

# The Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness

Stage II

## LOOKING FOR A WISH-FULFILLING JEWEL



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Teachings by Jim Scott

## LOOKING FOR A WISH-FULFILLING JEWEL

<b>LOOKING QUICKLY FOR A SELF .....</b>	<b>3</b>
The Transitory Collection.....	3
<b>THE SONGS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Light Offering.....	5
2. Giving Rise to Bodhicitta.....	5
3. Arousing Bodhicitta .....	5
4. An excerpt from Eight Flashing Lances .....	5
5. Eight Things to Remember .....	6
6. The Problem with Self.....	7
7. Words of Dakini Niguma.....	7
8. Six Questions.....	8
9. Three Nails.....	8
10. Twenty-Seven Cases of Dissolution.....	9
11. The Seed .....	12
12. A Summary of Maitreya's Text, Distinguishing Phenomena and Pure Being.....	12
13. Excerpts from Eight Flashing Lances .....	13
14. Excerpts from The Essence of Clear Light Sunshine: A Commentary on The Three Nails .....	13
15. Song of Equality.....	13
16. Seven Delights.....	14
17. What Mind Is .....	15
18. Appearance Emptiness Equality .....	15
19. Impartial Aspiration Prayer .....	16
20. Milarepa's Dedication .....	16
21. Friends .....	16
22. Self-Appearing Illusion.....	17
23. Long Life Supplication for Khenchen Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche .....	17
24. Long Life Prayer of Amassed Blessing Clouds for Jim Scott.....	18
<b>THE ANALYSIS: HOW TO FIND THE WISH-FULFILLING JEWEL .....</b>	<b>19</b>
The Basics of Chittamatra.....	19
<b>A) Practice involving something to focus on.....</b>	<b>19</b>
i. Phenomena are mind because they are the confused projections of habitual tendencies .....	19
ii. Phenomena are mind because they are the natural display of pure being .....	20
<i>Some Helpful Advice from Khenpo Rinpoche.....</i>	<i>20</i>
The imputed aspect .....	23
The dependent aspect .....	23
The perfectly present aspect .....	24
<b>B) The practice involving nothing to focus on.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>C) The practice involving no subject to focus on.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>D) The practice whose focus is the suchness.....</b>	<b>24</b>
A Presentation of Chittamatra in Verses by Khenchen Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche.....	25
The Chittamatra Aspiration .....	25

## LOOKING QUICKLY FOR A SELF

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### The Transitory Collection

The definition of “self” is that which has the three characteristics of being single, lasting and independent. Nevertheless, we all have an instinctive idea of self, which has no specific definition. It is not something we have questioned. It is just what we call “I”, “me”, “my”, “mine” without thinking about it. And we always mix this instinctive idea of self with the skandhas or aggregates.

To clear up the confusion involved here, we need to distinguish between self and person. The person is the continuum of the skandhas, which exist relatively as mere appearances; but “self” is a label we associate with the person.

We could say the person is made up of 3 skandhas: body, mental formations, and consciousness, although they are commonly referred to as 5. The Buddha, upon seeing the relevance of two kinds of mental formations, namely, feelings and discrimination, decided to single them out to stress the need to pay particular attention to them.

*Feelings*, commonly referred to as the second skandha, is the main source of suffering for worldly people. While *discrimination*, the third skandha, is the main source of suffering for monastics, who, having abandoned the mundane life, they are not so exposed to feelings related to romantic relationships and family, but are exposed to discriminations regarding the various views from the schools of philosophical tenet, and so on. In this way, we have a total of 5 skandhas: body, feeling, discrimination, mental formations, and consciousness.

Now, the **transitory collection** is the name given to the 20 different misinterpretations that can occur in relation to self and skandhas. They consist of 4 misunderstandings regarding each one of the 5 skandhas, making up a total of 20 views. These four are the following:

- i. The self is the same as a given skandha
- ii. The self is something different from the skandha
- iii. The self is the base for the skandha
- iv. The skandha is the base for the self

To name an example of each wrong view regarding every skandha making up the 20 perishables:

Skandha of **body**:

1. The self is the body, e.g., *I am sick*
2. The self is something different from the body, e.g., *I have a headache*

3. The self is the base for the body, e.g., thinking I have this particular body due to this particular separate self: *I am kindhearted, that is why I have gotten this graceful body*
4. The body is the base for the self, e.g., thinking the self is located somewhere in the body, like in the brain or behind the eyes; also, e.g., pointing to the chest when referring to me

#### Skandha of **feelings**:

5. The self is the feeling, e.g., *I am happy*
6. The self is something other than the feeling, e.g., *I have fallen in love*
7. The self is the base for the feeling, e.g., *I am myself a sensitive person, therefore this feeling of love manifests*
8. The feeling is the base for the self, e.g., *I found myself feeling like never before*

#### Skandha of **discrimination**:

9. The self is the same as the discriminating ability, e.g., *I am right*
10. The self is different from the discrimination, e.g., *I have superior discernment*
11. The self is the basis for the discrimination, e.g., *I am intelligent; this is why my discernment is superior*
12. The discrimination is the basis for the self, e.g., *Reflecting on eastern philosophy, I found out I am Buddhist*

#### Skandha of **mental formations**:

13. The self is the same as the mental formation, e.g., *I am angry*
14. The self is something other than the mental formation, e.g., *I have angry emotions*
15. The self is the basis for the mental formation, e.g., *Since I am human, I experience disturbing emotions*
16. The mental formations are the basis for the self, e.g., *The anger made me who I am*

#### Skandha of **consciousness**:

17. The self is the same as the consciousness, e.g., *I am watching TV* (as in identifying oneself with the eye consciousness or with the mental consciousness ascribing the name "TV")
18. The self is something other than the consciousness, e.g., *I have a vivid consciousness*
19. The self is the basis for the consciousness, e.g., *I am human; therefore I think*. Or e.g., thinking the consciousness is located in the body (only if I am, at the same time, believing self and body are the same thing)
20. The consciousness is the basis for the self, e.g., *I am myself a manifestation of consciousness*; or e.g., *I think; therefore I am*.

