

CHAPTER 15

**How to Train the Mind within the Expanse of Appearance, Emptiness, and Empty Echoes**

[160] Again, in the celestial mansion of such a sublime teacher [Dromtönpa], our teacher, the perfect spiritual friend of all, asked the following question for the benefit of future sentient beings whose intelligence is small:

“Master, what is the greatest fault for a practitioner?”

“These afflictions of attachment and aversion seem to be the greatest.”

“Master, what is the root of attachment and aversion?”

“It is the things desired by the monks of the monasteries.”

“Do I not also have this, master?”

“This can be discerned from the basis and from the strength of self-grasping.”

“This self-grasping can easily arise, master.”

“Then it will lead everyone to their downfall.”

“What should one do if attachment and aversion arise, master?”

“Drom, train in the manner of illusions and apparitions.”

“What is the nature of an illusion, master?”

“Drom, it is applied to a base material by means of incantations and medicine.”

“In that case, what is an apparition, master?”

“Drom, it is the portrayal of diverse things though being unreal.”

“What is the nature of the base [material] of that illusion itself?”

“Drom, it is grasped at as signs though being unreal.”

“Do please tell me an example of an illusion.”

“Drom, [once] in a town called Śrāvastī,  
There was a man named Candrabhadra  
Who was skilled in magic.  
He had a friend called Śrīman,  
Who had a family of three.

“One day Candrabhadra taught magic  
To the householder Śrīman.  
He told him that this would be useful in the future.  
‘Candrabhadra, what can I do with it?  
I would be happier to own a horse instead,’ [replied his friend].  
Discerning [the situation], Candrabhadra thought, ‘I’ll trick him once.’

“Early one morning, while his three family members

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Ate their breakfasts, Śrīman spun yarn next to the door;  
His wife washed and rinsed [pots, pans, and dishes].

“Then the skilled magician came  
Riding up on an illusory horse  
And asked Śrīman, ‘Do you want to buy this horse?’  
Śrīman replied, ‘I don’t have any money, so I can’t buy it.’  
‘That’s alright. You can leave your yarn with me,’ said the magician.  
Thinking, ‘He wants the yarn as the horse’s price;  
This means I could fool this man!’  
Śrīman agreed to buy the horse.  
‘Well then, why don’t you check out how he rides?’ asked the magician.  
As soon as Śrīman mounted the horse,  
The horse sped off, out of control.

“When the sun had set and he had reached an unfamiliar desolate region, [161]  
He thought, ‘I have been doomed by this wretched horse.’  
As he looked around here and there,  
He saw a house with smoke bellowing [out of its chimney]  
And ran fast to the door.  
When he knocked on the door and called out for someone,  
An old woman came out.  
‘Wonderful, here is a human being,’ he thought.  
“If my luck is bad, she might turn out to be a nonhuman,  
And I might get duped by her tonight.  
But even if she does deceive me, what can I do?  
There is nowhere else to go.

“I could be devoured by tigers and wolves,  
So I had better rely on her instead.’  
With such thoughts he asked for a shelter.  
‘By all means, do come inside,’ she replied.

“As he entered the house and looked around,  
He saw that she had three daughters.  
After she had offered him delicious food and drinks,  
The woman asked, ‘Who brought you here?’

“Once he told her what had happened earlier,  
She replied, ‘Now you’ve got nowhere to go.  
This is an island not owned by anyone.  
My husband is dead; he is with us no more.  
Why don’t you start a family with one of my daughters  
And become the master of this household?’

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Even if you leave, you won't get anywhere.'  
He felt that he had no other choice.

“So he started a family with one of the daughters.  
He lived with them and many years passed by.  
He even had three children, two boys and a girl.  
One day, while their mother went to collect wood,  
The four, the father and his three children,  
Went to play on the river bank.  
The moon's reflection was visible in the water  
And one of the boys jumped in to grab it.  
The child was swept away by the water.  
When the father jumped in after his son,  
Another son followed him and was swept away as well.  
Śrīman was beside himself as to what to do.  
As he held on to the one behind, he lost grip of the other;  
So in the end he caught neither.  
On the shore, a tiger carried away his daughter.  
He shouted curses at the tiger many times.  
Not retrieving all three, he fainted.  
Nearly dead, he ended up on the dry shore.  
As he woke up from collapsing with grief,  
His wife arrived there at the site.

“‘What happened?’ she asked and he told her the story.  
Grief-stricken, his wife plunged herself into the river.  
Witnessing the death of his children and their mother,  
Śrīman thought, ‘What kind of a person am I with such [terrible] merit?  
I was separated from some while they were still alive,  
And from the latter four I was separated by death.  
It would be better if I, too, were to die right here.’

“In his grief, he tore out his hair  
[And saw that] all of his hair had turned white.  
Anguished, he fled  
And, after a while reached his homeland.  
When he went to his house and looked around,  
He saw his first wife singing a song.  
‘Are you still basking in the sun?’ [she said.]  
‘I haven't finished washing [the dishes] yet.’  
On seeing this, something snapped deep within his heart.  
‘Oh, how much I have suffered! [162}  
I've been lost for so long, and  
You didn't even come to search for me once.

