

Recognizing My Mother
An Experiential Song on the View

by Changkya Rölpai Dorjé

Translated by Thupten Jinpa

FPMT

Education Services

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Set in Calibri 12//115, Century Gothic, Lydian BT, and Monlam Uni Ouchan 2.

Recognizing My Mother
An Experiential Song on the View

E ma ho!

1.

You who reveals bare the wonder
of profound dependent arising nature,
O my guru, your kindness is boundless indeed.
Kindly reside in my heart
as I utter these spontaneous words
from thoughts flickering through my mind.

2.

This lunatic child,
who lost his old mother long ago,
is about to realize by chance
what he has not recognized:
She has been with him all along!

3.

She is perhaps that “is” and “is not”
quietly spoken by my brother dependent arising.
This diverse subject-object world is my mother’s gentle smile;
this cycle of birth and death her deceptive words.

4.

My undeceiving mother, you have betrayed me!
While I hope to be saved by my brother dependent arising,
it is ultimately in your kindness alone, O mother,
that my hopes for freedom lie.

5.

If the duality of subjects and objects is as it seems to be,
then not even the buddhas of the three times can save us.
But this ever-shifting spectacle is in truth
my changeless mother’s expressions.
Hence there is indeed a way out.

6.

This inexpressible mother of mine,
not existing in any form, appears in all forms.

In this mutual dependence [of emptiness and form] alone
is an important lesson indeed.

7.

Not finding my father when sought
is, in fact, finding my mother;
my father is found in my mother's lap!
That's how these kind parents save their child, I am told!

8.

Evidently my mother's face,
which is neither one nor multiple,
appears ungraspably in my brother's mirror.
Yet a lunatic like me had not the slightest clue!

9.

Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti set
their instructions upon the wind,
and Mañjuśrīgarbha conveyed these to us by bird.
So I hope to see my ever-present old mother
without the hardship of a prolonged search.

10.

There seem to be among today's scholars
some, caught in a web of words like
"thoroughly withstanding" and "true existence,"
who seek only to negate some creature with horns
while leaving intact this everyday appearance of solidity.

11.

But such vivid duality is not found
on my mother's unveiled face, I believe!
From protracted discussions missing the point,
my old mother is liable to flee!

12.

Things exist, but not in this way
of stark facts rendered in dichotomies.
For the inseparable bond of our loving parents
is more one of tenderness and joy.

13—14

Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Vijñānavāda,
and the three eastern [Svātantrika]] masters, though they label

this mother, this limestone-like white elephant,
with names so divergent: “external matter,” a grinning tiger!
“an intrinsic subject,” a crazed monkey!
“inherently existing nondual nature,” a ferocious bear!
yet they all seem to have lost the old mother.

15—116..

Likewise, many scholars and meditators
amid Sakya, Nyingma, Karma, and Drukpa
pride themselves on their diverse terminology:
“reflexive awareness,” subject-free, empty, and luminous;
“primordial purity and spontaneity,” Samantabhadra’s true face;
“mahāmudrā,” the uncontrived innate nature;
“neither *is* nor *is not*,” devoid of any standpoint.
This is all splendid if the target is hit,
but I wonder what you are all pointing at!

17.

External matter is not dismantled—
Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas, worry not and be pleased.
Though no reflexivity, cognition and cognized are tenable—
all Vijñānavādins, do be pleased.
In intrinsic nature’s absence, dependent arising remains stark—
O three eastern masters, be pleased as well.

18.

With no conflict, clarity and emptiness can be upheld—
holders of pupil-instruction lineage, be not apprehensive.
Though pure primordially, good and bad are feasible—
you vidyādhara yogis need not grasp at purity.

19.

Since the innate nature can dawn
through even contrived meditation,
you elderly meditators need not be persistent.
Since one can uphold the absence of elaboration
of existence and nonexistence,
you stubborn logicians need not fret.

20.

This may all have evolved from
not knowing the proper use of conventions
by some wanting in erudition.
I mean no disrespect.

Do forgive me, if I cause offense.

21.

Though I am not among the omniscient,
I do possess expertise in riding
the well-bred horse of my ancestors' works.
So I hope to traverse the challenging passage
through constant and dedicated striving.

22.

No search is required, for the seeker is the sought.
Never grasp at the true, for it is false.
Yet shun not this falsity, for it is the truth.
And we can rest in this
that is neither nothing nor absolute.

23.

Though I may not see my mother directly,
I feel I've just found my kind long-lost parents
through [hearing] their mere names;
they are as if right here beside me.

24.

Great indeed is the kindness
of Nāgārjuna and his heirs.
Great indeed is the kindness of Losang Drakpa,
Great indeed is the kindness of my guru.
To repay their kindness, I will honor my mother.

25.

Through the joyous celebration of all noble deeds,
through the meeting of the young child, awareness,
with his unborn and inexpressible aging mother,
may all mother beings be led to lasting joy.

By meeting with her young child, awareness,
The unborn and inexpressible ageing mother
Will lead all mother beings to the lasting joy
Through the great celebration of all-excellent deeds!

26.

Ah! I, Rölpai Dorjé,
perform here right now
a dance of ecstatic joy

and worship the Three Jewels.

These few deceptive lines describing the recognition of my mother entitled “The Melodies of an Echo” have been written by Changkya Rölpai Dorjé, someone with deep admiration of the great Middle Way, on the miraculous holy Wutaishan (Five-Peaked Mountain). Scribed by Bhikṣu Gelek Namkha.

Colophons

Translator’s Colophon: Translated by Thupten Jinpa, January, 2021. I thank David Kittelstrom for his help in editing the English. An earlier rendering of the text was published in *Songs of Spiritual Experience: Tibetan Buddhist Poems of Insight and Awakening* (Boston: Shambhala, 2000).

Publisher’s Colophon: This translation was used with permission from the translator on the occasion of a teaching on emptiness that was given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to FPMT on February 8, 2021 on the basis of Changkya Rolpai Dorjé’s text.

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