

*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 3*

We will continue from the text where we left yesterday. However one thing I would like to share is it is important to bear in mind and understand that one commonality of all the teachings of all the great religious traditions of the world is that in all of these traditions the emphasis is not so much relying upon external material conditions for one’s well being and happiness but rather to focus upon internal development and inner resources.

From the philosophical point of view as we discussed yesterday, the differences, the demarcating line between a Buddhist tradition as opposed to a non-Buddhist tradition is whether or not one subscribes to a belief in some kind of eternal, permanent self.

And in Buddhism one of the primary grounds upon which the notion of an eternal, permanent and unchanging self is rejected is because of its emphasis on the understanding of the law of cause and effect, causality and dependent origination.

The essence of Buddha’s teachings can really be summarized within two elements; one is the philosophical standpoint of Buddha’s teaching, which is the understanding of the view of dependent origination and the conduct or the action of the Buddha’s teaching which is the action of non-harming, (being) compassionate.

Because of the basic Buddhist understanding of dependent origination as its fundamental philosophical standpoint, there is a deep emphasis placed upon the understanding of the law of cause and effect as explained before. The point being made here is that if on the causal stage, if one creates conditions and causes that have the potential of bringing about suffering, and harm, then as a consequence of that action and chains of causation at the stage of effect and result one will experience the consequences and effects that are consonant with that set of conditions that one created.

Similarly if at that causal stage, if the conditions and actions that one engaged in are constructive and something that have the potential to benefit, and help, then these actions on the resultant stage will bring about consequences and effects that are again consonant with those set of conditions. The point being made here is that a good action will lead to a good result and consequences and bad and negative actions, negative causes and conditions will lead to undesirable consequences and effects. In essence, the heart of the teachings of dependent origination is basically this; if you do good you will reap beneficial results or outcomes, if you do evil or bad you will reap the consequences that are undesirable. Since causing harm and violence is a condition that creates suffering and pain, therefore there is this emphasis in the Buddha’s teachings on avoidance of harm and avoidance of violence.

*Recorded Live at the Office Depot Center (Public Talk) and the University of Miami  
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English Translation by Geshe Thupten Jinpa September 19-21, 2004*

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When we speak of avoidance of causing harm or avoidance of engaging in violent activity, how do we demarcate violence and non-violence and harming and non-harming acts? That distinction of non-harming versus harming or violent versus non-violent action cannot be made simply on the basis of the external appearance of the act itself. The demarcation must really be made on the basis of motivation; the state of mind that underlies the act. At the root is compassion as the motivation and because of this, at the root non-violence must be defined as an act that is grounded in compassion. Therefore, often Buddha's teaching is characterized as being rooted in compassion.

When we speak of engaging acts that are non-harming and that avoids violent activity, one can understand this in terms of two levels: on the initial level when we speak of engaging in actions that are non-harming motivated by compassion and a concern for other sentient beings, one deliberately refrains from engaging in harmful actions. That is the first stage of the action of non-violence or non-harming where it is primarily in the form of refraining. However, as one's capacity for compassionate activity increases, then on a later stage when one becomes more advanced not only does one deliberately refrain from harming others but one must actively engage in acts that are beneficial and helpful to others.

This practice, the action of compassion is really the skilful means or the method aspect of the path, your spiritual path and the understanding of dependent origination is the wisdom aspect of the path, the insight aspect of the path. When you can combine these two together within your own spiritual practice, then your practice and action will become truly powerful.

When we speak of the Buddhist understanding of dependent origination, of course there are different levels of understanding. One level of understanding is in terms of cause and effect, how everything and every event comes into being by being dependent upon causes and conditions and other factors. That is one level of understanding of dependent origination. In the Madhyamaka or the Middle Way school writings there is also a deeper understanding of the meaning of dependent origination where not only are things and events understood to arise in dependence on causes and conditions but also their very identity as things and events are dependent on other factors. They are dependent upon convention, designations and so on.

This idea of dependent origination although in terms of systematic presentation they may have originated primarily in the Buddha's teachings and Buddhist writings, however, so far as the philosophical perspective of dependent origination is concerned this has relevance in many areas; such as in relation to our understanding of the natural environment, with relation to our understanding of the nature of modern economy or even in politics. In fact this idea of dependent origination can be applicable and useful in many areas of human activity because the more we are able to appreciate the deep inter-connectedness of everything and all events then naturally we will have a much more holistic perspective on everything.

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If asked what is the essence of the Buddha's teaching, what is the heart of the Buddha's teaching one can respond by saying that the essence of the Buddha's teaching is the advocacy of a way of action or conduct that is rooted in compassion that is non-harming, non-violent and which is also premised upon the philosophical standpoint of dependent origination and one can say that this really captures the essence of the Buddha's teaching.

