

# Six Contemplations for Entering the Path of Living Dharma

by Tarchin Hearn

## 1 – Action and Response (Causality)

Everything and everyone is a dynamic intermingling of myriad causes and conditions. Ultimately, every action affects everything else. I do something and you respond to it. You do something and I respond to it. What one person does affects the whole community. What the community does affects the individual person. What the humans do affects the plants and animals. What the other creatures and life forms do affects the humans. Changes in our physical organs affect our thinking. Shifts in feeling affect our digestion and cellular functioning. Activity in any realm or dimension of being, reverberates through every other realm and dimension; inner and outer, micro and macro. Contemplate this deeply.

## 2 – Interbeing

Each of us is carried and moved by the inspiration, the aspirations, and the life examples, of uncountable dharma teachers, mentors and exemplars, from many backgrounds and traditions – a great river of wisdom and compassion revealing itself through art, poetry, writing and philosophy, and through the examples of their own inspiring lives. Their lives are part of our lives, shaping our attitudes, the quality of our attentiveness and even the functioning of our physical bodies. Contemplate this deeply.

Each one of us is an embodied expression of our parents and our parent's parents, and that includes their hopes and fears and attitudes to life. We contain the talents and foibles of an ocean of ancestors; their patterns of speech, their genetic tendencies, their approaches to work, religion, child rearing, politics, property and power. Each person is a vast treasury of possibility, both positive and negative. Contemplate this deeply.

Every person is an inter-being of myriad dimensions. Each of us is a manifesting of a profoundly integrated living world, an evolving planet, arising now as you and me and all of us together. The green plants, and the water cycles, the sun and the mineral realms, along with all the other creatures, are weaving the fabric of myself and yourself through every shifting moment. Each one of us is part of the other. We exist because of each other. Contemplate this deeply.

## 3 – Personal Activity

Every action of body, communication and mind is the seed for future results. Every person carries within them the seeds of love and hate, of greed and generosity, of wisdom and confusion, of humbleness and pride. These seeds were planted through the uncountable actions of ourselves and the innumerable ancestors who preceded us. How can we water the

wholesome seeds in ourselves and in each other? How can we weed out the unwholesome seeds so that they don't sprout again in the future? Consider this deeply.

#### **4 – Individual as Community**

Every multi-celled creature is a symbiosis of myriad living beings. Inwardly, my body is composed, not only of human cells, but collaborating communities of micro beings that live in my gut, in my tissues and on my skin. Even a single cell is collaboration of myriad molecular communities! I am a 'we' and we together, make an 'I'. Outwardly, I mesh, breath by breath, with the photosynthesizing world, breathing in oxygen and breathing out carbon dioxide. Uncountable realms of responsive knowing – chemical, physical, emotional, conceptual and perceptual – are continuously dancing me into being and this is so for everyone. We live in and through each other with no absolute beginning or end. What am I? What are you? And what are we? Contemplate this deeply.

#### **5– Mind and Knowing**

Everything that I experience arises in the field my own knowing. Each moment of perception is a multilevelled collaboration of inner and outer, self and other, that brings forth the world of my experience, a world filled with meaning and import. At the same time, each being that I meet is, him, her, or itself, also bringing forth an equally vast and meaningful world that is arising as their own unique knowing. The flavour of my knowing, my overall attitudes, typical emotional states, prejudices and aspirations, helps to mould the universe I perceive and live in, and so too does yours. The universe that is my knowing shapes and affects the universe of your knowing, while simultaneously, the universe of your knowing is shaping and affecting the universe of my knowing. Investigate this deeply.

#### **6 – An All-Embracing Matrix of Knowing and Understanding**

When we sense the vast ephemeral collaborative intelligence that each being is, we relate to them differently than if we see them as merely a discrete fragment or object in our own field of experience. Each being is an expression of immeasurable inspiration, talent and raw material. Each being is a unique matrix of knowing with their own hopes and fears and aspirations. Each being is a manifesting of an entire universe of talent and possibility. The question of wholesome relationship between ourselves and another, needs to consider not only how not to harm ourselves and others, but also how to support all that is good and life affirming in each other.

Given that the living world is an immense matrix of knowing and understanding, what would it mean for 'all of me' to be present with and for 'all of you'? What would it imply or require for me to live in ways that support the integrity, beauty and stability of the entire biotic community? Contemplate this deeply.

### FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

1 – Each day take one of the six themes and make it your main contemplation for an entire day. Use it to shine the light of fresh seeing on the ordinary activities of your life, such as relating to your family and friends, to the people you meet at work, to strangers, adversaries, flowers, trees, dogs, cats, birds and other creatures. At the end of the day review what you discovered and consider what this implies in terms of how you live with others and how you could live with others. Is there a difference here? In the light of this contemplation, would you change the way you do anything? Does this have any implications for how you earn your living, how you relax and in general, how you live your life?

2 – Do the above exercise with a small group of people, between 2 and 5. After exploring a theme for a day or so, come together as a group. Begin by spending a few minutes relaxing into awareness of your breathing. Then, if they are meaningful to you, recite the verses for Refuge along with the Bodhisattva Vow. Having expressed together this shared aspiration, then share your insights with each other. What did you discover? Is there anything you feel bad about or regret? Are there ways that the contemplation has strengthened you? What do your discoveries imply in terms of how your behaviour helps or harms yourself or others?