

## A Simple Visualization - The Refuge Tree

In this practice, we imagine the Buddha, ourselves, and others, as having bodies that are made entirely of light... and we see ourselves as being in a Paradise, or in a Pure Land, such as Sukhavati...

Imagine that you are in a large, open, sacred space, beautiful, adorned with flower gardens, lakes, and wonderful trees, with birds sweetly singing...

The sun is brightly shining, as a few clouds float by... It's a lovely day... perfect in every way...

We see before us now the Buddha, the Divine Form we are meditating upon, or our main teacher, at the center of what appears as a great Refuge Tree, surrounded by Bodhisattvas, and all our ancestral teachers, going back generations, right down to our very own Root Teacher or Teachers...

These holy ones are all made entirely of beautiful light, and appear in the space in front and above us, on celestial clouds, on lotuses and moon cushions... They smile upon us...

Whatever is most pleasing and uplifting, that is what we see and feel before us now...

*Imagining yourself to be praying in a Paradise, or in a Pure Land, or in the Garden of Eden can be very helpful...*

*Imagine that you are now praying in a perfect Pure Land, together with, and in the presence of all the exalted souls of the Saints and righteous people of the past, present, and future...*

*Imagine, as you are praying, that the Saints you have personally known, physically seen, or have heard about \* are praying with you...*

*Feel the elevated bliss, light, and power generated from such a visualization flowing through your prayers...*

*Have the sense that all these Noble Ones, the whole company of heaven and faithful here on earth are present...*

*'All should join together - one to the other and one above another - so that they all can receive the heavenly flow of blessings {shefa}, by way of those above them who are closer to the source of supernal goodness...'*

{The Baal Shem Tov}

With this Right View and a pure motivation, as we recite verses of refuge and aspiration prayers, meditate, and recite mantra, we visualize that we receive blessings from the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, from all the Bodhisattvas and Devas, from all Holy Beings, and from all that is sacred and pure in the universe, in the form of light and nectar...

These dissolve into ourselves, and into all those we see as being with us now, our family and friends, those we don't know, and those who are experiencing any difficulty at all...

We visualize that the light and nectar purifies, heals and calms, nourishes, strengthens and inspires us all...

*May all share in these blessings...*

*May all beings receive all they need to awaken and be free...*

*May all beings have happiness, and all the causes of happiness flourishing...*

Meditate like this... Make prayers of aspiration...

To conclude, dedicate the merit to all beings.