

TEACHINGS ON THE GREAT TREATISE

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

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Text and audio files of full presentation available on www.lamrim.com

Day 1

Infinite altruism is the Buddhist path.

The teaching on Dependent Origination lays the groundwork for the most important teaching in Buddhism, which is the sustained awareness of the Wisdom of Emptiness.

In order to achieve the Wisdom of Emptiness, one must stop grasping at the belief of the intrinsic nature of the *self* or a permanent "I." Then one must stop grasping all views of reality other than this.

His Holiness spoke of the three types of practitioners. The first type of practitioner is one who wishes for a better rebirth into a higher realm. The second type of practitioner seeks a fortunate rebirth by cultivating the conviction in the law of karma. The third type of practitioner seeks Definite Goodness. This is the cultivation of ultimate reality or the Wisdom of Emptiness.

There is a wide diversity of mental dispositions in human beings and each of the three Yanas (Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana) has teachings that address this wide variety of dispositions.

Some of the Buddhist teachings may seem to be contradictory, but they are actually aimed at each individual because of the different mental dispositions and who is dealing with their own mental distortions. Thus the teachings of the Buddha are personalized instructions.

All of the teachings of the Buddha have relevance for the individual in taming one's mind and heart.

One must cultivate all aspects of the path.

Day 2

Feelings are part of the mind. To reduce mental afflictions depends on one's mental attitude. One needs firm conviction that it is possible to reduce mental afflictions. In Buddhism, this is typically done from an introspective analysis of the five Skandas.

Humility is the maximum way to transform the mind.

There are 2 sets of cause and effect. The first set has to do with origin of afflictions and the origin of the root afflictions of unenlightened existence. The second set of cause and effects arises as a result of happiness and the aspiration for all sentient beings to be happy, concurrent with the individual wish to achieve enlightenment.

Determination and aspiration are necessary to achieve the Wisdom of Emptiness. One must apply the use of intelligence for the perfection of Emptiness to be perceived.

The Wisdom that realizes the Emptiness is complemented by Bodhicitta. This generates the perfection of Emptiness.

Live the ideas that you teach.

All phenomena are devoid of inherent existence and free of the duality of subject and object.

Reflect critically on your own understanding of these teachings. Internalize the teaching and get your own personal flavor of Emptiness. This is what generates compassion. There is no doubt that compassion will arise from awakening the ultimate mind.

The teachings are generally individualized for the student for bringing about the cultivation of Definite Goodness which is the Wisdom of Emptiness.

The first priority is to understand the Buddhist teaching on the Emptiness of *self*.

The third of the Four Noble Truths is the most important. It is the truth of cessation. It is the most important because it is the way in which depression is avoided when overly focused on the recognition and source of suffering which are the first two noble truths.

The deepest suffering of all is called the suffering of conditioning. Conditioned suffering is the suffering of karma and its related afflictions. The Skandas are the fruits of karma and thus the condition for future suffering.

The second type of suffering is the suffering of change. This is related to the attempt to sustain states of pleasure, which is impossible.

The first type of suffering is mundane suffering that covers everything from bodily aches and pains to traffic accidents. Even animals avoid such mundane suffering.

All practices must be coupled to the teachings of *no self* and its cultivation. This makes it a Buddhist practice.

Liberation is freedom from the bondage of karma, its afflictions, conceptualizations and cyclic rebirth. Liberation is a state of mind.

Recognize that you are drowning in an ocean of suffering.

The conception of a *self* is the root of conditioned suffering and cyclic existence.

Grasping at *self* is an innate mental state. It is natural but is not correct and its perception is not in accord with reality. We need to ask constantly if our mental states are correct and in accord with reality.

Grasping at *self* is ignorance. It is distorted nature. It must be differentiated from true reality. We tend to react to events and objects based on this grasping. We need a method to know the true way of being, which is Emptiness.

We have a naïve perception of things having *self* existence. All such perceptions and things and *self* existence are unstable.

The mind is not really polluted. Everyone can experience loving kindness and compassion.

One must undermine the solidity of grasping by developing the Wisdom of Emptiness.

