

Welcome to *Khenpo Tamphel's* online course 27/3, 2021

Bodhicittavivarana (Exposition of the Awakening Mind) by Nagarjuna



Arya Nagarjuna is considered to be the second Buddha. He came at a time when Buddha's teachings in general, and the Mahayana in particular, were declining, on the verge of extinction. After fully realizing the Buddha's mind, he heroically reestablished and revitalized Buddha's unadulterated teachings, particularly, Mahayana and Vajrayana. He brought the *Prajnaparamita* (Perfection of Wisdom) in 100,000 Verses that was available only in the naga realm to the human world. He transmitted the wisdom lineage of the profound view of emptiness from Manjushri. Nagarjuna was also the holder of the Distant Lineage of Mahamudra that came from Buddha Shakyamuni to Saraha through Buddha's disciples Avalokiteshvara and Manjughosha, who appeared as the bodhisattvas Ratnamti and Sukhanata. Flying with the wing of sharp wisdom, through logical reasoning, he sincerely retaught the two truths (relative [causality] and ultimate [reality nature]), reintroduced the nature of *sunyata* (emptiness) which is beyond all boundaries and elaborations, and established the Middle Way school through *Mulamadhyamakakarika*, which transcends all misconceptions including the extremes of eternalism and nihilism as well as the Mind Only view which thrived at that time. His masterworks in this area include the *Six Collections of Reasoning*. Knowing that buddhahood cannot be attained without the wing of generating the awakening mind (the desire to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings), thus, he composed praises not just to the Buddha, the dharmakaya, the result; but also to those who contribute to the result. For example, in *Bodhicittavivarana* (Exposition of the Awakening Mind), he explained what the awakening mind (both relative and ultimate) is and how to attain it. In *Sattvaradhanastavam* (Praise to Pleasing Sentient Beings), he regarded honoring sentient beings as important as honoring Buddhas since sentient beings are the basis of all our attainments, from generation of the awakening mind to achieving buddhahood. Arya Nagarjuna's deep compassion for sentient beings can be seen in *Suhrillekha* (Letter to a Friend) and *Ratnavali* (Precious Garland) where he explained the quintessence of Buddha's teachings especially on karma causes and effects in form of heartfelt advices that can be applied not just by the King, but by everybody from all walks of life, even nowadays for us. He is undoubtedly a major exponent of the Mahayana Buddhism. As a great tantric master especially on the anuttarayoga tantra *Guhyasamaja*, he composed commentaries, *Pancakrama* (the Five Stages) and so on expounding the quintessence to meditation yogis.

Most of the details of his life were passed down in form of legends, so it is hard to check their validity; however, in *Vimalakirti Nirdesha* sutra, the Buddha foretold that Vimalakirti would be reborn under the name of Nagarjuna four hundred years after Buddha's parinirvāṇa. Nagarjuna's coming was also mentioned in many sutras such as the *Lankavatara Sutra*, the *Mahamegha Sutra*, the *Manjushrigarbha* and many others. Regarding his life, it was said that he lived around the 1st and 2nd century and was born into a brahmin family in Southern India. At birth, his parents consulted an astrologer who told them that the baby would live for just seven days, but if they made offerings to one hundred monks, his life could be extended to seven years; however no further than that. His parents performed the offering joyfully. Unable to bear the suffering of losing their child, just before he turned seven, his parents sent him away, but he arrived at Nalanda where he met the great Mahasiddha Saraha (Rahulabhadra). Under Saraha's care and guidance, he was ordained and initiated into a tantric practice of Amitabha and Amitayus. He attained accomplishments and his life was substantially prolonged. Being gifted and diligent, he became a scholar proficient in all branches of knowledges, including, the science of medicine and alchemy. In addition, by studying sutras and tantra with Saraha, especially on mahamudra and the secret anuttarayoga tantra of Guhyasamajua, he became a great master in sutras and tantras. He was once the abbot of Nalanda responsible for students' sustenance, high learning and

pure conduct. He dispelled monks who were not keeping the precepts and defeated numerous debaters. His vast activities also include charity works such as feeding the victims of prolonged famines through turning iron into gold, erecting temples, stupas and so on. As mentioned, he travelled to the realm of the nagas to turn the Dharma wheel and to recover the *Prajnaparamita* to the human realm. Some said that that was how his name Nagajuna (he who has the power over the nagas) came about. On one occasion, he also traveled to Northern Continent to teach where he befriended a boy who later became King Gautamiputra to whom he gave heartfelt advices especially on morality based on causality. These accessible advices are documented in *Suhrlekha* (Letter to a Friend) and *Ratnavali* (Jewel Garland). According to most Indian and Tibetan sources, Nagarjuna, who was skilled in longevity practices and had magical ability to extend his life, lived six hundred years. But it's not clear if he was a single person or a composite figure, a mythology molded out of multiple teachers named Nagarjuna of that place and time.

