

Cultivating Mindfulness of Bodhichitta in Daily Activities

*Bodhichitta Mindfulness Practices from the
“Sutra of the Clouds of the Sublime Rare Ones,”
Lama Zopa Rinpoche, and Other Sources*

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The Bodhichitta Mindfulness Practices

The sutra teachings of the Buddha include mindfulness practices to keep our minds in bodhichitta, especially during retreat. Of course, you can also do activities with mindfulness of renunciation and right view, but by doing every single activity with bodhichitta, your life will become most wise, most meaningful, and most beneficial.

But if you follow the self-cherishing thought, it will not allow you to gain the realization of bodhichitta. It won't even allow you to generate a good heart because you are seeking happiness only for yourself and whatever you do is only for yourself. When you are unable to generate bodhichitta, you cannot enter the Mahayana path, achieve the Mahayana arya path, and complete the merits of virtue and wisdom of the Mahayana path. Because you cannot cease the delusions, complete the path, and achieve full enlightenment, you cannot do perfect work for sentient beings by bringing them to enlightenment. Then they will have to suffer for a long time. In this way, self-cherishing harms you and the numberless sentient beings, both directly and indirectly, from life to life.

But if you practice Dharma and generate bodhichitta and a good heart, it will result in the total opposite – happiness for yourself and happiness for all sentient beings. With a good heart,

the happiness of this life comes. Even without thinking about it, it just comes; not to mention the happiness of future lives, liberation, and full enlightenment. With bodhichitta, you are able to cause numberless sentient beings to receive these four levels of happiness. And by practicing the good heart in your day-to-day life, as well as in your moment-to-moment life, there is happiness even for yourself – a comfortable life, a life without fear, depression, and guilt. The entire packet of sufferings doesn't happen. Because of a good heart, you don't experience it. Instead, your good heart brings happiness to you now and in your future lives, like the sun shining in this world. It also brings peace in the world, peace for other sentient beings, and peace for everyone around you. All this comes from the Dharma, from a good heart. Then when death comes, there is nothing to feel sad about. You can die with great happiness and joy, because there is no reason to feel depressed.

Anyone who is seeking the state of omniscience needs to attend to the many methods for collecting merits and purifying delusions. The Omniscient One, who was very skillful and had great compassion for us sentient beings, explained that even the activities that we normally do – such as eating, sleeping, sitting, walking, and doing our jobs – can become ways to collect unfathomable virtue and skies of merit. With mindfulness of bodhichitta, they can become not only beneficial to oneself, but beneficial to all sentient beings. The Buddha explained this to us who do not have a bodhichitta realization. This is how everything we do can be dedicated to become a cause of happiness for all sentient beings. This is something that we can practice immediately. Then all the activities we do in the breaks between our lam-rim meditations will be done with bodhichitta and the thought to make them beneficial for all sentient beings. Our daily activities will become a cause for us to attain omniscience so that we can liberate sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric sufferings and bring them to enlightenment.

Lying Down, Sleeping, Waking, Standing, Sitting

When you lie down in the snow lion position, think:

I am bringing all sentient beings to the sorrowless state.

When you go to sleep, think:

May all sentient beings achieve the dharmakaya.

When you wake up, think:

May all sentient beings achieve the holy body of a buddha.

When you get up from bed or stand up from sitting, think:

**May all sentient beings rise up from the oceans of
samsaric sufferings.**

When you sit down, think:

I am bringing all sentient beings to the heart of enlightenment.

