

Padmasambhava: Instruction for women on attaining enlightenment without abandoning daily activities



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The great master known as Padmasambhava, untainted by a womb, was born miraculously from a lotus flower. The mighty king of Tibet invited him to the Snowy Land. After he had tamed the land for Samye, he resided at the Juniper Ridge of Crystal Pearls. It was at this occasion that seven extraordinary women — Lady Tsogyal of Kharchen, Lady Diamond Lake of Shelkar, Lady Splendid Worship of Chokro, Lady Matingma of Dro, Lady Jewel Crest of Margong, Lady Sparkling Light of Chim and Lady Mati of Ruyan — arranged a golden mandala, the size of one cubit, with turquoise flowers as the seven royal possessions.

After they had made a feast offering with rice wine and a variety of delicacies, they made this request: Great master, please listen. Share with us your flawless physical presence, your pristine voice, and your mind that transcends all conceptual constructs.

Lady Tsogyal, the Princess of Kharchen, addressed the Lotus Master in this way: Please bestow an instruction for awakening to enlightenment in this very life, while in a female body, for a woman like me who is not very intelligent and is dim-witted, uneducated, and narrow-minded. Please give an instruction that is easy to understand and remember, and which is simple to grasp and realize.

The master then instructed her with these words: Princess of Kharchen, listen here. The true nature of dharmata is not an object that the mind can grasp; it has no dimension and belongs to no category. It is a nature that cannot be identified in any way whatsoever, and therefore does not need to be analyzed by the intellect. It is simply a matter of knowing the mind that is always present within you from the very beginning, so intelligence is not necessary. Forget about being clever, and simply remain.

This true nature is not within the domain of the intellect. Since it is a self-existing purity, nonarising and naturally present, there is no need to deliberately cultivate it. It is experienced simply as a natural presence; therefore it does not need to be held in mind, nor is it necessary to be sharp-witted. Just leave the intellect to itself.

The mind of equality is neither wide nor narrow. The buddha-mind and the mind of a sentient being derive from

a single base, which is awakened mind. It becomes enlightened by realizing it, and one roams in samsara when not realizing it. The identity of this mind, which defies conceptual constructs, is a lucid brightness, a sheer emptiness made of nothing whatsoever, an unimpeded, vivid presence — that is the mind of a buddha. There is nothing you need to realize apart from it, so settle this issue by realizing it.

The nature of dharmata is not caught by names or writing, and therefore transcends the confines of conceptual constructs. This instruction has neither script nor text. There are no elaborate details to be discerned. As soon as you understand this it does not matter if you are dim-witted or uneducated — it does not require vast learning. This is the realization you should settle on. This is also the great scriptural lineage. This will resolve the entire scope of learning and reflection. This is also what will let you awaken to enlightenment within this very life, before you leave the body. So, train in it.

Nevertheless, you women don't understand when it is explained; you don't see when it is shown; you don't listen when it is told; and you can't keep secrets yet insistently ask for more teachings. While the Dharma is not in your hearts, you prance about as if it is. This teaching for women like you will hardly be successful, so don't deceive yourself, but give your practice the utmost attention.

Lady Diamond Lake of Shelkar then asked: Great master, hear me. For a woman like me of poor disposition, who is unable to practice with diligence, I request you to bestow an instruction for awakening to enlightenment though indolence.

The master then instructed her with these words: Lady of Shelkar, listen here. The nature of dharmata is naturally present in your mind, so it is fine to be indolent.

What is meant by the true nature of dharmata? It is this unconfined lucid wakefulness that is naturally present. It does not need to be sought elsewhere. When you recognize this mind of equality, self-existing and unceasing, it is fine to be indolent. Since every type of perception appears as the expression of this aware nature of mind, no matter which thought movement takes place, it arises from and dissolves back into the nature of dharmata, so original wakefulness is unceasing.

This nature to be realized is not something to be cultivated or accomplished, so it is fine to be indolent. Within such nature as dharmata, there is nothing whatsoever to be cultivated or achieved; it is present as your natural possession from the beginning. Every type of activity or effort binds you with the rope of ambition. There is no separate result to achieve by means of effort and striving. Let your mind of equality relax unsupported in the realized state of dharmata.

If you are able to be indolent after realizing this nature, that itself is the awakened state of a buddha. You will have no fear of further rebirth in samsara.

But, nevertheless, a woman like you cannot let go and cannot stay put. You always make elaborate plans for unnecessary activities and think not for an instant of the Dharma practice that is needed. When you set out to look into the nature of mind, you are unable to look for even a moment; instead you tirelessly keep an eye on your own looks, which is unnecessary. Without gaining strength in

meditation practice, you give emphasis to pointless chatter, as ceaseless as drool from an old cow. I haven't seen any success from teaching to such women. If you want to persevere, do so with further Dharma practice. Lady Splendid Worship of Chokro then asked the master: Great master, hear me. For a woman like me, whose five poisonous emotions are strong, please bestow an instruction for awakening to enlightenment without having to reject these five poisons.