Anyhow, as the founder of the Madhyamaka school, Arya Nagarjuna's philosophy had a deep influence on the Mahayana, and especially on Tibetan Buddhism. He is thought to be one of the principal developers of the two truths doctrine. He is one of the six great commentators (the Six Ornaments) on Buddha's teachings. His commentaries cover all three turnings of the wheel as well as the secrete mantra Vajrayana. He is also counted among the eight-four mahasiddhas, and among the eight vidyadharas. Lord Jigten Sumgön, the founder of the Drikung Kagyu Lineage, who came also at the time when Buddhism declined, was renown as the 'second Nagarjuna' because, just like Nagarjuna did, he ratified and revitalized Buddha's teachings and whose deeds have great resemblance to those of Nagarjuna. Through Nagarjuna's prolific writings, the essence of Buddha's teachings flourish; his wisdom and compassion will definitely continue to benefit countless sentient beings far and wide for generations to come. Nagarjuna's most prominent disciple was Aryadeva, the author of *Catuhshataka* (The Four Hundred Verses on the Middle Way).

Exposition of the Awakening Mind (Tib. *byang chub sems kyi 'grel pa*; Skt. *Bodhicittavivarana*) is the quintessence of the Buddha's teachings and Nagarjuna's heartfelt pith instructions that point out how to attain perfect enlightenment. Buddha explained the importance of the awakening mind: "To accomplish the benefit of self and others, there is no other means in the world apart from the awakening mind;" its merits: "The attainment of powers, stages, levels/bhumis, and buddhahood are aspects of the awakening mind;" and its characteristics: "The awakening mind is free from any concepts such as self, aggregates, mind and so on; it is characterized by emptiness; it is moistened by compassion; one must cultivate it with effort." Based on Buddha's teaching, Nagarjuna explains how such amazing aspiration awakening mind can be generated. Then once it is generated, how we can utilize our wisdom awareness to penetrate into emptiness (*sunyata*) by means of his unprecedented Middle Way approach to perfect the ultimate awakening mind and to rid misconceptions that obstruct us and bind us to samsara. Thus, this comprehensive, yet very short, meditation manual can lead us to perfect enlightenment if we take it to heart and meditate on it diligently. Khenpo Tamphel will guide us to understand these precious instructions in great detail.

Venerable Khenpo Konchog Tamphel was born in 1975 in Ladakh, India. At age nine, he became a monk at Lamayuru Monastery, one of the three main Drikung Kagyu monasteries in Ladakh. After completing his basic monastic education, he joined the Drikung Kagyu Institute in Dehra Dun in 1987 where he studied the various branches of Buddhist philosophy for nine years and received the degree of Acharya in 1997. Since then he has served as a translator for His Holiness Chetsang Rinpoche and His Eminence Garchen Rinpoche, taught and worked as a research officer at the Songtsen Library (an important institution and resource for Buddhist Studies), taught at various Drikung Kagyu Dharma Centers worldwide, translated and published rare Drikung Kagyu texts from Tibetan to English. His translated works includes *Water Crystal* (based on a commentary of the Ganges Mahamudra by H.H. Chetsang Rinpoche), *Introduction to Mahamudra the Co-emergent Unification* by Lord Jigten Sumgön and *Shamatha to Mahamudra* by Yongzin Ngedon Gyatso. He earned his Khenpo degree in 2004. Since 2012, he has been heading the Ratnasri Translation Group for 84000 Dharma Translation. Since 2013, he has been teaching and assisting on research projects at the University of Vienna including the project "Neue Erwägungen zur Buddha-Natur" (new considerations on Buddha nature).

Khenpo Tamphel teaches in English. This is a perfect opportunity to learn about our mind, our buddha nature, and how to totally reveal it through bodhicitta (relative and ultimate) by studying this profound and important text in depth with such a highly qualified and beloved teacher.

Ny Tid:	lördag 27/3 (med en kort paus)
Kursavgift:	300 kr. som går till Khenpo Tamphels dharma-aktiviteter.
Anmälan:	senast söndagen 14/3 till info@ratnashri.se samt insättning på pg 1287806-2. Zoom-länken skickas ut dagen innan undervisning, därefter görs ingen återbetalning. Undervisningstexten skickas elektroniskt till samtliga deltagare.

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