

Instructions for Step Three of the Main Practice: Strengthening Presence

One full week of the workshop will be devoted to engaging in Step Three of the main practice. The formal practice is to be done during the time just before and during sleep; the informal practice is done during waking hours.

The formal practice:

Begin with the following preparatory practices:

1) Reflecting on your day: While in bed at night, reflect back on your day: How did you perceive what happened today? How did you react to it? Were you able to perceive your visions, emotions, and actions through the space of Stillness, Silence and Spaciousness, recognizing them as a dream? Try to view the memories that arise as memories of dreams. Then let go of the stories and memories of the day.

2) Setting your intention: Pray to the Dream Goddess and to the masters of the lineage, asking for their blessings and a successful dream yoga practice for the night.* Sing the Inner Refuge Prayer.

3) Clearing your mind: Perform the Nine Breathings of Purification, clearing the issues that are current for you. Always focus on significant issues that are currently confronting you.

Now move on to Step Three of the main practice:

1) For this step of the practice the sleeping position is on your back, with a high pillow under your head and upper

back/shoulders. Legs are crossed loosely (it doesn't matter if the right or left leg is on top). Using a high pillow can help keep sleep light and generate more lucidity in dreams. But avoid an uncomfortable neck position; adjust the position of the pillow as needed for comfort.

2) Gentle your breathing. Connect with the stillness of the body, silence of the speech and spaciousness of the mind. Feel the protection of being in this sacred space. Within that space, draw clear and open attention to your heart chakra. Visualize there a black, luminous syllable "HUNG." The "HUNG" represents inner power, strength, and confidence.

- Visualize/imagine the syllable "HUNG"
- Feel it in your heart area
- Become one with it
- Gradually let go of the image as you allow yourself to fall asleep in that experience.

3) If you wake up for any reason during the night, each time resume the Step Three sleeping position, visualize the image again, and merge with the image as you are falling back to sleep.

4) Two hours before you normally get up, wake yourself. Repeat the preparatory practices with the exception of reflecting on your day: Sing the prayers and perform the Nine Breathings of Purification. Then resume the sleeping position and again visualize the same image of the syllable "HUNG" in the heart area as you are falling back to sleep.

If you notice that it is hard for you to go back to sleep at this time of the morning, try waking up half an hour to an hour earlier the next morning. Sleep patterns are highly individual, and for some people waking up a little earlier will make it easier to fall back to sleep.

If you have a lucid dream — if you are aware you are dreaming while you are dreaming — try to work with your dream. For example, if you are feeling fearful, try changing fear to hope. Try changing small to big, slow to fast. If you want to, you can fly, visit sacred places, or ask questions of the lineage masters. Trust you can overcome any blockage, because it is just a dream.

The informal practice:

The informal practice is done daily throughout the week in addition to the four foundational practices.

- Throughout your day, any time you have a moment and particularly at times when you feel weak or you lack confidence, draw clear and open attention to your heart area.
- If possible, you can also visualize and feel there the black, luminous syllable “HUNG.”
- If you are familiar with it, be aware of the sense of inner strength, personal power and confidence that naturally arises within the open space of your heart chakra.

Repeat this informal practice throughout the day.

** If you want to follow the traditional approach, you can recite the Ma Gyu refuge prayer, praying to the Dream Goddess and the masters of the lineage. Remember that the point of this part of the practice is to set and strengthen your intention, so you can do this in any way that you feel will be effective for you.*

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