He who sees Dependent Origination, ignorance will not arise.

Ignorance is grasping at existence as having *self* existence.

Dependent Origination is the first way of looking at Emptiness. This is called relational dependence on other causes and conditions. Life is an openness to relationship. Therefore there is no *self*-existence. This is the most precious way to achieve liberation.

You need to engage in other people's pain appropriately using the six perfections, for example, and in this way, there is a very good attachment.

Genuine happiness is free from suffering and its causes.

An undisciplined, untamed mind is the source of all suffering.

You cannot know reality from one angle. You must look from different angles.

Doubt and skepticism are important because it will lead to critical intelligence and questions that need to be asked.

The mind is dominated by the power of afflictions. At the beginning of the path each affliction needs an antidote. All teachings are about taming the untamed state of mind. There are many diverse teachings. According to the Buddha, there are 84,000 types of afflictions. And because of this, there are 84,000 types of teachings and antidotes.

Logical evidence comes from studying the nature, dependence and function of phenomena.

There are two types of meditation. The first is analytical meditation, as discussed above. And the second is called absorptive meditation having to do with concentration, calm abiding and insight.

Opposing forces are a part of nature, such as love and hate.

Pleasure and opportunity are the purposes of human existence. Then the question becomes how do you make your human existence meaningful? It is through the extinguishing of the suffering of all beings by or through extinguishing one's own suffering.

Students have three capacities. The first is to stop the behavior of the afflictions. The second is to cease grasping of the source of afflictions. And the third is to end distorted views of reality.

Depending on your aspiration, there is a teaching for it.

It starts with the cessation of afflictions in one's (conception of a) *self*.

The root is ignorance of true existence.

Eliminate obscurations first. Remove the obstacles that obscure the natural quality of awakened mind.

Karma is a mental factor in the mind.

Day 3

The basis of survival is affection as a social animal. Affection and love precede religion and are basic human values seen in almost all infant-mother relationships. If it's missing, it is pathological.

Buddhism rejects a *self* that is independent of mental and physical elements.

A creator God is a concept but it includes love. Buddhism is non-theistic and believes in the law of causes and causality. Causes are the creator. It is not possible to find the beginning of life. Thus every event has its own causes and is part of a continuum.

The Buddha said, "Because of this there is that, because it has arisen, this arises." Things do not come into being because of a prior intelligence. The causes for something to come into being are themselves impermanent and also their corresponding causes.

If you posit a beginning, then you must look at two possibilities. The first is that the beginning is an uncaused event or secondly, that there is a permanent eternal cause.

Buddhism rejects both of these because neither can produce an effect. Thirdly, if you posit a beginning, it is because of ignorance. Conditionality simply arises.

Things arise from their previous continuum, such as an embryo arising from the parents' regenerative fluids. A cause cannot occur that did not share a similar characteristic with the effect. Thus there is no beginning of the *self* and no end.

One is seized by the "Iron Hook" of Emptiness.

Constantly observe your own mind to make your existence meaningful.

When you get up in the morning, make a determination to implement the teachings. Then review what you did at the end of the day.

Seek a Nirvana without residue.

Ultimate mind is luminous and knowing. Nothing undermines the continuity of this. The Wisdom of Emptiness has a knowing factor and a movement or energy. This consciousness continues to exist past one's lifetime. When this mind is realized, the Four Kayas manifest. These are the four embodiments of the four Wisdom bodies of the Buddha. At this time, body, speech and mind become inseparable.

The 37 practices of a Bodhisattva lead you to becoming an Arhat. But the 6 perfections (paramitas) will lead you to Buddhahood. Buddha cannot cease to exist. Take refuge in this!

You have to experience and know the force of suffering. Strive to contemplate the cause of suffering. This must be the motivation to sever the roots of cyclic existence.

Your afflictions are composed of karmic conditioning and grasping at a false *self*. These are called *compositional factors*.

Impermanence is the first of the four seals of Buddhism (Dependent Origination, Emptiness and Nirvana – the cessation of suffering are the other three). Everything is subject to change on a moment to moment basis. Everything is very transient. The momentary nature of phenomena is under the power of the causes and conditions of karma and its afflictions. The fundamental causes are ignorance and inauspicious conditions.

