

Sojong Practice

Through the practice of sojong, or 'renewal', we can shed light on the patterns and habits that get in the way of realizing our aspirations and renew our commitment to the path of awakening. "So" means to heal, repair. "Jong" means to give up/purify/dismantle habitual patterns

This beautiful practice reminds us and reconnects us with what is most important in our lives. This is also an excellent way to acknowledge and heal discord within a community, or group.

This guided ritual is based on the tradition practice of the 'Four Powers of Confession'. Through these four contemplations we bring to mind what we have done that may have caused harm to ourselves, or others, or what wasn't in line with our own aspirations for how we want to live in the world.

(Recognition) We then arouse a sense of healthy **Regret** for what we have done. We then bring to mind a practice, or **Remedial Action** to move forward and heal what needs to be healed. Finally, we arouse a determination, or **Resolve**, to not fall into those patterns of behavior and to be in the world in alignment with our most virtuous aspirations.

The Tibetan word *so* means "to repair" or "heal" and the word *jong* means to "give up" or "purify."

The Four Powers of Confession

Recognition

Bring to mind your life in this past month.

Try to bring up something that you have said, something you have done, or a pattern of mind that fell short of your intent and aspiration for yourself.

Recall an event, or pattern involving just you alone, or you and someone else that was particularly difficult, or that went badly. Acknowledge the situation clearly and honestly. Note how you feel about what happened, about yourself, or the others involved.

Bring to mind how painful it is to be caught by such a pattern, or to have acted in the way that you did.

How does this pattern, or behavior color your attitude towards yourself?

How does this pattern affect your relationship with your significant other, your family, children, friends or acquaintances?

What does this 'cost you' in terms of your own well-being, peace, connection to others, and your ability to love, or be loved?

Regret

Arouse a sense of weariness, or regret regarding this particular incident, or pattern

- not shame, or self-blame, but a sincere desire to refrain from harming yourself and others, a desire to renew your commitment to wake up, and to reconnect with your fundamental goodness?

Remedial Action

Again, bring this pattern, or event clearly to mind. Recall what is done, or what is said when you're caught in this pattern.

Can you see that at the core of the situation was your desire, or the other person's desire to be happy, or free of some distress?

Aren't we all alike in wanting to be happy and ease? And aren't we all the same in going about it ways that usually bring yet more pain and confusion

Consider the situation with this in mind.

With this understanding can you forgive yourself for whatever part you played in the situation?

With this understanding can you forgive the other person, or people for whatever part they played in the situation?

What quality, or practice will you lean into so that you learn from this experience and use it to grow?

You could decide to meditate more to tame our mind and enrich our heart.

You could decide to do everything you can to arouse the "four boundless attitudes" of loving kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity.

You could lean into the practice of the paramitas of generosity, ethical, conduct, patience, exertion, and meditation.

You could heighten your mindfulness of the fact that everyone wants the same peace and happiness that we do and we could resolve to do whatever we can to make that possible.

You could bring to mind throughout the day the fact that we are, indeed, a "gathering of the kindness of others".

Rest with this for a minute.

Resolve

Now bring to mind a clear and firm resolve to refrain from this pattern in the future. Arouse the desire and the courage to be kinder, clearer and more gentle with yourself and the world around you. Resolve to refrain from that which disturbs your wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. Recall and refresh your aspiration and commitment to bring your practice and your most noble intention to whatever arises in the next month.