

February 15/26

A Blossoming of Sublime Understanding and Love
– Unbroken Wholeness, the Sadhana of Amitabha and Pureland Buddhism –

This series of classes are an invitation, especially directed to 'Yogis of the Natural World' and long term practitioners of buddha-dharma, to join in an experiential exploration of love and clear seeing, using the lens of this "Sadhana of Amitabha".

A playlist of recordings for all the classes can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDfqQ393gSUJpWgp-thJLAWbwuYMREjvl>

Resources and Reminders
class # 2 – Prologue and Ancestral Ground

The structure of classical Tibetan sadhanas often parallel a gradual path of awakening. This sadhana, to a degree, departs from this in that it is more a poetic intimation or evocation of what we might think of as "**primordial sadhana**", or the generative process of all-inclusive wholeness – this ongoing ever-fresh immediacy of living – this cresting wave of now and the love and clear seeing that is the knowing of it.

The key to primordial sadhana rests on translucensising the myriad inter-dependent domains and dimensions of experience thus increasingly revealing the spacious open inter-being~inter-knowing nature of everything. Each section of the text provides a framework for doing this.

General Suggestion: To augment your ongoing daily practice (outlined in the Jan 18th class) you will find it helpful to at least once/week, slowly, thoughtfully, contemplatively, read through the text, frequently pausing to explore how your immediate living is enhanced by taking to heart the meaning of the words of the text.

Before doing this, take some time to settle: breathing, opening the doors of sensitivity, opening the mandala of sentient space in front, behind, to the sides, above and below, translucensising all experience. Then begin to read the text.

More on the mandala of space can be found on p49 of [Walking in Wisdom](#)
Engaging in the "[Essential Practice](#)" is also a good way to precede reading the text.

Prologue

This prologue could be repeated at the end of the sadhana as an epilogue. It outlines what could be thought of as the unelaborated expanse of Buddha Amitabha – the everfresh blossoming of sublime understanding and love.

Root Guru Mantra: OM AH HUM

A mantra is commonly understood to be a word or phrase that is chanted or sung over and over as an aid to focus attention. At a more subtle level, a mantra is a teaching. The word 'guru' means teacher or that which teaches. The term 'root' points to what is core or foundational. The Root Guru Mantra refers to the foundation or core of all-inclusive wholeness, an seamless integration of the domains of experience alluded to by the syllables, OM, AH and HUM.

The following chart gives a few possible understandings that can be linked with this Root Guru Mantra.

| | OM | AH | HUM | OM AH HUM |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| 1 | body | speech | mind | body/speech/mind |
| 2 | view | meditation | action | |
| 3 | ground | path | fruition | |
| 4 | dharmakaya | sambhogakaya | nirmanakaya | svabhavakaya |
| 5 | the dimension of <i>Being</i> (pure & total presence) | the dimension of the full richness of experience | the dimension of apparitional being | suchness |
| 6 | ineffable | openness | spontaneous presence | oneness |
| 7 | empty in essence (emptiness) | luminous in nature (clarity) | pervading in responsiveness (pervasiveness) | Mind itself; <i>rigpa</i> (open awareness; the immeasurable expanse of inter- being~inter- knowing) |

row 1 – ground, (preparation)

rows 2 &3 – walking the path

rows 4, 5, 6,&7 – fruition

In general everyone needs to explore and integrate row 1. With deepening experience, rows 2 and 3 will become more and more relevant. For meditators who feel at home in mahamudra/ dzogchen approach rows 4 to 7 will become increasing useful reminders.

Om => body i.e. physiological body; dharmakaya, view, ground (primordial base), originally pure, – your physical body and the body of totality.

Ah => speech i.e. your communication and the languaging of life/universe; sambhogakaya, meditation, path: spontaneously present.

Hum => mind i.e. your minding, your attending to and caring for 'others' and the inter-knowing that is at the heart of all phenomena; nirmanakaya, action, fruition: compassionately responsive.

OM AH HUM, OM AH HUM SVAHA

1st **OM AH HUM** refers to a skilful integration of explanations and experience in the realm of duality (the unawakened state.)

2nd **OM AH HUM** refers to the all inclusive generative process (awakened state) which itself contains all explanations (the so called unawakened state)

SVAHA indicates that these arise as a single mystery.

