



My Dear Friends,

I so hope you are all doing well. I think of you often, spending so much time in your meditation cell, and hold you in my dedications. As a sangha, we are connected in the invisible web of consciousness, and the ripples of kindness we send to each other fill all of space.

To be in lockdown for so long is challenging. But I hope you have also found the gift. If you can devote yourself more to practice, this will be a time of tremendous opportunity for you. In the Buddhist tradition, solitary retreats are considered precious. Western practitioners pay up to \$9,000 to do a 3 year solitary retreat, some with no contact with other humans, mail permitted only once or twice a month. They choose these conditions so they can deeply focus on diving in and progressing on their path.

We don't have a way of sending books or magazines now, but I hope you are re-reading whatever materials you have to support your journey. These books, magazines, newsletters have teachings that you could read and/or practice every day, and each day benefit from it. I have read some books over and over. Buddhists recite (out loud or silently) the same prayers and sadhanas (practice texts) over and over for hours each day, for months or years. They aren't supposed to feed the mundane mind, by being 'interesting'. They are energetic rivers that carry you deeper into yourselves and guide you to awakening, to enlightenment. If you're bored it's not the right practice for you. Find the phrases or quotes or mantras or visualizations or prayers that move you, and let them move your heart as often as you can. This is your deepest self calling to you, and beckoning you to come home to yourself .

OFFERINGS

~Garchen Rinpoche is offering Refuge From Afar to anyone who wants it. He's 84. I wouldn't wait - if you want it, ask!

~The Bodhisattva Vow can also be taken after you have taken the refuge vow. Write to me for more info.

~ Spring 2020:Awakening During the Pandemic Newsletter and Newsletter #4.

~Altar cards or pictures of: (let me know if you can get card stock): Garchen Rinpoche, Dalai Lama, the Karmapa, Green Tara and White Tara (Female Buddhas), Medicine Buddha, Chenrezik.

~Please write if you have questions about the included practices and meditations.

~Sorry, we don't have a way to send books yet, and I don't have Tibetan calendars, or malas.

please write your contact info clearly on the envelope and the letter. thank you!

Tara's Voice
PO Box 524
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TAKING REFUGE FROM AFAR with GARCHEN RINPOCHE:

"Use your time well! Use your time to awaken!"

Prison is the greatest gift in your life , if it leads you to the Dharma!"

"Taking refuge is asking to be under the umbrella of Buddha's blessings, and you become part of Rinpoche's heart-circle. Rinpoche was imprisoned in Tibet for 20 year of hard labor, when the Chinese were arresting monks because of their religion. He has a special place in his heart for prisoners. Mindfulness was his major practice for those years. If he was caught meditating, he'd be killed, so he knows the profound power of practicing in prison - "Use your time well!. Use your time to awaken! Prison is the greatest gift in your life if it leads you to the Dharma, to the Buddha!"

To take refuge does not mean you give up your religion. The Dalai Lama has said many times, if you do Buddhist practices you become a better Christian, Muslim...whatever your religion, because practicing Buddhism helps us to become better human beings.

If you want to take refuge, and you can, send me the following and I will send it off to Rinpoche. If you can't send any of these - no problem! Rinpoche will give refuge to everyone who asks!!

~a clipping or 2 or 3 locks of hair from the top of your head (the crown), cut with sincerity, a picture of you, and if you can, something as an offering (picture, flower, poem, stamps)

You will receive a packet including a refuge card with Buddhist prayers, your new Tibetan name, and teachings. I have taken refuge with Garchen Rinpoche...

As long as Rinpoche is able to, he will offer this. I recommend acting on it as soon as you feel to. The turn around is a few months.

Excerpt from Garchen Rinpoche's Teachings on Refuge:

Refuge Prayer I take refuge in transcend awareness, the heart essence of Buddha
I take refuge in compassion, the heart essence of Dharma
I take refuge in spiritual friends, the heart essence of Sangha

Why do we want to take refuge? If you do not want to suffer, the Buddha shows the path to freedom from suffering. Buddha said perfectly practice virtue as much as we can. As much as we do that, we develop a mind of love and compassion. First we must give up harming others, and then we must benefit them as much as we can.”

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Mindfulness and Mantra Meditation

Mindfulness and mantra repetitions are like two wings of the same bird. Mindfulness brings us deeply into this present moment, allowing us to let go of burdens from the past and worries about the future. It cultivates great concentration, and tames the mind. The mind learns to keep coming back to what the body is doing right here, right now. If you bring strong alertness and focus into deep mindfulness, profound states awaken and we experience more peace, patience, spaciousness, and wisdom.

Mantra is also a very powerful practice. When we think or recite a mantra, we are connecting to the essence of the heart of the Buddhas - mantra is the manifestation of the essence of the Buddha manifesting as sound, as sacred words. They purify and tame the mind.. With mantra we also train the mind to let go ordinary mundane thinking, and we turn our attention to sound that awakens the essence of our pure nature. Mantra is like a sacred boat that carries us into the river of ourselves.

In one of his teachings Garchen Rinpoche spoke about how we get attached to sound and thoughts because we get attached to concepts. And one thought leads to another, one concept leads to another. You'll think about when is it time for lunch, what are we going to have today, who will be there in what mood, and on and on. This is what happens with thinking: we get involved in the story and one story leads to another. But when we think of mantra, we are connecting to a pure sound that is in its nature emptiness and it's only intention is to bring us into awakening. So if we think of mantra there's no story. And we don't get pulled more deeply down the rabbit hole of thoughts. If the story arises, you bring your attention back to the mantra. And it gets easier and easier to keep doing this, because the mantra is helping to purify the mind as you return to it. The story-thoughts lose their power when we don't entangle with them or feed them with our attention. Just ignore them and they'll dissipate. The mundane mind becomes quieter, mantra becomes clearer and more continuous, sometimes effortless, and in that beautiful space of our deeper perfections arise.

