

Instructions for Meditation on the View of Emptiness, The Song of the Four Mindfulnesses, Causing the Rain of Achievements to Fall

Initially, one observes the suffering of cyclic existence, goes for refuge, and performs guru yoga, visualising the sources of refuge and petitioning them to remain in the world and teach the doctrine; this is the mindfulness of the guru. Then, one observes other sentient beings' suffering in cyclic existence and, due to their dearness to oneself, generates love and compassion which thereupon induce an altruistic mind of enlightenment—the wish to attain Buddhahood for the sake of others—the second mindfulness. Due to this, the divine guru enters oneself, transforming one's own body, speech, and mind into that of a deity, the third mindfulness. Then, the actual session of practice is constituted by meditation on the view of emptiness, the fourth mindfulness, in which a union of calm abiding and special insight is cultivated in conjunction with tantra.

Kaysang Gyatso set these four practices into five stanzas for the sake of ease in memorisation and, thereby, adaptability for practice. The first stanza is concerned with how to rely on a spiritual guide:

1 Mindfulness of the Guru

On the seat of the immutable union of method and wisdom

Sits the kind guru who is the entity of all the refuges,

A Buddha who has perfect abandonment and wisdom is there.

Forsaking thoughts of defects, make a petition with pure perception,

Not letting your mind stray, place it within admiration and respect,

Making your attention unforgetful, maintain it within admiration and respect.

Because the guru possesses a union of method and wisdom—compassion and realisation of emptiness—he is said to abide on

the seat of the immutable union of method and wisdom. In another way that accords with Highest Yoga Tantra, the seat is in one's own heart and is comprised of the red and white drops, indestructible until enlightenment and thus immutable, and on this seat is one's kind guru. The practice of considering the guru to be present in one's own heart is conducive to conceiving one's body, speech, and mind as undifferentiable from the guru's.

He is the guru, personal deity, sky-goer, Buddha, and Bodhisattva—the essence of all sources of refuge. Though the great masters of the past, such as Nāgārjuna, were indeed very kind to write such great texts, they are now only objects of memory and even if we thought, 'How nice it would be to meet Nāgārjuna', we could not. At this point in our spiritual development we are like sick persons unable to move about even with a cane; we are like the very young or the very old, unable to sustain ourselves, and since in this dire situation the guru is the sustainer, he is viewed as the essence of all sources of refuge.

The kind guru should always be considered as abiding in one's heart; thus, the Buddha who has abandoned all obstructions and attained complete realisation is not to be sought externally but identified in the centre of the heart. This is the ultimate guru, the innate wisdom of the mode of subsistence of all phenomena.

Since the guru is a fully qualified Buddha, one should forsake the conception that he has defects, such as ordinary activities. Within mindfulness and awareness one should train in admiration and respect.

2 *Mindfulness of the Altruistic Aspiration to Highest Enlightenment*

*In the prison of the suffering of limitless cyclic existence
Wander the six types of sentient beings¹ bereft of happiness,
Fathers and mothers who protected you with kindness are there.
Forsaking desire and hatred, cultivate endearment and compassion,
Not letting your mind stray, place it within compassion,
Making your attention unforgeful, maintain it within compassion.*

Sentient beings want happiness but are bereft of happiness; they do not want suffering but are continuously tortured with suffering. The place where the six types of beings wander is cyclic existence, the limitless forms of which are prisons, created by the power of contaminated actions and afflictions. These suffering beings are not unrelated to oneself; rather, because they have extended continuous kindness over one's beginningless continuum of lives, one has responsibility for them.

These persons, wandering in cyclic existence, are not to be differentiated into groups with some desired and others hated; all are to be helped. Forsaking desire and hatred, one should cherish them more than oneself, continuously generating the compassionate wish that they might be freed from suffering and the causes of suffering.

