

The Illusory Body

Outer appearances are but illusion.
Inner experiences are inexpressible.
Day and night, arising experiences are the Nirmanakaya.
This is the instruction on the Illusory Body.
Are you free from attachment Translator?

Like illusions and dreams, everything is non-existent.
All appearances are like a magician's illusions or
the displays of a dream.
All dharmas do not exist in the ultimate sense.
In our delusion we grasp at them as if they really existed.

Like echoes and reflections, everything occurs through a
combination of causes and conditions.
All sounds are like echoes in a rocky canyon,
all images are like very clear reflections in a mirror.
All appearances lack inherent existence.
They arise in dependence on causes and conditions.

Like dew and bubbles, everything is impermanent and
constantly changing.
Morning dew disappears as the sun rises and
bubbles arise and vanish in an instant.
All phenomenal appearances are impermanent.
They change moment by moment.

Like mirages and rainbows, everything appears
but does not really exist.
Floating rivers appear in a hot desert and
magnificent rainbows appear in the sky.
All phenomenal appearances, although vividly apparent,
do not exist.
They do not exist for even one moment.

When practicing like this, we should not be satisfied
with mere intellectual comprehension,
But should rid ourselves of grasping attachment
to all things.
We should actually experience them as illusions.
This needs to be realized.

Contemplating the body as a reflection in a very clear mirror,
sometimes we praise it, sometimes we feel disgust.
The reflection has no feelings of happiness or sadness,
nor a sense of beauty or ugliness.
It is just the result of a combination of causes and conditions,
the presence of oneself and the mirror, it is not self-existent.
Likewise, no "I" exists from the top of one's head
to the tip of one's toes,
But because we hold on to an "I" as something enduring,
we experience happiness and sadness.
Even happiness and sadness do not last
and do not exist substantially.
We practice contemplating appearances to be illusion like this.

Contemplating the voice as an echo,
sometimes we shout out to a big rock and the echo returns.
The echo has no "I" to react to what is said.
Likewise, one's own and others' voices are just sounds having
no substance, no self.
We practice contemplating the empty sound as illusion.

Contemplating the mind as a cloud,
sometimes clouds of varying sizes and shapes
arise from or vanish into an empty sky.
They occur in various ways, but they are just
impermanent appearances leaving no trace.
Likewise, positive and negative conflicting emotions
arise in the mind, but come and go
without a trace, without a basis, without a root.
We practice contemplating the appearances of mind as illusion.

All subjective and objective aspects of dharmas,
are naturally non-existent from beginningless time.
All teachings say that appearance, sound, clarity and
awareness are void like a magical display.
Knowing this will lead only to an intellectual understanding,
it will not lead to perfect realization.
But if one practices as described here,
one will actually experience all dharmas as illusion.

The instruction on the Illusory Body is like
a reflection of the moon in the water.
It destroys attachment to ordinary appearance,
the eight worldly concerns, and self-grasping.
It is the foundation of the path.
This is my heart's advice.

Dedication

Bodhicitta, the excellent and precious mind,
Where it is unborn, may it arise,
Where it is born, may it not decline but forever increase.