In terms of the goal of spiritual practice, in Buddhism one speaks of two goals – one is the temporary goal of attaining birth in the higher realms endowed with the facilities for engaging in the practice of dharma and the higher goal is the attainment of liberation from cyclic existence. The rebirth in the higher realms is characterized as a temporary goal because it is in the higher realms that individuals have a relative degree of freedom from many of the more evident experiences of pain and suffering and which also accords the individual the opportunity to engage in spiritual practices and so on. The ultimate goal of attainment of liberation, here liberation is understood in terms of a total freedom from suffering which is characterized by total elimination of the fundamental ignorance which lies at the root of our unenlightened existence. It is that liberation that is the ultimate goal or object of aspiration for a Buddhist practitioner.

In the Buddhist text, one speaks of the four factors of human aspiration. These four factors are listed as:

- a) Acquisition of wealth
- b) Attainment of one's object of aspiration
- c) Practice of dharma
- d) Attainment of nirvana

Wealth is seen as a factor that will enable the individual to attain the mundane aspirations so that the individual has the facilities to then engage in the practice of dharma. The dharma is the factor that would lead the individual to attainment of liberation. Dharma here refers to the practice of the three higher trainings; the trainings in morality, meditation and wisdom. Generally speaking with respect to the first two factors, the attainment of mundane aspirations and also the means by which the attainment is achieved, the acquisition of wealth, generally in North America you have pretty much achieved that. Because of this many Tibetans are very eager to go to the United States because they believe that by going to the States they will at least be able to fulfill the first two aspirations, the acquisition of wealth and the fulfillment of desires. These Tibetans are not contented with the teachings of the three higher trainings; they would want to run to the United States.

However, in the case of many individuals in North America there are also cases where individuals after having gained a relative degree of wealth and also a relative degree of fulfillment of mundane aspirations, then sometimes individuals feel a sense of incompleteness or a sense of disillusionment and frustration. Such an experience of a feeling of incompleteness, something lacking or frustration even with material acquisitions is understandable because if we think more deeply we will recognize the importance of

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having some sense of contentment with relation to material facilities and acquisitions because anything such as material acquisitions and wealth and so on which are finite, which have a limit or they will cease to exist and come to an end (whether material objects or whatever) ,any object that has an end, that are finite, with relation to these objects it is always more wise to have a sense of contentment instead of being never satiated. It is always wiser to be contented. However with relation to phenomena which have the potential to be infinite such as the positive qualities of the mind and so on, with relation to these qualities one should not have contentment one should always aspire for more. However, most of us we do the opposite; with relation to material acquisitions, objects which are finite and have limits we have very little contentment. With relation to the spiritual qualities, mental qualities we have a very easy sense of contentment. It is this inability to not be contented with what one has which is also very deeply related to the kind of huge gulf between the rich and poor that we see particularly in the more affluent societies.

Since the Buddhist text attainment of mundane aspirations is also understood to be a legitimate goal of spiritual activity, not only is the attainment of rebirth in the higher realms in future lives also an object of aspiration but also having material, mundane aspirations fulfilled in this life too is something one should aspire for. With relation to the ultimate goal of a Buddhist practitioner, which is the attainment of liberation, which is referred to as the definite goodness – there is the attainment of the liberation from cyclic existence and also the attainment of full Buddhahood. In the Mahayana text there is the identification of two ultimate spiritual goals. One is the liberation from cyclic existence; the other is the attainment of full enlightenment. Corresponding to these two ultimate goals of a spiritual practitioner there are also two main obstacles that one must overcome. The obstacle for the attainment of liberation is the defilements in the form of afflictions (kleshas) and the obstacles to the attainment of omniscience or full enlightenment are the subtle obstructions to knowledge.

How do we understand the differences between the defilements? The defilements in the form of afflictions and defilements in the form of subtle obstructions to knowledge? Here of course as explained before there are differing explanations in the Buddhist writings. However, the most definitive and profound explanations of these defilements are found in the writings of masters such as Chandrakirti, Buddhapalita, Shantideva and so in whose writing there is a very explicit explanation of the primary form of afflictions being that of our natural grasping at the true existence or substantial existence of all things and events. This grasping at true existence of all phenomenon is really understood as a form of mental affliction. This is in fact also understood to be the fundamental ignorance underlying our unenlightened existence which is this innate grasping at true existence and substantial reality of all phenomenon. This is also very clear in Nagarjuna's own writing. For example in the Seventy Stanzas on the Middle Way , Nagarjuna explicitly states that when identifying the twelve links in the chain of dependent origination, he identifies the first link, which is ignorance, and explains ignorance in terms of grasping at substantial reality and true existence of self and also of phenomena . He then states that this ignorance of grasping

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at self and all phenomena then sets into motion all the twelve links giving rise to volitional acts and so on culminating in birth and death.

