

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

*On May 4, 2007, Tenzin Gyatso His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama became one of my root teachers when he conferred the **Chittamani** Tara Permission **Initiation** (Dolma **Chittamani** Jenang), in Madison, Wisconsin. The following is a transcription of the initiation ceremony in honor of my new root teacher. Any errors are solely mine and do not reflect on His Holiness the Dali Lama or his most excellent translator Geshe Thupten Jinpa.*

May all beings who read only one word of this transcription accumulate all the merit necessary to achieve their enlightenment.

May 2, 2007 – Day 1

His Holiness the Dalai Lama (Speaking in English): So, dear dharma friends, I am simply happy to be here once more and meet my long, long, long time friend Geshe Sopa. 1959 [the year of] my final examination – the Geshe examination – among the debaters Geshe Sopa was one of them – HHDL speaks Tibetan.

I remember very clearly. Geshe-la was one of the selected scholars to open debate with me when I sat down for my final exams in Lhasa in 1959. In the morning session the main topic is epistemology and logic. And, the afternoon session was on Perfection of Wisdom studies and Middle Way philosophy. And, I remember very clearly that Geshe-la opened his debate on the concept of Buddha Nature and referring to an important sutra which has "belchen(?)" but because Geshe-la is from Tsong Province, he had this very strong Tsong accent and said, "palchen(?)". And, so, I remember that very clearly. (Laughter).

HHDL: In 1959 we escaped from Tibet. Geshe-la was among the few thousand monks who escaped from Tibet. And, 1960 or 61 [he sat] for his own examination in India. And, then soon [after he was] sent to America. So, I think around 1963 – I think 64 – 65 – we sent to America _____. I think one good thing is that since then he remained as if a good monk. So _____ (Laughter).

Then, I think, 1981, the Kalachakra Initiation. At that time, his own situation, you see, was difficult. And from my part it was also we had no idea...

Translator kicks in: So, in 1981 we had the Kalachakra Initiation at Deer Park Monastery. But, at that time the Deer Park Center was in its very early stages – not well established – so it didn't have much in the form of facilities and Geshe-la was not that well versed in the ways of the world here. And, on my part, too, not being fully cognizant of the situation here – so the two of us – he requested and out of ignorance I said yes and then we staged the Kalachakra here.

HHDL: And, here _____ and his wife, in their home I stayed. So, since then we have become very close friends. So, once more, I'm very happy to be here. So now, today and tomorrow a lecture on Buddhism. And, I always believe that different people and different cultural heritage – including religious faith – so here American like European and [have] basically a Judeo-Christian background – So therefore, I want to make clear: it is important to keep one's own tradition – one's own tradition and faith. This something I mentioned earlier – the Judeo-Christian religion or faith and to some extent maybe Muslim. So, it is safer to remain with your own tradition. Changing [your] religion is not easy. Sometimes it may create more confusion. So, therefore it is important to remain with one's own tradition and faith. [In the] meantime,

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

learning a sense of the different traditions – that is also useful. Particularly, the reality that the whole world is now [populated with] 6 billion human beings, so we're almost becoming like one big human family. So, the whole planet is like one entity. So from that perspective – a small planet, 6,000,000,000 human beings – that's one entity. And, that entity [is composed of] multi-religions, multi-cultures.

And, another factor - not only in the past but even today - some division, some conflict is also happening – very, very unfortunate. So for that closer relations of different traditions [are necessary] – at least some knowledge of the religion – of the practice. That's very helpful to develop mutual respect. And then, of course, if there are already some Buddhist practitioners here – some Tibetans and some Americans – so, as an individual who really feels [that] one's own tradition is not much effective, and some other tradition seems more effective – then in such a case examine very carefully - Then if you really feel that the Buddhist approach is more effective, more suitable, then it is the individual right to choose that. What's very important is that you – that individual person finds the Buddhist approach more effective, that does not mean that your traditional religion is no longer effective or of any benefit to lots of people. No. There are still millions of people getting inspiration – immense inspiration and hope and purpose of life from your traditional religion. Therefore, in spite [of the fact that] you follow Buddhist tradition, you must respect your old tradition. That's very important.

So, now usually when we have received Buddhists from different traditions, then to respect the order of seniority of the Buddhist traditions, firstly, Pali – chant or recite in Pali some sutra – then next there's the Sanskrit tradition – I think senior most is Chinese. So, [we] usually recite the *Heart Sutra* in the Chinese language. Now, here [there are] no Chinese who can recite that – I think not available – then OK. Then, sometimes in Viet Namese, Japanese, or Korean – so usually I do that in India also. That creates some kind of spirit that we all traditionally – as Buddhists, like that. So, now today at the beginning we will recite a short prayer.

So, before the teaching we will do some chantings – especially the chanting that relates to the three daily activities. There are three parts. The first part is the salutation to Buddha. The second part is a few sentences from the vinaya. Then third, reflections on impermanence or _____ nature, or empty nature. Then after that – *Heart Sutra*.

So, those people who can recite Tibetan please chant with us. If not, simply reflect on the meaning of emptiness.

His Holiness and the translator chanted/recited the prayers.

Refuge and generation of bodhicitta

I go for refuge, until I am Enlightened, to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Highest Assembly.

From the virtuous merit that I collect by listening to the Dharma,

May I attain the state of Buddha to be able to benefit all sentient beings. (3 times)

sang gye chö dang tsog kyi chog nam la
jang chub bar du dag ni kyab su chi
dag gi chö nyen gyi pe sö nam kyi
dro la pen chir sang gye drub bar shog

Generation of bodhicitta

With a wish to free all beings

dro nam dral dö sam pa yi

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

I shall always go for refuge
To the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha,
Until I reach full enlightenment.

sang gye chö dang ge dun la
jang chub nying por chi kyi bar
tag par dag ni kyab su chi

Enthused by wisdom and compassion,
Today in the Buddhas' presence
I generate the Mind for Full Awakening
For the benefit of all sentient beings.

she rab nying tse dang je pe
tsön pe sem chen tön tu dag
sang gye dun du ne gyi te
tsog pe jang chub sem kye do

As long as space remains,
As long as sentient beings remain,
Until then, may I too remain
And dispel the miseries of the world.

ji si nam kha ne pa dang
dro wa ji si ne gyur pa
de si dag ni ne gyur ne
dro we dug ngal sel war shok

Long life prayer for H.H. the Dalai Lama

In this Pure Land surrounded by snowy
mountains
You are the source of all benefit and happiness
without exception
All-powerful Avalokiteshvara, Tenzin
Gyatso
May you remain firm for a hundred eons.

gang ri ra we khor we zhing kham su
pen dang de wa ma lu jung we ne
chen re zig wang ten dzin gya tso yi
zhab pe kal gye bar du ten gyur chig

Dedication prayers

By these virtues may I quickly
Realize the state of a guru Buddha
And having done so may I place
Every last being into that state.

