

A Daily Practice (From Odyssey to Freedom, pages 449 - 450)

Visualizations for a Brief Lam Rim Practice

These are condensed from Rinpoche's descriptions. More elaborate visualizations can be found in many sources, for example Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand. Visualization is a way to engage our imaginative energies in the practice of meditation. It gives us the feeling, or as Rinpoche says, 'the taste' of enlightened existence. It allows us to combine analytic and concentrated meditation together naturally.

Refuge visualization

Within a vast, open expanse of sky or space that is calm and bright, free of all obstruction, I envision the golden, glowing form of Lama Buddha Shakyamuni. In reality it is my own Spiritual Master or Masters in the form of Shakyamuni Buddha. Even if I cannot visualize the appearance, I feel the presence of a being who has infinite love, infinite wisdom and an infinite ability to help me. His mind is Buddha, his speech is Dharma, and his body is Sangha. Knowing I and all other beings need help to deal with life and death, I turn to Lama Buddha Shakyamuni for refuge, and he gladly accepts me.

As I say Namu Gurubye, light and liquid come from the body of Lama Buddha Shakyamuni to me. As the light and liquid enter my body, all obstacles in general are cleared, in particular all obstacles relating to 'the big G word.' A strong connection is established.

As I say Namu Buddhaya, light and liquid come, washing away all negativities or obstacles, especially bad karma that prevents me from using Buddha's teachings. 'Buddha becomes my Buddha, and my Buddha becomes a Buddha.'

As I say Namu Dharmaya, light and liquid purify all negativity, especially those created on basis of Dharma, such as sectarianism or religious prejudice. Spiritual development grows within me.

As I say Namu Sanghaya, light and liquid purify all negativities, especially those related to problems within the spiritual community.

I may choose to visualize all the negativities flowing out of my body like dirty water or scorpions, leaving body and mind like crystal, clear, pure and bright.

Four Immeasurable thoughts

As I repeat this verse, I visualize all of space filled with living beings. I wish them happiness; this is immeasurable love. I wish them freedom from suffering; this is immeasurable compassion. I wish them everlasting joy; this is immeasurable joy. I wish them to be free of neurotic clinging and dislike; this is immeasurable equanimity.

I pray to Lama Buddha Shakyamuni that I may be able to accomplish this. Lama Buddha Shakyamuni melts into a little ball of light that comes to me and dissolves between my eyebrows, becoming one with me. 'I become Buddha, Buddha is me.' In this blissful state, I send out blessings in the form of light and liquid to relieve the sufferings of beings everywhere in the six realms. I meditate for a little while on the thought that I have completed my work as a Buddha.

Envision Supreme Field, invoke and dissolve Wisdom Beings

Again, from the empty sky, I envision Lama Buddha Shakyamuni as before. I realize that in reality Enlightened Beings are all-pervasive, but I say the words of invocation that empower the visualization to satisfy my mind. To accumulate merit and purify negativities I practice the Seven Limbs.

The Seven Limb Practice

- Together with all beings, I praise and aspire to attain the qualities of buddha's enlightenment.
- I multiply all the symbolic offerings I set out or imagine billions of times.
- I purify all my negative, harmful deeds, words and thoughts using the Four Powers.
- I rejoice in all positive and helpful deeds done by anyone, anywhere.
- I request to receive the help and guidance I need at each stage.
- I entreat Lama Buddha Shakyamuni to remain connected with me.
- I dedicate the merit of this practice to preserve it and share it with all beings.
- Ask for inspiration and blessings through mantra

As I say the mantra, I strongly make a single pointed, firm request. I visualize light and liquid coming from the supreme field of merit purifying all my negativities. I obtain the blessings and support, and the wisdom and compassion of all enlightened beings. Finally, a duplicate Buddha comes out and dissolves to me. That duplicate Buddha now becomes me, I become Buddha, and start functioning like a Buddha, generating light from my body, purifying all the environment and inhabitants, so that every land, everywhere, becomes a pure land, every being everywhere becomes a pure being. For a minute I believe and feel that it has happened.

Ask for inspiration and blessings through the Lineage Prayer

As I repeat the words, I visualize all the masters of the Lamrim lineage either in their own forms or inseparable from Lama Buddha Shakyamuni. The first time I say the last line, light and liquid come from those lineage masters purifying all my negativities, especially with regard to Lamrim practice. I receive blessings to develop all the Lam rim stages. When I say it a second time, a duplicate of those masters dissolves to me.

The Foundation of All Perfections

As I say the words of each verse, I think of the meaning. The first time I say the last lines of each verse, light and liquid from the supreme field of merit purify my negativities in general and particularly those that prevent me from developing that particular point. As I repeat, I imagine that I did develop that point or realization, that it has become actualized.

Dedication

Remembering what I have realized about the true nature of reality, I dedicate and freely give away all my merit to benefit others, knowing this preserves it. I dedicate so that all may generate Bodhimind. I dedicate to the long life of all Spiritual Masters, and to all beings always connecting with them. I dedicate to all beings attaining freedom from suffering and everlasting joy.

Just as the brave Manjushri and Samantabhadra realized things as they are,
I dedicate all these virtues in the best way, that I may follow after them.

Whatever dedication the Victorious ones Gone to bliss of all three times have admired as best, I shall also perfectly dedicate in the same way all these roots of virtue so that I may perform good works.

Rinpoche on Visualizing the Result:

Here you may raise the question, “Well, nothing happened but I say it did, am I fooling myself?” In a way, we are all fooling ourselves, but on the other hand, it is here we are building a connection. It is here we are sowing the seed. It is here we are nurturing our development. It is here, together with whatever efforts that we put in daily, that we will complete our development. Therefore, when you think in that way, you are fooling nobody. You are actually generating and sowing the seed. You are making it possible for it to happen. This is not only the positive suggestion but it could materialize.