

Theatre of Sadhana

"As we thus integrate in the Maya way
That does not prevent the causally originated semblances
Though it transcends the constructions
All things and I the skandhas and consciousness"

"As forms in a glass
Deities in ourselves we image
Image and void conjoined
Are maya's dance
Dancer like
Divers costumes make him fair
Fair comely mirror image of the mind"

These are verses that precede the visualisation in two major sadhanas, one of which we are going to do tonight. Each of them captures the view of sadhana, the view of visualisation practice generally. I talked about it in my opening talk.

The first, (read) can be paraphrased as
Viewing things as empty doesn't mean anything is taken away, it simply means dropping constructions like me and the world, consciousness, and the five skandhas. The five skandhas being form, feeling, recognition, volition and consciousness.

The second, (read), can be paraphrased as
Visualising awakening is like seeing oneself in a mirror. The image we see, and its freedom from construction, are like seeing a magical performance. We dress them in comely garments because this reflects the amazing qualities of awakening that are potential in our own mind.

Again it's the element of theatre. Theatre based on dropping constructions. Of course we can't just drop constructions just like that. That would be as impossible as dropping 10 kilos of weight when we needed to. There is a process. But theatre works through impersonation, taking on other personas, pretending, role playing. And something rubs off on us as a result. At the same time we get to play with the nature of the mind. If we enter into the sadhana in this kind of spirit, it's going to work really well.