## THE SONGS

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### 1. Light Offering

May the shining light of this candle flame we offer  
To the ten directions' Victors and their Heirs  
Remove the darkness of all beings' ignorance;  
May the shining light of knowledge and wisdom blaze!

*Spoken by Khenchen Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, translated and arranged by Jim Scott*

### 2. Giving Rise to Bodhicitta

The precious supreme bodhicitta  
Where it has not arisen, may it arise  
And where it has arisen, may it never decline  
But continue increasing further, further and beyond

*Copyright 2015 by Marpa Foundation and the translator. Translated and arranged for song by Jim Scott*

### 3. Arousing Bodhicitta

An excerpt from the *Thirty-Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva*

From beginning-less time, my mothers have cherished me.  
What's the point of my happiness, if they are left suffering?  
So, in order to liberate the countless numbers of sentient beings,  
To arouse bodhicitta is a bodhisattva's practice.

*Copyright 2015 by Marpa Foundation and the translator. Translated and arranged for song by Jim Scott, 2015.*

### 4. An excerpt from Eight Flashing Lances

Self-concern's ambitions are exhausted  
Uplifting waves of love without contention  
Tireless, relentless, not self-seeking  
These are three which make compassion fully free  
Like a lance that flashes free in the open sky

*Composed by the lord Götsangpa  
Under the guidance of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, translated and arranged by Jim Scott, Kamalashila, Schloss Wachendorf, Germany, 7 Aug. 1996*

## 5. Eight Things to Remember

At the moment you are fond of large estate sites,  
You surround yourself with a manor and its grounds;  
But when your time to go has come, you'll have to leave it  
Behind you like an empty shell.

Are you aware that this is what will happen?  
You'd do well to remember and keep it well in mind.

At the moment you are fond of fame and fortune,  
You surround yourself with power and pomp;  
But when your time to go has come, who will you turn to?  
Not a refuge in this sorry world for you.

Are you aware that this is what will happen?  
You'd do well to remember and keep it well in mind.

At the moment you are fond of family relations,  
You surround yourself with relatives and friends.  
But when your time to go has come, you'll have to leave them—  
Kin and dear ones, every last one.

Are you aware that this is what will happen?  
You'd do well to remember and keep it well in mind.

At the moment you like admirers and helpers,  
You surround yourself with children and good things;  
But when your time to go has come, you'll leave without them—  
Empty-handed and stark naked you'll depart.

Are you aware that this is what will happen?  
You'd do well to remember and keep it well in mind.

At the moment you are fond of material comforts,  
You surround yourself with the status of success;  
But when your time to go has come, your body will fail you—  
Then it's fit for nothing more than to put in the ground.

Are you aware that this is what will happen?  
You'd do well to remember and keep it well in mind.

At the moment you are fond of your good condition,  
Your faculties work and your physical state is fine;

But when your time to go has come, it's another story—  
You no longer have any power over your mind.  
Are you aware that this is what will happen?  
You'd do well to remember and keep it well in mind.

At the moment you are fond of the palate's pleasures,  
You surround yourself with delicious food to eat;  
But when your time to go has come, your appetite dwindles—  
You won't even manage to get a little water down.  
Are you aware that this is what will happen?  
You'd do well to remember and keep it well in mind.

By keeping these in mind I practice dharma,  
I know the bliss of having no worldly goods.  
This melody on eight things to remember,  
Sung at the Karakache Inn in Tsang,  
Composed by I, the yogi, Milarepa,  
May it give you the boost you need to practice well.

*Sung to the merchant Dawa Norbu at an inn in the northern part of Yeru. page 315. Translated and arranged by Jim Scott, KTC, New York City, Summer 1995*

## **6. The Problem with Self**

Wherever there is self, there's a sense of other too;  
With self and other, anger and attachment follow too.  
And, through complete involvement in everything like this,  
All the problematic states in all their guises manifest.

*Verse from the Commentary on Valid Cognition by Dharmakirti  
Translated and arranged by Jim Scott, Karma Chöling, November 2002*

## **7. Words of Dakini Niguma**

What throws you down into samsara's deep ocean  
Are these thoughts of attachment and anger.  
But realize they don't truly exist,  
And all is an island of gold!

*Composed by The Wisdom Dakini Niguma. Translator and composer of melody unknown.*

## 8. Six Questions

Mind has even more projections than there are dust motes in the sun;  
Is there an accomplished yogi here or a yogini  
Who sees the appearance of things laid bare in the very bed where it lies?