“It is better to recite the mani mantra one time with deep sincerity, then to recite it 100,000 mechanically.”

Every Buddha has their own mantra. It's best to do a mantra that you connect with, that you feel, or like the sound of. If you feel it, you will have greater benefit. To do a mantra mechanically, with no connection, it doesn't have the same power. Try the mantras of different Buddhas and stay with the one that seems to bring the most benefit. That you like doing. All mantras contain within them the blessings of all the Buddhas, because all Buddhas are the same essence. They're all different colors of the same rainbow. All ice cream is ice cream, you'll have your favorite flavors, and sometimes that changes, It's the same essence ingredients. All mantras are blessings. Choose your favorite flavor and relax into it.

On Seeing and/or Hearing Thoughts

When we imagine a rainbow, we are imagining the colors and the emptiness of a rainbow. Some of us see our thoughts, and some of us hear our thoughts, and some of us do both. To see our thoughts like the manifestation of a rainbow, is to see the empty nature of thoughts. To see our thoughts like a rainbow is profound. It helps us to not get entangled and caught in the stories of thoughts. It allows us to rest in the presence of our beings, instead of wandering wherever the thoughts would carry us into - including negative actions. When we can see through the 'density' of thoughts, and see the 'emptiness', our thoughts can liberate, disappear, dissolve back into the emptiness from where they were born. Every moment we experience this freeing of thoughts, we are freeing ourselves from the bondage of ego attachment. We are tasting the mind of the Buddha within. We are tasting ultimate freedom. We are are tasting enlightenment.

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MEDICINE BUDDHA:Phakyab Rinpoche

Phakyab Rinpoche (pronounced pak yab rin po shay) is a good friend of mine. He has a pretty amazing story...While he was imprisoned by the Chinese during their overthrow of the Tibetan government, he hurt his leg. It didn't heal, and the Dalai Lama told him to go to the United States. When he got off the airplane, he couldn't walk, his leg was completely swollen, he had no money, and didn't speak any English. With

the help of kind strangers, he found his way to some Tibetans he had the phone number of. Within days, he was in the hospital- his had gangrene in his leg. They wanted to amputate when he didn't respond to treatments. He refused to lose his leg, and went into a 3 year solitary retreat in a small apartment in Brooklyn, meditating 16 or more hours a day. At the end of three years, his leg was healed. The Dalai Lama said Phakya Rinpoche is of a lineage of great healers. He did what no one in recorded medical history had ever done - gangrene was cured without amputation.

To receive this Medicine Buddha meditation from Rinpoche is a blessing!!!

The prayers here include Refuge, Awakening Bodhicitta, The Four Immeasurables and Dedication Prayer and Aspirations. You can recite these (or think) as a complete practice, or recite them before (recite the Dedication after) your other meditation sessions. You can create your own. There are many beautiful translations of the different Buddhist prayers. Each prayer stands alone as a powerful, profound practice. In some three year retreats, they will spend a month on each verse, contemplating and meditating on it for up to 16 hours a day I wanted to share these beautiful translations. Stay with what speaks to your heart.

Refuge

With the wish to free all beings, I shall always go for refuge
To the Buddha, the enlightened mind within all beings.
I shall always go for refuge to the Dharma, the invisible way of profound peace,
And I shall always go for refuge
To the Sangha, in all their stages, my spiritual friends and teachers.

Refuge, Dedication and Aspiration

With the wish to free all beings, I shall always go for refuge
To the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.
Infused with wisdom and compassion,
I vow to reach full enlightenment
For the benefit of all sentient beings.
As long as space endures, as long as sentient beings remain,
Until then, may I too remain, to dispel the miseries of the world.

MEDICINE BUDDHA VISUALIZATION / MEDITATION

Refuge (say or think 3x)

Until I reach the heart of enlightenment.
I take refuge in the Buddha, the enlightened mind,
I take refuge in the Dharma, the invisible way of profound peace,
I take refuge in the Sangha, the spiritually awakening and fully awakened beings,
.

Awakening Bodhicitta (3x)

Through acts of kindness, generosity, patience and other virtues,
And with a heart awakening into luminosity and clarity,
May I embody all the pure qualities of a Buddha
In order to help all beings be free of suffering.

The Four Immeasurables (3x)

May all beings be free of suffering and all the causes of suffering.
May all beings have true happiness, and the causes of true happiness.
May all beings never be separate from the highest bliss, which is free of suffering.
May all beings rest in the evenness of equanimity, without attachment to some or aversion to others.

Visualization/ Meditation

Imagine in front of you a magnificent palace of light, holographic and 3-dimensional, made of precious jewels. It represents the perfection that we perceive when we awaken to compassion and wisdom.

See yourself in the palace, sitting in front of a luminous, radiant Medicine Buddha. He is deep sapphire blue in color, and sits cross-legged, holding a bowl in his left hand that is filled with ambrosial healing nectar. In his right hand he holds the stem of a blooming medicine herb, a myrobalan. He sits upon a flat, white moon disk that rests on a lotus flower. He is adorned in maroon robes and bears the signs of a perfect Buddha. Infinite Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, which represent all the enlightened energies of the universe, surround the medicine Buddha. They radiate immeasurable love, compassion and wisdom, which strengthen our faith and belief in the possibility of restoring ourselves to complete wholeness and health.

(visualize the OM -AH and HUNG (or HUM) as English or Tibetan letters, if you know Tibetan. The visualization of light and sound More important than the shape of the 'word' Om, etc.)

At the crown of the Medicine Buddha, (on top of his head), is a blazing white OM which emanates purifying, radiant light in all directions. In his throat chakra (energy center) is a glowing red AH also radiating healing light. In his heart is a blue HUNG radiating beautiful sapphire blue light in all directions. The three syllables represent the enlightened mind (HUNG), speech (AH) and body (OM) of the Buddha. (The Buddhists consider the mind to be in the heart.)

