

DISCOVERING BUDDHISM AT HOME

Suggestions for Continuing Meditation in Discovering Buddhism at Home

Dear DB at Home Students,

There have been several enquiries about how to meditate on a continuing basis as one moves through the modules of the Discovering Buddhism at Home course.

Following are some suggestions, based on methods for meditating on the Lam-rim (Graduated Path to Enlightenment) as part of one's daily practice. There are probably as many ways to approach daily practice as there are meditators. So, don't be rigid; use this information as a guideline, and then tailor your practice schedule to suit your own personal needs.

As you have all heard it said so many times: What is essential is that we meditate *every* day.

There are instructions in the various modules, beginning with the Module 1, *Mind and Its Potential*, which will help you to set up your daily practice. Review these instructions from time to time to refresh your memory. Pay careful attention to Ven. Sangye Khadro's instructions in Module 2, *How to Meditate*.

In Modules 1 and 2 there are slightly different versions of a *Meditation on the Buddha*. In the beginning, this meditation, or another similar one, can be used as the basis for your daily meditation. It is good to keep your practice simple, making the sessions short so they are comfortable and workable for you.

Begin by carefully generating a constructive motivation for your practice and your day in general; using instructions for this from the teachings you have received so far.

Then, do the *Meditation on the Buddha*, or a similar meditation. Following the absorption, near the end of the practice, after imagining that you have become the Buddha, you may do an analytical or reflective meditation (e.g. from Modules 1 and 2 – *Meditation on the Continuity of Consciousness*, *Appreciating Our Human Life*, *Meditation on Impermanence*, or meditations from the subsequent modules).

By the time you have reached Module 2 or 3, you will have several meditations from which to choose. By the end of the course, you will have a series of meditations available to you that cover the entire path to enlightenment. This is your lifetime's work, if you choose to engage the teachings on a deeper level. By making effort in the early stages of this course to establish your practice, you will serve yourself well in your continuing journey.

Beginning with the meditations in Module 1, use one of these reflective meditations each day following the absorption in the *Meditation on the Buddha*. Make your way systematically through all the meditations that you have worked with thus far in the modules you have completed or are presently taking. When you have done all the reflective meditations in this way, go back to the beginning and start again.

You may find that you want to work for a longer period of time than one day for each meditation. That's fine - three days, a week, whatever - but don't get stuck in one place. Keep moving through the sequence until it is complete. Then begin again.

Finish your session with a strong dedication to put a seal on the meditative energy you have generated.

As your meditation develops and becomes more comfortable, you may wish to move on to a meditation written by Lama Zopa Rinpoche for use by beginning students, *A Daily Meditation Practice*. It is a clearly outlined practice complete with guided meditations for developing one's motivation, the mind of refuge, and the thought of bodhichitta. In addition, the practice contains mantra recitation and visualization based on Shakyamuni Buddha and a Lam-rim prayer in the form of a request for blessings to develop all the realizations on the path to full awakening. It may also be helpful to know that *A Daily Meditation Practice* is the practice text that is used as the basis for the teachings found in Module 8, *Establishing A Daily Practice*.

It is possible to use this expanded meditation in the same way as mentioned above, incorporating your reflective meditation into the practice at the time of reciting the Lam-rim Prayer.

It is important to utilize all the meditations to which you have been exposed on a continuing basis in order to generate insight and integrate these realizations into your life. Don't just work with the meditations that you groove on, that feel good or that come easily to you. The more you work with the difficult ones - the less comprehensible ones - the more your insights will grow. So, persist with compassion for your self and patience with the process. Your work will bear fruit.

Thubten Yeshe

DB Teacher, *Mind and Its Potential*, and Assessor