



ANALYTICAL MEDITATION

TAMING THE MIND

DZOGCHEN PONLOP RINPOCHE

An excerpt from
Commentary on
THE WHEEL OF
ANALYTICAL MEDITATION
OF DETAILED EXAMINATION
The Complete Purification of the Activity of Mind

Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche

Oral Translation by Tyler Dewar

Root Text Translation by Gerry Wiener

Commentary

Commentary on The Wheel of Analytical Meditation of the Detailed Examination, The Complete Purification of the Activity of Mind

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Root Text

The Wheel of Analytical Meditation of the Detailed Examination, The Complete Purification of the Activity of Mind

by Ju Mipham Rinpoche. © 2014 Khenpo Gawang and Gerry Wiener. Translated by Khenpo Gawang and Gerry Wiener.

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For further information contact: info@nitarthainstitute.org

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Oral translation by Tyler Dewar

Transcribed by Megan Johnston

Edited by Meg Miller and Tashi Wangmo

Designed by Tashi Wangmo

Nitartha Institute

Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche founded Nitartha Institute in 1996, under the guidance of Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche and Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche. The parent organization is Nitartha International, an educational organization dedicated to the preservation of Tibet's heritage of religious and philosophical texts.

In bringing the teachings of the Kagyü and Nyingma lineages to the West, Ponlop Rinpoche realized that Western students will benefit from intensive study taught in a way that explores their modern-day lives and Western cultural assumptions. Taught by Tibetan and Western teachers, Nitartha courses are modeled on the Tibetan monastic college system (shedra). Students combine the study of key texts and commentaries with thorough training in analytical meditation. In addition traditional skillful methods of debate give students an interactive

medium in the classroom to test the validity of their conclusions. In this way, misconceptions are revealed and clarity sharpened.

The Institute is open to all who are interested in deepening their study and practice of Buddhism. Students who attend Nitartha range from those relatively new to the Buddhist path but who are eager to get a thorough foundation in the teachings, to senior practitioners of many years who feel that renewed in-depth study will strengthen their practice and deepen their insight. One of the Institute's great attractions to both Buddhist and non-Buddhists is the in-depth study of how mistaken concepts can cause or perpetuate confusion, and how conceptual mind can be skillfully used to examine, understand, and undo this process.



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Meditation on Repulsiveness

We are human beings, one of the six classes of sentient beings who live in the desire realm of the three realms of samsara. Since we live in the desire realm, desire is foremost among the mental afflictions for us. All the other mental afflictions, such as aggression, bewilderment, pride, and jealousy, arise on the basis of this fundamental mental affliction. It is not that we do not have the other mental afflictions, but the ground for all mental afflictions is desire.

From the Sutrayana perspective, the main method to purify the mental activity of desire is the meditation on repulsiveness. The meditation on repulsiveness mainly concentrates on the body as the object of repulsiveness. You start off by contemplating the nature of your body, and if you find that you have any attachment and clinging to your body, you then contemplate the repulsive nature of your body. From there, you expand your contemplation outward to the bodies of others and so on, whatever you might be attached to. When you contemplate your own body, you think about how what makes up your body now is something that you have to leave behind in the end.





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From the Buddhist point of view, the body is actually like a motel or a hotel. Whether you stay in a shitty motel that smells bad or whether you stay in a fancy hotel that has really nice soap and Aveda shampoo, it is the same thing. Nothing belongs to you. You are there as a guest, and from that perspective, there is no difference. You can take care of that room, or you can trash it, like Eddie Van Halen did because they gave him green M&Ms. But do you really want to live in a trashed room? Even if you are living in a shitty motel room, if you take care, it can be nice. In the same way, as long as you live in this motel called this body, this life, and so on, if you take care, it will be nice, and there is nothing wrong with that. At the same time, it is impermanent, and sooner or later, you will have to leave this motel. Sooner or later, someone will take your body to a mortuary. In Tibet, the vultures take care of it.

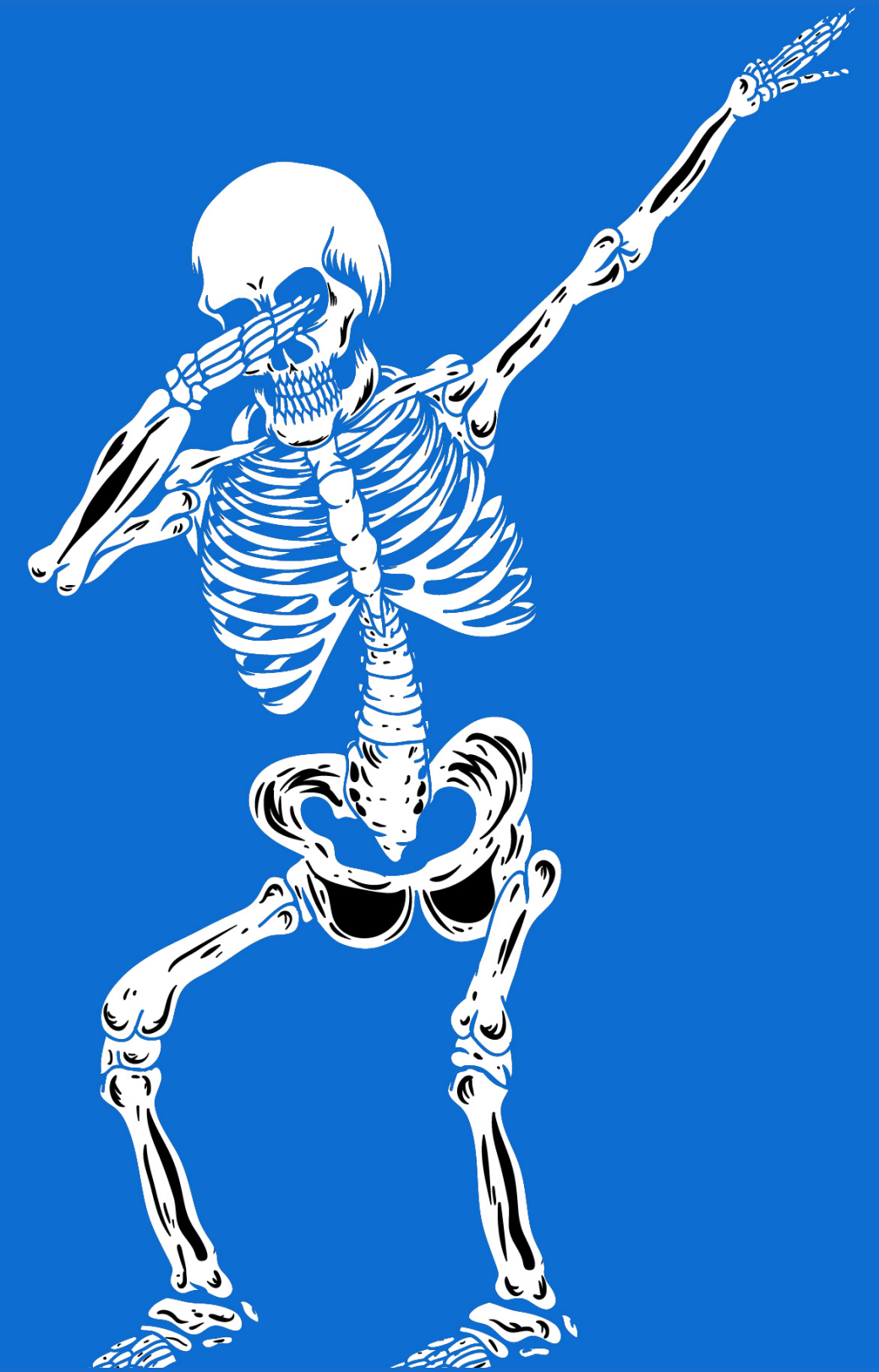
As an antidote to our clinging and attachment to our own body, we meditate on repulsiveness. This way of meditation is from the common or foundational vehicle of Buddhism, and three main meditations are practiced at this stage. The first type is the meditation on filthiness, the second type has the name of the overall category so it is called the meditation on repulsiveness, and the third type is the skeleton visualization, the skeleton being the main basis upon which the body is built. I will not be explaining the detailed explanation of these three meditations in this class. The practices may sound very weird, but they are profound in the sense that they are great mind training practices. It is all about mind training—mind training, mind purification, mind transformation.

