

Primordial Dharma

– a daily meditation and practice –



Tarchin Hearn

Primordial Dharma

– *a daily meditation and practice* –

The word dharma has a variety of meanings depending on how it is used. Some more common examples are: truth, law, phenomena, thing, or teaching. Digging into its roots we find *dhar*, from *dhareti* (Skt) which means to hold, or support and by extension, to cradle and nurture. *Ma* in many languages means mother. Putting them together dharma refers to that which holds, supports, nurtures and mothers. The study, practice and realisation of dharma recognises that everything and every being exists as a web of dynamic relationship. We are supported, nurtured and mothered by myriad other beings, situations and circumstances, while simultaneously, from the other's point of view, our very existence contributes to holding, supporting, nurturing and mothering them. This mutual shaping is a fundamental truth. It is primordial dharma.

This short yet pithy text outlines a process of gradual attunement to a fundamental truth of dharma. Its words and verses encourage us to explore, to dance in and with a timeless mystery – one that is revealed and demonstrated in each movement and moment of our living. This is a 'way of natural blessing' that is instantly available to anyone who, saturated with curiosity, integrity and compassion for all beings, find themselves answering life's invitation to open their senses, their heart of empathy and their deep commitment to supporting this vibrant community of a world unfolding, in all its abundance. May these words inspire the blossoming of wisdom, compassion and non-clinging awareness in all who receive them.

*Celebrating Primordial Dharma;
Where meditation practice mirrors realisation.
Where, path and goal are not different.
Where what is studied or practised,
is who is studying and practising.
Where love and clear seeing perfumes the ever-fresh gardens
of our lives, and the lives of all living beings
Primordial Dharma is an ungraspable treasure.
Fundamentally inconceivable,
it is
good in the beginning,
good in the middle
and good at the end.
It mothers, holds, supports and cradles everything,
This ever-fresh dancing of creativity and wonderment.
Its what I am
and what I do,
this primordial dharma that is also you.
It manifests everyone
– mysteries unfolding –
inviting investigation,
Realised by wise lovers of suchness,
everywhere
Blessed.*

Preparation

To cultivate a profound recognition of Primordial Dharma,
first arrange yourself in a comfortable posture.
Then, making friends with your breathing,
invite your entire body / brain / mind / community to settle
in the fullness of living that you are.

Contemplating Bodhicitta

Smiling, breathing, present;
with an expanding appreciation for the spacious, open,
inter-being~inter-knowing nature of this on-going experience,
Feel the deep stirring of *bodhicitta* –
a naturally evolving disposition for cultivating
both in ourselves and others,
our innate human potential for panoramic, multi-realmed
awareness, ceaseless compassion, and love.

Through encouraging and refining this immeasurable
all-encompassing expanse of spontaneous
love and clear-seeing presence,
May we loosen the hypnosis of *samsara*,
and release into the ocean of
continuously evolving collaborative creation.
May we manifest ways of living that uplift all beings.

Refuge

*Within this primordial space of contemplation, reflect on refuge –
your deepest sense of groundedness, connectedness and belonging.*

Bringing to mind my teachers and ancestors,
along with my human and non-human
companions on this path of life-unfolding,
– on behalf of all of us –

I take refuge in the true state of affairs;
– spontaneously present timeless awareness,
– radically inclusive love blossoming in all it's fullness,
– vast ungraspable suchness
that is this living world/universe.
This is ever fresh Buddha in action.

I recognise, celebrate and cultivate
the paths, teachings and encouragements
that support our realising the true state of affairs.
Day by day and night by night,
I bring forth generosity, wholesome relating,
patience, skilled use of energy, a continuity of caring and
enquiry, and wise understanding.
This is Dharma put to good use.

Releasing into a profound sense of being this continuously
gestating mystery of communion,
I am home.
This is the experiencing of true Sangha,
the fruition of all refuge practice.

Gradually, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha
appear to merge and mingle,
until we realise that each one contains and reveals
the other two.

This is a wondrous three-in-one refuge;
the natural blossoming of Primordial Dharma.
It's where we all belong.

Smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, offering,
I deepen this confident knowing/ experience of refuge.

Bodhisattva Vow

However innumerable beings are
I vow to meet them with kindness and interest.

However inexhaustible the states of suffering are
I vow to touch them with patience, love and skilful response.

