

**HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA'S TEACHINGS ON TSONG-KHA-PA'S
LAM RIM CHEN MO, THE GREAT TREATISE ON THE STAGES OF THE PATH
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English translation by THUPTEN JINPA, PH.D.
Lightly edited with topic headings. Time codes refer to the audio selection.

HIS HOLINESS...05:33 [Chanting in Tibetan]

[Offering of white silk scarfs [*katas*] by Joshua and Diana Cutler, Directors of the Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center]

INTRODUCTION

HIS HOLINESS: 06:45 Good Afternoon, everybody. Indeed I am very, very happy to be here to lecture on the *Lam Rim Chen Mo*. Firstly, I visited the late Geshe Wangyal's Center many years ago, during my first visit to America, that was... '79, because of the historically very close link between Tibetan and Mongolian peoples, and particularly since the Third Dalai Lama's very unique, close relations with Mongolia. So when we say with Mongolian, this includes Kalmyk, Buryat, all these Mongolian types. There is a very unique sort of relation. Then also in my own case, one of the best Tsenshap[study partners], Ngodrub Chowanyi, was Mongolian. So he helped a lot. So with this Mongolian there was something very close, personally, some close connection, link. Then, on one occasion, at the late Wangyal-la's, Sok-po [Mongolian] Wangyal la's Center, on one occasion, we reflected on all these past sorts of long stories. We, everybody, very much moved, isn't it? Everybody cried. I also was very much touched.

So the Center, Joshua, he is not Tibetan, not Mongolian, but a European American. But you two [Joshua and Diana Cutler], I think, very faithfully carry out the late Wangyal-la's spirit. So with that they asked me to give teaching on the *Lam Rim Chen Mo*. And they also translated *Lam Rim Chen Mo*. So I promised in the future on one occasion that I am going to teach *Lam Rim Chen Mo*. So now today it materialized. But of course, you see, this book is quite a thick book. Reading all this book within few days—impossible. So I am going to explain...[continues in Tibetan]...

THUPTEN JINPA: So I will proceed by my teaching on this text, primarily summarizing essential points, and, where necessary, I may elaborate on these points.

HIS HOLINESS: 11:25 Although the *Lam Rim Chen Mo* book, *Lam Rim* book, I think is available, but I brought with me, you see, this, my own personal *Lam Rim Chen Mo*, because this text, 17th March 1959, when I left Norbulingka that night, this book I brought with me. So up to now ten to fifteen times I gave teachings from this *Lam Rim Chen Mo*. So 'til now I think at least around fifteen times teaching of *Lam Rim Chen Mo* I gave. So all these teachings, you see, through this book. So this is personally something—something very dear to me. Like that.

So as usual when I give lectures on Buddhism, always there is some kind of procedure. Firstly, there is the *Pali Mangalam Sutra*, or any sutra, chanting because that's the first, the original *Buddhadharma*. Then second, Sanskrit. Since the first century B.C. or second century B.C., I think, then Sanskrit eventually became the main language. Particularly in the Nalanda tradition, the main language is Sanskrit. So the *Heart Sutra* we are going to have recited in Sanskrit by my Indian Buddhist *bhikshu* and great scholar. Then perhaps Chinese. So today these three languages. So....

CHANTING

BHIKKU BODHI 15:44 The *sutta* that I will recite is called the *Ratana Sutta*. This is a hymn of praise to the three jewels—the Buddha, Dharma, and the Sangha—and it's a way of invoking the blessings of the three jewels upon this Dharma assembly. The *sutta* is fairly long but I will recite an abbreviated version of it.
[Chanting of abbreviated *Ratana Sutta* in Pali]

HIS HOLINESS: 22:06 Thank you.

PRIYADARSHI 22:27 [Chanting of *Heart Sutra* in Sanskrit]

HIS HOLINESS: 25:09 Thank you.

CHINESE NUNS 25:14 [Chanting of *Heart Sutra* in Chinese]

HIS HOLINESS: 30:58 Thank you.

HIS HOLINESS: 31:15 [Chanting in Tibetan followed by the Sanskrit mantra:]
Tadyatha gate gate parasamgate bodhi soha [chanted 3 times]

COMMITMENT TO GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

HIS HOLINESS: 32:38

Now as I mentioned in an earlier lecture on Buddhism, one particular text, the *Lam Rim Chen Mo* was written by Lama Tsong-kha-pa, a great scholar and real holder of the Nalanda tradition. I think one of the top Tibetan scholars.

I think most of you are already familiar with my commitment, or my view, or my thought. Perhaps some may be new. So I want to mention briefly about my basic views or commitments. Number one—I am just one human being. Among six billion human beings, I am just one of them. I think besides our prayers, these things, in reality we — all six billion human beings — share one planet. We all survive under one sun. Then in today's, particularly today's reality — because of the population and also, I think, the easier communication, these things, and also the modern economy, global economy, the environment issue, because of these new factors — actually we simply become one community, one entity. So, according to that reality, there is no separate, independent,

individual interest. For each of us, our future entirely depends on the rest of humanity, the rest of the world.

So in ancient times, each nation or each community more or less lived independently. So since our usual concept or our view is still that old, sort of...

THUPTEN JINPA: ...old pattern of thinking...