There is an explicit recognition that grasping at true existence and substantial reality is a form of affliction. It is the fundamental ignorance. Similarly, in Aryadeva's Four Hundred Stanzas on the Middle Way, he compares grasping at true existence as the basic body faculty and all the other derivative afflictions as the other sense faculties. Just as all the other sense faculties such as our visual faculty, auditory faculty and so on are all based upon the basic body faculty, in the same manner all the derivative afflictions – such as desire, anger and so on are really grounded upon this grasping at a true existence of things. He explicitly draws the causal connection between the derivative afflictions and the grasping at true existence . Then having identified what this fundamental ignorance is , then Aryadeva goes on to state that it is by cultivating insight into the suchness of dependent origination, the ultimate nature of reality of dependent origination one will then dispel this delusion . By identifying the insight into dependent origination, which is emptiness as the key antidote for dispelling ignorance implicitly Aryadeva is also recognizing the grasping at the true existence of self and all phenomena to be also a form of mental affliction. We find these very explicit explanations of defilements in these texts.

Then the question is if this grasping, the fundamental grasping at substantial reality of self and phenomena is a form of mental affliction, then what is the subtle obstruction to knowledge? Here Chandrakirti states in his own commentary, Supplement to the Middle Way, Madhyamakavatara , he explains that it is the imprints implanted upon one's psyche by these afflictions, by the grasping at true existence, it is the imprints and the propensities for grasping and including the dualistic perceptions we have as well as the duality of the perception of two truths (the conventional and ultimate truth) these are the subtle obstructions to knowledge. This perspective and this way of distinguishing between the two defilements is quite different from the perspective where the grasping at the selfhood of phenomena and the grasping at the self-existence of the person are thought to be different which is another standpoint.

The path to the attainment of such ultimate goals which is the full enlightenment of Buddhahood , there are two vehicles explained in the scriptures, one is the Perfection Vehicle of the Sutra and one is the Vajrayana, the Adamantine or In(?) Vehicle and within the Vajrayana we discussed yesterday there were three divisions identified ; these being the Kriya Tantra, which is the Vehicle of Action Tantra, then the Vehicle of Ubhaya Tantra and then the Vehicle of Yoga Tantra.

The Vehicles of the Disciples and the Self-Realized Ones that we discussed yesterday, these are the primary vehicles for the attainment of liberation from cyclic existence. With relation to the three vehicles, the Vehicle of the Disciple, the Vehicle of the Self-Realized Ones (the Pratyekabuddhas) and the Bodhisattvas there are some sutras (scriptures) where the Buddha explicitly states that these three Vehicles constitute final Vehicles in themselves. In other words, that the Vehicle of the Sharvaka constitutes the final vehicle

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for some individuals for whom it is considered appropriate , the attainment of the final enlightenment of the self-realized ones constitutes the final vehicle for some individuals . Similarly for the Bodhisattva Vehicle

However, in other Sutras and other scriptures Buddha has also stated that the Vehicle of the Disciple and the Self-Realized Ones do not constitute final vehicles because even those who attain enlightenment of the disciples and the self-realized ones will eventually enter the Bodhisattva Vehicle and all beings will ultimately attain Buddhahood. So even within the teachings of one and the same teacher Buddha Shakyamuni, we find these conflicting statements with relation to the Three Vehicles. This is to underscore the point that I mentioned yesterday that the Buddha taught his teachings in response to the needs of particular individuals. For some, one set of teachings is more effective and beneficial, for others the other sets of teachings are more effective and beneficial.

This approach of adapting the Buddha's message in response to the individual context has also been continued by subsequent Indian masters. For example, in the Five Treatise of Maitreya , in the Ornament of Mahayana Sutras, Maitreya explains the standpoint where the three vehicles are as representing final vehicles in themselves. However, in his Uttaratantra Ratnagotravipaka, (Ornament of) Sublime Continuum, Maitreya adopts the opposite standpoint where the first two vehicles do not constitute final vehicles and the Bodhisattva Vehicle is the final vehicle. Similarly in Asanga's writings in his commentary on Maitreya's Uttaratantra, (Ornament of) Sublime Continuum, he explains Maitreya's teachings primarily from the perspective of the Middle Way philosophy, Madhyamaka School. However, in his own text such as the Bodhisattava bhumi, Bodhisattva Levels, the perspective he adopts is primarily the Cittamatra or the Yogacara School as presented in Sutra Alamkara. So even in the writings of one Indian master we find different standpoints presented.

Now to carry on from the text where we left yesterday. Yesterday we finished the reading of the explanation of Kriya Tantra, Action Tantra. The second is the Ubhaya Tantra and Ubhaya means both – both refers to the external activity of ritual and so on and internal meditation as well. The text reads ***“The view of those who have entered the vehicle of Ubhaya-tantra is as follows. Whilst there are no origination and cessation on the ultimate level, on the conventional level one visualizes [oneself] in the form a deity.***

This is the same as in the case of Kriya Tantra. The text then goes on to state :

***This is cultivated on the basis of both the practice of meditative absorption endowed with four aspects as well as the [necessary] ritual articles and conditions”***

The meditative absorption endowed with the four aspects here is identified in (Jamgon) Kongtrul's commentary, he gives two alternative readings. In the first instance, he identified the four aspects to be

The suchness of oneself (the practitioner)

The suchness of the deity

The suchness of the mantra repetition

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The suchness of the actual visualization and meditation  
Or he states that the four aspects can also be understood to mean  
Sound – the mantra  
Mind – the meditative state  
Self-Generation – generation of oneself as the deity  
Generation of the other – the generation of the deity in front of the practitioner

Meditative absorption endowed with four aspects refers to these four aspects. It is through the combination of the meditative absorption and the reliance on external conditions such as rituals and this particular form of yoga is achieved.

