

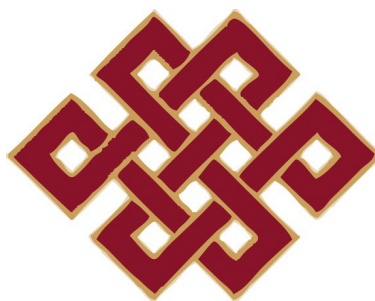
# The Open Secret of Human Happiness

## Compassionate Mindfulness Meditation

Second Edition

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Dechen Wangdu



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For

**Adzom Gyalse Rinpoche**

from whom I have learned so much



**Books of David Paul Boaz**

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*The Prior Unity of Science and Spirit:*

*Toward a Panpsychic Noetic Quantum Ontology*



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# I

## Human Happiness and Mindful Breathing

Happiness arises from your present mind state.

—Adzom Paylo Rinpoche

Have you ever wondered what you may discover of your appearing realities, and the very nature of your thinking perceiving mind, if you did not habitually filter your experience through your cognitive reticulum of concepts and beliefs—your scattered 'wild horse of the mind'? What would it be like to experience *directly* clearly and vividly, beyond any concept or belief, what reality actually is prior to your thinking about it? What if your powerful belief in an ultimately 'real' self-ego-I with its habitual certainty of a solid material world of separate 'other' beings were suddenly surrendered to your non-conceptual primordial wisdom of a diaphanous, miraculous deeper reality? Well you can!

Mindfulness is an exceedingly simple, natural process of normal breathing called conscious 'mindfulness of breathing'. You've heard about it. You may have established a secular mindfulness practice, even an 'advanced' yogic practice to tame that 'monkey mind' and connect to the source. Let us then further explore it; perhaps enhance it.

All the buddhas, *mahasiddhas*, saints and sages of our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition of humankind have told it. 'Mindfulness meditation' (*shamatha, zhine, sati, smrti, bhavana*)—non-conceptual deep contemplative direct experience—provides a *relative* powerful immediate antidote and an *ultimate* cessation to the bewitchment of the natural intelligence of our innate original compassionate love-wisdom buddha nature buddha mind Christ presence by the colossus of habitual discursive conceptual mind. How shall we recognize, and realize this great truth in our busy lives?

We begin by *choosing* conscious 'placement of attention/awareness' upon our 'innermost' love-wisdom mind *Presence* of the nondual primordial awareness-consciousness 'groundless ground'—by whatever grand name—in whom this all arises. We do this upon the mindful *prana/lung* spirit wind (*Lungta* or Windhorse), the *kosmic* life force breath in the belly. Our peace and happiness arise from where, and when we chose to consciously place our awareness! No mystery here. We do have this conscious choice. 'Mindfulness meditation' is the assiduous practice of that moment to moment choice.

Thus do we train obsessive concept mind in *awareness management*. As we begin to turn our attentional awareness inward we learn to rest in 'clear light luminous clarity' (*osel, prabhasvara*), that numinous Presence of the trans-conceptual primordial Nature of Mind itself—our 'supreme identity' of that 'supreme source' that is the 'basic space' (*chöying, dharmadhatu*) of nondual *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground' of all phenomena of Being Itself.

*Human Happiness.* Every human being desires most of all to have happiness. Yet, cloaked in primal ignorance (*marigpa, avidya, hamartia/sin*) we fail to recognize that the real cause of human happiness lies in our awakening to 'noself' of the compassionate Dharma teaching, by whatever grand name or concept—the very Nature of Mind itself.

Just so, every human being desires to avoid suffering. Yet we do not recognize that the real cause of human suffering lies in the afflicted negative emotions of an illusory self that begets negative thoughts, intentions, and then actions. Cause and effect karma. Due consideration of that great truth naturally arouses positive compassionate feeling desire for the benefit of living beings. That is the providential beginning of our own relative and ultimate happiness—entering in the teaching of the Dharma—Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, or Abrahamic Hebrew, Christian, Islamic.

It's a vital turning point in our lives. So we have an urgent moment to moment *choice* of our placement of attention/awareness (meditation, *gom*). Indeed, the untrained human mind already meditates via its obsessive random attention upon the grasping, clinging desire-mind objects of its troubled self-ego-I. We shall soon see how it is that we shift such awareness to the proper "objects of meditation".

We may use our conceptual mind to self-reflexively critique its own inherent limits. We establish a bit of healthy skepticism as to our own well defended biases, our skeptical mass-mind 'global web of belief' (Quine 1969). This includes our choice to establish a mindful meditation practice in the first place. Through mindful attention upon the breath in the body we move beyond this habitual web of concepts and beliefs with their often negative, judgmental thinking and emotion, into the already present peaceful empty clear light (*osel*) Presence of our indwelling love-wisdom mind. Bright primordial Presence of That (*tathata*). [Ch. VIII] That clear light is the prior, present unity of clarity and emptiness.

## **The Buddhist View**

In the Tibetan Buddhist Vajrayana view tantric practice has two stages of psycho-spiritual development: Development (generation, creation) Stage, and advanced Completion Stage that follows it.

Development Stage practice engages *yidam* or deity practice, primal *sambhogakaya* archetypes that personify our own very real awakened Buddha qualities and attributes—for example Vajra Sattva, Tara, Avalokiteshvara/Chenrezig, Menla Medicine Buddha—that reveal and ground our always already present 'innermost secret' buddha heart buddha mind, our very Buddha Nature of Mind.

Completion Stage practice—for example Nyingma lineage Dzogchen *kadag trekchö* and *lhundrub tögal*, and in Kagyu lineage Mahamudra *The Six Dharmas of Naropa*—may be viewed as advanced contemplative yogic technologies that train in opening of the trans-physical subtle body channels (*nadi, tsa*), winds (*prana, lung*), and drops (*bindu, thigle*). Thus do we liberate the subtle life energy *prana/lung* spirit wind to move freely and then

dissolve in the subtle central energy channel (*avadhuti*) thus awakening our indwelling, always present Presence of this blissful clarity that is primordial love/wisdom mind (gnosis, *yeshe*, *jnana*) for the *bodhicitta* benefit of all living beings. That is the Heart of Buddha's causal Mahayana teaching vehicle, of acausal nondual Nyingma Dzogchen, and of Kagyu Essence Mahamudra. And yes, that is the open secret of our human happiness.

[The prodigious Kagyu Mahamudra *Six Dharmas of Naropa* are: daytime *tummo* yoga and illusory body yoga (*gyulu*); nighttime dream yoga (*milam*) and luminous clear light yoga (*osel*); and the shadow yogas of liminal *bardo* and *phowa* near the moment of death.]

*Guru Yoga*. Well, how may we accomplish this Promethean quest for our already present human happiness? In the Buddhist view we realize our indwelling numinous luminous intrinsic awareness through Guru Yoga devotion to the precious outer Guru, our authentic fully qualified Dzogchen master—who faithfully mirrors our own selfless inner Guru—the very nature of our Buddha mind Presence that we already are; the nature and essence of the primordial intrinsic awareness ground of all arising phenomenal reality. "Primordial intrinsic awareness itself is absolute Guru, Ultimate Truth" [Jigme Lingpa]

Guru Yoga means "union with the nature of the guru" (*guru sattva*), outer, inner, and 'innermost secret intrinsic awareness itself'. That nature/essence is our own ultimate identity. In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition the primary Guru Yoga practice is the wondrous *Seven Line Prayer* to Guru Rinpoche. Sakyapa master Lama Jamyang Gyaltzen speaks the truth of the matter, "The Guru is the embodiment of all refuge...All practices, whether preliminary or main have to take place within the sphere of Guru Yoga." For Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche (in Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, *Guru Yoga* 1999):

When we take refuge, we see the guru present in all of the Three Jewels: the guru's physical presence is seen in the Sangha, the guru's teaching is seen as the Dharma, the guru's mind is seen as the Buddha...Guru Yoga is the quickest, most effective way for attaining enlightenment and is the one path in which all other paths are completed. Guru Yoga includes renunciation, bodhicitta, development and completion stage meditation, mind training, and [Dzogchen approach], which is why we can say that Guru Yoga is the embodiment, or the essence of all paths...It is not only the most complete path, but also the most condensed...As our devotion becomes stronger still, it is with a growing sense of joy that we begin to rely on the guru for everything...An inner confidence arises, an absolute certainty that the [outer-inner] guru is the sole source of refuge...Finally we have managed to merge our mind with the guru's mind. That frees us from fear...Thus have we realized the ultimate goal of all Buddhist practice.

The twelve syllable *Vajra Gura Mantra* is often said to be the most powerful Tibetan Buddhist mantra. It has "The power to dispel all obstacles and confer all the qualities of wisdom...Its twelve syllables are the essence of the twelve branches of Lord Buddha's

teachings...The twelve links of Interdependent Origination, which arise from ignorance...are purified, releasing us from samsara." [Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche 1999] The Mantra is recited thus: *OM AH HUM VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM*. "The first three syllables of the mantra represent the three [buddha body] *kayas*, as well as the vajra body, speech and mind of all the buddhas."

*OM* is 'basic space' (*chöying*) of primordial *dharmakaya* awareness consciousness ground of all arising phenomena. *AH* is *sambhogakaya*, Logos, clear light bridge into form. *HUM*—our essential nature—is *nirmanakaya*, bright Presence of *OM*, now present wisdom mind of all the buddhas. The *Seven Line Prayer* is composed on three levels of understanding—outer, inner, and innermost secret. These three dimensions of unfolding Being Itself are a prior and always present nondual unity. [Mipham 2007 *White Lotus*]

*VAJRA (BENZA)* symbolizes the changeless, formless, timeless, selfless nondual indestructible primordial love-wisdom mind (*buddhajñana*) of all the buddhas, nondual ultimate *dharmakaya* "groundless ground" of all phenomenal being, indivisible one truth unity of Buddha's Two Truths (relative form and ultimate emptiness), unity of the aboriginal ground and the awakened Fruition/Result of that ground. *Vajra* cannot be defiled or destroyed by primal ignorance (*marigpa, avidya*). Free of all defects, like a diamond it cuts through negative illusion, delusion, and all obstructions. It is the stainless basic space of *dharmakaya* Nature of Mind, primordial buddhahood itself, the very nature of Buddha Amitabha. And we are all already that Buddha nature. That is the non-causal Vajrayana Ati Dzogchen 'Fruitional Vehicle'—'great completion' of the Mahayana Causal Vehicle. Here, primordial buddhahood does not have a cause. Why? "It is already accomplished and present from the very beginning", our 'supreme identity'. [Nagarjuna] So there is no need to seek it elsewhere. That is Secret Mantra Fruitional View and Refuge.

*GURU* is *sambhogakaya*, flawless clear light vivid clarity and most precious of all beings, represented by Avalokiteshvara. Guru is highest wisdom essence of all pith instruction (*mangagde/upadesha*), received directly (*yogi pratyaksa*) from outer and inner Guru as "Absolute Guru" that is 'primordial purity' of ultimate intrinsic awareness itself.

*PADMA (PEMA)* is the Path, "the jewel in the lotus". "Guru Rinpoche [the 'Lotus-born' Padmasambhava] is the *nirmanakaya* emanation of Buddha Amitabha, who corresponds to the lotus family and the speech aspect of all the buddhas." [Khyentse Rinpoche] The Fruit of the Path lies not in the future; it is always present here and now. And that great primordial wisdom is *SIDDHI*.

*SIDDHI* means powers of spiritual accomplishment. Recognizing and resting in the wondrous qualities and actions of Guru Rinpoche, seen in our own outer Guru, we accomplish the supreme *siddhi* of all the buddhas. The profound *Seven Line Prayer* to Guru Padmasambhava is the quintessential Guru Yoga practice. [Mipham 2007]

*HUM (HUNG)* is warm dharma rain of the compassionate Buddhadharmas descending to earth purifying and blessing all living beings—every one of us without a single exception. Just so, the guru blesses all who pray and have pure authentic devotion and faith. Reciting the seed syllable *HUM* calls forth the guru to bless us with all *siddhis*,

both ordinary and sublime. *HUM* is our essential nature and true identity as human beings. *HUM* is the seed syllable of our love-wisdom buddha mind acting in *nirmanakaya* space and time as *dharmakaya* Presence of *OM*, always already present now, deep within. *HUM* is our light-form gift (*jinlob*) naturally expressing itself as skillful compassionate *bodhicitta*—thought, intention, and engaged action for the benefit of all living beings.