However immeasurable the dharmas are
I vow to explore them deeply and thoroughly.

However incomparable the mystery of inter-being
I vow to surrender within it fully.

From this day forth
with wisdom and compassion as my lamp and staff,
I dedicate all my life's energies to the welfare of all beings.

Smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, offering;
I abide continuously in this heart felt aspiration,
allowing it to become well established and unshakeably firm.

Meditation on the Four Immeasurables

May all beings have happiness and
the causes of happiness.

May all beings be apart from sorrow and
the causes of sorrow.

May all beings be filled with joy
when sensing the wholesome activity of others.

May all beings be graced with the serenity of
unshakable mindfulness and loving presence.

Essential Practice

In the natural flowing of whatever is occurring,
cultivate a continuity of profoundly nourishing ease,
suffused with serene alertness and vivid discernment.

Whether sitting, standing, lying down, or walking,
allow everything to rest in its own place,
– the unique ever-fresh fullness and
vastness of being/becoming, that it is.

Dedication

Through practising these meditations,
may I realise the essential union of
profound engagement and utter peace.

Cultivating this openness-of-being
in an ever widening mandala of situations and circumstances,
may I traverse the path of great bodhisattvas.

May I and all beings come to realise the natural way of abiding,
this ever present blessing of primordial dharma that we are.

Sharing the Merit

By the power of these wholesome activities,
 may our lives be rich with awakening.

Living thus, may we abandon all unwholesomeness.

Through the endless storm of birth, illness, old age, and death,
 may we help all beings to realise
 their true inter-being~inter-knowing nature.

This short yet pithy practice has been abstracted from a longer text
"*A Sadhana of Samantabhadra*" which can be found on Green Dharma
Treasury.

Deepening Exploration

– A Few Hints –

Although at first glimpse these meditations may seem quite basic, they can launch us and then support us on a life of exploration and meaningful living. This section provides a few hints along with references to my other writings that may inspire you to take these practices to heart.

General Suggestions

For everyone,

I invite you to treat this text as a treasury of encouragements for meditative exploration. As a practice, read slowly and give yourself lots of time to savour the words and the intent behind them. Allow frequent pauses to reflect. What do these words and phrases actually mean to you in the context of your ongoing daily life? Think about this. Delve into it. For each section, I have suggested other writings that could augment your investigations. As you breathe with these themes, experiment with them – mentally, emotionally and physically. Use them as lenses to look more deeply into your life and living. As you become more familiar with this way of contemplation you may find you only occasionally go through the whole text in a single sitting. Instead, you might go directly to a section or phrase that feels particularly juicy and engaging and then work with that.

For people new to meditation, initially you may have a sense of tentatively feeling your way into an unfamiliar territory that may or

may not turn out to be meaningful for you. Almost inevitably, questions and doubts will arise in your mind. This is quite common.

If you do feel yourself being drawn into these contemplations, then going through the text again and again will eventually become like walking with a valued friend.

Ultimately, you need to make these practices your own. Perhaps even rewriting words, phrases or even verses in ways that make the text feel more meaningfully inspiring. At that point, you might find it valuable to look into the longer parent-text, *A Sadhana of Samantabhadra*.

For dharma teachers,

This sequence of contemplative explorations, embellished with deepening hints arising from your own direct experience, could be used as a general framework for extended exploration with others, or as a dharma text for study and practice, over a long period of time.

Preparation

*To cultivate a profound recognition of Primordial Dharma,
first arrange yourself in a comfortable posture.*

*Then, making friends with your breathing,
invite your entire body/brain/mind/community to settle
in the fullness of living that you are.*

This section is called preparation in that it describes the essential core of contemplative practice. From the perspective of primordial dharma, these foundational instructions are good at the beginning, good in the middle and good at the end. Cultivating them again

and again, we blossom in the fullness of living that we are.

comfortable – from com = with + fort or forte = strength

posture – more than simply anatomical positioning, the word posture also indicates disposition, or attitude.