The root of suffering is the grasping associated with the oppositional forces of the four seals.

You must contemplate suffering to understand the Buddhist teachings.

Afflictions disturb the mental equilibrium. There are two types of emotions. The first are called spontaneous emotions, which are usually negative, especially anger and hatred.

The second has to do with cultivated emotions such as empathy, love and compassion which are positive.

There are two types of afflictions. One is cognitive and the other is affective. Cognitive afflictions are the hardest to work with.

Some of the antidotes for afflictions actually act as a suppression and therefore in the long run are not considered complete antidotes. Antidotes that eradicate completely are Wisdom antidotes.

The universal antidote is the Wisdom of Emptiness. It reveals the constructive nature of the affliction. *We react to objects that are unconstructed, unborn and Empty.* Scientifically, it has been shown that 90% of human reactivity to another person is a projection. It is a false attentional process due to aversion and attachment. Renunciation of grasping and the Emptiness of *self* must be accompanied by meritorious or virtuous acts.

Somebody who harms you is ultimately led to Buddhahood.

One cannot perceive another's level of realization.

The active form of mis-knowing is called ignorance.

Karmic seeds are planted in the six mental consciousnesses. The long term imprint is the "I."

Craving is an internal affair and attachment is an external affair. The continuity of karma is the problem.

Loving kindness does not oppose or eradicate ignorance. Only the Wisdom of Emptiness does so.

The Principal Path is Wisdom. It is not just Emptiness, it is the total clarity of Emptiness.

The practitioner needs special insight by physical and mental suppleness from analysis by Shamata (calm abiding). Training in concentration is therefore essential.

The Mahayana path is travel from a place of joy to a place of joy.

Day 4

The concept of interdependency is the basis of altruism. When things are seen as independent, they can receive the projection of dangerous, fearful, etc.

Bodhicitta is the conviction that recognizes the possibility of happiness and the cessation of suffering. This conviction cultivates compassion for others and the Wisdom of enlightenment for both self and other. This is called the awakening mind.

The principle element of Bodhicitta has its roots in compassion. There are 2 aspects to compassion:

1. Affection, such as the affection of a mother for her child, and a child for her mother.
2. Concern for a person who is suffering and the wish to bring about the relief of that suffering.

Compassion is a mental state.

We need to know more about the suffering that we want people to be relieved from. Not just mundane day-to-day suffering or the suffering of change in general, but the conditioned suffering in particular. Then you attain true renunciation of its causes.

When you extend this desire of the renunciation of the causes of conditioned suffering, genuine compassion arises.

The deeper your knowledge of suffering, the deeper the aspiration and ability to see the destructive nature of afflictions. One then generates the aspiration to be free of afflictions and its propensities of subtle obscurations. This also arises as a desire to renunciate.

There are two methods in the Buddhist path to cultivate compassion. It is important to cultivate a sense of affection and connection to other human beings.

The first method is called the 7 point analysis (Recognizing that all sentient beings have been our mother in a past life, Reflecting on the kindness of all beings, Meditating on repaying their kindness, Meditating on love, Meditating on compassion, Generating the extraordinary attitude of universal responsibility, The actual development of bodhicitta)

The 7 point analysis is about other human beings being related to you. It has an element of projection because it is seeing others as family and friends and the corresponding attitudes associated with that relationship. It generates ordinary compassion, which is the perception we have of other people's behavior towards us.

The second is called Tonglen practice. Nagarjuna is in the lineage of Tonglen.

Tonglen is the practice of seeing other humans and all sentient beings as equal. It is the practice of the lineage of "great waves." A higher caliber practitioner practices Tonglen because it requires reason and intellect to consider others equal and able to exchange oneself for the other. This cultivates genuine compassion, which is the ability to relate at a basic human level of equality. Other's behavior is secondary.

Tonglen practice begins with meditation on equanimity. You bring your attitude about others into focus as having no distance (between self and other). You then cultivate an attitude of all others being dear to you.

Altruism is the fruition of compassion.