"*Thögal*, the path of spontaneous presence is the self-arisen supreme primordial wisdom, symbolized by the seed syllable *Hung* [*HUM*]...expression of the enlightened mind of all the Buddha's...inseparability of the ground and fruit...actual *dharmakaya*, primordial Buddhahood." [Mipham 2007 *White Lotus*]

Thus, through patient recitation of the great *Vajra Guru Mantra*, and prayer and supplication to outer and inner Guru, do we accomplish the practice—"primordial intrinsic awareness itself"—while abiding happy in all the adversity of our busy precious lives. That is the wondrous power and poetry of Guru Yoga. The *Vajra Guru Mantra* is recited in Tibetan thus: *OM AH HUM BENZA GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUM (HUNG)*

*A Buddhist View of Mindfulness.* As you engage this Guide please consider, and remain present to these two basic principles of mindfulness meditation:

1) "Mindfulness of breathing" bestows the precious gift of observing your thoughts as the selfless, egoless *relative* natural play of the *ultimate* Buddha Nature of Mind, without identifying with them, or judging them 'good' or 'bad'. Thoughts are after all merely an impermanent evanescent natural arising of the emptiness play of our diaphanous relative mind within vast boundless ultimate ground that is the very Buddha Nature of Mind, breath of many voices, luminous contrapuntal fugue of this bright primordial mindscape that is Reality Being Itself. Fear not! Thoughts and self are inherently empty. "Emptiness cannot harm emptiness". Thoughts randomly come and go in dependence upon our present mind state awareness. They have only the power we *choose* to bestow upon them.

2) The second basic principle of mindfulness of breathing is an already accomplished *act of love*, received from deep within to which we *connect continuously* and thereby gradually awaken, breath by mindful breath, through Guru Yoga—"the source and embodiment of all refuge and the essence of all spiritual paths". Its benefits are naturally and spontaneously given again and again to all living beings within your sphere, including our precious Mother Earth, little blue planet that is our spaceship home here among the stars in the vastness of cosmic space.

How is it that such mindful, non-conceptual attention to the breath is an act of love? Through the 'placement of awareness' upon your 'already present' indwelling love-wisdom buddha heart buddha mind Presence of the primordial *dharmakaya* ground, you *are* that Love! That Love effortlessly and spontaneously expresses itself to all living beings.

*Therefore, both happiness and unhappiness naturally arise from the present mind state upon which you choose to place your attentional awareness.* We shall soon see that your present mind

*state* in due course causes and creates your present developmental *life stage*. Love-wisdom mind states beget happy compassionate mind traits. *With a bit of practice 'mindfulness of breathing' places you in the mind states you choose. You are now learning to choose your present life-world realities!* And that is a profound love-wisdom benefit to all living beings within the ambit of your life-world. Such a choice is indeed an act of Love.

Thus does mindfulness practice beget personal transformation. It does so by purifying—not always perfectly, breath by mindful breath—our obsessively thinking stressed out conceptual 'monkey mind' revealing that numinous Presence naturally abiding deep within, just prior to the conceptual chaos of anxiously busy self-ego-I.

### **What is Mindfulness Meditation? The Four Foundations**

'Mindfulness' has many meanings. It may be construed as a secular breathing practice to quiet the hyperactive thinking mind and tame its anxiety; or as a contemplative 'spiritual' practice to open the heart and mind and connect to our numinous Spirit ground, by whatever grand name. We shall in these pages consider it in its contemplative context as compassionate mindfulness meditation—deep non-conceptual contemplative practice as it has risen in our primary wisdom traditions—Eastern Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, and the Western Abrahamic monotheistic traditions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—the 'mystical' noetic contemplative voice of these three great traditions.

Mindfulness meditation—the Buddha's 'mindfulness of breathing' (*shamatha, zhine, sati*)—arose from the ancient Hindu Vedic *Sanatanadharma* and was adapted by Gautama the Buddha for training the minds of his disciples. It was codified in the 1st century *Pali Canon*. In the West a parallel contemplative tradition began in the ancient Hebrew mystical tradition and continued in Hebrew-Christian Hermetic Mysticism. [Boaz 2022 p. 82-102]

'Mindfulness of breathing' in the West is now mainstream. We find it in its secular raiment in all of our primary institutions: education, medicine, government, business, corrections; and in its spiritual meaning in organized Western religious practice, and in our Eastern contemplative traditions that have flourished on Western ground. Well then, just what is this 'mindfulness of breathing'? How precisely shall we utilize it in our lives?

The essence of mindfulness meditation is the inward directed wisdom of seeing clearly, both conceptually and non-conceptually, the actual nature of what Gautama the Buddha of this present age called in his lapidary *Satipatthana Sutra The Four Foundations of Mindfulness*, or the "four objects of mindfulness". These four 'objects' are indeed the very *process* of 'original awakening'—realization of the spiritual Path to human 'innermost secret' happiness, liberation, enlightenment, and buddhahood. Told the Buddha, "Mindfulness of breathing is the direct path for purification of the minds of beings...for overcoming sorrow...for the disappearance of pain...and for realization of nirvana."

That kind, harmless human happiness is what mindfulness meditation is good for. It is indeed the very open secret of our happiness here upon the earth.

In Buddhist tradition *The Four Foundations of Mindfulness* are, with Buddha's *Anapanasati Sutra* (On the Full Awareness of Breathing), the basis of all the love and wisdom that was to come from the great teaching of Shakyamuni the Buddha.

The Four Foundations are:

1) *Mindfulness of Body* is immediate awareness of our physical body, direct awareness of being here embodied in relative material form; our human body, just as it is now. "The body in the body...It is selfless (*anatman*), impermanent (*anitya*), and subject to suffering (*duhkha*, Pali. *dukkha*)." Here we learn to ground the busy mind—the urgent 'grounding relation' of Contemplative Science—firmly in this great gift of our spacetime earth body, precious physical vessel for the 'heart-mind of enlightenment'. We are here and now physically embodied in that present vast aboriginal awareness Spirit ground.

2) *Mindfulness of Feeling* is being present, mindful, and aware of "the feeling in feelings", just prior to our emotional responses to being here. Here we learn to ground the mind in loving acceptance of our natural feeling nature, the 'felt sense' of our innermost *buddic* love-wisdom mind, before it arises as concept and belief. As with the body, feeling is also selfless, impermanent, and subject to the suffering of samsaric existence in time.

That selfless human feeling capacity is as well the mode of feeling our profound gratitude for this precious gift (*jinlob*) of our life, just as it is now, adversity and all; and our devotion to the treasured 'Three Jewels' of the Path: the spiritual master or Lama, or Guru seen as the Buddha; the Dharma or teaching of the Buddha; and the crucible of the loving Sangha or spiritual community. For Christianity these Three Jewels are the Christ, the teaching of the Christ as expressed in both canonical and non-canonical Old and New Testament scripture, and the Church in its many holy vestments.

3) *Mindfulness of Mind* is mindful awareness of and non-identification with our adventitious, fleeting egocentric thoughts and the myriad negative and positive emotions that ride them. Our mind too is ultimately selfless, impermanent, and disposed to human suffering. Our scattered diaphanous thoughts randomly come and go. Mindful *rigpa* awareness does not take them too seriously. Nor does it judge them harshly. We learn to find humor in the comedy-drama of our precious lives. Are you really always right? Are you the center of the universe? Are you really superior to nearly everyone else? Mindfulness of mind is 'letting it be as it is'. Buddha told, "Rest your weary mind and let it be as it is; all things are perfect exactly as they are." That is the ultimate View. Incredulous indeed to those of us stuck in our conceptual egocentric relative view—world of self-ego-I.

4) *Mindfulness of Phenomena* (*dharmas*) that appear to the mind and body is bringing mindful awareness to any and all arising phenomenal experience, moment to moment, at the instant of its arising in and to our human mind. With practice we learn to let such ultimately illusory relative appearing phenomena 'self-liberate' (*rang grol*) at or near the

very instant of its arising, before it sweeps us away in the thought, intention and action that causes 'negative karma'. That is the ultimate View and its Dharma practice.

These *Four Foundations of Mindfulness* are the key to understanding the prior unity of objective Science and its panpsychic/kosmopsychic nondual perfectly subjective Spirit ground. [Appendix A below; Boaz 2023 *The Prior Unity of Science and Spirit*]

All arising phenomena are but the play of the aboriginal basic space (*chöying*) of *dharmakaya* awareness 'groundless ground' of our bright love-wisdom mind Presence—our indwelling always already present Buddha mind—inherently pristine and 'primordially pure' from the very beginning. We observe such arising phenomena like a loving mother watches her child at play. You are that mother. And you are that child.

In 'Mindfulness of Phenomena' we learn that the phenomenal experience of mind, and indeed the very Nature of Mind itself—basic space of *dharmakaya*—is selfless, impermanent, and utterly interdependent (*pratitya samutpada*) and interconnected; gently embracing each one of us. Recall, primordial *dharmakaya* is not a *thing*. It is everything.

And such an all inclusive view changes everything! From that expansive View arises Dzogchen 'Meditation' and 'Action/Conduct' of 'The Path' that results in 'The Fruition' of inner freedom from adventitious suffering, and of authentic compassionate harmless human happiness. View, Path and its Fruition are always a prior yet present invariant one truth unity. Padmasambhava Guru Rinpoche revealed that "The only way to realize Ultimate Truth is through Relative Truth; practice these two as a unity."

This *ultimate* interdependent nature of all arising phenomena (*dharmata*) is none other than vast empty space of the nondual boundless primordial awareness *dharmakaya* whole itself, basic space (*chöying, dharmadhatu*) of all appearing *relative* form, and of our mindful contemplative grounding practices that realize, then compassionately actualize it in our busy lives via *bodhicitta*—the thought, intention, and engaged love-wisdom action/conduct for the relative and ultimate benefit of all living beings, including Earth.

All four of these *Satipatthanas* are seen to be unified, if not yet fully realized, through the Buddha's practice of 'mindfulness of breathing'. Thus may we see clearly the wisdom of the prior and present noetic nondual *ultimate* unity of all the relative phenomena appearing to mind—beyond the *relative* duality of a subjective knower and its separate objects of experience; beyond that odious mind-body subject-object split. Relative 'mindfulness of breathing' is as well the contemplative foundation of ultimate *Dzogchen*. Mindful shamatha is indeed the first of the *Four Dzogchen Yogas*, as we shall soon see.

Thus is mindfulness meditation (*shamatha, zhine, sati, smrti*) the basis of 'penetrating insight', the clear seeing of *vipashyana* (Pali. *vipassana*) that together reveal the absence and emptiness/*shunyata* of any *ultimate* intrinsic existence of *relative* spacetime form; and the selflessness, and impermanence of all such appearing yet apparitional phenomena.

Yet, 'mindfulness meditation' cultures wisdom and love—our indwelling original love-wisdom mind—luminous Buddha heart Buddha mind Presence of timeless spacious primordial awareness ground of being itself, vast whole in whom this all arises, participates, and is instantiated. For Longchenpa the 'omniscient one' (2001 *Chöying Dzod*):



With no time frame, this spaciousness is equal to space itself...  
The Ati Dzogchen approach reveals the absence of causes and conditions, a single state of equalness...inseparable from the nondual ultimate...infinite and boundless without fixed depth or extent...supremely spacious expanse that is the primordially enlightened ground of being...This makes perfect sense although it is unacceptable in the lower [cause and effect] approaches.

Mindfulness bestows upon our human mind and body the nondual Dzogchen capacity to approach, connect with, recognize, then realize, beyond concepts, this always present *ultimate* primordial awareness Nature of Mind itself—Happiness Itself—in whom ordinary *relative* mind and its experience arises. Because these two seemingly separate dimensions of mind—relative and ultimate—are utterly indivisible this miracle of realization is always "Already accomplished from the very beginning...To abide here without seeking is the Meditation." [Middle Way founder Nagarjuna] Human happiness is the already present Result/Fruition of That. That is the Tibetan Vajrayana Fruitional View.

Yes. The Buddha's Two Truths are already an ontologically prior and phenomenally present 'innermost secret' one truth unity (*dzog*), invariant throughout all human reference frames and psycho-emotional-spiritual changes. *Emaho!* How Wonderful!

Therefore, our scattered limited 'ordinary mind', because it is perforce already embraced and subsumed by the perfectly subjective primordial awareness ground itself, is inherently lucent, limpid, open and pure, like the vast empty space of sky. And that is the Vajrayana ultimate 'Fruitional View'. This 'ordinary mind' of ours naturally, spontaneously brims with compassionate thought, intention, and engaged action for the benefit of living beings—even as it still clings a bit to its narcissistic sense of self. *Emaho!*

And yes, in the great Buddhist Mahayana tradition such compassionate skillful means (*upaya*) is known as *bodhichitta*, literally the 'heart-mind of enlightenment'. In the Buddhist Theravada tradition this wisdom of kindness is known as "purity of heart". That Buddha heart Buddha mind pervades all three Buddhist tenet systems, and all three of the Buddha's providential Three Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma. *Mahasukho!*

So, that is our natural vivid, timeless indwelling love-wisdom mind, by whatever grand name or concept. It furthers one to settle into, then rest in that mindful, always present Presence (*rigpa, vidya*) of freedom and bliss. What does love-wisdom mind look and feel like? Compassionate equanimity in the face of inevitable human adversity. But don't *believe* it! It's beyond belief. Buddha told, "Come and see for yourself (*ehi passika*)."