The *bijas*, or seed syllables, OM, AH, HUM form what in Tibetan Buddhism is called the root guru mantra. If you are new to mantra practice, you might want to leave out the OM, AH HUMs, and just work with the verses. If however you wish to enrich the verses with the mantras, try to do so in the following manner. In Indian music there is an instrument called the [Tambura](#) that provides a background atmospheric drone. Because the Tambura strings are tuned harmonically together, when you pluck one the other three will resonate sympathetically even if they are not directly touched. So too the OM, AH, HUM. Body speech and mind flow in and through and with each other. This is true with the other possibilities in the table rows. As you recite the verses of this prologue, imagine these mantras resound silently, like a background drone evoking associations and experience that reflect your understanding.

Ancestral Ground

This section invites a deepening immersion in this inter-being~inter-knowing universe. By calling it our ancestral ground we make it personal and in doing so we may realise that it is equally personal for every living being. Take time feel these processes in your body. You may be inspired to augment these explorations by studying anatomy, physiology and geophysical process, all of which will improve your capacity to visualise or better yet, sensualize in a tactile kinaesthetic way, this family of inter-relating. As I said in my poem, [we are in this together.](#)

To further support these contemplations, I read the following segment taken from an unfinished commentary on the sadhana of Samantabhadra.

Preamble

Although this (book) is likely to be read by Buddhists or contemplative practitioners, I do feel that the subject is relevant to everyone. To give a sense of the universality of this subject, I'd like to set the stage with an exercise in imagination that can touch all of us.

Imagine the pre-industrial world, a world with less humans and more non-human creatures, a world without internet, petroleum, paved roads and large scale machinery. It would not have been unusual for our ancestors to occasionally stand in the darkness of night, illumined only by stars, while experiencing being deeply touched by a sense of the ungraspable immensity, mystery and natural beauty of sheer existence; (the dancing inter-knowing that is nature in process, the inter-beingness that we are). People everywhere, in myriad different cultures have felt blessed in this way: tundra dwellers in polar regions, tribal nomads in deserts, farmers in fields and paddies, shepherds, woodsmen, fisherfolk at sea, yogis in Himalayan caves. Imagine the countless beings pausing to listen deeply in forests and jungles, their senses open in responsive contemplation, wonderstruck in the face of the all engulfing weaving of lives and living.

Today, these moments of reverence and awe, moments that remind us of the simultaneous smallness and immeasurable vastness of our lives, are becoming tragically rare. Most of us live in noisy, ever lit, constantly busy cities where our knowledge of nature is filtered through digital images from Hubble telescope, or David Attenborough documentaries – seen but not touched; on flat shiny screens. Yet in reality, everyone of us, ancients and moderns alike, began as infants, or even further back, as tiny bundlings of cellular possibility, doing what was needed to be done in order to survive in an enormous universe of un-pin-downable ever-morphing experience. Both collectively as species and ecosystem, and as individual creatures, sensitivity and question-driven-evaluation are expressions of our very existence. This was the beginning for all of us; a single all encompassing state of mystery – our life and living and the unimaginable vastness of this universe in which we find ourselves – and our ongoing need to make sense of it all.

What is this living this knowing? How does it all work? What on earth is going on? How is the universe functioning to give rise to us even being able to raise such questions? We refer to this radically inclusive, all-encompassing wholeness in myriad ways: totality, God, Tao, the blessed state, Buddha Nature, dharmakaya, suchness and so forth. These are different cultural attempts to designate existence in all its grandeur, its detail and ultimate unknowableness. This mystery embraces the dark underground and the dazzling above ground, the unconscious and the conscious, the terrifying and the exalted. Faced with such sublimity we are like a young child becoming increasingly aware of the world surrounding them which, in its size and complexity, can be both frightening and seductively intriguing.

Sages of old responded to such experiences with humble reverence and awe. So too, do many contemplative scientists of today. Immersed in this space of knowing, we can realise that we are all brothers and sisters of creation-in-process, emerging from, cared for by, and returning to, a cosmic parent or parents, a web of living that is everything and nothing, everywhere and nowhere; an expanse of continuous gestation, vast and mysterious and pregnant with potency. This is the 'one mystery' – it's where we begin, where we live, and where we end.

*Ironically,
it seems I am blinded by light,
yet in the darkness,
I begin to see.*

*Clear night sky,
the wheel of the galaxy arcing around me,
the horizon
a halo of atmospheric dust and diffused star glow,
and I realise, yet again,
I am embedded in sangha;
these trees, mountains,
hooting owls and river sound,
and ghostly kinaesthetic presence.*

*Contemplative science begins with reverence and wonder
and a mysterious desire to understand.*

It begins as reverence in the temple of the universe.