Kongtrul Rinpoche in his commentary goes on to explain that although in some text there is a mention in the Kriya Tantra of the visualization practice taking only in the form of a front generation, visualizing the deity in front of oneself and receiving blessing and there is no practice of generating oneself as the deity but Kongtrul Rinpoche explains that this must be understood in terms of the differences of the principal Kriya Tantra meditation and secondary deity practices. In the principal Kriya (action) Tantra meditations certainly one must have the meditation of generating oneself as the deity. In the secondary practices of deity yoga in the Kriya Tantra , the blessing takes the form of visualizing the deity in front from whom one imagines receiving blessings . The principal tantras of Kriya Tantra must contain a practice where the practitioner himself or herself generates into the deity. This is in agreement with explanations of Kriya Tantra found elsewhere where there is an identification of six forms of deity yoga meditation in Kriya such as:

The Empty Deity, the Sound, focusing on the letter, the Speech, focusing on form, the Signs (or hand implements)

In the Tibetan tradition there are many meditation practices, deity yoga meditations that belong to the category of Kriya Tantra, the Action Tantra. However, with relation to the second tantra which is the Performance Tantra or Charya Tantra, apart from VairocanaAdiSambodhi there are very few deity yoga practices in the Tibetan tradition. However, I have been told that in Japan there are quite extensive Charya practices including VairocanaAdiSambodhi and also Vajradhatu practices. These two are very prominent in the Japanese Tantra tradition, the lineage of which came from China.

Next is the Yoga Tantra Vehicle and the text reads ***“The view of those who have entered the vehicle of Yoga-tantra is twofold: (i) the view of outer yoga, the tantra of the Sages, and (ii) the view of inner yoga, the method tantra.”***

The distinctions between the two yogas, the inner and outer yogas is really made on the basis of the approach of the practitioners. In the case of Outer Yoga, unlike the Kriya and Ubhaya Tantra , here the emphasis is on the internal yoga of meditative concentration and not on reliance on external conditions, ritual articles and so on. However, common with the Lower Tantras, in the Outer Yoga, still one does use the external conditions, such as rituals, the ritual articles and so on including the practices of purity laws and so on but the emphasis is on the internal yoga of meditative absorption.

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The difference is that in the Outer Yoga, the state or level of mind that is used in the meditative absorption still remains on the gross level of consciousness; whereas in the inner yoga, not only is the practitioner totally independent of the reliance on external means such as ritual practices and so on but the level of mind that is used in the meditative absorption is the subtle mind and this is referred to as Method tantra. Method here refers to the methods and techniques that are used in bringing about the experience of the subtle level of consciousness. Such methods include such yogic practices as focusing on the channels, the winds (*pranas*), the bodhichitta drops and it is by employing these methods such as focusing on the channels, *prana* winds and bodhichitta drops that the practitioner brings about the experience of the subtle level of consciousness which is then utilized to engage in meditative absorption. The difference between the Inner and Outer Yoga is made on the basis of whether or not the level of mind used in meditative absorption is subtle or gross.

In (Jamgon) Kongtrul's commentary he makes it very explicit that it is only in the Inner Yoga where one finds the approach of the two stages, the generation and completion stages which provides the complete method for the practitioner to bring about the attainment of two embodiments of the Buddha, the form body (*Rupakaya*) and the truth body (*Dharmakaya*). Therefore, he explains that in many Vajrayana scriptures, there is explicit statement that it is only by relying upon the practices presented in the unique teachings of Highest Yoga Tantra , Annutaratantra that one can attain the full enlightenment of Buddhahood. Therefore Highest Yoga Tantra practices are described as Highest Yoga, unsurpassed or Annutaratantra. They are unsurpassed as it is only in these teachings that the complete methods or paths for the attainment of the dharmakaya and rupakaya, the truth body and form body of the Buddha are found. The reason for that is that it is only in the Highest Yoga Tantra teachings that there are methods explained whereby one can utilize the innate mind of clear light, which is ever present and in turn transforming that into the path.

Many of our grosser levels of mind are adventitious, they are occasional and they do not last. They arise and then cease to exist, fluctuate; the Yoga that is cultivated on the gross level of mind cannot be lasting and so therefore it is incomplete. In order for the Yoga that is aimed at attainment of the true embodiment of Buddhahood to be comprehensive and fully effective, that Yoga must take place at the fundamental, subtle state of one's consciousness which is referred to as the innate mind of clear light. It is in the Highest Yoga Tantric text that the methods for transforming the innate mind of clear light into the aspect of the path are explained. Therefore, these practices are referred to as Yoga. Yoga means the indivisibility of method and wisdom. The Highest Yoga Tantra practices are referred to as Annutara , which is unsurpassed as it is only in these teachings that the methods for effecting the innate mind of clear light into meditative absorption , a path is found. Kongtrul thus explains this very clearly in the text and makes the distinction between the Outer Yoga Tantra and Inner Yoga Tantra along the lines of whether or not

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one finds the techniques and practices for turning the innate mind of clear light into the path.

