Sutra and Tantra: The Profound and Miraculous

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Lesson 10: Magic Body, Clear Light, and Complete Buddhahood

Reading:
Brilliant Illumination of the Lamp of the Five Stages
(The American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2010)
Final verses, pages 574–577
Thus, as prophesied to teach the ultimate definitive meaning of the Sūtras, the ultimate of all Sūtras, the sole jewel of the three worlds, the Glorious Esoteric Community, the great king of Tantras famous as the sun and moon, the Savior Nāgārjuna, father and sons, having realized the meaning, elucidated it as they had seen it themselves, and fully and clearly explained all the meanings of the keys of the glorious Five Stages. If you do not understand well the lower paths and theories from which this is distinctive, then you will not understand the subtle and extraordinary distinctive specialties of the higher paths and theories. And especially, if you do not develop the precise intellectual discernment derived from cultivating the ultimate, definitive meaning, profound voidness and the definitive meaning Sūtras, and the extremely subtle reasoning processes of the Savior Nāgārjuna, you will not discover the key of the general path that leads to liberation and omniscience. And in particular, you will not identify well the essence of the subjects of the two nondual [Father and Mother] Tantras, the orgasmic intuitive wisdom from practicing the join-ing of bliss [311a] and void; though you will admire it, you will see it as merely a matter of faith.

Therefore, I studied well the treatises of our own and others’ schools, our Individual and Universal Vehicles, [the latter with] both its Transcendence and Mantra Vehicles, and the four classes of Vajra Vehicle Tantras. Further, through intensive practice I conducted far-reaching investigations concerning the way of leading the disciple through the processes of the completion of the body of each particular path, adorned by the specific appropriate personal instruction, concerning the determining of voidness and, having determined it, meditating it, and concerning the way of explaining the specific systems of the Community as above explained. [Then, taking] the full measure of the Tibetan translations of the Indian treatises of the Noble literature, and all the personal instructions [connected with these], I comparatively connected well the Root Tantra and the Explanatory Tantras. [Then,] I prayed far-reaching and encountered distinctively excellent signs for composing a treatise. [Thus,] with the pure motivation to restore to excellence the extremely degenerated Community system of the Noble literature and to see it endure for a long time without degenerating [again], I wrote [this treatise].
The supreme lamp dispelling beings’ mental darkness,
The sole mine of all jewels of good eloquence,
Peerless Teacher, crown of all philosophers,
The pervasive Lord, Glorious Vajradhara King,
Taught more than two million two billion
Of Unexcelled Yoga Tantras.

Thus, like an emperor among the kings of earth,
Surrounded by retinues of fabulous Tantras,
Ruling the continent of jewel Sūtras,
Fulfilling the hopes of the thousand bodhisattvas.
Serving as the summit of all the Sūtras—
Such is the Glorious Community, King of Tantras.

Having consummated all stages by its path,
The supreme adept Nāgārjunapāda
Well elucidated its hidden intention,
And [that intentions] was developed
By Āryadeva, Nāgabodhi,
Śākyamitra, and Chandrakīrti—
Who composed this feast of new true eloquence,
The supreme Illumination of the Lamp, illuminating
All the key points of the five stages,
Dispelling all the darkness of nonunderstanding and misunderstanding,
About the Five Stages, itself the essence of true eloquence.

The Sūtras in general and especially the Noble tradition,
Having tremendously declined for a very long time,
To discern the hard to fathom meaning of the Tantra,
The contemplation playing in bliss, is indeed difficult.

Still, by this performer of good evolutionary action,
Exceedingly blest with a good share of discerning genius,
Schooled in critical discernment by the vast sphere
Of the intelligence of [my] many expert [teachers],
Rich with treasures of insight that restored me
And energized [my mind] beyond all doubt—
For [you, you] superior ones, here at this end of time,
This unprecedented lucid teaching cannot not be given.

Having worked hard on this way, and researched afar,
I have composed, analyzing well and in detail;
Yet my mind inadequate, the Tantra’s meaning hard to
fathom,
Therefore whatever errors I have committed,
As loving parents still hold as wondrous
Even the errors of speech of their little child,
So may the divine host of Akṣobhyavajra
And the masterful beings please do likewise! [312a]

For someone who does not take the treatises as personal
instructions
—Unskilled in our and others’ theories, content with
prejudice,
Not struggling with the subtleties of the path of reason—
To take up the key points of a path so long lost [to the
world],
Is like for a child who climbs up on a stone stand
To struggle wildly to catch the sun—
Such a one can be said only to be well-meaning.
Thus, it is right [only] for the discerning to make the
effort.

For even the slightest sliver of your deeds
To enter the heart is so rare and precious,
Yet you made the well hidden meaning brilliantly clear—
May Your Holiness, Wisdom Treasure, please protect me!

By whatever good evolutionary force I gain,
By making effort on this treatise,
Seeing which and thinking over its meaning
Captivates the mind of the wise.
As a lover’s heart is [enchanted]
By the form of a beautiful woman,
May all beings understand precisely
The key points of the Tantras, so hard to discern,
And then accomplish their [profound] meaning,
And so proceed to the state of Vajradhara!

As long as the axial mountain Meru stands in the stamen
Of the eight-petalled lotus of earth’s continents,
So long may this true eloquence, for fortunate beings,
Long make clear the ultimate [meaning] of the path!

And may I from now for all my lives,
Never be apart from this ultimate of paths,
And may I always please the holy spiritual friend,
The peerless root of the mass of excellence!

[COLOPHON]
Thus, as for this Brilliant Illumination of the Lamp of All Key Meanings of the Profound Five Stages, the Essence of the King of Tantras, The Glorious Esoteric Community—due to being repeatedly petitioned to write down a clear and detailed version of the keys of the path of the Five Stages, taking with the crown of my head the dust from the feet of the holy mentors such as His Holiness reverend Khyungpo Lhaspa and His Holiness reverend [Rendawa] Kumāramati, the Glorious Esoteric Community yogī and learned mendicant, the Easterner Tsong Khapa Losang Drakpay Pal, in the Ganden Triumph Monastery on Great Nomad Mountain, [composed this text], and the scribe was Rinchen Pal, an Esoteric Community practitioner upholding the fourfold asceticism.

Mangalam