ge we di yi nyur du dag
la ma sang gye drub gyur ne
dro wa jig kyang ma lu pa
de yi sal la gö par shog

The mind of enlightenment is supreme and
most precious
Where it has not arisen, may it arise
Where it has arisen, without any decline,
May it only grow stronger and stronger.

jang chub sem chog rinpoche
ma kye pa nam kye gyur chig
kye pa nyam pa me par yang
gong ne gong du pel bar shog

May the teachings, the source of all happiness,
increase and propagate
May all those beings who uphold the doctrine
be healthy
May the teachings of the Buddha, the source
of happiness for all embodied creatures
Forever flourish.

pen de jung ne den pa dar zhing gye
ten zin kye bu tam je ku kam zang
lu jen kun la de kyi jung we ne
sang gye den pa tag tu gye gyur jik

Additional dedication prayers

The heroic Manjushri¹ comprehends
reality, as likewise does Samantabhadra².
Training after the manner of all of them I
dedicate this and all my virtues.

jam pal pa wo ji tar kyen par dang
kun tu zang po de yang de zhin te
de dag kun gyi je su dag lob chir
ge wa di dag tam che rab tu ngo

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

All the Conquerors who come in the three times greatly praise any dedication of merit, and so I will dedicate all these roots of virtue for the sake of practicing as did Samantabhadra.

du sum sheg pai gyal wai tam che kyi
ngo wa gang la chog tu ngag pa de
dag gi ge we tsa wa di kun kyang
zang po cho chir rab tu ngo war gyi

May the venerable lama have a long life;
May his enlightened activities spread
throughout the ten directions in space;
And may Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings,
the lamp which clears the darkness of
the beings in the three worlds, remain
forever.

je tsun la me ku tse rab den jing
nam kar trin le chog jur gye pa dang
lo zang den pe gron me sa sum gyi
dro we mun sel dak du ne gyur jig

Heart Sutra

The Blessed Mother, the Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom
Bhagavati Prajna Paramita Hridaya
bCom Idan 'das ma shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin p'ai snying po

Homage to unutterable, inconceivable, inexpressible Perfect Wisdom,
Unborn, unceasing essence of space,
The field of self-aware gnosis,
Mother of past, present and future Buddhas!
Homage to the Perfection of Wisdom, the Blessed Mother.

Thus I have heard once:

The Blessed One was staying in Rajgriha at Vulture Peak along with a great community of monks and a great community of bodhisattvas, and at that time, the Blessed One entered the meditative absorption on the varieties of phenomena called the appearance of the profound. At that time as well, the noble Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva, the great being, clearly beheld the practice of the profound Perfection of Wisdom itself and saw that even the five aggregates are empty of intrinsic existence.

Thereupon, through the Buddha's inspiration, the venerable Shariputra spoke to the noble Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva, the great being, and said, "How should any noble son or noble daughter who wishes to engage in the practice of the profound Perfection of Wisdom train?"

When this had been said, the holy Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva, the great being, spoke to the venerable Shariputra and said, "Shariputra, any noble son or noble daughter who so wishes to engage in the practice of the profound perfection of wisdom should clearly see this way: they should see perfectly that even the five aggregates are empty of intrinsic existence. Form is empty, emptiness is form; emptiness is not other than form, form too is not other than emptiness. Likewise, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness are all

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

empty. Therefore, Shariputra, all phenomena are empty; they are without defining characteristics; they are not born, they do not cease; they are not defiled, they are not undefiled; they are not deficient, and they are not complete.

“Therefore, Shariputra, in emptiness there is no form, no feelings, no perceptions, no mental formations, and no consciousness. There is no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, and no mind. There is no form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no texture, and no mental objects. There is no eye-element and so on up to no mind-element including up to no element of mental consciousness. There is no ignorance, there is no extinction of ignorance, and so on up to no aging and death and no extinction of aging and death. Likewise, there is no suffering, origin, cessation, or path; there is no wisdom, no attainment, and even no non-attainment.

“Therefore, Shariputra, since bodhisattvas have no attainments, they rely on this Perfection of Wisdom and abide in it. Having no obscuration in their minds, they have no fear, and by going utterly beyond error, they will reach the end of nirvana. All the Buddhas too who abide in the three times attained the full awakening of unexcelled, perfect enlightenment by relying on this profound perfection of wisdom.

“Therefore, one should know that the mantra of the Perfection of Wisdom—the mantra of great knowledge, the unexcelled mantra, the mantra equal to the unequalled, the mantra that quells all suffering—is true because it is not deceptive. The mantra of the Perfection of Wisdom is proclaimed:

tadyatha gaté gaté paragaté parasamgaté bodhi svaha!

Shariputra, the bodhisattvas, the great beings, should train in the perfection of wisdom in this way.”

Thereupon, the Blessed One arose from that meditative absorption and commended the holy Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva, the great being, saying this is excellent. “Excellent! Excellent! O noble child, it is just so; it should be just so. One must practice the profound Perfection of Wisdom just as you have revealed. For then even the Tathagatas will rejoice.”

As the Blessed One uttered these words, the venerable Shariputra, the holy Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva, the great being, along with the entire assembly, including the worlds of gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, all rejoiced and hailed what the Blessed One had said.

Next we will recite the salutation verses from *Ornament of Clear Realization* which is one of the key texts of the Perfection of Wisdom and also the salutation from Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* which is one of the key texts for the Middle Way Teachings.

Almost two-thousand-six-hundred years ago, Buddha Shakyamuni came, he taught basically the foundation of the Buddha Dharma. When the Buddha came there already existed in India a dharma – Hindu dharma, but I don't know. But, dharma [was] already there. So, like Samadhi – I think common. I think unique in Buddhism is [the idea of] dependent origination. That is

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

something very unique. Then, also I think what is unique is infinite altruism. Even within the Buddha's own teaching this concept of infinite altruism. I think Buddha taught this maybe later in his lifetime.

So, eventually two languages – one was the Pali language. I think at the time of Buddha there were some differences in language. Even in Pali, I think there were some differences. Some say that. I don't know. In any case, now the Pali tradition which eventually flourished in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia – I think mainly in these areas. Then, there's the Sanskrit tradition. I think the institution – or the period – the _____ period. I don't know what was the main language. Sanskrit? Or Pali? I don't know. We need more research work. I don't know. But, there's no doubt that since Nalanda University or institution was established – at least for a few centuries – I think that period the Sanskrit tradition was much developed. So, then eventually, mainly I think translations into foreign languages from Sanskrit – I think mainly Chinese. Then I think from the Chinese [it went to] Viet Nam, Korea, and Japan. Some Japanese say they also have a direct link from India – not through China. Then after a few centuries – I think three or four centuries – then [we have] the Tibetan translations from Sanskrit after Pali started. So, that means around the seventh century. So we are junior – we are younger – Pali senior-most, Chinese-senior, we're junior. But, as far as knowledge is concerned, I think at least today, we are not necessarily junior (smiles and laughs).

