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ཐོལ་སྒྱུ་རིག་སྟོང་ཟུང་འཇུག

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

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo



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.

bzhi pa'i dbang dang rjes su 'brel ba rdo rje'i thol glu rig stong zung 'jug

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
THE UNITY OF AWARENESS AND EMPTINESS	3
NOTES	5
BIBLIOGRAPHY	7
GLOSSARY	9

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

The Unity of Awareness and Emptiness is the fourth 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 sādhanā 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.

འཇིག་རྫོང་ཟུང་འཇུག་

The Unity of Awareness and Emptiness

O joy!

When all phenomena, defined as truly existing or not existing at all, manifest in union,
Their essence is unchanging, innate, inseparable bliss-emptiness,
Their original basic nature is untainted by clinging and beyond thought.
Guru, kāya of the unity of awareness and emptiness, think of me!
Grant your blessings that everything arises as a display of vajra wisdom!

From the essence, the state of inexpressible, unborn emptiness,
The nature ripens as luminous, pervasive, subtle wisdom,
And the display of compassion manifests as the manifold sameness of saṃsāra and
nirvāṇa.

Beyond the reach of thought, impossible for the ordinary, rational mind to portray,
Settle in the continuum beyond meeting and parting, the expanse of dharmakāya.
There, with confidence in the four liberations of the supreme path, deluded thought
patterns

Are the play of spontaneous presence, free from birth and cessation, past and future,
Arising as inseparable unity, endowed with the supreme of all aspects.

Welcomed by the young messenger of the four lamps, radiant and smiling,
When all delusory, defined phenomena are exhausted on the path of the four visions,
The progressions of the four bindus, consecrated within the central channel,
Dissolve into the four kāyas, inner luminosity endowed with six special qualities.

Ultimately, when awareness, fully liberated from the domain of subject-object dualism,
Manifests within the essential nature, untainted by the rational consciousness of
ordinary beings and beyond thought,
As the awakened deeds and activities of the kāyas and wisdoms,
May I attain the wisdom of spontaneous presence!

These short songs, which correspond to the path practice of the four empowerments, arose spontaneously on the king of all occasions, the gathering of the tenth day of the waxing moon. I sang whatever came into my mind. Let there be victory!

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*.

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GLOSSARY

bindu

ཐིག་ལེ། • *thig le* • bindu

“Circle,” “drop,” or “essence”. The precise meaning depends on the specific context.

four lamps

སྒོན་མ་བཞི། • *sgron ma bzhi*

The four “lamps” in the practice of Tögal, the path of spontaneous presence.

four liberations

གྲོལ་བ་བཞི། • *grol ba bzhi*

(1) liberation upon arising (*sbar grol*), (2) self-liberation (*rang grol*), (3) naked liberation (*gcer grol*), and (4) timeless liberation (*ye grol*).

four visions

སྒྲུབ་བ་བཞི། • *snang ba bzhi*

(1) the vision of the direct perception of reality, (2) the vision of ever-increasing meditative experience, (3) the vision of the culmination of awareness, and (4) the vision of exhaustion into reality.

inner luminosity

ནང་གསལ། • *nang gsal*

Synonym of *gdod ma'i gnas lugs*. The primordial abiding nature of reality.

six special qualities

ཁྱད་ཆོས་དྲུག་ལྡན། • *khyad chos drug ldan*

The six special qualities of Samantabhadra, which describe the great stage of primordial liberation: (1) arises from the ground (*gzhi las 'phags*), (2) appears as the true essential nature (*rang ngor snang*), (3) differentiates specific aspects (*bye brag phyed*), (4) liberates directly within openness (*phyed thog tu grol*), (5) does not come from elsewhere (*gzhan lung las ma byung*), and (6) abides in its own natural condition (*rang sar gnas pa*).

svābhāvikakāya

རོ་བོ་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.

vajra wisdom

ཡེ་ཤེས་རྡོ་རྗེ། • *ye shes rdo rje* • jñānavajra

The indestructible bindu of the heart, which is the ultimate Vajrasattva. One of the four vajras: (1) vajra body, (2) vajra speech, (3) vajra mind, and (4) vajra wisdom.