

**HOW TO
MEDITATE**

PRAYERS AND
MEDITATIONS

**MODULE 2 OF
FPMT'S**

**DISCOVERING
BUDDHISM**

LHAGSAM

TIBETAN

MEDITATION

ZURICH

Painting by Jane Seidlitz



**HOW TO MEDITATE
MODULE 2 OF FPMT'S
DISCOVERING BUDDHISM**

**PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS FOR
THE INTENSIVE PRACTICE DAY**

PRODUCED FOR THE STUDENTS OF
LHAGSAM TIBETAN MEDITATION, ZURICH
FOR ITS THIRTEEN-MONTH SERIES OF
TEACHINGS COVERING ALL FOURTEEN
MODULES OF DISCOVERING BUDDHISM
TAUGHT BY **VEN. ROBINA COURTIN**
SEPTEMBER 2, 2021 UNTIL
SEPTEMBER 22, 2022



**LHAGSAM TIBETAN MEDITATION
ZURICH**

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PART ONE: PRAYERS

1. REFUGE AND BODHICHITTA, MANDALA

1. TAKING REFUGE AND GENERATING BODHICHITTA

SANG GYÄ CHHÖ DANG TSHOG KYI CHHOG
NAM LA

I take refuge until I am enlightened
JANG CHHUB BAR DU DAG NI KYAB SU
CHHI

In the Buddha, the Dharma, and the
Supreme Assembly.

DAG GI JIN SOG GYI PÄI TSHOG NAM KYI

By my merits of generosity and so
forth,

DRO LA PHÄN CHHIR SANG GYÄ DRUB PAR
SHOG (3x)

May I become a buddha to benefit
transmigratory beings. (3x)

2. MANDALA OFFERING

SA ZHI PÖ KYI JUG SHING ME TOG TRAM

The ground is blessed with scent and
with flowers strewn

RI RAB LING ZHI NYI DÄ GYÄN PA DI
Adorned with Mount Meru the four
lands, sun and moon

SANG GYÄ ZHING DU MIG TE ÜL WA YI
Transformed as a pure land and
offered

DRO KÜN NAM DAG ZHING LA CHÖ PAR
SHOG

May all wandering beings enjoy this
buddha land.

3. INNER MANDALA

DAG GI CHHAG DANG MONG SUM KYE WÄI
YÜL

All those objects of my mind's three
poisons –

DRA NYEN BAR SUM LÜ DANG LONG CHÖ
CHÄ

Coveted friend, foe and stranger,
body, wealth, worldly pleasure,

PHANG PA ME PAR BÜL GYI LEG ZHE NÄ

Without a feeling of loss, I surrender

DUG SUM RANG SAR DRÖL WAR JIN GYI
LOB

Receive them please and free all
beings from their bondage.

IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM
NIRYATAYAMI

***Mandala offerings adapted for
chanting by Rob Preece***

2. THE HEART SUTRA: SUTRA OF THE PERFECTION OF WISDOM

*I prostrate to the Three Noble Rare
Sublime Ones.*

COMMON PROLOGUE

Thus did I hear at one time. The Bhagavan was dwelling on Mass of Vultures Mountain in Rajagriha together with a great community of monks and a great community of bodhisattvas.

SPECIAL PROLOGUE

At that time, the Bhagavan was absorbed in the concentration on the categories of phenomena called “Profound Perception.”

BUDDHA BLESSES THE MINDS OF SHARIPUTRA AND AVALOKITESHVARA

Also, at that time, the bodhisattva mahasattva arya Avalokiteshvara looked upon the very practice of the profound perfection of wisdom and beheld those

five aggregates also as empty of inherent nature.

SHARIPUTRA'S QUESTION

Then, through the power of Buddha, the venerable Shariputra said this to the bodhisattva mahasattva arya Avalokiteshvara: “How should any son of the lineage train who wishes to practice the activity of the profound perfection of wisdom?”

AVALOKITESHVARA'S BRIEF ANSWER

He said that and the bodhisattva mahasattva arya Avalokiteshvara said this to the venerable Sharadvatiputra. “Shariputra, any son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage who wishes to practice the activity of the profound perfection of wisdom should look upon it like this, correctly and repeatedly beholding those five aggregates also as empty of inherent nature.

AVALOKITESHVARA’S EXTENSIVE ANSWER

“Form is empty. Emptiness is form.
Emptiness is not other than form; form is also not other than emptiness.

In the same way, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors, and consciousness are empty.

“Shariputra, likewise, all phenomena are emptiness; without characteristic; unproduced, unceased; stainless, not without stain; not deficient, not fulfilled.

“Shariputra, therefore, in emptiness there is –

The five aggregates

“No form, no feeling, no discrimination, no compositional factors, no consciousness;

The six senses

“No eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind;

The objects of the six senses

“No visual form, no sound, no odor, no taste, no object of touch, and no phenomenon.

The six sense bases

“There is no eye element and so on up to and including no mind element and no mental consciousness element.

The twelve links

“There is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, and so on up to and including no aging and death and no extinction of aging and death.

The four noble truths

“Similarly, there is no suffering, origination, cessation, and path;

“There is no exalted wisdom, no attainment, and also no non-attainment.

“Shariputra, therefore, because there is no attainment, bodhisattvas rely on and dwell in the perfection of wisdom, the mind without obscuration and without

fear. Having completely passed beyond error, they reach the end-point of nirvana.

“All the buddhas who dwell in the three times also manifestly, completely awaken to unsurpassable, perfect, complete enlightenment in reliance on the perfection of wisdom.

