

The 36 verses from the text Transcending Ego: Distinguishing Consciousness from Wisdom,
written by the Third Karmapa with commentary of Thrangu Rinpoche

THE HOMAGE

1. I pay homage to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas!

THE COMMITMENT TO COMPOSE THE TEXT

2. I gained a thorough understanding through hearing the teachings
And contemplating them.
I then resided in solitude, in order to engage
In the process of meditation. I shall describe here,
The kind of realization that arose at that time.

THE ERRONEOUS VIEWS OF OTHERS

3. There are those, who believe that the three realms and all beings,
Are a creation arising from themselves, or from another,
From both, or from no cause.
There are those who state that there is a creator:
Gampo-Cha, Shiva, Brahma, or Vishnu,
Or that there are external atoms,
Or truly existing imperceptible matter,
That has created the self and the world.

WHAT THE BUDDHA TAUGHT

4. The unique, Omniscient One taught that
Those three realms are purely mind.
They are not derived from themselves, nor from that which is other,
Not from both, nor from the absence of a cause.
All phenomena arise through interdependence.
They are, by their own nature, empty,
Utterly free of being single or multiple,
Utterly free of being falsehood or truth,
Like the moon's reflection upon water and so on.
Knowing this, the Buddha taught it to beings.

HOW RANGJUNG DORJE GAINED REALIZATION

5. From what source does this
Delusion and non-delusion arise?
I have understood the nature of dependent origination,
In the same way that one sees one's own reflection in a mirror,
And knows that there is fire because there is smoke,
And I shall clearly describe it here.

THE FIVE SENSORY CONSCIOUSNESSES

6. The five sensory consciousnesses create afflictions
Because of holding and rejecting
Forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactility.

What are these sensory objects?
If the wise examine well, they will know that
Nothing, such as atoms and so on, exist externally,
As anything other than cognition.

REFUTING THE ERRONEOUS VIEW THAT THE SENSORY OBJECTS ARE NOT THE MIND

7. If the substance of those sensory objects were other than consciousness,
They could not both be a single entity.
A non-manifesting, immaterial awareness
Does not create material substance.
Therefore, a relationship where the latter arises from the former, could not exist.
With this view that sensory objects are other than consciousness,
It will become illogical for sensory objects to appear from consciousness,
Because they would have no connection.

WHY EXTERNAL PHENOMENA ARE MIND¹⁷

8. Therefore, all these various appearances,
Do not exist as sensory objects which are other than consciousness.
Their arising is like the experience of self-knowledge.
All appearances, from indivisible particles to vast forms, are mind.
This means, that if nothing exists externally and separately,
Brahma and the rest, could not be creators.

EXPLANATION OF THE MENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS

9. The relationship between the mental consciousness and mental phenomena,
Is like the experience of a dream.
The mind focuses on phenomena and becomes attached to them.
But they are devoid of any true reality.

THE MIND IS EMPTY

10. These six consciousnesses,
The appearances of sensory objects and of beings,
The attachment to a self, cognition
Whatever appearances are manifested
Are not created by anything which is other than themselves.
They are not created by themselves,
Nor created by both self and other,
Nor by the absence of both.

THE SCRIPTURES ON THE EMPTINESS OF MIND

11. Therefore, as the Victorious One has taught,
All samsara and nirvana are just mind.

THE SUMMARY OF THE EIGHT CONSCIOUSNESSES

12. The causes, conditions, and interdependence,
Have been taught by the Buddha to be the six consciousnesses,
The afflicted mental consciousness, and the ground consciousness.

THE OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS OF THE CONSCIOUSNESSES

13. The six consciousnesses are dependent on objective conditions,
Which are the six sensory objects of form and so forth.

THE PRIMARY CONDITIONS OF THE CONSCIOUSNESSES

14. Their primary conditions are the six sensory objects,
Which are clarity endowed with form.

THE SOURCE OF THE SIX CONSCIOUSNESSES

15. Both faculties and objects arise from the mind.
This manifestation of sensory objects and faculties
Is dependent upon an element that has been present
Throughout beginningless time.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH CONSCIOUSNESSES

16. Though a sensory consciousness perceives an object
Its particular characteristics are known by the mental event of identification,
Which is dependent upon the mental consciousness:
The immediate mentality and the afflicted-mentality.

THE IMMEDIATE ASPECT OF THE SEVENTH CONSCIOUSNESS

17. The first of those is immediate because
It is the condition for the arising and ceasing of the six consciousnesses.
It occurs in the same numbers as those of
The momentary arising and ceasing of the six consciousnesses.
It can be known by a mind that is yoga-endowed
And through the teachings of the Victorious One.

THE AFFLICTED ASPECT OF THE SEVENTH CONSCIOUSNESS

18. The second is an aspect of this immediate mentality.
It is called the afflicted-mentality because
It believes the mind as self, possesses pride,
Has attachment to the self, and has ignorance,
And gives rise to all the destructive views.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IMMEDIATE AND AFFLICTED MENTALITIES

19. The immediate mentality, which is instantaneous
Upon the cessation of the six consciousnesses,
Is the location for the arising of those consciousnesses.
The afflicted mentality is the location for the afflictions.
Therefore, mentality has two aspects
Due to their power to create, and its power to obscure.