In sum, as a method for purifying the mental activity of desire, we meditate on repulsiveness. Even though we may meditate on repulsiveness, we will not be able to completely relinquish the mental affliction of desire. Nevertheless, if we thoroughly practice this meditation, it is taught that it will stamp down the manifest forms of desire. We might not get all desire, including its latent or dormant forms, but we will be able to stamp down the manifest forms of desire.

The collection of instructions about these meditations for purifying the mind is known as the “upadeshas” or “pith instructions” for purifying the mind. It is also called “mind purification” or “lojong.” It is important to think about the name of this collection of teachings: instructions for purifying the mind. These are instructions that help us overcome our thoughts and different forms of fixation. They do not have anything to do with the objects we think about, the outer objects themselves, but they instruct how to purify our own mind inside.

These meditations are not about how ugly someone looks or how repulsive someone may be. They are about our attachment and how our attachment is ugly and repulsive. In the end, it is our attachment that is disgusting. Whether we have a beautiful object or whether we have a not so beautiful object, our attachment is the same, and it is our attachment and desire that bring pain to ourselves and others. In my opinion, whether we are contemplating filthiness or contemplating repulsiveness or visualizing skeletons, all are simply ways to relate to the attachment and clinging found in our own mind.

Although the basic structure of a skeleton does not have a label or name, once it is covered with flesh and so on, we put all kinds of labels on top of it. From there come many concepts, thoughts, ideas, and attachments that have nothing to do with reality. Even when we talk about our parents, children, and partners, we project and label on top of their basic skeletons. The actual reality of who they are is like a skeleton. Then, on top of that skeleton, we cover them with body and flesh—all of our projections, thoughts, and so forth—and we build something totally different other than who they actually are. On the basis of that skeleton, we generate many emotions, thoughts, attachment, and clinging. That mind is what is ugly, disgusting, and repulsive. That is what the teaching on repulsiveness really means for me.





Of course, in our meditation practice, we use different techniques to create and bring on this feeling of repulsiveness and ugliness. In that way, meditation is a bit like CGI. It has to be more creative and graphic in order to gross out and entertain people, like in “True Blood” and “Dexter.” In the same way, meditation is sometimes exaggerated, so that it makes you feel disgusted. Since the meditation on repulsiveness is so graphic, it has an “R” rating. If you are a minor, please close your eyes and ears! The meditation on ugliness, repulsiveness, and filthiness is quite graphic in order to bring on the feeling of how disgusting our thought process and labeling mind is. That labeling has nothing to do with the basic skeleton of reality. The basic skeleton of reality is totally different from what we put on top of it. When this kind of meditation is taught traditionally, people usually think it is weird and do not want to do it, but if you think about it, it is a profound and beneficial meditation, as it shows us how disgusting our labeling mind actually is.

Sometimes when you think someone is upset with you, and you wonder why he or she is not talking to you, you think that this person looks differently at you now. We have all kinds of projections. Why is she being like that? Maybe it’s because I did this or that, but when you finally have a chance to talk to that person, she says, “Oh, I have been so busy, and I didn’t have time to call you,” or she says, “I have been having a really difficult time with my work and haven’t had time to call anyone.” In the end, it has nothing to do with you or any of your projections that you have been suffering over for the past week. This is how our projections bring us so much suffering and pain. It is disgusting.

When you think about this matter carefully, you might reach the conclusion that there is no choice not to feel repulsiveness or no choice not to have an insight into filthiness, and that is why in the traditional context contemplating repulsiveness is presented in the beginning. It is very graphic, but this type of technique is needed to enhance our relationship to this contemplation on repulsiveness, such as contemplating the list of the thirty-six filthy substances of the body and so on.

At the beginning, it is a bit like a picture dictionary, but later you can just read the words and definitions, and you no longer need the pictures. After that, you can look to the synonyms and antonyms, and you do not need the definitions. So, there is a progression. In the beginning, you need a graphic dictionary of ugliness and repulsiveness; however, these things are not needed in the context of the final form of meditation. They are simply skillful means to purify and tame our mind. In the beginning, our mind is overwhelmed with the conceptual movement of thoughts, and in order to tame the mind, we practice shamatha that focuses on the breath. Next in order to relate to our emotional mind, particularly that of desire, we begin by practicing the meditation on repulsiveness, but all of these are simply methods for taming and purifying the mind, as opposed to being called methods for taming and purifying objects. It is not about changing what you see out there, it is about changing how you see it.