I think this is the last generation of really marvelous scholars. So age-wise I am part of that old generation of scholars, but personally my knowledge is very, very little. You cannot compare knowledge with him (talking about the translator, *Geshe Thupten Jinpa*). Of course, I have the highest seat – much laughter – but as far as knowledge is concerned I'm just there.

So _____, who is also _____ Rinpoche [monks on the stage with His Holiness], was also among the geshe who took their final exams in India at the beginning. He is one of the top masters of that generation. So, I'm very happy to be mixing with these people! They are really learned.

I think one good thing about Tibetan Buddhism is that since the eighth century Buddhism has been flourishing there. So, the main person at that time carrying the teachings of the Buddha Dharma – of course, Padmasambhava was also there – but I think the main teacher was Santiraksita³. He came from Nalanda. He himself [was a] big scholar monk. Also, I think after him, his main disciple or student, Kamolasheila, I think had some kind of serious discussion with some Chinese scholars. Then, Kamolasheila, eventually, I think his effort prevailed. Then he carried the same sort of practice – serious study – as the tradition of Nalanda and his teacher Santiraksita. Now, both of them wrote very difficult important texts about logic, about philosophy, like that. And, we still study these texts today. Because of their effort, I think the Tibetan tradition has for many centuries emphasized the importance of study.

So the tradition became established where there was an emphasis on study, critical reflection, and meditative practices were never isolated one from another. So, the practice continues today – the Nalanda tradition – I think a very rich tradition to study all these difficult texts. At the beginning [they are] learned by heart – all these root texts. Then, they are explained word by word. And, then debate, in order to get precise meaning [there is] a lot of debate. Because of these factors, I think that Tibetan knowledge, generally speaking, I think [is] quite good.

So, now how to start - I don't know.

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

At the beginning one of the things I would like to point out is that in Buddhist epistemological literature, when these texts describe the process by which we attain our immediate or long-term objectives – our immediate or long-term objectives are described as fruits of valid understanding or fruits of knowledge. And, what does that mean? What is the significance of describing our objectives as being fruits of knowledge and valid cognition⁵? And, here for example, according to Buddha's understanding our immediate objective is to attain higher rebirth and our final objective is to seek liberation – freedom from cyclic existence. So the ultimate objective is referred to as the "definite goodness" and the immediate short-term objective is referred to as "the higher birth." And both of these are described as fruits of knowledge. For example, what is the principle factor that would spur us to seek true liberation, true freedom? And, here it is a genuine sense of renunciation. Of course, although the renunciation itself is not an instance of knowledge, but truly renunciation arises only on the basis of a deeper knowledge such as a fuller understanding of the nature of suffering and so on.

And, similarly the key factor for attaining Buddhahood is the practice of awakening the mind of *boddhicitta*. Again, *boddhicitta*, or the awakening mind, is not itself an instance of knowledge, but *boddhicitta* or awakening mind can only arise on the basis of a true knowledge – a fuller understanding. Similarly, with respect to the immediate objective of attaining rebirth, what is the key factor for this? The key factor for that is living an ethically sound way of life that is constituted by refraining from the ten negative actions of body, speech, and mind.⁶ So, one can engage in such an ethical way of life on the basis again of a deeper knowledge of what are the negative consequences of engaging in harmful actions and what are the positive consequences of adopting a truly sound ethical way of life?

So again, here, it is understanding – it is knowledge – that would give rise to a more ethical way of life. So, therefore, in these Buddhist texts, all of our objectives whether they are immediate or long-term are described as fruits of valid cognition or fruits of knowledge.

What is the opposite side of this valid cognition and true knowledge? And, this in the Buddhist texts is described as distortions of reality – distorted forms of knowledge or false ways of understanding reality. And, within this domain of distortion we identify two forms. One takes the form of exaggeration referred to as super-imposition on reality and the other takes the form of denigration. So in one instance for example, when looking at reality if you tend to exaggerate over and above what is actually there in reality that falls into the domain of distortion. That kind of distortion is referred to as super-imposition or exaggeration. On the other hand, if you deny what is there in reality then you're also falling into a distortion and a false way of knowing. And, this form of distortion is referred to as denigration. So, therefore, a truly sound spiritual way of life has to be grounded in an approach that would avoid these two extremes – extremes of exaggeration and super-imposition and extremes of denial and denigration.

Although one may be able to adopt a certain ethical way of life with some half partial knowledge, to be true to the spirit of the Buddha's teaching one's spiritual path and practice has to be grounded upon a sound understanding of the actual nature of reality. And it is on that basis that one has to build one's path and practice.

So, therefore, when giving his first public sermon, Buddha taught his teachings within the framework of the Four Noble Truths – which all of you must be familiar with. These are the

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

truth of suffering, the truth of the origin of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the path that leads to the cessation of suffering. And when Buddha taught these four noble truths, he did so by means of repeating each of them with respect to their individual characteristics, natures, and their functions, and the effects of the practice. So, the point I'm making is that Buddha emphasizes right in his first public sermon the need to have a deeper understanding of the nature of reality. The Buddha's path and practice has to be based upon something that exists in reality – not just on some fantasy – but on [an] understanding of the nature of reality. And, on that basis you then need to develop an understanding and a sense of conviction that given this nature of reality – given this cause and effect relationship – there is a possibility for change – there is a potential for change and transformation. So on that basis – on the conviction of the possibility of change, then one applies the path – the practices that are developed on the basis of that understanding. So the implementation of the practice of the path leads to the result. Therefore, in the Buddha's teachings whether they are in the non-Mahayana the scriptures, or whether they're in the Mahayana teachings, or whether they're in the Vajrayana teachings – all the presentations of the teachings are made in terms of either the ground which is the nature of reality or the path which is based on the actual practices, and then the fruits or results of that practice.

So traditionally, all the teachings that are taught by the Buddha are referred to as the 84,000 heaps of teachings. And, this is the traditional way of listing all the teachings given by the Buddha. When they are condensed, one can understand this entire collection of teachings in terms of the three turnings of the wheel of dharma, or the three public sermons of the Buddha.

The first turning of the wheel of dharma – the subject matter of that is the Four Noble Truths as explained before; the second turning of the wheel of dharma – the subject matter of that is the Perfection of Wisdom particularly the teaching of emptiness which is also referred to as the "objective clear light". So what we can see is that the second turning of the wheel of dharma – where the main text or the scriptures are the Perfection of Wisdom, this can be seen as actually further development and elaboration on the third noble truth – the truth of cessation, because a deeper understanding of the truth of cessation is only possible on the basis of a fuller understanding of the nature of emptiness – the teaching on emptiness. Therefore, in order to elaborate on this third noble truth, the teaching on emptiness was presented in the second turning of the wheel of dharma as embodied in the Perfection of Wisdom scriptures. And, in these scriptures the explicit⁷ subject matter is emptiness, but implicitly⁸ as the basis upon which emptiness is qualified; also, the various levels of the stages of the path – the levels of realization of the path are also presented as an implicit subject matter in these Perfection of Wisdom sutras.

