

*Commentary on “Instructions on the Garland of Views” the only written  
teaching by Padmasambhava (Lopon Pema Jungna)  
Teachings by H. H. The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama  
Translated by Geshe Thupten Jinpa  
Part 4*

Generating bodhichitta, the awakening mind is really the essence of Buddhist teaching, the Buddha’s teaching and the path as well. One can say that all the various elements of the practices that are presented in the teachings taught in the Disciples Vehicle and the Self-Realized Ones Vehicles, all of these practices presented in these scriptures can be viewed as preliminaries to the practice of bodhichitta, the awakening mind. The cultivation of the awakening mind is really the main practice and the main element of the path. All the other practices such as the six perfections, including the Vajrayana practices can be seen as precepts for taking the bodhicitta, generating the awakening mind. Particularly the Vajrayana practices can be seen as an extension and elaboration and a refined development especially of the last two perfections, the perfection of meditation and the perfection of wisdom.

For this ceremony of generating the awakening mind, first of all you should imagine a space where the image of a Buddha in standing posture, imagined as real, a living Buddha and imagine that the Buddha is surrounded by all the great masters of India such as Nagarjuna and the great bodhisattvas and all the bodhisattva masters of the old and new translation phases of Tibet all of whom have made a tremendous contribution to all sentient beings. Imagine that the Buddha is surrounded by these masters. Based on that visualization, we will engage in the practice of the seven limbs for which we will not do a specific recitation but I will explain the seven limbs one by one

The first of the seven limbs is prostration. For this you should imagine and reaffirm your visualization of the Buddha surrounded by all the great bodhisattva masters and so on and then contemplate their great enlightened qualities of body, speech and mind and then cultivate from the depths of your heart a deep admiration and reverence to these objects of refuge and veneration and also from the depths of your heart cultivate the aspiration that aspires to attain their qualities of body, speech and mind for yourself. With that kind of deep sense of admiration and reverence then you place your two palms together folded and imagine making prostrations.

The second limb is making of offerings. Here, having imagined the object of refuge in front of you in whose presence you have bowed and made prostrations than you should mentally offer everything – things that belong to you, and things that do not really belong to anyone such as the common environment, you mentally offer to these great objects of refuge. More importantly you should offer all the virtues you have accumulated and all your realizations and spiritual practices. For example, right now after having reflected upon the qualities of the body, speech and mind of the Buddha and the great bodhisattvas, we have cultivated a deep sense of veneration and out of that we have paid homage to the

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Buddha by bowing down with palms folded; that in itself is a virtuous activity performed through your body. Similarly, verbally by reciting verses that praise the enlightened qualities of the body, speech and mind of the Buddha, these verbal actions constitute virtuous actions. Similarly even the utterance of a single word or a word uttered with the motivation to be of benefit to someone, even those utterances constitute virtuous activity. All of these activities you should offer to the Buddha. On the mental level, cultivation of deep reverence to the Buddha, cultivation of a deep sense of conviction in the truth of the dharma, cultivation of a deep sense of admiration to the Buddha and the Three Jewels, generation of great compassion and cultivation of some understanding of the view of emptiness on the basis of what we have been discussing over the last two days. When you were listening to the lectures and explanations of the various aspects of the Buddhist path, every now and then as a result of your understanding you may develop a sense of admiration of these teachings and the great veracity of these teachings and so on, even these admirations are mental acts of virtue, so you should make offering of all of these, this is the most important offering – and these offerings are referred to as the true offerings of practice, of spiritual practice.

The third limb is confession and purification or disclosure and declaration and here one should reflect on all the negative activity one may have engaged in all of which are causes and conditions for the suffering that we all do not desire. By reflecting on the fact that these destructive and negative actions give rise to suffering, one should develop a deep sense of recognition of their destructive nature and develop a resolution or a sense of resolve that from now on I shall not engage in these negative acts. With that thought you should declare them and purify them.

The next limb is rejoicing - one has to rejoice in one's own spiritual and virtuous activities that one has engaged in also rejoice in the virtues and spiritual activity of others. In relation to others one should rejoice and cultivate a deep sense of admiration for the great deeds of the Buddha and also masters like Nagarjuna and his immediate disciples, Indian masters like Asanga and his immediate disciples and also the great masters of all four major schools of the Tibetan tradition, cultivate a great sense of rejoicing and admiration in the enlightened deeds of all of these great masters.

