

Practice Instructions – Joy and Ease

The Path of Joy and Ease is a powerful method to deepen in all aspects of the Buddhist path.

How to practice the Path of Joy and Ease in a single session:

1. Arouse joy by choosing an object that brings us simple, uncomplicated joy. It can be anything. All that matters is that the thing we choose ignites joy, no matter how subtle. We then gently place our awareness on and calmly observe the object. We simply gently gaze at a flower, a tree, birds, a beautiful piece of art, or, for those who have devotion to a guru, a picture of our Dharma teacher. It could be gazing relaxedly at a beautiful mountain, a slow-moving river, the ocean, or a wide blue sky. If we are more affected by sound than visuals, we can place our awareness on the sound of wind gently blowing through trees, of water flowing soothingly down a stream, or beautiful birdsong. Once the joy rises, we place our awareness equally on the object and on the joy itself. Once we have our awareness on the feeling of joy, it will naturally grow. Just rest in that joy. Allow the joy to settle and calm the mind and body.
2. Call upon the Guru using the phrase, *Lama be with me now*. Allow sincere heartfelt devotion to rise. Visualise the Guru in the space in front of you, offer them your entire being unconditionally, and then dissolve them into your heart.
3. Rest at ease in stillness. With joy and the blessings of your Guru mingling in your heart, rest in calm abiding meditation without object or objective. Abide in this state of open ease and limitless rest.

When we combine the elements of radiant joy, devotion to the Guru and resting in stillness, we have a practice that is one of the swiftest and most effective paths to realisation. As one practices this daily, one will experience the relinquishing of all hopes and fears, identifications and fabrications, until all form-based practice drops away and one simply rests in a state of spacious awareness alive with Bodhicitta. At this point all name and form, effort and striving, are abandoned, and one abides in the deep experience that there is nothing to do, nothing to know, and nowhere to go. The experiences of Shamata, Vipassana, Trekchod and Togyal are accomplished naturally and effortlessly, and one then abides in the natural state.