What disposition, attitude and functionality of body, emotion and thinking is truly strengthening and health-giving for you? Investigate this. Play with it. Experiment. What works for you? This is a long term exploration theme that becomes more and more subtle and refined the further you take it.

making friends with breathing – What are the tactile-kinaesthetic qualities of friendship? Can you apply them to the sensations of your breathing, not just when you are calm, quiet and still but when you are active and, with more experience, even in the midst of strong emotion. Learning to make friends with our breathing, we develop *samadhi*, a continuity of caring and enquiry.

inviting – not demanding, or commanding. What does it mean to invite someone, without expecting a specific response?

your entire body~brain~mind~community to settle

Body – refers to the dynamic physiological structure of cells, tissues, organs and organisms which themselves are co-ordinated processes of molecular/chemical functioning. The brain is made of cells, so from this perspective, it is obviously a contributing aspect of the body.

Brain – refers to all nervous tissues, neuronal groupings and associated chemical secretions that modulate the functioning of body and its responses to the 'outer' world. Although the brain is a massing of neural tissue in the head, the brain/nervous system extends throughout the body. Body and brain are profoundly interconnected and inter-responsive.

Mind (or as Kalu Rinpoché would sometimes say, “that which knows”) refers to the entire field or expanse of knowing. For a human it arises as a sense of experiencing, a sense of relational-knowing-in-action – a sense of an agent engaging with objects. This knowing/experience seems to emerge out of the functioning of the body/brain and its activity brings together many domains, for example: thinking, remembering, feeling, emotioning, planning, conceiving, imagining, evaluating and so forth. We refer to this expanse of knowing that we are with the word ‘mind’ or more possessively with the phrase, ‘my mind’.

Community refers to the collaborative nature of life. Structural and functional couplings give rise to even more complex multi-levelled symbioses of living entities and processes. Though we may feel like autonomous individuals, biologically we are communities composed of trillions of cells functioning together as organs and tissues. Even a single cell could be seen as an evolving community of molecular organelles. This community that I am is continuously interlinking and inter-responding with communities beyond my skin; communities of families and societies and the entire evolving ecosphere. We body~brain~mind~communities are intimately engaged with myriad other body~brain~mind~communities; communities within communities within communities. We are a union or co-emergence of collaborative-diversity, and integrated wholeness. In a mature human being these four are totally and seamlessly integrated in their functioning. Bodies, brains, minds and communities cannot exist in isolation. Considered separately, each of these four is continuously adjusting its collective functioning in response to the shifting functionings of the other three. Together they make a whole.

Body~brain~mind~community; I have separated these words with a tilde (~) to indicate that they are mutually complimenting and shaping each other. Thoroughly exploring one's '*entire body~brain~*

mind~community'-in-action, is the heart of Buddhist meditation practice.

Writings that support a broadening of these explorations:

Breathing – the Natural way to Meditate

Foundations of Mindfulness

Walking in Wisdom

This Nectar of Naturalness

Body-Brain-Mind-Community an essay found at

<https://greendharmatreasury.org/2018/01/15/body-brain-mind-community/>

Contemplating Bodhicitta

Smiling, breathing, present;

with an expanding appreciation for the spacious, open,

inter-being~inter-knowing nature of this on-going experience,

Feel the deep stirring of bodhicitta –

a naturally evolving disposition for cultivating

both in ourselves and others,

our innate human potential for panoramic, multi-realmed

awareness, ceaseless compassion, and love.

Through encouraging and refining this immeasurable

all-encompassing expanse of spontaneous

love and clear-seeing presence,

May we loosen the hypnosis of samsara,

and release into the ocean of

continuously evolving collaborative creation.

May we manifest ways of living that uplift all beings.

Here we expand and refine the explorations of the previous section

to take into account the ethical implications of radical inter-connectedness. With the supports of *smiling, breathing, present and appreciating*, (these are thoroughly described in *This Nectar of Naturalness*) actively explore the inter-being~inter-knowing nature of your currently arising *body~brain~mind~community* experience.

Bodhicitta is a term indicating both the heart of awakening (non-clinging engaged presence) and heart – or intent – for awakening. In terms of intent, *bodhicitta* is a powerful yearning to actively cultivate wisdom and compassion for the sake of all beings. Traditionally this is called *aspiration-bodhicitta*. Through deepening contemplation, we come to understand the ultimately un-pin-downable collaborative nature of life and living. This is called *realisation-bodhicitta*.

At the cellular level, *bodhicitta* is demonstrated in the organising dynamic of autopoiesis and cell differentiation. In the adult human it can be seen in the cultivation of panoramic multi-realmed awareness, ceaseless compassion and love.

