

## IDMT Meditation Script

November 22, 2025: Exchanging self and others

### Arriving in the present

1. Now that we invoked the presence of the Buddha and all those that found Enlightenment before us, we can take a position amongst them.
2. There's different ways to practice letting go. As you know by now, letting go is the letting go not of people, of sentient beings, not of the world. It's letting go of aversion, desire, and ignorance.
3. A beautiful way to do so is through appreciation. The appreciation that we truly stand on the shoulders of giants: thousands of women and men that found awakening before us and who brought the lineages of experience and scripture to our doorstep.
4. We can rejoice in the fact that of all the places within samsara, we live in one of the few:
  - with access to leisure. Where we can sit here surrounded physically and digitally by spiritual friends, all making a sincere effort in their practice of the Dharma.
  - Guided by a living buddha, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who still is with us.
  - Having a physical body, a human body, with functioning senses, so that we can at least hear and see, read and listen.
  - And we have a mind, a human mind, a precious human mind, which can both understand and question.
5. We can experience for ourselves that when we let go of aversion and desire, our mind becomes free and natural, happily abiding in the present. As His Holiness often says, that is the freedom we have. We have the freedom to be happy.

### Cultivating a motivation

6. But we've been contemplating that that freedom to be happy is stolen from us, by a simple error in our perception. For when not understanding or being blinded to who we are, there is no freedom to be happy.

### The actual practice

7. *[Disadvantages of self-cherishing]* We can use our memory to explore that. We know how it feels when we get into trouble. But when there's pain or a challenge, the difficulty is greatly aggravated by self-cherishing. The mental suffering that self-cherishing produces in this case is much, much worse than the underlying difficulty.
8. In good circumstances, self-cherishing steals our contentment, distracting our mind away from the present, making everything appear unsatisfactory, making our mind troubled and unclear and our feelings erratic, chaotic.
9. This throws us into a constant circle of competition and conflict. As Mahatma Gandhi so wisely said: "There is enough for our needs, but there will never be enough for our desires." That's causing us to behave unskillfully, karmically conditioning our mind stream, pushing us involuntarily from moment to moment and from life to life.
10. All because of holding onto an unrealistic concept of who we are, cherishing an illusion.
11. But an illusion disappears under analysis.





12. Check for yourself by taking one of your memories of a moment of conflict or hurt, desire, competition, and feeling the sense of self that arises when we do so. That knot, that burden that seems to appear in our center, that sense of an unchanging, independent I.
13. As soon as we question that sense, it falls apart on its own:
  - What seems to be independent of causes and conditions, such as our body, turns out not to be made by us, but by our parents. We call it “I” only by habit, but when we look, no I is to be found here.
  - When we look for the I in the mind, we can’t find it here either, for neither are the individual moments of mind and time “I”; nothing remains the same from one moment to the next.
  - And even in the present it consists of elements that upon inspection all have their own life: feeling, discernment, volition, awareness.
  - Moreover, without conceptuality, we would not discern a self at all.
14. So let’s rest for a moment in this openness of unfindability and the freedom from self-grasping that it provides, a refuge from that burden.
15. In the safe space of this openness, we can visualize that we reappear. Not as something solid, but we could say space-like. Not as something alienated, but as a connected being. Not with a fixed identity, but being narrated into existence with every meeting.
16. [*Equanimity*] Now that we are transparent, we can imagine that we gradually become aware of the web of life around us on which we depend:
  - Sitting beside us in meditation our parents, surrounded by our siblings, our family, friends.
  - Sitting in front of us, someone that we find challenging, flanked by his own parents, surrounded by his own siblings and family and friends.
  - Surrounded by the beings on whom we all depend, with their own parents, friends, family and so on.
17. Extending our awareness, until we have a sense that we’re holding on to the totality of life.
18. All space-like, all dependently arisen, all coming into existence newly with every meeting. Seeing that from this perspective an independent self is a mere illusion, creating the separation with others. For in this web of life there is no center: every thread is held up by other threads and every thread holds up every other thread, every living being co-creating each other.
19. [*Advantages of cherishing others*] Then we can remember the advantage of cherishing others, that allows us to forget the illusory self. Gifting us freedom from self-obsession in times of trouble, freedom from loneliness and alienation. The miraculous beauties of patience, loving kindness, care, wisdom, generosity, guiding our actions in such ways that we may end up with more friends and loved ones than we can handle. Gifting us Buddhahood itself.
20. A vision so deep that we can imagine that out of sheer joy Aryatara appears above us to hold us and guide us on our way, when we reach out with our empathy to those around us, for we know their hurt, their challenges and that they feel as separated and alone as we do.
21. But we are strengthened by knowing that for us there is a path to Awakening. We have seen beings like Lama Zopa Rinpoche doing it before us. So that we may follow in their footsteps with confidence, knowing that those around us are dear to us, for without them we would not exist.
22. [*Tonglen: giving and taking*] Out of gratitude and concern, on the in-breath, we may draw their problems, the weight on their shoulders, towards us. As dark smoke that leaves their bodies,





the smoke of the hindrances, of ignorance, the burden of self-cherishing, and drawing it towards us.

23. And where for them it is poison, for a bodhisattva like us, it is medicine. It is nectar that heals all wounds, transforming into a golden substance upon entering our left nostril. Healing karma, painful emotions, leaving every burden of the grasping at self. Like a release from prison that generates an immense joy, that is best appreciated when shared, when given away freely.
24. So we can imagine that it leaves our right nostril on the out-breath, fulfilling wishes, healing wounds, of our parents, our family, our enemy. Washing away every burden of separation.
25. We're feeling gradually the openness of every mother sentient being, to themselves and to each other. Revealing us as the web of Indra from the Flower Ornament Sutra, in which every being is a diamond reflecting all other beings. Free and fulfilled, until all the darkness has been transformed into the radiance of awakening. Revealing us to each other as buddhas to be.
26. We can imagine the deep appreciation of Aryatara above us, that we have discovered, like her before us, the path of freedom. And she, in all her brilliance and openness, dissolves into us and becomes one with our hearts, so that we may not forget and be mindful we were never separated in the first place. *[bodhicitta]*

## Review and finish

27. With that conviction, we can slowly allow this visualization to dissolve, and we may slowly rise from meditation, to be of benefit for this world.
28. And so, now that everyone is enlightened, we can go home.

*Lightly edited script, not reviewed by Ven. Gendun  
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