

Dalai Lama, His Holiness Sonam Gyatso entitled, *Essence of Refined Gold*.

The Word Of Manjushri says that because subtle pliancy exists from the very beginning, the *ne nga-len* obstacles, which prevent one from engaging in virtuous actions to counteract and overcome mental delusions, are pacified, and so full pliancy of mind arises.

Then, the text continues, due to the force of that pliancy of mind, the conducive wind increases, freeing one from the *ne nga-len* obstacles of the body, making the body feel as light as cotton. This results in real pliancy of body arising. By the virtue of this pliancy of body, great bliss and joy will be experienced which is manifested in one's body. This experience of the bliss of pliancy of body in turn induces bliss in the mind, which is the bliss of the pliancy of mind.

At the time when the pliancy of body arises, there is some sensation of bliss and joy in one's mind, however this does not mean one has achieved calm abiding, because this bliss will diminish to the point that it coexists with single pointed concentration. The bliss actually causes the mind to fully stabilise on the object, so that single pointed concentration and the bliss of pliancy co-exist together.

To clarify the point about this experience of intense bliss diminishing, the text also says that when this first intense bliss diminishes, it does not mean that the pliancy ceases or is diminished. This is illustrated by using the example of someone receiving praise. As it says in the analogy, initially the person is delighted and overwhelmed with joy when their fame or reputation is boosted. This joy slowly diminishes, however it does not necessarily mean that the person's fame and reputation will also diminish.

When one achieves the state of calm abiding for the first time, it says one has achieved the preparatory stage of concentration, of the first level of the Form Realm for the first time. In other words, for the first time one has transcended the state of mind of the Desire Realm to the ground of the higher realms of, for example, the first level of concentration of the Form Realm. This first stage or preparatory level of concentration one achieves is called the Unavoidable Preparatory Stage, because it is something that is indispensable to gain many other realisations, whether they be mundane or supramundane realisations.

Based on this preparatory stage of the first concentration of the Form Realm that one has achieved, if desired, one can also achieve the preparatory and calm abiding stages of all four levels of the Form Realm, the four levels of the Formless Realm and so achieve all the realisations and higher states within worldly or cyclic existence. However, it is said, that this is not the purpose of achieving calm abiding, and achieving the preparatory stage of this first concentration.

Benefits of Calm Abiding

We should also try to learn about the benefits and advantages of achieving calm abiding.

1. It is said that as a benefit of achieving calm abiding, one achieves a form of clarity within ones mind. In other words, the mind becomes so clear and luminous that if one observes a wall, one can mentally observe

and count every atomic particle in the wall.

2. As a benefit of calm abiding one can also achieve the capacity to overcome mental delusions. After achieving calm abiding, even if the ten signs or principal causes for creating delusion² appear to ones mind, or if one has contact with these objects, one can immediately remember their faults and shortcomings, and there will not be any mental attraction to them.
3. As a result of calm abiding, fewer mental delusions will arise, and those that do can be easily removed and eliminated.
4. Calm abiding also has the benefit of transforming all states of mind while sleeping into the state of single pointed or meditative concentration.

This is just a brief description of the benefits of calm abiding.

As said before, what is most important is to keep in mind that the purpose of achieving calm abiding is not to achieve any higher qualities for ourselves within cyclic existence, such as the higher qualities of the Form and Formless Realms. Indeed the aim of any spiritual practice that we do is not to achieve a higher goal within this worldly existence. Therefore it is important to try to infuse any spiritual practice we do with the motivation of the bodhicitta mind, or of renunciation, and to always supplement our practice with taking refuge in the Three Jewels and so forth.

This concludes the teaching on Calm Abiding. In the next teaching we shall commence the next major topic, which is on wisdom, or special insight.

It is important to read more about this topic of calm abiding and know as much as possible about it, because for anyone showing any interest in, or who follows this meditation practice, this calm abiding meditation is the most important meditation practice. Therefore if we learn more about this topic, it means we can perform our meditation more effectively.

Meaning of the Heart Sutra Mantra

Sometimes OM is added into the mantra after the TAYATHA so that that mantra becomes TAYATHA OM GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SOHA. Normally when people say this mantra they do not say OM. However in the commentary on the mantra, you always find the OM included. The meaning is TAYATHA means It is So; OM is the beginning of the mantra; GATE means Go, so the first GATE means go to the Path of Accumulation; the second GATE means go to the Path of Preparation; PARAGATE means go beyond, which indicates the Path of Seeing; PARASAMGATE means go completely beyond, which indicates the Path of Meditation; BODHI SVAHA means be founded or stabilised in Enlightenment, which indicates the Path of No More Learning.

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Note on authentication

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Edited by Adair Bunnnett and Alan Molloy
Checked by Sandup Tsering and Alan Molloy

² The ten objects which generate delusions are the five sensual objects of form, sound and so forth, the three objects of the three poisonous minds, and the last two are the signs of male and female sex.
