

HH Dalai Lama: OM MANI PADME HUM

In Kindness Clarity and Insight, the Dalai Lama presents his analysis of a mantra as encapsulating a whole philosophy. In this one short mantra of compassion and wisdom is summarized the term philosophy: the union of Philo = love and Sophia = wisdom. wisdom. Here is a summary of his idea.

The whole mantra means “through the combined functioning of Compassion and Wisdom, may our ordinary starting mind be transformed into HUM-- which is wholeness, completeness, nonduality.”

OM = AUM is the starting point: the original body, speech and mind of the individual which is to be transformed. In Buddhism, the mind which we start with (which is not only the gross mind, but a very subtle mind, continuation consciousness, the “unit of life”) the “seed of Buddha,” is being transformed into enlightenment. Simply by the fact of being a human being, we have the potentiality of enlightenment within us.

MANI means jewel and refers to compassion, which like the jewel, has a diamond quality which can pierce through any egoistic attitudes.

PADME means lotus and refers to wisdom, which like the lotus grows up in the most seemingly unlooked for places.

HUM means wholeness, completeness, non-duality: the primordial natural state, paradoxically realized.