Blazing with white, red and blue light, the Medicine Buddha requests for the infinite Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and enlightened beings, to empower him to send healing energy to us. Delighted with his request, these beings shower him with their enlightened powers of body, speech in mind. Medicine Buddha is now ablaze with incomparable healing power.

As you visualize this, begin reciting the mantra for as long as you can. If you can, imagine that it is circling the HUNG at the Medicine Buddha's heart. As the mantra circles in a clockwise direction,(to the right) and it gets more and more powerful, more and more radiant, emanating more and more pure light. It keeps increasing momentum, blazing brighter and brighter.

Tayata om bekindze bekindze maha bekindze bekindze radza samudgatay soha.

(tay ah ta om beh kan dzay beh kan dzay maha beh kan dzay rah dza samud gatay soha)

Now visualize that the white light at the OM at the Buddha's crown chakra, and the red AH in the Buddha's throat descend into the blue HUNG in his heart. The blue light blazing in the Medicine Buddha's heart pours into your crown, and down into your whole body. This radiant pure light floods through every corner in your body down to the cellular level, releasing all blockages, diseases, negative thoughts and emotions, and negative karmic imprints.

See yourself completely and utterly free from all negativity, in radiance, love, joy and peace- and/or any beautiful qualities that you arise. Meditate in this for as long as you can.

Return to the Medicine Buddha and feel his blazing healing power. As you close the healing meditation, sit peacefully and dedicate all the positive energy that's been created the benefit of all sentient beings in boundless space.

Dedication and Aspirations

Through doing all this, through whatever virtue I have accumulated,
May all the suffering of all beings be dispelled.

For as long as there are beings who are ill, may I be a healer.

For poor, destitute beings, may I become inexhaustible treasure.

May anyone who denigrates me, or mistreats me, or harms anyone else,

Become capable of awakening.

May I be a protector of the unprotected, a guide for those on a road,

Like earth and the other great elements, and with the permanence and vastness of space,

May I be a source of utter well-being for innumerable beings.

I will give up without reservation, all my virtues of the three times

In order to accomplish the benefit of all beings.

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Chenrezik: the Great Noble Compassionate One
Teachings on the Mani Mantra by Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche
Om Mani Padme Hum

Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche was one of my great teachers. I once had a dream with the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama asked me who my teachers are. I said "Sakya Trizin, Khenpo Karthar..." and the Dalai Lama nodded his head and said..."Ahhh...Khenpo Karthar".

These teachings are from Khenpo's book: Chenrezik. For the Benefit Of All Beings.

The benefits of this practice, the meditation on Chenrezik and repetition of the six syllable mantra, are in fact, immeasurable. They are so tremendous that no words conserve to fully convey their scope. Chenrezik can be visualized above the crown of your head, or you yourself can appear as the deity. Bringing to mind the form of a deity affects the purification of all negativity. Even the worst karma can be eliminated when a person merely brings to mind the appearance of the Chenrezik,(also called Avalokita) the Noble Great Compassionate One.

The benefits of this practice, the meditation on Chenrezik and repetition of the six syllable mantra, are in fact, immeasurable. They are so tremendous that no words conserve to fully convey their scope. Chenrezik can be visualized above the crown of your head, or you yourself can appear as the deity. Bringing to mind the form of a deity brings purification of all negativity. Even the worst karma can be eliminated when a person merely brings to mind the appearance of the Chenrezik, the Noble Great Compassionate One.

Think that you and all beings are blessed by the Noble One, Chenrezik, so that your ordinary body, speech and mind become completely inseparable from his enlightened body, speech and mind. In that way, your appearance becomes totally vivid as you take on the form of Chenrezik - you are like a rainbow, an empty manifestation. The brilliant radiance completely fills all the realms of existence throughout space, effecting a profound all-pervasive transformation of phenomenal appearances. Everything in existence is this pure radiance. The entire external environment of the world becomes a completely pure realm of Sukhavati, the Unsurpassed Realm of Bliss.

In this extraordinary realm everything has the nature of precious substances and rays and spheres of rainbow light. All inhabitants of the world are released from all their respective sufferings. Their bodies are vividly transformed into the enlightened body of the Noble Great Compassionate One. All the ordinary sounds that beings produce, as well as the sounds of inanimate elements of the world become the naturally manifesting residence of the six syllable secret mantra, Om Mani Padme Hum. All thoughts and occurrences that arise within the mind are purified and they are delusional aspects in our revealed to be the enlightened mind of Chenrezik as awareness and emptiness, inseparable. As you experience appearances in their pure aspect as the manifestation of the enlightened body of 10 we seek as well as his pure realm, all sound is the sound of the secret mantra, in all mental events as empty awareness manifesting as the enlightened mind. In that way you regard the appearances of your body speech in mind as well as those of all other beings as being inseparable from the manifestation of the enlightened body, speech in mind I'll be in lightened body, speech, and mind of the Great Noble Compassionate one.

Brilliant rays of five colored iridescent light radiate from his body, purifying all beings of their negative karma, impure perceptions and deluded consciousness. The body speech in mind of all beings become inseparable from the enlightened body speech in mind of cheesy. You perceive all appearance as divine appearance, all sound as the resonance of the Mani mantra, and all thoughts and events that are rising in mind as a manifestation of rainbow-like empty appearance.

Because the mani mantra is so short, it's easy to remember. Once you learn it you can recite it (or think it) at any time, so it is an especially convenient mantra to incorporate in your ongoing practice. Because it is imbued with tremendous meaning and beneficial qualities, six syllable mantra is unsurpassable in its greatness. It is the king among secret mantras.

The profound significance of the six syllable secret mantra is connected to Noble of Avalokita's status as a total embodiment of the power of the wisdom of all buddhas. The mantra is itself the manifestation of the power and capability within Avalokita's compassion and the full range of his enlightened activity. The six syllables, in other words, are the concise expression of his magnificence and his capacity to bring beings to the state of liberation and omissions.