Thus it is, this prodigious process of phenomenal form arising within its primordial awareness emptiness ground or base (*gzhi rigpa*) is, in a word, *good*. That great *cosmic* process is for human beings the 'inherently positive basic goodness' that is this wondrous cosmic gift of spacetime reality; great gift (*jinlob, euengelion*) of our body and mind here in relative space and time. It is that embodiment in ultimately illusory but relatively all too real spacetime in which we learn to open and receive this compassionate mindful open secret of human happiness. Indeed, there is here no illusory time to lose.

Therefore, *The Four Foundations of Mindfulness* are the skillful means or method for awakening to such selfless love and wisdom happiness. It is both relative and ultimate remedy for the terrible human suffering caused by primal ignorance (*avidya*, *ajnana*, *marigpa*, *hamartia/sin*)—the adventitious Attraction-Attachment (grasping desire, greed, pride), and Aversion (fear, anger, hostility, hatred) that mortal flesh is heir to.

Our indwelling love-wisdom mind disperses the dark clouds of unknowing and ignorance that obscure the all-illuminating sun of our actual nature, the very 'clear light' Buddha Nature of Mind—*dharmakaya* ground personified as Adi Buddha Samantabhadra. *There is no cessation of human suffering without shamatha mindfulness meditation practice.*

Such a wisdom understanding of the unity of these *Four Foundations of Mindfulness* is, as we have seen, at once the realization of the prior and always present invariant *one truth unity (dzog)* of the Buddha's Two Truths, relative and ultimate—relative phenomenal form and its ultimate primordial awareness emptiness 'groundless ground'. That aboriginal ground is 'groundless' because it too is absent and empty of any whit of intrinsic absolute existence. How then does it exist? "Emptiness itself is established by human conceptual minds." [H.H. Dalai Lama]

Just so, Buddha taught the *Four Profundities*: "Form is empty; emptiness is form. Form is not other than emptiness; emptiness is not other than form." Yes, Buddha's prodigious Two Truths are a prior and always present nondual one truth unity.

From the Buddha's own enlightenment realization of this indivisible one truth unity of the Two Truths—relative form and its ultimate awareness emptiness ground—arises his teaching on the prior and present unity of the Four Noble Truths, the Fourth of which is the Noble Eightfold Path to liberation from the suffering of *samsara* and the endless painful cycle of rebirth. Here, the 'skillful means' of the Four *Satipatthana Foundations of Mindfulness* represents the penultimate 7th stage wisdom yoga, the 'Right Mindfulness' of the Eightfold Path, which opens into the final 8th stage 'Right Wisdom/Samadhi', which itself has four stages of mindful *dhyana* meditation resulting in ultimate equanimity (*upeksha*) and the final fruition of changeless 'unborn, uncreated' buddhahood—ultimate liberation and enlightenment of all the Buddhas of the Three Times that is human Happiness Itself—ultimate harmless happiness that cannot be lost. [Boaz 2020 Ch. V]

*How then do the Four Satipatthanas relate to the Buddha's Four Noble Truths?* Mindfulness of Body, and Mindfulness of Feeling illumine both *The Truth of Suffering*, physical body and mental-emotional suffering, and also *The Truth of the Cause of Suffering*. Mindfulness of Mind brightens *The Truth of The Cessation of Suffering*. And Mindfulness of Phenomena, selfless (*anatman*), impermanent (*anitya*), and empty interdependent nature (*pratitya samutpada*) of phenomena edifies the unified *Eightfold Path* to the cessation of suffering and our ultimate buddhahood. [Boaz 2020 Ch. II]

How does this ultimate spiritual metaphysic relate to relative materialist Science? The Modern Scientific Materialist cognitive pogrom against the metaphysics of human spirituality may be seen as an adventitious conceptual 'confirmation bias' that rules out non-conceptual nondual 'valid cognition' of our wisdom traditions. [Appendix A below]

## **Three Turnings of the Wheel, Three Tenet Systems, Four Noble Truths, Four Dzogchen Yogas, and Six Mahamudra Dharmas**

By his own accord Gautama the Buddha received his full *bodhi* love-wisdom mind enlightenment while 'sitting quietly', practicing 'mindfulness of breathing', and subtly chanting the Hindu Vedic mantra *OM*. After many trials he finally realized the primordial unity of the Two Truths of reality itself—Ultimate Truth and Relative Truth—the invariant one truth unity (*dzog*) and indivisibility of the *ultimate* primordial awareness selfless, formless, spacious emptiness 'groundless ground', and the *relative* conventional form and we beings that arise within it; and are never separate from that timeless ground.

Prince Siddhartha Gautama of the Northern India *Shakya* Clan realized with perfect clarity and yogic bliss the nondual primordial wisdom (*jnana, yeshe, gnosis*) that relative form and its nondual ultimate 'basic space' awareness 'groundless ground' abide in an ultimate intimate relation of identity, equality, and sameness (*samatajnana*).

As Buddhist Middle Way founder Nagarjuna told 500 years later, in such a nondual ultimate view, "There is not the slightest difference between [relative] *samsara* and [ultimate] nirvana." Upon this vast perfect realization Gautama, now the Buddha, gently touched our Mother Earth and exclaimed, "Earth is my witness!" His 'mindfulness of breathing' brings that *cosmic* primordial love-wisdom mind down to earth for us, and providentially fearlessly grounds it in his own, and our own earth body buddha heartmind for the benefit of all living beings. *Emaho!*

A buddha is one who is fully awake (full *bodhi*) to the interdependent Two Truths unity that are *relative* appearing phenomenal reality and the *ultimate* primordial ground in whom this all arises. Further, such a one desires to assuage the primal ignorance (*marigpa, avidya*) that causes terrible suffering (*dukkha*) for those beings who are not awake to that great truth. The bodhisattva—we buddhas in training—assiduously practice that path.

*The Three Turnings of the Dharmachakra Wheel* is the Mahayana understanding as to how this liberating process accomplishes that wondrous result. The *Dharmachakra Parvartana Sutra* reveals that great process for the benefit of all living beings. The Buddha taught his love and wisdom Dharma in different ways in accordance with the cognitive capacity of his human listeners. The notion of Three Turnings was first introduced in the *Samdhinirmocana Sutra* of the Third Turning of the Middle Way Yogachara school.

What does this mean for all of us being here in the realm of phenomenal space and time? It means that we relative conditioned human beings and our selfless, formless, ultimate awareness source-ground—by whatever hallowed name—are not in any way separate from That (*tathata*) buddha mind Presence! Who am I? That I Am! What is my mind? That is my mind! *Mahasukaho!* Nondual certainty. Yogi's bliss. Great joy!

Just so, in his first teaching following his perfect enlightenment Buddha taught, in the little Deer Park at Sarnath, the *First Turning of the Wheel of Dharma*. The First Turning offered a logical, conceptual, and moral understanding of our selfless (*anatman*), impermanent (*anitya*), interdependent (*pratya samutpada*) individual human liberation from

suffering, and the causes of suffering. The rather spooky details of no-self/*anatman* and emptiness/*shunyata* would be further developed in the Second Turning of the Wheel. The First Turning transmitted to the Buddha's first disciples his Four Noble Truths, the profound way of happiness for those who would be noble of body, mind and spirit.

These are, all too briefly: 1) The Truth of Suffering; 2) The Truth of the Cause of Suffering; 3) The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering; and 4) The Noble Eightfold Path that provides an end to human suffering. In short, life is filled with dissatisfaction, confusion, and physical/mental suffering; suffering has a cause, namely, atavistic egocentric primal ignorance (*avidya, marigpa, ajnana*); suffering has a cure, namely freedom from primal ignorance; and that cure is the practice of the eight yogas of the Path. Then told Buddha, "The Noble Eightfold Path is accomplished by living mindfully." [Boaz 2020 *Ch. II*]

Indeed, such a mindful compassionate life is both origin and aim of the entire Primordial Wisdom Tradition of humankind—spiritual archetype and immeasurable metric of a life well lived. Here we surrender our quixotic happiness seeking strategies.

We can now see how it is that mindfulness meditation with its Four Objects of Mindfulness is the very foundation of the entire Buddhist love-wisdom Path to psycho-emotional wholeness, the end of suffering, and authentic harmless human happiness.

Thus it is, from Gautama Shakyamuni the Buddha's final realization of the ultimate one truth unity of his Two Truths—ultimate and relative—arises his 'First Turning of the Wheel of Dharma' (*Dharmachakra*), the early Hinayana or Shravakayana (Abhidharma) First Tenet System for personal *individual liberation* that includes the Four Noble Truths. The Fourth Noble Truth is of course the Eightfold Path to the ultimate human happiness that is liberation, then full *bodhi* of enlightenment, and then permanent buddhahood.

And yes, this relative path to ultimate enlightenment is grounded in the compassionate wisdom of mindfulness with its Four *Satipatthana* Foundations, its *Anapanasati* "full awareness of breathing", and selfless *bodhicitta*, the relative thought, prayer, intention, and engaged human action/conduct for the benefit of all living beings.

In the First Turning of the Wheel appearing phenomena are conceptually, interdependently really real. In the Second Turning spacetime stuff is ultimately illusory and 'empty of any inherent ultimate existence', utterly beyond human concept and belief. This is the path not of mere personal liberation, but of the liberation of all living beings.

Then, in the Third Turning we see the prior and present one truth unity of Buddha's Two Truths—the conceptual dualistic Metaphysical Realism of the phenomenal domain of Relative Truth of the First Turning—with the Ultimate Truth of the inherent empty nonexistence of form and self of the Second Turning. The definitive Third Turning reveals the prodigious Middle Way Antirealism, even Metaphysical Idealism ("Mind Only" *Yogachara*) of the all subsuming dimension of that nondual one truth unity. [Boaz 2020]

We must conceptually understand the non-conceptual nondual one truth of this unified liberation Dharma *process*, that we may benefit suffering human and other living beings. We come to understand conceptually that liberation from suffering requires the

utter surrender of our concepts and beliefs about it. That begins our psycho-emotional freedom and ultimate harmless Happiness Itself—profound happiness that cannot be lost.

Thus, 500 years after the First Turning arises *The Second Turning of the Wheel*, near Rajgir on Vulture Peak Mountain—Buddha's Mahayana decidedly non-conceptual radical teaching on selfless no-self, emptiness/*shunyata*, and compassionate *bodhichitta*. From this teaching arises the compassionate Buddhist Mahayana second Tenet System with its bold intention to liberate all sentient beings. Here arises the noble *Prajnaparamita Sutra* on the wisdom of emptiness, and then the conceptual Middle Way *Prasangika* Madhyamaka teaching. Buddha's very brief *Heart of Wisdom Sutra* (*The Heart Sutra*) concisely summarizes the bodhisattva's love and wisdom of that Second Turning of the Wheel.

From this relative conceptual causal Middle Way (*Uma*) mindful foundation arises, in the Third Turning, definitive ultimate acausal nondual Tibetan Buddhist *Ati Dzogchen*, the Great Perfection view and highest nondual *Ati Yoga* practice. *Dzogchen* is sometimes classified by Tibetan Buddhists as a Fourth Turning of the Dharma Wheel.

So yes, *The Third Turning of the Dharmachakra* then gives us Buddhist Idealism, the *Yogachara* 'Mind Only' (*chittamatra*) school with its 'Three Natures' doctrine: 1) conceptual, dualistic, imagined, illusory *imputed nature*; 2) causal interdependent *dependent nature*; and 3) the acausal nondual perfected or *completed nature*—our *tathata/buddha* nature. Here is revealed the Buddha's *definitive* teaching on our already present indwelling selfless (*anatman*) buddha nature (*tathagatagarbha*). To Buddha's inner selfless no-self *anatman* emptiness is added outer emptiness-*shunyata*, the logically sound utter absence of inherent ultimate existence. This view utilizes the inherent limits of conceptual logic to self-reflexively refute that conceptual logic. We here skillfully enlist our prodigious human causal conceptual mind to critique its inherent limits and go beyond into the acausal *dharmakaya* Nature of Mind. Nondual *Ati Dzogchen* and Essence Mahamudra reveal That.

Therefore, The First Turning offered an exoteric analytical conceptual logical path to liberation. The Second Turning offered an esoteric, trans-conceptual, potentially nihilist, utterly selfless path, absent and empty any whit of the intrinsic existence of the realist First Turning. Then the Tibetan Third Turning offers the third Tenet System with its nondual completion of the First and Second Turnings that is truly a syncretic path to human liberation grounded in the more profound depth of Ultimate Truth. The Third Turning liberates potential confusion of the First and Second Turnings without losing the selfless nondual wisdom of emptiness. We require the prior and present unity of all Three Turnings of the Wheel. The *Dharmachakra Parvartana Sutra* reveals that profoundly.

But can we really understand that none of this stuff, nor our concepts and beliefs about it, ultimately exists? If so how? We surrender our dualistic concepts and beliefs and turn inward toward the astounding nondual truth. In any case, spacetime stuff does indeed exist relatively, conventionally. So there are beings to help, and little kids to keep.

