

## Practice Syllabus 2020: Natural Freedom I

**Live Meetings:** These are the first Monday of every month at 8am EST, unless you hear otherwise.

### January

#### Theme: Bodhicitta within the View

- Formal Practice 3x per week: Lonchen Nyintik Ngondro (LNN) pp. 10-17, Dedication (p. 37). Insert Yeshe Tsogyal and/or Guru Rinpoche prayers as usual after Lineage Prayer.
  - Receive love and compassion from the refuge tree, and extend love and compassion to all beings
  - Explore the distinction between referential love (love with an object) and non-referential love (love within the view) in this practice
- Inquiry Practice (to be explored on your own, with a partner or in your Kula)
  - What is the difference between wisdom and love?
  - What is non-referential love?
- Informal Practice
  - Remember bodhicitta throughout your day. Can you access it as a guiding light?
  - Practice random acts of kindness.
  - Memorize the six paramitas

Readings: Longchenpa, Finding Rest in the Nature of Mind: Trilogy of Rest Volume I, pp. 75-102

### February

#### Theme: Vajrasattva

- Formal Practice 3x per week: Lonchen Nyintik Ngondro (LNN) pp. 10-27, Dedication (p. 37). Insert Yeshe Tsogyal and/or Guru Rinpoche prayers as usual after Lineage Prayer.
- Teacher comments
  - Spend most of the session reciting the mantra and receiving nectar from Vajrasattva yab yum above your head.
  - Get your body involved: allow the nectar to wash through/heal/energize the subtle body.
  - The essence:
    - Learning to receive unconditional love
    - Exploring your shadow/habits/obstacles
    - Learning to let go

- Inquiry Practice
  - What is my shadow?
  - What is good about not letting go?
  - Who/what is Vajrasattva really (the diamond being)?
- Informal Practice
  - Take the mantra into daily life....hiking, walking, moving, housework.
  - What do you need to do in order to “clean the temple” (in the widest sense)? What habits and distractions keep you from accessing wakefulness?
  - Do some psychotherapy and explore your shadow side.

Readings: Longchenpa, Finding Rest in the Nature of Mind: Trilogy of Rest Volume I, pp. 103-125

## March

### Theme: Mandala

- Formal Practice 3x per week: Lonchen Nyintik Ngondro (LNN) pp. 10-33, Dedication (p. 37). Insert Yeshe Tsogyal and/or Guru Rinpoche prayers as usual after Lineage Prayer.
- Teacher comments
  - When you get to the short mandala offering, recite it three times and then do Lama John’s offering practice for the bulk of the session (self-paced meditation). Spend 20 minutes in meditation, including the dissolution and resting.
  - The essence of this practice is
    - To loosen up the habit of grasping
    - To explore what you cling to and why
    - Learning to make an offering of your life
- Inquiry Practice
  - What is good about grasping?
  - What does wise generosity look like for me? What would foolish generosity look like?
- Informal Practice
  - Make an effort to notice the small acts of generosity taking place around you
  - Make a generosity challenge for yourself in March.....consciously give something away or make offering every day this month.

Readings: *Dakini Teachings*, Biography of Padmasambhava and March reading

## April

### Theme: Guru Yoga

- Formal Practice 3x per week: Lonchen Nyintik Ngondro (LNN) pp. 10-36, Dedication (p. 37). Insert Yeshe Tsogyal and/or Guru Rinpoche prayers as usual after Lineage Prayer.
- Teacher comments
  - Spend the bulk of the session reciting the mantra and communing with Guru Rinpoche and Yeshe Tsogyal. Outwardly, they are holders of the Dzogchen Lineage. Inwardly, they are the embodiment of all your benefactors. Secretly, they are your own awareness. Ponder these layers of meaning.
  - Receive unconditional love and unconditioned wisdom as a shower of nectar-light. Sometimes dissolve and rest.
  - The essence of this practice is
    - To connect to the Dzogchen lineage
    - To commune with embodied wakefulness
    - To dissolve the conceptual mind
    - To explore the relationship between love and awareness
- Inquiry Practice
  - What is devotion?
  - What do I trust?
  - What do I fear?
  - What is good about doubt?
- Informal Practice
  - Explore the theme of trust, faith and doubt in your life
  - Sometimes recite the mantra and remember your benefactors you while you during your movement practice walking, moving, swimming.
  - Explore/read about transference and counter-transference

Readings: *Dakini Teachings*, April reading

## May

### Theme: Natural Refuge Tree

- Formal Practice 3x per week: The Natural Refuge Tree, adding preliminary prayers if you like.
- Teacher comments
  - Use the recorded practice on Insight Timer
  - Get your body involved....it is the base of refuge
  - Open to whoever shows up, as in benefactor practice
  - The essence of this practice is
    - To explore your personal lineage and sources of support
    - To commune with embodied wakefulness

- To dissolve the conceptual mind
  - To experience non-dual awareness through a relational field
- Inquiry Practice
  - What is devotion?
  - What is “the teacher”?
  - What relationships nourish you and why?
  - What kinds of archetypes speak to you right now?
- Informal Practice
  - Spend time with the “guru” of the natural world
  - Spend time with the wise ones in your immediate life
  - Can you see the world as guru? The present moment as guru? Your difficult ones as guru?

Readings: *Dakini Teachings*, May reading

## **June and July**

### **Theme: Dzogchen Shamatha**

- Formal Practice 3x per week: Just sitting, just breathing, just being. Begin with some form (chanting, praying, communing) and let go into the formless realm.
- Teacher comments
  - Keep the Longchenpa readings as specified below close this month. The instructions for resting are there....see which instructions speak to you.
- Inquiry Practice
  - What am I seeking?
  - Why am I practicing?
  - What is the “natural state”?
  - What does it mean to rest?
- Informal Practice
  - Reflect on the view free from the two extremes, as described by Longchenpa. What is it like when you fall into an extreme? Can you identify that moment?
  - What does it mean to have “one taste” as described by Longchenpa?

Readings: Longchenpa, *Finding Rest in the Nature of Mind: Trilogy of Rest Volume I*, pp. 115-163