

༄༅། །ཤེར་དབང་གི་ལམ་བྱེད་དང་རྗེས་སུ་འབྲེལ་བའི་
རྫོ་རྗེའི་ཐོལ་སྒྱུ་བདེ་སྟོང་བྱུང་འདུག།

**The Unity of Bliss and Emptiness:
A Spontaneous Vajra Song Connected to the
Path Practice of the Wisdom Empowerment**

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KHYENTSE VISION
PROJECT

This text includes Vajrayāna content. Please be aware that some Vajrayāna texts may only be fully understood and appreciated through receiving the necessary empowerments, transmissions, or practice instructions from a qualified teacher.

sher dbang gi lam khyer dang rjes su 'brel ba'i rdo rje'i thol glu bde stong zung 'jug

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

The Unity of Bliss and Emptiness is the third of four spontaneous vajra songs¹ that arose in Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo's mind during a feast gathering held on the holy tenth day of the waxing moon, the monthly tantric festival of Guru Padmasambhava. Each of the four songs corresponds to one of the four Vajrayāna empowerments granted to practitioners of the inner tantras. The four empowerments correspond respectively to the four levels of practice on the Vajrayāna path, which culminate in the four realizations of unity specified in the song titles. When we receive the four empowerments from a vajra master during a ritual ceremony, they are called *ground* empowerments; when we take them individually during daily sādhana practice, they are called *path* empowerments; and when they manifest as complete realization, they are called *fruition* empowerments. Generally speaking, empowerments purify, grant blessings, authorize the disciple to engage in particular practices, and sow the seeds of liberation into the four kāyas or dimensions of awakening.

The first empowerment is the Vase Empowerment, which introduces the disciple to generation stage practice, the yoga of form. This empowerment purifies and blesses the body and subtle channels, authorizes the disciple to undertake deity visualization, and sows the seed of the nirmāṇakāya. Generation stage practice destroys belief in solidly existing appearances and culminates in the realization of the unity of appearance and emptiness.

The second empowerment is the Secret Empowerment, which introduces the disciple to the completion stage practice with concepts. This empowerment purifies and blesses the speech and subtle winds, authorizes the disciple to engage in mantra recitation and practices to transform the subtle winds, channels, and essences, and sows the seed of the saṃbhogakāya. Completion stage practice with concepts destroys attachment to ordinary speech and energy and culminates in the realization of the unity of luminosity and emptiness.

The third empowerment is the Wisdom Empowerment, which introduces the disciple to the path of skillful means. This empowerment purifies and blesses the mind and subtle essences, authorizes the disciple to engage in the three types of *mudrā* (*karmamudrā*, *amayamudrā*, and *jñānamudrā*), and sows the seed of the dharmakāya. The path of skillful means destroys attachment to impure perceptions and culminates in the realization of the unity of bliss and emptiness.

The fourth empowerment is the Precious Word Empowerment, which introduces the disciple to completion stage practice without concepts and sows the seed of the svābhāvikakāya. This empowerment purifies the body, speech, and mind of all karmic and cognitive obscurations. The introduction to the nature of mind enables the disciple to practice the Great Perfection, based on the unity of awareness and emptiness.

In these joyous vajra songs, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo supplicates the four kāyas of the Guru and celebrates the path and realization of each of their corresponding four empowerments, ending each song with an aspiration to reach their ultimate realizations.

བདེ་སྣང་ཟུང་འཇུག

The Unity of Bliss and Emptiness

O joy!

Through the messenger of the sublime wisdom ḍākinī's embrace of the supreme method,

On the direct path of the reversal of the discipline of blazing and dripping,
In the maṇḍala of the excellent marks and signs of inseparable space and awareness,
Dharmakāya guru, the unity of bliss and emptiness, think of me!
Grant your blessings that I may accomplish example luminosity!

