

From

THE EXPANSIVE ORAL INSTRUCTIONS

OF THE PRECIOUS DHARMA MASTER

CHETSANGPA RATNA SRI BUDDHI

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INTRODUCING THE MIND AS IT IS

Om Mani Padme Hung Hri

The precious Lama also said:

At this time we all have the freedoms and opportunities of a precious human existence which is so difficult to attain. If you want to gain the permanent result of buddhahood it is necessary to practise the precious holy dharma. It is said that the methods of following the path of the holy dharma are vast beyond comprehension, but for we who meditate, the outer sutra commentaries and explanations and inner tantra commentaries and explanations are not so important. We need just one instruction spoken by the holy accomplished guru by which we can understand our own mind to be the root of all samsara and nirvana. If this is truly understood, then all the doctrines spoken by the Buddha, both sutra and tantra, and the doctrines and literature of the great saints are fully present within your own mind. When that occurs, then what is called ‘knowing one, freeing all’ comes. If the mind is not understood, then although you may know many dharmas, such knowledge is vast but with a hollow centre – you know all but cannot attain even one thing. For that reason it is necessary to understand just this mind itself.

If you wonder how the mind² is to be understood, well, it is through a clear knowledge of the three aspects of ground (*gZhi*), path (*Lam*) and result (*'Bras-Bu*).

1. THE GROUND

Firstly, to consider how the ground abides. The intrinsic way³ of one’s own mind is primordial, uncontrived and instantly present. It is not made by the meditation of the buddhas and it is not affected by the stupidity of sentient beings. Mind’s original presence does not depend on causes and conditions. It is void, without inherent existence and is free of all conceptual elaboration. At the beginning⁴, mind itself is without source and so is void. In the middle, it is without resting place and so is void. At the end, it has no destination and so is void. Mind’s essence cannot be grasped as this or that, and so it is void. It is without form and colour, and so is void. This voidness is not an empty annihilation, for mind’s intrinsic clarity is pure and all-pervading.

Mind is itself the maker of all samsara and nirvana. Never changing, its presence is instant. Whatever is possible appears yet without inherent existence. Mind is profound, precise and beyond all measurement. It may seem to exist but is actually void due to (the unreality of) entities and signs. It

may seem not to exist, yet it shows many illusory forms. Mind's original presence is beyond thought and it does not become an object of thought. It is impossible to say what it is like. Beyond thought, it is inexpressible. It is not touched by any faults or good qualities whatsoever. Mind's original presence is not obscured by any good or bad karmic conditions. It is not stained by all the impurities of reliance on signs. None of the names of all the phenomena of samsara and nirvana can be applied to it.

Mind's original presence is free from all the limitation of holding to dualities such as permanent and impermanent, hope and doubt, inhibiting and encouraging, rejecting and accepting, good and bad, large and small, top and bottom, bound and free, happy and sad, and so on.

Mind's original presence is not made by anyone. It cannot be ascribed any size or dimension. It is free of all partiality. It is beyond being something that can be indicated by saying, "*It is this.*" From the very beginning it has been perfectly pure and abides in great equanimity towards everything within samsara and nirvana. Those who realise this have the ground or basis (*gZhi*) of buddhahood. Those who do not realise this have the ground of arising as sentient beings. Therefore it is called The Ground of All (*Kun-gZhi*).

2. THE PATH

The practice which constitutes the path is to understand falseness so that confusion is liberated. Firstly, regarding the manner of delusion, very briefly, the intrinsic way of the mind abides as openness (*Ngo-Bo*), immediacy (*Rang-bZhin*) and potential (*Thugs-rJe*). Our openness is empty and free of conceptual elaboration. Its immediacy is clarity instantly present. Its potential unceasingly arises as diversity.

