

Meditation Advice

Extract taken from 'The Happy Twins: Dzogchen and Mahamudra'¹

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Meditation advice

We will do some practice now. Just sit in an open way, relaxed. Immediately you will have experience. You are always having experience but in meditation we have more of a chance to be present with experience. If you take the mind as something other than the experience and you formulate it as '*I am having this experience*' it is a mode of interpretation that operates in dualism when we see subject and object as separate.

So, we sit, we relax, we are here. Experience is arising. Don't think about who is the experiencer. Don't try to interpret, or make sense of it, or conceptualise it. Stay present with the experience.

If you merge into the experience you get lost. If you are too far away from the experience you enter into duality. Be present with the experience, as the experience, in the way that the reflection is present with the mirror. The reflection is *in* the mirror, it is very intimate, but it is not the same as the mirror. That is why when a thought arises it is in the mind, as the mind; it is the mind showing itself. The thought vanishes but the mind doesn't vanish. The reflection came out of the mirror but the mirror is there.

So now we do the practice and we don't interfere with what is occurring. However it comes, let it come.

¹ 1. Two texts were studied on this retreat. The Mirror of Luminous Revelation (from Nuden Dorje Drophan Lingpa) and The Mahamudra Middle Way of the Ganges (from Tilopa)

Meditation Practice

No doubt one of the things that we notice is that we have a tendency to run a commentary on what is going on. We give ourselves an account of our experience. This commentary takes up a position of apartness: I am commenting on what is happening. But the commentary is arising in the mind, from the mind, as the mind; so it is within, pretending to be without, to be outside.

If we listen to the commentary it seems to displace us, so that we are now standing in relation to our experience. *'This is going well.'* However the commentary goes, there is usually some little riff of thoughts about thoughts running along. The thing to do at that time is to relax in the out breath, be more inclusive, and give space for the commentary. Give space for everything.

As long as everything is moving in space it is just passing through, but once it starts to build bridges across and especially to take up hierarchical positions and judging — *'This meditation is not going well'*, or *'I don't like this'*, or *'I don't know why I am doing this'* — it is taking hold of something, shaping it, and giving it a value. Then it seals it in that value. That is just the play of the mind; it is only the mind.

Your belief that *'this is different from that'* is what creates the split. It is not that you are being a bad person because you believe this and so you should just stop doing it. It is not like that. We are the arising of the habit-formations of this splitting. We find ourselves in splitting. We find ourselves in this dualised experience. It is habit-formation and it is very seductive because it claims to be the truth. *'Trust me. Believe me.'* Don't enter into judgement. Don't judge the judge, just let it happen. Today the mind may be dull and heavy, or cloudy, or busy like the wind outside; it is just like that and after a while it is different.

If you were to do a pie chart of your life, where you have a circle with the little quadrants coming off it showing how you had spent your time, imagine the size of the segment representing the time spent doing meditation. It wouldn't even be a line on the page! Nonsense stuff would get quite a big tick. This is us.

We might read about how to do practice and think it sounds pretty good and decide to give it a go but this is difficult. You have to bring yourself close to your mind so that your mind can reveal itself. The mind doesn't hide, however the ego doesn't look. And when the ego does look, it looks for some-*thing*, and as we have been setting out, the mind isn't a some-*thing* so you can't find your mind. You find your mind but you find it in its showing aspect or its clarity aspect which is thoughts, feelings, emotions and so on. Even when you find them you think 'some-*thing*', because you don't see that there is a mirror.

You think the reflection is real, like the reflection of the moon in water or a mirage or a rainbow. The mirror never separates from the reflection. The mind is never separated from experience. All experience is the mind. You will not find the mind as some-*thing* but it will show itself to you ceaselessly as experience.

Once we realise that experience is inseparable from the mind, which is inseparable from the ever-empty ground, which is primordially pure, then we see the inseparability of spontaneous or

immediate manifestation or showing – *lhundrup* [Tib. Lhun sGrub] – which is this experience, and *kadag* [Tib. Ka Dag] – primordial purity – the emptiness of the mind.

The empty mirror is *kadag* – the flow of reflections is *lhundrup*. When you are driving in a car and the reflections come in the mirror, nobody is pushing them in or painting them on to the mirror. When you are sitting here thoughts come, feelings come, sensations come; you are not making them. This is a revelatory existence. It is revelation after revelation after revelation... this and this and this. Here. And where is here? The open mind.

Feeling tired or sleepy in meditation

Question: What do I do if I feel sleepy during meditation? Do I fight against it?

James: No. Maybe lie down and rest a bit, or have a cold shower to shift the mood. The key point for us is never to struggle because as soon as you are struggling and applying willpower and effort you have duality, so be with the mind however it is.

I studied with many different teachers in India but it was only when I met Namkhai Norbu that he made this very clear for me. He told me to meditate when it is a good time to meditate. Nobody had ever said that to me before. They always said you should do your practice regularly six times a day. If you don't feel like meditating, why would you meditate? I asked him, what if we never feel like meditating? He said he doubted this. He was saying to be a friend to yourself and collaborate with yourself. Stay close to your own situation.

If you are tired after a long hard day but you feel you should meditate, then sit comfortably and enjoy the flavour of 'should'. Or listen to the echo of 'should'. Who in your life has told you 'should'? Mama, papa, schoolteachers, a lot of people have said 'should'. Has that been helpful? No. Do you have resistance to 'should'? Yes. I should but I won't. You are saying yes and you are saying no. You are increasing your internal division as a path to non-duality. Struggling with yourself, trying to defeat yourself to overcome yourself when there *is* no self. Who are you fighting with? This is shadow boxing.

If you are not in the mood you might need to consider whether you are getting enough sleep. '*Have I got a job I hate? Why is my life so painful and unpleasant?*' Altering outer phenomena can sometimes help your meditation. Struggling with outer phenomena as if they were inner phenomena when you are not clear about non-duality is ridiculous.

Don't fight or force yourself. Be an ally to yourself and work with yourself. We meditate together then we are here because this is our timetable but when you are on your own you have to work out when is the best time for you to do practice. Some people prefer the morning, some prefer the evening depending on their energy structure. Find out what is suitable for you.