And in the next limb by focusing upon the Buddhas and bodhisattvas in front of you, you make supplication to this assembly to turn the wheel of dharma. It is in this context that you need to learn the tune of the mandala offering that was done before. (*Holiness is being humorous as the Khenpo had made a mandala offering at the beginning of the fourth session with a unique tune to the mandala offering*), and the tune needs to be sung in a slightly quivering voice as we witnessed.

The next limb is making a plea to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas not to enter into nirvana.

These are the main content of the practices of the seven limbs; there is no need to explicitly recite any prayers for that practice.

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The most important thing to do now is the contemplation - and here first of all it is important to reflect on a very deep level upon the fundamental equality of self and others. This meditation on or contemplation on the fundamental equality of self and others needs to be understood on the fundamental level where just as oneself wishes to achieve happiness and overcoming suffering so too do all sentient beings desire to seek happiness and wishes to overcome suffering.

Similarly just as in one's own case, one's essential nature of mind is pure and one's suffering and in particular the afflictions are in principal removable, in the same manner all sentient beings possess the nature which allows them, at least in principal, to be able to remove the suffering and their causes.

Similarly just as oneself has the potential for the attainment of the omniscient mind of the Buddha so too equally all sentient beings possess that equal potential of being able to achieve the omniscient mind of Buddhahood. From all of these angles, if we reflect deeply, we will recognize the fundamental equality of self and others. Then the question is, what the difference is when it comes to the well being of self and others?. The difference really only lies in the number. When we speak about the well being of oneself, we are talking only about the well being of a single individual. When we speak about the well being and welfare of others we are talking about infinite number of sentient beings. Although on the fundamental level there is equality between self and others, the difference really lies in the number of self and others.

Having recognized the fundamental equality of self and others, and also having realized that the difference lies in the number of beings involved, one develops a strong wish to free all sentient beings of their suffering. It is important to reflect on what is stated in Shantideva's Guide to the Bodhisattvas Way of Life, *Bodhisattvacaryavatara* where Shantideva makes the following statement: *That all the problems and adversities that we see in the world are in the final analysis consequences of self-centeredness and all the joy, happiness and prosperity that we see in the world are in the final analysis consequences or effects of the thought cherishing others.* By reflecting on this statement one needs to reflect deeply upon the shortcomings and disadvantages and drawbacks of the thought that cherishes one's own well being alone and the benefits and virtues of cultivating the thought that cherishes the well-being of other sentient beings. When you that, you will appreciate what Shantideva sums up in the same text in the following, where Shantideva says:

*“what more is needed to be said, simply compare the fate of the childish  
whose concern is only with one's own interest  
and the Buddha, the fully enlightened one  
whose concern is for the well being of other sentient beings.”*

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As Shantideva points out, if we simply compare where we are as ordinary beings and the fully enlightened Buddhas, the difference between us is really the indication or the result of difference between cherishing self-centeredness and cherishing the well-being of other sentient beings. Our own situation of remaining continuously in the unenlightened state is really the function and consequence of still being perpetually caught in this continuation of self-centeredness whereas the Buddhas and bodhisattvas have reversed that process and in the place of cherishing one's own self-interest they have replaced that with the thought cherishing other sentient beings and it is because of that reversal in the process , the Bodhisattvas have already embarked upon the path that would lead to enlightenment and the fully awakened ones have already attained full enlightenment. By reflecting along these lines one should really compare between the pros and cons of the these two thoughts; one cherishing one's own interest alone and well being and the thought that cherishes other sentient beings and arrive at a conclusion where one recognizes the disadvantages of self-centeredness and appreciates the value and benefits of other centeredness the thought that cherishes other's welfare.

Having thought along these lines we should then reach the conclusion where we make a strong resolve; from now on I shall not allow myself to be enslaved by the two powerful negative forces, these being the grasping at inherent and true existence of all phenomena and the cherishing of my own self-centered interest. These two graspings ; the grasping at the self-existence of oneself and the grasping at one's own self-interest , the thought that cherishes one's own interest these are the two twin forces have up till now really enslaved us . Now you make a resolve and it is these two thoughts or forces that have really been responsible for all the adversities and all the problems that we have constantly undergone. By making the resolve that from now on I shall not allow myself to be enslaved by this and now today I have truly recognized who is my true enemy and having recognized this true enemy you should make the resolve that from now on I shall never endorse them nor reinforce them, instead I will counter them and I will combat them with the corresponding antidotes which are the generation of the awakening mind which counters the self-cherishing thoughts and I shall cultivate the wisdom realizing emptiness which counters the grasping at true existence and with these two practices I shall aim to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all beings, so you really should make a strong resolve.

