

MEDITATION

THE **LOVE** ISSUE

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PEACE, LOVE &
MEDITATION

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MEDITATIONS
TO GENERATE
EMPATHY,
COMPASSION,
KINDNESS & LOVE

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Let The Sunshine In

What is the True Nature of Love, and how do we access it within ourselves? *Pauline Müller* explores these profound questions through the insights of Wangyal and Urgen Rinpoche, who provide some fascinating ideas from the Tibetan Yungdrung Bön Tradition.

From the highlands of the Tibetan Plateau – a geographically far cry from the 1969 Summer of Love – the Yungdrung Bön Tibetan Tradition invites us to embrace Unconditional Love for ourselves and all beings.

Historic Bön scriptures teach that the Yungdrung Bön Tradition of the Himalayas was handed down 18,000 years ago by Tonpa Shenrap, one of many fully enlightened beings – or buddhas – who preceded Siddhartha Gautama – the buddha who is most commonly referred to as “The Buddha” today (Gautama Buddha lived around 2,500 years ago).

Over millennia, the ancient Yungdrung Bön Tradition has become known as Tibetan Bön Buddhism. It is similar but different to Tibetan Buddhism, and significantly precedes it.

Yungdrung Bön holds Dzogchen as its highest technology out of its Nine Ways – a range of nine perspectives or distinct paths from which followers can approach the Bön teachings.

Embracing our True Nature: wide open spaciousness

In Bön, alongside the four elements of fire, water, earth, and wind, the fifth element – ether, or wide open spaciousness – plays a leading role in taking refuge within.

While it may be an unfamiliar form of self-love for us as westerners, merging with “spaciousness” brings us home to ourselves. Only once we open up to ourselves can we open up to those around us. “Openness is the ultimate Love,” Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, lama (teacher), founder and director of the Ligmincha Institute, explains.

There is more to opening up to the world than simply sharing sunshine smiles with strangers – even though that is lovely, too.

“The teaching says [that, ultimately], you are unbounded space. You are this infinite light and awareness. You are this genuine warmth,” Rinpoche continues. “The most important thing in that boundless space, in that absence of ego... [is] feeling illuminated. That sacred space needs to be [illuminated] by being aware of it.”

Honing this awareness of illuminated spaciousness is the first step toward developing a deep sense of well-being, which subsequently gives rise to pure, Unconditional Love.

Deep happiness is the seat of Unconditional Love

According to the late Tulku Urgen Rinpoche, one of the greatest Dzogchen masters of his time, deep happiness is the seat of Unconditional Love.

“Without the experience of joy or well-being, there cannot be an experience of Love,” Urgen Rinpoche wrote. “Without this [foundation of joy or well-being], there cannot be the action or function of Love, [and] no boundlessness to Love.

“We have to start with the experience of well-being. We have to feel well-being or happiness. We have to experience it in our bodies, in our minds, and in our perceptions.”

Urgen Rinpoche’s teaching highlights that this sense of authentic joy is not tethered to any external force, substance, or condition. It is a spontaneous arising of loving-kindness within.

How to maintain a state of happiness & well-being

The secret to attaining and maintaining this simple yet elusive joy (according to the Dzogchen Vajrayana system) is to carefully tend to the state of the subtle body.

In Dzogchen, the subtle body consists of tsa (channels), lung (energies), and tige (seeds of energy). Our consciousness, which moves on these energies, attains a sense of calm and well-being when it has a balanced system on which to circulate.

The rigors of life often cause disturbances to the subtle body, allowing fear and rumination to throw our systems out of balance. In Vajrayana, the relentless white noise of looming dread that runs through our nervous systems causes the tige, or seeds of energy, to go entirely haywire. Subsequently, compassion, happiness, and love begin to wither, while a general sense of ‘meh’ can snowball from mild depression into complete hopelessness.

Fortunately, there are several ways to return oneself to a state of loving-kindness.

One of the best solutions to rekindle a sense of well-being, happiness – and finally, Love – is Vipassana meditation, which delivers one to a state of samadhi.

Just as a busy mind can wipe out the vitality of our tige, becoming utterly still and deeply meditative can revive it.

To fully leverage the meditative shamatha state of calmness & stillness, Urgen Rinpoche counseled holding a steady sense of mindfulness of the body & its sensations, the mind, and the meditative sense within.

As one progressively moves into a sense of deep calm and open spaciousness, well-being – the source of Unconditional Love – is rekindled. Allowing the mind to rest deeply in the present moment is the great secret.

“It is said that the body rests on the meditation cushion – and the mind rests on the body.”

