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རྣལ་འབྱོར་གྱི་སྒོ་སྤྱོད་།

**Mahāsiddha Virūpa's
Mind Training Instruction:
The Yoga of Unparalleled Compassion**

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo



KHYENTSE VISION
PROJECT

grub chen bir+wa pa'i man ngag mnyam med snying rje'i rnal 'byor gyi blo sbyong

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Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

The Yoga of Unparalleled Compassion is an instructional text belonging to the mind training genre.¹ Extolling the virtues of compassion, which it holds to be the very foundation of the qualities of a buddha, it presents a concise visualization practice on how to develop a compassionate heart. It is based on the following eight-line quotation from a text by the Indian mahāsiddha Virūpa entitled *A Pith Instruction on Suchness Utterly Free of Elaboration*:²

Those who've protected you with boundless love,
Are embodiments of kindness—think of them with compassion.
“This perpetrator of harm, too, is my mother!
Though she has shown repeated kindness to me in the past,
She is out of control, as if she were insane.
Owing to her negative karma, she will suffer in the Avīci hell.”
Through contemplating thus,
Your compassion for the three realms will become perfect.³

In the present text, the author lays out a twofold approach—a direct meditation and a step-by-step meditation. They focus on the notion of embracing even one's worst enemy with compassion by acknowledging the fact that they have been one's mother in many past lifetimes.

A similar, slightly longer, text—also based on the quotation above—entitled *Glorious Virūpa's Mind Training*⁴ is included in the celebrated *lojong* compendium *Mind Training: The Great Collection*.⁵ Its colophon describes it as an instruction manual or guidebook⁶ attributed to Lowo Lotsāwa Sherab Rinchen, a teacher of the key Sakya lineage holder Chögyal Pagpa (1235–1280), representing the wisdom intention⁷ of Virūpa and the teaching⁸ of Darpañācārya.⁹ This fits well with the fact that Lowo Lotsāwa and Darpañācārya collaborated to translate Virūpa's *Pith*

Instruction on Suchness, the root text from which both their instruction and the present text are drawn.

མཉམ་མེད་སྤྱིང་རྗེའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར།

The Yoga of Unparalleled Compassion

Om svasti!

The alluring nectar of unparalleled compassion
Dispels all agonies of beings in the triple world.
By means of the moon of bodhicitta,
It makes the splendid water lily of liberation bloom as one desires.

To this end, I shall offer this unstinting gift:
The oral teachings of the siddha,
Unwaning nectar-like teachings,
Sole basis of sustenance for the fortunate.

This pith instruction of Virūpa, lord of yogis, at whose steadfast lotus feet an ocean of paṇḍitas and siddhas of the noble land of India bowed the crown jewel of their heads in reverence, is the essence of the ocean-like collection of scriptures of the Mahāyāna, the teachings of the Buddha. Regarding how to practice the profound steps involved in this mind training instruction called *Yoga of Unparalleled Compassion*, [67] the vajra lines in its root text tell us:

Those who've protected you with boundless love,
[Are embodiments of kindness—think of them with compassion.
“This perpetrator of harm, too, is my mother!
Though she has shown repeated kindness to me in the past,
She is out of control, as if she were insane.
Owing to her negative karma, she will suffer in the Avīci hell.”
Through contemplating thus,]

Your compassion [for the three realms] will become perfect.¹⁰

The crux of this passage is that if bodhicitta is absent, it does not matter how much one practices the six perfections, the generation and completion stages, and so forth—those practices will not function as causes for buddhahood. Therefore, as great compassion is the foundation of all the qualities of a buddha, one should give rise to it in one's heart. To accomplish that, there are two ways: (1) a direct meditation and (2) a gradual meditation.

I. Direct Meditation

It is said that once one has succeeded in having compassion for one's main object of hatred, compassion for everyone else will automatically arise too. This can be practiced as follows.

Begin by cultivating bodhicitta after your meditation session or at any other convenient time. Then visualize in front of you your worst enemy, someone who you would like to wreak vengeance on. Imagine what his or her body and face and so on are like. Think, "Oh, this poor enemy of mine!" and visualize that their flesh has been removed and that they are no more than a trembling skeleton. Say out loud one hundred or at least twenty-one times: "Oh, this poor enemy of mine!" This is the meditation of the flow of compassion.

II. Gradual Meditation

The meditation on the reasons for compassion is as follows.

(1) Reflect in the following way, reciting out loud: "Why should I have compassion for this person? Because this person was my mother—oh, my poor mother!" [68]

(2) "This person has been my mother not just once but countless times since beginningless time in saṃsāra—oh, my poor mother!"

(3) "Each time this person was my mother, she did not care about her life and body. The only thing she would ever think of or consider was me. She has done an incredible amount for me and protected me from inestimable harm—oh, my dear old mother!"

(4) "Even though the two of us were mother and child throughout many lifetimes, at present this person is unaware of ever having been my mother because of separation through birth and death. For the same reason, I too was unaware that I used to be this person's child. Out of control, as if they were insane, they brought all kinds of harm upon me—how terribly sad! If my present mother were to become insane or possessed by a demon and were to attack me with a weapon, how incredibly sad that would be! Oh, my poor mother! Her mind is confused by fierce hatred, and she has become like an insane person. I must immediately find the best possible means to help her!"