We read in the text as follows ***“The view of those who have entered outer yoga, the Sage’s tantra, is as follows. Not holding the external [ritual] articles to be of primary importance, they cultivate [their goal] on the basis of emphasizing the yoga of visualising male and female deities that are devoid of ultimate origination and cessation and the form body of the Noble One that share resemblance with them, which is the meditative absorption endowed with the four seals of a thoroughly purified mind.*”**

This reference to visualizing the male and female deities that are devoid of ultimate origination and cessation is not a statement that these deities are by nature devoid of origination and cessation but rather the emphasis is on the need to cultivate the understanding and realization of these deities as being devoid of ultimate origination and cessation as explained before. It is this wisdom realizing the emptiness that is then imagined as arising and taking the form of a deity. In the Outer Yoga (Charya Tantra), the meditative absorptions are endowed with what are called the Four Seals, and these Four Seals correspond to our body, speech, mind and action. The Outer Yoga practices are modeled upon processes of purifying our body, speech, mind and action. In relation to these body, speech, mind and action, the Four Seals I mentioned which are the Pledge Seal, Dharma (Reality) Seal, Action Seal and the Great Seal. It is through the meditative absorption endowed with the four seals that the practitioner goes through the process of purifying body, speech, mind and action and this prepares the individual to attain the body, speech and mind of the enlightened deity. One of the characteristics of Charya Tantra (Performance Tantra or Outer Yoga) as described here is the tremendous emphasis placed on the mudras (hand signs) and gestures which are part of the meditation ritual. Many of these hand mudras are very complex and there are very few experts who are totally knowledgeable of these intricate hand gestures, mudras. When I was giving the transmission of the teaching on Vajradhatu which is a Charya Yoga Tantra (Principal Yoga Tantra). I had to rely on an expert who is sitting next to me and he will be guiding me as I perform, so it is almost like he is shepherding me.

On one occasion when I was giving these teachings the then Abbott of Namgyal Monastery, who is a great expert in all these intricate mudras (hand gestures), he was sitting on one side of the stage. When I had to perform the mudras I had to look at him all the time and because it was for such a long period of time I started having strains on my neck so I finally asked him to sit in front of me so I do not have to strain my neck.

We now read from the text on the section on Inner Yoga Vehicles. The text reads ***“The view of those who have entered the vehicle of inner yoga, the method tantra, is threefold:***

- (1) the mode of generation,***
- (2) the mode of completion, and***
- (3) the mode of great completion [or great perfection].”***

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In the commentary Kongtrul explains that the distinctions between the generation, completion and great completion (or great perfection) here should not be confused with the general distinction between the *mahayoga* generation and anuyoga completion and atiyoga great completion or great perfection which is found in the general teaching of the Dzogchen teachings . The distinction here is not exactly the same as the one found in general explanations of the three stages of generation, completion and the great perfection in Dzogchen teachings.

Kongtrul in his commentary goes on to explain that generally speaking between the two stages, the stages of completion and generation among the Tibetan masters and scholars there are primarily two standpoints; one is the standpoint of Longchen Rabjampa and his disciples according to which the completion stage and the generation stage is understood in terms of the aspect of deity yoga meditation where the aspect of emptiness and the aspect of appearance (aspect of appearance relates to generation and aspect of emptiness relates to completion)

Probably Kongtrul here when referring to Longchenpa and his disciples, he is referring to two Khunkyen's, the first being Longchen Rabjampa and the second or latter being Khunken Jigme Lingpa (*the reference to Khunken Jigme Lingpa being a disciple of Khunken Lonchenpa does not imply that he was an immediate direct disciple , Jigme Lingpa was much later but in his biography it is mentioned that once when Jigme Lingpa was meditating in Samye Chinpo Monastery he had a mystical visionary experience of receiving direct blessings and inspiration from Longchenpa and therefore he is referred to sometimes as a disciple of Longchenpa.*) in their writings the distinction between the generation stage and the completion stage is made on the basis of understanding the two aspects of deity yoga meditation, the emptiness aspect and the appearance aspect. However Kongtrul then goes on to state that the most excellent way of understanding the difference between the two stages is the one found in the writings of Longchen Dharma Shiri which is the position of Tsongkhapa as well where the distinction between the two is really drawn on the basis of whether or not the individual practitioner has been able to generate the wisdom of the union of bliss and emptiness on the basis of the entry , abiding and absorption of the prana winds into the central channel. In all subsequent experiences of yogic meditative states which arises following the entry, abiding and absorption of the prana winds into the central channel , these stages are referred to as completion stage and all prior stages of deity yoga meditations or visualizations are described as belonging to the generation stage . Because of this sometimes the generation stage is referred to as a contrived yoga as it is a simulated form of yogic states. The completion stage is referred to as the uncontrived state as it is not simulated. The distinction between the two is then outlined with one being described as contrived and the other as uncontrived. Kongtrul goes on to explain that this is the most excellent way of understanding the differences between the two stages.

