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SELF-LIBERATING KNOWING

THE ULTIMATE GREAT PERFECTION
PROFOUND METHOD OF AWAKENING

PATRUL RINPOCHE

This text by Patrul Rinpoche is very different in style from his previous work on the Two Truths as its focus is clearly on practice. Here he indicates that the view and practice he will describe are the true essence of all the dharma teachings. "It is the essential nectar of all the sutras and tantras, the pure essence of all the secret mantra vidyadharas. It is the one teaching of mahamudra, the great perfection, and the middle way."

Patrul Rinpoche shows how the dzogchen view illuminates all meditation problems. He points out that there is no need for a variety of antidotes specific to different problems since the insightful application of one basic principle to all situations will be sufficient. Our ordinary consciousness (rNam-Shes) arises together with its objects and through interaction develops various responses to situations which it perceives to be essentially different from itself. This is the experience of fragmentation, of a world of discrete objects inhabited by beings who seem to become different in different situations, for example when making love or talking to their employers. However from the dzogchen viewpoint there is just one ground to all that occurs as samsara and nirvana, and this open empty ground offers no basis for subject/object duality. If this is seen directly intrinsic integrity is revealed. Yet until one is stable in openness habitual distractedness may return with the full potential of reified subject/object interaction.

The dzogchen view is distinctive in stating that integration cannot be achieved through managing fragmentation. Integrity is intrinsic and it is solely by relaxing all dispersive arousal into the open ground that the delusion of fragmentation will cease. If you have many antidotes that you can apply to meditation problems then, no matter how useful or effective these

antidotes are, their very multiplicity will be a factor sustaining the false and confusing experience of fragmentation.

Patrul Rinpoche highlights this by saying, "Desirable or undesirable, for whatever arises just remain without artifice on the arising." This is the message that is repeated again and again throughout the text, and though the formulation of the words may be slightly different the essential point is always the same. Like a master of aikido the dzogchen meditator lets the energy of the problem be the energy of its liberation. The meditator's responsibility is to move out of the line of involved connectivity so that attachment and conflict do not arise. All that manifests becomes self-liberating since there is no anxious self eager to cause either obstruction or engagement.

THE TEXT

A teaching from the heart of a ragged gentleman.

Wonderful!

Never moving from the state of the perfect intrinsic mode,
 Having cut the root of delusion, you are the Primordial Buddha.
 Samantabhadra, may I quickly actualise
 Your perspicacity, just as it is.

If you fortunate people wish to gain enlightenment then diligently practise the true meaning of these three words from the heart of this wandering beggar, the old dog Patrul.

That which is known as emptiness intrinsic mode is the fulfilment of the vows of all guru adepts. It is the understanding of all the buddhas of the three times. It is the life essence of all the deities, the heart-blood of all the dakinis and the site of all the dharma protectors. It is the essential nectar of all the sutras and tantras, the pure essence of all the secret mantra vidyadharas. It is the one teaching of mahamudra, the great perfection, and the middle way.

I will introduce you to the inseparability of your own mind and the intrinsic mode. Knowing this, everything is liberated. This one is sufficient to rule. It is the ultimate truth of mahamudra. If you see it in the morning, you'll be a buddha in the morning. If you see it in the evening, you'll be a buddha in the evening. So it is said. This great name has a great meaning. All of these titles and attributes refer simply to remaining in the self-arising non-artificiality of the emptiness of your own mind.

If you yogis and yoginis wish to unmistakably actualise this pure view, remain clear and alert in the state of non-artificial voidness. If the mind stays still, then remain without artifice on that staying. If there is no recollection, then remain on that non-recollection. In brief, remain without artifice on whatever arises in the mind. Do not react, neither encouraging nor inhibiting. For whatever arises, just remain without artifice on that which is arising. Don't hold your mind 'here'. Don't seek 'there' after objects. Remain without artifice exactly on the mind of the looker and thinker. Don't hold your own mind 'here'. Don't seek 'there' for the object of meditation. Remain without artifice exactly on the mind that is doing the meditation.