HIS HOLINESS: ...old thinking still remains there. So the gap between the reality and our perception — that gap is there. Sometimes increasing. So because of that—our old thinking, old way of viewing—actually with that view, our actions then become unrealistic. This way our view is just, I think, old sort of thinking.

37:05 So that's why I think... I think almost nobody wants more problems. Therefore nobody wants to create more problems, but problems are there. A lot of man-made problems are there because we are lacking that holistic, realistic view. So, in order to develop a sense of global responsibility, look at the entire planet. Just one small planet, and an individual's future entirely depends on that. So we have to take care. That's the best way to safeguard our individual futures, isn't it? Like that.

So we need the sense of concern for the wellbeing of the rest of the people, rest of the sentient beings, rest of the world. So my number one commitment is to make clear that we need a wider view and a sense of global responsibility. That's my number one commitment.

So I feel that with respect to Buddhist teaching, not to take it as a religion but simply some ideas. To think of entire sentient beings, that's useful. Maybe it's unrealistic to be thinking about, concerned about outer space—too far. It looks as if it does not make much sense—but emotionally it's very useful. So when we're thinking about the infinite planets, infinite sentient beings, then when we think about the six billion human beings on this planet, then there is no question. And billions of animals who really suffer immensely under human hands. Isn't it?

39:33 So the Buddhist message—the message of infinite altruism—that's something very relevant. Not talking about next life. Not talking about buddhahood. But simply in order to be a happier person, a more sensible person, a more useful person on this planet, I think the message or teaching of infinite altruism is something very useful. And also in day-to-day life, whenever we are facing some difficulties, some of these ideas are really helpful to equip our minds or particularly our emotions, so that when we are passing through difficulties still we can maintain our peace of mind. So that also is very, very good for our health. Too much worry, too much adversity, ambition—too much ambition—then bound to increase suspicion, jealousy, these things. Result? More unrest. So some of these sorts of thoughts, these sorts of ideas, are very, very useful for the well-being of one individual mentally and emotionally, and through that way, physically also. Like that.

Then the second commitment...

So, therefore, to nonbelievers who have no interest about religion, okay. Listen to some of these ideas. If you feel something useful, then take it. If you feel nonsense then forget. No problem.

COMMITMENT TO RELIGIOUS HARMONY *41:14*

Then my second commitment is to the promotion of religious harmony. I am a Buddhist. Sometimes I describe myself as a staunch Buddhist. Because, you see, those ancient Buddhist masters, particularly the Nalanda masters, their minds are very, very critical, including [analysis of] Buddha's own words. So their critical analysis about non-Buddhist traditions, their views...[continues in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: These masters are very erudite and very critical. They are able to find wherever there may be cracks in non-Buddhist positions.

HIS HOLINESS: *42:30* So all these masters, including Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Dignaga, Dharmakirti, and Shantarakshita, these very, very sharp minds and great logicians make clear all the weaknesses of different sorts of traditions within the Buddhist tradition. So my mind also in some way, at least in a little way, is equipped that way to investigate, to analyze. So from that viewpoint I can say I am one staunch Buddhist.

However, I also accept the value or potential of all these major traditions. That's the positive side. The negative side—conflict, division in the name of religion—is so bad. So sad. Some innocent, genuine, faithful people sometimes suffer. So therefore the effort—the promotion of religious harmony with major respect, mutual understanding—is very, very essential. So, in order to develop a closer understanding with those non-Buddhists, it is useful to learn about the Buddhist structure.

So in fact yesterday I made one pilgrimage to Ajmer in Rajasthan, a famous Muslim holy place, mainly a Sufi center. The most holy place, I think, according to Sufism. From there, yesterday, in the very early morning... for five days or one week they have their annual religious sort of prayer. The whole night they pray. So they invited me. So I preferred to participate in the morning. So yesterday from 3:30 up to 4:30, I participated at prayer with a Muslim hat—Buddhist monk's robe and Muslim hat. So there very, very hot and very humid and too crowded, so still my robe has some smell. Of course, the Indian public, I think, a hundred thousand, several hundred thousand people, very, very crowded. And of course... [continues in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: *46:36* in very close proximity to each other...

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: So maybe we can call it the scent of sound ethical discipline, Muslim ethical discipline...

HIS HOLINESS: ...plus...

THUPTEN JINPA: ...mixed, of course, with sweat.

HIS HOLINESS: 47:08 So really I enjoyed that meeting. Very good. So actually... I think a few weeks ago, again one international Muslim conference took place in Delhi. They invited me. So I think I was the only non-Muslim in participation in that conference. And in the afternoon again I visited Delhi...

THUPTEN JINPA: Tomb of...

HIS HOLINESS: 47:52 The mosque in Delhi, the ancient one...

THUPTEN JINPA [and others]:...Jamma Masjid...

HIS HOLINESS:... Jamma Masjid, so I went there, prayed together with Muslims, thousands and thousands of Muslims. So this is the first time, you see, that I wear the Muslim white hat, so I had a little doubt. I personally was very happy but a little hesitant because some hard-liner Hindus may feel a little different way, I thought. But later, the response from the Hindu community was also excellent, very good. So seems as if people appreciate my effort to promote religious harmony and genuine respect.

