

Special Instructions on Unique Mindfulness

Atiśa composed this brief work at the request of his Tibetan translator-disciple Naktso Lotsāwa Tsultrim Gyakwa. The text succinctly outlines the practices of wisdom and means for a bodhisattva who has not yet received a consecration for Secret Mantra practice. Atiśa concludes by citing verses to illustrate that while buddhas are bereft of any mental element, they benefit all sentient beings.

In the Indian language: *Ekasmṛtyupadeśa*

In the Tibetan language: *Dran pa gcig pa'i man ngag*

I pay homage to the Blessed Lord of the World!

After having respectfully bowed to the Omniscient One,
and having paid tribute to Ārya Nāgārjuna and Avadhūtipa,
I will write here the instructions for simultaneous entry/
simultaneous intuitive understanding.

Now, from when a bodhisattva has produced the first generation of the mind for awakening, and holding it close until obtaining the great consecration, there are two activities: the activity of wisdom and the activity of means.

Wisdom consists in the knowledge that all things are, from the beginning, unproduced, and from the very first are the realm of reality itself. The activity of this wisdom is for the beginner, for as long as not obtaining a consecration, to continuously, day and night, meditate on suchness.

Means consists in the awakening mind that does not relinquish sentient beings. The practice of means is to devote all mental, verbal, or physical acts, directly or indirectly, to all sentient beings. It is practiced in two phases: a phase where sentient beings are an object of observation, then a phase without any object of observation. Furthermore, there are the stages of the unskillful with diseased vision, and of the skillful purified of diseased vision.

At the moment when the realm of reality manifests itself, from here on wisdom is no longer acquired and pristine awareness abides becoming the realm itself. The activity of wisdom ceases because of arriving at the goal through practice. The activity of means becomes objectiveless, naturally, spontaneously without effort and striving.

Beginner bodhisattvas, since they still have the notion of a self in individuals, conceive of “sentient beings” and generate compassion for their suffering. Then, through practice they will discover that “sentient being” is only an imputed name for ephemeral entities that have not existed from the very first.

Otherwise, thinking that there is nothing else apart from the dependently arising aggregates, elements, and sensory spheres, or thinking that these things are only one’s own mind, there is nothing else other than this, one generates compassion for those sufferings.

When at the level of a buddha there is no objective support, as the *Inquiry of Suvikrāntavikrāmi* states:³⁷⁵

The gnosis of a buddha, a blessed one, sees nothing.

Why? Because there is no object of gnosis.

Well then, does gnosis exist at this juncture or not? Ārya Nāgārjuna denies that it does, as he states:

The mind has not been seen, and will not be seen, by all buddhas.

What will one see of something that has the nature of having no nature.³⁷⁶

Thus, this is in accordance with the transmitted oral instructions. Therefore, buddhas do not have any other activity except for accomplishing the purposes of others, and, in this way, the purposes of others are the principal result that is the desired purpose of their practice. The Ārya Nāgārjuna has stated:

The excellence of the purpose of others is accepted as the foremost result of awakening. Other than buddhahood itself and so forth, these other benefits are asserted as the result of this goal [i.e., awakening].

May these special instructions to penetrate reality reside in your mind.

As requested by Tsultrim Gyälwa, here is an abbreviated teaching. For the extensive teaching one should look at Nāgārjuna’s instructions and the Mahāyāna sūtras. The instructions of simultaneous intuitive understanding were composed by Paṇḍita Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna. They have been translated by the paṇḍita himself and by Tsultrim Gyälwa.