

Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche

*Meditation Month 2022: The Bodhisattva's Path of Meditation*

Week Four: "Self-Transformation"

January 24, 2022



Hello, welcome back. How was the *bodhicitta* practice? I think this is not so easy. In one way, we might feel like, "Wow, this is a great commitment. This is not realistic." But in another way, *bodhicitta* is within us. Actually, on a deeper level, we all have it. We all want to do something good, something virtuous, something nice. Nobody thinks from the beginning, "I want to be a bad person." The deeper level is with us all the time. Last time, I asked a question. Normally, I ask this question to many people: If you have capacity, will you help all beings to fully connect with their love and compassion, awareness, and wisdom? Most people say yes. It's there with us, and we need to recognize that.

Now, the main teaching for today is *tonglen*, as I promised to tell you more about from last week. In Tibetan, *tong* means sending or giving, and *len* means taking. What are we giving and taking? This is such a wonderful practice that we sometimes call self-antidote, self-transformation. We will do taking first, and then we'll do sending.

Let's say you have *kleshas*, like maybe aversion, hatred, craving, jealousy, ignorance, confusion, or what we normally call suffering, meaning maybe you might feel stressed or depressed, or you might have agitation. When I was young, I had panic attacks, so I used my panic as the subject of my *tonglen*. Nowadays, we're having a pandemic around the world, maybe losing loved ones also or getting pain or disease or losing jobs. What we're going to do here is understand our own problem and be aware of that, and at the same time, we understand others also have suffering. When they have these problems, when they have these *kleshas*, like hatred, we will never be in peace. Not happy with the panic, of course, not happy with the stress, of course, not happy. You understand about others: whoever is having these *kleshas* and suffering, they're not happy.

So now what are you going to do? Today, this is imaginative labor, of course, and it doesn't look realistic, but in the imagination, you can do anything. But in a way, it really helps us to develop strength of love and compassion, and it really helps us to build our will to help others. It will

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develop skills and talents to help others. In a way, it's helping others. A lot of scientists now say that if we imagine that we are doing physical exercise, we actually grow muscle. Here, we are transforming these kleshas and suffering. Let's say we'll do hatred as an example. If we do taking and sending practice with the hatred, then the hatred actually transforms into love and compassion. Without suppressing it, without getting rid of the hatred, poison becomes medicine. Problem becomes solution. It really helps to free your hatred. You will be full of love and compassion.

We will do this practice together now. First, please keep your spine loosely straight, and please relax the body and the muscles. Be your mind and body together. And as I mentioned in the past again and again, it doesn't matter whether you are relaxed or not relaxed, peaceful or not peaceful. It doesn't matter. Just be with whatever is there in your body

Now pause. The feeling of wanting to practice is love. Being with whatever is coming, being with your body is awareness. Accepting whatever good or bad, not rejecting, not controlling, accepting them and being as it is is wisdom. So you have love, you have awareness, you have compassion now in your body.

Now, maybe you might have some confusion, hatred, jealousy, panic, depression, whatever you have, some problems that you're facing. Now, be aware of that problem. First, bring awareness to the kleshas, or the problems in your life now.

When you have these kleshas and problems, you're not in peace, so think about others who are having this problem. They are also not in peace, so develop love and compassion to others.

Now, when you breathe in slowly, at the same time, take others' problems into your own kleshas or problems. Let's say you have hatred. Take others' hatred or problem into your own hatred.

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When you breathe in, slowly breathe now and take all the others' hatred as dark smoke and dissolve it into your own hatred. Now, slowly breathing in, wish that they may be free from hatred. You can do that now according to your own speech.

Take others' hatred in your own hatred and wish that they may be free from hatred and the suffering from hatred.

Not only can you practice this with hatred, but you can practice with any other kleshas: craving, doubt, pride, jealousy, panic, depression, stress. All of this becomes love and compassion. Hatred becomes love and compassion. Panic becomes love and compassion. Stress becomes love and compassion. How nice.

When you do that, all of this becomes love and compassion, and in that moment we accumulate virtue. We accumulate merit. We accumulate wisdom. This is wonderful.

Now, we're going to focus more on sending. We will send this virtue, the virtue by taking others' kleshas and suffering, and we send this virtue to others. So now slowly breathe out, and while you're breathing out, send this virtue as bright light and dissolve to other beings and wish that they may have happiness and the causes of happiness. Now you can do as your own speech.

When you send your breath together with your happiness to others, when you breathe in, wish that they may be free from suffering, and when you're breathing out, send your happiness to others. When you breathe in, wish them to be happy or wish them to be free from suffering. Breathing out, send your happiness, your virtue. Breathing in, wish that they have happiness and are free from suffering. Now, please feel your body and relax your mind and body together.

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This is the practice of taking and sending. The tonglen practice is finished. Can you really take others' problems and kleshas to you? Actually, this is what we call impossible, and as the Buddha said, "Everybody has their own karma. We cannot change others' karma." But if we practice in that way, what happens? We can develop the strength of our love and compassion and, at the same time, accumulate good karma or virtue. That may become causes to help others. So, in a way, we are helping others indirectly.

So, now the course is finished, and I'm very happy to be part of this course. I'm always very happy to share this ancient practice that I received and that changed my life, and I hope you all have great benefit from this ancient practice. Thank you very much.