The master then instructed her with these words: Lady of Chokro, listen here. The five poisonous emotions are a natural possession within you since the beginning and therefore cannot be discarded by rejecting them. They are not transformed by transforming or purified by purification. Since these five poisons are of the nature of dharmata, they must be liberated where they are by dissolving naturally.

The identity of anger is empty. The very moment after anger has bloomed into a hell, there is nothing more for that anger to grow into, so nothing further is grown. The object of the anger is empty, so nothing grows from that either. Anger is empty of an individual identity and so has neither shape nor color, matter nor substance, and therefore dissolves in itself without having to be rejected. Anger causes no harm when it arises, and there is no benefit from it not arising. Anger naturally dissolves within the expanse of dharmata.

It is similar with desire, close-mindedness, pride, and envy — they are empty of locations and so have no origin; next, they are placeless and have neither support nor substance; and finally, they are empty of identity, and consist of

neither color nor shape. The five poisonous emotions dissolve where they are, leaving no trace. Original wakefulness consciously dawns. Thoughts are freed as dharmata. The rope of duality is cut.

When you practice after having realized this, whichever of the five poisonous emotions arises will dawn as dharmata. They need not be rejected. Original wakefulness does not need to be produced. This is the instruction in letting the five poisons be naturally liberated. When you practice in accordance with this principle, you cannot avoid attaining buddhahood.

Nevertheless, women like you ignite their minds with the five poisonous emotions. They drench themselves in unwholesome tendencies and indulge in their desires. Their craving for a man is like the raging winds of duality. Soiling and fouling, such women grasp at hoarding dust. Thinking not of the Dharma, but only of themselves, they are callous and unyielding. The five poisons hold the danger of running wild, so apply yourself to practice. Lady Matingma of Dro then asked the Lotus Master: Great master, hear me. For a woman like me, who has many tasks and many distractions, please bestow an instruction for awakening to enlightenment without having to abandon activities.

The master instructed her in these words: Lady Matingma of Dro, listen here. Dharmata manifests in countless ways, and everything is therefore the awakened state. To enjoy without clinging to any of the five sense pleasures is like enjoying a plate of food. Nonattachment is the way of a buddha's action.

Since self-existing wakefulness unfolds from oneself, every recollection is wakefulness. Whatever occurs in your mind, do not follow it; let it clear where it occurs — that itself is the awakened state. It is like a water bubble that comes from the water and dissolves back into the water. Spinning through samsara is impermanent; it has no substance whatsoever. No matter how you may circle through the incessant unfolding of birth, old age, sickness, and death, like magical apparitions, none of these have any substance, since they all occur from your own mind. Understand them to be magical illusions; they are experienced, and yet they are unreal.

The belief in a self is a delusion, so do not believe that an ego or a self has any substance. House and property, husband and children, wealth and belongings are all like objects in a dream; treat them like fantasies, since they are unreal and illusory.

All worldly activities are painful in nature. Like the thread from the silkworm's spittle, they unfold from you, and then they chain you. Whatever you do, give it the seal of no concept, and dedicate your actions as the accumulation of merit. If you practice in this way, every action you do becomes a dharma that leads to attaining buddhahood. Nevertheless, simple women like you have little fortitude. Having physical enemies, you cannot practice the Dharma but are forced into marriage. Your bad karma involves you in countless tasks, so you never think of the Dharma. Very few women succeed in Dharma practice, so embolden yourself with perseverance.

Then Lady Jewel Crest of Margong asked the master: For a woman like me, who has unwholesome karma, please

bestow an instruction for not having to be again reborn as a woman in the future.

The master replied: Lady of Margong, listen here. The awakened mind that is a self-existing knowing is not formed in the past, present, or future; also, it is neither male nor female nor neuter and has no difference in quality. Its self-existing and self-arising natural presence, dharmata that does not arise, is free from death, transmigration, and destruction. In it, there is no dread of change.

Since the unfolding of thoughts from this mind is wakefulness, there is no need for effort or cultivation. Thought arises within it and dissolves back into it, like clouds in the sky.

Dharmakaya is present within you. Since it is never formed, samsara is pure from the beginning. It does not incarnate into a body. The play of dharmata is the nature of intelligent insight, and once you understand this, there is nothing inferior in being a female. While failing to know the nature of dharmata, being born as a mighty king does not stop samsara's flow.

In any case, nothing whatsoever can help you unless you realize dharmata that does not arise, just like no child can be born from a barren woman. Yet as soon as you realize the never-arising dharmata, there is also no need to take rebirth.

