



MEDITATION INSTRUCTIONS (1979)

KYABJE DUDJOM RINPOCHE

PART ONE

INSTRUCTIONS ON SHAMATHA

On the one hand, what we call dharma is very difficult. On the other hand, it's very easy - because it really just depends on our own minds. So you should search for your mind and look after it. Don't let your mind get carried along by rising thoughts. Cut the elaborations and conceptualizations of mind and allow your mind to relax into its natural state. Let your mind simply be in your body and allow relaxation to enter into your mind.

What does the state of relaxation feel like? It's like the state of someone who has just finished some exhausting work. After laboring long and hard to accomplish their task, once it is finally over, they experience a blissful satisfaction and are content simply to rest. Quite naturally, their mind will arrive at a state of calm and they will remain relaxed for a while without being caught up in their usual pattern of wild and unimaginable thoughts.

So, following this example, you should try to guard and protect your mind, even in the midst of all kinds of turbulent thoughts. Leave your mind in its own natural state and relax. Keep your body still, and your speech silent. Don't think about whether or not you should do this or that. Just settle your mind into a state of relaxation and calm in which there is no chasing after objects and no wild and crazy thoughts. Instead you should find yourself in a state that is vividly open and empty, brilliantly clear, and deeply relaxed. This state of ease is an indication that the mind has arrived at its inherent clarity - and it will simply settle itself in that clarity.

But it won't remain like that for long. Something happens - a thought arises. When that arising takes place, let your awareness recognize it just as it occurs. Don't think "something's gone wrong", but recognize the arising *as soon as it arises*. And just leave it at that - with the recognition. If the mind is just left in its own natural state, it becomes pacified and all of the rising thoughts naturally subside. *As you leave them, they liberate themselves.*

It's like waves in the ocean - they're left to dissolve back into the ocean. And, that's really the only place for them to go. It's the same with our minds. When from out of a state of stillness, a movement occurs, by simply leaving it to follow its own natural course, it will be liberated by itself. It will be naturally pacified and become clear, by itself.

That's how you should practice this. But if instead you think “Oh! Now this thought has arisen. That can't be right...” And you try to stop the thought, then that, itself, is just more thinking. Practicing like that, you only risk furthering your own confusion as the mind follows after objects - so don't practice in that way!

Resting in the recognition, without following after thoughts, is known as “peacefully remaining” because it defuses or pacifies the power of thoughts and enables you to remain in the blissful nature of your own mind. This is what we call the practice of “shamatha” (in Sanskrit) or “zhine” (in Tibetan).

When you become somewhat familiar with this practice, you may experience a state of physical and mental bliss or ecstasy. Or, if you're meditating at night, you might experience a state of clarity, as if daylight had dawned. Different experiences such as these can occur and they are signs that you are cultivating the peace and calm of shamatha.

There's no fault in seeing these as positive, but it would be a mistake to become attached to them. If you just allow them to occur without feeling any attachment towards them they can only assist you in your practice and no harm will come of them. so whatever experiences of bliss or clarity occur there's no need to grasp at them with attachment and no need to suppress them either. simply allow them to dissolve naturally.

You could also have what is known as an experience of absence of thought. This is a dark, dull, and drowsy state in which there is no awareness whatsoever! You're not quite asleep, but you're in a blank dullness. This experience of absence of thought does involve *some* calm abiding but there are no rising thoughts and none of the mind's inherent clarity! This is because you have drifted into the *alaya*, the “all-ground”, and you will need to alert yourself and awaken from it. In order to clear it away, straighten your body, exhale the foul air, and focus your awareness in the space in front of you. Otherwise, if you remain in such dullness, your meditation will be ineffective and will never evolve at all. This experience of absence of thought is a fault in meditation and must be cleared away whenever it occurs. Then, it is also very important to sharpen your awareness.

Practicing like this is the way to develop calm abiding.

STILLNESS, MOVEMENT, AND AWARENESS

When the mind is resting naturally and at ease in its own unaltered state, that is referred to as the *stillness* of meditation.

If a thought arises out of this state of stillness, that is called *movement*.

And that which knows when the mind is in a state of stillness and recognizes any movement is your *awareness* or *rigpa*.

These are known as *nye ju rig sum*, the three states of stillness, movement, and awareness.