The basic nature of things is not produced by cause or condition;  
Is there an accomplished yogi here or a yogini  
Who gets to the very bottom of this, cuts down to its very root?

Mind's impulse to sudden thought cannot be stopped by hundreds with spears;  
Is there an accomplished yogi here or a yogini  
Who sees that attachment can dissolve, be freed in and of itself?

The movement of thinking mind cannot be locked in an iron box;  
Is there an accomplished yogi here or a yogini  
Who sees that discursive mind itself is empty in itself?

The sensory enjoyments even wisdom deities do not shun;  
Is there an accomplished yogi here or a yogini  
Who's able to see through the transparency of the process of consciousness?

What about the appearance of the six kinds of objects that go with the consciousnesses—  
Not even the hands of Victorious Ones can put a stop to that;  
Is there an accomplished yogi here or a yogini  
Who can see there is no object there behind the appearances?

*Translated and arranged by Jim Scott, Tibetan page 270*

## 9. Three Nails

SUNG AT TIGER CAVE LION FORTRESS IN YOLMO, NEPAL

Beloved lama, bless me to naturally rest  
In the view, meditation and conduct you have lived

The nails to be driven related to view are three  
The nails to be driven in meditation are three  
The nails to be driven related to conduct are three  
The nails to be driven in terms of result are three

To describe the nails that go with view, the three



Are life's appearances being a factor of mind  
In luminosity's space is native mind  
In that there is no discrimination at all

To describe the nails of meditation, the three  
All thoughts in being dharmakaya are free  
Awareness is luminous, in its depths is bliss  
And resting without contrivance is equipoise

To describe the nails of conduct, there are three  
The ten wholesome deeds are the natural expression of conduct  
The ten unwholesome are naturally pure in their ground  
And luminous emptiness strategies cannot create

To describe the nails that go with result, the three  
Nirvana is nothing imported from somewhere else  
Samsara is nothing deported to somewhere else  
I've discovered for sure; the mind is the buddha, your mind

Now with all of these nails, there is one to be driven home  
This nail is the nail of pure being's emptiness  
A genuine lama knows how to drive it home  
If you analyze too much, you won't get it in

Coemergent realization drives it home  
These tools providing some teaching are meant to be shared  
They occurred to the mind of the yogi, who put them to song  
May they gladden the hearts of you son and daughter disciples

*Translated and arranged by Jim Scott, Tibetan page 259*

## **10. Twenty-Seven Cases of Dissolution**

Master and hidden buddha in human form  
You with the name not spoken lightly, lotsawa  
Father who've been so kind, at your feet I bow

I am no singer of Vedic song  
You spirit said, "Sing a song, sing me a song"  
In answer, here's a melody that sings of basic being

Thunder and lightning and floating clouds  
Whenever these appear, from the sky they appear  
And when they dissolve, into the sky they dissolve

Rainbows and fog banks and sleet, these three  
Whenever these appear, from the blue they appear  
And when they dissolve, into the blue they dissolve

Pollen and harvest and fruit, these three  
Whenever these appear, from the earth they appear  
And when they dissolve, into the earth they dissolve

Forests and flowers and foliage, these three  
Whenever these appear, from the mountain they appear  
And when they dissolve, into the mountain they dissolve

Rivers, foaming waters and waves, these three  
Whenever these appear, from the ocean they appear  
And when they dissolve, into the ocean they dissolve

Attachment as patterns, perception, holding on  
Whenever these appear, from the all-base they appear  
And when they dissolve, into the all-base they dissolve

Self-aware, self-luminous, self-liberated too  
Whenever these appear, from the mind itself appear  
And when they dissolve, into the mind itself dissolve

The unborn and unceasing and inexpressible  
Whenever these appear, from pure being they appear  
And when they dissolve, into pure being they dissolve

What appears as, is perceived as, and is thought of as a ghost  
Whenever these appear, from the yogi they appear  
And when they dissolve, into the yogi they dissolve

The blocking spirits, magical creations of the mind  
Your own projections empty, with this not realized  
The yogi takes these ghosts as real, into delusion falls

The root of delusion grows out of the mind  
By gaining realization of the essence of the mind  
Clear light is seen to be quite free of coming, going too

Objects seeming outside, a delusion of your mind  
And through examination of appearances' traits  
Appearance and its emptiness you realize are not two

When you think it's meditation, meditation is a thought  
"I'll do non-meditation" is another thought again  
Meditation and non-meditation, not two different things

A view involving dualism forms delusion's base  
There is no view or theory in reality itself  
And all of these examples show the character of mind

Consider well examples illustrating space's traits  
Their point will be quite clear to you, pure being's reality  
Then view for you is look into what's real, past thinking mind

In the depths of meditation, without wandering, just rest  
Keep a flow of natural conduct flowing, don't let it get lost  
For fruition toss all terms away, along with hope and fear

Spirit, claim this dharma inheritance that's yours  
I have no time to while away in endless empty songs  
Don't think or question more just now, but teach your tongue to rest

A spirit said to sing a song and so I've done just that  
And now the words that came of this, the words of a crazy man  
Are for you to put to practice, spirit, if you can

For food you then will feed on the food of great bliss  
For drink you'll quench your thirst on a nectar undefiled  
For work you'll spend your energy tending yogis' needs

*A Song of Dharma's Definitive Meaning Sung to a Female Spirit Translated and arranged by Jim Scott. Tibetan page 240*