THE MANTRA OF THE PERFECTION OF WISDOM

“Therefore, the mantra of the perfection of wisdom, the mantra of great knowledge, the unsurpassed mantra, the mantra equal to the unequaled, the mantra that thoroughly pacifies all suffering, should be known as truth since it is not false. The mantra of the perfection of wisdom is declared:

TAYATA OM GATE GATE PARAGATE
PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA

[TAYATA OM GO! GO! GO BEYOND!
GO PERFECTLY BEYOND! GO TO
ENLIGHTENMENT! SVAHA]

“Shariputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva should train in the profound perfection of wisdom like that.”

BUDDHA’S APPROVAL

Then the Bhagavan arose from that concentration and commended the bodhisattva mahasattva arya Avalokiteshvara saying: “Well said, well said, son of the lineage, it is like that. It is like that; one should practice the profound perfection of wisdom just as you have indicated; even the tathagatas rejoice.”

EVERYONE REJOICES IN THE BUDDHA’S WORDS

The Bhagavan having thus spoken, the venerable Sharadvatiputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva arya Avalokiteshvara, those surrounding in their entirety along with the world of gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas were overjoyed and highly praised that spoken by the Bhagavan.

This completes the Ârya-bhagavatî-prajñâpâramitâ-hridaya-sûtra.

COLOPHON

*Translated from the Tibetan by Gelong
Thubten Tsultrim (George Churinoff), the
first day of Saka Dawa, 1999, at Tushita
Meditation Centre, Dharamsala, India.
Amended March 7, 2001, in the New
Mexico desert. Published by FPMT.*

*Headings added by Ven. Robina
Courtin*

3. FOUNDATION OF ALL GOOD QUALITIES

The foundation of all good qualities is
the kind and perfect, pure Guru;
Correct devotion to him is the root of
the path.

By clearly seeing this and applying
great effort,
Please bless me to rely upon him with
great respect.

Understanding that the precious
freedom of this rebirth is found only
once,
Is greatly meaningful, and is difficult
to find again,
Please bless me to generate the mind
that unceasingly,
Day and night, takes its essence.

This life is as impermanent as a water
bubble;
Remember how quickly it decays and
death comes.
After death, just like a shadow follows

the body,
The results of black and white karma
follow.

Finding firm and definite conviction in
this,
Please bless me always to be careful
To abandon even the slightest negative
action
And accomplish all virtuous deeds.

Seeking samsaric pleasures is the door
to all suffering:
They are uncertain and cannot be
relied upon.
Recognizing these shortcomings,
Please bless me to generate the strong
wish for the bliss of liberation.

Led by this pure thought,
Mindfulness, alertness, and great
caution arise.
The root of the teachings is keeping the
pratimoksha vows:
Please bless me to accomplish this
essential practice.

Just as I have fallen into the sea of
samsara,
So have all mother transmigratory
beings.
Please bless me to see this, train in
supreme bodhichitta,
And bear the responsibility of freeing
transmigratory beings.

Even if I develop only bodhichitta, but
I don't practice the three types of
morality,
I will not achieve enlightenment.
With my clear recognition of this,
Please bless me to practice the
bodhisattva vows with great energy.

Once I have pacified distractions to
wrong objects
And correctly analyzed the meaning of
reality,
Please bless me to generate quickly
within my mind stream
The unified path of calm abiding and
special insight.

Having become a pure vessel by
training in the general path,

Please bless me to enter
The holy gateway of the fortunate
ones:
The supreme vajra vehicle.

At that time, the basis of
accomplishing the two attainments
Is keeping pure vows and samaya.
As I have become firmly convinced of
this,
Please bless me to protect these vows
and pledges like my life.

Then, having realized the importance
of the two stages,
The essence of the Vajrayana,
By practicing with great energy, never
giving up the four sessions,
Please bless me to realize the teachings
of the holy Guru.

Like that, may the gurus who show the
noble path
And the spiritual friends who practice
it have long lives.
Please bless me to pacify completely
All outer and inner hindrances.

In all my lives, never separated from
perfect gurus,
May I enjoy the magnificent Dharma.
By completing the qualities of the
stages and paths,
May I quickly attain the state of
Vajradhara.

4. DEDICATION AND LONG LIFE PRAYERS

1. DEDICATION PRAYER TO ACHIEVE BUDDHAHOOD

GE WA DI YI NYUR DU DAG

Due to this virtue, may I quickly

LA MA SANG GYÄ DRUB GYUR NÄ

Become a guru-buddha

DRO WA CHIG KYANG MA LÜ PA

And lead all transmigratory beings,

DE YI SA LA GÖ PAR SHOG

Without exception, to that state.

2. TO ACTUALIZE BODHICHITTA

JANG CHHUB SEM CHHOG RIN PO CHHE

May the precious supreme
bodhichitta

MA KYE PA NAM KYE GYUR CHIG

Not yet born arise and grow.

KYE PA NYAM PA ME PA YI

May that arisen not decline,

GONG NÄ GONG DU PHEL WAR SHOG

But increase more and more.

3. FOR THE LONG LIFE OF HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA 1

By Lama Zopa Rinpoche

JIG TEN KHAM DIR PHÄN DE MA LÜ PA

The wish-granting Wish-Fulfilling
Jewel,

GANG LÄ JUNG WÄI SAM PHEL YI ZHIN

NOR

Source of every single benefit and
happiness in this world,

KA DRIN TSHUNG ME TÄN DZIN GYA TSHO

LA

To the incomparably kind Tenzin
Gyatso, I beseech:

SÖL WA DEB SO THUG ZHE LHÜN DRUB

SHOG

May all your holy wishes be
spontaneously fulfilled.