Although from the very beginning mind itself abides as the presence of these perfectly pure three modes (*sKu gSum*) it is instantaneously obscured by the adventitious impurity of the three forms of ignorance. Due to this, one's own presence is not known by oneself.

a. The way of delusion

Firstly, there is co-emergent ignorance (*Lhan-Chig sKyes-Pa'i Ma-Rig-Pa*) by which innate recollection of or presence in (*Rang-gSal Gyi Dran-Pa*) the intrinsic way of mind as the three modes does not arise. Due to this there is stupidity, darkness, obscuration, fumbling and profound lack of vision. The good qualities of the modes and realms of the buddha are not known. And the rough faults of the karma and afflictions of sentient beings are also not known. So one abides with a very weak and uncertain knowledge. This is co-emergent ignorance.

Due to the arising of subtle habits of attachment to this previously arisen ignorance, and due to the unpredictable influence of the objects of the six senses, consciousness appears to be internal and unpredictable, and then events and conditions are believed to be real. With this, by grasping at objects as good and bad, and accepting and rejecting them, the objects seem to be real and so one abides with the three afflictions of stupidity, aversion and desire. Then towards whatever arises as an appearance for the six senses, if it seems good, there is desire and if it seems not to be good, there is aversion. If it is held as neither good nor not good, there is the stupidity of dull absence of thought. In that way there is desire and aversion, accepting and rejecting, encouraging and inhibiting. This is called 'the ignorance of identification' (*Kun-Tu-brTags-Pa'i Ma-Rig-Pa*).

In this way, from the root of ignorance the six afflictions arise without control and so we find ourselves to be travellers ('*Gro-Ba*), wandering in the six realms and experiencing the sorrows of each of them.

This is called ‘the ignorance of not understanding cause and effect’ (*Las rGyu ‘Bras La rMyong-Pa’i Ma-Rig-Pa*).

This demonstrates the way the three forms of ignorance ripen into the result of samsara.

b. The way of liberation

From beginningless time the ground has been inherently pure as openness, immediacy and potential, the three modes instantly present. Accordingly, by awakening to how one actually is, the clarity of self-recollection rises like the sun and dispels the darkness of co-emergent ignorance. By awakening to the ceaseless multifarious display of the innate potential of awareness, appearance is self-arising and self-liberating, and this dispels the ignorance of identification. Because the ignorance of identification has been purified, the root of the life force of bad actions has been cut and so the ignorance of not understanding cause and effect is self-purified.

Moreover, those who understand their own falseness are known as ‘buddhas’ and those who do not understand their own falseness are known as ‘sentient beings’. But these are just conventional terms, for there is not a hair’s breadth of difference between the intrinsic way of buddhas and sentient beings. They are separated only by whether they are awake to this or not. In the middle of samsara and nirvana there is just the letter A (emptiness) – this is the actual truth.

There are three aspects to protecting awareness of inherent clarity regarding one’s own falseness: view, meditation and activity.

The View.

The view indicates a definite clear confidence in one’s ever-present alignment with the intrinsic way free of the stain of ignorance. This is the three modes instantly present.

The Meditation

The maintenance of this view is known as meditation. Connected with this is the teaching of the methods for keeping the mind steady. To begin with, stop the activities of your body, voice and mind.

Pray to your guru who has all the necessary qualities. Merge your mind with hers. In that state, do not pursue past ideas. Do not wait for future ideas. Keep your present awareness free of all artifice, letting it occur easily in its own fashion. Do not modify it with good thoughts. Do not mix it with bad thoughts. However it presents itself, do not modify it in any way.

Keep your mind clear, happy, brilliant, naked, bright, open, tranquil and relaxed. Keep openness as void happiness, immediacy as clear happiness, and potential unimpeded. Without any set object of meditation, remain without wavering for even an instant.

If thoughts arise from that state, these thoughts are without foundation or root, so look clearly at the actuality of whatever arises. Without accepting or rejecting, remain relaxed and open. If you practise too intensely the problem of many wild, excited thoughts will develop, so remain loose and free. If you are too relaxed, the problem of sinking and dullness will develop, so remain alert in the presence of awareness.