## **11. The Seed**

Mind itself alone is the seed of everything  
Samsara and nirvana manifest from it  
Homage to the mind, which is like a wishfulfilling jewel  
Bestowing all desired results

*Composed by Saraha, translated and arranged by Dechen Gyalpo, Jim Scott, Dechen Choling, about 2003*

## **12. A Summary of Maitreya's Text, *Distinguishing Phenomena and Pure Being***

The dualistic appearance of our enemies  
We think is truly real  
This is what creates the suffering of our anger  
And the pain of the anger's consequences  
But the pain of our angry actions' consequences  
Is greater than the pain of the anger ever was

The dualistic appearance of our friends  
We think is truly real  
From this comes the suffering of change and your heart gets broken  
Our friends make us suffer more than enemies ever could

And so if you know the practice so profound  
Of being free of attachment but full of love  
Both friends and enemies turn into dharma resources  
Adverse conditions become your dharma friends

Phenomena are samsara, confused projections  
Pure being is nirvana past all grief  
These two are not one and the same nor do they differ  
The one's like ice, the other's like its water

If you see through phenomena, samsara's confused projections  
Pure being manifests for you  
This is transformation, pure appearances shine  
Like reflections on the melted ice's water

*Composed by Dechen Rangdrol, DCL July 2004 Translated and arranged by Jim Scott*

### **13. Excerpts from Eight Flashing Lances**

Experiences just naturally unhindered  
Free of fear, depression and anxiety  
The triumph over all perceived / perceiver split  
These are three which render conduct fully free  
Like a lance that flashes free in the open sky

The murkiness of clinging clarified  
Causes and conditions, like reflections  
Knowing what to do and not, that subtle art  
These are three which make relations fully free  
Like a lance that flashes free in the open sky

*Composed by Lord Gotsangpa. Trans. and arranged by Jim Scott*

### **14. Excerpts from The Essence of Clear Light Sunshine: A Commentary on The Three Nails**

Namo Guru Hasa Vajra Ye!  
All appearances are mind – what’s the point of this nail?  
Confused appearances come from one’s habits of mind,  
And all appearances: the energy and play of clear light,  
So these are all mind and that’s the deep point of this nail.

Mind itself is clear light – this point of this nail’s hard to get:  
Mind’s true way of being can’t be known through elaboration;  
And its essence: completely pure from the very start –  
This, the point so profound – clear light, inexpressible.

*Composed by Khenchen Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche. Trans. and arranged by Jim Scott, March 12, 2021*

### **15. Song of Equality**

All appearances are an equality of appearance emptiness  
Each and every sound is an equality of sound and emptiness  
Feelings, all of these, are an equality of bliss and emptiness  
So, rest then evenly in the equality, free of thoughts’ complexity  
Go about the city, and do it like this, be open, spacious and relaxed  
Resting evenly in the equality free of all complexity

*Composed by Dechen Rangdrol Translated and arranged by Dechen Gyalpo, Jim Scott, Tegchokling, Nepal, 2010*

## 16. Seven Delights

Namo Ratna Guru

When thoughts that there is something perceived and a perceiver

Lure my mind away and distract,

I don't close my senses' gateways to meditate without them

But plunge straight into their essential point.

They're like clouds in the sky, there's this shimmer where they fly;

Thoughts that rise, for me, sheer delight!

When kleshas get me going and their heat has got me burning,

I try no antidote to set them right;

Like an alchemistic potion turning metal into gold,

What lies in kleshas' power to bestow

Is bliss without contagion, completely undefiled;

Kleshas coming up, sheer delight!

When I'm plagued by god-like forces or demonic interference,

I do not drive them out with rites and spells;

The thing to chase away is the egoistic thinking,

Built up on the idea of a self.

This will turn those ranks of maras into your own special forces;

When obstacles arise, sheer delight!

When samsara with its anguish has me writhing in its torments,

Instead of wallowing in misery,

I take the greater burden down the greater path to travel

And let compassion set me up

To take upon myself the suffering of others;

When karmic consequences bloom, delight!

When my body has succumbed to attacks of painful illness,

I do not count on medical relief

But take that very illness as a path and, by its power,

Remove the obscurations blocking me,

And use it to encourage the qualities worthwhile;

When illness rears its head, sheer delight!

When it's time to leave this body, this illusionary tangle,  
Don't cause yourself anxiety and grief;  
The thing that you should train in and clear up for yourself—  
There's no such thing as dying to be done.  
It's just clear light, the mother, and child clear light uniting;  
When mind forsakes the body, sheer delight!

When the whole thing's just not working, everything's lined up against you,  
Don't try to find some way to change it all;  
Here, the point to make your practice is reverse the way you see it,  
Don't try to make it stop or to improve.  
Adverse conditions happen, when they do, it's so delightful—  
They make a little song of sheer delight!

*Composed by the lord Götsangpa. Translated and arranged by Jim Scott in collaboration with Anne Buchardi, Karmê Choling, Vermont, August, 1996*

## **17. What Mind Is**

Sugar candy, yes, it tastes so sweet,  
But you don't taste it just by hearing that.  
Think and think, but you're still not tasting it;  
If you want to taste, you have to use your tongue.

The same is true about the essence of mind:  
Someone else can point it out to you,  
And you'll understand it, but won't see it yet,  
So, take that knowledge, yes, and look yourself.