Your mind is not found by seeking. Mind itself (*Sems-Nyid*) has been empty from the very beginning. Seeking is not necessary for the seeker is thatness itself (*De-Nyid*). Remain unwaveringly on the one who is seeking. Understanding or not understanding, true or not true, existing or not existing – no matter what comes just remain without artifice on the one who is thinking. Good or bad, pleasing or dirty, happy or sad, for whatever recollection arises, without accepting or rejecting, just remain without artifice on the one who is doing the recollecting. Desirable or undesirable, for whatever arises just remain without artifice on the arising.

Moreover in the *SNYAN-RGYUD* it is said, “*The non-artificial ground is mahamudra (Phyag-rGya Chen-Po). The non-artificial path is the great middle way (dBu-Ma Chen-Po). The non-artificial result is the great perfection (rDzogs-Pa ChenPo)*”.

With great subtlety this non-artificiality removes all obstacles. When the mind is disturbed and fluctuates between no thoughts and many thoughts, keep body, voice and mind very calm and relaxed. Then in that state remain unwaveringly in uninvolved attention to whatever is occurring. When faint thoughts arise that hover on the edge of awareness, alert your awareness and remain in calm clarity that is truly awake.

When the mind is sinking, foggy or obscured don't desire the experiences of happiness and clarity but keep mind in its own place without reacting. When the mind is happy or sad, remain unwaveringly on the doer of the happiness or sadness.

When happiness, elation, success, pride or honour arise, remember that they are the grand appearance of the power of the demon of elation (*dGa'-Brod bDud*). If you don't discard them you will soon be deflated, so remain calm in body and mind. Fever, sorrow, theft, robbery, insults, abuse, beatings, problems, famine – when such things occur don't be dejected, don't frown and don't cry. Remain buoyant, happy and smiling.

TEACHING ON THE MIND'S HIDDEN FAULTS

Some great meditators, both male and female, think they are not able to awaken to how their mind is and so they become sad and many tears fall. There is no need for sorrow. There is no basis for not being able to awaken to this. Simply remain on the one who thinks they are not able to awaken to how their mind is.

Some great meditators say that how the mind is is difficult to grasp. It is not at all difficult. The error is in not understanding meditation. There is no need to seek meditation and there is no need to buy it. There is no need to make it and no need to go for it. There is no need to work at meditation. It is sufficient to remain in the state of allowing the free arising of whatever occurs in the mind. From the very beginning your mind has been present and so there is no need for (ideas of) losing or finding, having or not having. The mind has been present from the very beginning, so whether thinking when thinking, or not thinking when not thinking, this mind is just itself. For whatever arises in the mind it is sufficient to remain without artificiality, calmly and unwaveringly on whatever is occurring. Happiness and ease will come without effort. When dharma practice seems difficult, that is simply a sign of one's own errors and defilements.

Some great meditators do not remain as is necessary on the mind itself, but do much unnecessary looking there and searching here for mind. By such looking there and searching here, the mind is not revealed. This is the error of not seeing the true meaning. Looking there and searching here are not needed. Simply remain on the mind which is looking there and searching here.

Some great meditators do not let their mind remain on thoughts if there are thoughts, and on no thoughts if there are no thoughts. They think thoughts come from somewhere else and then go looking there and searching here, and consequently do not awaken to their mind. There is no need to look there or search here, simply let the mind remain on thoughts if there are thoughts, and on no thoughts if there are no thoughts.

Some great meditators do not keep in mind that this mind is actually empty. They think it is and then they think it isn't and they create many doubts. This is the error of not awakening to the actuality of the mind. There is no need for doubts. Your own mind has been empty from the very beginning so simply remain in that state of emptiness. If doubts arise simply remain exactly on the doubts.

Some great meditators do not look at the mind that is recollecting. They look instead at the misleading objects of recollection such as earth or stones – there are many who do this. By doing this the pure view is not gained for they have the view of dualism (subject and object). Look by remaining on the recollector.

