

# Meditations



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## **1. Meditation on Developing Reliance on the Spiritual Guide.**

The foundation of the spiritual path is finding and following a qualified spiritual guide.

The purpose of this meditation is to develop awareness of the importance of following a qualified spiritual guide, to develop the recognition of the kindness of the spiritual guide and to strengthen the determination to follow the advice and instructions of one's spiritual guide.

Contemplate: the importance of relying on a qualified spiritual teacher. With the wish to train the mind through the practice of Dharma will come the recognition of the importance of following, a qualified spiritual teacher. If a teacher is needed to explain relatively gross subjects how much more is a teacher needed to explain the subtle subjects necessary for the control and transformation of the mind. We also need the encouragement and inspiration of a qualified spiritual teacher as we progress on the spiritual path.

Contemplate: the benefits of relying on a qualified spiritual guide:  
- the general benefit of being guided from a state of confusion and suffering to the state of enlightenment;  
- the eight specific benefits.

Conclude: I will rely on my spiritual guide.

Focus: single-pointedly on this determination.

Imagine your spiritual guide is in front of you.

Contemplate: My spiritual guide is kinder than all the buddhas in general, and kinder than even Shakyamuni Buddha.  
My spiritual guide directly shows me the path to liberation and enlightenment. Even buddhas can do no more and at the moment I have no opportunity to meet with them face to face. At the moment I am like a poor person without the richness of spiritual realisation. My spiritual guide gives me wealth now while the buddhas will give me wealth when I am already rich with spiritual qualities.  
My spiritual guide is kinder than my parents and friends. Friends and relatives can give external help and comfort but my spiritual guide gives me the means to gain the wealths of hearing the Dharma, moral discipline, patience and so forth. Through these I will gain inner strength and comfort and thus gain happiness now and in the future.

Conclude: by developing a feeling of closeness and appreciation for your spiritual guide.

Focus: single-pointedly on this feeling of warmth and closeness.

Contemplate: How can I repay the kindness of my spiritual guide?

The qualified spiritual guide is pleased only by sincere practice of the Dharma not merely by offerings of gifts and services.

Conclude: I must put the teachings of my spiritual teacher into practice.

Focus: single-pointedly on this determination.

Reliance on the spiritual teacher lays the foundation for true spiritual development.

Dedicate the Merits.

## **2. Meditation on the Preciousness of a Fully Endowed Human Life.**

The purpose of this meditation is to recognise the qualities and value of a fully endowed human life and to develop the determination not to waste a moment of this precious life.

Begin by recognising that your present human life has all the conditions necessary for spiritual development.

Contemplate: I am free from birth in an existence of intense suffering (hell).  
I am free from birth in an existence of intense poverty and hunger (hungry spirits).  
I am free from birth in an animal existence.  
I am free from birth in an existence of such intense pleasure that I am distracted from seeking for a state of lasting happiness (god existence).  
I am free from birth into an irreligious country.  
I am free from birth as mentally retarded or with damaged senses.  
I am free from birth at a time when no enlightened guide has appeared.  
I am free from birth holding fixed wrong views or into a society where wrong views completely predominate and are dogmatically clung to.

Reflect on each freedom and develop a feeling of joy and appreciation.

Reflect on and rejoice at the qualities of your human life, on its qualities in general and the ten endowments in particular.

Conclude: by feeling joy and appreciation through reflecting that your life has all the conditions necessary for complete spiritual development.

Focus: single-pointedly on this feeling of joy appreciation.

Contemplate: on the great value of this human life if it is used wisely. With this human life I can gain greater happiness in this life and in future lives; I can attain liberation from all the miseries of cyclic existence and I can attain the full awakening of all qualities, the state of enlightenment.

Conclude: what a tragedy it would be if I were to waste the opportunities afforded by this human life.  
I must use every moment of this life in the most meaningful way.

Focus: single-pointedly on this determination.

Contemplate: the rarity of this human life.

- rare because it is difficult to create the causes for human existence.
- rare because the number of human beings is extremely small compared to the number of beings in other realms.

To help realise this rarity think of examples such as 'the turtle living at the bottom of the ocean'.

Conclude: that since this human life has such great value and is so rare, what a tragedy it would be to waste this human life. I must therefore avoid wasting a moment of my human life.

Focus: single-pointedly on this determination.

It is very important always to remember the qualities and value of human life and of the importance of using it wisely.

In this way we are always encouraged to develop on the path no matter how difficult the situations we meet. In this way great energy to engage in positive actions and to progress on the spiritual path is generated.

### 3. Meditation Outline on Death and Impermanence.

The purpose of this meditation is to encourage us to put into practise the teachings of the Buddha without delay or procrastination, thus enabling us to gain meaning from our human life.

Although we can gain great meaning from our human life, our life is impermanent.

We must become aware of this and face up to our death to make any progress on the spiritual path. Since it is difficult to come to terms with our death we should always be aware of the faults of not thinking about death and the benefits of thinking about death.

Contemplate: the general faults of not remembering death and the six particular faults.

Without remembering death you will never remember to practise the methods to find complete release from suffering. The scope of life is reduced to the fulfilment of immediate desires and needs. You will always be disturbed by the underlying fear of death and your inability to come to terms with this.

Contemplate: the general benefits of remembering death and the six particular benefits.

Conclusion: I must not avoid thinking about death but try to think of this continually.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

Contemplate: the certainty of death.

When death comes nothing and nobody can turn it away. My lifespan cannot be lengthened and it decreases moment by moment without interruption. I will die whether or not I have had time to practise Dharma (if I subtract the time spent in sleeping, working, eating, etc, there is very little time for the practice of Dharma).

Conclusion: I must practise Dharma.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

Contemplate: the uncertainty of the time of death.

The lifespan of all beings in this world is completely unfixed so why should be fixed? There are more conditions for death than for survival. My body is so fragile and weak.

Conclusion: I must practise Dharma now.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

Contemplate: what happens at the time of death.  
Will my wealth and possessions help?  
Will my friends and relatives help?  
Will even my own body help?

