

Humanistic Buddhism in Tibetan Buddhism

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Although the phrase "Humanistic Buddhism" may not be familiar to many Buddhists, its definition and description offered by Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order, founded by Venerable Master Hsing Yun, and by the Los Angeles branch temple, Hsi Lai Temple,¹ offers a definition to which most Buddhists would certainly agree about their religion:

a basic philosophy of life that encourages us to integrate the Buddha's teachings of kindness, compassion, joyfulness, and equanimity into our daily lives for the benefit of ourselves as well as others. In addition, it teaches us the ways to cultivate the wisdom that clearly understands the true nature of all things.

In Venerable Master Hsing Yun's book, *How I Practice Humanistic Buddhism*,² a summary account of the Buddha's practice of "humanistic Buddhism." is presented by the Abbess of Hsi Lai Temple, Tzu Jung. These include:

1. the Buddha's exhibition of compassion, practice, and wisdom in daily life;
2. his instruction on maintaining a harmonious relationship with one's family and community;
3. his role as teacher for the benefit of all sentient beings;
4. his emphasis on the importance of human beings in their present existence on this earthly plane.

What is of value here is the fact that there is nothing that is totally novel about Fo Guang Shan Buddhism but rather an affirmation of the essence of Buddhist teaching. In its most general or generic form, Buddhism refers to a teaching that stresses that we recognize our present, situation and perceptions as troubling, unsettling, confusing, frustrating, and, in general, inadequate; why we suffer in this manner; how we can overcome or transcend this failing; and what it means to achieve this newly found insight. For Buddhists, the model for this realization is the Buddha. As stated by His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama³:

¹ Found on the web page of Hsi Lai Temple, "Frequently Asked Questions About Hsi Lai Temple." See <http://www.ibps.org/english/history/faq.htm> (the home page address is <http://www.hsilai.org>).

² Translated by the International Buddhist Translation Center (Hacienda Heights: Hsi Lai University Press, 1997).

³ *The World of Tibetan Buddhism: An Overview of Its Philosophy and Practice*, translated, edited, and annotated by Geshe Thupten Jinpa (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 12-13.

... the story of the Buddha's life holds great significance for us. It exemplifies the tremendous potentials and capacities that are intrinsic to human existence. For me, the events that led to his full enlightenment set an appropriate and inspiring example for his followers. In short, his life makes the following statement: "This is the way that you should pursue your spiritual path. You must bear in mind that the attainment of enlightenment is not an easy task. It requires time, will, and perseverance." Therefore, right from the beginning, it is crucial to harbor no illusions of a swift and easy path.

The story of the Buddha's life reveals two important factors that explain many of the developments in Buddhism over the centuries following the Buddha's Parinirvâna: that the practices are based on the experiences, activities, and verbal instructions and insights of the Buddha, and that they reveal the difficulties in overcoming what amounts to bad habits arising from uninformed perceptions and decisions that have arisen over the multifarious lifetimes of sentient beings. If it took an incalculably long time to become what we presently are, then it will take an incalculably long time to become what we presently are not.

As in any religion or philosophy, the interaction of theologians and philosophers will lead to constant reevaluation of the initial teachings or, in the case of many philosophies of South Asia, of the initial experiences of the founder-teacher. This is certainly the case regarding the teachings and experiences based upon the Buddha, whose verbal teachings are but a reflection of his existential state. Nor is this a precedent limited to the Buddha. The founder-teachers of Jainism and Christianity—Parsvanâtha, Mahâvîra (if not the founder of Jainism, certainly a reformer of this religion), and Jesus offer similar examples. Furthermore, it is generally presumed within these traditions that the teachings presented are fully understood and complete by the founder-teacher. As a result, there is a presumption by disciples that the founder is not just a witness to the Truth but Truth Incarnate. Follower-disciples, therefore, can never surpass the founder-teacher in understanding and practice although they may duplicate the achievement of the paragon.⁴ If we view the above religious traditions in this light, His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama's words cited above are particularly significant. Consequently, the Buddha, viewed as the Exemplar, requires his disciples to know and understand not only his teachings but also to practice the spiritual Path he prescribed as well as understanding as fully and completely as possible his motivations and aspirations behind the teachings and Path. Why and how one teaches and practices the Dharma is certainly important, in some instances more so when considered from the point of view of the Buddhist teaching of karma and of the mind. What the Buddha knew, how he practiced the Path the way he did, and why he pursued the Path and the life of a wandering teacher are the primary questions that result from the progression of Buddha's teaching to the ideological system we identify as Buddhism. Buddhism refers primarily to what is said and written about the Buddha by his followers as opposed to what the Buddha himself said or did. Since nothing is known with

