

Meditation Cushion

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Dvadashanta meditation

Meditation changes how we experience daily life. It is akin to waking up out of a dream into inner freedom while still having to navigate within that dream!

As teachers, it is natural to search for the right words to guide students into meditation, knowing the fruit of the practice gives us equanimity in the midst of the all that is happening around us and in our world.

In our own classes, beyond a silence at the end of asanas or a nice long Savasana, it is actually not the words per-se, but our shift into that inner freedom that raises an all -pervasive meditative awareness in class. The same freedom we have begun to savor from our own practice will transmit to others just by our presence. In fact, it will permeate our class effortlessly. It is therefore important that we ourselves be on-goingly nourished by meditation to feel at ease to take a whole class inside.

The seated meditation offered below is for the end of an asana practice and is based on one of the several ways to meditate on the breath. This is called the Dvadashanta, the still points at the ends of the in- breath and out- breath. It works well for students of all levels as well as long time practitioners.

Posture and Alignment

Depending on the moments you can decide to give more or less details from the ones given below. Just pick and choose naturally as it arises.

Meditation posture should be easy, comfortable and effortless.

It is a passage inward starting with the outermost body--the start of the journey.

You can sit in a chair with the knees level with the hips, both feet on the floor hip- width apart.

You can sit on the floor in Sukhasana in cross- legged position, the knees either level with the hips or slightly lower.

Use plenty of lift of the sit bones on firm blankets so the pelvic tilt allows the spine to be upright without effort

Sit quietly

Let the spine float up making space between the vertebrae

Lift the tops of the ears up and back a tiny bit and soften under the occiput so the head floats on top of the spine effortlessly

Shoulders will rest gently over ribs and the ribs over in the pelvic basin

.... like a long vase sits on its base.

The foundation will be firm and stable.

Relax and expand from the inside out a little.

“Side body long”

“Inner body bright”

Let the hands rest mid-thigh with your elbows beneath your shoulders

Raise the sit bones a bit higher and then let the hands glide back until the upper arms hang straight down

Let the collar bones widen.

The heart area will become open and spacious.

It will feel like Ahhh and the breath will move more freely

The outer edges of the shoulder blades will float back.

This will nestle the blades into the back.

The bottom tip of the blades will integrate into the top of the back ribs like you tuck in a shirt

Keeping the hands relaxed turn the palms down and form chin mudra --thumb and index touching--
Hands become usually feel more effortless with the palms down

Chin mudra sends a signal to the mind to turn inward, to allow the inner direction –

Close your eyes

Let the lids close over the eyes like soft cushions

Let the eyes rest in their sockets so you can see with inner sight

Make it auspicious when you close the eyes as you are now using subtle senses to explore the inner worlds

Let the tongue float in the lower jaw

This helps quiet talking outward and inward

Breath

Let the breath go by itself

Notice its natural rhythm and watch it moves in its own spontaneous rhythm.

Focus on the breath at first as air in your lungs

Then shift and see your breath as Prana or the life force pulsing

It is just a gentle invitation, not a command

Take it another step:

You are life itself.

Take another step:

You are “That”—

“That” is creating Life

.... if you can... ever so gently...

penetrate the layers of the breath to the source

gently inviting your attention

Mind

Though conditioned to flow outward, the mind loves to flow inward, to touch its power at the source. The mind actually yearns for the inner direction where it can expand and dissolve into boundless vastness

This is its true home.

Notice thoughts. Move through the layers

Notice who is talking inside you

Notice to whom it is talking.

Meditate on the source of the mind

Don't worry about thoughts.

Every thought is arising from Consciousness.

This is the turning point, before you even launch a focus on mantra. There is a shift, a letting go of being immersed in your thinking and identified with the small I thinking.

Remind yourself to take advantage of this moment

Resistance to this shift is usual, so be gentle, don't use force, the mind doesn't want to be dominated, but only invited.

As you shift inward into a subtler space, thoughts begin to be seen as energy moving from deep within. This is when you can witness the mind

Make a repeated subtle effort of your higher will, (your Iccha Shakti) to detach from thoughts and locate your identity in the inner witnessing awareness

You are the vast underlying awareness.

You just notice or recognize the boundless Self that has been there all along beneath your thought form.

All thoughts-good bad or indifferent... are your creations.

Notice the vast space of your own awareness as your Self

Having a focus is helpful to enter and remain in that realm, stabilizing you in the transcendental dimension.

Therefore, this is a good time in the inner journey to focus on mantra

Mantra: The Dvadashanta

In this case, focus on the breath. Do not interfere with it or try to control it or change its rhythm.

Simply watch the spontaneous easy-flowing breath disappearing inside into a still point within and observe it gently flow out and disappear into a still point outside. Keep your attention on the place where the breath disappears inside and outside.

Know the breath is going in and disappearing inside

Know the breath is going out and disappearing outside

Inside....

Outside.....

These spaceless and timeless points are beyond form

There's a moment when the breath is neither in nor out like a hairpin turn where the direction is neither one nor the other

It is a point of non-duality.

See them as portals into the vastness, a portal into Supreme Consciousness

It is called the Dvadashanta the Abode of Peace.

Enjoy the gentle invitation to go there as the breath moves on its own. Seeming intrusions such as unwanted emotions or egoic turmoil are opportunities to notice, so nothing is ever really in the way.

Whatever is present, let it all flow through you.

See it all as a beautiful, beneficial ride.

Understand the breath is arising and subsiding due to Consciousness itself.

Don't judge.

Meditation is a zone of unconditional love.

If we can't get that love here with our innermost Self, where else can we get it...

Trust.

Self

Stay there with this focus and increase that focus when you feel your thoughts pulling you away. The true Self is clearly present when not obscured by mind. It is also there when the mind is busy. Enjoy this precious time with yourself.

Transition

Come back slowly into the waking state. Taking the boundlessness with you. Each time we take a dive into the Self, the Inner Consciousness that supports our very lives, we become increasingly supported. We increase the

presence of the subtle resonance of our own deepest core. Even meditations when we are lost in the “jungle of rampant mind” as we like to call it, bear fruit. Don’t worry. Relax.

Conclusion

Meditate a little in the morning before the day gets started. Consider that you are already meditating when in the preparations, washing the face, lighting a candle, setting up cushions, lighting incense or whatever you enjoy. These little actions all turn the mind slowly inward like turning around a big barge, where it goes slowly. In some Indian temples you have to circle the central deity in concentric circles until you can get close to it and make offerings. It is an ancient way to prepare the mind to meet the Divine Deity. Here the deity is you own Self. Once the decision is made to meditate, meditation has begun. Our little preparations are beneficial. Keep it simple. Many of you say even a short meditation fills the day with a subtle buoyancy of heart. Infuse the inner body slowly and steadily over time with your own spiritual energy. This in time will consume the samskaras that block our innate joy and presence. Meditation is our birthright and where human sorrow is absorbed.

The very planets and stars move in the great current of Meditation.