Meditation Practice

There is a nice verse that reminds us of the context and intention through which these teachings are being given to us. The verse says:

*All of the great many dharma ways of the victorious One,
Infinite in their reach
Are nothing other than methods
For taming our own mind-stream.*

Please contemplate this verse well. Remember it and memorize it.



Taming the Mind



Meditation in general, and the path of dharma in particular, is nothing other than the process of taming our mind. The whole journey is about working with mind. It is nothing more than that, however many stages or methods to tame the mind there may be. There is the Theravaden tradition, the Mahayana tradition, and the profound, yet scandalous, Vajrayana tradition. In the Buddhist family, Vajrayanists are the black sheep of the family, but as Americans we take pride in that status, because pride is important to us. If we don't have enough pride, we buy stickers. In any case, within the three-yana journey, we first engage in the process of taming our mind and the mental afflictions. If your mind is not tame, you cannot train it. For example, if your mind is not tamed when you train in the Lojong slogans, you are just fooling yourself.

As we have discussed, we tame our mind through the practice of shamatha meditation. The practice of shamatha meditation is a little bit like in the military when the drill sergeants break you down. Letting go of clinging and your comfort zone is little bit like that, isn't it? I often think of Bodhisattvas as drill sergeants, because they help us to let go of our clinging and attachment to this life and to the comforts of samsara. It is necessary for us to have a drill sergeants like lamas, acharyas,

teachers, and so on. I often think our teachers are too mild and kind, and they should curse and shout at us a bit more! No, I'm kidding. That's just my personal preference. I enjoyed that kind of behavior from my own teachers. In any case, the path of meditation is a process of taming our mind.

As is said in the sutras, completely taming one's own mind is the teaching of the Buddha. The method that allows us to completely tame our mind is the genuine dharma. First, in order to tame the great number of coarse thoughts that disturb the mind, we rely on the method of shamatha on the breath, and it is the foundation for everything else. If we have not practiced shamatha meditation, then no matter what meditations we do later, we will not be able to accomplish any of the profound and special practices. They will all just be a big waste. All our attempts to practice Mahamudra, Dzogchen, or the Great Middle Way will amount to nothing. Therefore, the practice of shamatha is very important in the beginning.





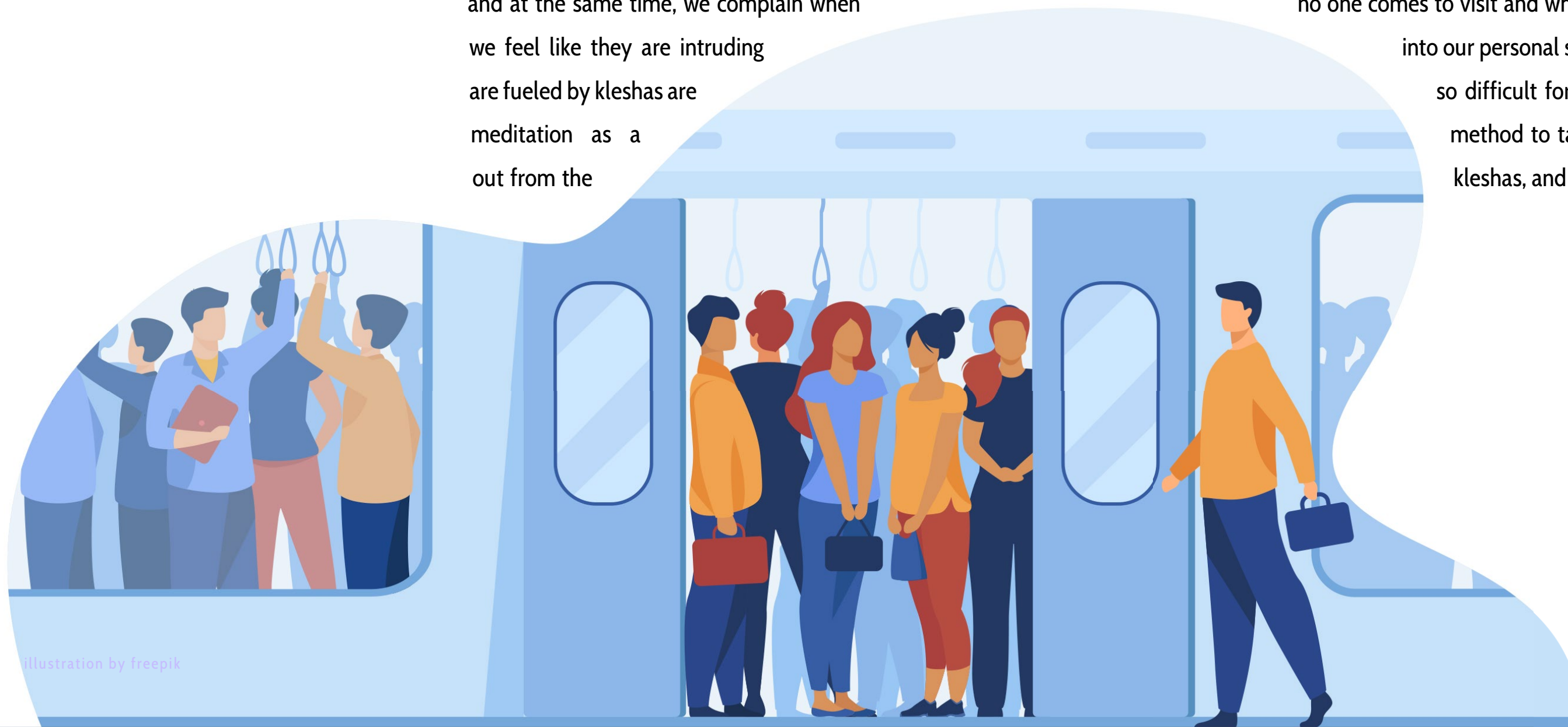
Getting to Know Your Mind

You get to know your mind a little bit more through shamatha meditation. In the beginning, it is really important for you just to sit with your mind. Your mind is not as bad as you think. Your mind is not as scary as you have always imagined. Your mind is totally fine, so simply sitting with your mind at the beginning is quite a profound experience. Getting to know your mind is the key. We are very good at knowing other people's minds. For example, we know what's happening in our partner's mind every day. Not only do we know what's happening in our partner's mind, we also know how to fix it, and then we tell them how to fix it. You all know the rest of that story. Although we seem to know what's wrong with another person's mind, we do not even know what's going on in our own mind.