⁴ Thus, for instance, the Buddha is described as an "unsurpassed guide for those who need restraint" (*anuttarah purusadamyasârahih*). See Paul J. Griffiths, *On Being Buddha: The Classical Doctrine of Buddhahood* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1994), 60, 62-63 and note 3 on p. 209.

empirical certainty about the latter, Truth-seekers have to place their faith and confidence in those who interpret the Buddha's teachings and practices, or in the formative days of the tradition, in those who remembered them. Such is the beginning of "doctrine": teachings that are presented as truths or valuations that suggest how a person should define the world and how to live in the world.

Doctrines, or more specifically, *primary* doctrines, are statements largely concerned with the context in which individuals and communities should conduct their lives. As such, these doctrines:

1. propose what it considers the proper courses of actions binding upon the individual both in a private and public vein;
2. propose beliefs about the context of human activities;
3. propose valuations of the consequences of courses of human intentions, dispositions, and actions.

Primary doctrines are statements that place ultimate truth values on the conditionality of the world, the individual and community within the world, and what is regarded as the transformative actions assigned to the individual and community. Each of the major religious communities teaches its members how to live in accord with a certain paradigm, with the supposition that conformity with the paradigm will lead to the transformation of the individual. It is imperative, therefore, that the doctrine of a religion, Buddhism included, be viewed not merely as a philosophy of life echoing a certain set of verbal teachings, but as a set of precepts or directives that propose courses of action that promise to lead the individual to the successful conclusion promised by the teacher-founder.⁵

It is inevitable that in all religious movements, including Buddhism, doctrinal developments and differing interpretive approaches arise. The one teaching in Buddhism that has remained consistent is that of suffering (*dukkha*; *sdug bsngal*), which is always presented in a dramatic and comprehensive manner by Buddhist authors throughout the centuries. The pervasiveness of suffering in sentient beings is never denied, and it is often presented so that there exists no exception in existence, thus leading to the threefold division to accentuate this point: a) the suffering of suffering (*sdug-bsngal-gyi sdug-bsngal*; *dukkha-dukkha*); b) the suffering of change ('*gyur-ba'i sdug-bsngal*; *viparinâma-dukkha*); c) the suffering of pervasive conditioning (*khyab-pa 'du-byed-kyi sdug-bsngal*; *samskâra-dukkha*). Briefly, the first represents all physical pain and mental grief; the second emphasizes the transitoriness of happiness and pleasure embodied in the notion that one has anxiety and fear of losing what one finds pleasant and gratifying; the third involves that very reality of existence itself, and as such underlies the first two. Although all Buddhists recognize suffering in sentient beings, a controversy does arise regarding non-sentient entities, but what is important is that what is stated about sentient being is agreed by all: suffering is pervasive and arises from ignorance.⁶ In the Tibetan work, *The Beautiful Ornament of the Three Visions*,⁷ a work written by

⁵ For a general discussion of doctrine as it pertains to the Buddha, see *Ibid.*

⁶ In the Abhidharma work *Kathâvatthu (Points of Controversy)*, translated by Shwe Zan Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davids [London: Luzac & Company, Ltd., 1915], 315-17), together with its commentary, there is just such a discussion, with the Theravâdins referring to *Anguttara*

Ngorchen Konchog Lhundrub (1497-1557), there is a detailed recitation of the suffering of sentient beings that occurs in the three worlds (Desire, Form, and Formless) and the six realms of existence (the hells, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, gods, demigods). This description provides a good summary of literature in Buddhism that exists on the subject⁸ and leads the author to the following conclusions:

My own suffering is the result of what I myself have done. I did not believe in the nondeceiving protectors—the Preceptors and Precious Gems. I held the suffering nature of worldly existence to be happiness. I held the impermanent happiness of the higher realms to be permanent. . . . (54)