When native mind is introduced to you,  
Use what you've learned to help you look yourself,  
If you look like that, you'll see it, that's for sure,  
O shepherd boy, so work with mind like this.

*Sung by Milarepa to the shepherd boy Sangye Kyap during the Jetsun's later visit to Rag-ma.  
This translation by Jim Scott done March 12, 2021,*

## **18. Appearance Emptiness Equality**

Not to know the equality of appearance emptiness  
And get attached to appearances alone is delusion  
But to get attached to emptiness alone is delusion too  
If you know the equality of appearance emptiness

There's no need to get caught up in or give up phenomena  
Those appearances and emptiness  
What you must do is to rest in the spaciousness  
Of the equality of appearance emptiness

*Composed by Dechen Rangdrol. Translated and arranged by Dechen Gyalpo, at Tegchokling, Boudha, Nepal, 2010*

## **19. Impartial Aspiration Prayer**

All you sentient beings I have a good or bad connection with,  
As soon as you have left this confused dimension,  
May you be born in the West, in Sukhavati  
And once you're born there, complete the bhumis and the paths.

*Composed by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, August 29, 1999. Translated and arranged by Jim and Birgit Scott*

## **20. Milarepa's Dedication**

May we live long and be free of illness,  
Enjoy freedom, great resources, and happiness.  
Next life, may we meet in the pure realm,  
May we always practice Dharma and benefit beings.

*Sung by Milarepa. Under the guidance of Dechen Rangdrol (Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche), translated by Ari Goldfield, Guayrapa Asociación Cultural, Tarragona, Spain, May 3, 2003. Translation copyright 2012, Ari Goldfield.*

## **21. Friends**

A SONG OF THOSE WHO ARE FULL OF LOVE BUT FREE OF ATTACHMENT

Friends are empty forms, just like a water moon  
To think of them as being truly real  
Will only make your many sufferings increase

To know they're empty forms, like a water moon  
Will make illusion-like samadhi increase  
Compassion free of clinging will increase  
And non-referential view will also increase

And meditation that's fixation-free  
And conduct free of doer, deed increase  
Of all the many marvels, this, by far the most marvelous!  
Of all the many wonders, this, the most wonderful!

*Composed by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche at Marpa House, England, Aug. 1997. Translated and arranged by Jim Scott*



## 22. Self-Appearing Illusion

All these forms, appearance emptiness  
Like a rainbow with its shining glow  
In the reaches of appearance emptiness  
Just let go and go where no mind goes

Every sound is sound and emptiness  
Like the sound of an echo's roll  
In the reaches of sound and emptiness  
Just let go and go where no mind goes

Every feeling is bliss and emptiness  
Way beyond what words can show  
In the reaches of bliss and emptiness  
Just let go and go where no mind goes

All awareness, awareness emptiness  
Way beyond what thought can know  
In the reaches of awareness emptiness  
Let awareness go, oh, where no mind goes

*Composed by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche in the Garden of Translation near the Boudha Stupa in Nepal. Translated and arranged by Jim Scott, March 1998*

## 23. Long Life Supplication for Khenchen Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche

You who shine with the radiance of intelligent skillful play  
You who are a fertile field of excellent qualities  
You manifest an ocean of Dharma, with each point clear and distinct  
In all ten directions the melodious sound of your song reverberates  
You sing the songs of the deep meaning of the view and meditation  
Genuine spiritual friend, may your feet continue their playful dance  
We beg you to always remain

*This supplication for the long life of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso, the unequaled spiritual friend, I make out of my own devotion to this genuine master, and also in response to the repeated requests of many groups of his Eastern disciples, who possess the jewel of faith. On the topmost floor of the Gyuto Ramoche Temple in the noble land of India, the one fortunate to receive the healing nectar of his excellent teachings, Karmapa Orgyen Trinle Palden Wangi Dorje, makes this supplication with a clear mind, and may its aspiration be realized in precisely the way it has been made.  
At the gracious bidding of Dzogchen Ponlob Rinpoche, Translated and arranged by Jim Scott, Warsaw, Poland, October 10, 2010*

## 24. Long Life Prayer of Amassed Blessing Clouds for Jim Scott

Great Amitayus, who leads us from samsara,  
saving those suffering without protection,  
Vanquisher of all untimely death,  
we bow to the Buddha of Boundless Life.

Long mantra:

*Om namo bhagawate / aparamita ayurjana subinitsita tedzo radzaya / tathagataya / arhate  
samyak sambudhaya / teyatha / Om punye punye mahapunye / aparimita punye / aparimita punye  
jana sambharo patsite / Om sawa samskara parishuddha dharmate gagana samudgate sobhawa  
bishuddhe mahanaya paiware svaha*

Brief mantra:

*Om a maharani dziwentiye svaha* Recite as much as possible, then:

We supplicate to the Protector Amitayus,  
who bestows the siddhi of longevity:  
Please grant your blessings for Jim's good steady life,  
master of two tongues, eyes bright with insight.

Giver of life, eyes wide with compassion, goddess White Tara,  
wish-fulfilling wheel, we pray to you:  
Grant a kalpa's worth of life to Lotsawa,  
who propagates the teachings.

Wisdom goddess who bestows supreme life,  
we pray at your feet, victorious Namgyalma:  
Please bless the speaker of Dharma in two tongues,  
source of benefit and joy, Vajra essence.