Moreover, in *The Third Turning* *no-self absence of an intrinsic self-ego-I is replaced by always already present living buddha nature buddha essence (Shentong), an indwelling spirit*

*Presence that is the supreme identity present in every living being, and attainable by human beings. Here Yogachara synthesized the Three Natures and Alayavijnana with our innate buddha nature.*

[The primary buddha nature sutras are the *Tathagatagarbha Sutra*, *Lankavatara Sutra*, and the *Mahayana Mahaparinirovana Sutra*. Good ancillary reading.]

The Tibetan Vajrayana Indian Buddhist tantras are included, with the *definitive* sutras, in the Third Turning; and are sometimes seen to constitute a Fourth Turning. Nyingma school and Kagyu school accept both the First and Second Turnings as definitive. Gelug school accepts only the Second Turning as definitive.

Clearly, Gautama our historical Buddha was physically present only at the First Turning of the Wheel. The Second Turning was 500 years later at Vulture Peak. There he turned the Wheel as a *kosmic* Buddha in his spirit Presence as he appeared to those Buddhist wisdom bodhisattva masters via his timeless omnipresent *buddic* mindstream.

Mindful quiescent shamatha calm abiding directly (*yogi pratyaksa*) connects us to That, our always indwelling buddha heartmind essence and nature, quite beyond the frightfully foolish exuberance of our all too human habitual conceptual ideation.

From the Tibetan Buddhist Third Turning of the Dharma Wheel naturally arises the third Tenet System with its Nyingma *Four Dzogchen Yogas*: 1) Mindful *Shamatha*; 2) penetrating insight of *Vipashyana*; 3) *Kadag* purity of the primordial awareness ground; and 4) *Lhundrub* indwelling boundless primordial Presence of that 'groundless ground'.

*The Six Dharmas of Naropa*. Now as to the Third Turning of Buddha's *Dharmachakra*, the Tibetan Vajrayana Kagyu Mahamudra has produced the prodigious *Six Dharmas of Naropa*. The great Nyingma Dzogchen master Longchenpa learned the *Six Dharmas* from the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, then composed a profound commentarial praise entitled *The Refinement of Utter Lucidity: A Condensation of the Six Yogas of Naropa*.

Naropa (956-1040), disciple of Tilopa, collected the *Six Dharmas* in India, synthesized them into a complete system, then passed them to his heartson Marpa, who taught them to Milarepa. That text has entered all lineages of the Tibetan Vajrayana.

Broadly construed, the *Six Dharmas of Naropa* comprise a complete system of six Completion Stage yogic practices: *tummo* yoga and illusory body yoga (*gyulu*) to be practiced during the day; dream yoga (*milam*) and luminous clear light yoga (*osel*) for the practice of the night; and finally *bardo* yoga and *phowa* at or near the moment of death.

The Six Yogas provide the prepared yogin direct nondual experience (*yogi pratyaksa*) of this illusory dreamlike nature of appearing reality—selfless, egoless full *bodhi* wakeful clear light clarity of the Buddha's wisdom of emptiness. Liminal *bardo* and *phowa* practice then facilitate the 'transference' of the mental body during the death process.

Hence, the assiduous practice of Buddha's 'mindfulness of breathing' grounds the entire Buddhadharma by transforming vacuous concepts, and negative human emotion into our always already present *buddic* love-wisdom mind awareness—the very cause and open secret of human happiness. Shamatha mindfulness of breathing grounds nondual Dzogchen and Mahamudra as we awaken to our own innermost buddha mind Presence.

## Buddha Nature, Christ Mind, and the I AM Presence

Jesus the Christ taught foundational mindfulness practice as mindful *kenosis*—'self-emptying' or surrender of self-ego-I through deep contemplative mantra prayer upon the selfless mindful breath. Here the troubled self takes refuge in the Hebrew "I Am That I Am Presence" of Moses and the Prophets, selfless *pneuma-prana* 'breath of life' or 'Holy Spirit', divine breath of *Abba*, everlasting all subsuming nondual God the primordial Father of Jesus the Christ. Thus did he fulfill the Hebrew "Law of the Prophets". [Boaz 2022 p. 82]

Indeed, all of the masters of our wisdom traditions have taught this great truth of selfless mindfulness meditation—by whatever name or concept (*namarupa*)—as a skillful means to recognize, then connect to the always present nondual Spirit Presence of the Primordial Deep (*Bathos*) that is our divine human origin, aim, and destiny.

We shall learn in these pages to accomplish that miracle via the simple "placement of attention/awareness" upon the positive, compassionate mind states that we choose, far beyond our common, fruitless happiness seeking strategies. "To rest here without seeking; that is the Meditation." [Nagarjuna] In Ati Dzogchen View and Praxis it is known as the natural, effortless, continuous "nonmeditation" of this always present bright continuity of egoless mindful awareness.

Mindful shamatha is said to be the paraconceptual foundation of trans-conceptual nondual Dzogchen View and Practice. The overall result of such nondual practice is deep inner subjective and outer objective peace, yogi's bliss, and knowing feeling *certainty* of Buddha's *one truth unity* of his Two Truths, relative and ultimate—our 'innermost secret' Buddha Nature of Mind.

Shamatha calm abiding mindful directed attentional awareness greatly empowers the contemplative object of that attention. That mindful awareness is the conscious cognitive finite portal into the non-conceptual infinite ultimate all embracing reality dimension, selfless dharmakaya 'groundless ground' of authentic happiness that passes all conceptual, rational semiotic linguistic understanding. That is the harmless human happiness that cannot be lost.

Yes. That is what mindfulness meditation is good for. The bleak alternative to such a happiness outcome is the dreaded post-Postmodern affliction that Dr. Andrew Holecek has renamed "PTSD—Post-Truth Samsaric Disorder". The price paid for that epic atavistic cognitive disaster is a compassionate authentic human life free of fear and anger in this constant presence of our death.

There can now be no doubt, the profound relative and ultimate wisdom antidote to that insidious self-contraction is Gautama the Buddha's "mindfulness of breathing"—conscious continuity of connection to our always already present indwelling nondual buddha mind 'I AM Presence'—our selfless, timeless, formless, 'basic space' (*chöying*) primordial awareness Buddha Nature of Mind.

Who am I? THAT I AM! What is my mind? THAT (*tathata*) is my mind! *Emaho!*

## II

### Mindful Shamatha Becomes Dzogchen Mind Training

Shamatha calm abiding is the true foundation for advanced Dzogchen teaching.

—Adzom Gyalse Rinpoche

*Mindfulness Meditation: Shamatha Calm Abiding.* In the East shamatha (*zhine, smrti, sati, bhavana*) arose from the ancient Hindu Vedic *Sanatanadharma*. It is present in one of its contemplative variations throughout the esoteric noetic primordial wisdom traditions of our species—Eastern Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, and Western Abrahamic monotheism—esoteric 'mystical' Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hermitic Christian-*Kabbalah*.

Mindfulness in the Western Tradition emerged primarily from 12th century Hebrew Theosophical *Kabbalah*, through the foundational mystical *Zohar* that explicates the mystical basis of the Torah. *Zohar* is a beautiful spiritual guide to the infinite emptiness of monistic pantheistic primordial *Ein Sof*, unmanifest Hebrew nondual Godhead, ultimate spirit ground prior to its emanation into spacetime form via the *Ten Sefirot* of the *Kabbalistic Tree of Life*. [Boaz 2022 Ch.2 pp. 82-102]

Hebrew *Kabbalah* and *Zohar* were accepted by many Christian theologians of the time to become the 'Hermitic Reformation' with its mystical Christian-*Kabbalah* tradition that is the source of present Hermitic Hebrew-Christian mysticism—esoteric view and practice of the teaching of Jesus the Christ on Old/New Testament love and wisdom.

Gautama the Buddha adapted mindfulness meditation from his Hindu Vedic tradition as "mindfulness of breathing". It pervades the entire Buddhadharma; all three Buddhist Tenet Systems (Hinayana/Theravada, Mahayana, Tibetan Vajrayana); and all three Turnings of the Buddhist Wheel of Dharma. Counter conceptual mindfulness calm abiding provides a contemplative foundation for Buddha's Two Truths and his Four Noble Truths with the Eightfold Path to liberation; and as well of the *Dzogchen* "Seven Mind Training Steps to the Great Perfection", as we shall see in *Chapter III*.

How then shall we approach *Ati Dzogchen*? Before *Dzogchen* foundational *ngöndro* practices can begin it is wise that the practitioner engage basic shamatha mindfulness meditation—the 7th yogic discipline of Buddha's Eightfold Path—to tame the wild horse of conceptual mind. *Without a foundation in basic shamatha mindfulness to pacify the 'wild horse' of scattered concept-mind, Dzogchen view and practice remain all too conceptual.* In *Ati Dzogchen* view and practice dualistic mindful shamatha becomes the nondual purity of primordial awareness of the liberating vast spacious *dharmakaya* groundless ground itself.



Gautama Shakyamuni, the Buddha of this present age, continued his teaching of the path of meditation and the wisdom of selfless (*anatman*), impermanent (*anitya*), and emptiness/*shunyata* in his *Satipatthana Sutta*, the *Foundation of Mindfulness Sutra*, as we have seen. These Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Four Objects of Mindfulness) form the 'two limbs' of Buddha's teaching—compassionate love (*bodhicitta*) and wisdom, both relative discriminating *prajna/sherab* and the ultimate primordial wisdom of spacious nondual gnosis/*jnana/yeshe* in which it arises.

All four *satipatthanas* embrace compassion, selflessness, impermanence, and all four are subject to the suffering of our being here in *samsaric* space and time. As we lift the veil of ignorance (*marigpa*) relative samsara and ultimate nirvana are an ontic prior and always present phenomenal one truth unity of the Buddha's prodigious Two Truths—relative form and ultimate emptiness reality dimensions of this primordial ground of Being Itself.

Yes. Here Buddha teaches the conscious "placement of attention", our non-conceptual immediate 'bare' awareness upon the rhythmic rising and falling of the breath in the body. Our attention is here gently focused upon the life giving *jnanaprana* spirit wind (*lung, c'hi, pneuma/Holy Spirit*) rising and falling with each breath in the belly. *Prana/lung/pneuma* is the subtle esoteric spirit energy voice of physical light-form-matter-energy ( $E=mc^2$ ). Together they constitute the prior and ever present unity of objective Science and its perfectly subjective nondual Spirit ground. [*Appendix A* below]

From our awareness in the *hara/do* chakra upon the breath in the belly we move our focused attentional awareness to our feelings, our mind, and our sense perceptions of arising phenomena with their corresponding chakra centers upon the 'central vertical axis' in the human physical and subtle body. Thus arises, breath by mindful breath, awareness of these Four Foundations of Mindfulness or The Four Objects of Mindfulness, great *jinlob* gift of *body, feeling, mind*, and the *phenomena* arising for our sensing feeling embodied mind. These four are an indivisible prior, ever present noetic unity. ['Noetic' is nondual body, mind, spirit subject-object unity.] "Ultimate Truth is one." [Chandrakirti] All that through a 'progressive' refinement of attention of our "mindfulness of breathing"; surrender of the egocentric '*Five Hindrances*' to the 'full *bodhi*' of liberating enlightenment.

*The Five Hindrances, and the Seven Factors of Awakening.* These five obstructing simulacra of the full *bodhi* of enlightened buddhahood are: grasping sense desire; ill will (anger, hostility); lethargy (sloth and torpor) and agitation; fear/anxiety; doubt or lack of faith. *The Four Satipatthanas* free us to simultaneously engage Buddha's sutra '*Seven Factors of Awakening*' which are: *mindfulness* of breathing; *investigation* and study of the emptiness of arising form; patient, diligent *effort*; *joy-bliss* of happy feeling; *peace* and tranquility of mind and body; *meditation-samadhi* (*dhyana, jhana*); *equanimity* or loving acceptance of self and others, with compassionate *bodhicitta* for the benefit of both. The *Five Hindrances* and the *Seven Factors* constitute the causal cause and effect Mahayana View. The acausal View?

Now this causal dharma plot thickens. In his prodigious *Chöying Dzöd* Longchenpa reminds us that in the acausal nondual *ultimate* view none of these *relative Hindrances*, nor the *Factors of Awakening*, not even buddhahood truly exist. How shall we understand this radical teaching? In the acausal, nondual wisdom mind of the 'omniscient one':

Within the essence of basic space [*chöying*] causality is transcended and the ten attributes do not pertain...The ultimate meaning of genuine being involves no effort nor achievement...  
Pacify all conceptual elaboration of existence and nonexistence!...  
Buddhas and ordinary beings are equal in basic space, relative reality and ultimate reality are equal in basic space, flaws and positive qualities are equal in basic space. All things arise equally in basic space. From *The Way of Abiding* we hear: In the ultimate heart essence, with no [duality] there is no framework of view, empowerment, mandala, mantra, levels, training, or progress. Rather, there is expansive openness in supreme spaciousness... Great Perfection...freedom from bias based on characteristics... beyond the extremes of denial [negation] or affirmation.

