

The Two Wings of Awakening: Cultivating Wisdom and Compassion

A meditation session based on points one and two of the seven points of mind training
Adapted from *The Great Path of Awakening* by Jamgon Kongtrul and instructions from Lama Norlha Rinpoche

First, practice the preliminaries:

Contemplation of the four reminders:

The precious human existence: We now have all the conditions we need to attain awakening.

Impermanence and death: This opportunity can end at any time, so we need to practice now.

Karma: It is our own actions that determine our fate: happiness, suffering, or liberation.

The suffering of samsara: Since there is no reliable happiness anywhere in confused existence, we must use this life to free ourselves and others from confusion.

Guru yoga: requesting the lama's blessing (recite 3x or more)

Lama, completely genuine great spiritual friend, I pray for your blessing.

Please arouse in my mindstream extraordinary love, compassion, and bodhicitta.

Calm abiding meditation:

With straight, relaxed posture, bring the mind to rest by counting 7 or 21 breaths.

Main practice of cultivating ultimate bodhicitta (wisdom)

Step 1: **Look at all experience as a dream.**

Step 2: **Examine the nature of unborn awareness.**

Step 3: **Let even the remedy release naturally.**

Step 4, the main meditation: **Rest in the essence, the basis of everything.**

Alternative brief ultimate bodhicitta instruction: Flash openness. PC

Main practice of cultivating relative bodhicitta (compassion)

Practice taking and sending alternately, synchronizing with the breath.

Main practice combining ultimate and relative bodhicitta (wisdom and compassion) LNR

While practicing taking and sending, rest in the essence of the one who is taking and sending.

How to apply the practice in daily life:

Ultimate bodhicitta: **In daily life, be a child of illusion/view everything as illusion.** CTR/RT

Relative bodhicitta (3 slogans):

Three objects, three poisons, three seeds of virtue.

Begin the sequence of taking and sending with yourself.

Whenever you experience suffering or are caught up in a negative emotion, you could take all the similar suffering or negative emotion experienced by others into your own and send them (and yourself) happiness. And whenever you experience happiness or pleasant circumstances, you could share it by sending it to all beings.

Use reminders in everything you do.

Selected commentary on the ultimate bodhicitta instructions:

Step 1: Look at all experience as a dream.

“We could say, ‘regard all thoughts as a dream’ and just touch them and let them go...no big deal. Just allow a mental gap to open, and wonder, ‘Could it be? Am I dreaming this?’...Begin to contemplate that perhaps things are not as solid or reliable as they seem. PC

Step 2: Examine the nature of unborn awareness.

“When you look directly at the presence of mind, no color, no shape, no form is perceived...no origin, location or cessation.” JK

“Here the instruction means to look...like observing birds, just seeing what they are doing...This type of inquiry is not intellectual.” KTR

Step 3: Let even the remedy release naturally.

“We begin with the belief that everything is solid and real. Then we develop the belief that this is incorrect and everything is emptiness or like a dream. This second belief is not real either.” KTR

“Let go of even the notion of emptiness, openness, or space.” PC

Step 4: Rest in the essence, the basis of everything.

“This instruction presents the actual method for placing the mind [in] the nature of all phenomena, the natural state, which is the basis of everything...buddha nature. Let go and rest...follow no train of thought, but rest evenly in a state in which mind itself is clear and free of conceptuality.” JK

“We are talking very simply about the basis as just a clear mind, a basic clear mind...simplicity and clarity and nondiscursive thought...You can just come home and relax. The idea is to return to home sweet home.” CTR

Step by step instructions for taking and sending JK LNR

Practice taking and sending alternately, synchronizing with the breath.

1) Begin by bringing to mind people and animals toward whom love and compassion naturally arise, such as your mother, your father, friends, pets, and those who have been kind to you. 2) Extend this feeling of compassion step by step to all sentient beings: first, to people and animals you have neutral feelings toward, such as the UPS delivery person, the grocery checker, people you pass on the street, birds flying overhead; 3. then (skip to step 4 if this is too difficult) to people and animals for whom it is challenging to feel compassion, such as those who irritate or harm you, those you might consider enemies, those who commit evil deeds, etc.; and 4) finally to all sentient beings whose numbers fill space.

Then begin the practice of taking and sending: while inhaling, take in all the suffering of sentient beings in the form of dark smoke, and think they are really freed from it. While exhaling, send out all your own merit and happiness to sentient beings in the form of white light, and think they really receive it, and at the end they attain the awakening of buddhahood. Rejoice!

References and recommended reading:

JK: Jamgon Kongtrul, *The Great Path of Awakening*, translated by Ken McLeod, 2005 edition

KTR: Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, *The Seven Points of Mind Training*

CTR: Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, *Training the Mind*

PC: Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are*

RT: Ringu Tulku: *Mind Training*

LNR: Lama Norhla Rinpoche, “The Mind That Is Meditating.” (teaching transcript)

Adapted from source materials 2016 by Yeshe Chödrön Linda Jordan. Translations of the guru yoga prayer and some slogans have been slightly edited from the Tibetan with reference to previous translations by CTR and Ken McLeod.