From the citadel of the *padmabhañjali* endowed with threefold liberation,
The flower of supreme liberation blossoms in the central channel.
By relishing the supreme elixir of unified bliss-emptiness, the great method,
The wisdom realization of the inseparable four joys intoxicates.
Within the luminous continuum of the upward sequence of the sixteen joys,
The fruition of the path of no-more-learning is perfected within equality.²

Saṃsāra's suffering is bound within the unchanging sphere,³
And by tasting nirvāṇa's abiding reality as a direct realization,
The amṛita of melting bliss from the inseparable magical net
Dissolves the impure delusion of birth and death into its own essence.

When the supreme essence elixir, reveling in the spacious sky of nonduality,
Reaches the great maṇḍala of the *jālandhara*,
Relying upon the blessing of the empowerment of great light rays,
May I attain the wisdom endowed with the supreme of all aspects.

May virtue prevail!

NOTES

1. The titles of the four songs are *The Unity of Appearance and Emptiness*, *The Unity of Luminosity and Emptiness*, *The Unity of Bliss and Emptiness*, and *The Unity of Awareness and Emptiness*.
2. Of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.
3. The unity of space and awareness, the state of equality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, in which there is no suffering.

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GLOSSARY

empowerment of great light rays

འོད་ཟེར་ཆེན་པོའི་དབང་། • *'od zer chen po'i dbang*

An empowerment bestowed by the light rays radiating from the top of the heads of all the Buddhas. It is received by a bodhisattva at the end of the ten bhūmis immediately before attaining complete and unexcelled enlightenment (Tulku Urgyen, *Light of Wisdom*, vol. 2, note 23).

endowed with the supreme of all aspects

རྣམ་ཀུན་མཆོག་ལྡན། • *rnam kun mchog ldan*

This expression denotes the union of the two truths of appearance and emptiness, variously explained as appearance having emptiness which is the supreme of all aspects, and emptiness possessing the sublime capacity for manifestation.

example luminosity

དཔེའི་འོད་གསལ། • *dpe'i 'od gsal* • upamā prabhāsvara

In certain completion stage practices, the two manifest obscurations (emotional and conceptual) that derive from the sleep of delusion are removed through the power of gathering the winds and mind in the heart center.

four joys

དགའ་བ་བཞི། • *dga' ba bzhi*

Joy (*dga' ba*), supreme joy (*dga' mchog*), special joy (*khyaḍ dga'*) or joy free of joy (*dga' bral*), and coemergent joy (*lhan skyes pa'i dga' ba*).

jālandhara

རྩྭ་རྒྱ་ར། • *dza lan+d+ha ra* • jālandhara

The sacred site situated in the crown of the head, inside the top of the skull.

padmabhañjali

པདྨ་བྱུང་ལི། • *pad+ma b+bany+dza li* • padmabhañjali

The female consort's secret space. Padmabhañjali is probably a corruption or variant of padmabhājana, “lotus vessel,” here used metaphorically.

sixteen joys

དགའ་བ་བཅུ་དྲུག ་ *dga' ba bcu drug*

Joy (*dga' ba*), supreme joy (*dga' mchog*), joy free of joy (*dga' bral*), and coemergent joy (*lhan skyes pa'i dga' ba*), each of which has four aspects through its contact with the other three, making sixteen in all.

svābhāvikakāya

རིག་ཉིད་སྒྲུ ་ *ngo bo nyid sku* ་ svābhāvikakāya

The svābhāvikakāya is the ultimate buddhakāya, the union of the three other kāyas. Its wisdom aspect is called the wisdom dharmakāya, its luminous appearance in the perception of pure beings is the saṃbhogakāya, and its physical appearance in the perception of impure beings is the nirmāṇakāya.

threefold liberation

རྣམ་ཐར་གསུམ། ་ *rnam thar gsum* ་ trivimokṣa

The absence of characteristics as the cause (*rgyu mtshan ma med pa*), the absence of aspiration as the result (*'bras bu smon pa med pa*), and emptiness as the essence (*ngo bo stong pa nyid*).