The practice of shamatha meditation is a process of sitting with your own mind, experiencing your thoughts, and seeing what happens in your mind, rather than in someone else's head. It is much easier to guess what you are thinking than to guess what someone else is thinking, but we often choose the more difficult path. For example, we want to help people in the third world more than we want to help people in our neighborhood. Why? The third world is a more romantic choice. You likely have never been there or grown up in that kind of situation, but I did grow up there, and it is not fun or romantic. Of course, it is good if you can help people living in third world conditions, but there are also plenty of people in America who are starving. But instead, we look to help people who are further away in the same way that we guess the thoughts of other people instead of looking at our own thoughts. The practice of shamatha meditation brings us home. It brings us back to who we are, where we are, and what we are, and that is a profound discovery. You do not need to second guess, because it is a direct experience. You look at your own thoughts. You do not have to guess what you are thinking, because you see how you project onto different things. This is how we first work with our mind in meditation.

Taming the Kleshas

The second stage of practice is taming the kleshas. Once we recognize our own mind, we discover that it is disturbed by many different kleshas that are swirling and storming about. So in the first stage, we work with our thoughts, and in the second stage, we work with the kleshas. We usually take our kleshas very personally, and we have a lot of attachment to our kleshas. We don't mind arguing with someone about a point of view, but when someone touches one of our kleshas, we take it very personally. The way we experience a klesha toward someone, whether it is anger, passion, or jealousy, is very personal. It is very uncomfortable and intrusive when someone enters your personal space, isn't it? I find it very interesting that in our culture here we talk so much about our personal space and how we need more personal space, more private space, and so on, and at the same time, we complain when no one comes to visit and when no one talks to us. but when they do come to visit, we feel like they are intruding into our personal space. It is a contradiction, and that's why thoughts that are fueled by kleshas are so difficult for us. Therefore, in the second stage, we use analytical meditation as a method to tame the kleshas. We analyze the thoughts that spring out from the kleshas, and that is how we tame them.

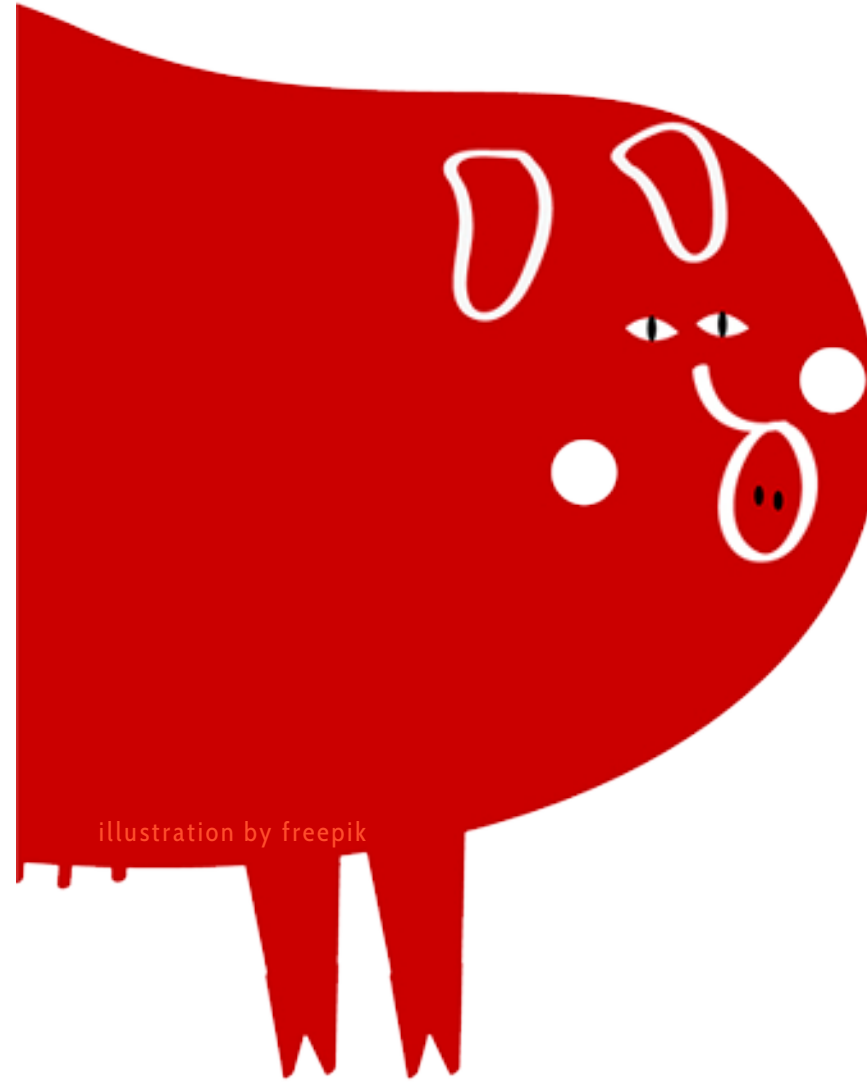


Analyzing The True Nature

In the third stage, we analyze the true nature of the kleshas, which is the true nature of mind, and we also engage in analytical meditation in relation to the true nature of mind. The text that we are studying here mainly emphasizes the third stage, and these teachings are given with the assumption that the person studying the text has already gone through the first two stages.

As we have discussed, in the beginning it is important to practice shamatha on the breath, and then in the second stage, we tame the klesha mind. There are many methods for taming the kleshas, but the main one is to engage in the methods for purifying the activity of mind that depend upon shamatha. All of these methods are simply methods for taming the mind itself. Let's look at the verse we read yesterday:

All of the great many dharma ways of the Victorious One, infinite in their reach are nothing other than methods For taming our own mind-stream.