The first syllable of the six is **OM**. The white syllable OM manifests from the five aspects of the wisdom of the Noble One. It is the complete embodiment of the qualities of wisdom. It has the nature of the transcendent virtue of meditation. OM purifies oneself and others of the mental affliction of pride as a cause of suffering. It also purifies the resulting suffering that is produced from pride.

The next syllable, **MA**, is green. This syllable manifests from the energy of the Noble One's unceasing, boundless love and compassion for all beings. It represents the enlightened activity that is manifested with his benevolence. It has the virtue of patience or forbearance. It purifies the mental affliction of jealousy as a cause of suffering. It also purifies the resulting suffering that is produced by jealousy.

The third syllable, **NI**, is yellow. It rises in through the energy of Avalokita's tremendous compassion - compassion that is effortless and that it involves no contrived action, and all encompassing in that it extends to all beings impartially. It is the unchanging timeless awareness that totally encompasses enlightened body, speech, mind and activity.

The next syllable, **PAD**, is blue. This syllable manifests through the inherent energy of the unbiased compassion and boundless impartiality of the Great Compassionate One. It represents the enlightened body. From the six transcendent virtues, it has the nature of the transcendent perfection of knowledge. It purifies the affliction of delusion. It also purifies the general resulting suffering produced by that affliction, and in particular, the countless sufferings experienced by animals such as those of dullness and stupidity as well as enslavement by human beings.

The next syllable, **MA**, (pronounced meh) is red. MA manifests as the dynamic expression of Avalokita's boundless, empathetic joy and compassion, which extend equally to all beings impartially. It is the syllable of enlightened speech. From among the six transcendent virtues it has the nature of transcendent virtue of giving. It purifies greed as well as stinginess which derives from greed, both of which are causes of suffering. Likewise, it purifies the general resulting suffering that is produced by these disturbing emotions.

The sixth syllable, **HUM**, is black. This syllable manifests through the inherent energy of the Noble Avalokita is boundless compassion. HUM represents the enlightened mind. From among the six transcendent virtues it has the nature of the transcendent perfection of knowledge by which the ultimate nature of things is realized. It purifies the state of dualistic fixation on self and other as well as the anger and beings experience based on that misunderstanding. It also purifies the resulting suffering that is produced by these afflictions.

The six syllable mantra, **OM MA NI PADME HUM**, completely encompasses the power of Chenrezik's boundless enlightened activity - the activity of dredging the depths of samsara in order to free beings from their respective states of suffering. This six syllable mantra, the supreme king among secret mantras, is to be repeated as many times as possible as the main part of your meditation session, or thought your day. There is good reason for devoting such focused attention to repetition of the mantra. In the Himalayan region the great siddha Karma Pakshi engaged in vast and inconceivable enlightened activity for the benefit of beings in the degenerative era - activity that for the most part, with based on this six syllable mantra. Devoted Tibetan practitioners of the mantra would accumulate vast numbers of repetitions: 300 million, 500 million, 700 million, or more. It's relevance however it's not limited to that part of the world. In degenerate times of conflict and upheaval, when beings throughout the world suffer from exceptionally turbulent emotions, if the six syllable mantra is taken as one's main practice, it will yield tremendous power to alleviate adverse conditions, being a special method imbued with all the extraordinary qualities.

The mani mantra, is the complete embodiment of the enlightened awareness of all Buddhas. It is the ultimate realization of all the awakens beings is represented within this mantra. It is heart of the five families and we can beings and of all masters of secrets picked each of its six syllables constitutes a pit instruction that stands alone as the condensation of the 84,000 teachings of the Buddha. It is a source from which arise all qualities of perfection and it serves as the great path that leads to liberation. Someone who sincerely thinks of this mantra, even without saying it out loud, will be purified of negativity and obscurations of bad karma that has accumulated throughout the past lives in the same way as the sun shines brilliantly on the surface of snow.

Chenrezik Sadhana: HH the Karmapa

Going for refuge and the generation of altruistic motivation (Bodichitta)

In the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, I confidently go for Refuge
SANG-GYAY CHO-DANG GAY-DUN LA / TAK-TU GUE-PAY KYAP-SU CH'

In order to establish all (mother) sentient beings in the state of Perfect Enlightenment.
MA-GYUR DRO-WA SEM-CHEN NI / SANG-GYAY SA-LA GOE-PAR CHYA

Meditation on Openness/Emptiness

OM SVA-BHAVA SHUD-DHA SAR-VA DHAR-MA SVA-BHAVA SHUD-DHO HANG
("The self-nature of all phenomena is pure Openness/Emptiness – Maintain that Nature!")

Seeing yourself as Chenrezik

From Openness/Emptiness arises a lotus with a moon-disk
TONG-PAY NGANG-LAY PAY-DAY TENG

Upon this throne is one's self-nature in the form of Great Compassion White in color, with four arms.

RANG-NYI THUK-JAY CHEN-PO'I KU / KAR-SAL ZHAL-CHIK CHAG-ZHI PA

The two upper hands are joined at the heart holding the wish-granting gem
DANG-PO'I THU-KAR THAL-MO JYAR

The other two are holding a crystal-rosary and lotus-blossom
SOG-MAY TRENG-WA PE-MA DZIN

Clad in the silken robes and wearing the five-pointed crown and other ornaments
KYIL-TRUNG DAR-DANG RIN-CHEN GYEN

This is the form of the Bliss Body
LONG-CHO ZOK-KU TSHEN-PAY TRN

In the center of his heart is a HRIH upon a moon-disc, surrounded by the mantra.
THU-KAR DA-TENG HRIH THAR NGA-KYI KOR

Light radiates out (from the HRIH) emanating offerings for the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.
DAY-LAY WOE-TROE SANG-GYAY CHANG-SEM CH'OE

The blessings (of the Buddhas & Bodhisattvas) return as light and are absorbed (into the HRIH) DE-NAM JYIN-LAB NGOE-DRUB DAK-LA THIM