Transcending fear allows Love to shine through

In Bön, Unconditional Love arises through transcending fear and finding The Source within.

According to Wangyal Rinpoche, fear and conflict stir a false sense of “love” in romantic relationships – alongside the drama that often makes Western relationships feel “passionate.” The result is a gradual move from genuine peace & love toward a disconnect from ourselves and the other, which we take into the world. “If you are not uncomfortable with anything, why do you have to relax? Why do you have to put →



PHOTOS: PEXELS

“When our own cups of happiness and Love are full, it is easier to share with others.”

so much effort into [loving] somebody?” Wangyal Rinpoche asks, highlighting a glaring societal blindspot. “‘I love you.’ Three words. It is such a simple thing. There are so many people [who] just cannot say it. Probably they just cannot feel it. Because of another identity [they have claimed that prevents them from doing so]. Like in some cases, fear,” he says.

We can calm the mind & body through jam lung (soft breath) meditation.

When we dive into meditation, old suffering and fear of the future naturally make their way to the surface. That is a fundamental part of meditation, and it is not something to avoid. Instead of reacting to the emotions, we can mitigate the mental pain by becoming aware of the body and the physical sensations that precede the arising of the emotions.

Often, these sensations reverberate in the heart center, whence such energy can cause negativity within our minds and nervous systems.

In Dzogchen, emotions cause what is known as “speed” - an energetic velocity. While this velocity can become either positive or negative, it mostly turns negative when left unchecked, causing fretful and anxious demeanors.

An aid in reaching a deep sense of calm from such agitation of the body and mind is the practice of jam lung, or soft breath, as described by Urgen Rinpoche.

To practice jam lung, draw in deep, leisurely breaths, and release equally leisurely out-breaths.

Deliberate breathing turns the mind to locating the velocity of the emotion, which tends to anchor in contracted areas within the body - often alongside pain or discomfort.

On the in-breath, we can shift the disturbing “speed” by imagining drawing the sensation of discomfort from its location through the body, and visualizing storing it in the area located three fingers below the navel.

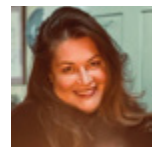
Over time, following this protocol is meant to restore and balance the entire body-mind-emotion system.



From here, one can achieve the sense of well-being that is the ultimate source of Unconditional Love.

Once this skill is solidified, Urgen Rinpoche advises us to treasure and nurture the meditative process by sharing loving kindness generously - as that is its “ultimate function.”

When we become Love, we share from brimming urns. When our own cups of happiness and Love are full, it is easier to share with others. May your sun shine in, today. ●



Pauline Müller, the author of this article, is a freelance writer, seasoned meditator and novice meditation teacher, based in Southern Africa. She is also a perpetual people feeder who loves wide open spaces and great adventures. Connect with her at pauline-muller.com. Geshe Losar (who provided significant input in this piece) is a Tibetan Bön lama and founder of Canada’s only Bön Buddhist Center, Sherab Chamma Ling, in Courtenay, British Columbia.

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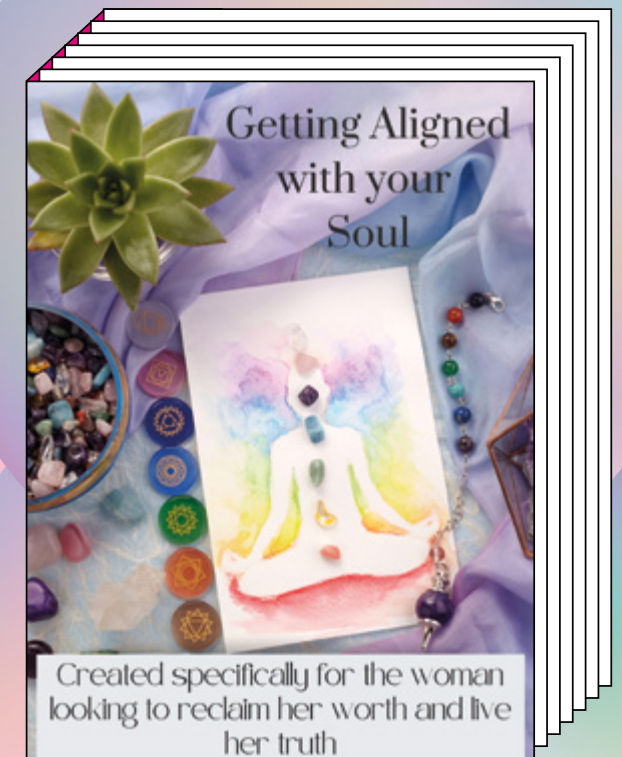
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