The third turning of the wheel of dharma – there are two categories in this collection of teachings. The first category, which is the primary one, is the sutras, the scriptures, belonging to the teachings on the Buddha Nature – the Tathagarba, the sense of Buddhahood. And the key text is the Tathagarba Sutra⁹ – the sutra on the Essence of Buddhahood. So, what we find here is that in these particular scriptures – collection of scriptures – what is being developed further is the subjective clear light which is the subjective quality of the experience of emptiness because in the second turning it was the objective emptiness that was presented. In this third turning it is this subjective clear light which is the subjective experience of emptiness – and this is presented. And, there's also a second category of the third turning - such as the Lavagala(?) Sutra and also Sandhinirmocana sutra which is the sutra on unraveling the intent of the Buddha. And, in this second category of the teachings, what we find is another set of teachings which are

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

presented by the Buddha for the benefit of those individuals who are not yet ready, or who are not fully receptive to the teachings on emptiness. For example, in the second turning, emptiness was taught across the entire spectrum of reality, but there are for the benefit of those practitioners who are not receptive to this teaching – in the third turning such as the Lavagala(?) – Buddha taught another way of interpreting the teaching of the Perfection of Wisdom where identity-less-ness or absence of inherent existence is contextualized differently. Therefore, three forms of identity-less-ness are presented. So, in brief, the third turning of the wheel of dharma has two categories: the primary one and the secondary one.

So the basic point I'm making is that the key approach in Buddhism is really based upon cultivation and development and enhancement of discriminative awareness – the faculty of discriminative awareness – the wisdom. And, on the basis of the cultivation, development, and application of this faculty of wisdom, one gains deeper insights and a fresh outlook on the nature of reality. So it is through a combination of this new perspective – new outlook on reality – and the insights you derive on the basis of the application of wisdom that one is then able to bring about a transformation at the level of our emotions as well. So, this is the key approach of Buddha dharma. Because of this, it becomes very important for the practice of Buddhists – first engage in some form of study.

So although the key text for this series of teachings is really Tsongkhapa's text *The Songs of Experience* which is the condensed points on the path – Stages of the Path. The author of that text is Tsongkhapa who tells actually in an autobiographical manner how he himself engaged initially in the study of the Buddha's texts. So, therefore, I will first read that autobiographical verse which is on page 25 [of the Program] which is *The Good- Goal Expression of Realizations: The Spiritual Autobiography of Lama Tsongkhapa*.

The first stanza is a salutation verse. We read:

OM! May all be happy and well!

The eye that views worldly ascendance and the liberation of enlightenment,

So, in this line Tsongkhapa refers to the two objectives a Buddhist practitioner – the short-term objective of attaining higher birth and the final objective of attaining liberation.

The next line reads:

The source of rest of those weary from wandering the paths of cyclic existence,

And, here he's referring to the importance of the teacher as embodying the wisdom that is, in fact, what will bring about freedom from cyclic existence because the root of cyclic existence – unenlightened existence – is ignorance. Therefore, the root of all sufferings is ignorance because nobody – no single sentient being – deliberately looks for suffering. All desire to be free from suffering, yet we continue to perpetuate the conditions that give rise to suffering. So what this suggests is that at the root of our very existence there is a form of ignorance – there is a form of unknowing. Therefore, it is through cultivating that wisdom one will be able to undo this process that leads to suffering and thereby bringing about this rest – the respite that we're seeking for. So he writes:

The source of rest of those weary from wandering the paths of cyclic existence,

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

*The root of all good fortune – kind Guru, and
Treasure of Holy Wisdom, (Manjushri,) – I bow at your feet.*

So, in the next stanza we read:

For one of slight effort to gather the magnificent collections,
Rejoicing in virtue is taught as supreme.
Especially, toward virtues created in the past by oneself,
If one generates great joy devoid of pride,
Virtues created in the past will increase.
In order to accomplish that goal taught by the Conqueror and
As many further purposes are seen,
It is excellent O mind if you generate joy in that way!

So up until this point, Tsongkhapa is stating the key purpose of having composed this which is to really reflect upon and review the study and the meditative practices that he himself has engaged in so he could rejoice in the wholesome acts of his own. And, also, reminds the reader that rejoicing is, in fact, one of those virtuous acts that has the ability to enhance one's merits. And then in the next [last two] lines he then also acknowledges other possible purposes composing this when he says: *As many further purposes are seen, It is excellent O mind if you generate joy in that way!* So, here he's also implying that by telling his own story of how he himself has engaged in the study ended up on critical reflection and undertook the meditative practices perhaps it could inspire others to follow in the same example and engage in the study and practices.

And, then in the next stanza he gives the summary of what that life was. He says,

First of all, I sought vast and extensive learning,
In the middle, all the scriptural traditions arose as practical advice,
At the end, I practiced all day and night
And dedicated all in order for the teachings to spread.
Having thought about this, my goal has been good,
You are very kind, O Treasure of Holy Wisdom.

He is referring to Manjushri, his teacher. So here when talking about the kindness of his teacher – so in this text, at the end of most of the verses you find a line where Tsongkhapa acknowledges the kindness of his teacher – and here he invokes the name of Manjushri - the Treasure of Holy Wisdom is a reference to Manjushri. Generally, as it is very clear from Tsongkhapa's various biographies, Tsongkhapa studied at the feet of numerous Tibetan masters of many different traditions. For example, at the beginning of one of his major works there is a reference to his four principle tutors particularly dealing with the sutra cycle of teachings. These teachers include the great master Nevin Kukubelle (?) as well. Then, there are also many great teachers – one Vajrayana instructions that he received such as Choeki Beba(?), particularly Chumpa Beba – the yogi, Chumpa Beba and so on. Yahma(?) one of the four tutors of Tsongkhapa, was actually a proponent of Shento (?) philosophy. And then, one Tsongkhapa's earliest teachers was Chojey Dondrub-rinchen¹⁰ when Tsongkhapa was in Amdo and before he came to Central Tibet. And then, however, later one of the principle teachers of Tsongkhapa was Rendawa¹¹ and particularly on the study of great Indian Buddhist classics and especially those that deal with Middle Way philosophy of emptiness. Rendawa was the principle teacher. However, gradually Tsongkhapa's main teacher became Manjushri and initially Tsongkhapa did not have any direct communication with Manjushri but rather it was mediated by one of

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

Tsongkhapa's masters who was known as Lama Umapa, Drupchen Pawo Dorje.¹² It was known that Pawo Dorje was a mystic who had repeated visionary experiences of Manjushri – Bodhisattva Manjushri. In fact, this kind of repeated visionary experiences began very early on in the life of Umapa. In fact, Umapa when he was a young boy was a shepherd herding sheep. One day he fainted and had this experience of losing consciousness and when he woke up he had a vision of Manjushri who had a dark color of body. And from that point onwards, Umapa had always visionary experiences of Manjushri as if meeting person to person. So, initially Tsongkhapa – in order to test that this visionary experience of Manjushri that Umapa was having was a genuine one – he submitted many questions to Manjushri through Umapa – questions that dealt with very difficult and subtle and profound aspects of both sutra and tantra. And, on the basis of repeated questions that were submitted Tsongkhapa came to recognize that the vision he was having was a genuine one. And, since then Tsongkhapa used Umapa as a medium to have many difficult points of various teachings of the Buddha – related to sutra and tantra – he submitted his questions to Manjushri through Umapa.