All of these methods that purify the activity of mind are simply methods for taming the mind. We must see that studying and practicing the dharma is nothing other than taming our own mind. That's why sometimes it is kind of surprising that a seasoned Buddhist practitioner gets so upset about their salad dressing or getting served the wrong sauce for their fish. That kind of behavior shows clearly that we are not relating with the path in the way that the Buddha intended.

Purifying Desire, Aggression & Bewilderment

There are many kleshas, such as pride and jealousy, but the main kleshas are desire, aggression, and bewilderment.

What is desire? It is basically a confused or mistaken thought. In what way is it mistaken? It mistakes that which is unclean for that which is clean. It mistakes that which is impermanent for that which is permanent, and it mistakes that which is selfless for a self. Due to this mistakenness, the klesha of desire arises. For this reason, the first stage of purifying and taming the klesha of desire is the meditation on repulsiveness. When we cling to that which is filthy as being clean, when we cling to that which is repulsive as being attractive, and when we cling to that which is selfless as being a self, then the klesha of desire arises. In general, we cannot stop our thoughts of desire right away, but it is important for us to start to recognize where these thoughts of desire come from and how they arise. What is the object of desire in terms of its actual state? This is how we do the meditation of repulsiveness.



illustration by freepik

In a detailed presentation of the meditation of repulsiveness, many substages are explained and antidotes are given for attachment to the object of desire's color, attachment to the object of desire's shape, and so on. There isn't anyone who is really happy with their skin color. Fair-skinned people like to suntan so they can be darker. Dark-skinned people want to be fairer, so they use all kinds of expensive skin lightening formulas. White people are not happy, and dark-skinned people are not happy. In the end, we are all not happy. How can the world experience peace even from the skin point of view? We are not even happy with our skin, let alone with our hair—bald people want more hair, and thick-haired people want less hair. We have lots of attachment toward the shape and colors of the objects of our desire.

There isn't much need to teach further on the meditation on repulsiveness, because those who practice the path on the support of a householder lifestyle probably do not want to meditate on repulsiveness. This teaching is mainly given to fully ordained monks and fully ordained nuns. but it is important for us to think about repulsiveness a little bit. If you have a desire to study these teachings further, then we can make that happen in the future.

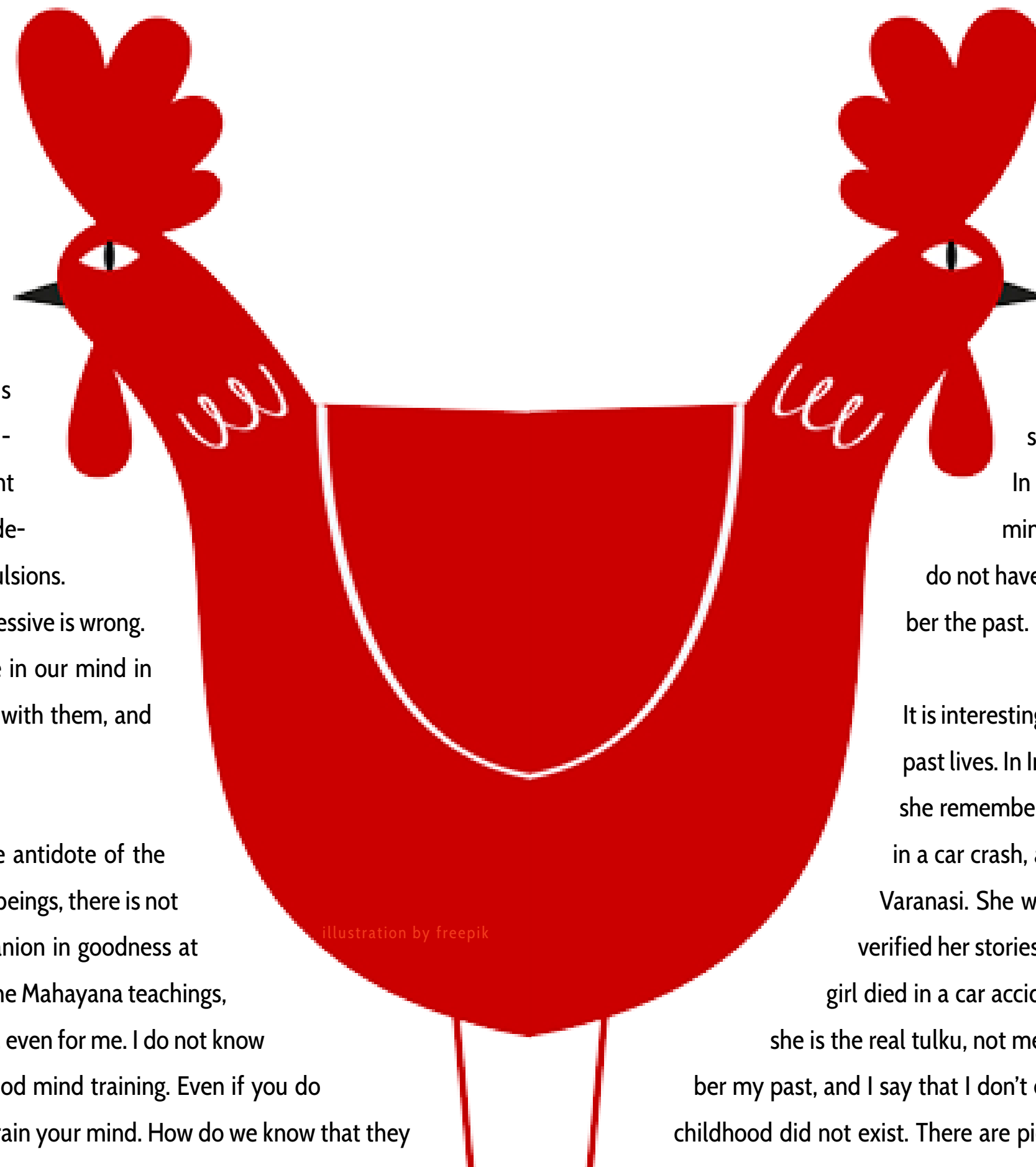
From the Vajrayana perspective all sentient beings have desire, but the presence of desire is not the fundamental problem. In Vajrayana, we transform desire into loving-kindness and train in being free from clinging. The vajrayana teachings say that desire itself does not produce suffering, but if clinging arises based on desire, then that produces suffering. Based on our clinging that arises due to desire, we see how possessiveness develops in our mind and other types of complexes, and we see how much suffering is caused. Possessiveness, controlling behavior, all these things are based on clinging and attachment and that brings a lot of suffering. From the Vajrayana perspective, fundamental desire is not the problem; it is our clinging that is the problem. Therefore, just enjoying things is okay. There is nothing especially wrong with that.