Conclusion: since only the wholesome state of my mind helps at the time of my death I must practise Dharma, the method to cultivate wholesome states of mind and purify unwholesome states of mind, as purely as possible.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

Contemplate: my death is certain, its time is uncertain and only Dharma will help at the time of death.

Conclusion: I will practise Dharma now, I will practise only the Dharma and I will practise it purely.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

#### **4. Meditation on the Sufferings of the Three Lower Realms.**

The purpose of meditating on the sufferings of the three lower realms is to develop fear for being reborn in these realms. Only then will we be motivated to avoid rebirth in the three lower rebirths.

Although human life has great potential in spiritual terms, death is certain and its time is uncertain. I might die at any moment. After death my subtle mind continues and takes rebirth in a form which corresponds with those imprints and tendencies that are most powerful in influencing the mind.

Everything I do or think now leaves an imprint on my mind. If I live motivated by thoughts of aggression, competitiveness, dissatisfaction, possessiveness and so forth, this builds up tendencies in my mind which will determine my future behaviour and experiences, in this life and in future lives. These experiences will be those of increased violence, desolation, craving, fear and suffering.

By applying an understanding of rebirth, actions and their effects and how the mind determines our experiences we can generate a strong feeling for the reality of rebirth in lower realms.

If I create actions motivated by aggressive dissatisfaction, harmful thoughts and so on, I will experience the intense suffering of the hell-realms in my future lives. Although these are mentally created states of suffering, they will be as real then as my present experiences are to me now.

Contemplate: the hell-realm experiences of intense sufferings:

- the intense heat and cold
- the endless violence
- the cruel frustration of hopes.

Consider the experiences of people burning to death, freezing to death, being tortured, trapped in intense suicidal depression. Put yourself in those situations - "what if I were to experience such suffering?"

It is almost definite that I have created the causes for rebirth in such an existence. If I do nothing to remove these causes or do nothing to stop creating these causes in the future I will definitely have to experience the intense sufferings of hell-like existences.

Conclude: I will definitely avoid creating the causes for a hell rebirth.

Focus: single-pointedly on this determination.

If I create actions motivated by strong attachment and miserliness I will experience the intense frustration, disillusionment and craving hunger of the realm of the hungry spirits in future lives.

Contemplate: on the sufferings of hungry spirits:

- heat and cold
- intense hunger and thirst
- fear and exhaustion
- constant frustration and failure to satisfy their craving and hunger.

Consider parallels within the human world and within your own experiences. Consider how much suffering you experience going without food and drink for a day - "what if I were to experience such suffering for a vast period of time?" It is almost definite that I have created the causes for rebirth in such an existence. If I do nothing to remove these causes or do nothing to stop creating these causes in the future I will definitely have to experience the sufferings of a hungry spirit existence.

Conclude: I must avoid creating the causes for rebirth in the realm of the hungry spirits.

Focus: single-pointedly on this determination.

If I create actions motivated by unawareness and ignorance of the effect of my thoughts and actions, following any delusion which arises then even if I only create slightly non-virtuous actions I will be reborn in an animal realm.

Contemplate: the sufferings of animals:

- being ignorant and driven by blind instinct
- heat and cold
- hunger and thirst
- no certainty of gaining food or shelter
- at the mercy of the weather
- fear
- being used for work
- being eaten by each other or by human beings.

Consider particular animals and see what sufferings they have to experience. "What if I were to be reborn as an animal and experience such suffering?"

It is almost definite that I have created the causes for rebirth in such an existence. If I do nothing to remove these causes or do nothing to stop creating these causes in the future I will definitely have to experience the sufferings of an animal existence.

Conclude: I must avoid creating the causes for rebirth as an animal.

Focus: single-pointedly on this determination.

Contemplate: all three realms and of the probability of being reborn in one of them in my next rebirth.

Conclude: I must avoid creating the causes for rebirth in any one of the three lower realms.

Focus: single-pointedly on this determination.

## 5. Meditation on Refuge.

The purpose of taking refuge is to direct our lives and energies away from creating the causes for the endless sufferings of cyclic existence and towards the Three Jewels - Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, who represent the goal of liberation and the means to achieve this.

One of the two conditions for taking, refuge is to recall the feelings of fear and anxiety produced from meditating on death and the possibility of taking rebirth after death in one of the three lower realms.

Contemplate: We know from our own experience how agitated we get at being separated from even the smallest replaceable possession. At death we will be separated from everything we know - our friends, relatives, possessions, our body, the air we breathe, all sensory contact with the world. We are thrown into complete darkness and are totally alone.

The intense agitation generated at the time of death activates negative imprints in the mind producing the fearful nightmare-like appearances of the intermediate state and the three lower realms.

If we are honest about the uncontrolled nature of our present state of mind and combine this with the recognition of the uncertainty of the time of death, then fear and deep anxiety will arise.

Conclusion: There is a very real probability of my experiencing extreme anguish at death and suffering rebirth in a lower realm of existence.

Focus: single-pointedly on this fearful thought.

Arising from this fear we will automatically think: How can I avoid this suffering? Who or what can help me?

Contemplate: The inadequacies of those sources of refuge we usually turn to in times of difficulty, such as friends, relatives, wealth.

Because the terrors of death and lower realms are dependent upon our state of mind we must principally look within our own minds for true refuge from these terrors.

If we die with a calm and controlled mind which has purified all negativities such as anger and attachment and their imprints, we have nothing to be afraid of at the time of death and we will not be reborn in lower realms of existence.

Dharma is the medicine-like method which enables us to develop such a peaceful and controlled mind. There is no

other method. Buddha is the source of these methods, like a doctor who has diagnosed a disease and skillfully prescribed the correct medicine. Buddha is also a non-deceptive source of refuge due to his attainment of four qualities - freedoms from all fears and sufferings, great skill and wisdom, great compassion and freedom from any partiality towards helpers or harmers. The Sangha are those who are successfully following the Dharma methods and are like nurses who help us to follow the medicine-like Dharma.