Thus do we learn to view our habitual dualistic limited relative conceptual understanding of the Buddhadharma by the lights of our already present and awake trans-conceptual, acausal nondual Ultimate Truth primordial love-wisdom buddha mind; "basic space" (*chöying*) of that in whom (Samantabhadra) this all arises and outshines. The bright Presence of That (*tathata*) always already embraces this relative all too real yet ultimately illusory dimension of spacetime Relative Truth. That lofty nondual *ultimate* view requires a continuity of *relative* "mindfulness of breathing" as Buddha called it so long ago.

### **The Four Foundations of Mindfulness Revisited**

1) *Mindfulness of Body* as immediate direct awareness of being physically embodied in human form—"the body in the body". Here we learn, upon each mindful breath to ground the airy, heady mind in our physical earth body, the spacetime vessel for our engaged compassionate *bodhicitta* activity/conduct, 'heart-mind of enlightenment' arising always in this vast, infinite and boundless whole that is nondual primordial awareness Spirit ground—for the benefit of all living beings, including our precious Mother Earth.

2) *Mindfulness of Feeling* is being lovingly present, 'mindful and aware' of "the feeling in feelings", our 'felt sense', just prior to our emotional and conceptual responses to being here in form and time. Here we learn to tame, pacify, and ground the habitual busy concept-mind in our indwelling always already present nondual Presence of noetic, non-conceptual, love-wisdom feeling-knowing Buddha heartmind. Through *feeling* we

experience great gratitude for the exceedingly rare and precious gift of our human life, and devotion to the treasured *Three Jewels*—the Guru as the Buddha, his dharma teaching, and the sangha spiritual community. Sometimes we may experience the *Fourth Jewel*—our wise loving Lama who teaches us how to take refuge in these precious Three Jewels.

3) *Mindfulness of Mind* is mindful awareness of, and non-identification with our fleeting, insubstantial thoughts and the negative and positive emotions that ride them. Our thoughts naturally arise and fall away spontaneously. We need not take them too seriously, nor judge them good or bad. Thoughts have only the power we choose to bestow upon them. Grounded in 'mindfulness of breathing' we learn mantra prayer, deity practice, direct *rigpa/vidya* Presence of the primordial ground, *Ati Dzogchen* approach, and skillful engaged *bodhicitta* activity for the benefit of all living beings.

4) *Mindfulness of Phenomena* that continuously appear to the body, feeling senses, and the mind is accomplished by the 'placement of awareness/attention', moment to moment, upon any and all arising sensory phenomenal experience. With mindful practice we learn to allow negative appearing stuff to 'self-liberate' (*rang grol*) at or near the very instant of its arising in our bodymind, before we impulsively act on them creating new negative karma. We come to understand that all appearing phenomena are but the play of that vastness, primordial awareness-consciousness 'groundless ground' of our bright always present love-wisdom Buddha heartmind Presence, inherently pristine and 'primordially pure' from the very beginning. Recall that these *Four Foundations of Mindfulness* are in the ultimate nondual View a priori and always present one truth unity.

### Awareness Management

*In the Vajrayana Buddhist taxonomy of reality the ultimate nature of relative conventional appearing reality is empty (shunya), impermanent (anitya), and selfless (anatman); the interdependent arising (pratitya samutpada) of all phenomena (dharmata). Emptiness manifests as the interdependent arising of spacetime phenomena. This boundless emptiness whole of physical and mental phenomena is realized by the human being via nondual primordial wisdom (yeshe, jnana, gnosis). That ultimate reality is none other than the vast empty (shunya) 'basic space' (dharmadhatu, chöying) of primordial dharmakaya awareness 'groundless ground'—Adi Buddha Samantabhadra—boundless unbroken whole itself in whom all of this relative spacetime form arises, participates, and is instantiated.*

Through *awareness management*—attention to bright Presence of quiescent 'mindfulness of breathing'—we learn 'the path' to awakening to the primordial love-wisdom of Buddha's empty "noself" (*anatman*), and of the 'two selflessnesses' that are 'self' and 'other'. These are the inherent 'selflessness of the person', and the 'emptiness of phenomena' arising to the person. While appearing *relative* reality is often all too real, there

is no intrinsically existing *ultimate* self-ego-I, and so no ultimate existing spacetime phenomenal reality arising for it. And that is the peaceful joyous love-wisdom mind 'samadhi of certainty' of the Buddha's Two Truths, boundless emptiness, and impermanent physical and mental form arising therein. As Buddha told, "Form is empty; emptiness is form." These Two Truths are, in the ultimate view, a prior and present *one truth unity*, invariant through all phenomenal reference frames arising as our experience within it.

From that primordial awareness ground arises compassionate 'original basal clear light' *wisdom of emptiness*—Dzogchen *rimé* master Mipham's immutable "noumenal Fundamental Mind" (*chös nyid*), pristine clear light mind nature (*'od gsal yeshe*) Presence (*rigpa, vidya*) abiding as our primordial ground of being. Speaks Jamgön Mipham [2006]:

About this, just this original basal clear light, the primordial mode of subsistence, is the [ultimate] reality of all phenomena. All appearances of cyclic existence and nirvana shine forth from within it...continuously abide within it...Thus, the meaning indicated by the phrases 'fundamental basic mind, the clear light, the Great Completeness' is the noumenon of the mind, self-arisen pristine wisdom...empty basic knowledge without object and subject...basal mode of [being], the great equality...immutable and not changing in the three times...[That is] what is to be realized by the View...[The Ground] is empty and pervasive like space...like a jewel, like the sun...Consciousness itself dawns as perfect wisdom, and even phenomena dawn as naturally pure...When fundamental mind abides as the basis, it is said that 'the realizer realizes emptiness'...At that time 'realizing mind' has dissolved completely into fundamental mind [the nature of mind]...This naked basic wisdom is awareness of the present moment, in which you do not follow thoughts of past or future.

Very beautiful. How is it that we 'accomplish' such deep wisdom understanding? In the non-causal 'Fruitional Veiw' Nargarjuna reveals that "It is already accomplished from the very beginning"—deep within each one of us. That uncaused primordial love-wisdom buddha mind is always already present at the spiritual Heart (*nyingpo, hridaya, kokoro*) of all of us human beings. It is That (*tathata*) to which we awaken upon the Path. So there is no need to seek that ultimate harmless happiness elsewhere. It lies not in past sacred personages, nor in some future blissful liberated mind state. It cannot be found in our habitual apocryphal happiness seeking strategies, not even our future looking spiritual designs and goals. Thus do we wisely make the here now practice of mindful awareness itself our goal. "Make the goal the practice." [Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche]

We have seen that all of our Buddhist practices are enhanced by the Buddha's non-conceptual shamatha 'mindfulness of breathing'. How shall we understand this? In the clear words of 16th century *Mahamudra* master Dakpo Tashi Namgyal (2001 p. 29 ff):

Look directly into your conscious mind. It is a wakefulness for which no words suffice. It is not a definable entity, but at the same time, it is a self-

knowing aware emptiness that is clear, lucid and awake. Sustain this without distraction...As a thought or perception arises...look into it directly... Its experience is, in itself, something unidentifiable—it is unobstructedly aware and yet not conceptualizing...As for perceptions, they are a mere impression of unobstructed presence, which is insubstantial and not a clinging to a solid reality. Simply rest in this aware emptiness that is unidentifiable [pure] awareness...perception devoid of self-nature.

What is your mind? *That* is your mind. Who am I? *That* I am. Now, naturally aware mindful "unobstructed presence" and your very own natural love-wisdom mind are one and the same (*samatajnana*), the nondual wisdom of sameness. There exists not an iota of separation. It has always been thus. Great joy! Rest now—upon the mindful breath in your belly—for a few moments in that boundless flow of pure joy that is beyond words.

### **Buddhist Dzogchen: *The Three Statements That Strike the Essential Point***

These *Three Essential Statements* arose in the *Three Vajra Verses* that comprise the wondrous 'Final Testament' of first century Dzogchen founder Garab Dorje. They constitute the Ati Dzogchen Ground, Path, and Fruition that are, in the Fruitional View, already accomplished View, Meditation, and Action/Conduct as it is expressed in Vairochana's early Dzogchen tantra, the *Six Vajra Verses* (*rig pa'l khu byug*), natural luminous Presence (*rigpa, vidya*) of timeless, selfless intrinsic awareness—'basic space' of primordial *dharmakaya* Ground that we are—'supreme identity' of our 'supreme source'.

*Verse I: The View is the Ground.* "Recognize your own intrinsic awareness."

That immediate present moment non-conceptual pristine basal primordial awareness 'groundless ground' (*gzhi rigpa*) utterly transcends all thoughts about it, and indeed all conceptual activity related to the Three Times (past, present, future). That aboriginal awareness is itself spontaneously 'self-sprung' intrinsic awareness Presence (*rigpa, vidya*) of that Ground of all arising inherently empty spacetime phenomena. "The ultimate nature of all phenomena is nondual, beyond the limits of the mind." From that View of the Ground arises the Dzogchen *Semde* (mind) teaching cycle.

*Verse II: The Path is the Meditation.* "Choose the state of presence, beyond doubt."

All of the arising phenomena of relative samsara and ultimate nirvana are but the play of one's own already present intrinsic awareness (*rig pa'i rtsal*). One must "decide" upon that primordial state of Presence, and understand that nothing else ultimately exists. "There is no concept that defines 'what is', but vision nevertheless manifests: all is good." From the Path that is the Meditation arises the Dzogchen *Longde* (space) teaching cycle.

*Verse III: The Fruit/Result is the Action/Conduct.* "Continue in the state of presence with confidence in liberation." The Action/Conduct manifests as the precious *bodhicitta*.

The untrained human mind is such that gross and subtle thoughts and negative emotions continuously arise within it. By immediately recognizing their ultimate illusory nature they 'self-liberate' (*rang grol*) at the very instant of their arising and return to the infinite expanse of the *dharmakaya* ground whence they arise. In that nondual spacious basal primordial awareness 'groundless ground' emptiness and awareness are always a prior yet present one truth unity. "Everything is already accomplished, so having overcome spiritual seeking one finds oneself in the self-perfected state of Presence." That is the Fruition of the View, Meditation, and Conduct.

That Fruition/Result arises from Dzogchen *mangagde* or *upadesha* Heart Essence (*Nyingthig*)—direct master to disciple teaching cycle that altogether constitutes the final cause of the liberating compassionate Fruition/Result of the Path. That great relative Path bears ultimate Fruit of Buddha's Three Turnings—Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen teaching.

In the clear words of our own Dzogchen/Mahamudra master Adzom Paylo Rinpoche regarding Garab Dorje's wondrous *Three Statements*:

The real state of the authentic, uncontrived Nature of Mind is the infinite great expanse, without reference, without clinging—enjoyment, like the sky...The key point of the *View* is to settle in Presence of uncontrived equanimity. The key point of the *Meditation* is to choose primordial luminosity, which liberates us from the precarious Path. The key point of the *Action/Conduct* is to decide on self-liberation, the direct transmission of *rigpa* awareness, expressed as kind *bodhicitta*. The *Fruition/Result* is simultaneous instant liberation. How wonderful!

Continuing with Longchenpa's Dzogchen "Theme of Ineffability", Jigme Lingpa, author of our *Longchen Nyingthig Heart Essence of the Infinite Expanse*, on the acausal nondual ultimate Ati Dzogchen View:

No buddhas, no beings, beyond existence and nonexistence Intrinsic Awareness Itself is absolute Guru, Ultimate Truth. By resting naturally, beyond fixation in that inherently free perfect *bodhi* mind, I take refuge in the Guru and actualize *bodhicitta*.

For Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, in the perfect words of the Buddha:

'All that arises is essentially no more real than a reflection, transparently pure and clear, beyond all definition, conceptual, or logical explanation. Yet the seeds of past action, karma, continue to cause further arising. Even so, know that all that exists is ultimately nondual, empty of self-nature.'

## Adzom Gyalse Rinpoche on the *Three Essential Statements* of Dzogchen View:

The View' is the Nature of Mind. It is the very Ground of being. View is most important. Without a clear understanding of the View—the Meditation, Action/Conduct, and the Fruition will be deficient. The correct View opens the way to fruition of buddhahood. From it arises the Meditation and the Conduct. Dzogchen Ati Yoga is the ultimate View. It is beyond mere conceptual view; it is the nondual fruitional state itself, the actuality of the nondual buddha reality—beyond mind—the very Nature of Mind itself.