4. FOR THE LONG LIFE OF HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA 2

GANG RII RA WÄ KOR WÄI ZHING KHAM

DIR

In the land encircled by snow
mountains,

PHÄN DANG DE WA MA LÜ JUNG WÄI NÄ

You are the source of all happiness
and good.

CHÄN RÄ ZIG WANG TÄN DZIN GYA TSHO
YI

All-powerful Chenrezig, Tenzin
Gyatso,

ZHAB PÄ SI THÄI BAR DU TÄN GYUR CHIG
Please remain until samsara ends.

**5. FOR HIS HOLINESS'S
WISHES TO BE
SPONTANEOUSLY FULFILLED**

TONG NYI NYING JE ZUNG DU JUG PÄI LAM
Savior of the Land of Snow
teachings and transmigratory
beings,

CHHE CHHER SÄL DZÄ GANG CHÄN TÄN
DRÖI GÖN

Who extensively clarifies the path
that unifies emptiness and
compassion,

CHHAG NA PÄ MO TÄN DZIN GYA TSHO LA
To the Lotus Holder, Tenzin
Gyatso, I beseech –

SÖL WA DEB SO ZHE DÖN LHÜN DRUB
SHOG

May all your holy wishes be
spontaneously fulfilled.

6. FOR THE LONG LIFE OF LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE

THUB TSHÜL CHHANG ZHING JAM GÖN
GYÄL WÄI TÄN

You who uphold the Subduer's moral
way, who serve as the bountiful
bearer-of-all,

DZIN KYONG PEL WÄ KÜN ZÖ DOG POR
DZÄ

Sustaining, preserving, and
spreading Manjunath's victorious
doctrine;

CHHOG SUM KUR WÄI LEG MÖN THU
DRUB PA

Who masterfully accomplishes
magnificent prayers honoring the
Three Sublime Ones:

DAG SOG DÜL JÄI GÖN DU ZHAB TÄN SHOG
Savior of myself and others, your
disciples, please, please live long!

7. FOR THE LONG LIFE OF TENZIN OSEL RINPOCHE

LHAG PAR NUB CHHOG SA THÄI DRO WA
LA

Venerable one, to you whose
kindness exceeds that of all the
conquerors for those wanderers in

far-off places, especially the West,
GYÄL WA KÜN LÄ LHAG PÄI DRIN CHÄN
JE

Mindful of your loving concern for
us, in intentionally descending again
LAR YANG SAM ZHIN CHHOG THÄI RIG
RÜ SU

Into a family of a far distant land, we
make this request:
JÖN LA KA DRIN DRÄN PÄI KHYÖ ZHAB
SÖL

Lama, please, please live long.

PART TWO: MEDITATIONS

5. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE INTENSIVE PRACTICE DAY

PREPARATION

Prepare the space to sit comfortably for the day. It should be clean and tidy, free of clutter and distracting objects as much as possible. It's helpful to have virtuous images, such as the Buddha, in front of your meditation seat / cushion. You may wish to make offerings such as light, incense and flowers. Bring into your meditation area any reading materials etc., which you will need during the day. Remember not to place any Dharma books or materials on the floor.

Remain as mindful as possible during the entire day on the purpose of this practice, to integrate the material you have learned during this module on How to Meditate. In between sessions do not read newspapers, mail or any other non-Dharma material. Keep the day free from television, phone calls etc., and from conversations with others. Regard the day as a time of meditation retreat and spend the day alone without any distractions. If this is not

possible in the family home, please investigate another more suitable environment for your retreat.

SESSION STRUCTURE

Three sessions in the morning and three in the afternoon, with adequate break time in between: e.g. session one, then 20-30 minute break, session two, another break, session three, then lunch break.

Afternoon: session four, then 20-30 minute break, session five, another break, then the final session.

Have some paper and a pen with you during each session to write down your thoughts at the end of the session.

It is preferable but not compulsory at this stage to do the meditations without being guided by the MP3s, as it allows for deeper integration.

Session 1: approximately 35 minutes

- Spend some time generating a strong and clear motivation for the day and the session.
- With this motivation in mind, practice the first meditation, *Awareness of the Breath*, attempting to gain a deeper familiarity with this practice.

- Strongly dedicate the merit of this meditation for the benefit of all living beings.
- Spend a few minutes writing how this session was for you, anything you learned, any challenges that arose.
- Have a break.

Session 2: approximately 35 minutes

- Follow the same procedure for this session.
- Generate a strong and clear motivation for the session.
- Then practice the second meditation, *Nine-Round Breathing / Clarity of the Mind*, attempting to gain a deeper familiarity with this meditation, and integrating its meaning within your mind.
- Strongly dedicate the merit of this meditation for the benefit of all living beings.
- Spend a few minutes writing how this session was for you, any insights you gained, any challenges that arose.
- Have a break.

Session 3: approximately 35 minutes

- Follow the same procedure for this session.
- Generate a strong and clear motivation.

- Then practice the third meditation, *Appreciating Our Human Life*, attempting to gain a deeper familiarity with this meditation and integrating its meaning within your mind.
- Strongly dedicate the merit of this meditation for the benefit of all living beings.
- Spend a few minutes writing how this session was for you, anything you learned, any challenges that arose.
- Have a break.

Session 4: approximately 35 minutes

- Generate a strong motivation for this session.
- Then practice the fourth meditation, *Purification Meditation*, attempting to gain a deeper familiarity with this practice and integrating its meaning within your mind.
- Strongly dedicate the merit of this meditation for the benefit of all living beings.
- Spend a few minutes writing how this session was for you, anything you learned, any challenges that arose.
- Have a break.