Some great meditators do not abide in the inseparability of appearance and mind but go chasing after appearances instead. That is not the pure view. It is the view of dualistic experience. Do not follow appearances outside. Do not pull the self inside. Maintain the inseparability of appearance and mind.

Some great meditators do not rest in their own place but look at whatever thoughts arise, like a cat waiting expectantly for a mouse. If thoughts arise, stay on the arising and if thoughts don't arise, stay on the non-arising.

Some great meditators do not know how to remain on mind itself and go following after memories. This is not the pure view. This is pursuing recollection. Do not pursue recollection but remain on the recollector.

Some great meditators do not remain on the mind however it is, whatever is happening. They like 'good' meditation and so struggle fiercely to control the mind. This is not the pure view. Mind is not artificial so don't do anything artificial or contrived. Let the mind remain in its own place with whatever arises being allowed to come.

Some great meditators strongly control and edit whatever recollections arise and thus they bind their mind. This is not the pure view. This is obstruction of the mind. If mind is settled, stay on that settledness. If mind is changing, then stay on the changes.

Some great meditators carelessly keep the mind vacant and unfocused. This is not the pure view. It is the view of a vacant mind. Remain clear and sharp in the presence of emptiness.

Some great meditators think that the mind itself is empty and then meditate like that. But that is not the pure view. It is meditating to manufacture emptiness. Remain on the one who thinks that it is emptiness.

Some great meditators when they experience bliss, calm, emptiness, great clarity and so on, look at it very roughly and intensely. And when there is emptiness with no object occurring, they cease to look at all. This is not the pure view. This is discrimination. Without engaging in any discrimination whatsoever, remain on whatever arises.

Some great meditators look when good recollections arise and don't look when bad or common recollections occur. This is not the pure view. This is looking at the good and avoiding the bad. Without looking at the good or avoiding the bad, remain unwaveringly on whatever good or bad recollections occur.

Some great meditators like it when their mind is happy and get angry with their mind if wild disturbing thoughts arise. This is not the pure view. This is the error of not knowing how to stay with the true actuality of whatever arises. When wild thoughts arise, relax the mind and remain on the wildness itself.

Some great meditators do not tighten or relax attention according to the current need. This is not the pure view. It is allowing oneself to become a little artificial and is the error of not knowing how the mind abides. By tightening and slackening when necessary, and not tightening or slackening when not necessary, remain clear and alert in the natural flow of the mind (*Rang-Babs*).

Some great meditators are not able to remain in meditation when they remember the sweet taste of good food and drink. They get up and search for tasty food and drink and when they find it they enjoy it. By acting like this the sustenance of contemplation is lost and true meditation is not achieved. Due to the joys of delicious tastes great meditators become useless and tormented. So without longing for the sweet taste of fine food and drink, focus on your need for the sustenance of contemplation.

Some great meditators cannot remain in meditation when happiness, status, pleasure, praise and so on occur, and instead become really happy, pleased and excited. And when sorrow, problems, illness, abuse, prosecution and so on arise, they also cannot meditate. With a grim face like a black cloud they say that it is all very difficult and tears fall from their eyes. By acting like that the good dharma of being able to experience happiness and sadness as equal is not achieved. Going under the power of happiness and sorrow and the rest of the eight worldly attitudes¹ they do not gain the dharma. They become ordinary people used to bad habits. So you must practise maintaining an even attitude to whatever arises, be it happy or sad.

AN EXPLANATION OF MIND'S ACTIVITY

From the very beginning mind itself has been free of substance. When it is looked for, nothing is seen and thus it is empty. Yet it is not empty for it is radiant awareness. The inseparability of awareness and emptiness is pervasive like the sky. Although you try to keep mind steady it cannot be fixed and goes everywhere directly. And although you do not try to hold it, it returns to its own place. Although it is without hands or feet it is always moving. Though you send it

away it won't go but returns to its own place. It has no eye yet is aware of everything. The appearances of awareness become empty. The mind itself is said to be nothing yet although it is nothing, perceptions and experiences occur. It does not exist because it becomes empty. It does not not exist because perceptions and experiences manifest. The clarity of the union of appearance and emptiness radiates out. The clear and empty intrinsic mode has radiant self-expression with the five original knowings² spreading fully.