Again light radiates – purifying the obscurations of sentient beings.
LAR-YANG WOE-TROE DRO-WA'I DIK-DRIB JYONG

All beings are hence transformed into the form of Great Compassion.
DRO-DRUK THUK-JAY CHEN-PO'I KUR-GYUR NGAG-DRA DROK
(meditate on this for as long as you can)

Mantra Recitation, then dissolution

OM MANI PADME HUM
HRIH

(continuously think or recite the mantra and with the last mantra, think/say HRIH at the end)

All outer and inner phenomena dissolve into oneself,
oneself dissolves into the non-dual, all-pervading Openness/Emptiness
CHHI-NANG NOE-CHUE WOE-SHU MIG-MAY GYUR

Dedication of Merit

By this virtue may I quickly realize the exalted state of Chenrezik
GE-WA DI-YI NYUR-DU DAG / CHEN-RE-ZIG WANG DRUB-GYUR CHIG

And thus lead all sentient beings without exception To the glorious state of Chenrezik
DRO-WA CHIG-KYANG MA-LUE PA / DAY-YI SA-LA GOE-PAR SHOG

OM MANI PADME HUM

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When you see thoughts, let them be like a rainbow. If you see them transforming into a rainbow, they will dissolve into space. And the rainbow in your mind will help uplift you to the rainbow realm of pure consciousness, where thoughts may arise and dissolve effortlessly.

When you hear thoughts, let them be like a morning bell, dissolving into the silence of the open sky.

In this simple way, you will come to be free of the tyranny of thoughts. They will dissolve effortlessly, like dust in the wind, droplets falling and dissolving into the ocean. And in this space-like mind, the wisdom mind will awaken. *Tara*

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Garchen Rinpoche: Looking at the Nature of Your Mind: How To Meditate: Teachings to liberate afflictive emotions, and realize the true nature of the mind: The Mind Looking at Itself

These meditation instructions by Garchen Rinpoche are profound. Some of you will understand what Rinpoche is pointing to right away. Some will not understand them at all at first. I didn't understand them at first, but they awakened in me a yearning to understand - to really know through experience - what Rinpoche is pointing to. If you read them again and again, the wisdom transmission in the words will penetrate through your 'ordinary' mind, and awaken your 'extraordinary' mind - they will awaken the wisdom within you that just needs to be reminded how to find your true, inner self. Be patient. Keep making the effort. For most of us, the veil is cleared away slowly. The dust covering the radiant jewel of our beings is covered with dust of the ego, and challenging emotions (afflictions). For some of us, it's dust. For some of us, the jewel within is covered with so many layers it's more like dirt...or even cement. But with effort and motivation, we clear the jewel, and begin to shine. As the Buddha said: "If it were not possible for all beings to awaken, I wouldn't teach it." Remember - Milarepa, black magician and murderer, found the dharma (teachings of the Buddha), and with great effort and bodhicitta (desire to awaken for the benefit of all beings), he became one of the greatest Tibetan yogi's of all time. As the Dalai Lama says: "Never give up." These powerful profound teachings are an excerpt from Rinpoche's teachings on meditation, given on 10/17/20. Meditating in this way embodies boundless love and wisdom. The union of love and wisdom is enlightenment. My longing is for you to read and contemplate these words often, meditate on what you learn, and practice with a sincere heart. The veil of the illusion lifts a moment at a time, and the veil gets thinner and thinner. If you practice focused mindfulness during your daily activities, this meditation and your mindful meditation in action will be like two wings of the same bird, and your progress will be like a beautifully flowing river to the ocean of pure consciousness.

Garchen Rinpoche: Teachings on Meditation *(My comments are in italics)*

We have concepts about what we think meditation is. Actually, meditation is the mind looking at itself. To meditate is to look at the nature of the mind. Sentient beings are confused by many confusions, misunderstandings and partial misunderstands. Milarepa was giving teachings on the 10 Paramitas (usually teachings are given of the 6 Paramitas - the 6 Perfections of conduct of the bodhisattvas). He said the perfection of wisdom is the 7th Paramita, and there is no other perfection of wisdom than realizing the natural state of the mind. Based on this one statement, one can already understand with certainty why we need to meditate. If you have realized the natural state of your mind, no further learning is necessary. We should really trust in that.

The highest learning there is, is the recognition of the natural state of the mind. There is no higher learning than this. The nature of the mind is your clear, recognizing awareness. That's the true nature of the mind. It has always been here in the past, it will always be here in the future, and it is here right now. It is the clear awareness that recognizes all the thoughts.

Recognize the thoughts. Then, in meditation, you habituate to that seeing. Then, this will actually eliminate the afflictive emotions. And you will realize the great power in your mind. The afflictive emotions, like anger, will be transformed into primordial awareness when they are clearly seen with this awareness. They dissolve into themselves. They become liberated into the natural state.

This mindfulness, looking at the mind and seeing thoughts, clears away all darkness of the mind.

Sometimes there is a space of no thoughts will arise. Then you will experience the non-duality of the mind - the mind is like space. Recognize that moment and then we habituate to stay in that state. That space is the View, the natural state of the mind. The state of non-duality. No self, no other. No object, no subject.*

As we practice the 6 Paramitas: (the 6 Paramitas of the conduct of Bodhisattvas are: generosity, ethical self-discipline, patience, perseverance and joyous effort, concentration and meditation, and wisdom) and as we practice more mindfulness, patience and kindness, we begin to feel a love awakening from within ourselves. It's not an emotional, romantic or a love of attachment. It's hard to define, except to say the truth: this love is our state of being, awakening as love. It's beyond reason, and it's deep and undeniable. There is an infinite well of love within us, that just simply is who we are.

When we look at our mind in meditation, bodhicitta must be there as a basis. *(We do this practice in order to benefit all beings, including ourselves.)* On the basis of this boundless immeasurable intention of love, one looks at the mind. *(As you practice in this way, you will be cultivating more and more bodhicitta, more loving kindness, and little by little, this precious intention will permeate your mind, your*

heart and your life.)When you cultivate immeasurable love, then the mind becomes all pervasive. The one power that is all pervasive is the power of love.