With faithful minds of longing, we supplicate  
the refuge of the Three Jewels and Vast Three Roots:  
We welcome treasure of Dharma like the dawn  
and ask for Lotsawa to stay healthy and firm.

By the blessings of refuge, ocean of compassion,  
by the power of unchanging truth of pure being,  
and by the power of our pure motivation;  
may these aspirations without fail be quickly fulfilled.

Upon request by the students of the Rigpe Dorje Institute to write a long-life prayer for the revered senior translator Jim Scott, these supplication prayers and words of aspiration adorning the three deities of longevity were composed with virtue on February 27, 2011 by Lodrö Namgyal, who bears the title Khenpo in name only.

## THE ANALYSIS

### HOW TO FIND THE WISH-FULFILLING JEWEL

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#### The Basics of Chittamatra

a) Practice involving something to focus on, namely, that all phenomena are mind only

All phenomena are mind,

- i. Because they are the confused projections of habitual tendencies, and
- ii. Because they are the natural display of pure being, the dharmata, luminosity-emptiness.

The first is apparent reality, relative mind. The second is genuine reality, the nature of mind.

i. **Regarding the first of these reasons:**

A literal translation of the Tibetan for “confused projections” is “delusive appearances”.

The general definition of “appearances” is: Anything produced by causes and conditions.

Specific examples of appearances: forms, sounds, smells, tastes and touch. These are also examples of phenomena.

Definition of **phenomena**: “The traits of samsara itself, here called ‘phenomena’, are defined as the realm of manifestation, which consists of **appearances** involving a duality of perceived and perceiver, plus the assumption that anything appearing in such a way actually exists in that way. This is accompanied by formulation, which applies terminology.”

This can be compared to a well composed painting in which there appears to be objects much further away than those in the foreground, even though they are on the same flat surface. It can also be compared to dreams where one does not know one is dreaming. The “objects” experienced are not present as something outside the mind experiencing them. The dreaming mind is experiencing itself, its own content. The experienced object and experiencing subject, also called perceived and perceiver, are not two different things, even though they seem to be. Their seeming to be two is a mere delusion; they don’t actually exist as two.

The fact that the perceived object appears to be something different from the perceiving mind “is merely one’s own mistaken conceptual process, since what appears to the mind, namely the object, is non-existent even while it is appearing. This is illustrated by such examples as [the “objects” experienced in dreams] or the **strands** of hair which **appear** to a victim of cataracts, even though these do not **exist** as the objects they appear to be. “

“Thus, anything whose appearance involves this duality, even though **existing in an apparent sense**, could not be real in actual fact. For this reason, no referents of the terms used have ever existed either”, to which the conceptual mind could assign some conclusive name on the basis of the dualistic

appearance. Being only an imputation on the part of one's own concepts, the complex manifold referred to as phenomena consists solely of this conceptual process. "

"To sum up what has been said here, all phenomena, which are composed of dualistic appearance to which dualistic assumption is added, are nothing other than complete imputations having no existence with an actual constituent of their own, while nevertheless appearing."

## ii. Regarding the second reason:

All phenomena are mind, namely, because their nature is pure being, the luminous nature of mind:

"The other factor is pure being, which is defined as the opposite of the above; i.e., it involves no differentiation between a perceived and a perceiver appearing to be two and a signified referent contra a signifier in the form of the conventions employed based on the dualistic assumption. It is suchness."

Briefly stated, what is thought of as an object is the clear light of mind "filtered through" the habitual mental patterns. An example illustrating this to some extent would be the imprints on a strip of film being run past the bright light of a projector such that they are projected onto a screen and appear to be trees, cars, figures, and so on in front of the onlookers.

All of the above is either a direct quote from or is based on Maitreya's *Distinguishing Phenomena and Pure Being* with the commentary by Mipham Rinpoche.

## Some Helpful Advice from Khenpo Rinpoche

When Chittamatra says all appearances are projections of mind, this is not meant to be taken on a coarse level or understood in a very simplistic literal way. For example, it does not mean you can just sit down and project a car or a million dollars. And it doesn't mean you cannot be run over by a bus because it's just a projection of your mind. These ideas would be a distortion of what "projection" means here.

To understand this properly, it's crucial to know Chittamatra does not deny karma, which means it does not deny cause and effect. On the contrary, in saying all appearances are mind, that means they are results of a causal process. The fact that things are mind does not bypass the causes and conditions we are familiar with. On the contrary, it depends on them. The world only functions, because it is mental habitual patterns.

## Examining That Advice

On hearing "all appearances are mind," some would say, "What about previously unknown far away galaxies? How could they be mind when nobody on this planet even knew they existed until recently?"

First of all, being previously unknown by one type of observer does not mean previously unknown by all. The Buddha described other world systems and the beings in them in great detail over 2000 years before the discovery of the telescope.

And secondly, "mind only" does not mean "my mind only." That's one reason these progressive stages of meditation start with the discovery that there is no self. As we have seen in step 1, since there is no truly existent "me", there can be no truly existent "mine".

And thirdly, since appearances are mind only because they are produced by causes and conditions, a planet that would not be a mere appearance would have to be a truly existent object. That would mean it would have its own power to exist without a cause. In existing without a cause, it would never begin, develop or disintegrate. In other words, it would not have the characteristics of a planet or any other composite object, not to mention a whole galaxy.