Eventually Tsongkhapa wished that he would himself also have a personal vision of Manjushri and then composed hymns to Manjushri and also spent some time in retreat particularly emphasizing the *mondro*(?) practice of purification of negativities, enhancements, and accumulations of merits, and so on. And, this retreat was done in the *Gardon*(?) area where I personally had the fortune to visit this retreat site. Then as a result one day Tsongkhapa had this visionary experience which is described in the *Secret Biography of Tsongkhapa* where one day Tsongkhapa saw this huge mass of light – a blue light – in front of him. And, then as he observed carefully in the midst of this mass of light there was Manjushri. And, since then Tsongkhapa was able to invoke this vision of Manjushri on a repeated basis. And in that way he was able to relate to Manjushri like a teacher to disciple – in a person to person relationship. And since then in most of the major writings of Tsongkhapa when he acknowledges his debt to his teacher Manjushri was since then listed as a teacher. So, the invocation of Manjushri in these kinds of texts is not simply an acknowledgement that Manjushri was a meditation deity – a special meditation deity – but rather there is more to it. There is an acknowledgement of Manjushri as in fact one of his main teachers. And, this Manjushri that he had a vision of also sometimes tends to be quite harsh in his advice. In fact, once Tsongkhapa was engaged in a very extensive cycle of teachings at _____ monastery and although young his fame as a great scholar was becoming well established and his teachings were attended by many monk students. And, at one time while he was doing this Manjushri told Tsongkhapa, if you are serious in deepening your understanding of philosophy of emptiness – to gain realization of that – and also if you are serious about gaining higher levels of realization of the path, then you must immediately put an end to this teaching career and seek solitude and go and practice as a hermit. And at that time, one of Tsongkhapa's teachers, Umapa, approached Manjushri and said, "you know, the time is not right. His teachings are being attended by so many students. He's doing such beneficial work for so many people. And, by abruptly stopping this series of teachings he will be doing a disservice to the Buddha dharma. And, in fact, a lot of people might misunderstand and start criticizing Tsongkhapa." And, Manjushri responded to Umapa and said, "whether or not certain activity serves the Buddha Dharma is something I will know. And, if he's worried about other people criticizing him, then if they do criticize, practice patience!" Of course, as a result, Tsongkhapa went on a retreat and engaged in a long solitary practice.

So, in the next stanza we read:

If the totally confusing darkness about points to be accepted and rejected

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

Is undisputed by the lamp of perfect learning,
The path is unknown – then, what need is there to mention
Entry into the city of liberation?

So, in these lines Tsongkhapa is reminding us that we're all aware that for all of us in order to lead a successful way of life we need to prepare. And, the key preparation for that is education. So, we ensure that we obtain the right kind of education so that we can live a life that we would like to live successfully. This is a concept that we all understand. So, what he's saying is that if this is essential for living a successful way of life within the framework of a single lifetime what need is there to speak of the *need* for such careful study for someone who is seeking the highest enlightenment which is the ultimate aim.

And, then, having emphasized the *need* to engage in the study – the need to dispel the darkness of ignorance through the lamp and the light of learning – then Tsongkhapa explains what kind of texts, what kinds of topics should one study – or he has studied. And here he defines the key texts – the texts written by – and so we read here:

In the treatises of the Invincible Lord of Dharma (Maitreya) and
The world renowned Six Ornaments and Two Supremes,
I trained in them all in detail.

So in these two lines he's identifying the key texts that he himself has studied. So, these are texts authored by Maitreya – and particularly Maitreya's commentary on the Perfection of Wisdom, the *Ornament of Clear Realization*, *The Abhisamayalamkara*, and also *The Changeless Continuum* which is also the _____, the text on Buddha Nature, and also the Ornament on Mahayana Sutras. So, altogether, they are known as the five texts of Maitreya.¹³

And then he's talking about the Six Ornaments and the Two Supremes. The two supreme masters here refer to two Indian authors whose texts are authoritative on the study of monastic vows and monastic ethical discipline. Then the Six Ornaments refer to masters like Nagarjuna, Aryadeva¹⁴, and Asanga and his brother Vasubandhu, and two authors on Buddhist logic and epistemology, Dignaga¹⁵ and Dharmakirti¹⁶. So these are the texts that he says he has studied – the writings of these great masters – the masters on the Perfection of Wisdom, the masters on Abhidharma,¹⁷ masters on logic and epistemology, the masters on the middle way philosophy of emptiness.

And then in the next lines, he explains what kind of approach he took when he studied these texts. And first of all, he says that he studied all of them comprehensively. In other words, not being satisfied with just partial knowledge – or one text – or one of the fields – but rather he studied all these key fields of classical Buddhist knowledge. And, then, even here the comprehensiveness alone is not sufficient because someone could have comprehensive knowledge, but the level of knowledge can be not very detailed. Someone could have a comprehensive knowledge simply based on study of the reviewing an outline of a text. So he's saying not only did he engage in a comprehensive study but also in a detailed study. "Detailed" here refers to not only the need to memorize the root text, carefully study the commentaries, then subject the commentarial explanation to critical enquiry primarily through debate.

Debate is the main medium that is used in the Tibetan monastic institutions. And, in the debate, for example, sometimes the text begins with three primary outlines. The first outline is critiquing of others' standpoints. The second outline would be presentation of one's own standpoint. And, the third section would be responding to possible objections to one's own standpoint from others. So, within this three-fold approach of critiquing other's standpoints, presenting one's own standpoint,

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

and responding to possible criticism and objections, you can have a much more critical appreciation of the subject you're studying. And, of course, in the debating courtyard, sometimes this principle is not practiced in actual reality. You know, people may in the course of a debate use all sorts of clever language to – basically throwing caveats all the time – and not really getting to the bottom of the actual nitty-gritty of the issues. Sometimes this can happen. In fact, one major author, Kenpo Shenka (?) who has written a lot of literary commentaries on many of the great Indian classics – he once told Cummo (?) Rinpoche – who told me – when Kenpo Shenka when commenting on Tibetan commentary or literature, would say that the Tibetan commentaries give you the impression that they have dealt with a topic in a most detailed critical manner – in a decisive fashion – but in actual reality often they're not that decisive. Kenpo Sheka himself relied more heavily on the Indian commentary or tradition.