One should meditate until one has such experiences as tears coming to one's eyes, involuntary moans from one's voice, the hairs of one's body stand up, and the like. If such experiences arise, one should, without stopping the experiences, merge it with the object of one's meditation and meditate. This produces an uncontrived mind that desires to attain liberation from worldly existence. . . . (55)

The benefits of reflecting thus are from the mouth of Jetsun Rinpoche Dagpa (Gyaltshen), that

If one arrives at the conclusion that no happiness exists wherever one may be born in the realms of living beings, then all of one's actions turn into religious (practice) (55)

Nikaya (I, 286) as its main doctrine that all phenomena are conditioned (*sankhâra*) and not just sentient beings as opposed to the Hetuvâdin argument that only sentient beings are subject. In the commentary to the *Kathâvatthu* (*The Debates Commentary* [*kathatthupparakaraṇa-atthakatha*], translated by B.C. Law [London: Luzac & Co. Ltd., 1940; Pali Text Society, Translation Series #28], 204-205), the two types of *dukkha* in support of the Theravâdin view are given as (a) *indriya* (*dukkha*)—associated with living entities, and (b) not confined to living entities, such as wind, earth, rocks. The first is connected to the suffering of suffering; the second to the suffering of impermanence (*anicca*), *i.e.* change. Insentient objects are themselves transitory and so will arise and pass away. Furthermore, they can cause grief and pain (as wind in cold weather, fire in a burning house).

⁷ *The full title is The Beautiful Ornament of the Three Visions: An exposition of the path which extensively explains the instructions of the "Path Including Its Result" in accordance with the Root Treatise of the Vajra Verses of Virûpa*, translated by Lobsang Dagpa and Jay Goldberg (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1991). This is a translation of *Lam 'bras snon 'gro 'l khrid yig snan gsum mdzes rgyan*.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 9-54. The essence of the reality of suffering is given in Sântideva's *Bodhicaryâvatâra* 9: 154-65. A good translation of this work is provided by Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton and published by Oxford University Press, 1996.

Suffering certainly is the motivating factor in liberating oneself from this unenlightened existence, but within the Buddhist tradition, a basic question arises, “Who should benefit: oneself or others?” This becomes the basis of differing points of view within the Buddhist world. Although the generalizations about the distinctions between the so-called “Hīnayāna” (a pejorative title that is better substituted by “Monastic” or “Individualistic” or “Nikāya” Buddhism) and Mahāyāna Buddhism concerning who has priority vis-à-vis liberation are perhaps exaggerated, there can be no question that the ideal of the bodhisattva in the Mahāyāna tradition as one who seeks the liberation of all sentient beings is definitely emphasized,⁹ an ideal that is also emphasized in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Humanistic Buddhism, as defined by Fo Guang Shan above, is in agreement with His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama’s observation of compassion or altruism. He states:

The diverse teachings of the Buddha all outline various methods for training and transforming the mind. Historically, however, a traditional classification of certain practices. . . developed in Tibet and was known as lo-jong,¹⁰ which means mind training, or thought transformation. . . . One of the principal characteristics of lo-jong practice is the overwhelming emphasis it places on overcoming our grasping at a solid ego identity and the self-cherishing attitudes based on this apprehension of self. This self-cherishing attitude obstructs us from generating genuine empathy towards others and limits our outlook to the narrow confines of our own self-centered concerns. In essence, with thought transformation, we seek to transform our normal selfish outlook on life into a more altruistic one, which, at the very least, regards the welfare of others as equal in importance to our own, and ideally regards others’ welfare as much more important than ours.

Perhaps the most important text pertaining to this topic is Sântideva’s (695-745) *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, a work composed sometime in the 8th century C.E. in India. What motivates much of Tibetan Buddhist training is found in this work. It is clear that the subject of the work, the bodhisattva, is the highest ideal and the reason for this is the altruism or compassion that is generated by the