Session 5: approximately 35 minutes

- Generate a strong motivation for this session.
- Then practice the fifth meditation, *Meditation on Impermanence*, attempting to gain a deeper familiarity with this practice and integrating its meaning within your mind.
- Strongly dedicate the merit of this meditation for the benefit of all living beings.
- Spend a few minutes writing how this session was for you, any insights you gained, any challenges that arose.
- Have a break.

Session 6: approximately 35 minutes

- Generate a strong motivation for this session.
- Then practice the sixth meditation, *Meditation on the Buddha*, attempting to gain a deeper familiarity with this practice and integrating its meaning within your mind.
- Spend a few minutes writing how this session was for you and also how this intensive day of practice has been for you:

- your experiences and any insights you have gained
- how your study and meditation are transforming your attitudes and life
- Strongly dedicate the merits of this session and the day using the dedication prayer on the following page – one of the favorites of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, from Chapter 10 of *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, by Shantideva.

Dedication Prayer

From *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, by Shantideva

May all beings everywhere
Plagued by sufferings of body and mind
Obtain an ocean of happiness and joy
By virtue of my merits

May no living creature suffer
Commit evil or ever fall ill
May no one be afraid or belittled
With a mind weighed down by depression

May the blind see forms
And the deaf hear sounds
May those whose bodies are worn with toil

Be restored on finding repose

May the naked find clothing

The hungry find food

May the thirsty find water

And delicious drinks

May the poor find wealth

Those weak with sorrow find joy

May the forlorn find hope

Constant happiness and prosperity

May there be timely rains

And bountiful harvests

May all medicines be effective

And wholesome prayers bear fruit

May all who are sick and ill

Quickly be freed from their ailments

Whatever diseases there are in the world

May they never occur again

May the frightened cease to be afraid

And those bound be freed

May the powerless find power

And may people think of benefiting each other

For as long as space endures
And for as long as living beings remain
Until then may I too abide
To dispel the misery of the world

6. MEDITATION 1: AWARENESS OF THE BREATH

Begin by sitting in a way that is most comfortable but also most conducive for doing meditation. Have your legs crossed either in the full-lotus or half-lotus position or whatever way is most comfortable for you to place your legs. Have your hands resting on your lap, right hand on top of the left, right fingers on top of the left fingers, palms facing upwards and the two thumbs touching, making a triangular shape with your hands. Don't press your arms against the side of your body but leave some space for the air to circulate and let your shoulders relax.

Have your back straight. Imagine your vertebrae being like coins and make this stack of coins very straight and even. Or imagine there is a string attached to the top of your head and someone is pulling it from above, making your back straight.

Have your eyes left open a little bit with your gaze downwards on your lap or on the floor in front of you. Your mouth and jaw are relaxed, don't press your teeth together but

leave them loose. Have your mouth closed and place the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth behind the upper teeth. Have your head gently tilted downwards just a little bit. Let your body relax in the position.

To relax the body first feel the top of your head and let a feeling of relaxation develop in the top of your head, let the top of your head be relaxed. Then imagine that relaxed feeling traveling down from the top of your head and down through your whole head, letting your whole head relax. Relaxing your forehead, your eyes, your face, the sides and back of your head; and the inside of your head, your skull, your brain.

Let the feeling of relaxation penetrate every cell, every atom, every tiny particle of your head. Let it continue to travel down and relax your neck and throat. Then into your shoulders, the relaxed feeling flows into your shoulders, relaxing your shoulders. Then let it travel down your back, let your whole back become relaxed.

Now the front of your body: let the relaxed feeling travel down to the front part of your body, your chest, your abdomen, relaxing all the internal organs and muscles as well. This relaxed feeling travels down into the upper

parts of your legs and your knees and the lower parts of the legs and then ankles and feet and all the way down to your toes.

Allow the relaxed feeling to travel from your shoulders down your arms, relax the upper part of the arms and the lower parts of the arms, then wrists and fingers. Do your best to keep your body relaxed for the remaining time of this meditation; don't let it become tense again. Be relaxed and let your breathing be natural. Let your breath in and out in a natural rhythm.

Bring to mind a positive reason for doing the meditation. Have the wish that this meditation will be beneficial for yourself and others – that it will help to bring about a greater peace and happiness, as well as more positive thoughts and feelings.

Now focus your mind, your awareness, on your breathing. There are two places that are recommended for doing this. One is at the nostrils where the air is coming in and out of the body. You may actually feel the sensation of the air just passing in and out of the nostrils or even if you can't feel it, keep your mind, your awareness, at that place, being aware of your breath, going in and going out. The other place you can focus on is the

abdomen, which is moving in and out with each breath. You can feel the sensation of your abdomen moving in and moving out with each breath. Choose one of those two places and decide to keep your mind at that place, being aware of the sensations with each breath.

Any time your mind wanders away from this place, watching the breath at that place, gently bring it back.

Disengage from whatever else your mind has become distracted by, or involved with, the thoughts or the sounds or the feelings in your body. Once you realize that is happening, gently disengage your mind from the other object and bring it back to the breath. You might have to do this many times, again and again but be patient with yourself. Just keep bringing your mind back each time it wanders away from the place you are focused on; watching your breath.

Some people find to have better concentration it's helpful to count the breath. Watch each full breath, each inhalation and exhalation and count each breath as one.

Say to yourself, breathing in, breathing out, one; breathing in, breathing out, two and so on, up to ten and then start at one again when

you reach ten.

If your mind becomes completely distracted from the breath while you are counting to ten, once that happens then start again at one. See if you can get to ten breaths, keep your mind focused on your breathing for ten breaths, without wandering away.

Just keep doing that over and over. If it's helpful to count then count or if you could keep your mind focused on the breathing without counting, that's okay.