Embedded in the galaxy.

Embedded in the sun.

Embedded in the planet.

I look out, and in my mind's eye see the vastness of space.

I look in, and through eyes of anatomy,

histology, chemistry, and physics,

I see nearly as far 'in' as I can see 'out'.

And I wonder who I am?

Consciously and imaginatively

I cultivate my skills

in extending love for every member

of this evolving community of inter-being,

this symphony of becoming,

this holoversing in multi-part harmony.

We breathe together,

breathing with green plants

transforming star dust,

whirling vortices of living systems,

communing

through contact and exchange.

I cannot live without you,

– each and every one of you,

my immediate mothering, fathering,

brothering, sistering sangha.

A family of burgeoning life.

Visualising living on a sphere.

Rain and apples falling inward.

The entire planet entwined in the sun.

We began as a sphere,

a fertilised egg, buried in our mother.

Can we expand our vision of this journey?

Contemplating universe.

Differing densities,

clumpings of relating.

Some clumps called planets, some called stars,

and some called interstellar space.

*Clusterings of clumpings
whirling presences of specified
autocatalytic chemistries;
linkings, and
linkings of linkings.
rosaries of reflective process,
garlands of flowering flowerings.
Richer and richer detail
more and more prolific,
humming of autopoiesis,
the dawning of responsive awareness
aware-ing itself into existence,
and now telling this story,
contemplating embodiment,
a process self-contemplating,
a universe of inter-responsive densities
of knowing-in-motion.*

*Gyres of form,
appearing and disappearing,
flowings of becoming,
this river of living,
acapelling symphonies:
jazz combos, folk groups,
rock bands, and marching drums,
choral groups, choirs, and orchestras;
interweaving gatherings of gathering;
a continuous, – fantastic – extravaganza of improvisation,
linking and adapting,
conserving, and stretching out on a limb – ecstatic in the risk.*

*Advancing and retreating,
communion everywhere
reverberating stories,
songs coalescing,
shapings of shapings in form
and knowing
and beyond forms of knowing.*

*And arising in this dance are concepts:
beginnings, and endings,
birth and death,
self, and others,
matter, and mind,*

*health, and illness;
these mysteries,
opaque and thing-like,
this torrent of musing music.*

*Contemplating this contemplation
and feeling
this privilege,
this blessing,
this indescribable suchness.*

*Releasing in contemplation
surrendering in all dimensions.
The horizon 'disappears' us,
as the choir crescendos, it's an
AHHHHHH !!!!!!!
and then,
like Wittgenstein,
falls silent
into the music.*

*And so,
a yogi of the natural world enters the inconceivable;
dancing in stillness.*

Song Of The Oceans Of The World Becoming

*(extracted with appreciation and thanks from "Song of the World Becoming: New and Collected Poems 1981
– 2001", by Pattiann Rogers)*

The song of the oceans
of the world becoming is always
among us. It rises over and over
from the oceans of the grasslands,
rippling like the shifting waves of orange
autumn sorrel, green May barley.
It ascends in immediacy
from the oceans of the forest floor,
spreads through a flotsam of mosses,
ferns, vine maple, pine accretions;
thus it is permeated by branches,
stubs, leaves, thorny seeds, shingled
bark, which become, in truth,
the momentary architecture
of its carriage and meter.

Smelling slightly of salt, wet weed,
and sea sand, down comes this song
again and again like a tidal blue
surf of the skies, down from the floating
black depth of the stars. It swirls
like channeled winds flooding rock
caverns, like lolling swells of winter
in a whiteout. It engulfs with daylight,
spilling around and throughout
a solar deluge of summer.

The song of the world becoming
in its expanse and bottomless height
can nonetheless gather wholly
into one molecule on the tip of one
tentacle of an anemone attached
to the rim of a low-tide rock,
and briefly balance there. It is complete
and prophetic in a gesture of light
off the neon needle of a damselfly
vanishing and reappearing above
warm mud and water rushes.

The song of the oceans of migrating
caribou, flocking bats, goldfinches,
of swarming honey bees, swarming
suns and stellar dusts, travels
beautifully with all the masses
of its expanding cosmic horizons.
Present in circular motions to the outer
edges of the known universe evolving,
it is ancient, it is partial.

So the song is becoming as the world
becomes, and it can never leave us;
for we are the notice in its passages,
and we are the divining in its composition,
and we practice in death the immortality
of its nature forever.