So if you really like that kind of effort then please practice it yourself. Make closer contacts with other traditions, with followers of other traditions, and particularly with Muslim brothers and sisters. I think this is very, very important. Since September 11th event, sometimes some negative sort of impression, so that's totally wrong.

Good.

Of course, from a Buddhist viewpoint, I think in the past, in past history, many Indian Buddhists suffered a lot under Muslim hand. Past is past. No use, you see, to think along these lines and then keep hatred. Absolutely foolish. Past is past. Now, today, now for example, those Muslims in the Bodhgaya area, I think their ancestors came to Bodhgaya in order to destroy the Buddhist temple there. But now, today, they are best friends of Buddhist pilgrims. Like that. Whenever I visit Bodhgaya they always invite me, they provide for me, they give me tea and some very delicious nuts. I always enjoy. So that's today's reality. And anyway around a thousand million, a thousand million Muslims there. Very important. Those genuine Muslim practitioners—wonderful persons. Like that.

SPREAD OF THE BUDDHADHARMA

HIS HOLINESS: Okay. So now the lecture on the *Buddhadharma*.
Firstly...[continues in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 51:24 So according to the conventional understanding of history, Buddha came to the world almost 2,600 years ago.

HIS HOLINESS: 52:03...So eventually, I think, *Buddhadharma* then spread from India and different countries to many others in Southeast Asia and East Asia. So today in Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, in these areas mainly the Pali tradition. Then in China and Korea, Japan, Vietnam and then also in Tibet and Mongolia, of course, the Pali tradition is also there, and on top of that, the Sanskrit tradition.

So it seems in the Sanskrit tradition, the major foreign language is first, most importantly, the Chinese language. Then second, I think, is the Tibetan language. So Buddhism flourished in China at least three to four centuries earlier than in Tibet. So I always consider that firstly the Pali tradition is senior-most. That's the foundation of *Buddhadharma*. The holders of the Pali tradition are the elder students, elder-most students of Buddha. Then in the Sanskrit tradition, the Chinese Buddhist is the senior-most Buddhist student. Then we Tibetans and Mongolians. So wherever I give teachings to the Chinese community I always, at the beginning, express my salutation because they are the elder students of Buddha.

TRANSMISSION OF THE NALANDA TRADITION TO TIBET

In the meantime I also mention, half teasing, as far as knowledge is concerned, junior student is sometimes better. Because Tibetan Buddhism was established by Shantarakshita. Shantarakshita was one of the topmost logicians and philosophers of the Nalanda institution. So he personally came to Tibet. And then Kamalashila came, one of his important students. Both great scholars. You can see— their writings are still available. Oh really great logicians and philosophers, Madhyamika philosophers. So naturally the teacher himself—monk, top scholar, logician. So, you see, naturally he wants that his student should be that way. Isn't it?

I think up to now, the 21st-century, there is the rigorous study of all these important texts. At first learn by heart. Then, word by word explanation. And not only just explanation but learn through a thorough sort of debate. So precise... precision through debate. So generally the Tibetans' sort of knowledge about the *Buddhadharma* is nothing special, but because of these sorts of great teachers, I think it is a real holder of the Nalanda tradition. I think it has a more complete form or more depth. I think the Tibetan tradition is the best.

So then, there are differences. In all those Indian masters' texts and Tibetan masters' texts, there are differences—different styles because of the different circumstances. In India there were not only Buddhists but also non-Buddhists, and a lot of discussions among top scholars of these different traditions. So the writing by Nagarjuna or Aryadeva, all these...

THUPTEN JINPA: ... more comparative in their perspective...

HIS HOLINESS: ... more sort of analyze...

THUPTEN JINPA: There's more detailed, deeper analysis as well.

HIS HOLINESS: 58:35 Then for Tibetan masters' sort of texts, generally the circumstances were only Buddhist. So therefore I think it was almost taken for granted that the audience was Buddhist. So there was not much emphasis on comparison.

So this book, this text, [*Bodhipathapradipa*, or *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*] of course was written by Atisha Dipamkara, one Bengali. In the eleventh century he came to Tibet. Shantarakshita came in the eighth century. In the eleventh century Dipamkara came to Tibet. Then I think basically the Nalanda tradition was already established well. So Atisha Dipamkara then wrote a small text that is... [continues in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: So Atisha composed this short text, since the Nalanda tradition was already well established, and the aim of the text is to provide a kind of a method on how to integrate the knowledge of the various Buddhist teachings in the context of a practitioner of different levels of mental capacities.

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:00:43 So this text, known as *Bodhipathapradipa*, or *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*, became the root of all the *lam rim* texts, *stages of the path* texts.

HIS HOLINESS: So this *Lam Rim Chen Mo* is actually... [continues in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: So in that sense one can treat this, Tsong-kha-pa's text, *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*, as a kind of an extensive commentary or exposition of that short text of Atisha.

TRANSMISSION OF *LAM RIM CHEN MO*—SALUTATION TO THE BUDDHA—BUDDHAHOOD IS CREATED FROM CAUSES

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: Do any of you have the text [*The Great Treatise*] itself?

HIS HOLINESS: ... Thick book?

THUPTEN JINPA: The thick book.

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: Can you raise your hands?

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: The transmissions of this *Lam Rim Chen Mo* teaching I received are ones from Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche and another one from Kyabje Ling Rinpoche, my two tutors.