Keep your body relaxed. Keep your breathing normal, natural and keep your mind focused on the breathing, watching each breath go in and out. Bring the mind back to the breath each time it wanders away. Before opening your eyes to conclude this session, remember the positive thought we had at the beginning of the meditation, wanting it to be beneficial for ourselves and others. By doing the meditation we've created some positive energy, what we call merit in Buddhism. This is the cause of happiness and the cause of good experiences. It's good to share this merit with others. At the beginning of the meditation, we have the thought to do the meditation to benefit ourselves and others. Bring that thought back into our mind and

mentally dedicate the positive energy or merit you created by doing this meditation to that same goal or purpose. May this be the cause of greater peace, happiness and benefit both to ourselves and others.

When you feel ready you can open your eyes and relax.

7. MEDITATION 2: NINE-ROUND BREATHING / CLARITY OF THE MIND

Have your eyes either open a little bit or closed, whichever is better for you. Relax your shoulders, have your hands on your lap with the right on top of the left; two thumbs touching; arms slightly away from your sides, hanging loosely by your sides. Your mouth and jaw relaxed. Chin tucked in a little bit. The tongue on the roof of the mouth behind the upper teeth and your breathing normal with a natural, steady rhythm.

Now let's start the nine-round breathing exercise.

Using your right hand, your right index finger blocks off the left nostril while you are breathing into the right nostril. Just let your breath come in slowly and steadily, pause for a moment, then block off the right nostril and breathe out the left nostril.

Slowly and steadily do the same three times. In through the right and out through the left. Focus completely on the breathing, on the sensation of the nostrils as you are

breathing in and out.

For the next three breaths keep your right nostril blocked and breathe in through the left and then move your finger to block off the left and breathe out through the right. So breathe in through the left and out through the right, three times.

For the last three breaths bring your hands back to your lap and breathe through both nostrils evenly, slowly and gently.

Pause for a moment and then exhale through both nostrils, keeping your mind fully focused on the breath, on the sensations, as you breathe in and out.

Continue to breathe normally and bring into your mind a positive motivation for doing the meditation. Think, “I am going to do this meditation in order to work on my mind, to be a more positive, beneficial person for others, for the world. May this meditation bring more peace and happiness to others, to the world.”

Once you've generated a positive motivation, bring your awareness back to your breathing and just be aware of each inhalation and exhalation of breath.

Let your attention ride or float on the breath, similar to the way you would float on

the surface of the ocean where there are gentle waves coming and going. Stay floating on the surface, flowing with the wave, coming and going, flowing in and out, just let your attention rest or float on the gentle rolling rhythm of the breathing.

Now move your attention away from the breathing to the mind itself, that which is aware of breathing. In other words, instead of being aware of the breath, which is the object of your mind, the object of your awareness, become aware of the mind itself, the awareness itself, that which is observing the breath, experiencing the breath.

The mind is like space or like sky, completely clear, not solid, and vast, spacious and unlimited.

Try to get a sense of how your mind is like that, like this clear, vast, spacious sky. The things that we are aware of, the thoughts, images, memories and so on, are similar to the clouds that pass through the sky. They're not always there but they appear, and after a while they disappear.

If there are thoughts appearing in your mind while you are sitting here doing this meditation: thoughts, memories, images, or if you hear sounds or feel sensations in your

body, think that these are just like clouds, passing through this space or clear sky of your mind. Let them come and let them go. Realize that they are only momentary and not solid; they just come and go.

Let them go and return your awareness to the mind itself, which is like the clear spacious sky.

See if you can get a sense of identifying with this clear space-like nature of the mind. In other words, feel, “This is the real me, this is my real nature, who I really am.”

Rather than identifying yourself with the temporary clouds of thoughts and emotions that pass through your mind, see if you can realize those as mental events, things that come and go in the mind. They are not you and not who you really are.

Let them go and identify with the clear space-like nature of your mind, your awareness, so that you are the sky, not the clouds.

Before opening your eyes, mentally dedicate the merit or positive energy for doing this meditation. In the same way you motivated at the beginning, may this meditation be beneficial for others, may it bring greater peace, happiness, and benefit to other beings,

to the world.

Dedicate the effort that you made and the positive energy you've created from doing the meditation to that goal.

8. MEDITATION 3: APPRECIATING OUR HUMAN LIFE

Start by sitting in a comfortable position. And make sure your back is straight and that your body is relaxed, with all the muscles in the body relaxed.

Let your breathing be natural. And focus your mind, your awareness on your breathing just for a few minutes to settle it down. Let go of any cloud-like thoughts, images, feelings – just let those flow away from your mind and just let your mind be right here in the present, being aware of your breath coming in and out, not thinking about anything else.

Generate a positive motivation for doing the meditation – one that goes beyond just thinking of your own happiness, your own benefit. See if you can generate some kind of motivation that is concerned for others, wanting to help others, wishing that the meditation will be helpful for others, in addition to yourself.

Now begin the meditation by thinking about your own buddha-nature, which is the

potential of your mind to become completely clear and pure, free of all negative states of mind like anger. And to fully develop all the positive qualities, the positive states of mind – such as loving kindness, compassion, and wisdom. See if you can get a feeling of this potential right now.

It's possible for your mind, this very mind that is sitting here now meditating, to become completely clear and pure and very powerful and beneficial for others, able to do so much good for others.

If you find it difficult to accept this idea of buddha-nature, then see if you can at least accept that the human mind has incredible potential, so much intelligence. We are able to know what is right, what is wrong, what is true, what is false. We are able to understand other people and their suffering, able to feel moved by compassion to help others and we are able to think of all kinds of ways and means to benefit others.

We have so much potential and capability to make our lives meaningful and beneficial not just for ourselves but for others as well.

Feel a sense of that potential that exists within you.

