

A Little Buddhist Wisdom Excerpt: Short Jewel Heart Practice

I give you a simple little practice everybody can do, something to hold on to. If you get up in the morning before you go to work or do whatever, meditate for a short period.

1. REFUGE

First is seeking protection from Buddha, dharma and sangha and generating a great thought: one would like to benefit all sentient beings and for that one would like to seek the highest stage ever possible. Then you take refuge with the words:

*I take refuge to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha
Until I obtain enlightenment.
By practicing generosity and the other perfections
May I attain enlightenment
For the benefit of all beings (3x)*

*or: I take refuge in the Guru
I take refuge in the Buddha
I take refuge in the Dharma
I take refuge in the Sangha*

The Guru here can be guru Tsongkhapa, who is the central figure of this teaching tradition, the Gelugpa tradition.

Buddha is not necessarily only Sakyamuni, the historical buddha; there are many different buddhas, like the buddhas of the ten directions, the medicine buddha, the long-life buddha etc. In particular it is important to link up your own future buddha, the beauty nature or buddha nature within the individual, with the external buddha.

Link up your own dharma, your own spiritual development, which is your own positivity, with the external dharma of the attainments of the enlightened beings. We have introduced all the negatives. If you reduce your anger, then by cutting the anger, by separating yourself from the anger, you gain positivity. That very positivity -this is one example- is your own dharma. Likewise it goes for all other delusions; if you separate yourself from those delusions the positivity gained by removing them from you, by not letting yourself run under their control, is the first step of spiritual development within the individual. That is your own dharma. You take refuge to it, you try to build up your own dharma here, and you strengthen it by contacting the dharma within the fully enlightened beings over there.

Also there is the sangha, the special persons who have definitely clearly seen the true reality. Each one of us will become our own future sangha. You sort of wake that up.

2. THE SEVEN LIMBS OR SEVEN PRACTICES

*I bow down in body, speech and mind.
I offer the best I have to give both real and imagined
to fill the space between us.
I regret and purify all transgressions,
I rejoice in all virtues.
I request you to remain until total enlightenment.
I request wise and compassionate guidance.
I dedicate my merit for the sake of all beings.*

Let me tell you a little bit about it. This is part of the Buddhist system even before Buddhism came from India to Tibet around 1200 years ago. The Indians taught the Tibetans how to pray. This kind of prayer is not just simply wishing. Normally we ask the Enlightened beings if they could help us to achieve certain things. But here, it is different. According to that there are a few things that we can do as well. We can make offerings to them. We can also purify all our wrong doings, all our negativities and non-virtuous actions.

I am not going to tell you too many details about that right now, because it is a huge subject in itself. But I may spend some time with you during the next 8 weeks, talking some more about purification. Just one thing now: We can purify whatever mistakes we make. We can make ourselves pure and perfect. Having made a

mistake is not the end of everything. You can correct it and make things pure. It is not hopeless. You can do it. There are many ways how to do this. In our prayer we just have one line: *I regret and purify all transgressions*. If I talk about purification in detail we can go on for weeks. On the other hand you can summarize all in one sentence.

Offerings are not limited to physical giving. It includes mentally created offerings, which are even more important than the physical giving. If you have paid 10 Dollars you should think that you have given 100 000 Dollars and that you are happy to give this and willing to share. You mentally fabricate greater offerings and that makes your generosity a little more powerful.

Another part of the *Seven Limbs* is to rejoice. We rejoice in the good works we ourselves and others did. That helps tremendously. Our problem is jealousy. If somebody is doing something good, we really get jealous. If, instead of that, we rejoice, we ourselves get more benefit.

At the end of the prayers we do a dedication.

Briefly, that is the basic framework for our prayers. The most important thing for spiritual practice is the state of our mind. So, in the beginning, we should try to have a good motivation in the sense of thinking, 'I would like to help myself and others, my family, my fellow country men, the people in the world, particularly today, tomorrow and these days.' With such a mind, if you say prayers, the result will be different. (*Excerpt of Renaissance Unity Talk: March 17-03*)

3. MANTRAS

Then you go on and use the mantra:

*TAYATHA
GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SOHA*

That is the mantra of emptiness, the mantra of the true reality, the true nature of existence. That protects you from the disturbing obstacles either by evil or by spirits, ghosts etc.