HIS HOLINESS: The lineage of Trijang Rinpoche came from Thukje Pabongka Rinpoche, in that way. Then in Ling Rinpoche's lineage Pabongka Rinpoche is also there, but one main lineage was from the 13th Dalai Lama. So the 13th Dalai Lama gave a teaching on *Lam Rim Chen Mo* in the Norbulingka. Then Ling Rinpoche was quite young, but he received teaching from the 13th Dalai Lama. So now...[continues in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:04:00 The text opens with a salutation to Manjushri in the Sanskrit language. This is partly to indicate that the source of the Tibetan tradition is the Sanskrit tradition and Sanskrit became, as explained before, the dominant language, the medium through which *Buddhadharma* was presented in the Nalanda tradition. Therefore in Tibet the custom evolved to acknowledge that source, and often at the beginning of the Tibetan text there would be a salutation in Sanskrit.

HIS HOLINESS:... [There is an untranslated exchange in Tibetan with scholars on stage.] ...Everybody failed to recall that sentence... Of course, understandable. All scholars are now quite old. So gradually forgetting.

THUPTEN JINPA: So the first verse of salutation is salutation to the Buddha. And here, the way in which Tsong-kha-pa pays homage to the Buddha is by reflecting upon the qualities of the Buddha's body, speech and mind. And in the first line he reflects upon the qualities of the Buddha's body. And here he identifies causation—the fact that the Buddha's physical body, or Buddha's form body, came into being as a result of its causes.

HIS HOLINESS: [talking to the scholars on the stage about someone there who did recall the passage] Now he contributed... now he makes a contribution, a very good contribution.

THUPTEN JINPA: So here, in this first line, Tsong-kha-pa identifies explicitly that the Buddha's form body is a result of specific causes. Here the causes are identified as accumulation of all the qualities of goodness, in other words, referring to the meritorious deeds. And by identifying, by correlating, this cause and the result, which is the Buddha's form body, Tsong-kha-pa is making a very important point here. The point is that even the attainment of buddhahood is a function of causation, a function of causes and conditions. Buddhahood does not come out of nowhere, nor is it an eternal permanent state, which is uncaused.

And here in a sense, Tsong-kha-pa is also kind of invoking a similar point made by Dignaga in the opening stanza of his *Pramamasamuccaya*, *Compendium of Valid Cognition*, where, in identifying Buddha as a valid person, or valid being, Dignaga makes the point that he has *become* a valid being. And this term “become”—“having become”—is a very important point. And when commenting upon that, Dharmakirti says

that in order to negate the idea that the Buddha was uncaused, Dignaga explicitly mentions the term “becoming.” The idea or the point Dharmakirti is making is the fact that Dignaga, when referring to the Buddha as having “become” a valid being, is indicating that Buddha through some processes *came to be* a valid being.

HIS HOLINESS: 1:09:54 [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: So here Tsong-kha-pa speaks about the Buddha’s body which came into being from a myriad of causes. And these are, of course, listed in various texts, particularly the Perfection of Wisdom studies text, but also they are explicitly mentioned in Nagarjuna’s *Precious Garland* as well.

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:11:12 So in brief what Tsong-kha-pa is explaining is that even the Buddha whom we revere, the Blessed Buddha, was previously a sentient being who was on the path to becoming a Buddha. Therefore at one point the Buddha, too, was like ourselves an ordinary person who, as a result of having accumulated and gathered all the relevant conditions, eventually evolved into a fully enlightened being.

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: So, to fully understand the significance of this first line, that the Buddha’s body is born of myriads of excellent causes, one needs to also understand the relationship between the four noble truths as well, the presentation of the four noble truths.

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: In order to...

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: So in order to again fully understand the meaning of the presentation of the four noble truths, one needs to develop an understanding of the teachings on the two truths, particularly in the manner in which one understands the two truths as sharing the same nature but having distinct identities. So that kind of understanding of the two truths becomes important.

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: So these explanations will be given in the context of the practices pertaining to the person of middling capacity.

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: So one of the important principles that is implicit in this line, relating to the explanation of the Buddha’s qualities as having been born out of these myriads of excellent causes, is the principle of dependent origination in terms of cause and effect.

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:15:21 So in identifying the qualities of the Buddha’s enlightened speech, Tsong-kha-pa writes that your “speech fulfills the hopes” and aspirations of countless sentient beings, “limitless [sentient] beings.” So when we talk about fulfilling the wishes or hopes of countless sentient beings we are here referring to the welfare of sentient beings. So when we speak about bringing about the welfare of sentient beings, there are immediate, temporary welfare and long-term, ultimate welfare. So in both of these cases, in order for an enlightened Buddha to be able to bring about this welfare, the Buddha needs to have a deeper understanding of what these needs are and in what way the Buddha can bring about these welfares in the most effective manner. And here the primary medium through which the Buddha’s enlightened activity engages is through the medium of speech. Therefore the Buddha’s speech, the enlightened quality of the Buddha’s speech, is its capacity to fulfill the aspirations of the sentient beings.

HIS HOLINESS: 1:16:49 [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:17:12 So in some texts we will find references to the Buddha’s qualities in terms of their miraculous nature and in the kind of magical quality of the Buddha’s body, speech and mind. And with relation to the body, often miraculous powers of the Buddha’s physical body are identified, and the magical quality of the Buddha’s mind is identified as a mind that is able to realize all facts. And then the magical quality of his speech is a speech that is able to provide the instructions that are relevant to all beings. So, of these three magical qualities of the Buddha, always the qualities of speech are considered to be the most important.