Dharma also refers to one's ability to become free from the fears of death and future rebirths. Buddha also refers to the state of being completely free from all fears and sufferings and attaining all qualities. Sangha also refers to attaining the ability to help others in a lasting way.

Conclusion: The Three Jewels - Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, are the only true sources of refuge.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

Conclusion: To escape the sufferings of cyclic existence and to gain the bliss of liberation I go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

To strengthen this conclusion recite the refuge prayers. With these two thoughts, anxiety and faith, the single-pointed conviction that only the three jewels can help at death and in future lives, recite:

I go for refuge to the Buddha  
I go for refuge to the Dharma  
I go for refuge to the Sangha.

As the expression of taking refuge I must generate positive states of mind, avoid negative states of mind and, by acting with consideration and mindfulness, try always to help others.

## 6. Meditation on Actions and their Effects.

Although all things function in terms of cause and effect, in this meditation we focus on our own actions of body, speech and mind and their effects.

The purpose of this meditation is to develop the awareness that every action of our body, speech and even the subtlest actions of our mind produce a corresponding related effect in our future experience. This awareness will help our determination to avoid those actions which we recognise will produce effects and suffering and agitation, and to cultivate those actions which we recognise will produce effects of well-being and peace of mind.

In summary, to avoid suffering and gain happiness in the future, I myself must create the appropriate causes.

Contemplate: actions are definite in the sense that if I create the cause I will definitely experience an effect which is related to the cause. Specifically, if I create an action motivated by a negative, deluded state of mind I will definitely experience a suffering result. If I create an action motivated by a positive state of mind, not motivated by delusion but concern for others, I will definitely experience happiness as a result.

Conclusion: I must avoid negative actions which create the cause for suffering and I must cultivate positive actions which create the cause for happiness.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

Contemplate: actions are expandable in the sense that even insignificant actions produce great results, just as from a small seed, a large tree can grow.

Conclusion: I must avoid even the smallest negative action and cultivate the smallest positive action.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

Contemplate: If I create the cause I will definitely experience the result, no matter how much time elapses between the action and the result. Apply this to negative actions.

Conclusion: I must definitely avoid even the slightest negative action.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

Contemplate: If I don't create the cause I will definitely never experience the effect. Apply this to positive actions.

Conclusion: I must definitely cultivate even the slightest positive action.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

In conclusion, focus single-pointedly on the determination to avoid even the slightest negative action and to cultivate even the slightest positive action.

or.

Contemplate: each of the ten unwholesome actions, recognise the faults of these actions.

Conclusion: I must avoid each of these actions in my daily life.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

Contemplate: each of the ten wholesome actions, and the benefits of these actions.

Conclusion: I must cultivate each of these actions in my daily life.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

## **7. Meditation on the General Sufferings of Cyclic Existence.**

Purpose: By observing actions and their effects (avoiding unwholesome actions which lead to suffering and cultivating virtuous actions which lead to happiness) we begin to gain control over our future experiences of happiness and suffering - obtaining relatively happier conditions in future lives. However, we will never gain complete freedom from suffering until we remove the root causes of our unwholesome actions, namely our delusions, principally that of ignorance.

To be able to remove delusions and thus attain liberation from suffering is a two-fold process. We must first gain the aspiration to attain liberation and then apply the methods to attain liberation. Developing aspiration is like recognising the dangers of a disease. The stronger is our recognition the more effort we will put into getting cured.

We need power to overcome delusions and this is gained through developing awareness of the disadvantages and faults of cyclic existence - the process of uncontrolled death and rebirth which is created through the power of delusion and deluded actions.

Contemplate: The six general sufferings of cyclic existence:  
No certainty;  
No satisfaction;  
Repeatedly leaving one's body;  
Repeatedly taking rebirth and experiencing all the sufferings of birth and growing up;  
Suffering of changing one's status;  
Suffering of being without lasting friends and companions which remain from lifetime to lifetime - one is born alone and dies alone.

Contemplate: The three general sufferings of cyclic existence:  
Suffering of misery;  
Suffering of change;  
Suffering of pervasiveness.

Conclusion: If I remain in cyclic existence I will continually experience these sufferings. I must therefore strive to apply those methods (the three higher trainings) which destroy the causes for rebirth in cyclic existence and thereby attain liberation, the state-beyond-sorrow (nirvana).

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

## 8. Meditation on the Sufferings of Cyclic Existence.

The purpose of this meditation is to develop renunciation, the wish to gain liberation from uncontrolled rebirth within cyclic existence; to develop the wish to emerge definitely from the suffering states of cyclic existence. To develop renunciation we need to meditate on the sufferings of particular realms of cyclic existence. In the fourth meditation we contemplated the sufferings of the three lower realms of cyclic existence. In this meditation we will contemplate the sufferings of the three higher realms.

Contemplate: The suffering of the human realm:  
The suffering of birth  
- painful birth process,  
- confusion at birth,  
- dependence on others,  
- the ageing process begins immediately, and so on;  
The suffering of sickness;  
The suffering of ageing  
- beauty of the body diminishes,  
- strength of the body decreases,  
- sense powers weaken,  
- the ability to enjoy things decreases,  
- dependence on others increases,  
- fear of approaching death, and so on;  
The suffering of death;  
The suffering of separation from friends, pleasant situations and attractive objects;  
The suffering of meeting with unpleasant people, situations and unattractive objects;  
The suffering of searching for but not finding the objects of our desire;  
The suffering of having a mind and body contaminated by delusion.

Conclusion: to escape from these sufferings in the future I must attain liberation from cyclic existence.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

Contemplate: the sufferings of the anti-gods - those of jealousy of the gods, competitiveness, frustration and continual warfare with the gods.

Conclusion: to escape these sufferings I must gain liberation from cyclic existence.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

Contemplate: the sufferings of Gods, especially their suffering at the time of death.

