

HOW TO MEDITATE

I. THE PURPOSE OF MEDITATION: THE SKILL OF CONCENTRATION AND A HABITUATING YOUR MIND TO VIRTUOUS THOUGHTS

II. TYPES OF MEDITATION

- A. ANALYTICAL (A PROBLEM-SOLVING)
- B. REVIEW
- C. SINGLE-POINTED CONCENTRATION

III. LIVING A LIFE CONDUCIVE TO MEDITATION

- A. LIVE IN A CONDUCIVE PLACE (QUIET, PLEASANT, WITHOUT DISTRACTIONS)
- B. LIVE SIMPLY, WITH FEW DESIRES
- C. BE SATISFIED WITH WHAT YOU GET
- D. GIVE UP USELESS ACTIVITY (DON'T BE A BUSY-BODY)
- E. LIVE AN ETHICAL LIFE
- F. DON'T OVERLOAD YOUR SENSES (WITH CONSTANT TV, MUSIC, PLAYING ON THE INTERNET, ETC.)

IV. CREATE A SPECIAL PLACE IN YOUR HOME DEDICATED TO YOUR MEDITATION

V. SET ASIDE A REGULAR TIME EACH DAY FOR MEDITATION

VI. ASSUME THE POSITION

- A. SIT ON A CUSHION CROSS-LEGGED, IN HALF-LOTUS, OR FULL-LOTUS POSITION, WITH BACK STRAIGHT, BUTT SLIGHTLY ELEVATED, WITH CUSHIONING FOR YOUR THIGHS AND ANKLES
- B. EYES CLOSED OR SLIGHTLY OPEN WITH GAZE FOCUSED ON SPACE IN FRONT OF END OF YOUR NOSE
- C. SHOULDERS RELAXED AND LEVEL, HEAD UP
- D. MOUTH CLOSED WITH LIPS GENTLY TOUCHING AND TEETH NOT CLENCHED, TONGUE TOUCHING UPPER PALATE BEHIND FRONT TEETH
- E. HANDS ON LAP, RIGHT ONE ON TOP OF LEFT ONE, WITH THUMBS GENTLY TOUCHING

VII. PRELIMINARIES TO MEDITATION

- A. FOCUS ATTENTION ON BREATH. BREATHE NATURALLY. COUNT BREATHS (BEGINNING WITH EXHALATION; EACH EXHALATION AND INHALATION COUNT AS THE SAME NUMBER) UNTIL YOU CAN REACH 10 WITHOUT SERIOUS DISTRACTION.
- B. TAKE REFUGE \cong (RECALL TO MIND YOUR HIGHEST IDEALS)
- C. THINK ABOUT HELPING OTHERS (ABODHICITTA \cong)
- D. VISUALIZE A HOLY BEING SITTING IN FRONT OF YOU
- E. THINK ABOUT A QUALITY OF THAT HOLY BEING YOU ADMIRE AND WANT TO EMULATE (AMENTAL PROSTRATION \cong)
- F. MENTALLY OFFER A GIFT TO THE HOLY BEING
- G. CONFESS AND PURIFY YOUR BAD DEEDS
 - 1. REMEMBER YOUR HIGHEST IDEALS (ATAKING REFUGE \cong)
 - 2. VISUALIZE CLEARLY A RECENT ACT OF MIND, SPEECH, OR BODY IN WHICH YOU FAILED TO LIVE UP TO YOUR OWN HIGHEST IDEALS
 - 3. PROMISE YOURSELF YOU WILL NOT DO THIS MISDEED AGAIN FOR A SET PERIOD OF TIME
 - 4. PROMISE YOURSELF YOU WILL DO SOME KIND OF ACTIVITY TO MAKE UP FOR THE MISDEED
- F. REJOICE IN YOUR GOOD DEEDS AND PROGRESS
- G. REQUEST THE HOLY BEING YOU=VE VISUALIZED TO TEACH YOU HOW TO BE A BETTER PERSON
- H. OFFER A PRAYER THAT THIS HOLY BEING, AND ALL OTHERS WHO ARE BENEFICIAL INFLUENCES ON YOU, STAY WITH YOU AND LIVE LONG LIVES
- I. ASK THE HOLY BEING TO ENTER INTO YOUR HEART AND BECOME PART OF YOU

VIII. THE MAIN MEDITATION

- A. ANALYTICAL MEDITATIONS ARE THOSE IN WHICH YOU CAREFULLY ANALYZE A PROBLEM YOU ARE HAVING (AND ITS SOLUTION) , A TEACHING YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN, OR A VIRTUOUS TOPIC OF ANY KIND
- B. REVIEW MEDITATIONS ARE THOSE IN WHICH YOU CAREFULLY REVIEW, STEP BY STEP, ONE BY ONE, A SERIES OF THOUGHTS OR IDEAS YOU WISH TO BURN INTO YOUR MEMORY
- C. ONE-POINTED CONCENTRATION IS WHERE YOU VISUALIZE A VIRTUOUS OBJECT OR CONCENTRATE INTENSELY ON A SINGLE VIRTUOUS THOUGHT

FOR A GOOD GUIDE TO PARTICULAR MEDITATIONS, CONSULT KATHLEEN McDONALD, *HOW TO MEDITATE: A PRACTICAL GUIDE* (WISDOM PUBLICATIONS)

IX. DEDICATION OF MERIT

MEDITATION GENERATES A VIRTUOUS STATE OF MIND. ALWAYS DEDICATE THE GOODNESS OF WHAT YOU=VE DONE TO OTHERS -- TO RELIEVE THEIR SUFFERING AND PROMOTE THEIR WELL-BEING AND HAPPINESS. THIS HELPS US GENERATE A AGOOD HEART \cong AND DIMINISHES OUR INNATE TENDENCY TOWARDS ASELF-CHERISHING. \cong