



“I believe deeply that we must find, all of us together, a new spirituality. This new concept ought to be elaborated alongside the religions in such a way that all people of good will could adhere to it”—H.H. Dalai Lama

Michael Gregory, the founding director of Mindfulness Meditation Centers (MMC) has been alongside students on the path to awakening for nearly twenty years. Since its inception in 2000, Mindfulness Meditation Centers has been providing no-nonsense, plain speaking meditation instruction, hospice volunteering, in-depth spiritual and personal counseling and extensive media archives of all its past teachings online.



Prayers and Aspirations

The Four Thoughts That Turn One's Mind to Dharma

First, A precious human birth favorable for Dharma practice, is hard to obtain and easily lost. I must make this life meaningful.

Second, The world and all its inhabitants are impermanent. In particular, the life of each being is like a water bubble. It is uncertain when I will die and become a corpse. At that time only Dharma can help, so I must practice now with diligence.

Third, When death comes there is no freedom, and karma takes its course. Since I create my own karma, I should abandon all unwholesome actions, and always devote my time to wholesome actions. With this in mind, I must observe my mind stream each day.

Fourth, Just like a feast before the executioner leads me to my death—home, friends, pleasures and possessions of samsara cause me continual torment by means of the three sufferings. I must cut through all attachment and strive to attain Enlightenment.

Refuge Prayer (Taking refuge in the Three Jewels) 3x

I go for refuge to the **Buddha**, **Dharma**, and **Sangha**. Until I achieve enlightenment. By the power of the goodness that I do, in giving and the rest. May I reach Buddhahood, for the sake of every living being.

Refuge Prayer (Taking refuge in the Three Jewels) 3x [Tib.]

Sang gye chu dang tsok kyi chok nam la, jang chub bar du dak ni kyab su chi
dak ki jin sok gyi pay so nam kyi, dro la pen chir sang gye drup par shok



Seven-Branch Prayer

With joyous Faith I prostrate
To the Noble All-Seeing One
And to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas
Of the ten directions and the three times.
I make offerings both actual and imagined
Of flowers, incense, lights, perfume
Food music and much else.
All you assembled Noble Ones, please accept them.
From beginning-less time until now,
I confess all the ten unvirtuous acts
And the five actions of unlimited consequences
I have committed when influenced by obscuring passions.
I rejoice in the merit of whatever virtue
Sravakas, Pratyekabuddhas, Bodhisattvas
And ordinary peoples have gathered
Throughout the three times.
I pray you turn the wheel of Dharma
In the form of the greater and lesser vehicles
For as many different aptitudes as are
present In the motivations of all sentient beings.
I beseech you to not pass into nirvana,
But until samsara is completely emptied,
To look with great compassion on all sentient beings
Who are lost in an ocean of frustration and sorrow.
—May whatever merit I have accumulated become a cause
for the enlightenment of all beings. May I myself without delay
become foremost among protectors of beings.

Bodhicitta

Bodhicitta is precious, may it arise in whom it has not
arisen Once arisen, may it ever grow and flourish!



Mahamudra Lineage Prayer

(The Short Prayer To Vajradhara, invoking the blessings of the
Kagyu Lineage)

Great Vajradhara, Tilopa, Naropa, Marpa, Mila, Lord of Dharma Gampopa,
Knower of the Three Times, omniscient, Karmapa,
Holders of the four root and eight branch lineages -,
Drikung, Taglung, Tsalpa, these three, glorious Drukpa and others,
Masters of the profound path of Mahamudra,
Unequalled protectors of beings, the Dakpo Kagyu,
I supplicate you—the Kagyu gurus.
Grant your blessing that I may follow your example and hold your lineage.

Detachment is the foot of meditation, as is taught.
To this meditator who is not attached to food and wealth,
Who cuts the ties to this life,
Grant your blessings that I have no attachment to honor or gain.

Devotion is the head of meditation, as is taught.
The guru opens the gate to the treasury of oral instructions.
To the meditator who continually supplicates you,
Grant your blessings that genuine devotion is born within.

Non-distraction is the body of meditation, as is taught.
Whatever arises is fresh, the nature of realization,
To the meditator who rests simply in naturalness,
Grant your blessings that my meditation is free from conceptualization.