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:18:50 So therefore when we’re talking about the enlightened quality of the Buddha’s speech, we are talking about this quality of the Buddha’s speech—the ability to fulfill all the wishes, aspirations, of sentient beings. And here Lama Tsong-kha-pa wrote in his *Praise to the Buddha for Teaching Dependent Origination*, saying that among all your enlightened activities the most important one is your activity of speech, and within that, the speech teaching dependent origination is the most important. So in other words, what Tsong-kha-pa is explaining is that, with relation to understanding the enlightened qualities of the Buddha’s speech, one needs to understand that among all the speeches of the Buddha, those that pertain to teachings on dependent origination in terms of emptiness—dependent origination in terms of ultimate reality—those teachings are the most important.

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: We also notice that in Nagarjuna’s own writing, often when he makes salutations to the Buddha and pays homage to the Buddha, he does so by recognizing particularly the Buddha’s having taught the teachings on dependent origination.

HIS HOLINESS: 1:20:40 [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:22:11 So what we see here is that when identifying the qualities of the Buddha’s body, Tsong-kha-pa is looking at it primarily from the perspective of the causes that give rise to the Buddha’s form body. When identifying the qualities of the Buddha’s speech he does so primarily from the perspective of speech as the fruition or the result. And then, in the third one, when identifying the quality of Buddha’s mind, he identifies the nature of the qualities of the Buddha’s mind, enlightened mind, as having the capacity to, while within a single instance, being fully immersed in the realization of ultimate truth but at the same time perceiving the diversity, the world of diversity as well. And so this enlightened mind of the Buddha really is the actual identity of buddhahood itself. So therefore when praising the Buddha’s mind, the perspective is from the nature of buddhahood itself.

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: So with these [verses] then Tsong-kha-pa makes homage to the Buddha saying that “I bow to you,” I pay homage to you, my head bowed, to “the principal among the Sakya clan.” [*Great Treatise*: “I bow my head to the chief of the Sakyas.” I, 33] So the Buddha Sakyamuni was a member of the Sakya clan.

HIS HOLINESS: 1:24:20 [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:24:56 And then in the...

TSONG-KHA-PA’S PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR COMPOSING THE TEXT

HIS HOLINESS: 1:25:02 [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:29:51 So in the subsequent stanzas of salutation, Tsong-kha-pa makes salutations to Manjushri and Maitreya. He then also makes salutations to Nagarjuna and Asanga, the two principal revitalizers of the Mahayana tradition. And then he also makes salutations to Atisha Dipamkara Srijana, the founder of this *lam rim* lineage, and then subsequently also to the great masters who are upholders of this lineage.

And then having made these salutations, Tsong-kha-pa explains in verse the primary motivation behind his composition of *Lam Rim Chen Mo*, this *Great Treatise*, and here the points he’s making are quite important. For example he says that these days, those who are very dedicated in the yogic practices, meditative practices, are lacking in learning. So there might be a lot of practitioners who are very dedicated to their own practices but they tend to select only one or two aspects of a particular practice and then they are lacking in a greater understanding of the overall Buddhist path. Therefore they’re not able to really implement into their practice an integrated approach that would encompass all the key elements of the essential teachings.

Similarly he says those who are learned, those who have great learning, somehow many of them seem to be not very skilled in bringing them together and integrating them and putting them into the context of a personal practice. In some cases, though someone may be highly learned in the text—they may have studied all the five great treatises or five great topics, or the thirteen great texts and so on—but on the personal level they do not seem to have actually experienced much effect from their Dharma learning. Today, in some cases in fact, the learning may serve as a further reinforcement of their own ego and conceitedness and jealousy, envy and so on.

In some cases, even though these negative qualities may not be pronounced in these masters, but somehow when it comes to actually implementing what they know into practice, somehow they seem to feel at a loss. They see all this vast area of teachings, and then somehow all these teachings seem to be scattered. And these learned masters are somehow not able to find the way of bringing them together in an integrated format which is relevant within the context of a practitioner. So that's what Tsong-kha-pa is talking about.

1:33:00 And then he says also many individuals, when it comes to their study and practice, they seem to be partial. So for example he's talking about the particular period in Tibet, where if someone happens to be keen in the practice of the sutra path then they tend to ignore the Vajrayana teachings. If someone happens to be a practitioner of Vajrayana, they tend to ignore the Sutra aspects of the teaching. If someone is enthusiastic about *pramana* studies, epistemological studies, then they somehow seem to specialize just on that, some maybe on Abhidharma [knowledge], some Vinaya [discipline]. But they keep their own understanding and practice partial so that it is not complete.

In such cases Tsong-kha-pa is saying that in all these three instances—yogic practitioners who have no learning, masters with great learning but unable to put them into a context of a practice, and those who are one-sided in their understanding—in all of these cases they're not capable of engaging in the practice of the Dharma that would truly please the “wise” ones. And here, what he is saying is that they are not able to engage in the path where they can have this integrated approach which will bring in all the essential elements of the Buddhist path and undertake that practice.