Conclusion: to escape those sufferings I must gain liberation from cyclic existence.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

Conclusion: There is no realm within cyclic existence where there is freedom from suffering and true happiness. Therefore I must renounce attachment to cyclic existence and seek Liberation.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

Contemplate: To gain Liberation I need to seek the causes of cyclic existence. These are the delusions, in particular that of ignorance, and deluded actions. If I remove these I will gain freedom from cyclic existence. To do this I must develop wisdom. To develop and apply wisdom correctly I need concentration. To develop concentration and avoid deluded actions and the influence of delusions I must observe moral discipline.

Conclusion: I must develop these three qualities in my daily life.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

## 9. Meditation on Equanimity.

The purpose of this meditation is to balance one's feelings towards others; to balance the feelings of pleasure at seeing one's friend, displeasure at meeting an enemy and indifference when meeting a stranger. Equanimity is the fundamental basis for developing true love and compassion and is therefore essential for proceeding to enlightenment. It is also a powerful method for overcoming delusions.

Contemplate: in front of you visualise a friend, someone who arouses a strong feeling of closeness and warmth; an enemy, someone who arouses a feeling of aversion; and a stranger, someone who arouses no feelings of closeness or aversion.

Contemplate: first the enemy and arouse a feeling of aversion and displeasure as if you were actually in front of that person.

Contemplate: the following points to reduce the feeling of strong aversion: The impermanence of relationships in general, and the impermanence of my feelings and attitudes in particular. The enemy is someone who harms but through my own previous actions I created the cause to be harmed. The enemy is only a condition for being harmed, not the principal cause.

When the enemy harms me, he or she is motivated by delusion, therefore I should get angry with the delusion not with the person.

Instead of getting angry I should develop compassion. The enemy by harming me is creating the cause for their future suffering.

Developing a negative mind of aversion harms only myself. The enemy is someone who attacks my self-image and self-importance. In terms of developing beyond these limitations the enemy is a spiritual friend.

With an understanding of past and future lives and of cause and effect I recognise that the enemy has been my friend countless times before and will be in the future. Only a temporary set of circumstances causes me to discriminate enemy.

No person is inherently evil; there is no inherent 'quality' making someone an enemy.

There is no inherently existing 'enemy'; enemy depends on 'friend' and vice versa. 'Enemy' is merely an imputation by conceptual thought.

Conclusion: Reduce the strong feeling of aversion when seeing the enemy.

Focus: on this reduction of strong aversion.

Contemplate: the friend and arouse a feeling of closeness and pleasure as if you were actually in front of that person.

Contemplate: the following points to reduce the feeling of strong attachment:

The impermanence of relationships, of my own feelings, especially when considering past and future lives.

My friend has been my enemy countless times before.

The friend is a condition for my happiness but my own positive actions created the cause; I should therefore be 'attached' to positive states of mind.

Attachment only creates the cause for my future states of suffering.

Does my friend really help my spiritual development?

There is no inherently existing friend.

Conclusion: Reduce the strong feeling of attachment when seeing the friend.

Focus: on this reduction of strong attachment.

Contemplate: the stranger and experience the feelings of indifference as if you were actually in front of that person.

Contemplate: the following points to change the feelings of indifference to one of openness:

The impermanence of relationships, of my own feelings especially when considering past and future lives.

The deceptiveness of my own attitudes towards others.

No inherently existing stranger, only potential friend or enemy.

Conclusion: Develop a feeling of openness to the stranger.

Focus: on this feeling of openness.

Contemplate: the three, friend, enemy and stranger together and try to balance one's feelings. The friend has been an enemy in the past, the enemy has been a friend and the stranger has been both. Try to equalise one's feelings. There is essentially no difference among friends, enemies and strangers.

Conclusion: Develop balanced feelings for friend, enemy and stranger.

Focus: on this balanced feeling of equanimity.

## **10. Meditation on Recognising all Beings as One's Mother.**

The purpose of this meditation, which is done on the basis of equanimity, is to develop a feeling of closeness and warmth towards all beings. This is essential in order to develop true love and compassion.

In order to develop a feeling of closeness to others it is very important to recognise and appreciate their kindness. We must recognise how all beings have been related to us in the past and have helped us and shown us kindness. We have been related to all beings in the past in countless different ways but generally speaking the relationship in which others have shown us the greatest kindness is that of being our mother.

In this meditation we recognise that all beings have been our mother which acts as the basis for recognising the kindness of others and thereby developing, love and closeness towards them.

*[(To develop this recognition it is essential. to have conviction in rebirth. Ideally this has already been developed as one progressed through the meditations of the stages of the path of lower and middling beings.)*

*To develop conviction in rebirth reflect on the following points:*

Contemplate: *Cause and effect. All things need a cause, and effects are always related to their causes.*

*The mind and body are different in nature. The mind is formless and has the ability to know and discern objects. The principal cause for my body is the sperm and ovum of my parents; the principal cause of my present moment of mind is the previous moment of mind. If the body was the principal cause for mind, this would mean that something produced an effect which was different in nature.*

Contemplate: *The different experiences people have. Why is an apparently healthy baby stillborn and a baby close to death lives on to old age? Is this chance, fate, accident, the reactions of chemicals, the whim of a god or the effect of causes created previously?*

Contemplate: *Mental tendencies. How does one explain the different personality traits found in even very small children? Why can two twins be so different? Why are people attached to some things which others despise? How can the complexities of people's likes and dislikes be explained? Can cultural and social conditioning fully explain why different tendencies are displayed by babies? If these are the results of chemical actions and reactions what causes*

*chemicals to react in certain ways? Are chemical reactions the causes of mental actions or their effects?*

*Mental tendencies are the result of former actions imprinted on the stream of consciousness.*

Contemplate: *Mental continuum. This moment's mind is the effect of the previous moment's mind; this year's mind is the effect of last year's mind and so on. Trace the mind back and try to find its beginning.*

Contemplate: *The example of sleep, dreaming and awakening and apply it to the process of death and rebirth.*

Contemplate: *Dreams. These may also indicate the existence of past or future lives.*

Contemplate: *The many well-documented accounts of people remembering previous lives.*

Conclusion: *I have definitely lived previous lives.*

Focus: *single-pointedly on this conviction]*

The Actual Meditation:

Contemplate: There is no beginning to the mind. I have had countless previous lives; so have all beings. The relationships which all beings have had with each other are countless.