Altruistic resolve is working for the welfare of others. How do I do this? What are my capacities and limitations?

The ultimate aim is to bring about the benefit of others. One must concurrently cultivate Wisdom.

You must have an aspiration to seek enlightenment. You must have this conviction of realizing it is in one's own mental continuum. Afflictions can be eliminated as part of this conviction. Even the subtle propensities can be eliminated.

Full omniscience is based on the most subtle forms of consciousness, such as the Four Kayas and Clear Light.

With Wisdom, one focuses on enlightenment.

Tsongkapa defines Bodhicitta as the state of mind of aspiration.

1. The aspiring level of Bodhicitta is the single pointed aspiration to achieve enlightenment for all sentient beings.
2. The engaged level of Bodhicitta is to seek the complete, right causes and conditions for Buddhahood.

Cultivate the aspiring mind through the six perfections (paramitas).

You need Wisdom for conviction and ascertainment.

You have to make your mind receptive to Emptiness.

Purifying and increasing merit will make the mind supple.

Your progress as a Bodhisattva is based on the cultivation of the Wisdom of Emptiness.

The reason you have fixed numbers and lists in Buddhist philosophy, such as the 6 perfections are for specific purposes, such as the Four Noble Truths and also to dispel confusion.

The first of the six perfections is generosity. Generosity to benefit others. Generosity is the giving of protection from fear.

The second perfection is morality. Bodhisattvas guard against *self*-cherishing thoughts.

As long as there is a tremendous diversity of human personalities, there will be a tremendous amount of spiritual vehicles to bring a person to enlightenment.

These three: pointing to, leading towards and settling in Emptiness - comprise all the teachings of the Buddha and thus all teachings of the Buddha point to the Wisdom of Emptiness.

Public Talk Day Four

To love one must listen and learn. So generate a good heart.

I have 3 basic commitments:

1. Human value. This is the basic need for happiness that all humans share.
2. Buddhist. To promote harmony among the different traditions.
3. Tibet. I am now actually a senior advisor and not the head of the political system of Tibet.

Our mind is really important for Good Heart.

Calmness increases self confidence. You can see things as they are and you see things as realistic.

Our survival depends on taking care of others.

Biology and basic human values have nothing to do with religion.

Learn to reason, learn to listen.

To develop external disarmament, one must have internal disarmament. The reduction of fear and negative attitudes is internal disarmament.

There are 2 kinds of religions:

1. Theistic Religion in which God means intrinsic love;
2. Non-theistic religion, which is Buddhism. Buddhism is based on the law of causality.

More anger, more trouble – more compassion, less trouble.

Affection comes from conception and birth. Faith comes later in religious practice.

Love precedes religion.

The practice of compassion is directed to one's self first.

The value we place on love and affection does not come from the guru or from God, but from your mother.

Religious people need compassion.

How do we help the children of this world?

1. We need to provide maximum care for mothers.
2. There must be education of the parents.
3. There must be ethical training for the children.

Day 5

The reason you pray to Buddha is to become Buddha.

Buddhism offers the possibility of the elimination of all wrong views.

To realize sangha is to realize a true dharma within, which is the cessation of suffering. Then sangha arises.

The meaning of the prajna paramita chant is that the ordinary present mind must be eliminated through shamata-vipassana.

Shamata-vipassana are cultivating qualities that are already present in our mind. We know how to concentrate and how to differentiate qualities of the object of concentration. We are applying effort to deepen that innate capacity.

You must work on the prerequisites to tranquil abiding, such as a quiet place, the opportunity for practice, etc. It is recommended that your left hand be below the right hand with the two thumbs together. The elbows are not touching the side of your body.

The position of the eyes is different in different meditative traditions. In Dzochen training, the eyes are straight ahead at the horizon. Kamilashila taught that one should look up with the eyes.

One can choose any external object or internal feeling for one pointed concentration. Depending on your emotional temperament, you need to choose objects that are appropriate for tranquility. You want objects that diminish afflictions.

It is not the physical thing, but the image of it in our mind that we concentrate upon.

