

TONGLEN: THE PRACTICE OF TAKING AND SENDING ON THE BREATH

Supplementary Materials, page 20-23

Refuge and Bodhicitta Prayer:

*To the Buddha, Dharma and the supreme assembly of the Sangha,
I go for refuge until Enlightenment.
May I, through the merit gained by generosity and so forth,
Accomplish Buddhahood for the sake of all beings. (Recite 3x)*

To settle the mind and body, I breathe in and out 21 times.

Preparation for practice:

Contemplating the FOUR THOUGHTS WHICH TURN THE MIND

- First, I contemplate the preciousness of my human existence, with its many freedoms and opportunities. In order to make full use of it, I engage in the practice of dharma.
- Second, everything in the world is changing every minute. The length of my own life is unknown. Therefore, I resolve not to waste my time.
- Third, every action I take has results which will affect me in the future. Because of this, I will use my limited time for beneficial action and avoid harmful action.
- Fourth, there is great suffering in the world, and even the happiest moments in life hold the seeds of the suffering of change. Thinking of this, I will work to relieve suffering in my own and others' lives.

Contemplation to begin the Actual Practice:

I recall the kindness of my mother or other kind provider, and expand my awareness to all living beings, who have been my mothers in countless lives. I extend my gratitude and concern to them, and make this prayer:

*All beings, though wishing happiness, experience suffering and frustration.
What can I do to help? Through this practice, I can take their sufferings upon
myself and give all my virtue and happiness to them.*

Actual Practice: Taking and Sending on the Breath

- **Beginning with myself:**

- Considering my own suffering, I imagine it as dark smoke entering my nostrils on the in-breath. The suffering dissolves into my heart, and I think that I am free of misery forever.
- Thinking of my own happiness, health, courage, and confidence, I imagine it as bright moonbeams flowing from my nostrils on the out breath. This happiness dissolves into me, and I think that I attain full awakening.

Continue this taking and sending practice for a period of time. Then:

- **Shifting my attention to a loved one:**

- Considering that individual's suffering, I imagine it entering my nostrils as dark smoke on the in-breath. The suffering dissolves into my heart, and I think that this individual is free of misery forever.
- Now, I imagine bright moonbeams flowing from my nostrils on the out-breath, carrying all of my own happiness, health, courage and confidence toward that individual. I think that they attain full awakening.

Continue this taking and sending practice for a period of time. Then:

- **Shifting my attention to someone I dislike or fear:**

Continue this taking and sending practice for a period of time. Then:

- **Shifting my attention to someone I do not know:**

Continue this taking and sending practice for a period of time. Then:

Calm Abiding Practice

I rest my attention lightly on the breath, without any thought of taking and sending practice. As thoughts and emotions arise, I choose not to follow, and if distraction occurs, I return to a gentle attention on the breath without hesitation or judgement.

Dedication Prayer

*By the beneficial action and positive attitude cultivated in this practice,
may I and all beings attain the state of complete awakening.*