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Listen to how melodious your song is.  
You've not grieved in the least.  
Instead of being overjoyed at my return,  
You chastise me for basking in the sun!  
As he exclaimed all this, he was enraged.

“Hearing this, the wife thought,  
‘Is he deluded or crazy, or has he been fooled by magic?  
What has happened to him?’  
She asked, ‘What has happened to you?’  
‘Wife, I have been separated from you for this long  
And you are still unaware of this?’ [he retorted].

“‘Why do you say such a thing?  
Just now you ate your breakfast,  
And I still haven't finished washing the dishes.  
Look here.’ Saying this, she showed them to him.  
‘What [is going on here]? You may have been tricked by your friend.  
Go look at what is left of your spinning.  
It's outside; you'll recognize it from its bulk.’

“Then it occurred to Śrīman,  
‘It seems that what she says is true,  
And I have been deluded about all of this.  
But it is impossible to be deluded for so many years.  
My three children—two boys and a girl—were born.  
I saw their death and disappearance!  
A year is comprised of twelve months,  
And there are three hundred and sixty days.  
How can the suffering of a single day  
Be felt across such [a span of time]?  
Perhaps my wife is deceiving me [after all]!’  
With this, he went to check the spinning yarn.  
Seeing that it still lay outside the door,  
He overcame his doubts.

“After several days passed,  
His friend, the skilled magician, came by.  
‘I haven't seen you for many years. I felt sad [about this], so I came to see you today.  
Where did you go?’ he asked.  
Once Śrīman had recounted the past events,  
The skilled magician replied:

“All phenomena are tricks of illusion;

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Nothing is substantially real.  
You never saw your three children and their mother,  
So how could there have been even physical contact?  
You have never left, with even a single step,  
So how could you have reached a far-off land?  
Not even a brief moment has passed,  
So how could you have suffered for many years?

“The suffering of samsara is just like that.  
Though seemingly real, it is just like your [experience].  
Though you have wandered long for eons,  
This wandering is like the years you have felt.  
Aging is like [the white hair on] your head;  
Youth is like the death of your [illusory] children;  
Enemies are like that hostile river;  
Your friends and family are like the old woman;  
Your homeland is like that [desolate] island;  
Sunrise and sunset are like your arrival there;  
They are like this, grasped as real when they are not.

“Do not forsake inquiry, householder Śrīman.  
This ultimate mode of being, which is primordially empty—[163]  
Understand it through hearing your wife’s words.  
Understand it through your reflections upon seeing your yarn.  
Understand it through deep meditation.

“As for places such as Śrāvastī—  
All subjects and objects, without exception,  
Are [empty] like this, so analyze them.  
Repeatedly reflect on this and you will understand;  
Through habituation you will see the truth.

“In the past you did not believe in the cycle [of illusions];  
Yet when searched for, how can real characteristics be found?  
Though you wandered for so long,  
Not until now have you understood that it’s groundless; this is similar.’

“As the skilled magician spoke these words,  
Śrīman realized that he had been tricked by an illusion.  
He recognized all phenomena to be like this [magician’s illusion],  
And, losing faith in the factors of cyclic existence,  
Became familiar with the truth of the ultimate nature.  
Today, he has become Tsültrim Gyalwa.  
Seeing the ultimate nature, he is learned in all fields.

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“I, on the other hand, am an apparition monk.  
For an apparition to create an illusion,  
Will even its appearance be possible?  
Drom, such is the basis of magical illusion;  
Drom, that which is called an apparition is also like this;  
Drom, the objects of attachment and aversion are also like this;  
So, Drom, continually recognize all things as being the same.”

“Master, this analogy of illusion is easy to understand.”  
“Dreams are easier to understand, Drom.”  
“Master, what is easier for Indians to understand?”  
“We find this illusion most easy, Drom.”  
“Master, magical illusions exist in Tibet, too.”  
“In Tibet, dreams may be sufficient, Drom.”  
“Master, what would happen if one had no dreams?”  
“Then there would be a great wonder.”  
“Master, what about poetic words?”  
“One might not comprehend the profound ultimate nature, Drom.”  
“I, for one, do not have any dreams.”  
“Drom, this is a sign that you have no sleep.”  
“As for sleep, yes, I go to sleep again and again.”  
“Sleep can be taken [into the path] as reality itself, Drom.”  
“Reality itself cannot be taken, master.”  
“Therefore you do not experience dreams, Drom.”  
“Good omens in dreams are a joy, though.”  
“Didn’t ‘dream’ just issue from your mouth, Drom?”  
“These are dreams that occur without sleep.”  
“Such things as pure visions can appear, Drom.”  
“Master, your conversations are profound indeed.”  
“I have never spoken about something not profound, Drom.”  
“This is the collection on relinquishing attachment and aversion, isn’t it?”  
“You are skilled at questioning as well, Drom.”  
“What should one do if one hears insulting words?”  
“Treat them like echoes and let them go, Drom.”  
“What should one do if one is being killed?”  
“Recognize that this is in return for taking a life, Drom.”  
“Teach us a method that would prevent such things.” [164]  
“In that case, Drom, relinquish taking life and let go.”  
“This will not avert what happens in this life, though.”  
“Generate a deep remorse to fill one’s heart, Drom.”  
“I need not seek this, for it would not occur to me [to do otherwise].”  
“This is excellent, for it is a sign of having understood, Drom.”  
“Don’t you have [other] methods to speak of besides this?”