In the lives I took birth from a womb or from an egg there was one being who was my mother. All beings at some time have therefore been my mother.

One cannot point to any living being and say this being was not my mother. If my present mother were to die I would still talk of "my mother" and develop feelings of warmth and affection. Why not regard all beings in a similar way? It's only a matter of time since the death of my mother in this life and the death of my mothers of previous lives.

Conclusion: All beings have been my mother.

Focus: single-pointedly on this feeling.

Having recognised all beings as one's mother, remember their kindness.

### **11. Meditation on the Kindness of Others in that they have all been your Mother.**

The purpose of this meditation is to recognise the kindness of all beings and therefore develop affectionate love, the feeling of closeness towards all without discrimination. Affectionate love is essential for developing the minds of great love and great compassion.

Using the example of your mother in this life,

Contemplate: Your mother in this life has been extremely kind to you because:

She gave life to you;

She took care of you during her pregnancy despite discomfort;

She endured the pains of giving birth to you;

She took great care of you and gave love and affection at a time when you were totally dependent and incapable of looking after yourself;

She loved you unconditionally.

From your mother you received food, clothing, warmth, shelter, education.

From your mother you received comfort and affection.

The qualities you have now developed are largely due to the influence of your mother.

Your mother protected and cared for you.

Without your mother you would probably not be alive today.

Your mother would have even risked her life in order to protect you.

Your mother is still caring for you and concerned for your well-being and comfort.

Contemplate: All beings have been your mother over countless previous lives and all beings have shown you such kindness.

Conclusion: Generate a feeling of tremendous gratitude and appreciation, a feeling of great warmth and closeness towards all beings, your mothers.

Focus: single-pointedly on this feeling of gratitude, warmth and closeness.

## **12. Meditation on the General Kindness of Others.**

The purpose of this meditation is to strengthen the feelings of warmth and closeness towards others. Developing the attitude of recognising the kindness of others is so important that we should develop encouragement in this practice by recognising and appreciating the benefits of this attitude. For example, our delusions will be reduced, all beings will be viewed as potential friends rather than enemies - this attitude is the essential foundation for developing greater peace of mind, concern for others, love, compassion, the mind of enlightenment and thus enlightenment. Even if all sentient beings had not been your mother they still have shown you great kindness.

Contemplate: We live in houses built by others.  
We wear clothes made by others.  
We eat food grown, harvested, refined, prepared, transported, retailed and cooked by others. The money we gave for these things we received from others.  
Our ability to get the job from which we received money came from others.  
Our skills and education came from others.  
Our material possessions and enjoyments came from others.  
Our good health is dependent upon others - due to the kindness of others there are hospitals, medicines, etc.  
All these things are available to us through the kindness of others.  
We owe our existence to the kindness of others.  
Through the kindness of others we are able to progress on the spiritual path.  
All beings have shown as much kindness in previous lives.

Contemplate: The kindness of others within the context of previous lives. This life and its special potential to experience and create the causes for greater happiness has causes. These were principally created by our state of mind in previous lives; states of mind characterised by positive attitudes of avoiding aggression, greed, causing harm, developing patience, generosity and so on. These attitudes were largely developed through the kindness of others - they educated us, provided examples, helped and encouraged us, and even acted as the objects of our positive states of mind.

Conclusion: All beings without exception have shown us great kindness in the past and are showing us kindness in every moment.

A feeling of warmth and closeness arises naturally on the basis of appreciation for the kindness of others and the wish to repay.

Focus: Single-pointedly on this feeling of warmth and closeness.

### **13. Meditation on Equalising Self and Others.**

The purpose of this meditation is to make oneself and others equal objects for one's concern and loving-kindness. This improves the mind of affectionate love, the feeling of warmth and closeness towards others, and acts as the essential prerequisite for the exchanging of self for others, that is, exchanging the object of one's love and cherishing from self to others. This exchanging of self and others is extremely important in developing great love, great compassion, the mind wishing to attain enlightenment for the benefit and is thus essential to gain enlightenment.

To gain encouragement in this meditation:

Contemplate: the benefits of equalising self with others:  
temporarily it will reduce personal problems, cause greater warmth and friendship in relationships within families, communities, societies and the world in general, ultimately it enables us to gain higher states of mind, such as great compassion, bodhicitta, and enlightenment.

Actual Meditation:

Remember: the feeling of warmth and closeness generated in the previous meditation when thinking of the kindness of others.

Contemplate: I must cherish others and return their kindness.  
Just as I want happiness so too do all beings.  
In this respect I and all others are equal.  
It is therefore inappropriate to seek for my own happiness alone.  
Just as I want to be free from suffering and problems so too do all beings.  
In this respect I and all others are equal.  
It is therefore inappropriate to seek freedom from suffering for myself alone.  
I am only one person, the number of all other beings is countless, so the concerns of others should be at least as important as my own.  
Just as I need to work to overcome my own problems and gain freedom from suffering so I should strive to overcome the suffering and problems of others.

Conclusion: develop a feeling of equality between self and others.

Focus: on this feeling of equality single-pointedly.

#### **14. Meditation on Exchanging Self with Others.**

The purpose of this meditation is to exchange the object of one's concern and cherishing from self to others.

On the basis of developing equality of self and others:

Contemplate: The faults of self-cherishing:

Self-cherishing is the cause of all suffering. From self-cherishing comes the desire to fulfil one's own happiness. From this we develop attachment to what we like or aversion to what we dislike and therefore create negative actions which lead to suffering for others and eventually for ourselves.

Resentment, fear, suspicion, craving, aggression, jealousy and all other deluded states of mind arise from self-cherishing.

Self-cherishing is close to self-grasping, the mind that grasps at a false view of reality and is the root cause of all unsatisfactory states of existence, the cause of all delusion, the root of all misery.