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However, in his commentary Kongtrul goes on to explain that the distinction between the three stages found here in the particular text is completely different. Here, the mode of generation, the mode of completion and the mode of great completion really refers to various stages of a single deity yoga meditation. The deity yoga meditation here is described in terms of the three meditative absorptions. One is referred to meditative absorption of suchness, second the meditative absorption of the appearance of everything, and third the causal meditative absorption. These three meditative absorptions correspond respectively to dharmakaya meditation, sambhogakaya (the Buddha body of enjoyment) and Nirmanakaya (the Buddha body of perfect emanation).

The process of engaging in these three stages of meditative absorption belong to the mode of generation according to this text and the culmination of these three processes is the actual visualization of the complete deity that is referred to as the mode of completion because there is a completion of the process of generating oneself as a deity. The mode of great perfection (completion) here refers to the aftermath of having completely generated oneself as a deity there are other practices such as visualizing deities on specific points of the body , such as the body mandala meditation and these constitute what is referred to here as the mode of great completion.

We read from the text

***“The view of those who have entered the vehicle of inner yoga, the method tantra, is threefold:***

- (1) the mode of generation,***
- (2) the mode of completion, and***
- (3) the mode of great completion [or great perfection].”***

### ***1. Mode of Generation***

***The mode of generation is achieved by means of the meditative practice of gradual development of the three meditative absorptions (which was explained before) and [gradual] creation of the mandala.***

### ***2. Mode of Completion***

***The mode of completion is achieved by abiding unwaveringly within [the visualization of] male and female deities that are ultimately devoid of origination and cessation as well as the middle way of ultimate expanse, which is the non-conceptual truth, while on the conventional level cultivating in [perfect] equanimity and un-muddled manner the form of the Noble deity with clear visualization.***

This reference to the ultimate nature of reality, referred to as the ultimate expanse here should be understood in its proper context. Since we are dealing here with the context of Highest Yoga Tantra (Anuttara Yoga Tantra), the references to terms such as “ultimate expanse” or the “ultimate truth”, *paramartasatya* and *dharmadhatu* and so on should really be understood according to the Anuttara Tantra explanation. One needs to understand the ultimate truth and emptiness on two levels. On one level there is the objective emptiness

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which is the emptiness and the ultimate truth as explained in the Middle Way philosophical texts, where we refer to basically the emptiness as it is understood in the perfection vehicle. This is the object. However the “ultimate expanse” or the “ultimate truth” in the Vajrayana context must also include the second dimension which is the subjective dimension, the subjective experience of that emptiness. Here it is not referring to any other subject but rather to a unique subject which is the experience of emptiness at the level of the innate mind of clear light. It is this innate mind of clear light that realizes emptiness which is also referred to as the “ultimate truth” and the “ultimate expanse”.

This is described as non-conceptual truths and it is in this context that one must understand the meaning of the ultimate expanse, in the context of Annuttara Yoga Tantra and this is described differently in the different lineages. For example, in the Kagyud teachings of *Mahamudra* sometimes it is the union of the objective emptiness and the subjective clear light would be described as the indivisibility of awareness and emptiness.

(*ritong – yerme?*)

In the lineages of the Sakya teachings it will be described as the indivisibility of clarity, luminosity and emptiness. In the Sakya *Lam-dre* cycle of teachings clarity is understood to be the defining characteristic of mind and emptiness is understood to be the nature of mind and it is the union of the two that is understood to represent the ultimate nature of reality. In the Sakya, *Lam-dre* language it will be described as (seltong-solchug )? , the union of clarity and emptiness . In the Geluk language it will be described as the union of bliss and emptiness with emptiness as the subjective emptiness and the bliss that of the great bliss of the innate mind of clear light. In the Geluk language it is referred to as the union of bliss and emptiness and similarly in the Dzogchen language of the Nyingma school, because the understanding in the Dzogchen tradition is the distinction between the ordinary mind and the basic awareness (*rigpa*), there is a discussion of a pure, pristine cognition. In the Dzogchen language, one speaks in term of the reality being primordially pure and its nature being that of compassion. It is the union of that reality and compassion. When the text speaks of the “ultimate expanse” in the context of Highest Yoga Tantra , referred to as representing the non-conceptual truth, one must understand the “ultimate expanse” in terms of the union of this emptiness as explained in the Madhyamaka writings and also the subjective experience of clear light and that is fused with that.

