

Seeing Confusion as the Four kayas is Unsurpassable shunyata Protection

The reason that the four kayas become a great protection is that we begin to realize the way our mind functions, our state of being. We realize that whatever comes up in our mind is always subject to that flow, that particular case history, that nature. Sudden pain, sudden anger, sudden aggression, sudden passion - whatever might arise always follows the same procedure, so to speak, the same process

[This] is the best protection because it cuts through the solidity of your beliefs... All of those schemes and thoughts and ideas are empty! If you look behind their backs it is like looking at a mask... if you look behind it, it doesn't look like a face anymore, it is just junk with holes in it. You realize that you are ... not any of your big ideas. That is the best protection for cutting confusion.

From Training the Mind & Cultivating Loving-Kindness by Chogyam Trungpa ,

Seeing Confusion as the Four kayas is Unsurpassable shunyata Protection

This slogan is saying that when confusion arises not only do you practice tonglen and connect with the heart, but also you flash on the nonsolidity of phenomena at any time. In other words, you can just drop it. Out of the blue, you just drop it.

For instance, on a meditation retreat there are noodles for breakfast. Maybe in the beginning it seems funny, but halfway through breakfast you find yourself - instead of being mindful of the food, the chopsticks in your hand, the other people, and the good instructions you've received - talking to yourself about what a good breakfast would be, how you'd like to have a good breakfast like your mother used to make you in Brooklyn. It might be matzo ball soup or tortillas or beans or ham and eggs, but you want a good breakfast: burned bacon, like mother used to make. You resent these noodles.

Then, not through any particular effort, you just drop it. To your surprise, there's a big world there. You see all these lights glimmering in your empty lacquered bowl. You notice the sadness in someone's face. You realize that the man across from you is also thinking about breakfasts, because he has a resentful look on his face, which makes you laugh because you were there just a second ago.

The world opens up and suddenly we're there for what's happening. The solidity of our thoughts becomes transparent, and we can connect automatically with this space - shunyata -in ourselves. We have the ability to drop the story line, to rouse ourselves.

That's an everyday experience of shunyata. But it's also a very advanced practice if you can do it when you don't happen to feel like it. If everything is solid and intense and you're wallowing in self-pity or something else, if someone says to you at that point, "Just drop it", even in the sweetest, kindest, most gentle voice, you want to punch that person in the nose.

From Start Where You Are : A Guide to Compassionate Living by Pema Chodron,

To see Confusion as the Four kayas, the Protection of Emptiness is Insurpassable

In general all appearances, and particularly adverse conditions, are like the distress experienced when you dream of being burnt in a fire or swept away by a flood. The confused appearances of mind are invested with a reality that they do not have. It is rigorously established that, although these appearances arise, there is not even a particle of true existence in them. When you rest in a state in which appearances simply arise but there is no clinging to them, the dharmakaya aspect is that they are empty in nature, the nirmanakaya aspect is they appear with clarity, the sambhogakaya aspect is that this emptiness and clarity occur together, and the svabhavakaya aspect is that these are inseparable. This key instruction, to rest evenly without grasping at origin, location, or cessation, points out the four kayas. It is the armor of view, the protection circle of emptiness, and the supreme instruction that cuts off confusion.

From The Great Path of Awakening : An Easily Accessible Introduction for Ordinary People by Jamgon Kongtrul,

Meditation on the Deceptive Appearances of the Four Bodies is Unsurpassed in Guarding Emptiness

Sechibuwa begins by focusing on the idea that the entire cycle of existence, all causes and effects, every being who is harmed and each one that inflicts harm, all phenomena both inner and environmental, are nothing more than appearances of our own mind.

The point is that these phenomena are merely appearances, but have no ultimate existence whatsoever. In this sense they are like pure, unblemished space. We ourselves, as well as the inflictor of harm and the person who is harmed, are all empty of intrinsic existence.

Sechibuwa's explanation of the "Four Bodies" presents an unusual interpretation of these terms. The first, dharmakaya, is sometimes translated as the Truth Body. In this particular context, dharmakaya is understood as the absence of intrinsic birth and existence of all phenomena: that phenomena neither arise nor exist autonomously of their own accord. Whatever has no intrinsic birth or existence can have no intrinsic cessation. This lack of intrinsic cessation is called sambhogakaya, roughly translated as the Enjoyment Body of the Buddha. If phenomena are empty of intrinsic arising and intrinsic cessation, there can be no intermediate period of abiding in existence, and that very lack of abiding or dwelling, is called here nirmanakaya, or the Emanation Body. Such phenomena then are not real: not intrinsically existent in the past, present, or future. This lack of inherent reality is called svabhavikaya, or the Nature Body.

Thus, nothing has any existence apart from the Four Bodies: neither illness, nor one's own mind, nor any inflictor of harm, nor any cause, nor any effect. In this way we can regard all phenomena, including every thought that arises, as the Four Bodies. Granted, it takes considerable background to practice this with understanding rather than simply as if following a formula.

Excerpted from: The Seven-Point Mind Training(first published as A Passage from Solitude : Training the Mind in a Life Embracing the World), by B. Alan Wallace

Voidness is the Unsurpassed Protection; Therefore Illusory Appearance is Seen as the Four Kayas

From the point of view of absolute truth, phenomena have no actual entity. What we think of as 'I,' 'my body,' 'my mind,' 'my name,' have no real existence either. Other beings have no real existence either, whether they be dangerous enemies or loving parents. In the same way, the five poisons are by nature empty. Bearing this fact in mind, we should watch from where these poisons, these negative emotions, arise – what does the agent of these arisings look like, and what do the emotions themselves look like? If we analyze, we shall find nothing. This absence is the unborn Dharmakaya.

Although everything is by nature empty, this emptiness is not the mere vacuity of empty space or an empty vessel. Happiness, sufferings, all sorts of feelings and perceptions appear endlessly like reflected images in the mind. This reflection-like appearance of phenomena is called the Nirmanakaya.

A grain not planted in the soil will never give a fruit; likewise that which is unborn will never cease to be. To be beyond origination is to be beyond cessation also. This aspect of unceasingness is what should be understood as the Sambhogakaya.

If there is neither birth, in the past, nor cessation, in the future, there cannot be something which endures in the present; for an existence necessarily implies a beginning and an end.

The fact that the mind is by nature empty, that it is nevertheless the place where phenomena appear, and that it is beyond origination and is therefore unceasing – this inseparable union of the three kayas is called the Svabhavikakaya.

If deluded perceptions are understood in terms of the four kayas, it follows that in that which is termed deluded, there is nothing impure, nothing to rid ourselves of. Neither is there something else, pure and undeluded, which we should try to adopt. For, indeed, when illusion dissolves, undeluded wisdom is simply present, where it always has been. When gold is in the ground, for example, it is blemished and stained, but the nature of gold as such is not susceptible to change. When it is purified by chemicals or refined by a goldsmith, its real character increasingly shines forth. In the same way, if we subject the deluded mind to analysis, and reach the conclusion that it is free from birth, cessation and abiding existence, we will discover, then and there, a wisdom which is undeluded. Furthermore, the deluded mind, being itself illusory, is unstable and fluctuates, like experiences in a dream, whereas the true and undeluded nature of phenomena, the Buddha-nature or Tathagatagarbha, has been present from unoriginated time. It is exactly the same in ourselves as it is in the Buddhas. It is thanks to it that the Buddhas are able to bring help to beings; it is thanks to it, too, that beings may attain enlightenment.

From Enlightened Courage, by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. Copyright 1993 by Editions Padmakara (Padmakara Translation Group).