

## Welcome to Khenpo Tamphel 's teaching on Bodhicittavivarana (Commentary on Bodhicitta) by Nagarjuna, Jan. 6-8, 2023



**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 realized 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 generating the awakening mind or bodhicitta—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 such as the awakening mind or bodhicitta. For example, in *Bodhicittavivarana*, he explained what the bodhicitta is (both relative and ultimate) 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 bodhicitta or 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, 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.

In *Vimalakirti Nirvedha* 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 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. In addition, by studying sutras and tantras with Saraha, especially on mahamudra and the secret anuttarayoga tantra of *Guhyasamaja*, 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. 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 advices are documented in *Suhrillekha* (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 has not been verified.

Anyhow, as the founder of the Madhyamaka school, Arya Nagarjuna's philosophy had a deep influence on all 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 secret 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 renowned 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.

**Commentary on the Bodhicitta** (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 bodhicitta or 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 bodhicitta can be generated. Then once it is generated, how we can utilize our wisdom awareness to penetrate into emptiness by means of his unprecedented Middle Way approach to perfect the ultimate bodhicitta 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 taught the introduction last time, he will start from verse 1. Khenpo Tamphel teaches in English. This is a perfect opportunity to learn together with such a highly qualified and beloved teacher.

**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 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).

**Tid:** fredagen och lördag **6-7/1**, kl. 9 – 12 och 14-17 (med paus) samt söndagen **8/1**, kl. 9 – 12 (med paus)

**Plats:** **Ratnashri Meditation Center**, Friggavägen 11, Lidingö (se vägbeskrivningen nedan)

**Kursavgift:** 1 350 kr, texten och enkel vegetarisk lunch ingår (enstaka dag 600 kr)

**Anmälan:** anmäl senast 4 jan. till [info@ratnashri.se](mailto:info@ratnashri.se) med insättning av kursavgift på pg 1287806-2

Vänligen ta med er om ni har [Drikung Kagyu Prayer Book](#) och [Ratnashri Book of Prayers](#).

Med hänsyn till COVID-19 är det viktigt att du inte deltar i kursen om du har något symptom. Undvik folkmassor veckorna innan kursen. Utför ett COVID-test inom 24 timmar innan kursen då ett negativt resultat krävs för att få delta.

**Ratnashri Meditation Center (Friggavägen 11, Lidingö, telefon 08-765 5878)**

Vägbeskrivning: T-bana Ropsten, buss till Lidingö Centrum (201,204,205,206,207,211,212,221).

Följ Odenvägen till vänster. Ta till vänster in på Friggavägen och gå rakt fram till Friggavägen 11.