That is also why the refuge and motivation prayers are so precious - the actual refuge is bodhicitta, is love. We practice the dharma to benefit all beings. When you take refuge, you should remember you do this to benefit all beings. This is the best intention to have when you start your meditations. We meditate on the basis of immeasurable love and compassion. If you meditate on immeasurable love you will understand the natural state of the mind as it is. If you can do that, then you can simply rest in the natural state. You will attain certainty with your own experience. That is called The Supreme View. When you look at your mind, and you know this is what it really is. This is a true certainty to be gained that comes from within. This is how we experience the View, the natural state. When you experience it, there is no doubt.

It is most powerful if this awareness arises on the basis of love. Boundless immeasurable love, bodhicitta is the true basis of this. And then, we bring that experience in to your daily life. It's most important to merge the meditation with your daily life and all your activities. They become liberated into the natural state.

Then rest within the innate nature of the mind. And thoughts will come like waves on the water. Thoughts become like drawing them on water: they disappear instantly. With practice, the thoughts will dissolve naturally, effortlessly. When this happens, we have seen the nature of the mind. The true nature of the mind is great bliss. You haven't seen it, but it is always with us.. We need to habituate this. That is very important.

In order to habituate it, you must have complete certainty that this is the nature of the mind. There will be times of no thought. The mind just rests single-pointedly in a state of self-recognition. It's like your mind is merging with space; the mind is like space, and within space, there is no duality. The first experience is to see is that there is no self and other. As you habituate this View, all fixation will collapse into itself in your mind. If you persevere, the mind will naturally become completely empty. Within that state there is a natural sound of reality, a sound sort of like a ringing, and that is the natural sound of Dhamata, reality itself, which is heard when all thinking comes to an end. When you rest in the fundamental nature of the mind without a single thought, the natural sound of dhamata will be heard. It is also heard when we die.

You will know from your own experience, that this is the nature of the mind. When this knowledge arises from within you will know, this is it. But you can't really describe it. That's why we say it is inexpressible; it's beyond words and thoughts, but you know it without a doubt. Then, you bring this experience into your daily life. *With practice, you habituate* conduct without grasping: you watch attachment and emotions arise, like anger, and one by one, as they arise, you keep cutting through them, you let go of them. This is how we sustain the awareness of the View, as we cut through the thoughts and feelings as they arise. Continue to practice until you attain that certainty.

Let your meditations be short in the beginning. Even just one minute, or five or ten minutes. You should meditate often during the day, whenever you have a few minutes. *A short, focused meditation is better than a longer, unfocused session.* Don't be rigid about how long you will meditate. Best to be relaxed and focused, and meditate more often.

More from Garchen Rinpoche

When observing thoughts, don't analyze the root of the phenomena . Analyze the root of the mind. In order to analyze the root of our mind, there is only one thing we will get - consciousness. When we meditate on this for even one minute, it has great benefit.

Mind must observe itself. That is true meditation. When you investigate the mind with the mind, the multitude of thoughts cease and you see the nature of mind. It's like if the root of a tree with flourishing branches and foliage is cut, it's 10,000 branches and 100,000 leaves wither.

The teachings of the Buddha says "All sentient beings are Buddha". So why do we still have our suffering? Our obscurations temporarily cover our buddha nature. Why? Because of our doubt. When we recognize the nature of thought, there is no suffering. When doubts or other afflictions (negative thoughts) arise in the mind, don't get involved with these thoughts. Just leave them alone. If we do not get involved with them, they will ultimately disappear, and you will be liberated from those sufferings.

Our obscurations temporarily cover our buddha nature. When the temporary obscurations are purified, we are one with the mind of the Buddhas.

We say that we wear the armor of the altruistic (*generous*) mind, and wearing armor means fearlessness. Normally when we have strong self-grasping the nature of that is that we are very much afraid. For example, if we just see a little mosquito flying around and we want

to kill it because we are afraid it is going to bite us, this is because of self-grasping - a self has arisen, (*and we are strongly concerned about this self.*) When there is a self there is much fear, (*because we're trying to protect our selves, our egos, possessions, etc.*) It is said that if you accomplish the welfare of others you are naturally accomplishing your own purpose.

What is the nature of mind like? Imagine a sky, empty, spacious, and pure from the beginning; its essence is like this. Imagine a sun, luminous, clear, unobstructed, and spontaneously present; its nature is like this. Imagine that sun shining out impartially on us and all things, penetrating all directions; its energy, which is the manifestation of compassion, is like this: Nothing can obstruct it, and it pervades everywhere.

* * * * *

Garchen Rinpoche wants us to read or recite this peace prayer and Shanti Devi's prayer as often as possible. You can devote a meditation session to reciting either or both of these powerful prayers.

World Peace Prayer

To the unfailing sources of refuge, the Three Jewels and Three Roots,
And especially Chenrezik, the protector of the Land of Snows,
To Noble Tara and Guru Padmasambhava, I pray:
Please remember your sacred pledge of former times!
Please grant blessings that this aspiration be entirely fulfilled!

In this dark age of decline, the thoughts and actions of beings are corrupted,
And the balance of the outer and inner elements is lost.
Through these causes and conditions, humans and animals alike
Are seized by epidemics and diseases unknown in the past.
They are struck by planetary demons, nāgas, evil spirits, dark forces, and elemental spirits.
Crops are damaged by blight, frost, and hail, and there is fighting and dispute.
Untimely rains, heat waves, and droughts in the world,
Fear of earthquakes, fire, adversaries, and natural catastrophes;
And in particular, evil hordes that hurt the teachings, and more,
Cause harm and violence throughout the world.