This said, the ideal is still there that when you engage with a text you do so comprehensively and in a very careful analytical process. And, it is in this way that Tsongkhapa says that he has engaged with these great Buddhist classics. So he writes, "I trained in them all in detail." And, earlier we have, "Because of this very fact, not satisfied by a partial and rough training." So here he mentions both the comprehensiveness of his studies and also detailedness and critical enquiry that he has engaged in. And he says,

Having thought about this, my goal has been good,
You are very kind, O Treasure of Holy Wisdom.

So, in the next stanza, Tsongkhapa explains how he had engaged in the study of the Buddhist texts dealing with a topic of logic and epistemology, he writes,

In particular, for one who sees this side (ordinary beings/things)
The one door of determining the actual reality of things
Is the treatises on perfect reasoning – in their difficult points
I trained repeatedly with much effort.
Having thought about this, my goal has been good,
You are very kind, O Treasure of Holy Wisdom.

So in the next stanza, Tsongkhapa his study of – so in this next stanza, Tsongkhapa explains how he engaged in an extensive study of the classics dealing with the Middle Way philosophy of emptiness. So we read,

Although I worked with much hardship on the treatises of sutra and tantra,
When practicing and expounding the meaning of the profound,
Having seen that I had not gone far beyond the kind of view
That has trained in nothing and knows nothing at all –
Through the path of subtle reasoning analyzing the profound,
Especially of the scriptural tradition of Nagarjuna,
In all the essential points that bring about right view,
I properly trained and cut off doubts.
Having thought about this, my goal has been good,
You are very kind, O Treasure of Holy Wisdom.

So here – of course, in the Geluk traditional presentation, the study of the great Buddhist Indian classics is referred to as the study of the Five Treatises. These being, *Perfection of Wisdom*, *Middle Way Philosophy of Emptiness*, Logic and Epistemology, and Abhidharma studies – which is phenomenology - and monastic ethics and monastic discipline. So, these are the five main fields of classical scholarship.

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

And, of course, in the Sakya tradition there is a reference to eight major texts that are fields of study and generally there's a reference to thirteen great classics of Indian Buddhist traditions and thought.

So, out of these five great fields of scholarship, Tsongkhapa is – as you can find out in the previous earlier verse – he referred to his study of logic and epistemology, pramana, and in this particular stanza he's singling out his own study of Middle Way philosophy of emptiness. So what he's pointing to is that these two are the key content of the field of scholarship and, in fact, there is a saying that epistemology and middle way philosophy are like two lions – back to back – so that they are protecting – guarding – against all forms of threat from any direction. So, they are in complimentary relationship.

So, with respect to these major fields of traditional schools of Buddhist scholarship, Tsongkhapa has, of course, composed very important treatises himself. For example, on the study of Perfection of Wisdom he wrote the classic known as the *Golden Rosary*. And on epistemology and logic, although he did not write actual commentaries, but he gave a lot of explanations many of which have been written down in the form of notes. And, of course, on Madhyamaka philosophy, Middle Way philosophy of emptiness, Tsongkhapa has written extensively. So, in a sense the key really is the study of Perfection of Wisdom where epistemology becomes a vehicle or a medium by which you study this. In fact, great Tibetan master Chium Shaypa (?), after having studied in Central Tibet, at the advice of the Fifth Dalai Lama, returned to his native Amdo and started giving intensive teachings and lectures in Amdo, and has written extensively, especially on the Perfection of Wisdom studies.

So, once another scholar approached Shaypa and said, "Now, people say that you are a great scholar, learned in all the classical fields of Buddhist scholarship, but it seems you have written mainly on Perfection of Wisdom. Why is that? Why haven't you written on other fields of Buddhist studies?" And, Shaypa said, "Well, all the other fields are all various aspects of the Perfection of Wisdom. For example, Perfection of Wisdom is the heart of the Buddha's knowledge, and logic and epistemology is a language – it's a kind of a medium through which you can study and disseminate it, and the philosophy of the middle way is the philosophy standpoint of the Perfection of Wisdom. And, phenomenology, the Abhidharma, actually describes the various levels of realization and experience that you can gain through the practice of Perfection of Wisdom. And, ethics and monastic discipline, basically present the precepts of the Perfection of Wisdom. So, the heart is the Perfection of Wisdom teachings.

So, this reminds me of a Mongolian teacher who was very learned in the Perfection of Wisdom studies. And, he, in fact, once said that although people talk highly of the fame of the three monastic universities – Sera, Drepung, and Ganden – but in actual fact it is Drepung that deserves all this reputation. And, when we speak of Drepung, it is in fact Gomang College that deserves the credit – that's his own college – and, then when you speak of the reputation of Gomang, it is actually the house of Homtom(?) which is one of the sub-sections of Gomang College where he belonged. He said it deserved the reputation. And, if you go further, the reputation of Homtom it is because of this sub-household within that Homten(?), Cherpa(?). Then finally – Mizan (?) - it is basically a small household that represents his native [home]. And, even there if you look carefully, the reputation finally comes down to me because I'm the scholar (tutor laughs uproariously as does His Holiness).

So, similarly, although we speak of the five main treatises, the key where everything converges and settles down is the Perfection of Wisdom.

So in the next stanza Tsongkhapa's explaining how he engaged in the study of Tantra – Vajrayana. He was a great admirer of the Vajrayana path and also expended a lot of time and energy in the deeper understanding of these teachings. And, so he writes:

Here, in progressing to complete Buddhahood,

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

The profound Vajra Vehicle and the Perfection Vehicle
Are the two varieties – Secret Mantra, versus the Perfections,
Is said to be vastly superior,
So, Tsongkhapa is acknowledging the wide-spread understanding that of these two – Sutra and Vajrayana – there is a recognition that the Vajrayana, the vehicle of the Vajra, is superior. Now, even in the West these days, everyone knows the Vajrayana as the swift path to enlightenment. It's already – Vajrayana has already established a reputation in the West today as the swift path – as the superior path.

Then, Tsongkhapa makes a slight criticism of others. He says:

Everywhere renown as like sun (versus) moon.
Accepting those words as statements of truth,
If those holding the burden of mastery do not search about
What the profound vehicle is like,

So he says, while those who continually cite this statement that Vajrayana is like a sun compared to a moon, and it's the supreme vehicle, but, yet, do not make any effort to really understand what it is. He says that:

And if such as these are moreover intelligent,
How could anyone else be of dull faculties?

(Laughing) So in other words, he's saying if these people can be described as the intelligent ones, then who should be called someone with a dull faculty? In other words, he's saying that these people who, despite making such claims, do not actually study the Vajrayana texts their search for the path is not a truly intelligent one. And then he writes,

Alas! That the very difficult to meet, unexcelled path
Like this be cast away without care is amazing.
Because of just that, the Conqueror's supreme vehicle,
The vajra vehicle more rare than the Buddhas,
The profound treasure of the two siddhis, [in oral teaching, translated as accomplishments]

So here, accomplishments – he's referring to the mundane level of accomplishments and the supra-mundane accomplishment of Buddhahood. These are the two accomplishments – the two siddhis.