Samsara is a buddhist term referring to all forms of living experience that are blind to our inter-being~inter-knowing nature and take for granted the fundamental separateness of self and other.

Writings that support a broadening of these explorations:

This Nectar of Naturalness

Gifts of Wonderment – Vol.1.

Refuge

*Within this primordial space of contemplation, reflect on refuge –
your deepest sense of groundedness, connectedness and belonging.*

*Bringing to mind my teachers and ancestors, along with
my human and non-human companions on this path of life-unfolding,
– on behalf of all of us –*

*I take refuge in the true state of affairs;
– spontaneously present, timeless awareness,
– radically inclusive love, blossoming in all it's fullness,
– vast ungraspable suchness that is this living world/universe.
This is ever fresh Buddha in action.*

*I recognise, celebrate and cultivate
the paths, teachings and encouragements
that support our realising the true state of affairs.*

*Day by day and night by night,
I bring forth generosity, wholesome relating,
patience, skilled use of energy, a continuity of caring and enquiry,
and wise understanding.
This is Dharma put to good use.*

*Releasing into a profound sense
of being this continuously gestating mystery of communion,
I am home.*

*This is the experiencing of true Sangha,
the fruition of all refuge practice.*

*Gradually, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha
appear to merge and mingle,*

*until we realise that each one contains and reveals the other two.
This is a wondrous three-in-one refuge;
the natural blossoming of Primordial Dharma.
It's where we all belong.*

*Smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, offering,
I deepen this confident knowing/experience of refuge.*

Without departing from the primordial space of contemplation invoked through the preceding two sections, reflect on refuge – your deepest sense of groundedness, connectedness and belonging.

Bringing to mind my teachers and ancestors, along with my human and non-human companions on this path of life-unfolding. This is an immense contemplation in and of itself. I sometimes refer to it (teachers, ancestors and ecology) as the triple ground of being. For those new to this concept, I urge you to study and practise "Touching the Earth" which can be found under practices on Green Dharma Treasury.

I take refuge in the true state of affairs . . . It's where we all belong. At different stages of your life journey, you might like to replace these words with other reflections on refuge. Many alternate verses can be found in the second half of "True Refuge". Here is a shorter and perhaps more universal expression that you might like to use.

*We take refuge in love and clear seeing.
We live courageously in this world of birthing/dying.
Our hearts embrace all companions on this path of lucidity and freedom.*

Writings that support a broadening of these explorations:
True Refuge

Touching the Earth <<https://greendharmatreasury.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/touching-the-earth2.pdf>>

Bodhisattva Vow

*However innumerable beings are
I vow to meet them with kindness and interest.*

*However inexhaustible the states of suffering are
I vow to touch them with patience, love and skilful response.*

*However immeasurable the dharmas are
I vow to explore them deeply and thoroughly.*

*However incomparable the mystery of inter-being
I vow to surrender within it fully.*

*From this day forth with wisdom and compassion as my lamp and staff,
I dedicate all my life's energies to the welfare of all beings.*

*Smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, offering;
I abide continuously in this heartfelt aspiration,
allowing it to become well established and unshakeably firm.*

bodhisattva – *Bodhi* means awakening. *Sat* is short for *sati* which means mindfulness or recollection and *va* is variously translated as air, wind and weaving. Together, *sattva* means 'being' or 'one in the process of becoming'. A *bodhi-sattva* is therefore 'one in process of becoming awake'. Because all living beings are inter-connected and inter-dependent, the process of anyone becoming awake is a process

that affects everyone. A bodhisattva is someone who is actively waking up, with and for, all beings.

If we juggle the syllables of bodhisattva we can come up with a number of rich possibilities:

- an ongoing breathing recollection of awakening;
- an awakening weaving of mindfulness;
- being mindful awakening;
- an awakening mindfulness of how we – all the living creatures of the earth – are, together with the mountains and streams and the physical forces of the universe, weaving into being the fabric of existence. In a modern sense a bodhisattva might be called an *eco-sattva*.

As bodhisattvas, we are all co-participants; weavers, designers and appreciators of the weaving – each one of us. *Bodhi* or *budh* also means to blossom or bud, so the word bodhisattva points to someone who is a flowering, in other words a living process of beauty and fecundity unfolding – not a mindless machine!