And here Tsong-kha-pa is saying that what Atisha has provided in his *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* is a way to integrate all of these elements of Buddha's teaching in the context of a single practitioner and in the context of one person sitting on one seat—bringing all of these elements into the context relevant to a single practitioner. Therefore Tsong-kha-pa says that in writing this extensive exposition of Atisha's text that will provide a path that would please the great learned wise ones, his heart takes great delight.

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: So what Tsong-kha-pa is explaining here is also very similar to what Aryadeva says in the *Four Hundred Stanzas*, where Aryadeva presents stages, for example, where he says that on the first level one must avert all the de-meritorious

activities, in the middle one must cease grasping to self, and finally, on the final stage, one must cease grasping at all views, and he who understands such an approach is truly wise.

QUALITIES NECESSARY ON THE PART OF THE LISTENER

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:36:48 So then in the final stanza, Tsong-kha-pa calls upon the potential readers who may benefit from this and asks them to listen to what he has to say. He says that those whose minds are not obscured by the darkness of biased thinking, and those who have the capacity of a mind that is able to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, and those who wish to make their human existence of leisure and opportunity meaningful, those fortunate ones, please listen to what I have to say with a single-pointed mind.

So again here, this is very similar to what Aryadeva says in his *Four Hundred Stanzas* where he identifies the qualities that are necessary on the part of a listener, where he says that the practitioner of Dharma who is listening to the Dharma teachings should be objective, should be endowed with critical intelligence and should have an interest in what he or she is learning. So these are the three qualities that are identified.

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:38:25 The text then follows with the...

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: ...a story of Atisha in the context of explaining the greatness of the author, which we are not going to read.

AUTHENTICITY OF ATISHA'S SOURCES AND THE LINEAGES FROM HIM

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:43:12 So in terms of the author of this text, of course it traces to the Indian master Atisha, and Atisha in turn traces the lineage that he has received back to two primary lineages—one stemming from Nagarjuna and primarily pertaining to the Buddha's teaching on the philosophical view of emptiness, particularly the teaching on dependent origination in terms of ultimate reality. So that lineage of the instructions comes through Nagarjuna and successive masters of that transmission which Atisha received.

And then another principal strand of teachings stems from Maitreya's lineage—Maitreya through to Asanga and successive masters—where the primary focus really has been on

the method aspect of the Mahayana path, particularly those practices that deal with the cultivation of loving kindness, compassion, and the awakening mind of *bodhichitta*.

So in Atisha... these two lineages really merged into Atisha, the author of the root text of *Lam Rim Chen Mo*.

And from Atisha historically in Tibet, three principal lineages of Atisha's teaching evolved. [One of] these is referred to as the "lineage of great treatises," which stems from Potowa. And the way in which they understood Atisha's instruction was on the basis of the study and practice of six principal Indian texts—the first two being the *Jataka Tales*, the Buddha's previous lives stories, and the *Collection of Aphorisms, Udanavarga*. And these two texts are seen as texts primarily related to cultivation of ...

HIS HOLINESS: [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:45:25 So the *Udanavarga*, this collection of aphorisms, probably was originally a Pali text. These two texts really form the basis for enhancement and cultivation of devotion and faith in the Buddha. And the two second texts are Asanga's *Bodhisattva Bhumi, Levels of the Bodhisattva*, and Maitreya's *Ornament of Mahayana Treatises* or *Mahayana Sutras*. These two texts are primarily viewed in terms of teachings on the meditative states, the samadhis, and they deal extensively with the various levels and paths of the Mahayana path.

The third two texts are Shantideva's *Sikhsamuccaya, Compendium of Practices* or *Compendium of Training*, and his *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. These two texts are seen as presenting primarily the bodhisattva's deeds, the bodhisattva's practices. So Potowa's lineage that emphasizes the understanding and practice of Atisha's teaching on the basis of the study of these texts is referred to as the "lineage of the great treatises."

1:46:49 And then another lineage that evolved among Atisha's students was where primarily their approach was to ground their explanations on a *lam rim* or *ten rim* (stages of the presentation or stages of the doctrine) approach. This was referred to as the "lineage of stages of the path" or the lineage of *lam rim*. Then they also evolved a third lineage which was referred to as the "lineage of personal instructions" where the emphasis was more on small personal instruction texts that are relevant to specific individual contexts, and so on.

So similarly when you approach the practice of *lam rim* and *lam rim* teaching, even following Tsong-kha-pa's *Lam Rim Chen Mo*, we can find all of these three lineages present. Tsong-kha-pa himself received all the teachings of these three lineages. For example if you look at the *Great Treatise* itself, the basis and much of the supporting kinds of sutras and the classical texts really have to do with the *par chin* literature, the Perfection of Wisdom literature. And in fact in Gyel-tsap Je's text on the perfection of wisdom he, every now and then, actually refers to *Lam Rim Chen Mo*, showing the close connection between the two.

So if you study *Lam Rim Chen Mo* on the basis of these supporting texts then you are primarily following the approach of the Kadam lineage of treatises but you can also follow the *lam rim* practice by kind of concentrating more on the actual *lam rim* genre of texts itself. For example, generally there are many different versions of *lam rim* texts. For example, there is the famous collection of eight great guides to *lam rim, tri chen gye*. There are also many other texts. So if you follow that approach you're following primarily the approach of the lineage of *lam rim* masters. However there are also other shorter texts that again focus more specifically on a small set of instructions. If your approach follows that pattern, then you are following the lineage of personal instructions. So then you can see that even in the context of *lam rim* study and practice one can follow all these three different lineages of the Kadampas.