I entered and trained in for a long time with much effort.
Having thought about this, my goal has been good,
You are very kind, O Treasure of Holy Wisdom.

So, in the next four stanzas, Tsongkhapa is explaining how he engaged in the study of the text pertaining to the four classes of Vajrayana teachings. So in the first one we read,

Without knowing the methods of the paths of the three lower tantra sets,
Even if one had decided that the
Highest Yoga Tantra was the best of all the tantra sets,
It would be no more than an assertion. Having seen that well,
I familiarized at length with the general and particular
Tantric sets of the three families of Action Tantra,

So he lists these as:

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

Samanya-guhya-tantra (*Secret General Tantra*), Susidhi
(*Well Accomplished*),
Subahu-paripriccha (*Requested by Sabahu*) and Dhyanottara
(*Later Concentration*).
Having thought about this, my goal has been good,
You are very kind, O Treasure of Holy Wisdom.

So, in this particular class of tantra – the Action Tantra – the three main sets of tantra are the key families – and they have different subject matter. For example, in the Secret General Tantra there's a lot of explanation of the various Mandalas. And, in the Subsidhi Tantra – Well Accomplished – there's a lot of explanation of the various meditative states that pertain to these Mandalas and so on. But, the key practice in the Action Tantra is what is described as the meditative yogi – or yoga with sign and without sign.

And, then in the next line, he speaks about his study of the performance tantra.

Of the second set of tantras, the Performance Tantras,
The principal is the Vairocana-abhisambodhi (*Manifest
Enlightenment of Vairocana*) Tantra.
By training in it, I created excellent certainty
About what is the sphere of the Performance Tantra.
Having thought about this, my goal has been good,
You are very kind, O Treasure of Holy Wisdom.

And in the next stanza we read,

Of the second set of tantras, the Performance Tantras,
The principal is the Vairocana-abhisambodhi (*Manifest
Enlightenment of Vairocana*) Tantra.
By training in it, I created excellent certainty
About what is the sphere of the Performance Tantra.
Having thought about this, my goal has been good,
You are very kind, O Treasure of Holy Wisdom.

So one of the unique aspects of the yoga tantra teachings is taking body, speech, mind, and action as the basis of purification and then the yoga with sign and the yoga without sign are employed as the main meditative practices to purify all the aspects of our body, speech, mind, and actions.

One of the important points Tsongkhapa is also making here is that in contrast to the highest yoga class – in the first three levels of tantra all the presentations of the path are all premised upon the gross levels of mind, just as in the case of sutras. So, all the presentations of the path and the cultivation of the path really takes place on the gross levels of our ordinary mind. And, if you look at the different traditions of Buddhism across the world, we will see that any teachings of the first three levels of tantra can be found in other traditions other than Tibetan. For example, you find in the Chinese tradition there's Vajrayana teaching; for example, those who deal with _____ tantra; and then those teachings that deal with Avalokiteshvara tantra. So you see these teachings and practices in China, Korea, and Japan as well.

And, then in the next stanza, Tsongkhapa talks about his studies of the highest class of yoga tantra where we read,

For the fourth, the Annuttara Yoga (Tantras) –
Renown as sun and moon-like among the masters of the superior land (India),
Of the Father Tantras, such as (Guhya) Samaja, and

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

The Yogini Tantras such as Hevajra and Samvara,
I trained in the root tantras and the explanatory tantras

So he talks about his study of both Father tantras and Mother tantras – not only the root tantras, but the explanatory tantras and the subsequent tantras and so on. And, then he also talks about the study of Kalachakra tantra whose style of presentation is very different from the other highest yoga class. So, he writes,

Differing in tradition from the explanations of other sutras and tantras,
I trained in the Vimalaprabha (*The Stainless Light*) that elucidates
The Kalachakra Tantra and uncovers the tradition of the chariot.
Having thought about this, my goal has been good,
You are very kind, O Treasure of Holy Wisdom.

So, he says he studied the Kalachakra tantra with the aid of the Vimalaprabha, *The Stainless Light* commentary.

And, so we read,

First, in the beginning, the period of searching for vast and extensive learning.

So this is the first part of his autobiographical song.

So, for those of us who are serious in our understanding of the Buddha's path, and also wanting to engage in a serious practice, it would be helpful to take the example of Tsongkhapa's life and try to study the texts he's referring to. And, with respect to the study of tantra there are writings of the great Sakyapa masters, particularly the first three Sakya patriarchs have contained good explanations on tantra. And, Putin's (?) writings are extensive on tantra. And, also Tsongkhapa wrote his great treatise on The Stages of the Path of Secret Mantra, Vajrayana, which is also a very good resource for study.

So, we will leave here today.

Closing Prayers.

May the merit accumulated by reading a sentence of this transcript lead all sentient beings to their enlightenment in this life time.

¹ **Manjushri** is a Bodhisattva who represents wisdom, and his mantra also symbolizes that quality. He holds a sword in his right hand — symbolizing his ability to cut through delusion. In his left hand, by his

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

heart, he holds a book — the Perfection of Wisdom teaching, or [Prajnaparamita](#) This is my footnote so I can remember who the different deities and teachers are. From:

<http://www.wildmind.org/mantras/figures/manjushri/>

² **Samantabhadra** (also known as **Vajradhara** and **Viśvabhadra** (the different names foreground different attributes and essence-qualities), is the Lord of the Truth in Buddhism, who represents the practice and meditation of all Buddhas. Together with Shakyamuni and fellow disciple Manjushri he forms the Shakyamuni trinity. He is the patron of the Lotus Sutra and, according to the Avatamsaka Sutra, made the ten great vows which are the basis of a bodhisattva. Samantabhadra is most commonly described as a bodhisattva himself, although some esoteric traditions regard him as a primordial Buddha. See:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samantabhadra>

³ *Buddhism in Tibet owes much of what it was to become to the genius of three persons, each of whom distinguished himself in his own field by his specific capacities, but all of whom are unanimously acclaimed to be alike in being the spiritual ancestors of the Rnying-ma-pa school of thought, which is one of the four major Buddhist traditions in Tibet.*

From a purely intellectual point of view, foremost among them ranks the Indian pandit Santiraksita, revered as a veritable Bodhisattva, a benefactor of mankind. He may be called the theoretical founder of Tibetan Buddhism. He was a representative of the Yogacara-madhyamika-svatantirika line of thinking, a rather late product of the Buddhist philosophical movement. As a Madhyamika, Santiraksita rejected the idea that a thing, be it a natural object or an introspected self, could claim any existence...

Indian Buddhist Thought in Tibetan Perspective: Infinite Transcendence versus Finiteness, Herbert Guenther, History of Religions, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Summer, 1963), pp. 83-105.