All suffering experiences are caused by the imprints of previous actions which were done with a harmful intent - placing one's own happiness above that of others. This came from self-cherishing.

The doubt may arise if I have no self-concern I won't eat and look after myself. However, with the motivation of benefiting others it is perfectly valid to strengthen your body and function normally in the world.

Contemplate: The benefits of cherishing others:

Cherishing others is the source of all happiness. All acts of morality are rooted in consideration and awareness of others, i.e. avoid killing, stealing and the other unwholesome actions because of appreciating the need of others to experience happiness. This is connected to the attitude of cherishing others. The greater the attitude of cherishing others the quicker one will develop qualities of moral discipline, giving, patience, effort and so on. All are essential to progress to the stage of buddhahood.

Contemplate: Cherishing self is the principal cause for all sufferings and problems.

Cherishing others is the root for all experiences of happiness and essential to progress beyond cyclic existence to attain liberation from all suffering and the attainment of

enlightenment. Realising the faults of self-cherishing and the benefits of cherishing others, change the object of one's concern and cherishing from self to others.

Contemplate: 'Self' and 'others' do not exist inherently; they are merely imputations like 'here' and 'there'. Mentally try to place one's concern on others rather than on self.

Conclusion: Develop the feeling that others are more important than one's self. They are true objects of concern, care and cherishing. Generate a feeling of strong cherishing for others.

Focus: single-pointedly on this feeling.

### **15. Meditation on Taking; Developing Great Compassion.**

The purpose of this meditation is to develop the willingness to take the sufferings of others and experience them oneself, thus enhancing the mind of compassion.

This meditation also enables us to transform adverse circumstances into methods for greater spiritual development.

Contemplate: Begin by 'taking' your own future suffering. Contemplate all the various sufferings you will have to experience if you remain in cyclic existence - the eight, six, and three sufferings, and think: May I experience these now and thereby never have to experience these in the future. Visualise these sufferings outside your body in the form of black smoke and imagine breathing in this black smoke. This comes into your body, gathers together and destroys your self-cherishing mind which is in the form of a black denseness at your heart (i.e. the middle of your chest). Then 'take' the sufferings of the particular realms of your future rebirths in a similar way (as above). When you are familiar with this begin to take the sufferings of others. Visualise all beings surrounding you in a vast assembly. Generate a feeling of warmth towards each and every being.

Contemplate: All beings are oppressed by suffering. Generate compassion, thinking: How wonderful it would be if all beings were free from suffering. I myself will work to free them from suffering. With this motivation imagine all the general sufferings of all beings leave them in the form of black smoke. This gathers together and enters your body and destroys your self-cherishing mind. All sentient beings are freed from suffering, and its causes. They obtain 'uncontaminated' bodies and their minds transform into the wisdom mind of a buddha. Then take the sufferings of those in the particular six realms. Visualise the sufferings of those in 'hell-realms' in the form of black smoke and take them into your body as above. Do this for the other realms in turn - hungry ghost realm, animal realm, human realm, realm of the anti-gods and god realm.

You can also take the sufferings of specific beings in certain situations - those in hospital, those suffering from hunger and thirst, loneliness, fear, physical torture and so on.

You can also first take the sufferings of those closer to you - your family, friends, the people in your town, country, this world, all human beings and all beings in the other realms, eventually taking suffering from all beings.

Conclusion: You have freed all beings from sufferings and established them in the pure happiness of buddhahood.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

## **16.Meditation on Giving.**

The purpose of this meditation is to enhance one's mind of love - wishing all beings to be never separate from happiness and its cause.

Contemplate: Visualise all beings around you.

Think: All these beings around me want happiness but they are unable to find pure happiness. How good it would be if they gained pure happiness. I myself will cause them to experience pure happiness. With this motivation transform your body into a wish-fulfilling jewel.

From your wish-fulfilling jewel-like body light radiates to all beings around you.

For those in the hot hells this white light becomes a cool and gentle rain;

for those in the cold hells, warm sunlight;

for hungry ghosts, food and drink;

for human beings, anti-gods and gods, whatever objects they desire.

The happiness they experience at receiving these things is not contaminated by delusion and is the cause for their experiencing enlightenment.

Also visualise giving, in the form of white light, all beings the realisations necessary for them to attain enlightenment.

Visualise all beings finally attaining the state of great enlightenment and becoming buddhas. You can also imagine beings in particular situations and visualise giving them whatever they wish for and which will bring them happiness. Imagine this happiness leads them to full enlightenment.

Conclusion: May all beings without exception meet with and never be separate from pure happiness and its causes.

Focus: Single-pointedly on this conclusion.

When familiar with the practices of taking and giving mount these thoughts on one's breathing.

As you inhale visualise taking the sufferings from others in the form of black smoke and as you exhale visualise giving happiness to others in the form of white light.

## **17. Meditation on Bodhicitta.**

The purpose of this meditation is to generate a spontaneous and heartfelt wish to attain enlightenment as the means to lead all beings to a state of perfect peace and happiness.

The meditation on bodhicitta is divided into two main parts - to develop the wish and determination to lead others to a state of perfect happiness and to recognise that only by first attaining the fully awakened state of buddhahood is one able to really help others.

Contemplate: To develop the wish to help others meditate on the seven-fold cause and effect, equalising and exchanging self with others, or combining these two together to form the eleven-point contemplation:

1. Equanimity
2. Recognising all beings as having been your mother
3. Remembering their kindness
4. Developing the wish to repay their kindness
5. Equalising self with others
6. Contemplating the faults of self-concern
7. Contemplating the benefits of concern for others
8. Exchanging self with others
9. Developing, compassion and love through the practice of taking and giving
10. Developing the superior intention - I myself must act in order to lead all beings from suffering to lasting happiness.

Contemplate: Only by attaining buddhahood can one truly help others. First recognise your present inability to help others or even yourself.

However, your mind does have the potential to gain full enlightenment. This buddha seed or potential is only temporarily obscured by deluded and unwholesome states of mind. By removing these delusions you will attain buddhahood. You will be free from all suffering and fear, have complete wisdom and skill in helping others, have unobstructed compassion for all and be willing to help all without bias whether these have helped or harmed you.

