

# The Four Yogas of Mahāmudrā

from Dharmakīrti's Oral Instructions

The four yogas consist of the stage of one-pointedness, the stage of non-elaboration, the stage of one-taste, and the stage of non-meditation. These yogas are each subdivided into a lesser, medium, and greater yoga, making twelve yogas.

## 1. The Stage of One-Pointedness

1.1. At the stage of *lesser one-pointedness*, it is still difficult to maintain a state of samādhi that possesses the experiences of empty clarity and bliss. This stage lasts until one can easily experience such a samādhi whenever one meditates.

1.2. At the stage of *medium one-pointedness*, one's samādhi is stable. At times, samādhi even occurs without engaging in meditation as one goes about various activities.

1.3. At the stage of *greater one-pointedness*, throughout the four activities, day and night, the meditation state becomes an uninterrupted experience without divisions of formal meditation and post-meditation.

## 2. The Stage of Non-Elaboration

2.1. At the stage of *lesser non-elaboration*, though one has realized that the essence of thoughts, perceptions, and mind is free from the elaborations of arising and ceasing, one still retains a consciousness that fixates on emptiness by ascertaining experiences [of emptiness], and one still hopes to attain nirvāṇa and is still afraid of saṃsāra.

2.2. At the stage of *medium non-elaboration*, one has purified the ascertaining fixation on the experience of emptiness. However, hope and fear still arise with respect to appearances, and one has not completely ceased superimposing onto reality.

2.3. At the stage of *greater non-elaboration*, one is liberated from the ascertaining fixation on the empty nature of all appearance and existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. One is free from hope and fear.

## 3. The Stage of One-Taste

3.1. At the stage of *lesser one-taste*, one has realized that all thoughts and perceptions have one taste within mind-itself that is mahāmudrā. However, one still retains a slight fixation on this experience or some attachment to a conviction of this recognition.

3.2. At the stage of *medium one-taste*, one experiences the manifold as one-taste, and having purified the stains of fixating on one's conviction, one attains a vivid realization of appearances and mind as inseparable; one realizes that there are no separate appearances outside nor a mind inside.

3.3. At the stage of *greater one-taste*, one realizes the manifold as one-taste, and [the realization of] one-taste manifests as the manifold. Everything subsides into a natural state of equanimity.

#### **4. The Stage of Non-Meditation**

4.1. At the stage of *lesser non-meditation*, deliberate mindfulness and meditation are no longer necessary, and appearances arise as meditation. However, merely subtle and illusory fixations are still present.

4.2. At the stage of *medium non-meditation*, illusory fixations are completely purified, after which the continuity of day and night becomes a single state of non-meditation. In the subsequent realization, a subtle aspect of consciousness as self-cognizance remains.

4.3. At the stage of *greater non-meditation*, even the subtle consciousness transforms into primordial wisdom, and everything becomes an all-encompassing domain of primordial wisdom.

There are three different classes of individuals, differentiated by how they develop: those who are immediate, those who are non-sequential, and those who are gradual. It is taught that since these three are divided based on their individual capabilities, their development is not fixed but occurs variously.

More elaborate discussions on the difference between whether or not one has seen the essence of the four yogas, whether or not one has mastered them, whether or not thoughts arise as meditation, whether or not one has developed qualities, whether or not one has gained control over the relative reality, whether or not the seeds of the rūpakāya have been planted, and so forth, can be gleaned from the compositions on the four stages of yoga by the great masters of the past.