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0018-2710%28196322%293%3A1%3C83%3AIBTIP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Q&size=SMALL&origin=JSTOR-reducePage>

⁴ Epistemology: The study of what is meant by "knowledge". What does it mean to "know" something as opposed to merely having an opinion? This issue has been at the core of Western philosophy since before Socrates, since, until it has been answered, all other questions become unsolvable.

⁵ All Tibetan traditions accept that in cognizing a validly knowable phenomenon (*shes-bya*), mental activity (*sems*, mind) simultaneously gives rise to (*shar-ba*, produces) a cognitive object (*yul*) and cognitively engages ('*jug-pa*) with it. In the definition of mind, "giving rise to a cognitive object" is referred to as "clarity" (*gsal*), while "cognitively engaging with such an object" is referred to as "awareness" (*rig*).

For example, in seeing a white rectangular towel, mental activity simultaneously produces the sight of a white rectangular towel and sees it. What we see, however, is not just sensibilia (a white rectangle). In order not to contradict convention (*tha-snyad*), we need to assert that we also see the towel itself -- the so-called "commonsense" (*jig-rten-la grags-pa*) towel." Cognition of a towel, however, does not create the towel.

Producing a cognitive object and cognitively engaging with it are two aspects of the same mental activity, two ways of describing the same phenomenon. It is not that production of a sight comes first and then, a moment later, the seeing of it occurs.

For more information see: The Berzin Archives at

http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/sutra/level5_analysis_mind_reality/truths/validity_prasanghika_madhyamaka.html

⁶ The Ten Nonvirtuous Actions of Mind, Body, and Speech are as follows: The three nonvirtuous actions of mind are (1) covetousness, (2) harmful intent (3) wrong view. The three nonvirtuous actions of body are (1) killing (2) stealing, (3) sexual misconduct. The four nonvirtuous actions of speech are (1) lying (2) divisive speech, (3) harsh words, and (4) senseless speech.

⁷ Explicit: precisely and clearly expressed or readily observable; leaving nothing to implication;

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

⁸ Implicit: implied though not directly expressed.

⁹ From the little research I am able to do, the Tathagarba Sutra seems to be the Heart Sutra.

¹⁰ Verified this reference in a *Short Biography of Tsongkhapa*, by Alexander Berzin, August 2003.

http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/approaching_buddhism/teachers/lineage_masters/short_biography_lama_tsongkhapa.html

¹¹ Verified this reference in the biography included in the introduction of Geshe Sonam Rinchen's book *The Three Principal Aspects of the Path* which is included on the Lama Yeshe web site:

http://www.lamayeshe.com/otherteachers/khapa/ltk_bio.shtml

¹² Verified online at <http://www.asianclassics.org/new/new.html#3>

¹³ According to the Tibetan Foundation at <http://tibetanfoundation.org>, As a Bodhisattva, Maitreya appears in many sutras. In the Larger Sukhavati Vyuha he is shown the Pure Land of Amitabha by Shakyamuni Buddha. In this sutra Maitreya is called by one of his other names, Ajita (unconquered). He also appears in the Gandhavyuha sutra. According to the tradition, Maitreya is also the author of some commentarial work, known as the Five Books of Maitreya. These include *Abhisamaylankara*, a brilliant summary of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in 25,000 lines. Modern scholars attribute these five works to Asanga or Maitreya-natha, however, there's no reason in principle, though, why the writer should not have been directly inspired by Maitreya to compose these works. Tradition has that through deep meditation Asanga had a vision of the Tushita devaloka during which he received from Maitreya the teachings contained in the Five Books.

Asanga had been experiencing difficulty in gaining and unmistakable understanding of the Perfection of Wisdom sutras and decided that only from Maitreya could he receive the instructions he needed. He therefore entered into intensive retreat in hopes of gaining a direct vision of this Buddha.

After three years of intensive retreat with no success he quit this retreat. On his way back home he saw an old man trying to remove a huge stone by brushing it with a feather. Asanga took this as a sign that with enthusiastic perseverance, anything could be accomplished, so he reentered his retreat. More years passed, without results. But each time Asanga gave up he would encounter someone doing an impossible task, and thus he would be re-inspired again. But after 12 years with no results, Asanga gave up his practice for good. This time on his way home, he saw a starving dog on the ground, its wounds being eaten by maggots. Moved by compassion for the dog and maggots, he cut off a piece of his own flesh and bent down to transfer the maggots to the meat with his tongue so he would not hurt the maggots. He closed his eyes, but although he leaned over very far, he felt nothing. When he opened his eyes to see what was wrong, the dog had disappeared and in its place stood Maitreya in all his glory.

Asanga was shocked and asked: "Where were you all those years I was meditating in the cave?" Maitreya replied that he had been there next to him all that time and only delusions had prevented Asanga from seeing him. Asanga's compassionate act removed the veil of those delusions.

Maitreya took Asanga and transported him to Tushita. They spent the morning there, during which Asanga received detailed instructions from Maitreya on the Perfection of Wisdom sutras in the form of five texts. These are:

- ❖ Ornament of Realizations
- ❖ Ornament of Universal Vehicle Scriptures
- ❖ Analysis of the Jewel Matrix, or Peerless Continuum (Uttaratantra)
- ❖ Discrimination between Center and Extremes
- ❖ Discrimination between Phenomenon and Noumenon

¹⁴ **Aryadeva** (3rd Century CE), was a disciple of Nagarjuna and author of several important Mahayana Madhyamaka Buddhist texts. He is also known as Kanadeva the 15th patriarch in the Zen tradition and Bodhisattva Deva in Shri Lanka where he was born as the son of a king. Some Chinese sources however, suggest he was born in Southern India in a Brahmanical family. For more information see:

<http://en.wikipedia/wiki/Aryadeva>

¹⁵ The Indian Buddhist philosopher and logician **Dignaga** (A.D. 480-540), a disciple of Vasubandhu, laid the foundations for the Buddhist teachings on cognition theory and logic. Dignaga's *Pramanasamuccaya*

Je Tsongkhapa's Experiential Teachings
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
May 2, 2007

(Compendium of the Means of True Knowledge) is one of the greatest works on Buddhist logic. For more information see: http://www.logic.glashoff.net/ks_dignaga.html

16 **Dharmakirti** (circa 7th century), was an Indian scholar and one of the Buddhist founders of Indian philosophical logic. He was one of the primary theorists of Buddhist atomism, according to which, the only items considered to exist are momentary Buddhist atoms, and states of consciousness. For more information see: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dharmakirti>

17 **Abhidharma** (Sanskrit) or Abhidhamma (Pali) is a category of Buddhist scriptures that attempts to use Buddhist teachings to create a systematic, abstract description of all worldly phenomena. The Abhidharma represents a generalization and reorganization of the doctrines presented piecemeal in the narrative sutra tradition. For more information see: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abhidharma>