The description of the condition of cyclic existence implies the need to generate an intention definitely to leave this state of suffering, but the thrust of the second mindfulness is to generate compassion for others since it is the root of the altruistic mind of enlightenment. If such a good mind does not arise, then one is bereft of the very basis of the Mahāyāna.

How can one relieve these sentient beings from suffering and the causes of suffering? One can provide vast benefit only by achieving Buddhahood and working for their welfare within that state; therefore, one must do whatever is possible to attain Buddhahood.

3 *Mindfulness of Your Body as a Divine Body*

When this altruistic attitude, the wish to attain Buddhahood for the sake of others, is so strong that one cannot bear delay in accomplishing others' welfare even for an hour, one views the present ineffectual situation as a waste of valuable time. What is the method for quickly attaining Buddhahood? By means of training in Mantra and particularly in the wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness, one can achieve Buddhahood in a single lifetime. In this practice a subtle mind realising emptiness is generated as a blissful entity,

within clear appearance, maintaining one's mind in the profound—observing emptiness—and in the manifest—observing the divine body.

4 *Mindfulness in the View of Emptiness*

Since this poem is mainly concerned with instructions on the view of emptiness, it has two stanzas on this topic, one each for the mode of sustaining the space-like meditative equipoise and for the mode of sustaining the illusion-like subsequent realisation.

Throughout the circle of appearing and occurring objects of knowledge pervades the space of clear light, the nature of phenomena, the ultimate,

An inexpressible mode of being of objects is there.

Forsaking mental fabrications,⁵ look to the entity of immaculate emptiness,

Not letting your mind stray, place it within the nature of phenomena, Making your attention unforgetful, maintain it within the nature of phenomena.

At the cross-roads of the varieties of appearances and the six consciousnesses

Is seen the confusion of the baseless phenomena of duality,

The illusory spectacles of a deceiving magician are there.

Not thinking they are true, look to their entity of emptiness,

Not letting your mind stray, place it within appearance and emptiness, Making your attention unforgetful, maintain it within appearance and emptiness.

All phenomena are established in the sphere of emptiness of inherent existence, devoid of their own inner principle. Thus, although the circle of appearing and occurring objects of knowledge is boundless and limitless, they are all of one taste in the sphere

and to develop this special meditative stabilisation of bliss and emptiness, the base of the bliss—one's own body—must be visualised as a divine body. This involves stopping both the appearance and conception of ordinariness.

*In the divine mansion of great bliss, pleasant to feel,
Abides the divine body which is your own body of pure aggregates and constituents,²*

A deity with the Three Bodies³ inseparable is there.

Not conceiving yourself to be ordinary, practise divine pride and vivid appearance,

Not letting your mind stray, place it within the profound and the manifest,⁴

Making your attention unforgetful, maintain it within the profound and the manifest.

Whatever appears is seen as empty; whatever is empty is experienced as bliss; and whatever is blissful appears as the sport of a deity. When this is realised, the objects of the six senses act as aids in generating bliss and thus are 'pleasant to feel'.

Everything appears as endless purity. When an environment appears, it is the sport of bliss, and when a being appears, that person is also the sport of bliss. One's own impure mental and physical aggregates and constituents shine as the sport of a deity; thus, a divine body is not to be identified externally but is one's own body viewed as a divine entity.

Since one believably practises the generation of oneself as one's own personal deity and trains in this vivid appearance and divine pride until they become firm, the Three Buddha Bodies—Truth Body, Enjoyment Body, and Emanation Body—are present. For instance, when cultivating the stage of generation in Highest Yoga Tantra, the Three Bodies are gradually manifested, and since one is then undifferentiable from a deity, the pride thinking, 'I am the deity', arises. Due to this divine pride, one does not conceive of oneself as ordinary but sustains a firm sense of divinity

of the nature of phenomena; there is no object not pervaded by this empty nature.

