice kind of play and a bit entertaining and you might feel good afterwards, but don’t underestimate the effect that such a meditation has. At a subtle level what’s happening is that this meditation is training you to start to open up your heart; to think about sharing your loving, kind energy with others. But it’s safe because there’s no one there waiting for it; wanting to see how much loving energy you can put out. It’s something that you’re doing inside, inside.

Body of the meditation:

I’d like you to focus your attention at your heart, at your heart chakra. This is the mid point inside your chest. It’s the seat, it’s the place, of your emotions. Don’t think that you’re looking down from your head to your heart, but just try to feel that place, that kind of mid point, and feel that your mind is there.

And I’d like you to think now of somebody who’s really close to you; someone that you really care about. And imagine them being blissfully happy, that they have everything that they want.

And try to generate, or feel, loving kindness. This is just a pure unconditional joy, or a light, in their happiness. Feel in your heart this incredible joy. This person you care about is blissfully happy.

And can you notice that this loving kindness, this joy, has a physical sensation? A feeling of warmth that’s arising in your heart just like fresh warm water flowing into a cold bath. And imagine it continuously pouring out, growing stronger, this warmth, this loving kindness. It feel so soothing so healing. It’s real healing energy that’s beginning to spread right throughout your body and your mind. Perhaps you can see it as brilliant, white nectar flowing, bringing bliss to every part it touches; healing, healing every physical, mental and emotional problem; healing their causes as well.

Imagine your whole body completely filled with this warmth, this white nectar, this healing energy of loving kindness. Concentrate on this.

And imagine this nectar becoming even brighter and feel, imagine, that you start to send it out through every pore of your body; sending it out in every direction; sending it out to touch all beings, to bring them happiness, to bring them bliss. And imagine sending it out first to the mother of this life, who's sitting quietly beside you on your left bringing her happiness and health; then out to your father of this life, who sits beside you on your right side; and then to your friends and other relatives who are sitting behind and to those who've upset you or made you angry, either recently or some time in the past and they're sitting in front of you.

Imagine this bright, white nectar of loving kindness going out to them. And forgive them for any harm that they've caused you and have compassion for the harm that they're causing themselves. *Pause*

Then imagine the light, the white nectar of loving kindness going out to all beings. Think that you've brought all suffering in the universe to an end, and that everyone has realised their full potential for awakening; and that the whole environment, everything, is so pure. And you're so happy that you've been able to repay the kindness of beings, your mothers. And having finished this work, the blissful energy of loving kindness flows back into you. And imagine that all these other beings, and the environment that you visualised, imagine all of that dissolving into empty space, the empty space of wisdom.

And imagine that you remain like a bubble of light floating in that empty space; it's an empty space of awareness.

And then gradually your body as well starts to dissolve, to disappear from the outside in, into your heart. And then that too disappears so that all that remains is your blissful mind; your blissful mind focused single pointedly upon your ultimate nature, emptiness. Just like the first hint of light in the dark sky before dawn.

And then generate the blissful healing energy of loving kindness again. And that forms a white light that takes the form of your body, with your mind inside.

Feel that your whole body and mind, that are products of the karma and delusions, feel that they have gone forever.

Feel instead that your new body and mind are now produced from wisdom and compassion.

And think that the purpose of this life born from wisdom and compassion, is to bring happiness to all beings, to ease their suffering, however you can.

And think from now on I will instantly dispel even the slightest hint of self importance or selfishness and do what I can to be of benefit of others; with every action I make; with every word I speak and with every thought that I think.

And we bring the meditation to a close, by dedicating the positive energy to really being able to do this.

So when you feel ready begin breathing more deeply, moving the body and opening your eyes.

What did you think of that meditation? I wasn't asking for like, "did the earth move for your" kind of question.

What came up for me with this is how, whilst ever we're focused on I, myself, my wants, there's some kind of tightness and some kind of limitation to what we're able to do. And

somehow I almost feel we limit ourselves. We almost hold ourselves back. But if you start to imagine this kind of warm, loving energy - you know, the word healing keeps coming up, because it is healing - if you imagine if your way of existence was based on compassion and wisdom it's almost .. well, there's a much lighter, much easier, much happier way of being. Now that was only in a meditation but even in a meditation we could feel that, couldn't we? Imagine if it was real. Imagine if it was a way of being, a way of existing, that was with you twenty four hours a day, three hundred and sixty five days a year, year after year! Imagine if it was stable; that you weren't going to slip back into the "what about me" thing. That you were not going to have this kind of being hurt, not getting what you want any more, but having a completely pure way of existing. And you wanted to try and help others to not be so closed, not so tight, not so fearful, not so suffering, wow! Probably a bit hard to imagine isn't it? So I think, as I said before we started that meditation, the idea is that it plants seeds; it starts to familiarise yourself with different ways of thinking, different ways of behaving; having a different premise, a different kind of reason for existing. Somehow I think that after you do a meditation like this you walk outside and it's almost, I often imagine, that you're glowing. There's something radiating; the white energy, this loving kindness energy, still is coming out of your pores.

Dedication:

Then dedicate the positive energy from meditating in this way to developing the qualities to be able to benefit all sentient beings, especially the qualities of a fully Enlightened Buddha. Then when you feel ready begin breathing more deeply.