Nevertheless, women like you are not clever enough to practice the Dharma. You lack the armor of perseverance and cannot practice. Your timid intellect makes it difficult

to show you the nature of dharmata; your weak fortitude prevents you from realizing it. Very few women succeed in Dharma practice, so try your best to endeavor and apply your mind to the practice.

Lady Sparkling Light of Chim then asked the Lotus Master: For a stupid woman like me, please bestow an instruction that awakens to enlightenment through a single phrase. The master replied: Lady of Chim, listen here. From the beginning, your mind has been a self-existing natural presence that never arises and is primordially present within your stream-of-being. It is not something that needs to be re-achieved through effort. Since this nature of mind is not a concrete thing, training in it means to cultivate nothing whatsoever. It is not an object to be cultivated, nor is there anyone to cultivate it.

Since your thinking is an original wakefulness, do not regard dullness and agitation as defects. Since they have no identity, your thoughts naturally dissolve and dharmata's natural presence comes to the fore. Dullness clears as it arises from and dissolves into this nature. Agitation also clears into basic space as it arises from this nature.

Since the fruition is not a thing that is achieved, it is enough to simply realize your own mind. Since your mind neither dies nor transmigrates, it is the single sphere of dharmakaya. Once you understand this meaning, the realization of the single cut, that itself is the awakened state of a buddha.

Nevertheless, fickle and suspicious women like you are incapable of following your master's advice with your

rigid and incorrigible emotions. Only a few of you can reach the end of Dharma practice; but if you do practice, treasure your master's instructions. Be willing to face at least a little hardship.

Lady Mati of Ruyang then asked the Lotus Master: Since my diligence is weak, please bestow an instruction on nonaction.

The master replied: Lady Mati of Ruyang, listen to me. The nature of dharmata is not a concrete substance, and therefore is not something that can be produced. Since this dharmata nature is present from the beginning, it does not result from bowing down. The nature of dharmata is within you, present and unobscured. Once you realize that your mind has no identity, that itself is the awakened state. It is not something that needs to be achieved. All effort and striving merely chains you to craving. Let be, uncontrived and without meditating.

Nevertheless, senseless women like you don't understand, no matter how much you are taught. Even when dharmakaya is pointed out, you don't recognize it. When introduced to the awakened state, you still don't see it. Even when taught, it is hard for you to realize the single cut of nonaction. Most of you will distort this teaching for women, so don a stronger armor and beware of being seized by the mara of taking a husband. Don't spawn children; instead practice in solitude, even though it is hard.

Once again, the Lotus Master gave the women some advice: Listen here, you faithful lady maidens. As your source of refuge, the most excellent is the Three Jewels, so

exert yourselves in the methods for taking refuge. This life will be fortunate and will prevent you from being born in the lower realms in the future.

As your object of trust, the most excellent is your guru, so honor him as high as the crown of your head. This life will be blessed, and he will guide you along the path in your future lives.

As your place of worship, the most excellent is your yidam, so offer feasts and give tormas. This will fulfill your aims in this life and bring you prosperity in your future ones.

As your objects of honor, the most excellent are your parents, so serve and care for them. It will bring immediate benefit in this life and assure their help in the future.

As a companion, the most excellent is your husband, so value him as you would your own eyes. It will make this life virtuous and ensure a birth of good standing in your next.

Since women have the most control over immediate circumstances, be generous with your meals. This will ensure you amiable servants in this life and affluent food and wealth in your future lives. Since they are karmic creditors from the past, make sure your offspring embrace the Dharma. This will help you in this life and help them in the future.

The Lotus Master then continued: Listen here, you lady maidens. The awakened mind of knowing is neither male nor female. Dharmata of self-existing wakefulness has neither lofty nor humble standing. Self-existing

dharmakaya is neither high nor low. The nature of the single sphere is beyond increase and decrease. The buddha-mind lies beyond dimension. Things and their nature are not a duality.

Once you realize that your mind is the buddha, the buddha does not need to be sought elsewhere. Realize the nature of your mind and train in that. Venerate your guru and the Precious Ones and live in accordance with the Dharma to the best of your ability. Then, though born as women, you are both wise and magnificent.

The seven women attained realization and rejoiced in the master's words. They prostrated to him, circled him, and made a lavish feast offering. Lady Tsogyal, the Princess of Kharchen, out of consideration for future people, wrote his words down at that very time, at Juniper Ridge of Crystal Pearls.

SEAL, SEAL, SEAL.

Sources: "Treasures From Juniper Ridge, The Profound Treasure Instructions Of Padmasambhava To The Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal" translated and edited by Erik Pema Kunsang & Marcia Binder Schmidt.