The nature of thought is dharmakaya, as is taught.
Nothing whatsoever, it arises as everything.
To the meditator for whom all arises in unceasing play,
Grant your blessings that I realize samsara and nirvana as inseparable.

Through all my births, may I not be separated from the perfect guru,
and always enjoy the splendor of Dharma. Perfecting the qualities of the
paths and stages, May I swiftly attain the state of Vajradhara.



Loving–Kindness Aspiration (Metta Sutta)

...And this is what should be done
By one who is skilled in goodness,
And who knows the path of peace:
Let them be able and upright,
Straightforward and gentle in
speech, Humble and not conceited,
Contented and easily satisfied,
Unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways.
Peaceful and calm and wise and skillful,
Not proud or demanding in nature.
Let them not do the slightest thing
That the wise would later reprove.
Wishing —In gladness and in safety,
May all beings be at ease.
Whatever living beings there may be;
Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,
The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,
The seen and the unseen, Those
living near and far away, Those
born and to be born — May all
beings be at ease! Let non
deceive another, Or despise any
being in any state. Let none
through anger or ill-will Wish
harm upon another.
Even as a mother protects with her life
Her child, her only child,
So with a boundless heart
Should one cherish all living beings;
Radiating kindness over the entire
world,

Spreading upwards to the skies,
And downwards to the depths;
Outwards and unbounded,
Freed from hatred and ill-will.
Whether standing or walking,
seated or lying down
Free from drowsiness,
One should sustain this recollection.
This is said to be the sublime abiding.
By not holding to fixed views,
The pure-hearted one, having
clarity of vision,
Being freed from all sense desires,
Awakens from suffering, and
discovers everlasting peace.

The Four Immeasurables **(Four Boundless Forms of True Love)**

Loving-kindness, Compassion, Joy and Equanimity.

May all sentient beings have happiness and the root of happiness,
May all sentient beings be free of suffering and the root of suffering,
May all sentient beings never be separated from the highest bliss, which is without suffering
— May all sentient beings rest in limitless equanimity, free from attachment and aversion to those near and far.

May all sentient beings have happiness and the root of happiness;

Loving Kindness is the intention and capacity to offer joy and happiness to yourself and others. The intention is that the person be happy, peaceful, content, light in body and spirit, safe and free from injury, feel loved, and feel connected. Having the capacity means you understand someone and have the skill to actually bring them joy and happiness. Loving-kindness is not attachment. Attachment is a way of using someone else to manage our own emotions. Attachment causes us to try to control others so that we or they will never feel suffering. True loving-kindness does not try to control.

May all sentient beings be free of suffering and the root of suffering;

Compassion is the intention and capacity to relieve and transform suffering and lighten sorrows. The intention is to bring freedom from all forms of suffering – freedom from anger, fear, despair, hatred, confusion, worry, anxiety, and all unwholesome mental formations. Compassion is not pity, which involves a feeling of superiority to others. Compassion involves the understanding of how deeply connected we are to others.

May all sentient beings never be separated from the highest bliss, which is without suffering;

Joy is well-being, gratitude, peace, and contentment in the mind in the here and now. In regards to others, it is the intention and capacity to rejoice when others are happy. Joy is not comparison. When we compare, it can easily lead to a superiority- (“I am better because I have more”) or inferiority,- (“I am worse because I have less”).

May all sentient beings rest in limitless equanimity, free from attachment and aversion to those near and far.

Equanimity is non-attachment, non-discrimination, non-judgment, letting go, loving all equally, accepting ourselves as we are without conditions, giving ourselves and others space to make mistakes, to experiment, to be ourselves, to be happy, to be sad, or to experience whatever it is that we are experiencing. It is neither cold nor indifferent. Nor does it mean that we do not see differences between things. We still see and understand that everyone has different skills and capacities, and yet we accept others as they are.



Mindfulness of Eating Prayer

In this food I see clearly the presence of the entire universe supporting my existence.
(Looking at the plate of food)

All living beings are struggling for life. May they all have enough food to eat to day.
(Just before eating)

The plate is filled with food. I am aware that each morsel is the fruit of difficult labor by those who produced it.

This meal is a gift and I am the fortunate and grateful recipient.

This is food, I am food, may this food nourish me so that I may nourish others.

(Beginning to eat)

With the first taste, I promise to utilize the energy taken from this meal to practice loving kindness.

