

A Short Format for Daily Practice

1. Think about your motivation.
2. Make offerings to the shrine.
3. Perform three prostrations.
4. Recite the Refuge Prayer (three times).
5. Contemplate the Four Thoughts.
6. Do your shamata practice.
7. Recite the Four Immeasurables (three times).
8. Recite the Dedication of Merit.

Refuge Prayer

༄༅། །སངས་རྒྱལ་ཚེས་དང་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་མཚོག་རྣམས་ལ།

SANG GYE CHÖ DANG TSHOK KYI CHOK NAM LA
In the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Assembly Most Excellent,

།བྱང་ཆུབ་བར་དུ་བདག་ནི་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཚེ། །

JANG CHUP BAR DU DAK NI KYAP SU CHI
I take refuge until I reach Enlightenment.

བདག་གིས་སྤྱིན་སོགས་བགྱིས་པའི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱིས།

DAK GI JIN SOK GYI PAY SÖ NAM KYI
By the merit of Generosity and other good deeds,

།འགྲོ་ལ་ཕན་ཕྱིར་སངས་རྒྱལ་འགྲུབ་པར་ཤོག།

DRO LA PHEN CHIR SANG GYE DRUP PAR SHOK
may I achieve Enlightenment for the sake of all beings.

How to Contemplate the Four Reminders (also called “Four Thoughts that Turn the Mind toward Dharma”)

By Kathy Wesley, based on oral teachings from His Eminence Tai Situ Rinpoche.

As for the contemplations* on the Four Reminders (precious human birth, impermanence, karma, and the unsatisfactoriness of samsara) there is actually a method for contemplating them. The method I like the best is to take one of the four topics as your object of contemplation for an entire week, spending anywhere from a few minutes to a half-hour (or more, if you have lots of free time!) doing analytical contemplation on it.

To do this, you first recite your refuge prayers or whatever prayers you say before starting your practice session, and then perform a little quiet shinay (sitting meditation) if you have time. Then, you begin the contemplation by reading a paragraph or two about the topic from one of the many books written on the given topic (such as the Chapter on the Ordinary Foundations in Jamgon Kongtrul’s book “The Torch of Certainty” or Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche’s transcript on the Foundation Practices), then put down your book and think, “Is this true? Is this thing meaningful to me?” analyzing its truth and its applicability to you in your life.

When you reach a point in the contemplation in which you reach a sense of “yes, this is true,” you follow that by consciously making the resolution, “since this is true, I must do my best to practice dharma so that my precious human life will not be wasted, “ thereby forming an altruistic, dharma-influenced aspiration born from the understanding you have reached.

Then you read a little more and perform the analysis again, until you reach the point of being moved in your being, form the resolution in your mind, and then read some more. In this way—reading, analyzing, resolving and so forth—you pass the period of your contemplation. When you reach the point of being moved and go on to make the resolution, you have truly performed the contemplation. Without this [understanding and subsequent resolution], you have merely reviewed information in a dry and intellectual way.

At the conclusion of the contemplation session, dedicate your merit to the benefit of all sentient beings. In this way your practice is embraced by bodhicitta.

**Contemplation is different than meditation in that meditation is usually considered the process of resting one’s mind on an object of virtue—such as a mantra, visualization, a visual object, or the breath. Contemplation is the process of using our intellect to examine and analyze a topic until we reach a deeply felt sense of understanding of that topic—that is, until we are moved by the truth of the subject we are contemplating.*

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The Four Immeasurables

༄༅། །སེམ་ཅན་ཅེ་དཔལ་ཅན་ཅད་བདེ་བ་དང་བདེ་བའི་རྒྱ་དང་ལྷན་པར་གྱུར་ཅིག།

SEM CHEN THAM CHE DE WA DANG DE WAY GYU DANG DEN PAR GYUR CHIK

May all sentient beings gain happiness and the cause of happiness.

།སྤྱུག་བསྐྱེལ་དང་སྤྱུག་བསྐྱེལ་གྱི་རྒྱ་དང་བྲལ་བར་གྱུར་ཅིག།

DUK NGAL DANG DUK NGAL GYI GYU DANG DREL WAR GYUR CHIK

May they be free from suffering and the cause of suffering.

།སྤྱུག་བསྐྱེལ་མེད་པའི་བདེ་བ་དམ་པ་དང་མི་འབྲལ་བར་གྱུར་ཅིག།

DUK NGAL ME PAY DE WA DAM PA DANG MI DREL WAR GYUR CHIK

May they never be cut off from the highest bliss, which is devoid of suffering.

།ཉེ་རིང་ཆགས་སྣང་དང་བྲལ་བའི་བཏང་སྟོམས་ཆེན་པོ་ལ་གནས་པར་གྱུར་ཅིག།

NYE RING CHAK DANG DANG DREL WAY TANG NYOM CHEN PO LA NE PAR GYUR CHIK

May they come to rest in the great impartiality, which is free of attachment and aversion.

Dedication of Merit

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༄༅། །བསོད་ནམས་འདི་ཡིས་ཐམས་ཅད་གཟིགས་པ་ཉིད། །

SÖ NAM DI YI THAM CHE ZIK PA NYI

By this merit may all attain omniscience.

ཐོབ་ནས་ཉེས་པའི་དགའ་རྒྱུ་རྣམས་ལམ་བྱས་ནས། །

THOP NE NYE PAY DRA NAM PAM JE NE

May it defeat the enemy, wrongdoing.

སྐྱེ་གན་འཆི་བ་བརྒྱབས་འཁྲུགས་པ་ཡིས། །

KYE GA NA CHI BA LAP THRUK PA YI

From the stormy waves of birth, old age, sickness, and death

བསྐྱིད་པའི་མཚོ་ལས་འགྲོ་བ་གྲོལ་བར་ཤོག།

SI PAY TSHO LE DRO WA DRÖL WAR SHOK

from the ocean of samsara, may I free all beings.



༄༅། །འཇམ་དཔལ་དཔའ་བོའི་ལྷར་མ་ཐུན་པ་དང། །

JAM PAL PA WÖ JI TAR KHYEN PA DANG

The courageous Manjuri, who knows everything as it is,

ཀུན་ཏུ་བཟང་པོ་དེ་ཡང་དེ་བཞིན་སྟེ། །

KÜN TU ZANG PO DE YANG DE ZHIN TE

Samantabhadra, who also knows in the same way,

དེ་དག་ཀུན་གྱི་རྗེས་སུ་བདག་སྟོབ་ཅིང། །

DE DAK KÜN GYI JE SU DAK LOP CHING

and all the bodhisattvas – that I may follow in their path,

དགོ་བ་འདི་དག་ཐམས་ཅད་རབ་ཏུ་བསྟོ། །

GE WA DI DAK THAM CHE RAP TU NGO

I completely dedicate all this virtue.