⁹ Compassion (*karuna*) is also recognized in the Monastic (here Theravāda) tradition: it is defined as that “which makes the heart of the good quiver at the pain of others” (*Atthasālinī* 192). For the arhant, compassion, along with the three other sublime states of friendliness, joy, and equanimity, is a quality that arises with the destruction of the four afflictions (*āśava*) (*DN* I. 156 and *AN* I. 61). The distinction between individuals with different aspirations is summarized by Atīsa (982-1054) in his verses entitled “A Lamp for the Enlightenment Path” (*Bodhi-patha-pradīpa*; *Byang-chub lam-gyi sgron-ma*). The three individuals in question are the Inferior (vs. 3: “One who by every means he finds, Seeks but the pleasure of samsāra, And cares but for himself alone...”), Mediocre (vs. 4: “One who puts life’s pleasures behind And turns himself from deeds of sin, Yet cares only about his own peace...”), and Superior (vs. 5: “One who wholly seeks a complete end To the entire suffering of others because Their suffering belongs to his own [conscious] stream...”). See *A Lamp for the Path and the Commentary of Atīsa*, translated and annotated by Richard Sherburne, S.J. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1983), 5.

¹⁰ *blo sbyong*. The practices are concerned with the generation of the “Awakening Mind” (*bodhicitta*) and living in accordance with the career of the bodhisattva.

Awakening Mind (*bodhicitta*; *byang chub kyi sems*). This is abundantly clear in the first chapter of the work, especially in vss. 21f.:

21. Immeasurable merit took hold of the well-intentioned person who thought ‘Let me dispel the headaches of beings’.
22. What then of the person who longs to remove the unequalled agony of every single being and make their virtue infinite?
23. Whose mother or father ever has such a desire for their welfare as this, what deities or sages or Brahmâs have it?
24. Those beings did not conceive this desire before, even for their own sake, even in a dream. How could they have it for the sake of others?
27. Worship of the Buddha is surpassed merely by the desire for the welfare of others; how much more so by the persistent effort for the complete happiness of every being?
31. Even if someone returns a favour, he is praised. What, then, can be said of the Bodhisattva, who does good without obligation?¹¹

Continuing on this theme, Sântideva remarks that generating *bodhicitta* or the “Awakening Mind [arises] for the welfare of the world” (3.22). Therefore, once the Awakening Mind is generated, a person then becomes a bodhisattva, and the work of the bodhisattva to destroy the sufferings of the world for as long as it takes (10.55), or, if suffering does arise, “may it all ripen in me [the bodhisattva]” (10.56).

These statements are all reflected in statements of Tibetan masters, some of which are given below:

His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama:

To be good followers of Buddha we must mainly practice compassion and honesty. Showing kindness to others, we can learn to be less selfish; sharing the sufferings of others, we will develop more concern for the welfare of all beings. This is the basic teaching. To implement this, we practice deep meditation and cultivate wisdom, and as our wisdom develops our sense of ethics naturally grows stronger.¹²

[In response to a question concerning the involvement of a bodhisattva in the political arena:]

A *bodhisattva* is a person who cultivates the aspiration to achieve complete enlightenment for the benefit of all living beings and who has also pledged to engage in the deeds that are the most

¹¹ Sântideva, *The Bodhicaryâvatâra*, translated by Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

¹² *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight*. Translated and edited by Jeffrey Hopkins and co-edited by Elizabeth Napper (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1984), 30.

Humanistic Buddhism in Tibetan Buddhism

beneficial in fulfilling this aim of working for others. This may include the field of politics. If a bodhisattva feels with some certainty that by taking an active part in politics he or she can bring about a great change within the community or society, then that bodhisattva should definitely engage in politics.

[An interview with H.H. the Dalai Lama:]

“What do you say to young Tibetans who want an armed revolution?” [Sandy Johnson] asked.

“Enemies are our most important teachers. They give us the opportunity to practice tolerance, which is the key to compassion. So it is imperative that we meet cruelty with nonviolence.”¹³

[Newang Choezin:]

Buddhist philosophy says that everyone wants happiness. So if you want happiness, help others be happy; then there is no conflict.¹⁴

[Ani Gomchen:]

I pray as I carve [stones] for all those in the six realms of samsara. In the morning I burn three incense sticks and pray that whatever accumulation of merit I make out of carving the stones be for the benefit of all sentient beings. This is my prayer every morning.¹⁵

[Lama Khamtrul Rinpoche:]

Fleeing [Tibet] was hard not just for me, but for all Tibetans. But instead of challenging my faith, these experiences have made it stronger.