The View of Dzogchen is expressed in *The Three Statements* of Garab Dorje. *The Three Statements* are the quintessential teaching of Guru Yoga. When we realize the non-conceptual definitive View, then the Meditation and Action become automatic. There is nothing that is not in the View...It is all inclusive. We desire skillful methods for recognition of that. So the Buddha taught Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen. In Sutra we study scripture to gain insight. Through Middle Way Madhyamaka we reach a conceptual conclusion as to the nature of non-conceptual *rigpa* intrinsic awareness. Through Tantra/Secret Mantra Dzogchen wisdom we encounter directly naked intrinsic awareness itself. Shamatha calm abiding is the very foundation of advanced Dzogchen teaching...By receiving the secret pith instruction of *mangagde/upadesha* we can approach that unity. That pith instruction is the quintessential teaching. These *Three Essential Points* accomplish that. Guru/Lama is always within. Inner and outer Guru together result in realization of *dharmata*, buddha essence. Inner Lama is the very Nature of Mind. Inner Lama and outer Lama are a primordial unity...So we begin with the View; then arises the Meditation, then the Action/Conduct. The final Fruition/Result arises from that. These four are already a unity... So first relax and release your conceptual mind. Leave it alone; let it be as it is, which then leaves only the luminous primordial wisdom. Like the vast empty sky, no conceptuality can arise here. Not scattered, free of desire and aversion. Now the Three Times [past, present, future] are free and liberated. Only pure being itself remains. So we begin by meditating upon calm abiding that is the very foundation of Dzogchen. Now we see mind as the Nature of Mind, unborn, non-abiding, and unceasing. Contrived conceptual mind cannot accomplish this. That is the View. Here View realizes the View; awareness recognizes pure awareness; non-recognition is now recognition. Rest now in primordial Presence. *Rigpa* intrinsic awareness is always present. That is Ati Dzogchen. Jamgön Mipham: 'Let mind drop away and rest in that empty space of pure awareness. Whatever arises in mind, let it be in its own place; self-liberated into the primordial ground, free of identity and judgment.' First exclaim a thundering PHAT! That blasts away all distractions. PHAT is the union of skillful means and wisdom. It frees us from bondage of concepts so we may enter in and remain in immediate undistracted meditative equipoise. Yet, since there is nothing to strive for, nothing to seek, nothing to meditate on, this is known as the Dzogchen 'nonmeditation'; not doing, simply being. Indeed, for the very rare 'Dzogchen type' there is no meditation, and no non-

meditation. That is 'liberation through hearing'. For individuals who cannot naturally rest in the Nature of Mind, even though we may understand Dzogchen View conceptually, and sometimes directly, we have not yet realized resting here beyond fabricated concepts. Here we require antidotes, 'brief moments many times'. We practice bringing *dharmakaya* into all situations, beyond our concepts and beliefs about it. Thus, by 'Deciding on that state', do we 'continue in confidence in liberation'. [The second and third Essential Statements.] That is the essence of 'the Meditation' of Garab Dorje's View, Meditation, and Action. The Action/Conduct is *bodhicitta*. The ultimate nondual *bodhicitta* Buddha reality is embodied in Ati Dzogchen. Patrul Rinpoche told that in the desire realm [form and formless form] we experience typical negative reactivity and create negative karma. We must be skillful in the various means of liberation to overcome this condition. We discover 'liberation upon arising'. That must be both subtle and gross. So we allow arising thoughts to self-liberate [*rang grol*] at the very instant of their arising in concept mind. This is much more than simple recognition of an arising thought. Rather, we surrender all thinking into its primordial wisdom Ground, so that our concept mind is entirely liberated leaving no trace whatsoever. That is mastery of *dharmakaya* through 'knowing liberation'; liberation in its own place, continuously. Therefore thoughts, whether subtle or gross, are always only *dharmakaya*, ornaments of the subtle play of primordial *dharmakaya* awareness—intrinsic luminosity of ultimate wisdom that we are—infinite vastness of that. Yet, phenomena continue to arise but in no way disturb this continuity of primordial intrinsic awareness. So, first we recognize the emptiness of adventitious thoughts, then they self-liberate at the instant of their arising. It's like meeting an old friend. However, we may know how to meditate—shamatha and vipashana—without the ability to self-liberate. Recognizing our thoughts upon their arising is not enough. We become caged in a desire realm, for example in a formless god realm. This is a path of delusion. Here we are ordinary meditating practitioners, not advanced yogins. So, 'liberation upon arising' is not Ati Dzogchen. Rather, ultimate liberation from the delusion of samsara occurs in the 'immediacy of the View' of primordial *dharmakaya* ground state. Samsara need not be suppressed or avoided. We finally realize it to be the play of stillness of *dharmakaya*. Ordinary meditation is not subtle enough to result in liberation. Delusion still persists. The duality of meditation and meditator still exists in the Vajrayana teaching vehicle. Yet, in the subtle non-doing 'nonmeditation' of the Ati Dzogchen View there is *only* self-liberated *dharmakaya*, *Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen* nondual intrinsic awareness, ultimate unity of Buddha's Two Truths, unity of form and emptiness. In this peaceful absence of concepts *dharmakaya* ground is self-evident! Absent concept-mind there is no object, no thought, no delusion, no question, only the basic space [*chöying, dharmadhatu*] primordial emptiness ground. That wakeful sublime Presence is pure clarity itself, always present upon the natural mindful breath. To conclude, the *Three Essential Statements* of Garab Dorje are a direct encounter! The View is spontaneously realized beyond dualistic practice. It illumines everything. The View is spontaneously realized with no need of



dualistic practice. That View is the heart essence and pinnacle of all nine *yanas*. View is primordial sublime nondual wisdom. This love and wisdom is the state of buddha nature. The duality of the Mahayana with its Six Paramitas and its Two Accumulations is perfectly realized as nondual. Great joy! That fruit is the quintessential instruction, *mangagde/upadesha* that exceeds all other teaching. This sacred pith instruction contains the meaning of few words—intrinsic awareness of pure dharmakaya. It is the great treasure of 'enlightened intent'—enlightened mind. Thus does the 'final testament' of Garab Dorje's *Three Essential Statements* capture the enlightened intent of the Buddha's teaching for all of us.

Longchenpa's penetrating ultimate instruction on *The Three Statements* is our guide to the realization of ultimate buddhahood. He then transmitted that to Jigme Lingpa. The result is the great treasure that is our precious *Longchen Nyinthig, Emaho*.

This concludes the 2023 teaching retreat of Adzom Gyalse Rinpoche on Dzogchen View and *The Three Essential Statements* of Garab Dorje. [Translated by Eric Drew.]

### **Longchenpa on the "Four Divisions of Meaning" of the Dzogchen Heart Essence.**

These are: Ineffability, Openness, Spontaneous Presence, and Oneness. In the ultimate view these four are not separate but a nondual prior and ever present unity.

*The Theme of Ineffability.* All phenomena are shown to have no substance or characteristics. The ineffable nature of things is that they are empty by virtue of their very essence...Within the womb of timeless basic space as an infinite sky, however the universe manifests...these forms of emptiness are ineffable by nature. All phenomena—the world of appearances and possibilities—whether samsara or nirvana, even as they manifest do not waver from the scope of awakened mind.

*The Theme of Openness [Trekchö].* Having come to an understanding of the way of abiding as ineffability, one reaches the definitive conclusion that its nature is openness [emptiness, limitless basic space, *dharmakaya*, Samantabhadra], like space, without limit or center.

*The Theme of Spontaneous Presence [Tögal].* Awareness—awakened mind—is always spontaneously present as the basic space, or ground of all phenomena, an infinite expanse, and its qualities are such that its essence has never existed as anything, while its dynamic energy arises as anything whatsoever.

*The Theme of Oneness.* All phenomena are shown to be one in naturally occurring timeless awareness. Awareness—oneness, single source—is the ground of all phenomena. Multiplicity does not waver from oneness.

—Longchenpa 1998 *Chöying Dzöd*

### III

## The Seven Mind Training Steps of the Great Perfection

Through cultivation of one-pointed shamatha all good qualities of Dzogchen  
Ground and Path enter in and manifest through the stages of your meditation.

—Adzom Paylo Rinpoche

The great Nyingma School *vidyadhara* Jigme Lingpa (1730-1798)—synthesizer of Longchenpa's *Longchen Nyingthig*—presented for us his precious Dharma treasure *The Steps to Liberation* (2016). Here he introduces to us the universal and all embracing "Sevenfold Mind Training" instructions—to be practiced continuously upon each mindful breath. For Longchenpa, these are the "Essential Instructions on the Preliminary Practices". They are the

vital points on the exceedingly profound essentials [that]  
lead all beings to the state of perfect peace...By meditating  
in this way experience whatever you direct your attention  
to...then rest in a spacious non-conceptual mind state.

That great contemplative teaching pervades all four of the Tibetan Buddhist Vajrayana lineages (esoteric Indian and Tibetan Buddhist tantra). Jigme Lingpa's *Seven Steps* are most profoundly revealed in the Dzogchen Great Perfection tradition as it arises in the 8th century Nyingma school of "the Ancient Ones". The natural Great Perfection, with its six singular but essentially same (*samata*) lineages is considered by those who know to be the pinnacle of all Buddhist sutra and tantra/mantra enlightenment teaching vehicles. The prodigious 'Sevenfold Mind Training' permits access to our non-judgmental, bias free already primordially present love-wisdom buddha mind. Compassionate heartmind *bodhicitta* is cultivated from the very beginning in all of them, and indeed in all the Buddhist Mahayana Vajrayana Great Vehicle teaching.

While the great masters and *mahasiddhas* of the later *Sarma* 'New Translation' (Rinchen Zangpo) Tibetan Buddhist lineages—Sakya, Kagyu, Gelug—have composed profound texts on mind training (Tib. *lojong*), the 'ancient' Nyingma 'Sevenfold Mind Training' of Jigme Lingpa's *The Steps to Liberation* should not be conflated with the *lojong* mind training of these profound later 12th through 15th century *Sarma* lineages.

Thus do these 'seven steps for training the mind' offer definitive teaching for awakening and liberating our human hearts and minds into the primordial *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground' of the *Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen*. This foundational seven-point teaching is requisite to Tibetan Buddhist view and practice. It is also practiced in union with the *kadag trekchö* and *lhundrub tögal* Dzogchen teaching cycles.

Here Jigme Lingpa's *Seven Steps* are naturally the prior and present unity of the *Four Dzogchen Yogas*, as we have seen. Yes, these are *Shamatha*, *Vipashyana*, primordial *Kadag* ground, and *Lhundrub* primordial Presence of that ground. Indeed, *The Seven Steps* may be seen as a foundation for the entire Tibetan Buddhist teaching tradition.

Jigme Lingpa's *The Steps to Liberation* with its Seven Mind Trainings embraces the nondual pith instructions of the Great Perfection teaching from 2nd century Garab Dorje, through 14th century Longchenpa (*Fourfold Heart Essence*), then on to the great Nyingma ecumenical *rimé Dzogchen* master Jamgön Mipham Gyamtso (1846-1912). These mindful steps teach the Buddhadharma from foundational relative selfless "*anatman*", "impermanence" and "compassion" to ultimate nondual "wisdom", the seventh step *dharmakaya* primordial wisdom ground in whom arises the very nature and essence of *ultimate* primordial awareness-consciousness itself, aboriginal ground in whom arises our *relative* conventional human consciousness.

All too briefly, Jigme Lingpa's *Dzogchen* mindful Seven Steps to liberation are: Impermanence; Karma; Suffering and Compassion; The Guru; Meditation; Ignorance and Negativity; and the nondual Primordial Wisdom of Emptiness. [Jigme Lingpa 2016]

In the perfect words of 14th century Tibetan *Dzogchen* master Longchen Rabjam (Longchenpa 1308-1364) the 'omniscient one' (*Chöying Dzöd* 2001):

The universe of appearances and possibilities arises as the adornment of the ultimate womb of basic space [*chöying, dharmadhatu*]...buddha nature, buddhahood that is spontaneously present by its nature, naturally occurring timeless awareness, utterly lucent awakened mind, primordially and spontaneously present...Everything is wholly pristine, supreme state of spontaneous presence...beyond the extremes of existence and nonexistence [*medpa*]...blissful place of rest. Spontaneously perfect is this timeless primordial awareness of the vast expanse of awakened mind, single sphere of being, all-pervasive, unborn and unceasing...The sublime secret of Dzogchen Ati Yoga is that of resting in genuine being, just as it is...By this virtue, may all beings without exception effortlessly awaken together in luminous primordial ground of the Great Perfection.

*Buddha Heart Buddha Mind*. Rest now for a few moments in that conceptually uncontrived compassionate numinous ground. Please do it now. You will be mostly free of conceptual thinking. Take refuge in That, "just as it is". Now how does it feel? Where in your body do you feel it? Who are you now? What is your mind? So many questions. So, simply relax and enjoy what is "already accomplished from the very beginning" by virtue of your humanity; that clear lucent Presence deep within you this very moment now.

That primordial basic space (*chöying*) of all embracing *dharmakaya* ground is now, and has always been your 'supreme identity'. Connect to That (*tathata*) through mantra prayer 'brief moments many times', day and night. Jigme Lingpa's Seven Steps will help.

## IV

### **The Neuroscience of Mindfulness Meditation**

All the happiness in this world comes from compassionate service to others; all the suffering comes from serving oneself.  
—Shantideva

*Mindful Prelude.* Human beings being here in time desire, require and deserve some semblance of happiness and well being. We have as well seen that these happiness mind states are already innately present within the human body-mind. We access them through the conscious "placement of awareness/attention" upon our always present love-wisdom mind Presence of the all embracing primordial ground in whom this all arises.