Therefore it explains that origination and cessation as well as the Middle Way of ultimate expanse which is the non-conceptual truth, this also alludes to the understanding of how the entire phenomena comes into being as a result of the play of the ultimate expanse. In the next stage the text explains:

***The mode of Great Perfection is to meditate on the basis of understanding all mundane and supramundane phenomena (or all worldly or trans-worldly phenomena) as being devoid of any differentiation and to recognize as having always been present as the mandala of body, speech and mind.***

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In the language of *Guhyasamaja Tantra*, one will understand the entire origination of all factors of both cyclic existence and nirvana as manifestation of the activity of the innate mind of clear light, either as a sequential arising of the processes or the reversal of the process of dissolution. In the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* literature we find explanations of how the entire element of cyclic existence of the afflicted world of *samsara* are really a product of the activity of *karma* and *prana* energies that are propelled by *karma*, underlying which are the activity of the eight conceptions indicative of the various levels of consciousness. These eighty indicative conceptions in turn are grosser levels of manifestations of more subtle states of consciousness such as the appearance, red increase, near approximation or near attainment. These three subtle states of consciousness which then give rise to the eighty indicative conceptions, these three subtle states in turn ultimately arise from the fundamental innate mind of clear light which is the fundamental state of mind which remains ever present and which is enduring.

From that point of view sometimes this innate mind of clear light is described as unconditioned, unconditioned by temporary causes and conditions. In terms of its continuity, it is ever present and sometimes it is described as the unconditioned or the unborn nature.

In the *Guhyasamaja* language we find a description of how the entire world of *samsara* and nirvana in some sense can be seen as a play, a constant play or manifestation or a kind of resonance of this fundamental innate mind of clear light. When seen from that point of view of clear light then there is no distinction to be drawn between *samsara* and *nirvana*, unenlightened or enlightened states and so far as the equanimity of *samsara* and *nirvana* is concerned we also find references to that in the Sutra teachings as well. For example, there is a passage in Maitreya's *Abhisamayalamkara, Ornament of Clear Realisation* where he talks about the equanimity of existence and the transcendence of existence or tranquility. Similarly in Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* we find explicit statements of the equanimity of *samsara* and nirvana. In these Sutra writings the equality of *samsara* and nirvana are understood in terms of the point of view of their being empty. In the Vajrayana context the equality of *samsara* and nirvana has an added meaning of how all the factors of both *samsara* and nirvana can be understood in some sense as a constant play or manifestation of the subtle mind of clear light.

The text goes on to state :

***“It is stated in the tantra:***

***As for the limbs of the Vajra body,***

***They are known as the five Buddhas.***

***The sources and the numerous elements,***

***They are the mandala of the bodhisattvas.***

***Earth and water are Locana and Mamaki;***

***Fire and wind are Pandaravasin and Tara;***

***The space is Dhateshvari.***

***[So] the three worlds are primordially pure.***

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***So all phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana are primordially unborn yet they have the capacity for illusory function as they have always been in the nature of the ten Tathagatas and their consorts.***

This reference to all phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana as being primordially unborn does not imply that they do not come into being due to their causes and conditions but this primordially being unborn refers to the perspective from the point of view of the innate mind of clear light they are all in some sense manifestations or effulgence of the innate mind of clear light and so in that sense they can be referred to as unborn.

Then we read ***“All phenomena are therefore naturally transcendent of sorrow”***. There is an indication that all phenomenon are in some sense primordially pure and this is also sometimes referred to as primordially enlightened, primordially Buddhas. This reference is made because as far as the innate mind of clear light is concerned, its nature is always pure. The afflictions and the various defilements co-exist with it but they do not penetrate into the essential nature of the clear light itself. As far as the clear light mind is concerned it is pure. From that point of view, all phenomena that arises from it can also be described as being primordially pure and being in the nature primordially of Buddhahood.

Then we read ***“The great [elements] are in the nature of the five consorts; the five aggregates, the nature of the five Buddha families; the four consciousness, the nature the four great bodhisattvas; the four objects, the four beautiful goddesses; the four senses, the bodhisattvas; the four temporal stages, the four goddesses; the bodily organs, the consciousnesses; the sensory fields and the bodhicitta drops arising from them, the four wrathful deities; the four extremes of eternalism and nihilism, the four wrathful female deities; the mental consciousness, the nature of Samandrabhadra, namely the indestructible bodhicitta; the objects [of both] conditioned and unconditioned phenomena are in the nature Samandrabadri who is the receptacle [of the creation] of [all] phenomena. All of these in turn have already been in the nature of complete enlightenment;”*** So this is as explained before.

***“they are not acquired now by means of the path.***

This refers to the natural enlightenment which refers to the fundamental innate mind of clear light because that is ever present and is not brought into being as a result of the path. ***Thus all phenomena - conditioned and unconditioned – such as the ten directions, the three temporal stages, the three worlds, and so on do not exist apart from one’s own mind.***

This reference to all of these non-existing apart from one’s own mind should not be understood in terms of the statement of the Buddha in the Sutra context where he talks about how all phenomena are own’s mind. Here it is referring to how all phenomena are manifestations of the innate mind of clear light.

The text then reads

***“It is stated:***

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***The clear understanding of one's own mind -  
This is the buddhas and the bodhisattvas;  
This constitutes the three worlds;  
This constitutes the great elements as well.***

***Thus it has been stated:***

***“All phenomena dwell in the mind; the mind dwell in space, while space dwells nowhere.”***

The space here does not refer to the conventional space that we understand, the space here refers to an inner space which is again the clear light that we have been speaking about. Since clear light is ever present it dwells nowhere.