The actual ceremony of generating the awakening mind will be constituted by repeating three times the three stanzas. The first two stanzas deal with going for refuge in the Three Jewels and also the generation of the awakening mind and the final stanza deals with the affirmation of that act. In these lines the actual practice of generating bodhicitta is very explicit and going for refuge is also very explicit. What is not explicit is the practice of meditation on emptiness, so this needs to be complemented by reflecting on the nature of self. For example, when we read the line "I shall always go for refuge..." - this reference to the term "I" - when you recite that you should be aware of the emptiness of one's own self ; similarly when you go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, just as the person who is going for refuge is devoid of intrinsic existence , similarly the object of your refuge, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha too are devoid of intrinsic existence because

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Buddha is a being and Sangha is a being and if the beings themselves are devoid of inherent existence then the dharma which is realization and the quality of these beings too will also be devoid of intrinsic existence.

When you go for refuge in the Three Jewels, when you state yourself by saying “I shall always go for refuge...” you should be aware of the emptiness of one’s own self and also the emptiness of the object of refuge which is the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha , similarly for whose benefit you are generating the awakening mind; these sentient beings too are devoid of inherent existence and if you are able to have this awareness and recognition when you do the recitation then this act will also contain the meditation on emptiness as well . In that sense this practice will contain both the bodhichitta practice , which is the generating the awakening mind and cultivating emptiness which is the wisdom aspect of the path.

We will recite these together three times

*With the wish to free all beings  
I shall always go for refuge  
To the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha  
Until the attainment of full enlightenment*

*Enthused by wisdom and compassion  
Today in the Buddha’s presence  
I generate the mind for enlightenment  
For the benefit of all sentient beings*

*As long as space remains  
As long as sentient beings remain  
Until then may I too remain  
To dispel the miseries of the world*

This is a very brief ceremony of generating the awakening mind and since the text is quite short because there are only three stanzas, if possible, you should read them on a daily regular basis and eventually you will be able to memorize them. Once you are able to do that and if you are able to reflect on them on a daily basis it will be very beneficial.

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We will now return to the text.

Next, having briefly explained what the three modes are, the mode of generation, completion and great completion; from this point onwards the text explains the way in which one engages in these three different modes. This section is again divided into sections, so the text reads:

***“Conviction in this mode of Great Perfection [arises] by means of four understandings:***

- (i) Understanding the oneness of cause,***
- (ii) Understanding through the mode of syllables,***
- (iii) Understanding through the blessings, and***
- (iv) Direct understanding.***

***Understanding the oneness of cause refers to this: Since all phenomena are on the ultimate level unborn, they are not different [from each other]; they are not different in sharing the characteristics of illusions on the conventional level; what is unborn itself appears as diverse illusory forms just like reflections of moon in water; since illusion is devoid of intrinsic nature and is unborn and since the ultimate and the conventional are indistinguishable one understands the oneness of cause”***

This alludes to an important passage in the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* which is one of the most important passages of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* which presents the philosophical viewpoint of this particular text. Just as the case when interpreting or reading Vajrayana text such as the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*, in which case reading of a single passage or a single statement can have many different levels of meaning. For example, one speaks of the four modes of meaning:

- (i) literal
- (ii) general
- (iii) hidden
- (iv) definitive or ultimate

Even in relation to a single sentence or word of the Vajrayana text of Highest Yoga Tantra, when you go for a class one can read this statement at many different levels. This also applies in the current context of this teaching here.

In commenting on this particular section of the text in Jamgon Kongtrul’s commentary, when referring to the ***“oneness of cause”*** here and particularly to the statement where we read that ***“all phenomena are on the ultimate level unborn, they are not different [from each other”***, Jamgon Kongtrul specifically points out that this non-differentiation of phenomenon should not be understood merely in terms of the sutra presentation of emptiness where - for example, one speaks of how all phenomenon are devoid of and free of the eight extremes such as going/coming, oneness/multiplicity and so on. That is not the meaning. The meaning of freedom from conceptual elaborations here must be understood as explained before from the point of view of the innate mind of clear light. The point

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Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche is making is that in the yogi in whose mind the wisdom of clear light has been directly manifest, in that yogi's mind there is no dualistic perception of any kind. From that point of view, characteristics such as going/coming, oneness and separateness and so on – none of these conventional characteristics can be said to exist. While the wisdom of clear light is manifest in that individual none of these dualistic perceptions of any kind will appear to that individual. It is from that point of view that one should understand the reference that “*all phenomena are on the ultimate level unborn*” and from that point of view that “*they are not different [from each other]*” – there is no differentiation of any kind. In brief this is a reference to the ultimate meaning clear light.

