



MEDITATIONS ON EMPTINESS

CLASS ONE: THE TWO REALITIES

From the Ninth Chapter of Master Shantideva's *GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA'S WAY OF LIFE*:

इमं परिकरं सर्वं प्रज्ञार्थं हि मुनिर्जगौ।

तस्मादुत्पादयेत्प्रज्ञां दुःखनिवृत्तिकाङ्क्षया ॥ १ ॥

imaṃ parikaraṃ sarvaṃ prajñārthaṃ hi munirjagau  
tasmādutpādayetprajñāṃ duḥkhanivṛttikāṅkṣayā (1)

The Sage has taught this whole set of teachings in order to prepare us for wisdom. So with a strong desire to end suffering, one should cultivate wisdom.

संवृतिः परमार्थश्च सत्यद्वयमिदं मतम्।

बुद्धेरगोचरस्तत्त्वं बुद्धिः संवृतिरुच्यते ॥ २ ॥

saṃvṛtiḥ paramārthaśca satyadvayamidaṃ matam  
buddhergocarastattvaṃ buddhiḥ saṃvṛtirucyate (2)

Truth is considered to be of two kinds – deceptive and ultimate. Ultimate reality is inaccessible to the intellect, for the intellect is said to be deceptive.



तत्र लोको द्विधा दृष्टो योगी प्राकृतकस्तथा।

तत्र प्राकृतको लोको योगिलोकेन बाध्यते ॥ ३ ॥

tatra loko dvidhā dṛiṣṭo yogī prākṛtakastathā  
tatra prākṛtako loko yogilokena bādhyate (3)

Because of this, the world is seen to be in two camps: the deep practitioners and the undeveloped. And the perspective of the undeveloped is invalidated by that of the deep practitioner.

बाध्यन्ते धीविशेषेण योगिनोऽप्युत्तरोत्तरैः।

दृष्टान्तेनोभयेष्टेन कार्यार्थमविचारतः ॥ ४ ॥

bādhyante dhīviśeṣeṇa yogino'pyuttarottarauḥ  
dṛṣṭāntenobhayeṣṭena kāryārthamvicārataḥ (4)

Even among the deep practitioners there is a differentiation according to levels of wisdom. Regardless of what they are trying to prove, both parties agree on the examples used.

लोकेन भावा दृश्यन्ते कल्प्यन्ते चापि तत्त्वतः।

न तु मायावदित्यत्र विवादो योगिलोकयोः ॥ ५ ॥

lokena bhāvā dṛśyante kalpyante cāpi tattvataḥ  
na tu māyāvadityatra vivādo yogilokayoh (5)

The worldly ones see and conceptualize things as if they were real and not illusory, and herein lies the point of disputation between the deep practitioners and the undeveloped.



प्रत्यक्षमपि रूपादि प्रसिद्ध्या न प्रमाणतः ।

अशुच्यादिषु शुच्यादिप्रसिद्धिरिव सा मृषा ॥ ६ ॥

pratyakṣamapi rūpādi prasiddhyā na pramāṇataḥ  
aśucyādiṣu śucyādiprasiddhiritva sā mṛṣā (6)

Things like physical form, even though perceived with the senses, are established through consensus and not by means of valid perception. Like the consensus that says things are pure when they are impure, it is false.