I have no specific feeling about the Chinese today. The people were under orders to invade our country. It wasn't their fault; it was their leaders' ignorance. They thought it was good for the future of the Chinese, but that is wrong thinking. For such ignorance I feel bad for the Chinese people.

Throughout the world, anger, desire, and ignorance are the roots of all suffering, whether among Chinese or Tibetans. I wish that these poisons could be banished from the world. A person who has anger for his enemies and love only for his neighbors will ultimately suffer. We all should understand the importance of this, whether we believe in religion or not.¹⁶

How may we connect these statements within the Tibetan Buddhist sphere compare with those of the Buddhist tradition as a whole? The Tibetan scholars accept the notion that the

¹³ Sandy Johnson, *The Book of Tibetan Elders: The Life Stories and Wisdom of the Great Spiritual Masters of Tibet* (New York: Riverhead Books [Penguin Putnam Inc.], 1996), 125.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 94-95.

teachings of the Buddha are expansive and progressive as illustrated in the Three Successive Turnings of the Wheel (*dharma-cakra; chos-kyi 'khor lo*), a teaching that did not originate with Tibetan Buddhists but was certainly adopted and emphasized by them.¹⁷ Within this context are

¹⁷ This is explained in some detail by Robert A.F. Thurman in his introduction to his translation of *Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence: Reason and Enlightenment in the Central Philosophy of Tibet* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 32-33 (*cf.* 204-206 and 352-53), which in turn is based on the statement in the *Samdhinirmocana Sûtra*. The relevant passage is based on John Powers' translation of the Sûtra (*Wisdom of Buddha: The Samdhinirmocana Sûtra* [Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1994], 139-141:

Then the Bodhisattva Paramârthasamudgata said to the Bhagavan: "Initially, in the Vârânaî area, in the Deer Park called Sages' Teachings, the Bhagavan taught the aspects of the four truths of the Âryas for those who were genuinely engaged in [Sràvaka] vehicle. . . .

"Then the Bhagavan turned a second wheel of doctrine which is more wondrous still for those who are genuinely engaged in the Great Vehicle, because of the aspect of teaching emptiness, beginning with lack of own-being of phenomena, and beginning with their absence of production, absence of cessation, quiescence from the start, and being naturally in a state of nirvâna. . . .

"Then the Bhagavan turned a third wheel of doctrine, possessing good differentiations, and exceedingly wondrous, for those genuinely engaged in all vehicles, beginning with the lack of own-being of phenomena, and beginning with their absence of production. . . ."

In other words, the First Turning of Dhamma refers to the Four Noble Truths, the Second Turning referring to the teachings in the Perfection of Wisdom Sûtras (*praj_âpâramitâ-sûtra-s*) stressing the emptiness of all things, and the Third Turning to the teachings of the Tathâgata Essence Sûtra (*Tathâgata-garbha-sûtra*), which emphasizes the Buddha Nature. H.H. the XIVth Dalai Lama also includes in the Third Turning the *Samdhinirmocana Sûtra* and the tantra system (*World of Tibetan Buddhism*, 28-29. See also pp. 15-27 and 30.

See also *A Lamp for the Path*, 143.

The Three Turnings of the Dhamma resembles somewhat the *p'an-chiao* ("judging the teachings") developed during the Northern and Southern Dynasties of China, which identified the Nikâya teachings as the "teaching of a half word [imperfect teaching]: and the Mahâyâna as the "teaching of a full word [perfect teaching].

differences that are more ideological rather than experiential. The question concerning compassion is a case in point. All traditions recognize the importance of compassion and carry explicit and abundant examples of its practice. In the *Jâtaka* Stories of the Theravâda detailing the previous lives of the Buddha as Bodhisattva, there are abundant examples of his displays of compassion.¹⁸ Also, in numerous sûttras in the Mahâyâna such as the *Upâyakausalya Sûtra*, acts of compassion arise.¹⁹ In the Tibetan tradition, such acts are recognized and encouraged.

One question that does arise within the Mahâyâna, and by extension in the Tibetan tradition is whether compassion is spontaneously realized once ultimate truth of the true nature of things (as non-dual) is grasped, as is the case in the Cittamâtra philosophy, or whether it is acquired through training, as in the case of the Mâdhyamika.²⁰ The position of the Dalai Lama, and of Tibetan Buddhists in general,²¹ follows the gradualist argument that compassion is gained through training. It is in this context that he makes the following observations²²:

Is Shâkyamuni, an individual Buddha, eternal? No. Initially, Shâkyamuni Budha was Siddhârtha, an ordinary being troubled by delusions and engaging in harmful thoughts and wrong actions—someone like ourselves. However, with the help of certain teachings and teachers, he gradually purified himself and in the end became enlightened.