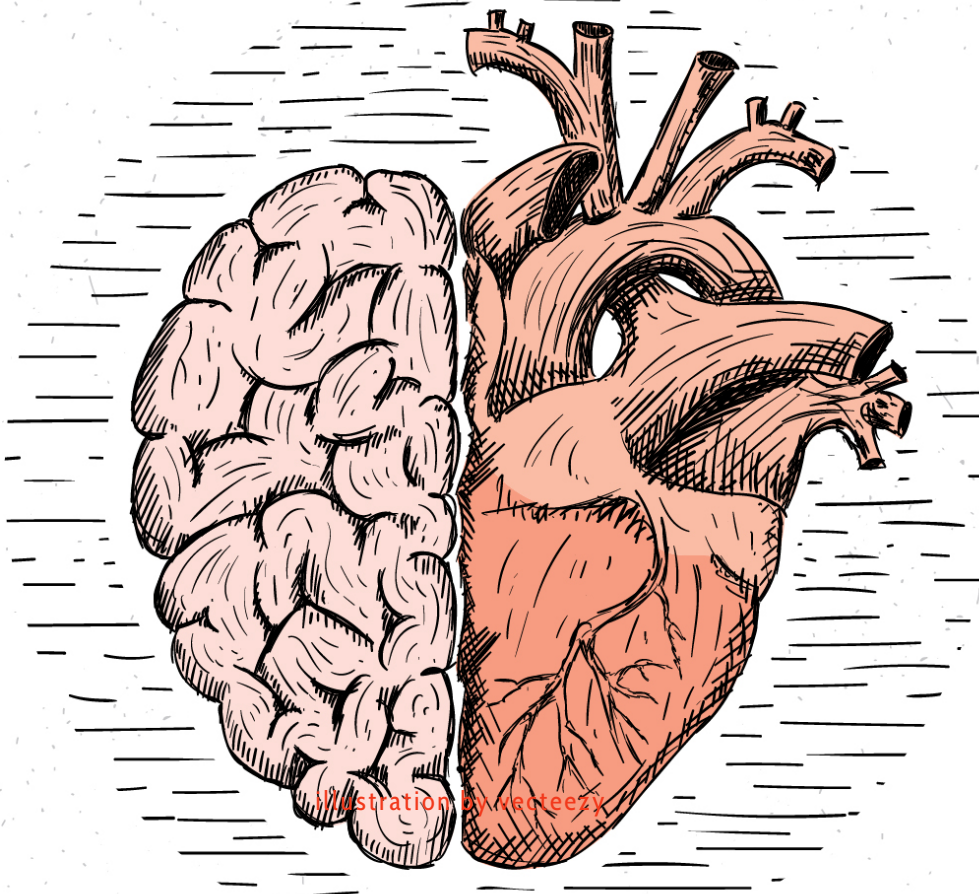
When you experience desire, you can have a great admiration for outer objects. There is nothing wrong with that. You can purely enjoy and appreciate objects. This is a beautiful world with beautiful objects, but when attachment comes you have to be careful, because attachment and clinging are the most harmful element in relation to desire—your possessiveness, your obsessions, your compulsions. Even from the relative point of view, we know being possessive is wrong. You cannot possess anyone. When these thoughts arise in our mind in relation to desire, we really have to pay attention, work with them, and let them go.

If we experience the klesha of aggression, we apply the antidote of the meditation on loving-kindness. From among all sentient beings, there is not one who has not been our friend or harmonious companion in goodness at some point in the succession of all our past lifetimes. In the Mahayana teachings, we talk about previous lifetimes, which is hard to believe, even for me. I do not know if there are past or future lives, but in any case it is a good mind training. Even if you do not believe in past lives, you can take it as a method to train your mind. How do we know that they

have not been our friends in past lifetimes? There is no proof that they have not been our friends in the past. Just as much as we do not remember the past existing, to the same degree, we also have no memory of the past not existing. In the end, it is the same. There is no definite experience in our mind that tells us such a thing does not exist. In the same way, we do not have any definitive experience in our mind that tells us we remember the past.

It is interesting, because in recent years many people have remembered their past lives. In India, there was a little girl who remembered multiple past lives. she remembered being the daughter of wealthy Sri Lankan family who died in a car crash, and she remembered when she was a wife of an old person in Varanasi. She was taken to these places to talk to these people, and they all verified her stories. They talked about how the wife died in Varanasi and how this girl died in a car accident in Sri Lanka. Everyone was really surprised. I think maybe she is the real tulku, not me. I don't remember anything. Many people ask me if I remember my past, and I say that I don't even remember my childhood. But that doesn't mean that my childhood did not exist. There are pictures of my childhood and my parents and uncles and aunts





tell me stories about it. In the same way, just because we do not remember our past lives, it does not necessarily mean they did not exist. We should have an open mind about it.

In brief, it is possible that those who appear as objects of aggression or anger to us now could have been our friends and harmonious companions in the past. We have a very strong wish and desire that the people we are close to, our beloved people, be happy and be free from any harm. We worry when they are late coming home. We think, “Oh, maybe something has gone wrong. I wonder if he is okay.” Then we start calling their cell phone, and they do not answer, and we freak out even more. We all have this desire toward those that we love. For example, I want my mom to be happy and free from suffering. In the same way, if the person who is an object of anger for us now was a friend of ours in the past, then we would have had that same level of love toward him or her at some time in the past.

It is definitely possible that these objects of anger were once harmonious companions or objects of love for us in the past, and the amount of love we have toward our friends now could have been the same feeling that we had toward these individuals in the past. We have this connection with all sentient beings. Therefore, instead of feeling anger, aggression, and hatred toward anyone, we can try to exercise the heart of loving-kindness. Even if a loving heart toward an individual does not arise, we should at least try to develop a sense of kindness and openness toward him or her. Feeling a rigid and wholehearted hatred and aggression toward someone is not necessary. That person may already be experiencing torment and suffering. Why would we still feel hatred toward someone who is already suffering and tormented? Instead of feeling hatred, we should feel the joy of kindness and love.