If your mind comes up with some resistance

to this idea or some doubt because you can see a lot of faults in yourself and a lot of mistakes that you've made, you might feel, "Oh, I have so many bad qualities." See if you can accept the idea that these faults, mistakes, and bad qualities are not permanent, "These are not things that will stay in my life forever."

They are not an inherent part of your mind so they can be cleared away; they can be reduced gradually and eventually cleared away completely. Your mind can be free of them. Your mind is something changeable, not something concrete, permanent, fixed. It's possible to work on your mind and change your mind and all the negative things.

This potential to transform the mind, to free it from negative qualities and develop positive qualities, this potential actually exists in everyone's mind, but not everyone is in the most ideal situation to be able to do this kind of work on their mind. There are some people, some human beings, who experience physical difficulties such as sickness or injuries, disabilities. Or they are very poor, living in extremely hard conditions, really just struggling to stay alive. Other people are experiencing mental difficulties: mental

illness or mental disability.

Even though their mind has this potential, their present situation is not one in which they are able to recognize and develop it.

Spend some time thinking about people in this situation. They may be people you yourself know or have heard about or seen. Or just use your imagination, think about the lives some people have, the difficulties some people have that make it almost impossible for them to understand the potential that lies within their own minds.

Let's see this potential within ourselves and develop it.

And then there are other people, human beings who may not be experiencing those kinds of problems, physical and mental problems. But they may not have access to spiritual teachers, spiritual teachings that will enable them to become aware of the potential that they have, the possibilities they have for transforming their mind, developing the potential and how to do that. They may spend their whole life completely unaware of this potential and how to develop it.

Again, think of people living in very remote places where they don't have access to these kind of teachings and teachers.

There are other people who are not experiencing these problems, they are not suffering physically or mentally, but are well off, living comfortable lives, and they have the opportunity to learn spiritual teachings from teachers but from their side they don't have interest. There's no interest there to understand themselves or their minds, to develop the potential of their minds, to make their lives more beneficial for others and so on.

There are probably people, family members, friends, people you work with, who are totally uninterested in anything spiritual. Instead, their interests lie in other things like accumulating money, possessions, property, or worldly kinds of knowledge and skills. Maybe they just enjoy themselves as much as possible, spending their life that way and maybe doing negative things, not realizing that doing negative actions brings suffering, problems to themselves and to others. An ignorance that actually creates more problems, more obscurations, ignoring their buddha-nature, the potential of their mind, rather than getting closer to developing it.

Bring to mind some examples of people who are in that situation, who are not interested in

anything spiritual, who aren't interested in developing their minds.

There are also people who have an interest in spiritual teachings, who really want to practice the spiritual path but may not have freedom to do so. For example, in some countries the government doesn't allow people to study and practice the religions or spiritual traditions of their choice. So spiritual teachers may not be allowed to give teachings, spiritual groups may not be allowed to gather and study and meditate on spiritual teachings. People might even be imprisoned for doing such things; books are banned, information is banned. People living in that situation don't have the freedom even though they have the wish to practice.

Sometimes people face objections from family members. They may wish to study and practice but they may have parents or a spouse, or even children, who are opposed to their interest and don't really allow them the freedom to study and practice as they wish.

So see if you can bring to mind examples of people who are in that kind of situation. Think about these conditions that some people, actually many people, find themselves in; conditions which are hindrances to

recognizing and developing the potential of the mind.

Probably it will become clear to you that you are free from these hindering conditions. In fact, you have very good conditions. Your body is healthy, your mind is healthy and functioning properly. You're physically, materially well off and comfortable, have time, leisure time to be able to study and practice spiritual teachings. You have access to spiritual teachers and teachings. You can meet teachers and you can learn teachings as much as you want, and you have the interest to do so. You are interested in spiritual teachings and find them meaningful, worthwhile. You are free to pursue your interest and are not hindered by government or by other people. You have the freedom to study and practice as you like. You'll probably realize that you have most, if not all, of these good conditions.

These helpful and conducive conditions which enable you to recognize the incredible potential that you have with your human mind, your human intelligence and the ability to develop that potential. The knowledge that there is the opportunity to develop that potential.

Thinking about this, see what kind of conclusion you come to. See if you can at least feel how fortunate you are to have this situation and also how it's actually quite rare.

Not everybody has it, many people don't have it. See if you can feel some sense of wanting to use this situation while you have it. Use it in a wise and beneficial way.

Finally take a few moments to mentally dedicate your merit, the positive energy of having done this meditation. Whatever positive energy you have created, remember the motivation you had to start with. Dedicate in the same way that it will become beneficial not just for yourself but for others as well, bringing more happiness and peace, wisdom and other positive experiences, positive qualities, beyond yourself too, for as many other people, as many other beings as possible.

9. MEDITATION 4: PURIFICATION MEDITATION

Arrange your body in the most comfortable and conducive position for meditation and relax your body. Let go of any tension you might have but still keep your back straight, which helps the mind to be clear and focused.

Generate a positive motivation to do the meditation.

Be aware of the breath as it comes and goes out of the nostrils. Just like the doorway or the gateway of the breath, going in and out of our body.

Imagine that as you breathe in you take in very pure and blissful light, and think of it as white in color, the color of purity. This light represents all the good energy and positive qualities that exist in the universe. If you can accept the existence of enlightened beings, then these are the qualities within their minds. Perfect unconditional love for all beings, universal compassion for all beings, wisdom that understands the way things are and is completely unconfused. Courage, being without any fear, especially in regard to

helping others, no matter what has to be done to help others, being very skillful in knowing how to help each person according to their mind and their needs.