Bathing, Washing, and Brushing Your Teeth

When you take a bath, shower, wash your hands, brush your teeth, and so forth, think:

**I am washing away all the stains of delusions of all
sentient beings.**

Or when you bathe or shower, visualize making a bath offering to your Guru. If you have received an empowerment, generate yourself as the Guru-Deity; otherwise, visualize your root Guru at your heart. Think that empowering deities hold up vases and pour water on your head, purifying all your own and others' delusions and defilements. A short way of doing the bath offering is to visualize yourself as Vajradhara and repeat this verse and the mantra as you wash:

KYAB SUM KÜN DÜ LA MA DOR JE CHHANG

Guru Vajradhara, embodiment of all three refuges,

GANG LA GANG DÜL SHE NYEN TSHÜL ZUNG NÄ

Takes the form of virtuous friends to subdue beings in whatever way is needed,

CHHOG DANG THÜN MONG NGÖ DRUB TSÖL DZÄ PÄI

And grants the supreme and common realizations:

DRIN CHÄN LA MA NAM LA KU THRÜ SÖL

To the kind gurus, I offer this bath.

OM SARVA TATHAGATA ABHISHEKATA SAMAYA SHRIYE AH HUM

In addition, you can bless the water by reciting OM MANI PADME HUM, or the Five Powerful Mantras a few times each. Then blow on the water, whereby it becomes powerful to purify negative karma.

Putting on Perfume

When you put on perfume, visualize yourself as the Guru, the embodiment of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and offer it to yourself and recite:

TONG SUM KÜN TU DRI NGÄ DANG WA YI

Like polishing gold already pure and refined,

DRI CHHOG NAM KYI THUB WANG NAM KYI KU

So do I apply the best of perfumes,

SER JANG TSO MA JI DOR JÄ PA TAR

Fragrantly filling the billion universes,

Ö CHHAG BAR WA DE DAG JUG PAR GYI

To the dazzling holy bodies of the Munis.

Dressing and Putting On and Releasing a Belt

When you get dressed, think:

May all sentient beings be clothed in shyness and shame.

Or offer divine dress to yourself as the Guru-Deity and recite:

SAB JAM YANG PA LHA YI GÖ

By offering soft, smooth, and fine divine dress

MI CHHE DOR JEI KU NYE LA

With indestructible faith in

MI CHHE DÄ PÄ DAG BÜL NA

You who have attained the indestructible vajra holy body,

DAG KYANG DOR JEI KU THOB SHOG

May I too achieve the vajra holy body.

When you put on your belt, think:

May all sentient beings' minds be bound by the three higher trainings.

When you release your belt, think:

May all sentient beings be freed from the bondage of karma and delusions.

Putting on Ornaments

When you put on ornaments, offer them to yourself as the Guru-Deity and recite:

GYÄL WA TSHÄN PEI RANG ZHIN GYÄN DÄN CHHIR

Because the victorious ones are adorned by the natural ornaments of the signs and exemplifications,

GYÄN ZHÄN DAG GI GYÄN PAR MI TSHÄL YANG

They do not need any other kind of ornament.

RIN CHHEN GYÄN CHHOG PHÜL WÄ DRO WA KÜN

But by offering these supreme jewel ornaments,

TSHÄN PE GYÄN PÄI KU LÜ THOB PAR SHOG

May all transmigratory beings achieve the holy body adorned with all the signs and exemplifications.

Washing and Cleaning

When you do laundry, wash dishes, and so forth, meditate that the water is the complete graduated path to enlightenment and think:

I am washing away all the stains of delusions of all sentient beings.

When you clean a floor, dust, and so forth, think:

May all sentient being not have bad conduct and have perfect, pure conduct.

Or meditate that the vacuum, broom, brush, or duster is the complete graduated path to enlightenment and think:

I am cleaning away the negative karmas and defilements of all sentient beings.

Preparing Food and Cooking

When you cut, chop, or slice anything, meditate that whatever sharp instrument you are using is bodhichitta and think:

I am cutting all sentient beings' self-cherishing.

Or meditate that it is the wisdom realizing emptiness and think:

I am cutting all sentient beings' ignorance and delusions.

I am cutting all sentient beings' root of samsara, the ignorance holding a truly existent I.

When you make a fire, light a gas stove, and so forth, think:

I am burning all sentient beings' delusions with the fire of transcendental wisdom.