Abiding in that state the intrinsic actuality of your own awareness is empty clarity free of substance. Without grasping, it is free. Without craving, it is happy. Without thought, it is completely authentic. Without inside or outside, it is direct. It is not touched by any fault or good quality whatsoever. It is not obscured by any good or bad actions whatsoever. It is not bound. It is not freed. It is naked, quiet, without stain, unobscured. It is not made or altered by anyone.

When a clear, direct actualisation of this primordial, unartificial, effortless truth arises, then for whatever arises from that state, be it bliss, clarity and absence of thoughts, or sinking and excitement with good and bad thoughts, or thoughts of the afflictions, or the grasping thoughts that arise with the appearances and sounds that arise due to the objects of the six senses, take whatever arises as the object of meditation. Without accepting or rejecting, inhibiting or encouraging in any way, stay clear and relaxed whatever appearances or thoughts arise. By this, thoughts need not be rejected. Mind itself is not mere emptiness for its innate clarity arises naturally as the dharmakaya intrinsic mode. At all times, whether eating, sleeping, moving or sitting, you must unwaveringly maintain the state of non-meditation.

If you find that you lose recollection of your inherent clarity, then as explained above, you will be obscured by ignorance. No matter how much virtue of your compounded ('Dus-Byas) body and voice you perform, it does not pass beyond co-emergent ignorance. Now why is this the case? The essence of ignorance is wavering, forgetfulness, obscuration, dullness, unconsciousness, non-recollection, carelessness and laziness. The essence of awareness is self-awareness of one's own falseness, and so is clarity and emptiness. It is naked, friendless, single, alone, with a presence that transcends conceptualisation. So stay just exactly in awareness without doing anything else.

The Activity.

At all times and in all situations, do not allow awareness to go under the power of good or bad conditions. On the outside, do not engage in worldly activities. On the inside, stop your dharma activities. Do not do any dharma practice whatsoever. Become completely familiar with the one true practice of being awake to your own awareness as the essence of all the buddhas of the three times.

3. THE RESULT

With the completion of that practice of one's own awareness, it is present without effort or intellectual activity. Thus the three modes of awareness are realised in their own place and one gains the result which is conventionally known as buddhahood.

Moreover, the openness of awareness is the unborn intrinsic mode (*Chos-sKu*). The immediacy of awareness is the innate clarity of the enjoyment mode (*Longs-sPyod rDzogs sKu*). The potential of awareness is the all-pervading apparitional mode (*sPrul-Pa'i sKu*). In the intrinsic way the three modes are inseparable as the single point of actuality (*Chos-Nyid Thig-Le Nyag-Chig*). Then, indistinguishable from intrinsic mode Samantabhadra, one's awareness goes directly to Akanishta, where one definitely gains buddhahood as a complete and perfect Samyaksambuddha.

So please keep this in mind.

THE RESULT OF THE THREE MODES

Om Mani Padme Hung Hri

Rinpoche also said:

The one essential point we dharma practitioners need to know is the instantly present three modes through the ground, path and result.

Moreover the **ground** having the two purities is known as the intrinsic mode. What does this mean?

Primordial Purity. From beginningless time the ground has been intrinsically pure. Its essence is empty, devoid of self-substance. It is free of all interpretations. It is not an object for the intellect and it transcends causes and conditions. It is beyond thought and expression. It is clarity as the sphere of awareness. From beginningless time it has been intrinsically perfectly pure.

Stainless Purity. The stains of the adventitious three forms of ignorance are removed by the three modes of awareness, revealing the void clarity of awareness free of obscuration. One's innate clarity is raw, steady, naked, single, unconfined and alone. This innate purity is unimpeded without inside or outside. This is known as the intrinsic mode having the two purities.

The **path** is the enjoyment mode having the five certainties. As the clarity of the intrinsic way of one's own awareness, as its own aspect, the enjoyment mode abides as the presence of the five certainties. This applies no matter where one stays on the path of the developing and perfecting procedures (*bsKyed-rDzogs Kyi Rim-Pa*). Its certain place is infinite hospitality (*Chos-dByings*) free of all interpretation. The certain teachers are the peaceful and wrathful expression of the innate clarity of awareness. The certain circle are the bodhisattvas in union, the ceaseless self-display (*Rang-sNang*) of awareness. The certain dharma is the recognition of one's own actuality through its self-display. The certain time is the abiding of effortless changelessness. These are what are known as the five certainties of the enjoyment mode.