In the next sentence where we read that “*they are not different in sharing the characteristics of illusions on the conventional level;*” – here too Kongtrul Rinpoche points out that when we use the terms conventional and ultimate in different context there is always a conventional and ultimate that corresponds to it; but here since the ultimate truth was understood in terms of the wisdom of clear light then the conventional truth here must also be understood in correspondence to that. The conventional truth here refers to the resonance, the self-expression of that innate mind of clear light and the self-expression of that clear light wisdom is the illusory body. The conventional truth here refers to the illusory body which is the self-resonance or expression of the wisdom of clear light.

These two dimensions, the ultimate clear light which is the dimension of emptiness and the illusory body which is the dimension of appearance; these two become the substantial, primary cause for the attainment of the enlightened body and mind.

In the commentary, Kongtrul Rinpoche goes on to explain what is meant by the oneness of experience and oneness of taste. Here he refers to two levels of union – in one context the union is the union of the objective emptiness and the subjective clear light which is understood in terms of the union of bliss and emptiness. Here as explained before the subjective clear light refers to the ultimate clear light (the wisdom of clear light) and from the perspective of that wisdom of clear light one can understand all phenomenon to be of a single taste. For example, as far as the individual person's experience of various levels of mental states are concerned , even all the subjective experiences including the grosser levels of consciousness they are as explained before manifestations arising out of the clear light state of mind.

Each and every aspect of one's mind/consciousness is permeated by the essential quality of consciousness which is clear light. The analogy given here is that just as every part of a sesame seed is permeated by the oil that is contained in the sesame seed, in the same manner all the levels of one's consciousness including the grosser levels of consciousness are also permeated by the nature of clear light.

Another analogy given is the relationship between ice and water. When you perceive ice there is definitely solidity in the actual structure of the ice but regardless of how solid ice may seem, it never loses its essential nature of being water - which is contained in the ice.

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In the same manner all the spectrum of consciousness is permeated by its essential nature which is clear light. As this is the case, the object, the field of experience of one's consciousness, all of these are in a sense manifestation and play of the innate mind of clear light as explained previously. From that point of view there is a oneness of taste in the entirety of phenomena. When the ultimate mind of clear light is experienced then it is conjoined with the object emptiness and there is the union of bliss and emptiness and this is one level of union.

However, Kongtrul Rinpoche points to another level of union where the bliss and emptiness is taken as one of the pairs of the union and the other is the illusory body. The union of this clear light wisdom and the illusory body represents the higher form of union where effectively the two truths of the conventional and ultimate truth have become integrated and united. This is a unique form of union that is explained and that is why in the text we read ***“what is unborn itself appears as diverse illusory forms just like reflections of moon in water; since illusion is devoid of intrinsic nature and is unborn and since the ultimate and the conventional are indistinguishable*** (this is referring to the union of illusory body and clear light) ***one understands the oneness of cause.*** The “oneness of cause” here Kongtrul Rinpoche understands in the commentary as the union of the illusory body and the clear light wisdom.

The next passage we read, having explained the meaning of the oneness of cause, the next is an explanation of the understanding through the mode of syllables. This section really deals with the oneness of taste of the body, speech and mind of the yogi who has attained this union , we read in the text ***“Understanding through the mode of syllables is as follows. The unborn nature of all phenomena is AH, which is the nature of enlightened speech; that the unborn nature itself appearing as causally efficacious illusion is O, which is the nature of enlightened body; and that the awareness that cognizes this, the illusory wisdom devoid of centre and peripheries, is OM, which is the nature of enlightened mind.”***

What this refers to in the terminology of *Guhyasamaja Tantra* we speak of the innate qualities of *prana* energies and subtle levels of consciousness and these subtle levels of consciousness are indivisible from their mediums which are the *prana* energies or the *prana* winds. Just as even on the level of experience or level of existence, these subtle levels of consciousness are indivisible from their medium which is the *prana* winds. The body, speech and mind are functions of the interaction between the subtle *prana* winds and the subtle consciousness. There are explicit statements in the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* that Kongtrul Rinpoche cites in his commentary where he cites from Chandrkirti 's commentary on the Root Tantra of *Guhyasamaja*, entitled “The Bright Lamp” , in which by commenting on a particular line from the root tantra, Chandrakirti explains that for the yogi who has gained union, the body, speech and mind have fused into a single taste.

