

Meditation 38

Transforming Mind's Poisons through Tonglen

Having generated bodhicitta, we let ourselves be aware of whatever poison is uppermost in our mind. We think of everyone else who's struggling with that particular poison—those we know, those we don't know, those near and far who may not have the means to transform that poison into benefit.

Thinking of the suffering that's being perpetuated, and the happiness they yearn for, our natural response is to want to do something to help. We wish we could help even one being cut through, purify, and awaken to their true nature. We give rise to this vast aspiration to have the capacity to help.

From that aspiration to help—which is love—we practice tonglen. We want for these beings the causes and conditions of happiness, which we imagine sending to them as a radiance of pure luminosity that pervades their lives and experience. We then inhale the causes and conditions of their suffering with the aspiration that they no longer experience it. Through our practice, we imagine we breathe it right into the center of our heart. Then, also from the center of our heart, we radiate limitless love and compassion, and then rest the mind.

As we continue the tonglen practice, we extend the light to more and more beings that are suffering in more and more different ways as the display of other toxic emotions, alternating each with resting the mind. We keep extending and extending until there's a sense of the pervasiveness of love and benefit for all beings and the pervasiveness of compassion that's dissolving and incinerating the causes and conditions of suffering until all beings have been established in a state of complete awakening.

Then, we make a dedication that, through the merit of this meditation, all beings truly awaken to the ceaseless benefit and happiness of knowing their true nature.