

Meditation on Renunciation

Preparation: Start by taking just a minute or two to focus on your physical body, finding the most beneficial position with your spine straight and erect, a position in which you can be aware and awake, but not stiff or rigid. Feel the weight of your body, its substantial, earthy character. Become present in the moment and place where you are.

Now continue with a 5-minute breathing meditation. Focus the attention on the breath (the sensation of the breath flowing in and out at the opening of the nostrils). Let all thoughts go, like clouds in the sky. If distractions arise, be aware of them without getting involved and without judgment, then gently bring the attention back to the breath.

Motivation: Create an altruistic motivation for the meditation session. Without developing a fully renounced mind, there is no way at all to escape from the ocean of cyclic existence and thus to reach full enlightenment. We have been fumbling around in cyclic existence since beginningless time, suffering horribly and unable to free ourselves, much less others. The fully renounced mind is the foundation of the paths to liberation from samsara and enlightenment; it is essential to achieving these states. So think that you are meditating not just for your own well-being or peace of mind or good reputation, but you are taking the time now to meditate and develop a fully renounced mind to reach the state of enlightenment where you can most skillfully benefit all beings.

The main body of the meditation:

The meditation on renunciation is based on all the meditations of the lower scope (perfect human rebirth, death and impermanence, sufferings of the lower realms, karma, refuge) and the middle scope (the sufferings of cyclic existence [of all six realms as well as the general samsaric sufferings], the causes of suffering: the mental afflictions, the four Noble Truths, the twelve links of dependent origination). The fully renounced mind is the mind that rejects or gives up not only suffering itself, but more importantly, the **causes of suffering: karma and the mental afflictions**.

To achieve a fully renounced mind, we must understand cyclic existence thoroughly; we must understand in what way all levels of cyclic existence are in the nature of suffering; we must understand what is suffering and what are the causes of suffering.

(1) Contemplate the 6 realms of cyclic existence, one by one. Contemplate the sufferings of each realm – from the hell realms to the highest god realms, especially focusing on the sufferings of the 3 lower realms. Contemplate the causes of rebirth in each of these realms. Come to the firm conviction that there is no rebirth anywhere in cyclic existence that is not permeated with suffering and brought about by our being under the control of the delusions and obscurations of our minds. Come to the conclusion that that you no longer want to ever be born in cyclic existence again.

Fix your mind on this conviction as long as you can with a concentrated mind.

(2) Contemplate the different types of suffering, especially the 3 sufferings: the suffering of suffering, changeable suffering, and pervasive suffering. Come to the final and firm conclusion that all experience, all existence that is under the sway of karma and the delusions is in the nature of suffering.

Fix your mind on this conviction as long as you can with a concentrated mind.

(3) Contemplate the different mental afflictions one by one, especially the 6 root delusions: attachment, hatred, ignorance, pride, jealousy, doubt. These are the root causes of our creating continuous negative karma, and thus the causes of our beginningless suffering. These mental afflictions have caused us again and again to take horrible rebirths in the lower realms, suffering interminably and unbearably for eons and eons. And if we do not renounce them, reject them altogether, they will cause us to take similar suffering rebirths again and again in the future. Since you understand that to be liberated from all suffering means that you must renounce these causes, completely and forever, come to the strong conclusion that you never want to be under the control of the delusions and the resultant karma again. Fix your mind on this conviction as long as you can with a concentrated mind.

Having genuinely generated this thought within you, stop all thinking processes and simply remain concentrated on this determination with single-pointed focus, allowing it to absorb into the deeper levels of your mind.

Dedication

Having made this effort to achieve a fully renounced mind, may I in every moment renounce and overcome the causes of suffering, that is, every mental affliction in my mind. May I be swiftly liberated from samsara and progress to the state of supreme awakening in order to lead all other beings to that supreme state.