The primordially pure intrinsic way effortlessly appears and the integrated modes (*sKu*) and realms (*Zhing-Khams*) arise ceaselessly. The mother (innate) and son (practice) clarities are merged as one. The intrinsic way of mind is like this. Are you awake to this, you Awakened Ones? Do you know this, you Knowledgeable Ones? Yogis, this is what you must practise!

INSTRUCTION ON SELF-LIBERATING CONFUSION

Just as poison can become like medicine, emptiness is free of avarice. Avarice arises due to the power of confusion. Without confusion watch the one who gives rise to avarice. Practise this looking without wavering and avarice will be purified and become empty. Remain unwavering in the presence of emptiness. This is the purity of avarice. There is no generosity higher than this. Yogis, to awaken to this is wonderful!

Emptiness is free of desire. Desire arises due to the power of confusion. Without confusion watch the one who gives rise to desire. Practise this looking without wavering and desire will be purified and become empty. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of emptiness. This is the purity of desire. There is no higher morality than this. Yogis, to awaken to this is wonderful!

Emptiness is free of anger. Anger arises due to the power of confusion. Without confusion watch the one who gives rise to anger. Practise this looking without wavering and anger will be purified and become empty. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of emptiness. This is the purity of anger. There is no higher patience than this. Yogis, to awaken to this is wonderful!

Emptiness is free of laziness. Laziness arises due to the power of confusion. Without confusion watch the one who gives rise to laziness. Practise this looking without wavering and laziness will be purified and become empty. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of emptiness. This is the purity of laziness. There is no higher diligence than this. Yogis, to awaken to this is wonderful!

Emptiness is free of distraction. Distraction arises due to the power of confusion. Without confusion watch the one who gives rise to distraction. Practise this looking without wavering and distraction will be purified and become empty. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of emptiness. This is the purity of distraction. There is no higher concentration than this. Yogis, to awaken to this is wonderful!

Emptiness is free of assuming. Assuming arises due to the power of confusion. Without confusion watch the one who gives rise to assuming. Practise this looking without wavering and assuming will be purified and become empty. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of

emptiness. This is the purity of assuming. There is no higher wisdom than this. Yogis, to awaken to this is wonderful!

Emptiness is free of craving. Craving arises due to the power of confusion. Without confusion watch the one who gives rise to craving. Practise this looking without wavering and craving will be purified and become empty. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of emptiness. This is the purity of craving. There is no higher satisfaction than this. Yogis, to awaken to this is wonderful!

AN EXPLANATION OF THE SELF-LIBERATION OF THE AFFLICTIONS

Regarding the transformation of the afflictions into original knowing, in the state of non-distraction there is no suffering. Suffering arises due to the power of confusion. Without distraction watch how suffering actually is. Suffering vanishes and becomes empty. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of empty clarity. This is the purity of suffering. It is known as the great bliss intrinsic mode.

The state of non-distraction is free of affliction. Affliction arises due to the fault of distraction. Without distraction watch how affliction actually is. Practise this watching meditation without wavering and affliction will become empty. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of emptiness. This is the purity of affliction. It is known as the unborn intrinsic mode.

The state of non-distraction is free of aversion. Aversion arises due to the fault of distraction. Without distraction watch how aversion actually is. Practise this watching meditation without wavering and aversion will vanish and become empty. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of clarity. This is the purity of aversion. It is known as the mirror-like original knowing.

The state of non-distraction is free of pride. Pride arises due to the fault of distraction. Without distraction watch how pride actually is. Practise this watching meditation without wavering and pride will vanish and become clarity. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of empty clarity. This is the purity of pride. This is known as the original knowing of perfect equality.