I just watched a TV show about a Bangladeshi guy who was shot in the face by someone. The shooter was someone who suffered a lot of abuse from his father in his childhood, and so he had a lot of hatred in his heart. He was extremely angry toward other ethnic groups, especially darker-skinned Muslims. The Bangladeshi guy did not die; he recovered, and the person who shot him was caught and put on death row. In the end, the Bangladeshi guy forgave his shooter, and he started a campaign against capital punishment for this person and filed a lawsuit against the state of Texas trying to save the very person who shot him in his face. He did not end up saving him, but he had a chance to talk to this person, who thanked him for what he did and said that he had changed his mind. Then this person said, “I love you bro.” Can you imagine that? The person who shot you saying, “I love you bro.” When we hear stories like this one, the evidence of the power of love and loving-kindness becomes very clear. I also watched a similar story on TV about a person known as The Green River killer. He was totally withdrawn and emotionless in court. People were accusing him and telling him to rot in hell forever, and he showed no reaction at all. Then at the end, one older lady said, “What you have done is terribly wrong, but I forgive you,” and then she talked about feeling something like sympathy or compassion. At that moment, you could see teardrops coming from his eyes, and then he could not stop crying, so the power of love is stronger than the power of hate.



If you compare the mind of loving-kindness to the mind of aggression, when you think clearly about it, you can see that the mind of loving-kindness is more powerful than the mind of aggression. We usually see it in the opposite way. We usually think that the mind of aggression is stronger, but if you really want to overcome your enemies, you need the mind of loving-kindness. When you express loving-kindness, they do not know what to do. They are looking for something to attack you with, but when you express loving-kindness, they are totally stunned, like a deer in the headlights. They do not know what to do or where to go. If you really want to destroy your enemy, you should use loving-kindness. Hatred will not destroy them. Hatred is fuel for their fire of anger. If you hate them, then you are helping them to become more angry and aggressive, and in turn, we all end up suffering more.



It is said that if we are afflicted by a mind filled with aggression or anger, we should practice the meditation on loving-kindness, such as the Seven Stage Cause and Effect Cultivation of Bodhichitta. If bewilderment dominates our mind, it is said that we should practice the meditation on inter-dependence. If pride dominates our mind, then as an antidote, we contemplate the divisions of the dhatus. In sum, this is the way we practice when we engage in the methods for purifying the activity of mind based upon shamatha.



illustration by vecteezy

The Wheel Of Analytical Meditation

The next stage is to purify the activities of mind based upon vipashyana, and for that we need to employ analysis. In a different text by Lama Mipham, he says that meditation devoid of analysis is like falling asleep and is therefore not beneficial. That is why analysis is taught to be important in our approach to the Buddhist teachings. When we analyze, we do so based on our hearing and contemplating. We do not just select random thoughts to analyze. The method of analysis here is based on the scriptures and reasonings of the dharma teachings. It is not the ordinary sense of analysis, in which our random thoughts go crazy analyzing things. That is okay, but it is not really beneficial here. What is beneficial in meditation is analyzing on the basis of scripture, such as the Buddha's teaching or the teachings of the great masters Nagarjuna, Asanga, and so on, as well as using logic and reasoning. When we analyze on the basis of scripture and reasoning, it becomes a great support and aid to our meditation. so when we talk about analyzing here, it does not mean letting our thoughts go crazy and analyzing some kind of conspiracy theory. Analysis here is based on scripture and reasoning.

We analyze using scripture and reasoning in this way, and the object of our analysis is the mind. If our analysis goes well, the result is that certainty arises. If certainty arises, then we cut through superimpositions and doubts. When we cut through our superimpositions and doubts, then our meditation can be free of obstacles. If our meditation is not free from superimpositions and doubts, then it is difficult for that meditation to progress. If we try to meditate in the midst of all our superimpositions and doubts, sometimes our meditation itself can become a cause for our mind to be more disturbed. Many people get messed up by meditating. Many people say that their mind was fine before, but since they started meditating things have gotten worse. This happens when our meditation is devoid of certainty. In order to give rise to certainty, we need analysis. Without analysis, we cannot give rise to certainty.

Analytical meditation is really a unique quality of Buddhist teachings. The Buddha always taught that we must analyze. The Buddha always taught that we must question. The Buddha never said that we should accept anything with blind faith. In my view, this is the most profound and distinguishing feature of Buddhism, compared to other traditions, religions, and cultures. The Buddha always said that you must question, and you must come to some kind of certainty. After you have certainty, you can take it or leave it. It's very American, isn't it? The Buddha never said, "It's my way or the highway." He said that after analysis and once you have certainty, you can embark on the path fully or leave it. It is up to you. If your certainty says it is wrong, then leave it. That's very liberat-