ATISHA AND THE STAGES OF THE PATH TRADITION

HIS HOLINESS: 1:49:39 [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:50:33 So...

HIS HOLINESS: 1:50:34 [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:50:48 Following Atisha's arrival in Tibet and his composition of the *lam rim* root text, the pattern of the *lam rim* structure and the presentation of the *lam rim* teachings has been adopted in all the four main principal schools of Tibetan Buddhism. For example, if you look at Master Long-chen-pa's text, *Mind at Ease, sem nyi nyal so*, again the presentation of the path in that text follows the basic pattern of Atisha's *lam rim* approach. Similarly if you look at Sakya Pandita's *Clear Elucidation of the Buddha's Intent, tu bay gong sel*, again the text is very clearly following Atisha's structure. In fact *tu bay gong sel*, this Sakya's text, can be seen as providing a kind of a fusion of *lam rim* stages of the path approach teachings with the *lojong* mind-training teachings. Similarly in the Kargyu tradition, Gampopa composed the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*. So in the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* again the basic approach and the pattern and the structure are very similar to Atisha's *lam rim*.

Of course there are sometimes different sequences adopted but basically the stages of the path are very similar. So for example in the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, one speaks of turning one's mind away from four facts, and if you look at these four turnings of mind, turnings away of the mind, again they are very similar to the *lam rim* teachings.

HIS HOLINESS: 1:52:35 [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 1:54:35 So even in the case of Atisha's own teachings, again they can be traced back to Nagarjuna's points, where Nagarjuna in his *Precious Garland* explains that if you examine all the teachings of the Buddha, all the teachings of the Buddha can be classified into two categories related to two aspirations. One aspiration is to attain a fortunate rebirth in a higher realm, and the other aspiration is to obtain ultimate liberation or definite goodness, as he calls it.

And so all the teachings of the Buddha, in one way or another, are related to the fulfillment of these two aspirations. So then how do we attain the fulfillment of our aspiration for better rebirth? This is done through adopting a way of life that is not harming, non-violent. And the heart of that practice is what he calls the approach of cultivating... living one's life on the basis of having a trust and confidence in the law of karma. So the cultivation of a confidence and faith in the law of karma and living one's life according to that conviction is the primary method by which one seeks to fulfill the aspiration to gain a fortunate rebirth.

And the other aspiration is to seek final enlightenment or liberation, and here the primary method is to cultivate an understanding of the ultimate nature of reality. And here ultimate nature of reality is understood primarily in terms of Buddha's teaching on dependent origination in terms of emptiness. And here one needs to cultivate wisdom. So in other words he says that, in brief, the two primary factors that one needs to cultivate and apply in the context of a Buddhist practice are faith or conviction in karma, law of karma, and the wisdom of emptiness.

And when we talk about attainment of final liberation there can be two forms. One is liberation of the individual, liberation from unenlightened existence. But there is also a liberation, attainment of buddhahood, for the benefit of all beings. So earlier, when commenting on Tsong-kha-pa's opening verse, he identified the primary quality of the Buddha's speech as having the ability to fulfill the aspirations of all beings. So this is the aim of the Mahayana practitioner. The Mahayana practitioner's motivation is to bring about the benefit of all beings, and the Mahayana practitioner's aim is to attain Buddhahood for their sake. So, motivated by that, one needs therefore to complement the path of wisdom with *bodhichitta*, awakening mind. In that way one then will be able to attain, bring about, the realization of that final aspiration. So therefore Nagarjuna says that, in brief, the two primary factors in the Buddhist path are *shradda* (faith of conviction, or confidence) in karma and wisdom.

HIS HOLINESS: 1:58:23 [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: So, with relation to the six classical Indian texts we identified that are principal for the Kadampas, there is another perspective which I actually find more helpful. And according to this perspective, the *Jataka Tales* and *Udanavarga*, the *Collection of Aphorisms*, are seen as texts belonging to the cultivation of faith, *shradda* or confidence. And *Bodhisattva Bhumi*, the *Bodhisattva Levels*, and *Ornament of Mahayana Sutras*, these two are related to collections on the bodhisattva ideals and practices. And *Siksamuccaya*, *Compendium of Training*, and *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* are seen as collections pertaining to the cultivation of the view of emptiness. And that's the alternative perspective which I personally find more helpful.

FOUR GREATNESSES OF ATISHA'S TEACHING

HIS HOLINESS: 1:59:53 [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: So with that we've basically dealt with the outline that explains the greatness of the teaching itself by highlighting the authenticity of its origin and the sources. Now we'll be dealing with the next outline which is, "In order to generate faith and conviction in the teaching: explanation of the greatness of the teaching itself."

HIS HOLINESS: 2:00:47 [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 2:05:01 So one of the first qualities of the teaching itself that is identified here is that, with Atisha's teaching on *lam rim*, one of the benefits of this is that an individual practitioner on the basis of this will then be able to come to the realization that among all the teachings of the Buddha there are no contradictions. And the point being made here is that earlier, when we talked about the qualities of Buddha's speech, enlightened speech has the capacity to fulfill the diverse aspirations of countless numbers of beings.

