



Saraha's Dohakosa: The Royal Song

Doha mdzod spyod pa'i glu: Dohakosa nama caryagiti

HOMAGE TO ARYAMANJUSRI!

Homage to the destroyer of demonic power!

The wind lashes calm waters into rollers and breakers;
The king makes multifarious forms out of unity,
Seeing many faces of this one Archer, Saraha.

The cross-eyed fool sees one lamp as two;
The vision and the viewer are one,
You broken, brittle mind!

Many lamps are lit in the house,
But the blind are still in darkness;
Sahaja is all-pervasive
But the fool cannot see what is under his nose.

Just as many rivers are one in the ocean
All half-truths are swallowed by the one truth;
The effulgence of the sun illuminates all dark corners.

Clouds draw water from the ocean to fall as rain on the earth
And there is neither increase nor decrease;
Just so, reality remains unaltered like the pure sky.

Replete with the Buddha's perfections
Sahaja is the one essential nature;
Beings are born into it and pass into it,
Yet there is neither existence nor non-existence in it.

Forsaking bliss the fool roams abroad,
Hoping for mundane pleasure;
Your mouth is full of honey now,
Swallow it while you may!

Fools attempt to avoid their suffering,
The wise enact their pain.
Drink the cup of sky-nectar
While others hunger for outward appearances.

Flies eat filth, spurning the fragrance of sandalwood;
Man lost to nirvana furthers his own confusion,

Thirsting for the coarse and vulgar.

The rain water filling an ox's hoof-print
Evaporates when the sun shines;
The imperfections of a perfect mind,
All are dissolved in perfection.

Salt sea water absorbed by clouds turns sweet;
The venom of passionate reaction
In a strong and selfless mind becomes elixir.

The unutterable is free of pain;
Non-meditation gives true pleasure.
Though we fear the dragon's roar
Rain falls from the clouds to ripen the harvest.

The nature of beginning and end is here and now,
And the first does not exist without the last;
The rational fool conceptualising the inconceivable
Separates emptiness from compassion.

The bee knows from birth
That flowers are the source of honey;
How can the fool know
That samsara and nirvana are one?

Facing himself in a mirror
The fool sees an alien form;
The mind with truth forgotten
Serves untruth's outward sham.

Flowers' fragrance is intangible
Yet its reality pervades the air,
Just as mandala circles are informed
By a formless presence.

Still water stung by an icy wind
Freezes hard in starched and jagged shapes;
In an emotional mind agitated by critical concepts
The unformed becomes hard and intractable.

Mind immaculate by nature is untouched
By samsara and nirvana's mud;
But just like a jewel lost in a swamp
Though it retains its lustre it does not shine.

As mental sloth increases pure awareness diminishes;
As mental sloth increases suffering also grows.

Shoots sprout from the seed and leaves from the branches.

Separating unity from multiplicity in the mind
The light grows dim and we wander in the lower realms;
Who is more deserving of pity than he
Who walks into fire with his eyes wide open?

Obsessed with the joys of sexual embrace
The fool believes he knows ultimate truth;
He is like someone who stands at his door
And, flirting, talks about sex.

The wind stirs in the House of Emptiness
Exciting delusions of emotional pleasure;
Fallen from celestial space, stung,
The tormented yogin faints away.

Like a brahmin taking rice and butter
Offering sacrifice to the flame,
He who visualises material things as celestial ambrosia
Deludes himself that a dream is ultimate reality.

Enlightening the House of Brahma in the fontanelle
Stroking the uvala in wanton delight,
Confused, believing binding pleasure to be spiritual release,
The vain fools calls himself a yogin.

Teaching that virtue is irrelevant to intrinsic awareness,
He mistakes the lock for the key;
Ignorant of the true nature of the gem
The fool calls green glass emerald.

His mind takes brass for gold,
Momentary peak experience for reality accomplished;
Clinging to the joy of ephemeral dreams
He calls his short-thrift life Eternal Bliss.

With a discursive understanding of the symbol EVAM,
Creating four seals through an analysis of the moment,
He labels his peak experience sahaja:
He is clinging to a reflection mistaken for the mirror.

Like befuddled deer leaping into a mirage of water
Deluded fools in their ignorance cling to outer forms
And with their thirst unslaked, bound and confined,
They idealise their prison, pretending happiness.

The relatively real is free of intellectual constructs,

And ultimately real mind, active or quiescent, is no-mind,
And this is the supreme, the highest of the high, immaculate;
Friends, know this sacred high!

In mind absorbed in samadhi that is concept-free,
Passion is immaculately pure;
Like a lotus rooted in the slime of a lake bottom,
This sublime reality is untouched by the pollution of existence.

Make solid your vision of all things as visionary dream
And you attain transcendence,
Instantaneous realisation and equanimity;
A strong mind binding the demons of darkness
Beyond thought your own spontaneous nature is accomplished.

Appearances have never ceased to be their original radiance,
And unformed, form never had a substantial nature to be grasped;
It is a continuum of unique meditation,
In an inactive, stainless, meditative mind that is no-mind.

Thus the I is intellect, mind and mind-forms,
I the world, all seemingly alien show,
I the infinite variety of vision-viewer,
I the desire, the anger, the mental sloth -
And bodhicitta.

Now there is a lamp lit in spiritual darkness
Healing the splits riven by the intellect
So that all mental defilements are erased.
Who can define the nature of detachment?

It cannot be denied nor yet affirmed,
And ungraspable it is inconceivable.
Through conceptualisation fools are bound,
While concept-free there is immaculate sahaja.

The concepts of unity and multiplicity do not bring integration;
Only through awareness do sentient beings reach freedom.
Cognition of radiance is strong meditation;
Abide in a calm, quiescent mind.

Reaching the joy swollen land
Powers of seeing expand,
And there is joy and laughter;
Even chasing objects there is no separation.

From joy, buds of pure pleasure emerge,
Bursting into blooms of supreme pleasure,

And so long as outflow is contained
Unutterable bliss will surely mature.

What, where and by whom are nothing,
Yet the entire event is imperative.
Whether love and attachment or desirelessness
The form of the event is emptiness.

Like pigs we wallow in this sensual mire
But what can stain our pearly mind?
Nothing can ever contaminate it,
And by nothing can we ever be bound.

This song of existential freedom was composed by
the Glorious Master Yogin Saraha.

*This Dohakosa of Saraha has been translated by
Kunzang Tenzin in Kathmandu over many years,
finished on the full moon of the seventh month
of the wood-ox year. May all beings be happy!
May all manner of things be well!*

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