(5) “Motivated by hatred not only toward myself but also toward many other sentient beings, this person has accumulated extremely bad karma, by the power of which they will be reborn in the great hells. With no way out they must undergo unbearable suffering—how sad!”

Meditate from the bottom of your heart on each of these five reasons for compassion [69] and recite them many hundreds and thousands of times. As you do these recitations, you will develop heartfelt compassion for the object of your contemplation so strong that tears flow from your eyes. Once this occurs, gradually extend your reflection to other adversaries, and then to your loved ones, neighbors, fellow countrymen, and so on, up to all sentient beings, infinite as space. As in the practice of the flow of compassion and the fourth reason for compassion already mentioned: “Because of separation through birth and death we, mother and child, are like a heap of peas that have been hit by a stone. We wander about, unable to recognize, let alone help, each other. Without having even heard or seen each other, we have been scattered in different places. Whatever happiness or suffering may happen to my mother, she is worthy of compassion!”

After you have wholeheartedly meditated like this, imagine: “How wonderful it would be if these mothers of mine actualized the state of a supreme deity!” Think that, as a consequence of that, all your mother sentient beings swiftly transform into a *yidam* deity in which appearance and emptiness are inseparably united. Then settle your mind in an open state free of thoughts and conceptual elaboration. This will help you to make progress and enhance your compassion.

The source of the Mahāyāna path is the mind of compassion,
A stream of nectar, swiftly granting benefit and happiness,
The supreme cure that quenches hatred’s burning fires.
Rely on it continually and buddhahood is at your fingertips.

May the words by which I have expounded
This most excellent discourse on compassion [70]
Be seeds of merit that produce
A pleasure grove of benefit and happiness!

The carefree yogi named Mañjughoṣa compiled this text from a very concise instruction manual by Nesarpa Jamyang Khyentse Wangchuk. May it be virtuous!

NOTES

1. *blo sbyong*.
2. *Suṅisprapañcatattvopadeśa*, *shin tu spros pa med pa de kho na nyid kyi man ngag* (Toh 2020).
3. *Suṅisprapañcatattvopadeśa*, 82b1–2. My translation of this quotation follows that of Thupten Jinpa in *Mind Training*, 269. Note that the Derge edition and Zhönu Gyalchok, *blo sbyong brgya rtsa*, 173, read *thog med* (“[since time] without beginning”) instead of *thogs med* (“boundless”).
4. *dpal ldan bir+wa pa'i blo sbyong*. For an English translation of this text, see Jinpa, *Mind Training*, 269–73. The Tibetan original can be found in Zhönu Gyalchok, *theg pa chen po blo sbyong brgya rtsa*, 173–76.
5. *blo sbyong brgya rtsa*.
6. *khrid yig*.
7. *dgongs pa*.
8. *gsung*.
9. See Zhönu Gyalchok, *blo sbyong brgya rtsa*, 176, and Jinpa, *Mind Training*, 273 and 612n406. Besides the “yoga of unparalleled compassion” (*mnyam med snying rje'i rnal 'byor*), this text also contains a “yoga of the root cause” (*rtsa ba rgyu'i rnal 'byor*), which is mainly about bodhicitta in its two aspects as the “cause” of omniscient buddhahood.
10. *Suṅisprapañcatattvopadeśa*, 82b1–2. The full eight-line quotation has been added for clarity. In the Tibetan original, only the first and the last line are quoted.

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GLOSSARY

Avīci hell

མནཱ་མེད། • *mnar med*

The Avīci hell is the eighth and last of the eight hot hells in Buddhist cosmology. Kangyur Rinpoche explains: “The eighth hell is the Hell of Torment Unsurpassed. Here there is the worst pain of all, constant and unwavering. [...] Beings who do great harm to persons who have sublime qualities or who kill their parents or their spiritual teachers will surely burn for an entire kalpa in the Hell of Torment Unsurpassed.” Padmakara Translation Group, *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, 162–63.

Nesarpa Jamyang Khyentse Wangchuk

གནམ་གསར་པ་འཇམ་དབྱངས་མཆིན་བཟྱའི་དབང་ཕྱུག་ • *gnas gsar pa 'jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang phyug*

Nesarpa Jamyang Khyentse Wangchuk Tenpe Gyaltzen (1524–1568) was considered a previous incarnation of Khyentse Wangpo. He was born into the Nesar family lineage, named after the Tsi Nesar temple they established in the Nyang valley in the eleventh century, and eventually became a great master of the Sakya tradition and an important lineage holder of the esoteric Lamdre teachings known as Explication for Disciples (*slob bshad*). On account of several visions and his activities as a minor treasure revealer he also became affiliated with the Nyingma tradition.

Virūpa

བིརུ་པ། བིརུ་པ། • *bir+ Wa pa, birU pa*

The Indian mahāsiddha Virūpa (lit. “the ugly one”) is the first human figure in the tantric Lamdre system, from which the Sakya tradition derives. He composed the *Vajra Lines on the Path with Its Result*, the primary text of the Lamdre tradition. On the diverging primary sources concerning his life and the possibility of multiple Virūpas, see Smith, *Sakya: The Path with Its Result*, xix–xxi.