Conclusion: By combining the wish to help others with the recognition that only as a fully enlightened being can you truly help others, you will develop bodhicitta, the mind of enlightenment, the determined wish to attain enlightenment to be of maximum benefit to others.

Focus: single-pointedly on this wish until the mind merges with and becomes bodhicitta.

To develop the aspiration to develop bodhicitta -

Contemplate: The benefits of bodhicitta (as listed in the *Stages of the Path* teachings):

Bodhicitta is gateway for entering the mahayana.

With bodhicitta you will become a son (or daughter) of the buddhas.

With bodhicitta you will surpass those of the Hearer and Solitary Conqueror lineages.

With bodhicitta you will become the object of veneration and of making offerings by both humans and gods.

With bodhicitta you will quickly generate a great collection of merit.

With bodhicitta you will quickly purify negative actions.

With bodhicitta all your wishes will be fulfilled.

With bodhicitta you will not be harmed by humans and non-humans.

With bodhicitta you will quickly complete the spiritual grounds and paths.

Bodhicitta is the source of peace and happiness for all beings.

(You can also contemplate the benefits as listed in Shantideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, Chapter I, verses 5-14.)

Conclusion: I must generate the precious mind of bodhicitta.

Focus: single-pointedly on this conclusion.

## **18. Meditation on Tranquil Abiding.**

The purpose of this meditation is to develop the special power of concentration which is then used to focus on ultimate truth, the emptiness of inherent existence. This will destroy ignorance, the root of all delusion and suffering and enable us to attain Liberation (if done with motivation of definite emergence) or Enlightenment (if done with motivation of bodhicitta).

Check the posture of your body,

Choose your object for concentration. This can be any virtuous object but decide on one object and stay with this object throughout the meditation.

When you have chosen your object of concentration, find it and hold it.

Maintain mindfulness and alertness. If you lose the object, find it again and hold it.

Instead of long periods of weak concentration it is better to maintain short periods of strong concentration punctuated by controlled periods of rest.

If you decide on the object of the mindfulness of breathing meditation:

Contemplate: the sensation just inside your nostrils as you breathe in and out.

Conclusion: This is the object of single-pointed concentration.

Focus: single-pointedly on this sensation.

If you decide to use the visualisation of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha

Contemplate: In the space in front of you, the size of your thumb, level with your forehead, at a distance of an outstretched arm away, is Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, golden in colour and so on. Remember previous instructions and check the details from his crown to the throne's base and back up until an outline of the whole appears.

Conclusion: This is the object for single-pointed concentration. (Even if the image is rough and vague. At first it is more important to gain a rough and steady outline and feel that Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is definitely in front of you than to have a clear and detailed visualisation.)

Focus: single-pointedly on the image of Shakyamuni Buddha in front of you and as a real and living being.

(The ability to hold the object for a minute is the First Mental Abiding, The ability to hold the object for two minutes is the Second Mental Abiding, and so on. There are nine mental abidings and then we attain Tranquil Abiding.)

Be aware of the Obstacles that will arise:

### Mental Fogginess/Dullness

To overcome visualise light;  
uplift mind;  
eject white light from heart;  
meditate on the value of this human life and on the  
opportunity to develop concentration and its importance.  
But don't push.  
If necessary, get up, walk around, look at the sky.

### Mental Wandering

Let distraction go, return mind to object and hold it tightly.  
Avoid too much tension - be patient but persistent.  
If you lose the object - relax, calm mind, establish good  
motivation and refocus.  
Settle mind by reflecting on death and the suffering of cyclic  
existence. There is no time to be distracted.  
It is important to develop Mindfulness and Alertness.

Good concentration should have 4 factors:

Clarity seeing object clearly as possible  
Lucidity mind free from conceptual thoughts  
Strength holding object tightly  
Stability single-pointedness of concentration.

### **19. Meditation on Emptiness: Selflessness of Phenomena (One's body).**

The purpose of this meditation is to realise that the objects of self-grasping minds do not exist.

Self-grasping is a mind that grasps at the inherent existence of objects and is the root cause for cyclic existence.

First recognise the emptiness, or selflessness, of phenomena, e.g. your body.

Contemplate: Ascertain the object to be refuted by emptiness - the inherently-existent body.

Try to become familiar with the generic image of the inherently-existent body as it appears to your mind when you think of your body, particularly when your body is threatened, criticised or admired.

Generate a strong generic image, a strong sense of my body.

Conclusion: Satisfy yourself that this apparently inherently-existent body which appears to exist from its own side, or independently, is the body which you normally protect and cherish.

Contemplate: Try to gain conviction that if an inherently-existent body were to exist it must either be identical with the limbs/parts of the body or different from the parts of the body.

Conclusion: There is no third possibility.

Contemplate: If the inherently-existent body that appears to our mind is identical with the parts of the body then it would follow that we would have many bodies because the body has many parts; or alternatively, since we have only one body the parts of the body are a single entity.

There is no single part of the body which is the body.

The collection of the parts of the body is not the body because a collection of 'non-bodies' cannot become a body. Also if you dismembered a body the resulting collection of parts would not be called a body.

Conclusion: There is no inherently-existent body which is identical with the parts of the body.

Contemplate: If the body is inherently-existent and different from the parts of the body it must be independent of parts of the body. It would therefore follow that if the parts were removed one

by one the inherently-existent body would remain. This is ridiculous.

Conclusion: There is no inherently-existent body which is different from the parts of the body.

Conclusion: It follows that the body, the vividly appearing body identified in the first point and which is the object of our cherishing and concern, does not in fact exist. When through this contemplation you apprehend an absence, or emptiness, of a vividly-appearing body which seems to exist from its own side -

Focus: single-pointedly on this emptiness.

(The body exists but not inherently. It is merely imputed by conceptual mind upon its basis of imputation, its parts. The body and its parts are different but not inherently different because they are mutually dependent. Body exists like an echo. If you are not satisfied with the mere appearance of an echo to mind but investigate, you cannot find it. However this does not mean that the echo doesn't exist at all.)