Then buddha Sakyamuni's mantra:

OM MUNI MUNI MAHA [SAKYA]MUNI YE SOHA

This mantra links yourself to Buddha, who has not only overcome the rough delusions but also the selfish interest and the subtle delusions; he has overcome all of them. The body, mind and speech of all buddhas and our personal body, mind and speech get linked together. Soha: May the foundation of your body-, mind- and speech-qualities be laid within our body, mind and speech.

OM MANI PADME HUM

Again *Om – Aum* – represents body, mind and speech. Mani represents method; the method is being love-compassion oriented, helping others, being totally dedicated, being less selfish, according to whatever your level may be. All of those love-compassion oriented practices are represented by the word *mani*, jewel. *Padme* is lotus, which is the wisdom, the clarity and understanding of wisdom. So the mantra is about trying to grow our own personal love-compassion by linking it to the buddha of love and compassion, trying to almost make it oneness. Likewise also we try to link up our wisdom with the fully enlightened beings' wisdom, which has no limit to clarity and knowing. We try to link up the very little wisdom we have to theirs, to make it to that level. *Hum* is the union, the union of that level of enlightened beings and me, bringing it up to that level.

OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA

Tare: One who has the proper method and the love to take us away from the circle of existence, *samsara*. Control-less we force ourselves; without control our delusions and karma make us to take rebirth one life after another. Tara will be able to lead us out of that. With *Tare* you name her. *Tuttare*: One who protects us from the eight fears, which we have been talking about in these talks. *Ture*: She who gives healing from all the illnesses that we have. We have two kinds of illnesses: the physical illnesses and the mental illnesses, after which the emotional illnesses come. The mental illnesses are all our delusions. The physical illnesses is

whatever sickness you have. Anything. Also if you have an addictions, you can concentrate on her, ‘Help me to get out of it!’ You focus of that when you say *Ture. Soha* is again to lay the foundation.

3. SEEKING INSPIRATION

The guru-devotional practice is the root of all development. Therefore you should think of a Tsongkhapa type of guru. Think not of a painted picture, but of a living figure. He/she is inseparable from all enlightened beings, inseparable from all the buddhas, inseparable from especially from your own spiritual masters. The guru you visualize in the form of guru Tsongkhapa or in the form of Buddha or in whatever form is easier to you. Then say the mantra:

*MIG-ME TZE-WE TER-CHEN CHEN-RE-ZIG
DRI-ME KYEN-PE WANG-PO JAM-PEL-YANG
DÜ-PUNG MA-LÜ JOM-DZE SANG-WE-DAG
GANG-CHEN KE-PE TZUG-GYEN TSONG KHA-PA
LO-ZANG DRAG-PE ZHAB-LA SÖL-WA DEB*

*You are Avalokiteshvara, great treasure of compassion,
not aimed at true existence,
And Manjushri, master of flawless wisdom,
As well as Vajrapani, destroyer of hordes of demons without exception.
O Tsongkhapa, crown jewel of the sages of the land of snows
Lozang Dragpa, I make requests at your feet.*

When you say Avalokiteshvara, it means the buddha of love and compassion. When you say Manjushri, you talk about the embodiment of the wisdom. When you talk about Vajrapani, you are talking about all the powers, all the capability to do everything. In other words love and kindness, wisdom and capability of *all* the enlightened beings together, have taken form in the physical shape of Tsongkhapa.

So you actually say, ‘You are the guru who has tremendous amount of qualities, qualities on the love, qualities on the wisdom, qualities in the power and capability. All of them I seek. I bow to you. Make me like you right now!’

You can think in that way [while saying the mantra]. Say the mantras three, seven, twenty-one, hundred or whatever you want to times.

4. DEDICATION

Then you can have a little dedication:

*By this merit, may I quickly
attain the state of enlightenment
and take with me every being
without exception*