Through this same causal process we too can become fully enlightened. There are many different levels of mind, the most subtle of which is the deep Buddha-nature, the seed of Buddhahood. All beings have within them this subtle consciousness, and through the practice of deep meditation and virtuous actions, it gradually can be transformed into pure Buddhahood. Our

¹⁸ See *The Jâtaka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births*, under the editorship of E.B. Cowell and translated by numerous scholars. Six volumes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895, 1905 [V], 1907 [VI]).

¹⁹ *The Skill in Means (Upâyakausalya) Sûtra*, translated by Mark Tatz (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994).

²⁰ This question is raised by Crosby and Skilton (*Bodhicaryâvatâra*), in their introduction to Chapter 8 (p. 85-86).

²¹ Which echoes the famous debate between Kamalasîla, who represented the Indian Mahâyâna model of the gradual path toward enlightenment, and the Chinese Hwa Shang, who represented the Chinese Chan school of sudden enlightenment, which ended in the gradualist side winning. See John Powers, *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1995), 130-33. It is also mentioned in *Mahâmudrâ: The Quintessence of Mind and Meditation* by Takpo Tashi Namgyal (1512-1587) and translated by Lobsang P. Lhalungpa (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993), 105-108.

²² *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight*, 30.

situation is very hopeful: the seed of liberation is within us.

To be good followers of Buddha we must mainly practice compassion and honesty. Showing kindness to others, we can learn to be less selfish; sharing the sufferings of others, we will develop more concern for the welfare of all beings. This is the basic teaching. To implement this, we practice deep meditation and cultivate wisdom, and as our wisdom develops our sense of ethics naturally grows stronger.

Whether this compassion is cultivated in an informal way or in advanced mental cultivation, such as Dzogchen (*rdzogs chen*), Mahâmudrâ (*phyag rgya chen po*), Chö (*chod*), or Lamdre (*lam 'bras*),²³ the result is the same. Although the practices are different, these practices all achieve the same goal. Mahâmudrâ, for instance, refers to the ultimate reality, which, according to the *Guhyasamâja*²⁴:

*. . . is devoid of all substance,
Devoid of subject-object duality
That arises from psychophysical aggregates,
Elements, and sense faculties.
This is the selflessness of reality
In which [samsâra and nirvâna] are equal.*

It is in this context of non-duality²⁵ that the mind, unbiased, can develop compassion without limit. Yet, the exercise of compassion, humanistic Buddhism, is not to be realized in abstractions or blindly following the dictates of teachers or the Buddha himself. It is based on the simple realization that “we all want happiness and don’t want suffering,”²⁶ for ourselves, our parents, relatives, friends, community, nation, world, friends and foe alike. In this sense, the message of the Buddha is understood by all who follow his Path, no matter what lineage, tradition, or school.

²³ For a brief introduction into these meditative practices, see Powers, *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*, 334f., 362f., 370f., 391f.

²⁴ As quoted in *Mahâmudrâ: The Quintessence of Mind and Meditation*, 93. On page 105, the author states that “mahâmudrâ is referred to in all the tantras and doctrinal texts through such terms as the intrinsic nature of the existential foundation [with regard to all things], the inherent emptiness, spontaneous coemergence, evenness, as well as immutable bliss, great bliss, nonarising, nonexisting, and nonceasing, depth, tranquility, and non-conceptuality.”

²⁵ *The Sâgaramatipariprcchâ-sûtra* states: “. . . all realities are marked by the seal [mudrâ] of innate freedom, which is completely pure and nondual. Like the expanse of space, all realities are without distinction because they are all marked by the seal of evenness.” Quoted in *Mahâmudrâ: The Quintessence of Mind and Meditation*, 97.

²⁶ Jeffrey Hopkins, “Equality: The First Step in Cultivating compassion,” *Tricycle* (Summer 1999): 29.

Humanistic Buddhism in Tibetan Buddhism