

Meditation on Buddha Shakyamuni

Gendün Rinpoche



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This booklet contains a guided shiné meditation in which one chooses the pure, outer object of Buddha Shakyamuni as a support for the mind.

We have added the four fundamental thoughts, refuge, bodhicitta, a prayer to the lama and the dedication in order to present this as a complete practice text.

The chapter in this booklet called
“Meditation on Buddha Shakyamuni”
is part of the German book
“Herzensunterweisungen eines Mahamudrameisters”
by Lama Gendün Rinpoche, Theseus 1999,
translated by Lama Sönam Lhundrup.

This English version has been slightly condensed
in order to enhance its character as a guided meditation.
It was translated by Chris with the help of Sabine and Seb.

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Drawing of Buddha Shakyamuni © Gérard Muguet

Bringing forth the right motivation

We begin by contemplating the four fundamental thoughts. Through this reflection, we will clearly see the situation which we and indeed all sentient beings are in. As a result, we will develop the necessary strength to give up all meaningless activities and to instead turn ourselves towards Dharma practice.

Making good use of this opportunity

We can be grateful that we have met the Dharma and that its blessing has been kept alive through a lineage of great masters up until today. There are countless circumstances which prevent us from practicing, but just a very few which support us in it. When we look at our life, we can see that it is not free from frustration and difficulties. However, when we hear the teachings, contemplate about them and also practice them, it is possible to understand the mind and reach liberation.

Facing the impermanence of all things

When we understand that external objects are impermanent and therefore cannot give us any lasting happiness and security, our attraction towards them will reduce. One day we will have to die and will no longer be able to hold on to our material wealth, our friends and relatives.

Then only our understanding of the Dharma can help us. As we do not know when our time to die will come, it is better to start practicing now.

Trust in cause and effect

As long as we are under the influence of our disturbing emotions, we act negatively with body, speech, and mind. Our behaviour will not only cause problems for others, but it will lead to suffering for ourselves as well. Each negative seed which is not purified, will ripen as fruit in the form of suffering for us in the future. For this reason, we should give up our egoistic way of thinking and instead decide to consciously act in a positive way.

Turn away from insatisfactory existence

In the long run, nothing is stable and secure and we don't know what will happen tomorrow. Quite often goals which we want to reach cannot be reached, whereas things we would like to avoid cannot be avoided. In order to leave this meaningless cycle behind, we rely on refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

Taking Refuge

With the understanding that nothing in this world can give us any real protection, we focus our mind on attaining Awakening.

“Until Awakening I take refuge in the Buddha,
Dharma, and Sangha¹.
May I realize buddhahood,
through the merit of generosity and the other
liberating qualities²,
for the benefit of all beings.”

(three times)

or in Tibetan:

*Sangyé chö dang tsok kyi chok nam la
jang chub bardu dak ni kyab su chi
dagi jin sok gyi pé sönam kyi
dro la pen chir sangyé drup par shok*

(three times)

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- 1 The Buddha embodies the awakened mind. The Dharma are the instructions showing the way to Awakening. The Sangha is the community which helps us to follow the path.
 - 2 The liberating qualities are generosity, ethical behaviour, patience, joyful effort, meditation and wisdom.

Forming the awakened attitude

Now we form the deep wish that our Dharma practice will be beneficial for all beings.

“May all sentient beings enjoy happiness and the root of happiness.

May they be free from suffering and the root of suffering.

May they not be separated from true happiness, devoid of suffering.

May they dwell in great equanimity, which is free from attachment and aversion.”

(three times)

or in Tibetan:

Semchen tamché dewa dang dewé gyu dang den par gyur chik

Duk ngäl dang duk ngäl gyi gyu dang dräl war gyur chik

Duk ngäl mepé dewa dampa dang mindräl war gyur chik

Nye ring tchag dang nyi dang drälwé tang nyom chenpo la né par gyur chik

(three times)

Thinking about one's Lama

We think about the lama in whom we feel the deepest confidence, and imagine that he is sitting above our head. We ask with all our heart for his blessing, which enables us to feel deep compassion and love for all beings.

“Precious radiant root lama,
You are sitting on a lotus and a moon above my head,
With your great kindness accept me,
And grant me the realisation of the body, speech,
and mind of Awakening.”

or in Tibetan:

*Palden tsawé lama rinpoche
Dagi chiwor pedé den shuk la
Kadrin chenpö go né je zung té
Ku sung tukyi ngö drup tsel du söl*

Then the Lama descends into our heart centre where he abides.