The **result** is the apparitional mode having the five non-certainties. With the actualisation of the meaning of the unborn intrinsic mode, and the powerful flow of the ceaseless enjoyment mode, the various forms of potential are self-arising and self-liberating. By means of this the resultant apparitional mode acts for the benefit of sentient beings via the five non-certainties. Thus non-certainty of place is the ability to go to whatever place in the six realms it is necessary to arrive at for the sake of those who are ready. The non-certainty of form is the ability to manifest in whatever form is appropriate to educate beings. The non-certainty of retinue is the ability to be available for whoever needs help, be they high or low, good or bad. The non-certainty of dharma is the ability to teach the different vehicles according to the capacity of different individuals. The non-certainty of time is the ability to appear in whatever time disciples are ready, be it past, present or future.

Moreover, the apparitional mode has two forms, the supreme apparitional mode, and the multifarious apparitional mode. The supreme apparitional mode has two aspects, the apparitional mode descending from compassion, and the apparitional mode that ascends through the vehicles (*Theg-Pa*). Regarding the apparitional mode descending from compassion, it is from the intrinsic mode having the two

purities that the innate force of the enjoyment mode having the five certainties arises. This in turn gives rise to the special apparitional manifestations. In contra-distinction the apparitional mode ascending the vehicles shows the form of yogis of the path, practising the path in order to act for the benefit of sentient beings.

The multifarious apparitional mode has two aspects, one showing the form of beings in the six realms, and one of not showing such forms. The former takes on a form that belongs in the six realms and acts according to the local customs. Thus it teaches by performing whatever is necessary for these beings. Taking that kind of form, or a form which is its antithesis⁵, it appears in order to act for the benefit of beings. The apparitional mode that does not have the form of a being of the six realms shows itself as earth, water, fire, wind or space, or as self-manifesting boats, bridges, paintings, or statues. It takes the form of temples, stupas, refuges, and so on and thus acts for the benefit of sentient beings.

This concludes the brief explanation of the manner of realising the threefold result: the ground intrinsic mode having the two purities, the path enjoyment mode having the five certainties, and the result apparitional mode having the five non-certainties. Please keep this in mind.

NOTES

2. Mind is used here as the translation for *Sems, citta*. In this context it does not refer to cognitive function, to the analysis of situations, to reflection on topics, or to working with thoughts as a means to clarity. These are all functions of mental activity operating in the sphere of duality. The term ‘mind’ in this context refers to awareness, presence, clarity, the basic noetic capacity that is inseparable from the open ungraspable ground of all. As sentient beings, we have access to it since it is our own ground, yet it is never ours, as it cannot be possessed. Whatever occurs in our ordinary mental functioning is the radiance of the intrinsic. The intrinsic is not created out of ordinary mental functioning.
3. The intrinsic way is unconditioned. It is not a way to somewhere but is the way everything truly is as it is.
4. If we think in terms of beginning, mind has no beginning. There is no time when it was not. Time is a concept arising and passing in mind. Mind has no source; it does not come from or arise from anything. It is unborn and so it is void and free of inherent existence.
If we think in terms of our mind being here with us, and try to identify it in terms of location and duration we find that it is elusive for our concepts cannot catch it. It is beyond conceptualisation and is not an object that can be reached by thought. When you think about it you are merely thinking about your idea if it, and this is not how it actually is. It is not an idea, a name, or a sign. It is unlocatable and so it is void and free of inherent existence.
If we think in terms of ending, mind, having no beginning, has no substance that could be exhausted or come to an end. The mind is not a thought that can be moved from here to there. It has no destination, no place to arrive at, since all places are merely its display and so it is void and free of inherent existence.
5. For example, to appear as an honest man in a land of thieves.