

Satirical Advice for the Four Schools

by [Jamgön Mipham Rinpoche](#)

Namo manjushriye!

Through the enlightened activity of the victorious buddhas,
And the skilful means of their bodhisattva heirs,
May the four schools of buddhist teachings, old and new,
Successfully transmit their perfect methods of awakening!

The authoritative transmission of sutras, the Gendenpa,
The authoritative transmission of mantra, the Nyingmapa,
The authoritative transmission of exposition, the Sakyapa,
And the authoritative transmission of practice, the Kagyüpa.

The Sakyapas are the masters of learning,
The Gendenpas are the masters of discourse,
The Kagyüpas are the masters of realization,
And the Nyingmapas are the masters of spiritual power.

These are the four marvellous transmissions of the teachings:
The Nyingmapas whose view is beyond all extremes,
The Kagyüpas who persevere in meditation,
The Gendenpas with their perfect conduct,
And the Sakyapas with their regular practice of approach and accomplishment.

Although they all possess infinite qualities,
Each one emphasizes a particular practice.

Nyingmapas chant through their noses,
Sakyapas chant with their lips,
Gendenpas create the melodies mainly in their throats,
And Kagyüpas chant strongly from deep down inside.

The Gendenpas maintain the complete path of scriptural study, so they are like the body of the teachings.
The Sakyapas bring together sutra and mantra approaches, so they are like the eyes of the teachings.
The Kagyüpas bring everything together into the single practice of devotion, so they are like the heart of the teachings.
The Nyingmapas possess the profound key instructions of the tantras and sadhanas, so they are like the life-force of the teachings.

Now for a few words in jest:

The Nyingmapas claim they have a path for accomplishing the level of Vajradhara through the practice of clear light Dzogpachenpo, without the need to rely upon an external consort and so on, and yet the lamas say they must take a wife in order to increase their longevity, improve the clarity of their vision, maintain good health, assist in the revelation of termas and accomplish the welfare of beings. They don't say that in order to benefit the teachings they should teach and practise! That taking a wife could be a way to benefit the teachings and beings, and a substitute for teaching and practice, and at the same time improve clarity of vision and so on, is, I think, incredible!

The Gendenpas claim the antidote to all the pains of existence is the wisdom which realizes selflessness, and yet when they approach the realization of no-self they are so afraid to let go of this sense of identity that they can not sit still upon their cushions. In the past it was said that the attainment of the path of seeing and the clear experience of selflessness that precedes it are marked by special feelings of joy, so I think this must be a symptom of the current degenerate age!

The Sakyapas make the supreme assertion that one should not place too much emphasis on conduct because inner wisdom is the most important thing, and yet when they recite the Lamdö Hevajra sadhana, they maintain the discipline of never leaving their seats, because to do so would transgress their vow. If they ever did need to get up and do something, they would have to drag their seats behind them, such are their rites of purification and liberation based on time and the physical body. I wonder what would happen to them if they did leave their seats!

The Kagyüpas assert that the Great Mudra is the wisdom which pervades all samsara and nirvana, and yet they think of the word 'mudra' as referring to one's hands. I wonder what such an enormous hand would look like!

Ha ha ha! That was all said in jest.

The teachings of the great masters are rich in meaning,
And each school has its own unique vision and key instructions.

Most followers of the Nyingma school shun the taking of life but think that there is no need to give up women. If they are a genuine yogins, I take refuge in them!
But in general this ordinary sexual desire is harmful to the Nyingma teachings, so take care, I pray!

Most followers of the Kagyü school dislike classical exposition and logic, preferring the approach that is based purely on mind and meditation. If they are those in whom realization and liberation are simultaneous, I take refuge! But in general this closed-minded attitude is harmful to the Kagyü teachings and must be abandoned!

Most followers of the Genden school do not see any fault in taking life, but their aggression is harmful to the Genden teachings, so take care, I pray!

Most followers of the Sakya school regard as supreme only those empowerments and instructions they themselves have received and the particular branch to which they belong—be it Sakya, Ngor or Tsar—but this strong prejudice and dogmatism is harmful to the Sakya teachings, so it needs to be abandoned!

Generally, even if one has attachment to one's own tradition it is important to avoid any antipathy towards other traditions. If we consider just our own tradition, since we are all followers of the Buddha, we can consider that we are all closely related. The different systems of teachings began at the time of Khenpo Shantarakshita, Guru Rinpoche and King Trisong Detsen, and, following the noble traditions of the past, all the schools in Tibet accept the four seals which are the hallmark of the buddhist teachings. We are all equal in this respect, and what is more we all assert the great shunyata free from conceptual elaboration. Not only that, we all accept the mantrayana with its inseparable unity of bliss and emptiness. This means that we are exceptionally close in terms of our view and our tenets.

Other traditions, non-buddhist outsiders and philosophical extremists, who differ even in terms of outer signs and dress, are as numerous as the stars in the night sky, and by comparison we buddhists are as rare as stars in broad daylight. Now, when the buddhist teachings are on the verge of extinction, all who seek to ensure their survival must view one another as the closest of allies. Any feelings of hostility will bring only ruin, so instead we must regard each other with joy, like a mother seeing her only child, or a beggar discovering a priceless treasure.

Having become followers of the same teacher,
May all who are students of these same teachings,
Abandon any hostility and prejudiced views,
And work together with a sense of joy!

Whoever practises in accordance with the true meaning of the teachings,
Be they from one's own or another tradition, may they gain accomplishment,
So that the four great buddhist schools here within the Land of Snows,
Come to blaze in dazzling splendour with a wealth of Dharma teachings,
And gain complete success and universal victory!

This was written playfully at the request of a friend who has the intelligence to follow all four schools—Sakya, Nyingma, Kagyü and Gelug. Mangalam!