The state of non-distraction is free of attraction. Attraction arises due the fault of distraction. Without distraction watch how attraction actually is. Practise this watching meditation without distraction and attraction will vanish and become empty clarity. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of empty clarity. This is the purity of attraction. It is known as the original knowing of detailed discernment.

The state of non-distraction is free of jealousy. Jealousy arises due to the fault of distraction. Without distraction watch how jealousy actually is. Practise this watching meditation without wavering and jealousy will vanish and become empty clarity. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of empty clarity. This is the purity of jealousy. It is known as the original knowing of unlimited accomplishment.

The state of non-distraction is free of assuming. Assuming arises due to the fault of distraction. Without distraction watch how assuming actually is. Practise this watching meditation and

assuming will vanish and become empty clarity. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of empty clarity. This is the purity of assuming. It is known as the original knowing of all-encompassing space.

The state of non-distraction is free of sinking and fogginess (*Bying-rMug*). Sinking and fogginess obscure due to the fault of distraction. Without distraction watch how sinking and fogginess actually are. Practise this watching meditation without wavering and sinking and fogginess will vanish and become empty clarity. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of empty clarity. This is the purity of sinking and fogginess. It is known as the original knowing of emptiness and clarity.

The state of non-distraction is free of frisky dispersal³ (*'Thor-rGod*). Frisky dispersal arises due to the fault of distraction. Without distraction watch how frisky dispersal actually is. Practise this watching meditation without wavering and frisky dispersal will vanish and become empty clarity. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of empty clarity. This is the purity of frisky dispersal. It is known as the unchanging original knowing.

The state of non-distraction is free of the three poisons⁴. The three poisons arise due to the fault of distraction. Without distraction watch how the three poisons actually are. Practise this watching meditation without wavering and the three poisons will vanish and become empty clarity. Remain unwaveringly in the presence of empty clarity. This is the purity of the three poisons. It is known as the original knowing of the three modes (*sKu gSum Ye-Shes*).

IN ORDER TO DEVELOP CERTAINTY, AN EXPLANATION OF HOW MIND REVEALS ITSELF

Sometimes no ideas come to the mind of great meditators. Your mind is vacant and empty. When that happens stay clearly on the mind itself without doing anything artificial.

Sometimes the mind is very dark and vacant and you are not able to clear it. When that happens sharpen your awareness and remain exactly on that.

Sometimes the mind is very sad. When that happens brighten up, relax and sit happily and at peace.

Sometimes the mind rests only for an instant as subtle thoughts come and go. When that happens bring the mind into relaxed attentiveness and remain there.

Sometimes awareness flickers feebly in and out of focus. When that happens gently draw the mind into clarity like pulling a hair out of a lump of butter. Then remain unwaveringly in that presence.

Sometimes many difficult ideas flood in and out and you cannot be still even for an instant. When that happens relax the body, relax the mind, and then gently control your distraction while still giving the mind room to move.

Sometimes you don't want to meditate; you're unhappy and just can't stay with it. When that happens pray strongly to your guru and keep your ideas light, happy, calm and contented.

Sometimes the mind is so clear and happy and joyous you feel like dancing. When that happens stay relaxed without forcefully grasping your mind.

All these ways that the mind reveals itself arise for beginners who have not clearly awakened to their own intrinsic way. Those who abide in that clear awakening have no basis for such things to arise from.

Moreover, to give just a little more explanation, when the intrinsic way is clearly awakened to, the view is not needed as clarity spreads by itself. Meditation is not needed since mind itself is truly awakened to in its own place. Distraction is not needed since mind itself is always fulfilled. Movement is not needed since awareness pervades like the sky. Artificiality is not needed since mind rests in the presence of clarity.

With your mind merged inseparably in the presence of clarity, without distraction you awaken to how the mind is in its own place. Then when spontaneous clarity arises from the presence of emptiness as the intrinsic mode, your own mind is inseparable from the buddha. The modes of your presence (*sKu*) are inseparable from the realm of their dwelling (*Zhing-Kham*). Free of all hopes and doubts, egotism, joy and sadness; free of all the myriad doubts of discriminating thought – that is how you will be when you truly awaken to your mind.