Just as the circle of objects of knowledge pervades space, so the objective clear light, the ultimate truth, pervades all objects of knowledge; it is their mode of being. It is not newly fabricated or created by the mind; from the very inception of any phenomenon its emptiness of inherent existence abides as its nature. This status of objects cannot be expressed with words or experienced in thought by ordinary beings in the way that Superiors perceive it; beyond terms and thoughts, it is inexpressible.

There is no need to search for the mode of being of objects elsewhere; it is right with these objects. As Aryadeva's *Four Hundred (Catuhśataka)* says, 'All these are empty of inherent existence,' using the term of proximity, 'these'. Since the ultimate truth exists as the nature of all appearances, if one analyses, the mode of being is right here.

Though it is said in scripture that all phenomena are merely imputedly existent, one must first analyse whether phenomena appear as if they only imputedly exist or not. They certainly do not; they appear to exist objectively. If they did exist in the concrete way that they seem to possess, they would have to be findable when sought analytically. However, when one trains in accordance with the modes of analysis taught in Nāgārjuna's *Fundamental Treatise on the Middle Way (Mūlamadhyamakāśāstra)* one gradually comes to a decision that although phenomena appear to be self-established, they do not at all exist that way. Then, deep vivid ascertainment that merely eliminates inherent existence is induced in the sense that no objective existence can be posited in the face of this ascertainment. When the mere vacuity that is a negative of inherent existence is experienced, one should fix on it one-pointedly; this is the mode of sustaining the space-like meditative equipoise.

Then, when one loosens the mode of observation of emptiness, the objects qualified by this empty nature appear as if pointable, 'This is such and such.' These various appearances—pure Buddhas, impure sentient beings, habitations, inhabitants, earth, water, fire,

wind—shine forth as the objects of the six senses—eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mental consciousnesses. However, when one analyses whether these various appearances have their own self-established entity, it cannot be found. All things to be seen, heard, smelled, tasted, and touched are baseless, without their own inner nature, unstable, lacking their own independent capacity or substance, their own inner basis. Yet, whereas they are baseless, they falsely appear to have their own mode of subsistence. The obscured who adhere to these objects as existing the way they appear are deceived, like persons who believe that a magician's illusions are real.

Previously in meditative equipoise, non-inherent existence became clear to the mind, but now, subsequent to meditative equipoise, phenomena appear to exist in their own right whereas they do not. The illusion-like subsequent realisation is the composite of the appearance of objects as if inherently existent within knowledge that they are empty of inherent existence.

One must again and again view the empty nature of objects and then within this realisation practise the union of appearance and emptiness, in the context of which one can gain great ascertainment of dependent-arising. Through this, one's understanding that all phenomena are merely designated by terms and thoughts increases, and through that, the ascertainment that phenomena do not exist in their own right becomes more powerful. Again, through its force, subsequent to meditative equipoise the ascertainment that whatever appears is the sport of emptiness becomes more powerful.

With the two realisations helping each other in this way, one advances over the four levels of the path of preparation: heat, peak, forbearance, and supreme mundane qualities. With the opening and heightening of the appearance of the suchness of phenomena, one's realisation becomes even more profound, whereupon the truth is directly realised.

These instructions on the view of emptiness for one who uses the four mindfulnesses, special instructions actually bestowed by the

SONG OF THE FOUR MINDFULNESSES

holy Mañjuḥśa on Tsong-ka-pa, a king of doctrine, were composed by the Buddhist monk Losang Kaysang Gyatso (bLo-bzang-bskal-bzang-rgya-mi-sho) for the sake of his own and others' establishing pre-dispositions for the correct view.

Notes

- 1 Gods, demigods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and denizens of hells.
- 2 Earth or hardness, water or cohesiveness, fire or temperature, wind or currents, space or passageways, and consciousness.
- 3 Body of Truth or wisdom consciousness, Body of Enjoyment or spontaneous speech, and Body of Form or physical body.
- 4 Profound emptiness and manifest appearance.
- 5 Mental fabrications which posit an object negated by emptiness other than inherent existence.