You can think of other positive qualities that you would like to develop within yourself. Think that those qualities are in the form of this light. Imagine breathing it in again and when it comes into your body, it flows to all the parts of your body, going all the way down to your toes, fingertips and filling every tiny part of your body, down to the cells, the atoms, the subatomic particles.

Just spend some time doing that; breathing in the white light, letting it fill your body. Think of the light as being healing, having the quality of healing you, healing whatever pain, problems, sickness you might have in your body and mind. This light can heal all those things.

Have a feeling that this is really happening, that there really is this blissful clear light coming into you and filling you.

Be content with whatever visualization comes to you and feel that it is really happening. There really is light coming in and filling you.

Your body becomes very light and clear and

relaxed. The nature of the light is very blissful, very nice, so that feeling fills you up. Continue to visualize the white light coming in when you inhale.

Now begin to visualize dark smoke or pollution going out of your body when you exhale. This smoke or pollution is whatever problems that you may have: sickness, pain, physical problems, discomfort; but more importantly, aspects of your mind that are problematic, negative aspects of the mind: anger, pride, selfishness and so on. Anything in your mind that makes you unhappy or disturbed. The negative karma you've created in the past, the imprints of those actions. Anything that is negative in your body and mind, imagine that going out of you when you breathe out, in the form of this dark smoke.

And then it disappears into space, and it doesn't go anywhere or pollute or disturb anything, it just becomes non-existent.

Continue to meditate like this, visualizing the white light coming in and the dark smoke going out. Your body and mind becomes more and more clear and pure and blissful and free of all the problems and negativities.

Now to conclude the meditation dedicate the effort you put into doing this meditation

and whatever positive energy that was generated to benefit not just yourself but others as well, as many other beings as possible. May it bring greater peace, happiness, clarity, positive energy and freedom from suffering and problems for as many other beings as possible.

10. MEDITATION 5: MEDITATION ON IMPERMANENCE

Sit yourself down in a comfortable position and focus your mind on your breathing for a few minutes to settle your mind in the present, the here and the now. Let go of any other thoughts and generate a positive motivation for doing the meditation.

Now bring your awareness to your body, this body sitting on a meditation cushion, in a meditation position. Just be aware of your body. And mentally think about what your body is made of: the different parts like skin, blood, bones, organs.

Then think about how each of these parts of the body is in turn made up of yet smaller parts, for example, cells. We can't see cells with our eyes, but we know how they work, that they are moving, changing, reproducing, dying. So on that cellular level there is constant change and movement. Even though we are sitting still, not moving, every minute, every second, every millisecond, there is constant change, constant movement – movement taking place through every part of

our body, down to the tiniest most subtle level.

Now take that awareness outside of yourself and see if you can realize that the same is true for the things around you. The physical things in the room - the cushion we are sitting on, the floor, the walls, ceiling, windows, all the things in the room. All these things around us are also made up of tiny particles. They are changing every second, every millisecond, not staying the same, from one tiny second to the next.

Then take that same awareness further outside of this room and think about other things. There are people whose bodies are also at a very subtle level constantly moving, changing, not staying the same, from one millisecond to the next. The earth and trees, mountains, buildings, houses, cars and roads. And the heavenly bodies in the sky – the sun, moon, stars, the clouds. Everything in this physical world is the same, made up of tiny particles. They are not static and frozen but constantly moving and changing, every second, every millisecond.

And then think about how as these things are changing, they are also gradually, slowly, disintegrating, becoming older, worn out, and

eventually at some point in time, things will go out of existence. They are not going to be there forever. Everything has its end.

Now spend a few minutes thinking about the impermanent nature of some objects that you are attached to. Bring to mind some different objects – they could be people, or other things like possessions that you have, or food or your car or your house, things for which you have attachment.

And then imagine how these objects will appear ten years from now. And now imagine how these objects will appear fifty years from now. Now imagine how these objects will appear a hundred years from now.

Now to conclude the meditation, whatever you have come to understand or experience during the meditation, make your own conclusion as to what you would like to do with this experience. What are some positive ways that you can use this experience and this understanding?

Finally, mentally dedicate the merit or positive energy of doing this meditation to help both ourselves and others to be more realistic, to develop more wisdom seeing things as they are and in that way become less under the influence of deluded and disturbing

thoughts, misconceptions and emotions. In that way we free ourselves from suffering and its causes and develop our potential to be peaceful and happy and eventually enlightened.

When you are ready to end the meditation, you can relax your concentration, relax your body and open your eyes.

11. MEDITATION 6: MEDITATION ON THE BUDDHA

Begin by spending a few minutes settling your body in a comfortable position for meditation. Let the mind ride on the breath in and out and let go of the thoughts that might be in your mind. Anything that your mind is distracted by rather than the breath – let all these thoughts and distractions go.

Then generate a positive motivation for doing the meditation, thinking that you are doing it to bring spiritual benefit, not only to yourself but to others as well. To increase positive energy such as love, compassion, kindness, wisdom in your mind and then to share this with others, to bring more positive energy to others and to the world.

Now begin the visualization of the Buddha: if you like, you could use the picture on page 2 as your reference.

When you visualize, you use your mind to draw or create the image so it's not an activity of the eyes. Your eyes should be relaxed and closed or partially opened. Use your mind itself to create the visualization.

The entire visualization is made of light. Every aspect is made of light, so that means it's transparent, not solid. You might think of a rainbow. When a rainbow appears in the sky, you can see the colors and it can sometimes be very bright, but there isn't anything solid there. If we were to try to touch or hold onto a rainbow there will be nothing there to hold on to. So our visualization should be similar to that, it appears but it's not solid. And it's just pure, transparent radiant light.