Some texts translate bodhisattva in a grand and more specialised way. “Spiritual hero’ or ‘great being’ are not infrequent renderings, however, it is valuable to keep in mind that these great Buddhist archetypes represent characteristics of healthy, well functioning people. A spiritual hero today would be someone who has the courage and strength, borrowing words from Czech philosopher and writer – and bodhisattva – Vaclav Havel, to intentionally “live within the truth”. Such a being may be someone who feels deeply moved to turn away from the deceptions and lies of ‘modern life’, the consumerism, the extractive economy, the narrow vision of human chauvinism, and the tragic blindness that is unable to see life as a planet-wide ecology of continuous becoming and all that this

implies. It is through the ordinary acts of daily living that we find the quiet heroism of today's bodhisattva – honouring the intelligence, the sentience and the ultimate unknowableness of everyone we meet – touching the moment, however however we find it, with attitudes of love, patience, active curiosity and an unforced tendency to engage with compassion.

Essentially, the bodhisattva vow is an expression of wisdom and compassion in action. Rooted in the experience invoked in the preceding three sections of preparation, contemplating bodhicitta and refuge, we strengthen the four great bodhisattva aspirations until each one is well established, suffusing everything we do.

Writings that support a broadening of these explorations:

Gifts of Wonderment – Volume 1

This Nectar of Naturalness

Meditation on the Four Immeasurables

*May all beings have happiness and
the causes of happiness.*

*May all beings be apart from sorrow and
the causes of sorrow.*

*May all beings be filled with joy
when sensing the wholesome activity of others.*

*May all beings be graced with the serenity of unshakable mindfulness
and loving presence.*

Immeasurable lovingkindness, compassion, empathic joy and equanimity/serenity comprise the heart fruition of the entire path of awakening.

Writings that support a broadening of these explorations:

The Four Immeasurables <<https://greendharmatreasury.org/writings/essays/meditation-four-immeasurables/>>

Natural Awakening (chapter 6)

Lovingkindness <<https://greendharmatreasury.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/lk-final-master.pdf>>

Union of Lovingkindness and Emptiness by Lama Mark Webber

Essential Practice

*In the natural flowing of whatever is occurring,
cultivate a continuity of profoundly nourishing ease,
suffused with serene alertness and vivid discernment.*

*Whether sitting, standing, lying down, or walking,
allow everything to rest in its own place. – (the unique ever-fresh
fullness and vastness of being/becoming, that it is)*

In the natural flowing of whatever is occurring – In other words, this is an exploration to be done in the midst of whatever we are doing, and whatever is taking place.

a continuity – Living takes place as a continuum, not a series of punctuated moments separated by gaps. Day and night, year by year, millennium by millennium, the biosphere of life is continuous and unbroken. Can you sense this? To extend our recognition of this continuous nature invites acute attentiveness.

profoundly nourishing ease – Don't be in a hurry to make this happen.

First of all, explore what this phrase could mean for you.

When we ease a stuck door, we loosen it and get it moving. When we ease a tension, we soften it and restore a greater freedom of movement. When we say something is easy, we usually mean that it requires little or no effort. Perhaps ease has something to do with loosening, softening and effortlessness. In what way can ease be nourishing and in what ways can it be non-nourishing? How does this nourishing ease manifest physically, emotionally, mentally and socially? Are there degrees of nourishing ease ranging from mundane to profound? This is a big exploration.

suffused with serene alertness and vivid discernment – If we look into when we are easefully in flow we might realise that such moments have an inherent quality of serene awakesness/attentiveness. In the midst of this settled calm, we tend to notice more detail. Can we use this deepening alertness and discernment to further the flow of ease and can we allow this fluid easing to reveal an ongoing immediacy of alert discernment.

its own place – Everything and every being has its own unique presence of resting and discerning. Can we learn to recognise this and then to honour it?

Writings that support a broadening of these explorations:

This Nectar of Naturalness

Essential Practice <<https://greendharmatreasury.org/2018/05/14/essential-practice/>>.

Dedication and Sharing the Merit

We conclude each meditation practice with a dedication and offering by way of sharing the merit. Going forth into our daily life activities we aspire to allow these qualities, that we have been cultivating through contemplative exploration, to inform our interactions with others.

Final Note:

In 2023 and early 2024 I gave extensive teachings on these topics which were recorded via Zoom and posted on the Green Dharma Treasury youtube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDfqQ393gSULyQ-Hw2QX_1jKaDxO_09Wa>