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“Mentally take upon yourself all sufferings, Drom.”  
“This is essential for others, but it is difficult to come by.”  
“Drom, it is true that [embracing others’ suffering] does not come about if one does not take them.”  
“If one takes them all, will that come about?”  
“Whatever the case may be, train in this way, Drom.”  
“What is the purpose of such [a training]?”  
“It has been taught that if one desires enlightenment, it is necessary, Drom.”  
“Which teacher taught this?”  
“The teacher Serlingpa taught this.”  
“Who taught this to Serlingpa, master?”  
“Countless [teachers] taught him.”  
“In that case, master, what is the method of this taking?”  
“Drom, draw forth the sufferings of all by means of your breath.”  
“How should one relate to one’s own virtues?”  
“Drom, place them astride your breath and give them to others.”  
“What happens after this?”  
“They will become like [the visualization of] emitting [light rays] and withdrawing [them].”  
“What happens after this?”  
“Buddhahood, the perfect fulfillment of abandonment and realization, will come to be.”  
“Master, I am hearing some audacious words here.”  
“This is audacious with a good basis.”  
“Do please say more, audacious one.”  
“Drom, whatever happiness comes about, give it to others.”  
“Say more on this still, master.”  
“Drom, whatever suffering comes about, take it upon yourself.”  
“Master, are these not huge boasts?”  
“Drom, offer gain and victory to others.”  
“Most amazing! Do say still more.”  
“Drom, accept losses and defeats yourself.”  
“You say so, but are there no dangers?”  
“Drom, there is none more wondrous than an enemy.”  
“Is this not reversing tail and head with respect to a friend?”  
“Drom, what if the tail grows on the head?”  
“Then it would be a huge hungry monster!”  
“Drom, I would also call one’s friends the same.”  
“Can such a norm be viable?”  
“Drom, the anchoring burden of the norms of samsara is huge indeed.”  
“How do you act toward your friends?”  
“I shake my head and run away, Drom.”  
“Master, do you not meet with any friends at all?”  
“Once I did meet with one.”

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“Did you not shake your head [then]?”  
“Drom, he ran away due to the effect of my Dharma practice.”  
“Did you hear what happened in the [Indian] plains?” [165]  
“Saying ‘the king has arrived’ he shed tears.”  
“Master, they are more polluting than an enemy.”  
“You’ve recognized how things are upside down.”  
“Master, what will happen if one trains in this manner?”  
“One will get very close to buddhahood.”  
“Master, will this purify negative karma?”  
“The [negative karma] will become like snow on a hot stone.”  
“Master, will this [training] serve the purpose of the seven limbs?”  
“This will go beyond one hundred limbs.”  
“Master, how does one extend this to other conditions?”  
“By knowing whatever conduct you engage in.”  
“Master, how should one conduct oneself when eating?”  
“There are those who think, ‘I am consuming concentration [food].’”  
“Master, what else can one contemplate?”  
“One is eating only for the sake of others.”  
“Master, how should one conduct oneself when wearing clothes?”  
“Think that one is wearing pure ethical discipline.”  
“Master, what else should one do?”  
“Relate together everything that accords with each other.”  
“Master, are there no possible pitfalls to this?”  
“Drom, if [pitfalls] occur, blame the self.”  
“Master, if there is no danger, this is highly profitable.”  
“No, there is no danger of being let down by this practice.”  
“Master, due to my past karma, I have heard the Dharma.”  
“There are teachings in the law of karma and its effects.”  
“Master, yes, there is in this the source of an essential point.”  
“I’ve never spoken of something that has no basis.”  
“Master, if one were to summarize everything, how should one do so?”  
“Have faith in the law of karma and its effects, Drom.”  
“Master, this [then] is a collection on echoes and illusions.”  
“Drom, bring together all of these well and let it go.”

“Though we engaged in many queries and responses,  
If encapsulated well, it is this:

When objects of attraction or aversion appear,  
View them as you would illusions or apparitions.  
When you hear unpleasant words,  
View them as [mere] echoes.  
When injuries inflict your body,  
See them as [the fruits of] past deeds.



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“There is nothing other than this.”

This concludes the fifteenth chapter of the *Jewel Garland of Dialogues*, “How to Train the Mind Within the Expanse of Appearance, Emptiness, and Empty Echoes.”

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