Therefore, both neuroscientifically and metaphysically, human happiness is a function of one's here now *present* mind state; a blatantly obvious relative conventional truth. As our attentional awareness is consciously placed upon our inherent innermost peace—that luminous Presence that we are—we are happy. If awareness is mired in worry and anger, we are unhappy. So the proper question as to human happiness is this: how do we accomplish such happy, peaceful mind states? That is to say, how do we learn "placement of attention" upon such already present happiness states?

We have examined some of the contemplative considerations. Let us now very briefly explore the recent pertinent neuroscientific data on the Buddha's ancient art and science of "mindfulness of breathing".

### **The Neuroscience of Mindfulness Meditation**

Over 50 years of Western neuroscientific research has demonstrated that mindful breathing practice supports the following noble objectives: preventive medicine, chronic pain management, stress reduction (recovery from stressed induced cortisol production which is known to cause many psychophysical and physical symptoms), psycho-emotional healing, learning, well being, and harmless human happiness.

Mindfulness meditation supports parasympathetic function (alpha and 'waking theta' brain rhythm "rest and digest" approach behavior), and therefore enhances immune function, while tending to tonify sympathetic (beta rhythm "fight or flight" aversion/avoidance behavior) activation which suppresses immune function. [Porges 2014; Siegel 2013; Sheng in Hanson 2014]

Neuroscientist Richard Davidson at the University of Wisconsin has shown that beginning meditators in a corporate business setting developed stronger immune systems than controls, as evidenced by statistically significant resistance to respiratory infections.

In another Davidson study, novice meditators reported being happier than non-meditating controls, experience more positive emotions, fewer stressful emotions, and an enhanced feeling of well being. [Davidson 2017; Begley 2007; Siegel 2013; Wallace 2009]

The left and medial prefrontal cortex of the brain (vmPFC) activated in mindfulness meditation has been shown to dampen response to negative emotional mind states, while enhancing positive states. Just so, the right prefrontal cortex is activated in negative states. The amygdala is responsible for such negative internal states as fear and anger, which are then expressed outwardly through egocentric, often destructive and self destructive behavior. fMRI reveals underdeveloped amygalas in such subjects.

In other words, the left and medial prefrontal cortex generate alpha, theta, and 25-42 hertz gamma brain oscillations which mitigate and pacify the negative neural signals from the right prefrontal cortex and amygdala which inwardly manifest as fear/anxiety and its flipside—anger, hostility, aggression, antisocial pathology—which then manifest outwardly as adventitious human evil: alienation, hostility, aggression, despotism, genocide, and never ending war. [Siegel 2013; Begley 2007; Wallace 2007, 2009]

This process of anger and aggression is observed clinically in stroke patients. Patients with damage to the "happy" left prefrontal cortex are generally more irritable than those with damage to the "angry" right ventromedial prefrontal cortex, who are often relatively calm, even serene [Sheng in Hanson 2014].

Meanwhile, the *frontoparietal control module network* manages brain's multiple modules allowing it to function as a consciousness unity (executive function and cognitive control), while the *default mode module*, which spans the same lobes as the frontoparietal network, is linked to such cognitive functions as self-referencing ("selfing"), introspective thought and subjective feeling, passive emotional listening and learning, emotional processing, memory retrieval and 'theory of mind' (empathetic emotional connection to others). [*Scientific American* November 2014; July 2019]

Mindfulness meditation meta-research, over thousands of studies since 1970, has demonstrated the following positive outcomes: enhanced immune system function, respiratory function, post-surgical healing, blood pressure reduction, reduced age related brain atrophy, reduced symptoms of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, reduction in symptoms of anxiety, clinical depression, bipolar disorder I and II, schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, attention deficit disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, autism spectrum disorder, sleep disorder, chronic pain, post-stroke symptoms, reduction of prison violence and recidivism, improvement of school grades, and much more. [Begley 2007; Wallace 2009; Siegel 2013]

Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) has been shown to be as effective as antidepressants in treatment of clinical depression. [Lancet Vol. 386; Kuyken 2015]

The experience of our sense of self is a function of the ventral medial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC), the fundamental model of self-ego-I in mental time. Here Buddhist emptiness/*shunyata* manifests as 'interdependent arising' (*pratitya samutpada*) of all arising phenomena; the 'unity of appearance and emptiness'. How shall we understand this?

## The Neuroscience of Meditation and Our Experience of Self

We've very briefly surveyed the neurobiological influences of mindfulness meditation on human conduct/behavior. How do these influences effect our sense of self-ego-I; our brain structure and function; relative human flourishing and happiness (*eudiamonia, felicitas*); and the ultimate harmless happiness and freedom of 'spiritual liberation/enlightenment' (*paramananda, mahasukha, beatitudo*)?

'Self' is an 'illusory' conceptual elaboration/imputation. Both Zen Masters and neuroscientists agree: "mindfulness of breathing" ("focused attention meditation"), and "compassion meditation" both facilitate 1) a beneficial shift of attention from obsessive, usually fraught self-referential thinking ("selfing") and concern for 'I, Me, Mine'; which 2) bestows a sense of inner peace and self-acceptance; which 3) reduces anxiety and anger toward self and others; which 4) enhances altruistic thought, intention and action for the benefit of living beings; 5) enhancing individual well being and experienced happiness.

How then shall we understand this inward contemplative process in the scientific gloss of neurobiology?

The unfocused ruminating wandering mind, under sway of the brain's 'default mode network'—the medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC) and the posterior cingulate cortex (PCC)—significantly increase self-referential attention—'selfing'—with its always present fear/anxiety, anger/hostility, greed/pride, and negative judgments about self, which are then psychologically projected onto others. The micro-cognitive result in the individual is stress and unhappiness. The macro-cognitive result in the human sociocultural cognosphere is alienation, autocracy, despotism, endless war, and despair.

Meanwhile, in the *limbic system*, the functional connection between the amygdala and the *anterior cingulate cortex gyrus* (ACCg)—the frontal aspect of the *cingulate cortex*—functions to regulate emotion and impulse control, morality and altruistic conduct, attention, conscious awareness of experience, emotional pain registration, social distress, motivation, modulation of appropriate emotional response to stimuli, decision making, error detection, and monitoring of conflict. The ventral aspect of the ACC is connected to the amygdala, hypothalamus, hippocampus, and anterior insula of the limbic system which is closely connected to and functionally related to the *prefrontal cortex*, but is not itself a cerebral structure. [Bush G, et. el. 2000 *Trends in the Cognitive Sciences* 4 (6): 215-222]

*The ACC gyrus (ACCg) is active in feelings of compassion and desire to benefit 'other' living beings. It is not activated in decisions that benefit only oneself. Indeed, ACCg is the critical neuroscientific cause of that profound bodhicitta behavior.* [Patricia Lockwood, Univ. of Birmingham and Oxford Univ.] Such engaged altruistic action/conduct is for most Buddhists the primary cause of human happiness. Such 'prosocial behavior'—engaged conduct for the benefit of others—is required for our individual and social well being. Clearly it has neurological and ethical components. We must personally engage both.

When grasping at self ceases, so does the yogin who has chosen to end such egocentric cognition. Within the ambit of such emptiness wisdom arises enlightenment.

Francis Crick has argued further that the ACC is the seat of human free will.

Pathology of the ACC includes schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety disorder, depressive disorder, schizoaffective disorder, PTSD, autism spectrum disorder. Cortical thickness of ACCg predicts increased risk of psychopathology. Mindfulness meditation, through its quiescence and its capacity to produce alpha, theta and gamma brain rhythm has a healing impact in all of them. [Siegel]

In short, scientific meta-research synthesizing data from thousands of research projects since 1970, reveal substantial benefit through each of the three primary classes of meditation practice. These classes include 1) *shamatha mindfulness focused attention meditation*, usually upon the breath, or on an object image/vision of the Buddha or of the Christ, or of a spiritual presence; 2) *open monitoring mindfulness meditation*, witnessing whatever arises in awareness without grasping, rejecting, or judging; and 3) *loving-kindness compassion meditation*, feeling our natural empathy, even love for all living beings. All three meditation modalities resulted in beneficial outcomes by conclusively reducing or deactivating processing in some brain structures, while enhancing activity in others. How is this so? And what are the clear and immediate benefits?

### **The Scientifically Proven Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation**

1) Reduced processing in the default mode network (PCC and MPFC) of the "selfing" wandering mind; which 2) reduces self-ego-I self-referential processing—habitual attention and concern about I-Me-Mine with its secondary anxiety, anger and ill-will mind states; 3) reduced activity in, and reduced size of the amygdala which is responsible for fear and anger ('fight or flight') mind states; 4) reduced stress related cortisol production by the adrenal cortex while blocking its circulation throughout the upper body upon the autonomic vagus nerve (CN-X); 5) enhanced beneficial brain alpha, theta, and medium amplitude gamma band oscillations (25 to 42 hertz), while reducing excessive, often obsessive beta activity; 6) reduced activity in the right prefrontal cortex which is active in fear, anger, and ill-will mind states; 7) greatly increased ACCg and left prefrontal cortex processing which enhances feelings of altruism, compassion and forgiveness toward self and others; 8) induced increased long term frontal cortex gyrification (neuroplasticity), which proved to be permanent, even when contemplative practice ceases. [Siegel 2013; Porges 2014; Begley 2007; Davidson 2017; Wallace 2007, 2009; *Scientific American* November, 2014]

The no longer surprising result of this neuroscientific meta-research includes 1) greatly reduced preoccupation with self and its obsessive narcissistic self-narrative; 2) reduced psycho-emotional stress; 3) induced and enhanced subjective feelings of connection, well being, good will; and 4) subjective reports of enhanced happiness.

Thus does mindfulness meditation with its "polyvagal breath"—5 seconds in, 7 seconds out through pursed lips—train the scattered "wild horse of the mind" in *awareness*

*management, the placement of attention, and continued focus of attentional awareness upon immediate, non-conceptual, present moment to moment sensory/feeling experience. That results in enhanced production of beneficial alpha, waking theta, and 25-42 hertz gamma band oscillation upon the mindful breath—our here now connection—while shifting self-referencing or 'selfing' attention away from chronic unfocused wandering mind with its obsessive clinging/attachment to self-ego-I, and toward ACCg produced altruistic compassionate thought, intention, and action for the benefit of living beings (bodhichitta, karuna, patheos, caris, hesed, lovingkindness, rahmah).*

[Mindfulness meditation "polyvagal breathing"—5 seconds in, 7 seconds out—blocks excessive stress inducing cortisol production by the *zona fasciculata* of the adrenal cortex and thus cortisol circulation through the upper body along the vagus nerve (CN-X). Abnormally high cortisol hormone levels may also cause Addison's disease, Cushing's syndrome, and other pathology (Porges 2014.)]

Thus do we begin to realize that conscious *mindfulness is an act of love*, a continuity of the *ultimate* primordial gravitas of the Great Love *kosmic* unity compassionately expressing itself in and through this *relative* gift of human form, for the benefit of all human and nonhuman beings, including our precious Mother Earth.

### **Being Happy Now: The Physics and Metaphysics of Primordial Presence**

Clearly, "mindfulness of breathing" as Gautama the Buddha called it, reduces or suspends habitual, often obsessive self-referential thinking ('selfing') that causes the terrible suffering secondary to our human often pervasive sense of a fearful lonely separate self adrift in a hostile, dangerous, meaningless cosmos. And this is accomplished through a program of mind training in present moment, trans-conceptual *feeling awareness* upon the breath—mindful placement and maintenance of attentional awareness upon the *prana* spirit wind (*lung, pneuma, Holy Spirit, c'hi, ki, bio-energy*) that rides the breath—which settles the scattered, fearful, obsessively thinking human 'monkey mind'.

Thus does dualistic human awareness enter in, merge and awaken to its own indwelling, always already present Presence of nondual primordial awareness-consciousness whole itself, numinous formless, timeless, selfless primordial ground of all spacetime form—the very 'Nature of Mind' (*cittata, sams nyid, buddhajnana*), nondual love-wisdom mind Presence of That, by whatever grand name.

Yes, neuroscientific meta-research demonstrates the profound value of contemplative mindfulness meditation (*shamatha, sati, smrti, bhavana*)—which begins with *shamatha* calm abiding, and loving-kindness compassion meditation—in support of our relative human flourishing and ultimate liberating harmless Happiness Itself. And that foundational meditation opens—under the gentle guidance of a qualified meditation master—into the mindful continuity of self-liberating nondual 'nonmeditation' of *Ati Dzogchen* and *Mahamudra* View and Praxis. [Boaz 2023 *Mindfulness Meditation*]



Indeed, there is a "mindfulness revolution" now abroad in the Western mind and its culture. It's alive and well in its secular guise in most of our institutions—education, medicine, psychology, the social sciences, business, government, military, corrections, even organized religion which has grown apart from its foundation in the contemplative mythos of the great Primordial Wisdom Tradition of our much beloved *Homo sapiens*.