The visualization of the Buddha is in the space in front of you, about the level of your forehead and about two meters away. The Buddha is seated on a seat consisting of a lotus with its petals spread out flat, a very large lotus, and on top of the lotus there are two flat discs of light, like cushions. These represent the sun and moon. They are round and flat and made of light – radiant.

Upon the lotus, moon and sun is seated the Buddha, with his legs crossed in a full lotus or vajra position. He is wearing the robes of a monk, which are saffron colored. His right hand is on his right knee in the gesture of touching the earth. The palm of his hand is against the knee, and his fingers are

outstretched, pointing downwards, touching the seat beneath him. In his left hand he holds a bowl, filled with nectar – medicinal healing nectar. So his left hand is resting on his lap in a meditation position, with the palm facing upwards, and the bowl resting on the palm of his hand.

The Buddha's body is made of golden light – transparent, radiant, and completely pure. The Buddha's face is very beautiful. His smiling compassionate gaze is directed at you and at the same time towards every living being. His expression shows that he is free of all judging, critical thoughts, or anger. There are no negative thoughts at all in his mind towards you or towards anyone else. He completely accepts us just as we are, with pure, unconditional loving kindness and compassion. The hair on the Buddha's head is dark blue-black in color, with each strand of hair separate from the others and individually curled. On the very top of his head is the ushnisha, the crown protrusion, which is a symbol of his enlightenment. His ear lobes are long, and his lips are cherry-red in color – a symbol of his great compassion.

Do your very best to visualize the Buddha, but don't worry if you can't visualize every

detail, or if the visualization doesn't appear clearly. Just do the best that you can and feel content with whatever you're able to do, even if it's not clear and perfect. The most important thing is to feel that the Buddha is really there. Feel the presence of the Buddha with all of his qualities – universal unconditional loving kindness and compassion and wisdom and skillful means, and all the other enlightened qualities, existing there in the space in front of you. And you can feel those qualities – feel the loving kindness radiating towards you. Not only is every aspect of the visualization made of light, but it's also a radiating light. Rays of light emanate from each pore of the Buddha's holy body and reach every corner of the universe.

Feel the living presence of the Buddha in front of you. See if you can feel a sense of trust and confidence in his ability to help you and in his willingness to help you, being completely dedicated to helping you and guiding you, for however long it takes until you and everyone else has reached enlightenment.

Now in your own words make a request to the Buddha asking to receive his blessings, to help you become free from all your negative

energy, misconceptions and other problems, and to receive all the realizations of the path to enlightenment.

Imagine that the Buddha joyfully accepts your request, and a stream of pure white light and nectar, which are in the nature of the enlightened mind, flows from the Buddha's heart and enters your body through the crown of your head. This light and nectar has the function of purifying all of our negativities. Imagine that the light flows into you, filling your body, from your toes and fingertips to the top of your head, from every cell and atom and tiny particle of your body. This has the effect of purifying your mind of all negative qualities, delusions and negative karmas, as well as purifying any sickness or physical problems in your body. All negativities are purified. Just as the darkness in a room is instantly dispelled the moment a light is switched on; in the same way the darkness of your negative energy is dispelled when this radiant white light and nectar fill your body.

Then visualize a stream of yellow light and nectar flowing from the Buddha's heart and entering you through the crown of your head, filling your body. The yellow light and nectar are in the nature of the enlightened mind – all

the knowledge, qualities and realizations of the enlightened mind. And when it fills you, you receive all of these qualities. Infinite good qualities flow into every part of your body. Your body feels completely light and clear and blissful. Spend a few moments concentrating on this blissful experience.

Now imagine the Buddha comes to the space above your head, turning to face the same way that you're facing, and melts into light. The whole visualization melts into pure light, and this light dissolves into you. Your ordinary sense of I, me, myself – unworthy and burdened with faults – and all your other wrong conceptions disappear completely. In an instant you become one with the Buddha's blissful, omniscient mind in the aspect of vast, empty space.

Then imagine from this empty space there appears in the place where you are sitting, the throne, lotus, moon and sun, and upon these you yourself as the Buddha. Everything is of the nature of light – your body, the seat you're sitting on, everything – pure, radiant, transparent light. Feel that you are Buddha. Identify with his enlightened wisdom and compassion.

Now generate the wish to help all beings

reach this state as well. Imagine from your heart, rays of light go out, like the rays of light that go out from the sun in all directions.

These rays of light from your heart go out in all directions to all beings, or as many as you can imagine. So a ray of light goes to each being – each human being and any other kind of being – and they become filled with light and it purifies all their negativities, their disturbing thoughts, emotions, negative karma, all their hindrances and obstacles.

All their suffering and its causes are completely purified. The light transforms their minds so that they attain all the qualities and realizations of the path to enlightenment. They attain universal love, compassion, perfect wisdom and skillful means, knowing how to help other beings and all the other qualities of enlightenment. All these qualities are attained in all the minds of all the beings. Also, if you wish, you can imagine the beings transforming into the aspect of a buddha. They all appear as buddhas.

Feel a sense of joy, rejoicing, that you have been able to bring your own mind to this state of enlightenment, the highest potential it has. And you have been able to help all other beings to do the same. You've brought them

to a state of perfection, perfect peace, bliss, happiness, the perfection of all positive qualities, freedom from our negative qualities. Feel how wonderful it is that you've been able to do this.

Finally, dedicate the positive energy or merit from having done this meditation that you will be able to one day do actually what you have just visualized. That you will be able to transform your own mind - free it from everything negative, perfect everything positive and bring your mind to enlightenment; and then help all other beings to do the same - to be free of everything negative, to develop all the qualities and realizations so that they can be enlightened as well.

To end the meditation, you can relax your body, relax your concentration and gently open your eyes.