

## **Clarifying the Natural State: Sustaining Meditation on the Natural State**

Excerpted from *Clarifying the Natural State*, Dagpo Tashi Namgyal, pp. 56-57 and from *Crystal Clear*, commentary by Ven Thrangu Rinpoche, pp. 105-106, both edited by Michael Tweed, translated by Eric Pema Kunsang, Rangjung Yeshe Publications.

### **(1) Elevate your Experience and remain wide open like the sky.**

(Thrangu Rinpoche's commentary:) *Elevate* means expand in all directions, let your experience open up, just as space is utterly open and unconfined. Space is not constricted or limited in any way, and when we sustain the meditation state, we should allow our state of mind to be very open, free and expansive, like the sky.

### **(2) Expand your mindfulness and remain pervasive like the earth.**

Here *pervasive* means constancy in all situations being continually mindful. It is, however extremely important that this mindful presence should not be forced or rigid; we should allow it to spread out through our lives like the vast plains of the earth stretch in all directions.

### **(3) Steady your attention and remain unshakable like a mountain.**

Though wide open with a feeling of expansiveness and vastness, one must still be grounded, therefore the third example is "steady your attention and remain unshakable like a mountain."

The next two analogies concern how to avoid the shortcomings that can occur during our meditation training. The first is avoiding the feeling of dullness.

### **(4) Brighten your awareness and remain shining like a flame.**

Having achieved steadiness and a sense of being unperturbed one must be careful not to become absent-minded or oblivious; therefore, "brighten your awareness and remain shining like a flame." You should be utterly present with an empty cognizance.

### **(5) Clear your thoughtfree wakefulness and remain lucid like a crystal.**

The next analogy deals with avoiding agitation, involvement in thought activity, especially the kind that goes unnoticed, the undercurrent of thoughts. You should not let the bright awareness diffuse into various thought patterns, but rather, "clear your thought-free wakefulness and remain lucid like a crystal --- like a totally flawless, clear crystal.

### **(6) Unobscured like a cloudless sky, remain in a lucid and intangible openness.**

This concerns the quality of emptiness in the experience. *Like a cloudless sky* has a sense of being vividly awake, wide-open and empty, a state in which there is no thing to pinpoint. In other words, instead of

clinging to, or fixating on, something called original mind or such, let it have the ungraspable, unidentifiable quality of open emptiness.

(7) The next analogy refers to nondistracted:

**Unmoving like the ocean free of waves, remain in complete ease, undistracted by thought.**

This means to be like a vast ocean, totally unruffled, undisturbed by the movement of waves.

**(8) Unchanging and brilliant like a flame undisturbed by the wind, remain utterly clear and bright.**

Otherwise, the state may sometime be clear and sometimes unclear, sometimes steady and other times unsteady. In its identity, our essence is empty and cognizant; it neither brightens nor dims, but has the steadiness of a flame undisturbed by the wind.

(Thrangu Rinpoche continues his commentary) Additionally, when sitting we should deeply relax the body. While maintaining the sevenfold posture as described above, do not be rigid or tense. The mind or attention should be left uncontrived and unbound. You should not focus on striving to achieve or avoid anything. That is all that being at ease means. It does not mean to resign and be careless or to be caught up in any thought that may come along.

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