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# THE SUNYATA MEDITATION

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*"All form is empty"*



"Form is emptiness; emptiness is form" is perhaps the most celebrated paradox associated with Buddhist philosophy. It is the supreme mantra. These words of the Buddha express not only a philosophy. It is meant to show that there is no meaning, no value or purpose in life; that in the end there is only a mere nothing as life is concerned. Life is in essence just Nothingness; but Nothingness is the full potential of All There Is, and it is said to be nothing in the sense because ALL THAT IS cannot be named, deciphered or translated, otherwise it would be limited by a mental construct or concept.

The Sunyata, the Emptiness, which is at the center of the Buddhist doctrine, is often not adequately understood. It is not a pessimistic or fatalistic doctrine, invented by a depressed mind. It is otherwise the total and deep experience of a very healthy state of consciousness.

For Sunyata is one of the deepest realization states of meditative consciousness. It is what we all experience when we close our eyes and study the interiority of life.

By closing our eyes we begin to see that life and consciousness consist of different layers. The first layer is already visible when our eyes are open. It consists of solid matter. This is the grossest form life exhibits. We can touch, smell, hear and see it. It is shallow,



because it is what it is. It needs no interpretation, but only confirmation. We all agree about a rock. A rock is a rock.

Sunyata, on the other hand, emulates the attempts to perceive reality beyond the form: the integral essence of the beings and how the vibrational fields and different levels of consciousness play diverse roles in our understanding of ourselves and the universe.

## THE SUNYATA MANTRA

o śū nya tā jñā na va jra sva bhā vā tma  
ko 'ha

o śūnyatā jñāna vajra svabhāvātmako  
'ha



Translates literally as: "o emptiness knowing diamond self-nature-essence"

## THE EMPTY BODY EXERCISE

The Sunyata or emptiness is a Buddhist technical term which refers to the fact that phenomena lack permanence and substantiality (or essence).

You may practice this exercise using the video "[Beyond the Shore](#)"; Prajna-paramita Hridaya Sutram (Sanskrit Version). This mantra is used in tantric rituals to remind the yogi of this basic Buddhist teaching and to try to evoke the experience of it. Normally we experience a series of jolts when we discover that things don't last, or provide satisfaction, because we fail to see the true nature of things. It is said that the vibration of this chant can eliminate blockages created by karma in past lives. It also facilitates the "wiring" of our neuron-pathways to receive and self-realize the deep meaning of compassion at the heart level.

The Sunyata mantra and exercise helps us tune into impermanence and insubstantiality. The mantra appears in visualization practices as a prelude to visualizing the yidam<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Yidam in Tibetan is a fully enlightened being who is the focus of personal meditation, during a retreat or for life. The term is often translated into English as tutelary deity, meditation deity, or meditational deity. Yidam is a visualized representative of your enlightened energy, or of Buddha-nature.

Suppose your passive form is to be an empty room with walls of skin, but inside, everything is empty.

This is one of the most beautiful techniques and one of the most difficult to practice: a challenge for our minds that try to capture and have control of everything and abhors a thought of non-existence.

Just sit in a meditative posture, relaxed, alone, your back straight and the whole body relaxed - as if the whole body was hanging by the column. Try to be aware of your posture but try to not over-analyze this exercise. The need for an observer is the need for ego to have a center, to make itself into a center of experience. So the observer is really none other than ego, or part of ego.



Close your eyes for a few moments to continue feeling relaxed, more relaxed, becoming increasingly calm. Do this for a few moments, just to stay in tune.



Begin to feel your body like skin walls and nothing inside, no one inside the house is empty.

Sometimes you will feel thoughts going through clouds of thoughts moving, but do not think they belong to you, they just are. You're not. Just think that they are wandering in the empty sky - they do not belong to anyone, they do not have any roots; they just are.

This is indeed the case: thoughts are just like clouds moving in the sky. They have no roots and they do not belong to heaven, they just roam the sky. They come and go and the sky remains untouched, uninfluenced.

Feel your body is just walls of skin with no one inside. An open space filled with plenitude.

Thoughts still remain - because of old habit, old momentum, old cooperation thoughts keep coming. But just think they are rootless clouds moving in space - they do not belong, they belong to no one. There is no one to whom they can belong - you're empty.

This will be difficult, but only because of old habits, nothing more. If your mind grabs some thought, become identified with it, move with it, to enjoy it, indulge in it. Just resist! Just say that there is no one to meet, there is no one to fight, and there is no one to do anything with that thought.

Within a few days, a few weeks, thoughts diminish; they will be less and less.

The clouds begin to disappear, or even if they come, will be major intervals of a cloudless sky when there is no thought.

A thought will pass. Then another will not come for a while. Then another, and then there will come another interval. In these intervals you will know first what emptiness is? And the very glimpse of it will fill you with bliss so deep that you cannot imagine.

*Adapted from Osho on "The Book of Secrets"*