Others might say, “We are surrounded by outer material objects, like cars. So how can you say these are mind only?”

So, let’s look at this **closely**.

Getting a car is only possible through relying on the causes and conditions that result in a car. Because it relies on causes and conditions, it is an appearance; and because it is an appearance occurring on the basis of habitual patterns, it is mind only.

But let’s look at this even more closely. One cause for getting a car would be the money. This is itself a mere appearance, because money too requires the proper causes, like for example a properly functioning system of monetary patterns. What do students of economics study? They train in concepts which have proven successful or unsuccessful in creating any one of the many bartering systems found throughout history.

Is there a bartering system that does not depend on concepts? If you think there is, what is the price of potatoes?

There is no such thing as the truly existent price of anything. It changes with changing standards, changing conditions.

Also, what’s your concept of money? Are you paying in colored beads, personal services like mowing the lawn, or do you pull out paper money, a credit card, or do you get by with a loan, the promise to pay later? Which concept of “money” will it be this time? If you try to pay in Franc or Deutschmarks, those are no longer even thought of as a valid monetary currency, even though they were earlier. Money is an appearance whose content depends on a temporary way of thinking.

Concepts are of course mental in their very makeup. If the system goes wrong and the banks fail because of some breach in the chain of causes, you can’t get a loan. And, it’s common knowledge that money itself is a concept, and the desire for it is also a mental factor. So, when we analyze it intelligently, we find that money traces back to mind.

Another cause for a car is a factory, and the factory itself relies on incredibly many other causes, like tools. But even the tools used in the factory trace back to know-how. Knowing how to form a particular tool to perform a particular function is a mental activity. And knowing how to use the tool relies on habitual patterns of behavior. These are basically mental factors, not on the unexamined surface of it, but when examined **closely**.

What role does projection play in this narrative? It’s all over the place.

For example, what’s “the perfect car” for you? That depends on a combination of causes, like which car you can afford and which you “fall for”, just to name a few. Projection plays a big role here. Concepts of attractive and unattractive are personal projections.

But at an even more basic level, the name “car” is a label being projected onto the form. Similarly, the computer screen being seen in this present moment by a visual consciousness is not a computer screen. What’s seen is just a form, not the name; what it is called is a label projected onto the form. A

label is a “signifier”, a descriptive concept. So again “computer screen”, “car” and any other label traces back to being mental.

But, because of our compulsive habitual tendency of mixing the label with its referent, we think they are the same. Incredible as this may sound, we think and act as if the name is the thing it is describing! When we, in our daily habitual way of thinking, don’t even distinguish the name of a thing from the thing itself, it’s no wonder we are confused about what “things” are!

At any rate, since the label “car” is a conceptual description, it is mental. But what about the referent for the label, the thing seen?

Is that not a solid object existing outside the observer? When not examined closely, of course it appears to be like that. But, when examined more closely, of course it is not. The mental label is projected onto a form, which is an appearance. BUT the form appearing is a mental image. The same is true if the form is appearing as a memory. If the form existed truly outside mind, it would not be perceptible by a mind. In being outside the domain of mind, it could not be perceived by mind. It could neither be seen, touched, or in any way evaluated as beautiful, affordable or even drive-able. Evaluating things is a mental process!

This relates further to the whole discussion of projections like beautiful and ugly, desirable and undesirable, etc. What one observer likes, another dislikes, or neither of these. These mental reactions arise from the mind-set (i.e., habitual tendencies) of the observer.

When not examined with prajna, the characteristics making something seem desirable appear to belong to the object observed. But, for that to be true, the object would have to itself dictate what it is and all observers would experience that object in the same way, because it would be the object that determines what the observer sees.

The fact that some observers experience desirable and others experience undesirable characteristics in connection with “the same” object indicates that the characteristics are being assigned to the object by the observer. That also means the two observers are not seeing the same object. In the somewhat sloppy way we speak, of course they’re seeing the same thing. But, when we take a closer look, what is a “thing”? It consists of its defining characteristics. Undesirable characteristics are not the same as desirable. They are the opposite. The two observers are seeing two different objects and calling them the same.

That this is a process of projection becomes even more obvious when the same object that is seen as desirable can later be seen as undesirable by the same observer. Objectively existing objects would not behave like that. An objectively existing desirable object could not change into the opposite of itself. And, if it did, it would not be objectively existent. It would have to be a projection of our own mindset at the time.

These are some examples from everyday experience of how to discover through analysis that all the phenomena of our experience are mind only.

What can we expect if we don’t do this meditation? Confusion. What we experience will continue to be based on confused habitual reaction patterns. Confused mind experiences its own confusion. That’s what samsara is all about. That’s the food suffering feeds on.

The real question we are working with here is: How do we correct the confusion?

The Chittamatra offers a very precise and detailed description of how this confusion comes about and the mental training (i.e., meditation) that clears it up. It's described briefly as the three aspects of experience:

- 1) The imputed or imaginary aspect
- 2) The dependent aspect
- 3) And the perfectly present aspect

- 1) **The imputed aspect** consists of all the labels we impute onto what is perceived. Because the object itself has no name, we can call it by different names in different languages.

Correcting that does not mean that we stop naming things. It means not believing there to be an intrinsic connection between name and referent and not clinging to the label as being the thing itself.