May these be swiftly pacified and vanquished from their very roots!
In the minds of all beings, human and non-human,
May precious and supreme bodhicitta arise naturally.
And, free of harmful thoughts and actions,
May the minds of all be filled with love for one another!
May the entire world enjoy abundant happiness and wealth!
May the Buddha's teachings spread far and endure long!
By the truthful power of the Three Roots, the Buddhas, and bodhisattvas
By whatever virtuous roots there are in samsara and nirvana,
And by the power of our highest pure intention,
May this aspiration be fulfilled!

Shanti Devi's Prayer

May every being ailing with disease
Be freed at once from every malady.
May all the sickness of the world
Be instantly and permanently healed.

* * * * *

TEACHINGS ON THE VIEW: (The Supreme View, as taught by Garchen Rinpoche above)

The following are more profound teachings on the nature of the mind, from different Rinpoches. To read these over and over is itself a meditation - they guide the mind to see itself. To realize the nature of the mind is to realize the nature of reality. This is enlightenment revealing itself, a moment at a time....

What is the View? Some Buddhist traditions often refer to this. It is the seeing that is said to be 'enlightened seeing', and we all have this vision within us. We simply have not paid attention to it. It is nothing less than seeing the actual state of things as they are; it is knowing that the true nature of mind is the true nature of everything; and it is realizing that the true nature of mind is the absolute truth.

"Once you have the View, although the delusory perceptions of samsara may arise in your mind, you will be like the sky; when a rainbow appears in front of it, it's not particularly flattered, and when the clouds appear it's not particularly disappointed either. There is a deep sense of contentment. You chuckle from inside as you see the facade of samsara and nirvana; the View will keep you constantly amused, with a little inner smile bubbling away all the time." Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche

What exactly is our buddha nature? It is in the sky-like nature of our mind. Utterly open, free and limitless, it is fundamentally so simple and so natural that it can never be complicated, corrupted, or stained, so pure that it is beyond even the concept of purity and impurity. To talk of this nature of mind as sky-like is, of course, only a metaphor that helps us to begin to imagine its all-embracing boundlessness. Buddha nature has a quality the sky cannot have, that of the radiant clarity of awareness.

When the wisdom of Rigpa shines, a growing sense of tremendous and unshakable certainty and conviction that "this is it" rises up: There is nothing further to seek, nothing more that could possibly be hoped for. This certainty of the View is what has to be deepened through glimpse after glimpse of the nature of mind, and stabilized through the continuous discipline of meditation and mindfulness.

The real glory of meditation lies not in any method but in its continual living experience of presence, in its bliss, clarity, peace, and, most important of all, complete absence of grasping.

The diminishing of your grasping is a sign that you are becoming freer of yourself. And the more you experience this freedom, the clearer the sign that the ego and the hopes and fears that keep it alive are dissolving and the closer you will come to the infinitely generous "wisdom of egolessness." When you live in that wisdom home, you'll no longer find a barrier between "I" and "you," "this" and "that," "inside" and "outside"; you'll have come, finally, to your true home, the state of non-duality.

An essential point of the meditation posture is to keep the back straight, like "an arrow". The "inner energy," or prana, will then flow easily through the subtle channels of the body, and your mind will find its true state of rest. Don't force anything. The lower part of the spine has a natural curve; it should be relaxed but upright. Your head should be balanced comfortably on your neck. It is your shoulders and the upper part of your torso that carry the strength and grace of the posture, and they should be held in strong poise, but without any tension.

If you can, sit with your legs crossed. You do not have to sit in the "full-lotus" posture, which is emphasized more in advanced yoga practice. The crossed legs express the unity of good and bad, skillful means and wisdom, masculine and feminine principles, samsara and nirvana. Rest your hands comfortably covering your knees. This is called the "mind in comfort and ease" posture. If you prefer to sit on a chair, keep your legs relaxed, and be sure always to keep your back straight.

What is the nature of mind like? Imagine a sky, empty, spacious, and pure from the beginning; its essence is like this. Imagine a sun, luminous, clear, unobstructed, and spontaneously present; its nature is like this. Imagine that sun shining out impartially on us and all things, penetrating all directions; its energy, which is the manifestation of compassion, is like this: Nothing can obstruct it, and it pervades. Meditating on loving kindness helps us restore our love and confidence, and heal any unresolved emotional wounds we may be carrying. It also puts us back in touch with the fundamental goodness of our core being, and once that has happened, we are able to love ourselves. Many people say that loving kindness practice gives them a method for transforming their difficult emotions and helps them avoid getting stuck in confusion and negativity.

When you meditate, breathe naturally, just as you always do. Focus your awareness lightly on the out-breath. When you breathe out, flow out with the out-breath. Each time you breathe out, you are letting go and releasing all negativity and grasping. Imagine your breath dissolving into the all-pervading expanse of truth.

When people begin to meditate, they often say that their thoughts are running riot and have become wilder than ever before. But I reassure them and say that this is a good sign. Far from meaning that your thoughts have become wilder, it shows that you have become quieter and are finally aware of just how noisy your thoughts have always been. Don't be disheartened or give up. Whatever arises, just keep being present, keep returning to the breath, to your awareness, even in the midst of all the confusion

Again and again we need to appreciate the subtle workings of the teachings and the practice, and even when there is no extraordinary, dramatic change, to persevere with calm and patience. How important it is to be skillful and gentle with ourselves, without becoming disheartened or giving up, but trusting the spiritual path and knowing that it has its own laws and its own dynamics.

If you want to totally free yourself from suffering, it is important to distinguish what to do from what not to do, since you cannot hope to taste the fruit of beneficial actions that you have not done, nor escape the consequences of your own harmful actions. After death, you will follow the course traced by your actions, good and bad. Now that you have a choice between two paths, one that leads up and one that leads down, do not act in a way opposed to your deepest wishes.

Buddhadharma is all about intention. Intention doesn't always play out the way you think it's going to, but if your intention is right and your mindset is not one of anger or ill will or hatred, if the intention is to relieve suffering, it makes all the difference.