So when we're talking about 'limitless numbers of beings' we are not talking only in terms of numbers. We're also talking in terms of the diversity of mental dispositions of individuals. So with respect to the diversity of the mental dispositions and interests and mental levels of his audience, Buddha has also taught different teachings. So on the basis of... depending upon the level of one's aspiration, one can make distinctions between greater and lesser vehicles, and on the basis of one's mental levels with relation to the understanding of the teaching on wisdom, one can make distinctions between the four classical Buddhist schools of India.

So now if you look at these teachings, if you simply try to understand these teachings at the level of individual texts on the surface themselves, and then compare them against others, there may seem to be a kind of a contradiction between teachings. However, if you have the perspective of Atisha's *lam rim*, then one will be able to understand this diversity of teachings not only in relation to teachings that are suited to different individuals who are different from each other, but one can also understand these diverse teachings in the context of a single practitioner—where all of these different teachings can be applied by a single practitioner progressively as he or she moves forward in his or her realization.

So for example with relation to the teachings on wisdom, there are different levels of subtlety of teaching on no-self. Similarly there is the teaching on the rejection of the reality of the external, objective world of the Mind Only school. Now if we relate these teachings to our own states of mind and the way in which we perceive the world, we can see why some of these teachings can be highly effective in our own case given the states of our realization. For example, if we were to observe our own mind and see how it relates to our own identity, we may sometimes see our own identity as possessing some kind of unitary, eternal, autonomous reality within us that we call self or soul or whatever. And so we can see that we have that kind of grasping. And the Buddha's

teaching that negates that can be immediately applicable for us to dissolve that kind of grasping.

Similarly, if we examine the way in which we relate to the external world, we tend to relate to the external world as if the physical world that is out there possesses some kind of independent reality of its own that is independent of my perception and has some kind of discrete reality. And again the Buddha's teaching on Mind Only can be beneficial in helping us dissolve that kind of grasping.

So we can see that, although some of these teachings may seem contradictory on the surface, if you relate them to the context of an individual who is progressively going through his or her realization and dealing with the various distortions in the mind, one can see that all of these teachings can be applicable in the context of a single individual without any contradiction. So this is one of the benefits of Atisha's teaching.

HIS HOLINESS: 2:09:46 [in Tibetan]

THUPTEN JINPA: 2:12:50 So then Tsong-kha-pa goes on to explain some of the other benefits of the *lam rim* teaching. He says that on that basis one will be able to understand all the teachings of the Buddha as personal instructions. And here the principal point Tsong-kha-pa is making is that it would be a mistake if someone were to adopt the perspective that within the teachings of the Buddha, whether it is in the canonical texts of the *Kangyur* (Sutra) or the commentarial collections, there might be two fundamental categories—one class of texts that are really relevant only for expanding one's knowledge and for more scholastic study, and another category of teachings that are relevant for one's own personal practice.

Tsong-kha-pa says that adopting that kind of a dichotomy between scholastic texts that are not relevant to one's practice and practice texts that have nothing to do with expanding on one's knowledge, that kind of dichotomy is unhelpful. And if you are able to adopt the perspective of *lam rim* teachings as Atisha suggested, then one will be able to understand that in all the teachings of the Buddha there will be elements that are relevant to one's own practice. And in fact all of these teachings will have direct relevance to one's own personal practice, so that one sees all of these in terms of personal instruction. Because there is nothing in the teachings of the Buddha that is not related in one way or another to the disciplining and taming of one's mind and heart. So in this way one can see all the teachings of the Buddha as personal instructions.

Once you're able to do that, then the next greatness that he identifies in the teaching is that one will be able to understand easily, without difficulty, the ultimate intention of the Buddha's teachings. And here, as explained before, the ultimate intentions of the Buddha's teachings are the means to bring about the fulfillment of our aspiration to attain higher, fortunate birth and attain final liberation. So one will be able to understand all the teachings as contributing, in one way or another, to the fulfillment of these aspirations.

And then the final greatness that he identifies is that one will then be saved from the grave error of rejecting the Buddha's teachings, rejecting the Dharma. And here Tsongkha-pa gives a lot of reasoning, but also he cites a lot of quotations from the Buddha's teachings. And he particularly cites from the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* where Buddha states that, for a Bodhisattva practitioner, he or she must cultivate the understanding of all the aspects of the path, must actually generate all the aspects of the path within, and must then engage in the actual application of all the aspects of the path.

Similarly, because one's aspiration is to help to bring about the realization of the wishes of myriads of sentient beings with such diverse mental dispositions, one must cultivate the understanding of diverse teachings and diverse approaches, and in this way one will be able to fulfill the aspirations of others as well.

And historically in Tibet, for example, there have been, among the Tibetan masters, a tradition of masters engaging in the study and practice of all the lineages—Sakya, Kargyu, Gelug, Nyingma, including Jonang as well—and adopting a nonsectarian approach, and not only engaging in the study of all of this, but also implementing in one's practice all the teachings of these various lineages as well, which is an excellent model.

HIS HOLINESS: 2:17:27 So now stop. So after a long flight—India to London, London now here—okay. Now I'm looking forward to a long sleep tonight. Thank you.