

The Meditation – breathing and visualization of the Buddha

Refer to posture handout for guidelines for sitting in a conducive meditation posture.

And to help the body be more relaxed, you can through your body with our awareness, and relax any tightness or tension you feel.

First feel the top of your head, and let the feeling of relaxation develop in the top of your head. Let the top of your head relax.

Then imagine that relaxed feeling traveling down from the top of your head down through your whole head, making your whole head relaxed.

So relax your forehead. Your eyes. Relax your face. Relax the sides of your head. Relax the back of your head. Then take your awareness inside of your head, and relax your skull. . . and your brain. . .so let the feeling of relaxation penetrate every cell, every atom, every tiny particle of your head. . .

And then let the relaxed feeling continue to travel down and relax your neck and throat.

And then relax your shoulders and the upper part of your back. Your shoulder blades and your muscles.

Then let the relaxed feeling travel down through your back; relaxing the middle part of your back, then the lower part of your back. So let your whole back be relaxed, let any tension melt, dissolve and flow away.

And now move your awareness to the front of your body. First relax your chest, your lungs and heart. And then let the relaxed feeling travel down into your abdomen.

Relaxing all your internal organs and muscles. Relax the pelvic area.

And then let the relaxed feeling travel down into your legs. First relax the upper part of your legs. Then relax your knees. And relax the lower parts of your leg. Then relax your ankles and feet and toes.

Finally relax your arms. Starting at the tops of your shoulder, allow the relaxed feeling to travel down through the upper parts of your arms, and then the lower parts of your arms, then your wrists, and your fingers.

So let go of any tension in your body. Let your whole body relax, let any tension melt, dissolve, and float away.

And now, relax your mind.

- You can do this by putting aside or letting go of all thoughts there might be in your mind, thoughts relating to what you did earlier today, or things that happened to you yesterday, or any time in the past.
- Or there may be thoughts about what you are going to do later, after this session, or tomorrow, or anytime in the future.

Put aside these thoughts of the past or future, or of any people or places, the just let your mind rest in the present – the present moment, this present place.

Now put your awareness on your breath. You can watch your breath

- At your nostrils, where the air is coming in and out of the body, you may be able to actually feel the sensation of the air passing in and out of the nostrils
- Or you can watch your breath at your abdomen, which is moving in and out with each breath. You can feel the sensation of your abdomen moving in and out.

Choose which ever you prefer. Just be aware of each breath, each inhalation and each exhalation.

- If you find it helpful, you can count your breaths in rounds of 10. Breathing in, breathing out, 1; breathing in, breathing out, 2. And if your mind wanders, just bring it back to the breath each time.
- Do this patiently, gently, don't get frustrated or impatient with yourself. Just patiently bring your mind back to the breath each time it wanders away.
- Do for 3-5 minutes

Let your breathing be natural.

Now, in the space in front of you, about the level of your forehead, visualize a very large lotus with petals spread out flat. On top of this lotus are two flat disks of light; they are cushions of light, round and flat, that represent the sun and the moon, wisdom and compassion.

- For this meditation, the Buddha can be as big or small as you want. Just remember that visualization is a function of your mind, so use your mind.
- The visualization is made of light. It is not solid. Think of it like a rainbow in the sky. You can see the colors, but a rainbow is not solid. It is transparent. Think about it, if you tried to hold onto a rainbow you could not.

On the lotus, sun and moon, is the Buddha. He is seated in the full lotus or vajra position with legs crossed. PAUSE

The Buddha's body is made of golden, transparent light, pure radiant light. PAUSE

He is wearing the saffron robes of a monk. PAUSE

His right hand is on his right knee, in the gesture of touching the earth. So the palm of his hand is on his knee and his fingers are pointing downward, touching the seat beneath him. PAUSE

He cradles a begging bowl, full of nectar, in his left hand. This nectar has the power to overcome all the sufferings of samsara, it can eliminate the ignorance and delusions in our mind, and the diseases of our body.

His left hand is in his lap and in the meditative position, with palm facing upward and the bowl resting there. PAUSE

His face is so beautiful, so beautiful. His smiling, compassionate gaze is directed at you, and at the same time, at all sentient beings. Just to see it makes you smile.

- His long, narrow eyes gently gaze at you with a sense of joy but aware of the needs of all beings.
- Really feel that his expression shows that he loves us all completely. He has pure love and compassion for us and all beings. PAUSE

The hair on Buddha's head is dark blue in color, with each strand separate from the others. Each is individually curled.

On the top of his head is the crown protrusion, a symbol of his enlightenment.

PAUSE

His earlobes are long. His lips are cherry red in color ready to teach us and all beings the Dharma.

So the most important thing is to feel that this really is the Buddha, and to have a strong sense of devotion to him. And to feel that the Buddha is really sitting in front of you, with a smiling face and great compassion and wisdom, and all the enlightened qualities are there, radiating toward you. PAUSE

So do your best to visualize the Buddha, like this, made of pure, radiant light. Don't worry if you can't get all the details. Be happy with what you have, and really get the sense of the qualities he represents. PAUSE

- Recall that he is totally dedicated to helping you achieve enlightenment.
- He engaged in practices and achieved this result, and you can too, because he gave us the guidelines, he shows us the way.

Option #1, beginning your practice at this point:

If you can, see if you can hold this visualization during your practice.

Option #2, finishing this mediation

Imagine that the Buddha dissolves into you through the crown of your head, filling you with love and compassion. And take a few minutes and relax in this feeling.

And now dedicate the positive energy you have created, which is what we call merit, by thinking, may I quickly become a Buddha so that I can lead each and every being to the state of full enlightenment.