## **20. Meditation on Emptiness: Selflessness of Persons.**

The purpose of this meditation is to realise that the self that we normally cling to does not exist inherently, from its own side, that is, independently from mental imputation.

Contemplate: The self, 'I', that we cling to at present. (Without becoming familiar with this self we are grasping to, it is impossible to establish whether it exists or not.)

Before we can refute its existence we must first become thoroughly familiar with the mental image of the self which we intuitively grasp. How does it appear to exist?

Try to imagine being unjustly accused and regenerate the sense of 'I' - "I didn't do that!" Try to generate the sense of 'I' very strongly. This 'I' generated appears to exist independently, from its own side.

Conclusion: Satisfy your mind that this self is the inherently-existent self to be refuted by the following points.

Contemplate: If this inherently-existent self were to exist in the way that it appears to our mind it must be either identical with its parts - the mind and body - or different from its parts.

Conclusion: There is no third possibility.

Contemplate: If the self identified at the first stage of contemplation is identical with the body and mind, it must be identical with them in all respects. If this is so there are certain inconsistencies. For example, since the body and mind are two entities we would therefore have two selves. Or alternatively, since self appears as a single entity without parts it would follow that the body and mind are a single entity without parts. Both alternatives are absurd.

Also, we say my body and my mind. because 'I' is viewed as separate from mind and body. How can a 'possessor' be identical with its 'possessions'?

Conclusion: The inherently-existent self cannot exist as an entity identical with our body and mind.

Contemplate: If the inherently-existent self that appears to us is different from body and mind it must be completely independent of them. It would therefore be absurd to say "I am sick" when our body is sick or to say "I feel unhappy" when our mind is depressed. Also, if your body and mind were absent it would be ridiculous to say your 'I' was still present. Such

absurd consequences would follow from saying the 'I' was different from the body and mind.

Conclusion: The inherently-existent 'I' which appears to our mind cannot exist as an entity which is different from the body and mind.

Contemplate: Both ways in which the inherently-existent self could exist have been refuted. We have already established that there is no third possible way for it to exist.

Conclusion: The inherently-existent self appearing to the mind does not in fact exist at all. When you experience an absence of, or emptiness of, the 'I' which is experienced as existing from its own side -

Focus: single-pointedly on this emptiness.

(I exists but not inherently - it is merely imputed by conceptual mind upon its basis, its parts, mind and body. Self-grasping is a mind which experiences its object as inherently-existent self or phenomena. When we realise the non-existence of the object of self-grasping then self-grasping cannot arise. Realising the Emptiness of all phenomena means self-grasping has no object and cannot arise. When it disappears, all delusions are destroyed.)

## **21. Visualisation for Loving Kindness Meditation.**

Settle yourself into a comfortable sitting position.

To calm the mind, bring your awareness to the breath as it enters and leaves the nose. Not forcing the breath, just breathing naturally, become aware of the sensation of breathing. Become aware of the breath.

Now bring to mind the thought that all sentient beings wish for happiness and to be free from their problems.

That even those who through their actions seem more intent on inflicting harm upon others, are really creating more problems for themselves. That their life could be happier, less problems from others who are trying to apprehend these people for the wrong that they have done, if they would renounce their ways.

Reflect that all sentient beings wish for happiness and to be free of their problems.

Visualise just in front of you, at the level of the crown of your head, a ball of pure white light.

This ball of light has the qualities of loving kindness and peace of heart; and it has the ability to purify us of our negative traits, our anger, hatred, fear, anxiety.

Get a feel for the presence of this ball.

For its qualities of loving kindness, of the wish for all beings to be free of their problems.

Really believe that this ball of white light has these qualities.

Now visualise that from this ball of light comes a ray of light and that this ray of light comes to the crown of your head.

Visualise this ray of light entering you at the crown of your head and slowly working down through the body filling your body with this white light.

Starting from the top of your head, your body is filled with white light.

And as the white light moves down through your body so it pushes out your negative habits, your anger, hatred, fear, anxiety. And beneath you a crack in the ground appears and then negative habits leave you in the form of dirty liquid.

This white light moving down through your head, neck, shoulders... slowly purifying you.

Now visualise the crack in the ground closing and feel, really believe, that you have been purified of all your negative habits.

Returning to the ball of light. The ball with those qualities of loving kindness and peace of heart.

Visualise that this ball of light comes to the crown of your head.

Visualise the ball of light dissolving through the crown of your head and moving down through your head, ...your neck, ...and on down, coming to rest at your heart.

This ball of white light, representing loving kindness and peace of heart, resting at your heart.

And this ball of light dissolves at your heart and spreads out in all directions throughout your body.

Your body becomes completely filled with this white light.

Completely endowed with those qualities of loving kindness, the wish for all beings to be free of their problems, and peace of heart.

From the top of your head to the tips of your toes, completely filled with this light.

Really feel this, really believe it.

Now with the strong wish to free all sentient beings from their problems, visualise rays of white light going out in all directions from your body. As these rays of light come into contact with anyone, any being, feel that they are purified of all their negative habits and given happiness and peace of heart.

First to the people in the room.

Then moving out from the room, to the people in the building. Pushing this light out.

Then out into the streets of Bristol. Helping all sentient beings, freeing them of their problems.

On out into the country, pushing this light out as far as you can. A never ending source of light with the power to free sentient beings of their problems, to endow them with loving kindness and peace of heart.

Pushing the light out as far as you can. Helping all sentient beings. Out and out.

And now as far as you have been able to take the light, slowly bring it back to you. But as you do so, it in no way takes away any help that you have been able to give those myriad of sentient beings.

Bring the light back to the country, ...to the streets of Bristol, ...to the Centre, ...to the room, ...to yourself, ...to your heart until once again you have a ball of pure white light resting at your hearts.

A ball of light with those qualities of loving kindness and peace of heart.  
A ball of light at your heart with the power to free all sentient beings from their problems and to give them happiness.



