

# Meditation on Compassion

**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. 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 compassionate mind to reach the state of enlightenment where you can most skillfully benefit all beings.

## **The main body of the meditation:**

Start by imagining that you are surrounded by all sentient beings, who are in the form of human beings. Your father is seated on your right, your mother on your left. Behind you are all your friends and family members ... those you are close to. In front of you are all the sentient beings that you have difficulty with or that you dislike ... your “enemies.” Surrounding you in all directions as far as you can see are all remaining sentient beings. They are all seated and facing you.

Now spend some time thinking of the sufferings of sentient beings. Contemplate the gross level sufferings of sentient beings in the human realm and in the other realms of cyclic existence. These include sufferings of the body: illness, injury, torture, death, pain, and so on; sufferings of the mind: anxiety, depression, grief, anguish, as well as the sufferings of the mind’s delusions: anger, pride, attachment, jealousy, rage, hatred, obsession, and so on; the sufferings of being born in each realm of samsara, especially in the lower realms: as a hell being, as a hungry ghost, as an animal; the general sufferings of samsara, such as meeting with unpleasant circumstances and people; not encountering desirable people and circumstances; having the things you desire taken away from you; being given things you do not want. Also, remember the subtle suffering of simply being born in cyclic existence, that is, with a body and mind pervaded by the causes of suffering so that suffering is indeed inevitable.

As you contemplate these sufferings of others, remember at the same time the kindness of sentient beings, that is, how there is nothing good or desirable that you have that did not come to you from the kindness of sentient beings. Food, clothing, shelter, all the physical things you have only came to you in dependence on others. That you are alive is thanks to the kindness of your mother and your family. Your education and, therefore, your achievements in life due to your education and skills ... you only have these because of the kindness of others who taught you, who helped you, who enabled you to go to school, and so on. And the kindness of other sentient beings is something that you have received during infinite lifetimes from countless sentient beings. There is not one sentient being who has not been kind to you in many, many lives.

Now think:

All sentient beings, including myself, are suffering tremendously. And because of our ignorance, we are forever seeking happiness in our lives, but we are continuously creating the causes of suffering for ourselves and others. Each sentient being has been unspeakably kind to me in all my past lives.

First, generate compassion for yourself:

How wonderful it would be if I were free of all suffering for now and forever. May I cause myself to be free of all my suffering. Contemplate this thought strongly in your mind.

Place your attention at your heart-center. Don't "look" at your heart-center as if from above (as if you are your eyes). Instead, actually "become" your heart-center. You are "in" your heart. Now imagine that the compassionate thought you have been contemplating manifests in the form of radiant golden light at your heart-center. As you contemplate the thought of compassion toward yourself, your compassion in the form of this radiant golden light fills your heart-center and your entire body. You are completely enveloped, filled, and purified by your compassion.

Now, generate compassion for all other sentient beings in the same way:

How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings were free of all suffering for now and forever. May I cause them to be free of all their suffering. Contemplate this thought strongly in your mind.

Again, place your attention at your heart-center. You are your heart-center. Now imagine that your compassionate thought that has manifested in the form of radiant golden light at your heart-center radiates outward, encompassing all sentient beings. Imagine this gradually: first the light pervades those who are immediately around you. Then it expands to pervade your entire community ... then your country ... your hemisphere ... your entire planet ... the entire universe ... All sentient beings in all realms of existence anywhere are completely enveloped by the golden radiating light of your compassion.

Contemplate this as long as you can with a concentrated mind.

When your concentration begins to wane, gradually reabsorb the golden light of your compassion back into your heart. It remains there as a small golden seed, always activated, always alive within you.

Make this determination: may all sentient beings be free of every suffering, both gross and subtle, and may I cause them to be free of all suffering, from today forward. 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 more compassionate attitude, may I quickly generate all positive qualities of kindness and compassion and remove all negativities and obscurations of self-cherishing from my mind. May I swiftly awaken to the state of supreme enlightenment and lead all other beings to that supreme state.