You can use your own mind or Emptiness which is the most profound object, but it must be already realized to do so, so don't start with that.

Our mind is caught in external stimuli or internal sensation. The mere knowing function of differentiating reality gets obscured.

One must capture the luminosity (Shamata) and knowing (insight), so our mind does not get hijacked into the past or future.

Use a small image of the Buddha and imagine it is very bright, so the light keeps you alert. Then imagine the image is heavy which will decrease excitement. These are the two basic remedies for a mind that is too dull or excited. When your mind is excited think of suffering and if it becomes lax, then think of the joy of compassion.

The key is the application of mindfulness, so you do not lose your object of concentration. There is mindfulness which is that attention retained without laxity or excitement and a meta-awareness that lets you know you've lost your concentration.

You can use the breath as the object and it will be quite settling.

You start with Shamata and go through the nine stages of it until your mind is supple. Then you work on insight.

All Buddhist schools agree that grasping at the *self* is the root of afflictions. This is grasping at the falsification of the object. It is devoid of *self* existence. It is absent of independent existence.

Learning critical reflection and the two types of meditation are the keys to daily practice.

You must reason and have critical analysis to determine what is a definitive sutra of the Buddha.

Chapter 24 in Nagarjuna's Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way is the key chapter.

The teaching on Emptiness is to help distorted states of mind, especially grasping at a *self* and its base, the Skandas.

Across the entire spectrum of phenomena, the existence of such is negated.

One must reject objective intrinsic reality of phenomena. The combination of Shamata and Vipassana brings the total calming of perceptual elaboration. Nagarjuna called this Suchness.

How do we grasp at the *self*? What is our style? You must ascertain how you do it in order to cut the root of grasping.

We are negating the manner in which we perceive the other to exist. It is subtle. What is being negated is the way we have been conditioned to perceive other.

Listen to this section in the latter half for the actual 2 points that are being negated.

The meaning of Emptiness is Dependent Origination.

Dependently designated means that phenomena are dependent not independent. Designated means it is not nothing.

Day 6

Emptiness is complemented with Bodhicitta.

Bodhicitta is the unique condition to attain Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings. It is the awakening mind. Seize the awakening mind by the ritual recommended by Tsongkapa in Volume 2 of the Lam Rim Chen Mo.

There is no possibility of enlightenment without exchanging your happiness with the suffering of others.

You can only make your life meaningful with Bodhicitta.

How do you correctly identify the object of negation?

Veering into Emptiness.

Purification of conceptual elaborations is done 3 ways (Dharma flavor analysis):

1. What are the causes of phenomena to arise?
2. Look at the phenomena *itself*.
3. Look at the effects of phenomena.

It is unfindable that phenomena have any *self* reality. Nothing can be found. But the problem is that does not mean nothing exists.

Dependent Origination is infallible. Dependent Origination looks at the arising. Emptiness looks at the ultimate reality. These two perspectives must be held until they merge.

You can't get to the ultimate without seeing worldly conventions (arising phenomena) as Dependent Origination.

You have to distinguish between apprehension and perception and what it is in relationship with. The context must be considered.

Objects do not contain the perceptions that our senses give to them.

The challenge is that after you negate objective reality and its intrinsic existence, how do you manage reality in that aftermath? Reality can only be nominally defined, such as biology, genes, etc.

How to proceed:

1. Analyze and have a reasoning process that the subject of analysis is unfindable.
2. Yet these arisings are there. How do we understand this existence? It is a nominal existence (name only).
3. Then relate it to Dependent Origination. Dependent Origination is the king among all reasonings. Because things are dependently originated, they are contingent on other things.
4. It can only be a relational existence. Thus it is only a nominal existence.
5. Relate it to how things appear to me now. How am I perceiving my world?
6. Dependent Origination leads to Emptiness. Emptiness leads to Dependent Origination.

With the infallible reality of Dependent Origination, the object of grasping is totally dismantled. You have arrived.

The form is not being emptied. The form *itself* is empty. Take the form as we perceive it then negate its existence.

Once you get that a person is empty, then you apply that knowledge to the person's mind, body, etc. This process is then applied to *yourself*.

The End