We read that from the fundamental unit of the subtle *prana* wind and the subtle consciousness - one part of that *prana* wind represents the enlightened speech; the *prana*

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wind in its entirety which culminates and arises as the illusory body, represents the enlightened body and the awareness of the yogi that realizes and has cognized this represents the enlightened mind. These three have fused into a single taste in the yogi who has gained the union. We read the reference to the three letters, O, AH, OM representing the body, speech and mind.

The next is the understanding through blessing and from the text we read the following ***“Understanding through blessing refers to the understanding that just as, for example, the power to change a white sheet of cloth into a red sheet lies in the dye, the power to transform all phenomena into enlightened Buddhas is obtained through understanding the oneness of cause and [understanding the mode of] the syllables.”***

What is being explained here is the possibility of the transformation which is embedded in the nature of phenomenon themselves. For example, in the context of the sutra system one speaks of natural nirvana which refers to emptiness and because all phenomena are devoid of inherent existence, because of this, their ultimate nature is emptiness. It is this natural nirvana that allows the possibility for the eventual removal or dispelling of the ignorance that grasps onto things as truly existent or substantially real. Whereas if the belief in a substantial reality is (?) verifiable and reflect reality as being true, that would imply that all phenomenon are substantially real and this would preclude any possibility for transformation and change. As all phenomenons are devoid of inherent existence, their ultimate nature is empty; it is this emptiness that allows the possibility of transformation and enlightenment.

In the same manner, here in the context of Highest Yoga Tantra, when we understand that all phenomenon of cyclic existence are in some sense effulgence or manifestations arising from the fundamental innate mind of clear light (a kind of grosser levels of manifestation) this then implies that all these factors of samsara, the unenlightened existence are really adventitious. Since the essential nature of mind is clear light which is free of any defilements and obscurations, this then allows the possibility for all these adventitious factors of samsara to be removable in principle. Due to this, it allows the possibility to apply powerful antidotes against defilements so that these can be eventually removed.

In the text here there is a reference to blessing and transformation through blessing and the Tibetan word is *“chen-lap”* which has the connotation of something being changed as a result of a power, brilliance or majesty. The term blessing connotes a transformation. As the essential nature of mind is pure, it allows the possibility of a transformation.

We can relate this to the same analogy that we used earlier about the relationship between ice and water that is contained in it. When you look at a block of ice, it is as hard as a piece of rock. Despite the solidity of the ice, it retains its quality or nature of water. Due to that nature there is the possibility to melt it and get water. If the block of ice had no quality of water contained within in it or the nature of ice was not water, there would not be the possibility of getting any water from it. In the same manner since all the various levels of

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gross afflictions and conceptual thought processes (impure and contaminated states of mind) arise from the innate mind of clear light, there is the possibility that they can eventually dissolve into the innate mind of clear light as well.

The next is the fourth understanding which is the direct understanding and in this section we read from the text *“Direct understanding is, [understanding] that the abiding of all phenomena primordially as fully enlightened is not contrary to [the intention of] the scriptures and the quintessential instructions and that it does not depend upon the words of the scriptures and quintessential instructions alone. This is understood directly as one has gained conviction from the depth of one’s mind by means of one’s own intellect.*

This particular passage points to the possibility of gaining direct experience of this truth. Then we read *“Gaining conviction through the path” refers to the comprehension of the meaning of the four understandings, which is the path of a yogi. However this is not like the practice in which the cause depends upon temporal process for its effect to arise; rather, one comprehends it directly by oneself through faith.*

In Kongtrul Rinpoche’s commentary on this particular section he explains that referring to the direct understanding in this context, this should not be confined to understanding the ultimate wisdom of clear light alone; there can be many different levels of direct experience and this is very similar to the ideas found in the *Lam-dre* cycle of teachings where there is a reference to ultimate wisdom and metaphorical wisdom. In relation to the metaphorical wisdom in the *Lam-dre* cycle of teachings, there is also recognition of subtle and grosser levels and so on. For example, there is a metaphorical wisdom that arises in following the dissolution of all the three subtle levels of consciousness, appearance, red increase and near attainment. There can also be grosser levels of metaphorical wisdom where the wisdom arises in the aftermath of the dissolution of the grosser levels of the eighty conceptions and so on. The point is that when we speak of direct experience in this context one should not confine that only to the ultimate wisdom of clear light; there can be many different levels of direct experience. Such direct experiences can also be affected in some cases on the basis of an experienced master giving an instruction to a ripened disciple who on the basis of the instruction can bring about the experience of direct understanding as well. Direct understanding has connotations on many levels.