With the second, I promise to utilize the energy taken from this meal to relieve the suffering of others.

With the third taste, I promise to help others find joy more than my own.

With the fourth taste, I promise to deepen my relationship of non-attachment and equanimity.

(After the meal)

The plate is empty. My hunger is satisfied.

I regard this meal as medicine to sustain our life. I vow to live for the benefit of all living beings.

I have taken this meal for the sake of enlightenment for all.



The Dedication of Merit

And by all this merit, may all sentient beings be free from
suffering, May it defeat the enemy of “wrong-doing”,

From the stormy waves of birth—old age—sickness—and death—from the ocean of
samsara, May I free all beings.



What does studying with MMC offer you?

—An introduction to an unfolding, step-by-step process to fully develop ourselves and to be more conscious, aware, gentle and peaceful. The foundation of all classes follows a traditional curriculum known as, ‘Lamrim—the gradual path to enlightenment’.

MMC has developed a compelling modern vernacular that delivers alongside this traditional process, a non-sectarian—fully dependable set of simple instructions that are easy to practice. When followed for a six-week period, we begin to encounter an increasing flexibility in our emotional and mental states so we may begin to shift into expressions of living with surety, ease and even elegance. **We begin to have a confidence in what feels healthy, loving, and wholesome. Step by step, we lead ourselves, through practicing the instructions, toward ever increasing mindfulness, compassion, and awakening.**

Learn in a warm and welcoming environment, alongside people who are products of your culture who have studied and understood how the Buddha’s teachings pertain directly to our experiences here and now in this contemporary American culture. Learn to incorporate these step-by-step methods of release and renewal through meditation.

Understand through contemplating in non-esoteric, topical and lively on-line discussions, all within a dedicated community of compassionate, like-minded students/practitioners through weekly live and 100% interactive classes. MMC has compiled a significant and extensive archive of video teachings. This accessible archive is sourced through a state-of-the-art video and audio technology documentation of MMC bi-monthly live short-term week-end retreats, and longer-term meditation retreats produced at our beautiful meditation center in southern California.

On-going series classes are held live every Tuesday evening, and distributed worldwide onsite, through our state-of-the-art broadcast quality retreat center facility, and by attending in person in classrooms and local community locations in the United States and throughout the world.

This course is based on Michael Gregory’s six-week *Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation* class. It’s supplemented with written material, exercises and reflections for bringing the practice into daily life.

On-going Personal Class Support is Available with Various Community Teachers and Senior Practitioners

The course material is both interactive and live, (the live class is held on Tuesday evening’s from 7-8:30 pm EST). Each week’s class is also recorded so it can be viewed at any time most convenient. The course may also be **Audited** without personal teacher support.

If you choose to register for teacher support, please take this commitment seriously: a volunteer experienced meditator will be reserving weekly time for you.



Further Course Details

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: *What does this course cost?*

A: As with all MMC programs, this course is offered by generosity only. That means there is no fee, but there will be a donation button on the course's website if you wish to offer support for the teachers and the program. This is available due to the sustained membership of the larger MMC community.

Please contemplate the benefit these teachings may bring and continue to bring to your lives and make donations based on that contemplation.

All Donations are welcomed!

If you wish to become a sustaining member—which is encouraged, please consider joining Path 1:

<https://mindfulnessmeditationcenters.com/path-1-exploration-and-foundation/>

or visit our homepage and use the donate button.

†To access the MMC benefits which include the video library, retreats and classes, those interested will need to become a sustaining member of the community and offer some monthly recurring donation based on their means and conscience after a serious reflection.

Q: How do I enroll?

A: You can enroll in Course 1 on the website at:

<https://mindfulnessmeditationcenters.com/online-learning/course-1/>

If you are interested in exploring more of our Online Learning Courses, please read about our Four Paths of Participation: <https://mindfulnessmeditationcenters.com/contribute/>

Q: May I watch from anywhere or start an MMC meditation and study group in my area?

A: Yes, and we encourage you to do so. All you need is a computer, a projector and high-speed internet access.

Q: Do I need to purchase materials?

A: Course materials are provided on-line as well as the homework and meditation assignments. Occasionally publications are required for class and can be obtained at libraries.

www.mindfulnessmeditationcenters.com