When we really see, in our mind's eye, a person we think we don't like, and instead of solidifying our reasons for hatred we honestly wish them happiness, good health, safety, and an easeful life, we start to forget what we thought we hated and why we felt that way in the first place. A sense of equanimity toward everyone arises as we do this practice—we feel compassion for those who were once invisible to us, and our disregard and apathy can transform into concern for their well-being and safety.

Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche describes a yogi through a garden. He is completely awake to the splendor and beauty of the flowers relishes their colors, shapes and sense. There's no trace of clinging or any afterthought in his mind.

As Dudjom Rinpoche says: "whatever perceptions arise, you should be like a child going into a beautifully decorated Temple. He looks, but grasping does not enter his perception at all. You leave everything fresh, natural, vivid and unspoiled. when you leave each thing in its own state, then all that you perceive arises as the naked wisdom of Rigpa, the View, the Supreme View, which is the perfect union of luminosity and emptiness.

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Meditate on the Space Between the Breaths

Breathe in, notice the space between the inhale and the exhale, then breathe out.

Notice the space before you inhale, before you exhale. Be with the quiet, the stillness in that space. Don't cling to it or stay too long. Just be with it peacefully. Relax. Very simple. Very profound.

Eating and Walking Mindfully

Try eating and walking a little more slowly, being aware of as many of the movements as possible. If you have to eat quickly - be aware of that! Bringing your awareness fully into your body's actions is a powerful tool to bring us more fully into this moment, helping us to let go of future and past. Sometimes it helps us to quiet the mind more easily than in sitting meditation. Try it for small amounts of time, and then do it longer and longer. Also noticing your breath while doing these actions can help you focus on right now. After a while, you will probably find yourself effortlessly become more mindful.

Inspirational Quotes

Though different forms are perceived, they are in essence empty.

Yet, in the emptiness, one perceives forms.

Though different sounds are heard, they are in essence, empty;

Yet in the emptiness, one perceives sounds.

Also different thoughts arise, they are empty,

And in the emptiness, one perceives thoughts. Dudjum Rinpoche

Body impermanent like spring mist;

Mind insubstantial like empty sky;

Thoughts unestablished like breezes in space.

Think about these three points over and over. Gyalwa Godrakpa (1170-1249)

Grant your blessings to that my mind may be one with the Dharma.

Grant your blessings so that Dharma may progress along the path.

Grant your blessings so that the path may clarify confusion.

Grant your blessings so that confusion may dawn as wisdom. Gampopa

Once we realize that thoughts are empty, the mind will no longer have the power to deceive us.
Khyentse Rinpoche

'The way to discover the freedom of the wisdom of egolessness, the masters say, is through the process of reading or listening, contemplation and reflection, and meditation. They advise us to begin by reading spiritual teachings over and over. As we do, they will keep on again and again, reminding us of our hidden wisdom nature. Gradually, certain passages and insights in them will strike a strange chord. Memories of our true nature will start to wake up and trickle back to us, and a deep feeling of something with uncanny familiarity and a feeling of our inner true home, will slowly awaken.' Sogyal Rinpoche

Through meditation and deep mindfulness, one becomes an ordinary person, but in an extraordinary way. Your words are still there, your hang-ups may still be there, but you see your stuff in a totally different light. You're at peace with yourself, at peace with the world. Not in a complacent sense, but in the sense that you are more accepting of what is, and you can simply devote yourself to a life of compassion and kindness. Ram Dass

At the beginning, a few seconds, 20 or 30 seconds, then one minute, five minutes, ten minutes, gradually you can sit in that pureness of mind. I think it worthwhile to start meditation, (see the)mind - not sensory mind. Deeper mind. Then you focus on deeper meaning. The meaning of life. the Dalai Lama

If you clean the floor with love, you have given the world an invisible painting. Osho

If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.'" Martin Luther King Jr.

No one can help us as much as our own compassionate thought. Buddha

With awareness, there comes choice. And so you are able to say: 'I allow this moment to be as it is.' And then suddenly, where before there was an irritation there is now a sense of aliveness and peace. And out of that comes right action. Eckhart Tolle

Ours is not a caravan of despair. Come, even if you have broken your vows a thousand times. Come back, yet again, come. Rumi

Stay together, friends. Don't scatter and sleep. Our friendship is made of being awake. Rumi

Hmmm... Are you thinking?...or are you watching /hearing your thoughts with detachment? Ah...It's wonderful and so powerful to know the difference!...The moment you're aware that you're thinking -you're Awake! You're in the View! That subtle shift means everything! It's the golden key to your inner awakening!

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RESOURCE LIST (Updated April 2020)

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Stay together, friends. Don't scatter and sleep. Our friendship is made of being awake. Rumi

I wish you all deep peace, and beautiful progress on your path, right where you are now.

May the treasures of loving kindness be as bountiful in our hearts as the sands on the earth.

And may the ocean of awakening compassion be as vast as the galaxies.

May the radiance of happiness and goodness prevail

And may we all have peace.

Tara

Dear Friends,

I am so glad to send you all a meditation practice this time of year. As the days keep shortening it seems like a fruitful time to go inside, explore our hopes and dreams, and to formulate ideas and visions about our future.

Meditation is kind of the opposite of that. The practice is somewhat to empty yourself of the concerns of everyday mind and to find a piece of peace in the deep spaces within yourself, connected to an infinite ultimate source from which all being manifest.

Meditation helps break the cycle of habitual thinking that can keep us trapped in our old thoughts. Try a little mediation this holiday season. Give yourself a gift of calm.

I like to meditate, and I constantly find my mind wandering into thought world. I just go back to following my breath until I once again realize I am thinking about something and go back to my breath. Constantly!! But I don't mind!. I feel better for sitting quietly for a time.

I find these days that if I just remember to take a deep breath before I respond to someone it changes whatever it is I think I have to say. There is more power in our breath than I understand.

Note PE has a new address. Send all mail there. Merry Holidays and Happy Balanced Life to you,
Gary