Kongtrul Rinpoche in his commentary then summarizes the section on the four understandings and explains the four understandings: -

- a) First understanding – which is the the oneness of the cause really explains the nature of the union of the two truths
- b) Second understanding – which is the understanding of the mode of syllables, really explains the oneness, the fusion of the body, speech and mind of the person who has attained the union
- c) Third understanding – understanding through blessings, explains the processes by which the impure aspects of one’s existence are purified
- d) Fourth understanding - explains the possibility of gaining a direct experience or understanding of that process

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In the next section the text deals with what are referred to as the three characteristic marks. Basically this section explains the process by which one's understanding goes through a process of progressively deepening from the stage of understanding derived through study, on to understanding derived through reflection and then culminating in the understanding derived through meditation, which is the standard process by which one's understanding gets deepened. The text reads ***"It is by means of [understanding] the three characteristic marks successful realization of the goal will take place. The comprehension of the four modes of understandings is the characteristic mark of knowledge;*** (this refers to the understanding derived through learning and study) ***constant cultivation of familiarity is the characteristic mark of engagement;*** (this is the understanding derived through reflection and contemplation) ***and its actualization due to the force of habituation is the defining characteristic of the result.*** This refers to the understanding derived through meditative practice.

The text goes on to explain ***"[These three characteristic marks also] present the correlations*** (interrelationship between the elements), ***the purpose, and the ultimate purpose. As for "correlations," it refers to relating the characteristic marks of the knowledge of the cause - the understanding of all phenomena labeled as afflicted or enlightened as being, right from the beginning, embodiments of enlightened body, speech and mind and as the expanse of natural Buddhahood, which is the meaning of blessing - to being the cause for achieving the unexcelled enlightenment.***

***As for the purpose, it is the comprehension of all phenomena - those that are imputed as afflicted factors or factors belonging to the enlightened class - as the five medicines as well the five nectars and so on, within the great equanimity of primordial Buddhahood, with no [evaluative judgment of] affirmation and negation. This is the characteristic mark of engagement and, since it is the cause of achieving the unexcelled Buddhahood, it is the purpose. The ultimate purpose is as follows. Given that all phenomena that are imputed as distinct realities, such as, as afflicted factors, as factors of enlightened class, as five medicines, as five nectars and so on, have spontaneously come into being within the great equanimity of unexcelled Buddhahood with no [evaluative judgment of] affirmation and negation, the wheel of existence itself has existed right from the beginning as the nature of unexcelled Buddhahood, sharing the characteristics of nirvana. It is therefore the characteristic mark of the result and the manifest actualization of this wheel of adornment of inexhaustible body, speech and mind which is the ultimate purpose.***

By explaining the three characteristic marks, the text goes on to explain their interrelationships, purpose and ultimate purpose of these various stages. His Holiness was saying that he is not going to elaborate on the text itself partly because we have not much time and also partly because there is an expression that one comments on a text like an old man chewing, one swallows the hard bits and one chews the soft bits.

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Next we read from where there is a discussion of the four branches of the yogic practice , these are referred to as the ***“approximation, near approximation, attainment and great attainment”***. These four branches of yogic practice, their different branches correspond to the specific Vajrayana practice of deity yoga that one may be engaging in. In the text we read ***“To achieve this one must strive in the yoga that brings about spontaneous realization of approximation, near approximation, attainment and great attainment. “Approximation” refers to the knowledge of the awakening mind, ( in this context awakening mind refers to the meditation on emptiness in the tantric sense) which is the understanding that it is by means of the path that all phenomena are realized as primordially in the nature of Buddhahood and that they cannot be altered by means of their counter-forces.***

When we speak of meditation on emptiness in the context of Highest Yoga Tantra it is not adequate simply to have an understanding of emptiness as presented in the sutra text but one also needs to have an understanding of the nature of clear light so that the actual meditation is done from the perspective of the subjective clear light experience. Therefore, there is a reference to the primordial Buddhahood. The primordial Buddhahood does not imply from the Vajrayana perspective that everything is primordially Buddha. The point being made is that given everything arises from the innate mind of clear light which is primordially pure they have the potential of primordial enlightenment or primordial Buddhahood. We then read ***“Near approximation” refers to the knowledge of oneself as a deity,(here referring to the illusory body experience) which in turn is the understanding that since all phenomena are primordially the nature of Buddhahood oneself too is primordially in the nature of a deity and that this is not something that has been cultivated at present.*** Earlier there was a reference to the statement that because of the primordial nature of Buddhahood, nothing can be altered by means of their counter-forces. If one understands that from the perspective of clear light then given the essential mind of clear light is pure, there is in a sense nothing really to remove or nothing really to eliminate in that ultimate sense. This resonates a passage or a stanza in Maitreya’s *Uttaratantra* and the exact identical stanza is also found in Maitreya’s *Abhisamayalamkara* , Ornament of Clear Realization , and in the Ornament of Clear Realization, there is a stanza which reads, “There is nothing here to remove nor is their nothing from which one needs to remove it.”