As a result, when someone calls us by a derogatory name, we can step back, breathe freely, and not be totally upset. That creates the space for feeling compassion for the person who insulted us. So that insult becomes the occasion for practicing excellent conduct instead of falling into suffering.

In addition to that, **the imputed aspect** also includes our notion of objects as existing outside. This is something we are imagining. It sounds very strange to say that, but because we have this habitual pattern, we even imagine the objects in dreams to be outside. Because the object **appears** to be outside, we think it **is** outside. We need to look more closely.

- 2) **The dependent aspect** consists of the appearance itself. Since it arises in dependence on the habitual patterns in our mind, the appearance is colored by our habitual way of seeing. We are unable to separate our impression of what is seen from the appearance itself, which means that what we're seeing is strongly conditioned by our preconceptions. What we see is what we get.

This is more obvious in a dream, which makes dream appearances a good example of how perceived objects are mind only. The image appearing in a dream is in fact a thought. It appears to the dreaming mind to be "something I am seeing", which would mean it would be a visual image of an object. But it's not. The visual consciousness is not functioning during dreams. The eyes are closed. The seer is the mental consciousness, the sixth consciousness, which is conceptual. These thoughts are believed by the dreamer to be objects.

They are called "the dependent aspect", because they arise in **dependence** on the habitual patterns in the mind. Flowers are seen in the dream because they've been seen in the waking state. We have the habitual pattern for that. They were taken to be real as separate from perceiving mind during the waking state, so they're taken to be real like that in the dream. It's a habit. Sometimes in dreams the patterns get scrambled and we see combinations not encountered while awake, like seeing the head of a lion on the body of a man. But that's just the patterns getting rearranged by sleeping mind, whose conceptual grip is not as stable as when awake.

The process just described is similar during the waking state. Here too the images experienced are **dependent** on mind's habitual tendencies. Although the first instant of visual consciousness is non-conceptual, conceptual mind quickly takes over. The labels it assigns to the images come

from the archives of our mind, the habitual patterns. From that point on, we don't separate what we are thinking from what we are seeing. The image seen has "morphed" into a thought.

**To summarize these two aspects**, the concept we're experiencing as an object includes both aspects. The concept itself is the dependent aspect of the experience. That we think it's an outer object is the imputed or imaginary aspect.

3) **The perfectly present aspect** will be explained below (d).

At this point in the meditation we are doing here, we have completed an explanation of the essentials of the main point, namely, that all phenomena are mind. The explanation of this first of the four steps of the meditation is the longest, since it is in some ways the most difficult to understand. Once this is clear, the last three steps follow naturally.

**b)** Here we arrive at the second of the four steps of this Chittamatra meditation. This step is called, "the practice involving nothing to focus on".

The explanation is very brief. Based on seeing that all phenomena are mind only, one is able to see that there is no perceived object to focus on.

**c)** With that as the basis, one engages in practice involving no subject to focus on.

Where there is no perceived object, there is no perceiver of it.

**d)** With that as the basis, one engages in practice whose focus is the suchness.

This is the very nature of mind, where there is nothing of perceived and perceiver on which to focus at all.

This fourth step of the meditation corresponds to the third of the aspects mentioned above, **The Perfectly Present Aspect**, which is described as follows:

Every time we experience something, **this** is what we're **actually** experiencing; this is what is perfectly present always, namely luminosity & emptiness inseparable, the nature of mind. But, because we're hypnotized by appearances and think they're outer objects, we don't recognize what they actually are. We are not thinking clearly and as a result we're locked into relative mind with its seemingly endless confusion, where we wander through the six weird realms of samsara, looking for happiness somewhere "out there". All because of the simple but tragic fact that we only experience what we think we're experiencing, not what we're actually experiencing, which is perfectly present luminous pure being empty of all the confusion and suffering of duality.

What then is the precise connection between the nature of mind and the appearances? It's that the nature of mind is luminosity emptiness: **The appearances** making up our everyday experience in relative mind are related to the **luminosity**, their **freedom from the duality** of perceived and perceiver is their **emptiness**.

When we have certainty in this, that is view. When we are not distracted from it, that is the meditation. When we have compassion for all who don't see it, that is conduct. Remembering the instructions during everyday experience is post-meditation.



## A Presentation of Chittamatra in Verses by Khenchen Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche

For the six kinds of beings with the six kinds of karma-made bodies  
Six kinds of appearances shine through tendencies' power  
For humans as well, who have six kinds of sensitive powers  
Six kinds of appearances shine through tendencies' power.

The very same person is seen in so many ways  
As enemy, friend and the rest — it can change very quickly;  
Since the same changes into so many and even so quickly,  
We can see that it's all just our tendencies being projected.

All changes are changes occurring within our projections;  
All changes are changes occurring within our thoughts.  
The root of all changes is changes in tendencies;  
To purify these, what is needed is meditation  
On their emptiness of any duality  
And this is their nature, this is their very being.

They do not exist on the outside as referent objects;  
Since what are perceived are tendencies being projected,  
And thus, their perceiver has no existence either,  
And this is their nature, the emptiness of both.

### The Chittamatra Aspiration

The cause of all karma, affliction and suffering  
Is tendencies being projected as dual appearance;  
To purify these, may we train in their non-dual nature  
And meditate thus, both now and in all lives to come.