HOW TO PRACTISE THE FOUR ASPECTS OF BEHAVIOUR

When you great meditators go out walking, don't jump about or run around like a madman. Relax your body and mind and in that state move with your mind maintained in non-distraction.

When you great meditators are sitting down, don't throw away your mala but use it to steady your thoughts. Sit up straight in the proper position and keep your mind fresh and clear.

When you great meditators sleep, do not sleep in mental dullness like a corpse. Merge sleep with the state of unwavering clarity.

When you great meditators are eating and drinking, perceive the food and drink as blessed nectar and your own body as the hundred peaceful and wrathful deities in the unwavering openness of mind itself.

Whether going or staying or sleeping, always act from the presence of the inseparability of emptiness and then your own mind will be inseparable from the buddha.

IF YOU WISH TO BE FREE OF REGRET AT THE POINT OF DEATH THEN YOU MUST PRACTISE AS FOLLOWS

You must serve a guru having all good qualities.

You must abandon all worldly activities and all conceptual elaborations.
 You must not allow your diligence to waver for even an instant.
 You must be able to patiently bear the life of a solitary hermit.
 You must endure the hardship of destroying your concern with food and drink.
 You need the view that is clear of any kind of duality whatsoever.
 You need the meditation that is constantly and unwaveringly clear.
 You need the conduct that is free of effort and discrimination.
 You need the result of the inseparability of your mind from the buddha.
 You need vows that are free of hidden desires.
 You need to be totally free of desire and avarice.

Make sure you practise these necessary things, you fortunate dharma practitioners.

THE GOOD ARMOUR THAT IS THE FRIEND OF MEDITATION

If you want the good armour that is the friend of meditation then you should practise as follows:

- Reject being an important official with many staff and servants.
- Reject being the owner of wealth and possessions.
- Reject being responsible for many valuables.
- Reject being the leader of those who are near to you.
- Reject having attachment to friends and aversion to enemies.
- Reject manufacture, trade and industry.
- Reject being responsible for trade and profit.

If these things are not rejected then your mind will become distracted. If they are rejected then by awakening to your mind's true place, buddhahood will be actualised.

Nowadays with wise gurus teaching and intelligent students practising, many people are able to understand their mind. Yet few are able to awaken to the true meaning (*Yang-Dag Don*). The true actuality of mind is empty and clear. The basis for one person actualising it is the same basis for all to actualise it. Become clear about it by questioning those who know. Knowledge comes from questioning many learned people. Free yourself from doubt and meditate!

ESSENTIAL ADVICE FOR GREAT MEDITATORS

Nowadays, for some gurus and disciples, the gurus teach wrongly and the students practise wrongly. Then even if they meditate till they are seventy or eighty no awakening comes. There are many people like this. There are many who make a false show of awakening. There are many who practise ignorant stupid meditation. There are many who are most diligent in meaningless activities.

So gurus, teach wisely! Students, meditate well! Do not be proud but question the wise. Don't be artificial but go right to the source of your mind. Don't deceive yourself. Remove all doubts!

NOTES

1. Gain and loss; fame and notoriety; praise and blame; happiness and sorrow.
2. The original knowings of all-encompassing space, detailed discernment, mirror-like clarity, perfect equality, and total accomplishment.
3. This occurs when thoughts, feelings, and sensations rapidly trigger each other into associative and dissociative patterns. This engenders a loss of focus in experience.
4. Stupidity or assuming, aversion and attraction. With ignorance there is no awareness of the open ground of all. This gives rise to stupefaction and dullness which then gives rise to the delusional pseudo-clarity of relying on signs to make sense of what is going on. This in turn generates the myriad assumptions that sentient beings hold in the six realms. These assumptions seemingly establish the truth of how they take things to be, and so their imaginings blind them to how experience actually is.