As a beginner, unless you do this practice formally (in proper meditation sessions), you won't be able to remain at peace. But, once you become more familiar with it, you'll be able to remain undistracted even while you are walking about! And when you are sitting, you will sit without being distracted from awareness. You should apply the practice to whatever you do, and then it will develop and improve.

Was that okay?
(practice)

THE TWO TYPES OF SESSIONS

When we rest for a while in the natural state like this, it's called meditative equipoise. This is what we refer to as a "formal session" of meditation. Then, when we rise from that state and we resume all our normal everyday activities such as walking about, sitting, reciting prayers or mantras, and so on, all activities such as these fall into the period of "post meditation". So, post meditation refers to the period after you have arisen from a state of formal meditative equipoise. If you're able to maintain an awareness of the present moment without losing it throughout the post meditation period, you will quickly gain stability in your formal meditation - so you should try to guard this awareness, and never lose it.

PART TWO

In meditative equipoise, we allow the mind to settle calmly into its own nature - like the ocean unruffled by the wind. Then, when a thought arises (as an expression of the mind's energy), and a change occurs, that rising takes place upon the mind itself. Mental distraction is only a movement or "change" that takes place within the mind. Whatever turbulent thoughts arise, if you allow the mind to settle into its own nature, they will pacify themselves just like waves in the ocean dissolving back into the ocean. That is how to practice formal meditation.

HOW TO CONDUCT ONESELF IN POST MEDITATION

In post meditation, which includes the activities of eating, sleeping, moving around and so on, you shouldn't just jump up like a startled rabbit the moment you finish your formal meditation. Get up slowly, and then, if you need to leave your home and go outside, walk with your body relaxed and your mind at ease. Focus your gaze lightly on the ground, a few feet in front of you, at about a "plow's length" (as it's said in the teachings), and walk calmly so your mind is not disturbed.

If, on the other hand, you just wander around aimlessly, turning your head from side to side as you go, you will become agitated. So, when you walk, you should move slowly and steadily: taking slow steps and looking at the ground a few feet in front of you. That is how to walk about.

When you sit down, don't fall to the ground like a sack of earth or heavy stone. If a stone is suspended above the ground and the rope that holds it in place is cut, it crashes to the earth with a "THUD!" Rather than sitting down like that, ourselves, we should sit slowly and calmly.

As for how you should act when encountering other people, it's said "when I look upon another being, may my gaze be honest and filled with love." So, when you encounter someone, gaze at them straightforwardly and honestly from a state of natural calm. Look at them with a sincere and loving gaze. If your mind is loving, and you have bodhichitta, then that will lend a particular expression to your gaze and convey an atmosphere of peace and calm. So, when you look at other beings, look at them honestly and with love.

When you talk, don't just chatter away meaninglessly about whatever comes to your mind. Speak truthfully and gently, in a way that suits your listeners and is agreeable to them. When you eat, don't make all kinds of noises like a cow chewing the cud or a dog gobbling up its dinner. Eat and drink calmly and mindfully, in a state of natural relaxation.

And when you go to the toilet, find a suitable location to do it in. One that's hidden from other people and away from popular gatherings and sacred sites such as temples.

When you go to sleep, lie down gently and in a relaxed way. Then pray to the Master and the Three Jewels: the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. That is how to go to sleep, with your mind at ease and in a state of prayer.

And then, when you wake up, bring the Three Jewels and your Master clearly to mind and get up in that state of devotion. In this way, it is said, "devotion should rise in your mind just as you, yourself are rising."

Then, throughout all of your daily activities: walking, resting, eating, or sleeping, your body should be relaxed. you should move calmly and slowly. your speech, too, should be calm, with as few words as possible, and yet disciplined, pleasant to the ear, and agreeable to the mind.

THE MEANING OF DHARMA

If you act like this, then all of your daily activities will accord with the teachings and, most important of all, your mind will be in harmony with the Dharma. Here, in this context, Dharma means taming our minds and pacifying all our disturbing emotions.

DEDICATION OF MERIT

By this merit, may all obtain omniscience
May it defeat the enemy, wrongdoing
From the stormy waves of birth, old age, sickness, and death
From the ocean of samsara
May I free all beings

Transcribed and compiled by Isaac Wostrel-Rubin for Do Ngak Dzong at the request of Ngakchang Karma Yeshe Namgyal Dorje Rinpoche.