In the Ornament of Clear Realization, this absence of anything to be removed is explained in terms of the emptiness of inherent existence of true existence . From the point of view of emptiness of true existence there is nothing that needs to be removed because no phenomena ever possessed any true existence or substantial reality , so in the ultimate sense there is nothing to be removed or negated. However, in Maitreya’s text *Uttaratantra* , The Sublime Continuum he cited exactly the same passage but in a different way where he understands all the defilements and afflictions to be adventitious and the qualities of the enlightened mind are naturally contained within the mind and he explains this passage along those lines.

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Particularly in the context of Highest Yoga Tantra this passage has to be understood from point of view of the essential nature of mind as being clear light and devoid of any defilements. From that point of view there is nothing to be removed or nothing to be eliminated .

We go on to read from the text *“Attainment” refers to the generation of the mother. As for the great mother, it is within the expanse of space the space itself appears as the great mother, namely as [the four great elements of] earth, water, fire and wind. One recognizes these as the mother who is the receptacle [of the creation of all phenomena]. The “great attainment” refers to the relating of method and wisdom, which is the primordial uniting of the wisdom of the five great consorts - the space of the consorts and emptiness - with the father of all the Buddhas of the five aggregates, free of aspiration. From this [union] the bodhicitta drops appear as emanations whose nature is such that within the truth of primordial Buddhahood, illusions play on illusions. And at this blissful moment of illusory supreme bliss continuum one achieves spontaneously the truth of signlessness with the non-objectified space into a single stream. The four classes of mara are [thus] subdued and one achieves the final objective.*

**The Procedure for Entering the Mandala of Great**

*[This is achieved in the following manner:] With respect to entering the primordially unexcelled mandala, which is the undifferentiated celestial wish-granting mansion wherein all phenomena are primordially pure, hearing the scriptures of method vehicle is the opening of one’s eyes Understanding the meaning [of these teachings] is seeing the mandala; cultivating its familiarity following its understanding is entering the mandala, while actualising it after entering it is the obtainment of the great siddhi attainment. This procedure signifies the final stage of Great Perfection - that is one arrives spontaneously on the level of great accumulation, which is the wheel of syllables.*

In this last passage the process of entering the path and progressively traversing the path is explained . In the next section we read

**“Demonstrating that this Mode of Great Perfection is Not Suitable for Everyone**

*The persons of excellent mental faculty understand what are primordially enlightened as primordially enlightened and the familiarity of this [knowledge] enhances with firm steps. This is not a pursuit of the ordinary person.*

This again refers to the point I made earlier, that for a genuine practitioner of Highest Yoga Tantra some realization of bodhicitta, the awakening mind and understanding of emptiness is indispensable. The understanding of emptiness as explained in the sutra teachings . Particularly in the context of Highest Yoga Tantra meditation, the understanding of the ultimate nature of reality from the point of view of the wisdom of clear light that is also indispensable ; without these basis there is simply no foundation upon which one can successfully engage in the practice of Highest Yoga meditation.

Next we read from the text, which is wonderful, we read

*“As for the ordinary person, even though he contemplates, he will have no conviction in its truth and profundity. Relating to this fact of the mind of the ordinary person not gaining conviction, having difficulty in comprehending it and accepting its truth and profundity, there is the danger of thinking that this must be the same for everyone. [One might then] denigrate the excellent persons as all liars and thereby engender thoughts of refuting them. Because of this it is being kept hidden as such it is taught as the “secret vehicle.” Therefore until the mind understanding the truth of all phenomena as being primordially enlightened has arisen, if one engages in other’s welfare on the basis of the lower vehicles, one will not undermine the spiritual trainees (referring to the disciples) So extensive statements are found [in the scriptures] that the master must be versed in [the knowledge of] the defects of cyclic existence, the excellent qualities of nirvana, as well as in all the vehicles, and that a master who is ignorant of some aspects [of the teachings] must not hold [the position of a teacher].*

In the next section of the text the author explains that due to the difference of views due to their profundity and so on , differences in the ascetic practices and the conducts that are based on them also differ. So we read from the text:

#### **“DIFFERENCES OF ASCETIC PRACTICES AND THE CONDUCTS**

*Due to the difference of views differences exist too in the ascetic practices and conducts. Those devoid of ascetic practice are the unreflective worldly and the nihilists. There are four kinds that have ascetic practices: (i) the mundane ascetic practice which the materialists and the extremists have, (ii) the ascetic practice of the disciples, (iv) the ascetic practice of the bodhisattvas, and (iv) the unexcelled asceticism.*

*Of these the unreflective is ignorant of cause and effects and is therefore devoid of ascetic practice. The nihilists uphold nihilistic view and are devoid of ascetic practice. The materialists seek qualities characteristic of this life so they possess ascetic practices, such as observance of purity laws and so on. The extremists, with the goal of purifying the eternal self, engage in such asceticism as abusing the body, keeping themselves in the five types of fire and so on; they engage in the conducts in a distorted manner.*

*As for the ascetic practice of the Disciple, the Discipline scripture (the Vinaya) states:*

*Do not commit any evil;*

*Engage in virtues as best as you can;*

*Thoroughly tame your own mind -*

*This is the doctrine of the Buddha.*

*Thus they view all factors of existence, virtuous or non-virtuous, as existing separately and respectively belonging to [the categories of] ultimate and conventional truths. They engage in the conduct of practising the virtues and relinquishing non-virtues.*

*As to the ascetic practice of the bodhisattvas, the Bodhisattva Vows states:*

*Not effecting the means when circumstances call for;*

*Not employing supernatural powers, threats and so on;*

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*He who has compassion and out of loving kindness,  
And those of virtuous mind, there is no fault [in these acts].  
So if it is sustained by great compassion, regardless of whatever acts one might engage  
in,  
be it virtuous or non-virtuous, one's vows will not degenerate. For the bodhisattva vow is,  
in brief, to act with taking great compassion as its ground.  
As for the unexcelled asceticism, the Great Pledge Sutra states:  
If one is thoroughly affirmed in the Buddha's vehicle,  
Even if one indulges in all the afflictions and the five senses,  
Just like a lotus [growing] in muddy water,  
In him morality remains pure and perfect.*

*Since all phenomena are in perfect equanimity from the very beginning, no compassion  
is to be cultivated and no hatred to be eliminated. It does not mean, however, that  
enlightened compassion does not arise for those who failed to understand this way. Just  
as they comprehend by means of the view that [all phenomena are] primordially pure,  
they engage also in the ascetic practices and the conducts with thorough purity.*

*The colophon of text along with the dedication says  
This secret [instruction], a garland of views,  
If there are persons who possess skills of wisdom and method,  
May such excellent beings encounter this [instruction],  
Just as the blind who opens his own eyes and recovers his sight.*

*The quintessential instruction entitled A Garland of Views is complete. It was composed  
by the great master Padmasambhava.*

We realize that this is quite a very profound text and quite elaborate as well. In order to fully understand the full presentation of the meaning of this text, obviously one would need to consult and study a much wider range of text as well. The most important thing as masters of the past have advised, what has been understood as a result of study must be implemented into practice. The essential point is to really concentrate on one's actual meditative practice.

Among the members of the audience here in this series of lectures there will certainly be people who are not practicing Buddhists, who may be followers of other faiths and traditions or who may have no faith at all in any religious tradition. However, you have had the opportunity to at least be informed and be introduced to some key elements of the Buddhist path and in that way at least you have acquired some knowledge and understanding.

However, those who are not practicing Buddhists such as the practitioners of other faiths and traditions and the non-believers who are gathered here, you do have one responsibility

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– that is to constantly watch the behavior and actions of those who claim to be practicing Buddhists.

**His Holiness:** *Thank you very much, I think quite a large number of people, really I think very attentively, listen, and I appreciate. Those people who consider themselves followers of Buddha - then practice - implement with determination and less expectation, that is important. Spiritual development takes time - according to my own experience, now nearly 70 years. Since my age of 16 I began to practice more seriously, then you know still my experience is very limited; at the same time I can assure to you that if you put implementation then definitely our mind will change, will improve – result oneself becoming more calm, more happier. Keeping enthusiasm all the time that is important.*

*Basically, as you know, the Buddhists system is to utilize human intelligence the maximum way and then try to transform our emotion, that is the proper way, not just prayer and not just faith but utilize our intelligence – analyse, analyse, thinking, thinking, thinking – that way develop some kind of conviction – conviction brings determination, determination bring effort, effort then time passes, things will change.*

Thank You.