Meditation on Buddha Shakyamuni

An awakened being, such as the Buddha Shakyamuni, is able to show all beings the path and lead them to Awakening. His activity for the sake of others knows no limits. For everyone of us with impure perception it is difficult to imagine what the Buddha really is. For this reason we take the historical Buddha Shakyamuni as a support for our meditation. But at the same time we should be conscious about the fact, that the Buddha is not an ordinary being.

For our meditation we sit down comfortably and relaxed, but our spine remains straight.

We let go of all attachment and aversion. We are aware of the present moment in complete equanimity.

Once we have reached the point of physical and mental relaxation, we contemplate the Buddha in front of us. First of all, we direct our attention towards the throne of the Buddha. It is made out of precious stones and carried by eight snow lions. There is a white lotus on silk cloth and cushions, and on this a flat moon disc on which the Buddha is sitting in vajra-posture. We visualise him having a wisdom body which is not made of flesh and blood.



We meditate on the Buddha as an illusory, rainbow-like manifestation—completely transparent—the essence of form and emptiness.

His right hand touches the ground, the left one rests on his lap in the posture of meditation. Regarding us and all sentient beings with limitless love and compassion; his mind is continuously absorbed in meditation, which knows each being directly without any deception. His gentle smile expresses his heartfelt attention towards all beings.



As soon as we have imagined the Buddha clearly in our mind, we contemplate his great kindness and how fortunate we are to be in his presence. We imagine that he speaks to us explaining the Dharma. Being grateful for this extraordinary opportunity we realise that this situation is the result of the accumulation of positive acts and the purification of our mind-stream during countless lifetimes. It is like receiving the fruits of efforts we have made in previous lives. Being conscious of all this, we feel truly happy. In this state of joy we imagine his body emanating rays of light filling our mind and body. This frees us from all physical and mental limitations and the veils created by dualistic notions. We let our mind become one with the Buddha's mind, feeling completely inseparable from him.

We remain in this state as long as we can.





- ⇒ When we realize that our mind has become dull or unclear, we should direct our attention either to his topknot of hair or to his face. This is a remedy for dullness.
- ⇒ However, if our mind becomes agitated with a lot of thoughts, we should direct our attention downwards at his feet and legs or on the throne and lotus. This pacifies mental agitation.
- ⇒ If we are neither sleepy nor agitated, we remain unified with the mind of the Buddha. We contemplate the entire form of his body or we direct our attention to the heart area.
- ⇒ In the case that we become easily distracted, having difficulty letting our mind rest on the form of the Buddha, we should let our gaze wander repeatedly over his body, starting from the upper part going downwards. Being completely relaxed, without any tension, we visualize all the characteristics of his outer appearance one after the other. Like this our mind will settle down.



If, after a while, we cannot clearly focus on the form of the Buddha anymore, it is a sign that we need a break. Then we look slightly upwards letting our gaze relax in

the space in front of us. As soon as we feel refreshed, we take it up again and go on.

During the whole session it would be helpful to cultivate our confidence in the Buddha's capacity to transfer blessing. Be certain of the fact that the moment you are thinking of him, the Buddha is really with you.



At the end of the session we imagine that rays of light emanate from the Buddha's forehead, throat and heart. When they dissolve into our three centers they bless our body, speech, and mind and purify all our veils and negativity.

Finally, the body of the Buddha dissolves into light and by dissolving into us, there is no more separation between him and us—like water being poured into water. Our mind is uncontrived, free and relaxed in its natural dimension.



Dedication

Finally, we dedicate all the benefit accumulated through this meditation to the lasting happiness of all beings, which is enlightenment. May we rapidly develop awakened qualities in order to truly help them.

“Through this merit, may we reach omniscience and overcome all negative forces (the clinging to emotions and concepts), and may we liberate beings who are swept away by the waves of birth, old age, sickness, and death from the ocean of existence.”

In Tibetan:

*Sönam di yi tamché zik pa ni
tob né nye pé dra nam pam jené
kye ga na chi ba lab truk pa yi
si pé tso lé dro wa dröl war shok*

Annotation

In this text Gendun Rinpoche gives different instructions on how to work with a wild or a dull mind and, depending on the situation, you should use the one which is most suited to you at that moment.

If you practice this meditation regularly, you will recognize that sometimes the image of the Buddha will appear to be bigger or smaller, closer or further away. This is fine. Instead of creating a perfect image of the Buddha, you should use the visualization in order to let the mind come to rest.

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