

Vomiting Gold

A pith instruction in the form of advice for the diligent practitioner, the excellent Atsang

by Khenpo Gangshar Wangpo

I bow before the glorious and sublime guru.

Child of a good father,

All worldly endeavors, focused, as they are, upon this life alone, have no essence whatsoever. It is beyond the slightest doubt that the guru – embodiment of the three rare and sublime ones – and especially the transcendent dharma are the absolute refuge and source of your well-being. Understand that this realization is the divide between continually transmigrating within saṃsāra and liberation.

Now let's see if you are up to much. A good child would give up distraction, disregard confusion, and extract the essence of leisure and fortune. To do this you must reflect upon impermanence....

Child of good lineage, some listen to this and some to that, what is spoken here and what is said there; some look at the ways of birth, illness, ageing and death; some act to accumulate wealth; others build homes; while some are given to study and contemplation, others train in the approaching and accomplishing practices of secret mantra in retreat. Nevertheless, of all of these, those who go on to achieve the ultimate are very few and far between.

Some ponder sickness, mortality, etc., and some do not, but all have to go through the pain such experiences bring – and that includes you! To fully realize that you could die at any moment is to have developed confidence in the contemplation upon impermanence.

Continually counsel yourself and in each and every moment to look at and cleanse your mind. Don't give in to distraction or fall under the influence of confusion, but rather, with the awakened ones and their offspring as your witnesses, practice with ardent endeavor.

Generally speaking there isn't a single teaching of the Buddha that is inadequate, woeful, or fruitless; and the main import of them all is to embrace each and every thought mindfully.

There is no need to alter your mind, simply sustain a mindfulness of your thoughts that looks directly into their very essence. Through this a powerful and clear awareness, unalterable by anything, will be revealed.

Essentially then, when distracted thoughts arise, they are called mind. When free of such distractions your innate awareness cannot be influenced by anything, be it positive and beneficial or negative and harmful.

When thought, confused or otherwise, arises, don't see it as a failure or fault; simply relax into its nature. With familiarity, awareness will come to be thoroughly distinguished from mind, with the former stabilized and latter liberated.

From time to time it is important to supplicate your guru, receive empowerment, and mix your mind with his or hers.

Similarly, should you practice deity yoga and mantra recitation, do so from within awareness. Awareness stripped bare will sever the head of self-grasping and selfish endeavor.

Shout "Phat!", practice yogic exercises, dream, and, during the day, meditate upon your illusory body within the sustained continuity of awareness. For this practice your environment makes no difference.

Sure signs of genuine practice are an increase in renunciation and compassion. Please keep this in mind.

Without moving or being distracted from this natural state of awareness, and with the attitude of *bodhicitta*, be diligent in making vast prayers of dedication; practice the seven-branch offering to accumulate merit; and meditate upon Vajrasattva, reciting the hundred-syllable mantra. As we have been carried along by a subtle undercurrent of thoughts over successive lifetimes and have accumulated karma thereby, it is imperative to confess all faults and to pledge to refrain from them in the future. These and other such practices are essential.

Requested by the ardent practitioner, Atsang, I, the confused old beggar Gangshar, gave rise to a cascade of concepts and wrote this, much like an old dog vomiting up golden instructions.

| Translated by Sean Price, 2015



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