***Furthermore:***

***“All phenomena are devoid of intrinsic nature; all phenomena are thoroughly pure from the very beginning; all phenomena are thoroughly radiant; all phenomena are naturally transcendent nirvana; all phenomena are manifestly enlightened.”***

***“This [then] is the [meaning of] Great Perfection. (The mode of Great Perfection means the perfection of the accumulations of merit and wisdom and the spontaneous realization of the resultant goal.)”***

In the commentary Jamgon Kongtrul summarizes and states the conclusion. He says that in this context when we read references to the term “jnana” which means transcendent wisdom we should not understand it as just any other form of jnana or wisdom but rather we must understand it as jnana in terms of the mind of clear light . Similarly when find references to the term resonance, self-resonance of something we should not understand it purely as the resonance of anything but rather as the resonance of the innate mind of clear light. He goes on to explain that in the Dzogchen literature sometimes the clear light is described as being that of unconditioned and Kongtrul Rinpoche points out that this meaning of unconditionedness is not the same as the characterization of permanent phenomena as unconditioned, such as the mere absence of something - like space defined in terms of the mere absence of obstructions, that is an unconditioned phenomena. This is not the meaning of unconditionedness, in the context of Dzogchen explanation of unconditionedness. Unconditionedness here refers to the clear light mind being unconditioned by any temporary causes and conditions, fluctuating, adventitious causes and conditions.

In the commentary, he then goes on to substantiate his (Kongtrul Rinpoche's) own understanding of the teachings and the concepts by citing from Saraha,, the great Indian yogi and also a citation from an earlier tantra of the old translation text and also another tantra called *A Liberating Drop* that was from the new translation tantra. In all of which an explanation is given of how the emergence and evolution of the entire phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana can be understood as a manifestations arising from the innate mind of clear light. Then Kongtrul Rinpoche refers to the explanations found in the Guhyasamaja Tantra which has been explained before , how the entire process of coming into being of cyclic existence can be understood in terms of the function of the activity of

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the eighty indicative conceptions which arises from the three subtle states of progressively subtle , grosser states of consciousness which are referred to as appearance, increase and near attainment , all of which arise from the innate mind of clear light.

It is the arising and the dissolution from the innate mind of clear light that one must understand origination of cyclic existence, samsara. Kongtrul Rinpoche then goes on to explain that when we say that entire phenomena are manifestations or play of this innate mind of clear light , one does not need to prove that all objects such as vase, pillars and everyday objects are somehow manifestations of this. Rather the meaning here is that in so far as the individual sentient being is concerned , his or her experience of the entire world of phenomena really arises from this process. It is from the karmic actions, the activity of the *prana* winds give rise to progressively grosser levels of consciousness which then culminate in the eighty indicative conceptions which then culminate in afflictions , which then motivate the individual into action and the action sets into motion the whole chain of causation within cyclic existence.

It is in this manner that as far as the individual is himself or herself concerned the entire cosmos are really functions of the innate mind of clear light. Here we can understand that if you look at the language of the Guhyasamaja Tantra , there is an understanding because of this the innate mind of clear light is sometimes described as the basic or foundational *dharmakaya* . The language of basic *dharmakaya* suggested that the whole process is understood in terms of being somehow analogous process to the arising of the three *kayas*, the three Buddha bodies , the Buddha body of Reality, the Buddha body of perfect enjoyment and the Buddha body of emanation and these also have correlations even to our day-to-day experiences of the periods of the waking state , the period of deep sleep and the period of death. Because of this we find in the tantras specific meditative practices with the aim of mixing (the so-called mixings) during the waking state, sleep state and death state.

Kongtrul Rinpoche then goes on to explain how an analogy that can be found here that all dreams we experience are in some sense manifestations arising from the state of sleep. In the same manner we can understand the arising of entire phenomena of cyclic existence as coming out of this innate mind of clear light. In the commentary he then states that for detailed explanations of this one should refer to the great commentarial treatises or the Tantras.

Just as in the Sutra system of teachings we find references to natural nirvana and the non-abiding nirvana where the natural nirvana refers to the emptiness of all phenomena, ultimate nature of reality which is naturally pure, naturally devoid of any grasping at intrinsic existence. The non-abiding nirvana refers to the individual who has not only realized this natural nirvana but has also purified all the defilements, which are the adventitious obstacles and then one attains the non-abiding nirvana of Buddha.

In a similar manner in the Vajrayana context of Highest Yoga Tantra context sometimes there is a language of the naturally pure wisdom , naturally pure jnana , thoroughly pure

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jnana referring to the innate mind of clear light that we all naturally possess because its essential nature is unpolluted. From that point of view it is naturally pure wisdom. Once the individual through the practice of the path gains total liberation of Buddhahood then not only clear light mind pure, the individual is free of all the adventitious defilements. Therefore at that point this individuals innate mind of clear light can also be referred to as the thoroughly pure wisdom or jnana and such language is also found in the Vajrayana literature. We will stop here.

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