THE GROUND CONSCIOUSNESS

20. To those with superior understanding,
The Buddha taught the 'ground consciousness.'

It was also named the 'foundation consciousness.'
The 'location consciousness,' and the 'acquiring consciousness.'
All the actions created by the other seven consciousnesses
Are accumulated, distinctly and impartially within it,
Like rain and rivers flowing into the ocean.
Therefore it is also named the 'ripening consciousness.'

21. As it creates everything,
And is the ground from which all seeds sprout,
It is described as 'the causal condition.'
However, because it is eliminated
When the seven consciousnesses are negated.
It is also called the 'conditional consciousness.'

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE GROUND CONSCIOUSNESS

22. This ground consciousness,
Which is the identity of everything external and internal,
Is the source of everything that should be eliminated.
It has been taught that it will be overcome
By the 'vajra-samadhi.'

MIRROR-LIKE WISDOM

23. When the ground consciousness, with its obscurations, is negated
At that time, there will be the 'mirror wisdom'.
All wisdoms appear in it, without the concept of "mine."
It is uncircumscribed and eternally possessed.
It realizes all that is to be known, without being directed towards them.
It is described as 'the dharmakaya,'
Because it is the foundation for all the wisdoms.

THE WISDOM OF EQUALITY

24. The 'afflicted mentality'
Is utterly defeated by the 'fearless samadhi.'
The kleshas are utterly eliminated on the paths of insight and meditation.
The subsequent absence of afflictions,
The absence of samsara and nirvana,
Is described as the 'wisdom of equality.'

DISCRIMINATING WISDOM: THE PURIFIER AND PURIFIED

25a. The immediate mentality
Is called 'the sustainer', because it sustains the six consciousnesses.
It is called 'thought', because it gives rise to thoughts.
It is defeated by true understanding and the 'illusion-samadhi.'

DISCRIMINATING WISDOM: THE RESULT OF PURIFICATION

25b. When 'the great patience' is attained.
Due to the transformation of perceptions and perceiver

There is a manifestation of pure realms,
The wisdom of all times,
And total, unimpeded activity.
The thoughts involved in these, transformed
Become 'discriminating wisdom'.

THE SAMBHOGAKAYA

26. These two wisdoms of equality and discrimination are
Pure meditation, through which there
is no abiding in samsara and nirvana
The possession of peace, love, and compassion;
The manifestation of various bodies;
And teachings to the retinues.
The mandala of the melody of the great dharma is manifest
And a treasury of all samadhis and dharanis
This is named the sambhogakaya.

THE ALL-ACCOMPLISHING WISDOM

27. The transformation of the five sensory consciousnesses
And the aspect of the mental consciousness are directed towards them:
The sixteen wisdoms of the 'patience for knowledge'
And the aspects of the four truths,
That have arisen from correct thought,
See and truly realize the meaning.

28. The five sensory consciousnesses are transformed when:
There is an engagement with all sensory objects,
And the power and possession of the twelve qualities
Of all the bodhisattva levels develop a hundred-fold.
When this is developed to the fullest extent,
It becomes the wisdom of accomplishment.

THE FOUR TYPES OF NIRMANAKAYA

29. This wisdom accomplishes benefit for all beings
Through an incalculable, inconceivable,
variety of emanations through all realms.
This is the Great Nirmanakaya.

THE DHARMADHATU WISDOM AS THE SVABHAVIKAKAYA

30. Thus mind, mentality, and sensory consciousnesses are transformed
Into the three kayas and their activity.
They are completely present within the mandala of the complication-free dharmadhatu,
Without samsara, nirvana, or beginning,
Without being single or multiple.
This is called 'the essence kaya'(svabhavikakaya).

OTHER CLASSIFICATIONS OF THE WISDOMS AND THE KAYAS

31. In some other texts, the Victorious One
Teaches this to be the dharmakaya.
The mirror-wisdom is then described as the 'wisdom kaya'
And the other wisdoms as the two 'form kayas'

SUMMARY OF THE WISDOMS AND KAYAS

32. Buddhahood is the manifestation of the nature
Of the five wisdoms and four kayas

THE TRANSFORMATION OF IMPURE TO PURE

33. That which possesses the stains of the mind,
mentality, and consciousness.
Is described as the ground consciousness.
That which is stainless, is the Buddha-nature.

34. The Buddha has taught that the truth of the path
Is the possession of the power of the Noble Ones,
That is born from the pure conceptualization,
That defeats impure thoughts.

THE REASON THIS TEXT WAS WRITTEN

35. The ignorant wander into the ocean of samsara
Because they have not realized this ultimate nature.
Other than with the boat of the Mahayana,
How could the other shore ever be reached?

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER

36. May everyone realize the meaning of this text.
May they understand by hearing the teachings
May they develop conviction through contemplation and then be able to realize the meaning
of the Lord Buddha's teachings through meditation

HOW THIS TREATISE WAS COMPOSED

The Treatise Distinguishing Consciousness and Wisdom was composed in the retreat center
Dechen Teng, by Rangjung Dorje on the first day of the tenth lunar month of the year of the
pig [the year 1323].