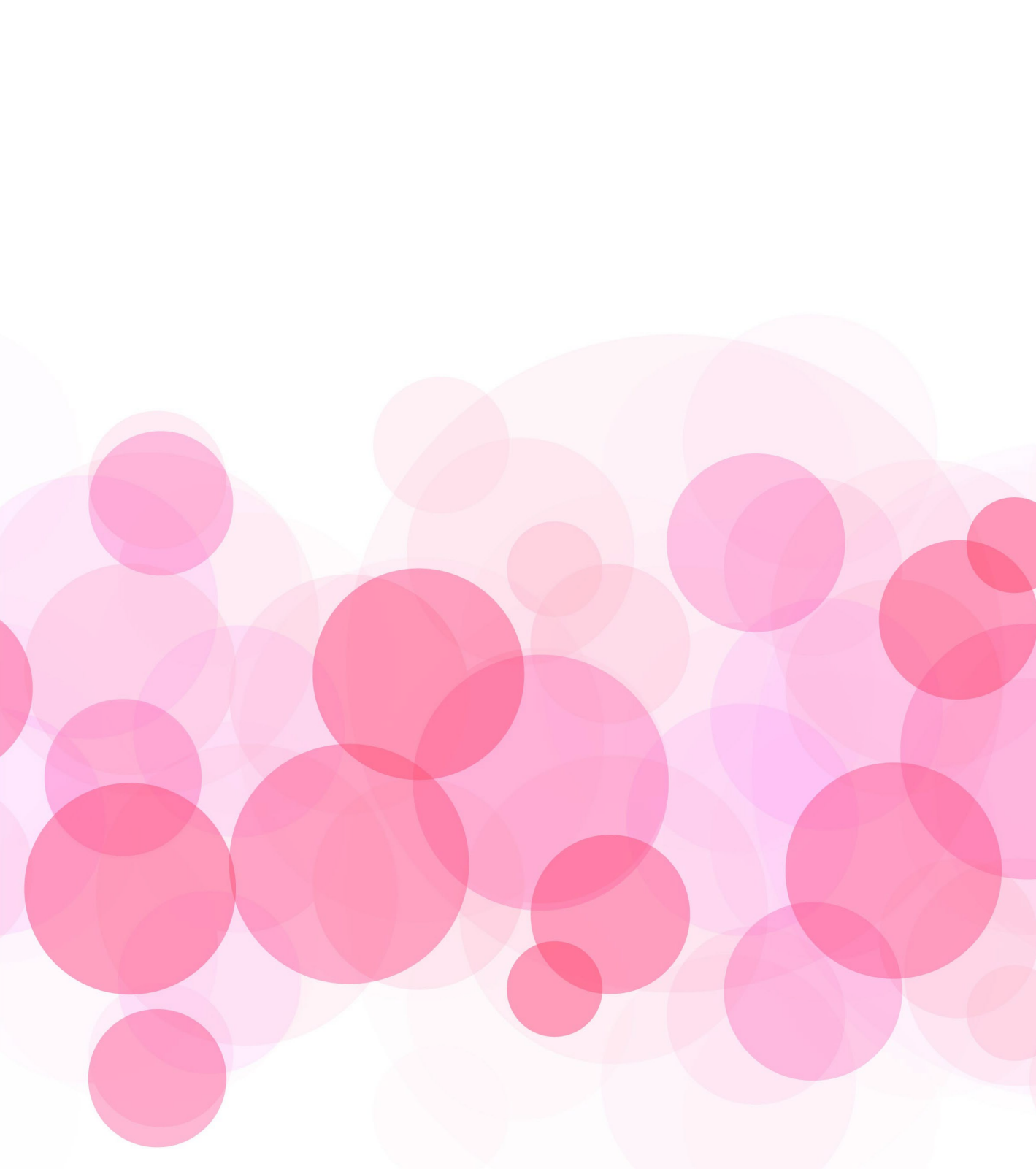


illustration by vecteezy

ing, isn't it? It is different from some supernatural being telling you cannot question or analyze, and that his word is the final word. The Buddha never said anything like that. This is why I think analysis and analytical meditation are so important. This point really strikes the unique feature of the Buddhist teachings and approach.

This is also different from other meditation practices. Other meditation practices tell you what to think, what to focus on, what to recite, what mantras to recite, and things like that. You just do it, but this one is telling you not to just do it, but to analyze first, and then on the basis of that analysis, you gain certainty. When you gain certainty, you cut through superimpositions and doubts, and when you cut through superimpositions and doubts, the instruction is to rest within that state. So, we do analysis, gain certainty, cut through doubts, and then rest. This is the process of analytical meditation. Isn't that nice, instead of just meditating like a zombie? Why do you want to be a zombie with someone controlling your brain? From the Buddhist point of view, that is not right. We don't just do what the gurus say; instead, we analyze and gain certainty, and once we have the certainty, we rest in that. Then a real experience can arise because that certainty is yours. It is not Milarepa's certainty. It is not Guru Rinpoche's certainty. It is not Lama Mipham's certainty. It is your certainty. It is a direct perception and a direct experience. You no longer have to guess what they mean by this or that. You do not have to have endless interviews with lamas, teachers, and practice instructors, because you have gained your own certainty inside of yourself. This is called "unassailable insight." No one can take it from you. Even if you were thrown in jail, you still would not lose this wisdom. Even if somebody waterboards you, and you are not lucid, it is there as soon as you gain consciousness. They can waterboard you again and again, but as soon as you gain consciousness, your certainty is still present. If your meditation is based on following someone's instruction, your certainty will not be there when you wake up. Instead you will think, "Oh shucks, where is my meditation? Where is my instruction?" and you will feel very angry at your guru.





When we give rise to this genuine certainty, it is unassailable by others, it cannot be taken away by others, and it cannot be led in another direction by others. Even if other people tell you that isn't the way it is or that is not the case, your mind still will not change in regard to your certainty. In the traditional language of the shédra, it is said that when you give rise to this level of certainty, even if a thousand Buddhas were to show up in front of you and say you have it wrong, you will still not change your mind. Isn't that nice? Or maybe you have just become extremely stubborn and beyond saving! Therefore, it is important to give rise to genuine certainty. If your certainty is corrupted, you will have a difficult time. This is the essence of why we practice analytical meditation.

In sum, the wheel of analytical meditation purifies the conduct and activity of mind, and we do that by engaging in a detailed personal analysis. This wheel of analytical meditation purifies the conduct and activity of mind by providing us methods to engage in a personal analysis. In other words, we do not rely on others to analyze for us. We could also say that this wheel of meditation engages in a detailed examination and analysis in that it analyzes phenomena as they appear, one by one, or discretely because we must engage in analysis in a continuous and uninterrupted way, it is called a “wheel.”

The way the relationship between analysis and meditation works is that in the beginning, we analyze by using scripture and reasoning. This analysis leads to the development of certainty, when the certainty arises, we rest within that certainty. We arrive at meditation at that point, but we do not just stay in that resting meditation state. We once again pick up our analysis and begin analyzing within resting. So the first stage involves analysis, and the second stage involves practicing analysis and meditation in tandem with each other. In the final stage, we practice resting meditation alone. These three stages carry their own sense of the word “wheel” as well. In the beginning, engaging in analysis in an uninterrupted way is like a wheel. In the middle, engaging in the alternation of resting and analysis in an uninterrupted way has the quality of a wheel, and in the end, allowing the resting meditation to sustain all meditation in an uninterrupted way is also like a wheel.

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