When you cook food in a pot or fry food on a pan, do the meditation for blessing the inner offering, thinking that the fire is the fire of transcendental wisdom.

Eating Food

When you eat food, think:

May all sentient beings be free from the six root delusions and twenty secondary delusions.

You can also:

- Offer the food to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and then make charity of the food to all sentient beings, especially the organisms living in your body.
- If you have received a highest yoga tantra empowerment, bless and offer the food to yourself visualized as the Guru-Deity, or offer it as a tsog offering or burning offering to the Guru-Deity visualized at your heart.

Going to the Toilet

When you go to the toilet:

- Visualize Vajrasattva on your crown and all sentient beings, including the members of your family, on a moon disk at your heart.
- Recite the long or short Vajrasattva mantra 21 times or as many times as you can, and imagine nectar and beams descending and purifying yourself and all sentient beings.
- Think that all the negative karmas, obscurations, sicknesses, and spirit harms of yourself and all sentient beings leave through your lower orifices in the form of urine or feces. It

descends, enters the gaping mouth of the Lord of Death, who is nine stories below the earth, and transforms into nectar. He is fully satisfied.

- As you flush and close the lid of the toilet, imagine his mouth closes and is sealed with a very heavy, golden double vajra.

Blowing Your Nose

When you blow your nose, meditate that the tissue is the whole path to enlightenment and think:

I am cleaning away all sentient beings' negative karmas and defilements.

Taking Medicine

When you take medicine, visualize that, out of their compassion, all the numberless buddhas in the form of Medicine Buddhas emit light rays that bless the medicine. It becomes powerful and able to overcome not only illness, but also able to purify negative karmas and delusions. Then think:

By taking this medicine, may my life become beneficial for all sentient beings.

Coming In and Going Out

When you open a door, think:

I am opening the door of the transcendental wisdom gone beyond samsara for all sentient beings.

When you go out through a door, think:

I am bringing all sentient beings out of the prison of samsara.

When you close a door, think:

I am closing the door of samsara for all sentient beings.

Walking and Traveling

When you walk, drive a car, ride a bike, or travel on a bus, train, or plane, think:

I am bringing all sentient beings to enlightenment.

Or:

I am bringing all sentient beings to a buddha's pure land.

Or, like Milarepa, when you walk, imagine that all the holy objects of the ten directions are on your right side and that you are circumambulating them.

When you go up a flight of stairs or up a hill (including on a roller-coaster!), think:

I am bringing all sentient beings to enlightenment.

When you go down a flight of stairs, or walk or drive downhill, think:

I am going down to liberate the sentient beings in the lower realms.

Going into Holy Places and Seeing Holy Objects

When you enter a temple, your house, your meditation room, and so forth, think:

I am bringing all sentient beings into the city of the sorrowless state.

When you see a stupa, think:

May all sentient beings achieve the holy body of a buddha.

When you see a holy object, such as a buddha statue, think:

May all sentient beings achieve enlightenment quickly.

Offering Incense

When you offer incense, think:

May the bad smell of all sentient beings' wicked nature be eliminated and may they have the scented smell of pure morality.

Or:

May all sentient beings have pure morality.

Colophon:

The bodhichitta mindfulness practices from the *Sutra of the Clouds of the Rare Sublime Ones* (Skt. *Ratnameghasūtra*, Tib. *Mdo sde dkon mcho sprin*), those from other sources, and those created by Lama Zopa Rinpoche were excerpted by Ven. Joan Nicell from the Light of the Path Retreats 2009 and 2010, North Carolina, USA and the Most Secret Hayagriva Retreat, Tushita Meditation Centre, Dharmasala, India, 2010. The visualization for taking medicine was dictated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche to Ven. Ailsa Cameron at Kopan Monastery, Nepal, November 2016, for inclusion in these practices. Compiled, arranged, and edited by Ven. Joan Nicell, FPMT Education Services, July 2016.

