

### Meditation 35

#### *A Concise Tonglen Practice*

Before beginning the tonglen practice, we remind ourselves that we want to be a cause of happiness and the end of suffering for all beings so they may know the stable joy and fulfillment of awakening to their true nature. Then we visualize someone in front of us that it's easy to feel love and have compassion for. We give rise to the wish to do whatever we can to take away any causes or conditions of suffering and give them happiness.

We start with that intention and our love and compassion for this person. We imagine breathing into the center of our heart all the karmic causes and current conditions of their suffering. As we exhale, we imagine the radiance of all our pure qualities, merit, love for them, and our wish for their short-term and long-term happiness beaming from the center of our heart and completely saturating their body, speech, and mind. Then, as we again inhale, we breathe in their suffering. As we exhale, we breathe out happiness. We join that visualization with our breath repeatedly until the habit to take away suffering and give happiness becomes as natural as our breath.

We expand this visualization step by step to include more and more people, starting with those we already love deeply, expanding to those we feel more neutral toward, extending to those harder to love, those we've had anger or hatred toward, and, eventually, to all beings. We ideally do this meditation until we feel our heart softening and opening, our fear relaxing, and our compassion and love growing. See what happens in your mind when you do tonglen with different people and situations. Is your fear subsiding and your love increasing, or the opposite?

Does your judgment about and alienation from others decrease or increase? Is your equanimity, respectfulness, and sense of inclusiveness increasing or not?

Ideally, do each step of the meditation with pure motivation repeatedly until your experience changes. Then dedicate the merit.