*Awareness Management: Human Happiness is a Choice.* On this neurobiological view then, human happiness is very much dependent upon an *awareness management* skill set—where, when, and how we *choose* to place our common attentional awareness. Human happiness is a choice. One may *choose* to engage contemplative mind training via "mindfulness of breathing" and so "tame the wild horse of the mind".

Please be advised: the scope and result of contemplative mindfulness meditation opens and engages cognitive dimensions beyond the reach of secular approaches. In any case all are based in historical Buddhist *shamatha* calm abiding. (Ch. VII).

In short, both happiness and unhappiness are the result of conscious placement of our cognitive attention/awareness in this present moment here and now upon the breath, indwelling Presence of the primordial ground of all arising phenomenal reality. And this can be learned from the wisdom injunctions of those who know—the qualified mindfulness meditation teachers and their kind mentor/masters. Great gratitude!

### **Modes of the Self**

Cognitive neuroscience has identified two ways of experiencing the self—two modes of self-reference: 1) *narrative focus upon self*, our urgent all consuming story-drama about ourselves; and 2) *experiential focus upon self*, bodily proprioceptive sense experience, including direct non-conceptual feeling 'spiritual' experience (*yogi pratyaksa*). These two modes are hypothesized by most cognitive scientists to be neurologically distinct. Recent contemplative research with H.H. Dalai Lama's highly skilled Buddhist meditating monks has shown these two modalities of self experience are in fact a neurological, phenomenological, and contemplative unity. [Davidson 2017; Siegel 2013; Wallace 2009]

Once again, volumes of research have demonstrated that in both meditators and non-meditators alike the *experiential focus* mode involving non-conceptual "mindfulness of breathing" reduced egocentric narrative self-referential activity in the MPFC and PCC of the brain's default mode network thereby enhancing the benefits of the compassion inducing ACC gyrus (ACCg). The reported result was 'peace of mind' and enhanced feelings of altruistic harmless happiness and well being.

For highly skilled meditators habitual fantasy-reverie self-referential thinking of the untrained mind is absent during sitting meditation, and for varying periods of time following formal sitting meditation. Here, processing activity of the 'selfing' *default mode network* is nearly quiescent. [Davidson 2017] These skilled practitioners abide in a calm

post-meditation contemplative mind state most of the time. This quiescent state persists through some sleep stages. The subjective experience of such a stable neurological state of mind is known to such practitioners as the clarity, peace and happiness of the 'yogi's bliss'.

In brief, 'advanced' meditators have demonstrated in hundreds of studies (Davidson 2017; Begley 2007; Wallace 2009; Siegel 2013) the capacity to maintain such stable direct non-conceptual contemplative mind states (*yogi pratyaksa*) with their corresponding brain rhythms (alpha, theta, gamma) in post-meditation activities—while "hewing wood and carrying water", and driving, talking, loving, reading and writing, teaching, and even mostly selfless conceptual creative thinking and planning. Skilled meditators demonstrate a radically decreased presence of a self-ego-I. [Ch. VII]

Therefore, mindfulness meditation practice for established meditators facilitates the *choice* of a fluent cognitive ambulation from fraught conceptual self narrative mode to a selfless, peaceful, non-conceptual experiential mode, almost at will. The result is *shamatha* 'calm abiding' quiescent peace of mind, and a felt sense of harmless happy, blissful connection and interdependence with all living things; indeed, with the *ultimate* unbroken whole of *kosmos* itself—even as inexorable human adversity continues to arise in the *relative* world of cosmos spacetime conditioned lived experience. [Ch. VIII]

It is then the mindful calm abiding of foundational *shamatha* practice through which the mindfulness practitioner lays the proverbial ground for the 'seven point mind training' of highest nondual *Dzogchen Ati Yoga*, the Great Perfection. [Ch. III]

### Awareness Management

Clearly, the neuroscientific implications of meditation practice for the reduction of human suffering and for harmless human happiness are profound. *Shamatha* calm abiding 'mindfulness of breathing' meditation and *loving-kindness meditation* offer skillful regulation of our habitual negative emotional responses to life's inexorable adversity by transforming the painful narcissistic self-narrative into quiescent, peaceful, and altruistic states of mind. And That (*tathata*) is the open secret of human happiness, both relative human flourishing, and ultimate liberating harmless Happiness Itself.

*We become that upon which we continuously choose to place our attention!* As Gautama Shakyamuni the Buddha of this present age told so long ago, "What you are is what you have been; what you will be is what you do now." As good a definition of cause and effect karma as ever there was.

As we assiduously practice "mindfulness of breathing", we learn to place our present moment to moment awareness—our *attention*—upon our direct trans-conceptual love-wisdom Buddha mind Christ nature *feeling experience*. Thus do we connect with that aspect of ourselves—indeed a luminous numinous Presence—that is selfless, profound, and directly experiential (*yogi pratyaksa*), beyond yet including our habitual discursive concepts and beliefs. We learn to utilize both voices of our human cognition—our *noetic*

*cognitive doublet*—objective conceptual, and subjective contemplative. And that is the beginning of our individual and collective understanding of the prior and present unity of objective Science and its perfectly subjective primordial Spirit ground. [Appendix A below; Boaz 2023 *The Prior Unity of Science and Spirit*]

*We can now begin to see that mindfulness meditation is, among other things, the quiescent observation of our thoughts without identifying with, or judging them, without following them, or trying to block them. We come to "let it be just as it is" here and now. We come to understand that we need not believe and defend our adventitious dreary and destructive negative ego-centric thoughts, feelings and closely held beliefs; stress is reduced; human happiness is enhanced. Thoughts, feelings, and beliefs are now seen to be inherently evanescent, ever changing, and impermanent. Perhaps we should take them less seriously, with a bit of self-effacing humor. Perhaps after all the narcissistic self-ego-I is not the egocentric center around which the universe revolves. I have come to call this prodigious cognitive process mindful awareness management. [Chapter VIII]*

### **The Liberating Phenomenology of Primordial Presence**

*Post-Empirical Prelude.* Not surprisingly, inherently trans-conceptual, 'post-empirical', nonlocal, nondual, selfless, formless, timeless yet always already present luminous numinous love-wisdom Buddha nature, Christ mind, *Ein Sof*, Brahman, Tao aboriginal Presence of the all embracing primordial ground of being in whom this all arises cannot be objectively located in or reduced to physical brain, nor heart, nor gut, nor in any other local spacetime place, nor in any scientific or spiritual concept; no more so than the spacious presence of love, or of wisdom, or of happiness can be objectively physically located. Spirit Presence of the *kosmic* bright 'primordial awareness ground of being' in which, or in whom the stuff of spacetime cosmos arises is trans-conceptual, nonlocal, nondual, perfectly subjective, contemplative, even nondual direct experience (*yogi pratyaksa*), quite beyond the grasp of our concepts and beliefs—try as we may to objectively reduce it to or locate it in a purely physical/material thinking brain.

But don't *believe* any of this! It is quite beyond belief, and our concepts about it. As Buddha told, "*Ehi passika; Come and see for yourself.*"

### **The Four Mind State/Life Stage Dimensions of Human Consciousness**

The perfect subjectivity of our innate love-wisdom mind buddha mind Presence does not admit of purely objective 'scientific proof'. As if objective Big Science exhausted our human awareness-consciousness processional that constitutes our four cognitive dimensions—mind states and life stages—of the totality of human body, mind, spirit

knowing/feeling experience. Yes. That dualistic human consciousness is always embraced in its nondual primordial awareness-consciousness ground, vast boundless whole of That.

Broadly construed, these four state/stages are: 1) pre-conceptual, unelaborated, objective, ordinary direct attention/perception, just prior to concept and naming; 2) dualistic exoteric objective thinking-conceptual, even scientific cognition wherein knowing subject and its objects are separate and divided (*anumana pramana, kalpana, doxa*); 3) esoteric subjective contemplative meditative cognition along with compassionate emotional feeling cognition (*dhyana, samadhi, shamatha, bodhicitta*); and 4) perfectly subjective nondual (subject-object unity), noetic (body, mind, spirit unity) direct yogic experience (*yogi pratyaksa, samadhi, satori, dhyana*) of our indwelling love-wisdom mind—nondual Spirit ground Presence itself—*Perfect Sphere of Ati Dzogchen*.

Just so, the deeply subjective love-wisdom mind of our indwelling Christ mind Presence (*christos*), or of our Buddha nature Presence (*buddhajnana*), or the *Atman* that is Brahman (*Kham Brahm*), or of primordial *Tao-Chia*, or of infinite *Ein Sof* are our great wisdom tradition exemplars of this all-pervading yogic state/stage four.

We abide most of our lives in the mind states of life stage one and two. It is assiduous practice of the contemplative mind states of life stage three—under the guidance of a qualified meditation master—that opens into the adept mastery of buddhas and mahasiddhas dwelling in the wisdom bliss of life stage four.

Yet, wonder of wonders, the love-wisdom '*samadhi* of suchness' and the '*samadhi* of illumination' mind states of life stage four are always already present and available to the experience of our 'ordinary mind' at any moment, in any life stage. Thus do contemplative *mind states* become liberated personality *mind traits*. This is so because the cognitive processional of these four human cognitive dimensions are inherently an indivisible prior and present *one truth unity* of human experience. The clarity and happiness of state/stage four is always present to those who choose to access it via 'placement of attention' itself.

To be sure, it is the art and contemplative science of the ancient practice of 'mindfulness of breathing' that reveals the phenomenology and metaphysical ontology of this trans-conceptual, numinous 'primordially pure' Presence that pilots us through these four cognitive dimensions of our being here in space and time. [*Appendix A* below; Boaz 2023 *The Prior Unity of Science and Spirit*]

Most human beings can recognize this nameless, selfless inherently subjective but very real love-wisdom face of ours when it is contemplatively, directly experienced (*yogi pratyaksa*), more or less beyond, or prior to the relentless distractions of our busy, often troubled, obsessively thinking and self-referencing 'selfing' concept-mind. That *process* of recognition, then realization is our inherent indwelling buddha mind 'wakefulness'. [Davidson 2017; Siegel 2013; Begely 2007]

Please recall our *noetic cognitive doublet*—exoteric objective conceptual, and esoteric subjective contemplative—that embraces the great enfolded, always unfolding and arising awareness whole of the above four dimensions of our human cognition. We quite artificially, conceptually separate these two (or four) modalities of mind to better

understand their prior and present invariant one truth unity. That unity is always the unbroken implicate order of the vast expanse of nondual unbounded *kosmic* whole, basal primordial awareness-consciousness *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground' itself in which, or in whom (Adi Buddha Samantabhadra) all of this explicate cosmic spacetime stuff, and all of us, self-reflexively arises, unfolds, participates, and is instantiated.

So many words for this basic process of being authentically and ultimately happy in this relative human form. And that happiness is always "already accomplished" deep within us. As H.H. Dalai Lama told, "Just open the door." Miraculous. *Emaho!*

### **Primordial Presence in the County Jail**

Now, as to my own not especially astute experience in psychiatric corrections, as my incarcerated Psychiatric Acute Care ('the PAC') students came to understand, in a non-conceptual experiential 'felt sense' this profound, no longer so spooky nondual *unity* of their physically embodied self-ego-I with 'spiritual' innermost esoteric love-wisdom mind Presence that is their actual 'supreme identity'—they began to heal. Their painful sleep disorders often relented, and their 'psychiatric meds' were reduced or eliminated. Many came to directly experience (*yogi pratyaksa*) their own always already present Presence of the primordial ground of everything—Christ mind, Buddha nature, infinite *Ein Sof*, Tao—beyond ego and by whatever grand name deep within their body and mind. [For moving personal written expressions of such experiences please see Boaz 2022 *Appendix D* "Light From the County Jail"; or visit [davidpaulboaz.org](http://davidpaulboaz.org)]

'Mindfulness of breathing' as the Buddha called such contemplative experience, revealed to these troubled folks who it is that they actually are—far beyond ego; far beyond their 'pathology' and shaming psychiatric diagnosis; far beyond their not so conscious deep cultural background materialist and religious "global web of belief" (Quine 1969). They came to realize via their direct mindful experience that they are so much more than a suffering unruly ego-I with or without clinical symptoms, or a legal problem, or a discouraging shaming psychiatric diagnosis.

My students—and in some instances staff psychiatrists some of whom I also trained in mindfulness practice—learned that the ultimate answer to the urgent perennial question "Who am I", is this: human beings are not just a painful, narcissistic self-ego-I encaged in a material bag of skin. There abides always within each human form a formless, selfless, timeless, perfectly subjective love-wisdom mind '*Presence*' of the nondual 'primordial awareness Spirit ground of being'—by whatever grand name—that is inherently clear, peaceful and happy. All of the Buddhas, love-wisdom masters, saints, and sages of the great Primordial Wisdom Tradition of our kind have taught this great truth through the compassionate example of their lives.

Some of my good doctors learned to teach inmates in both the 'PAC', and in 'General Population' the benefits of contemplative mindfulness meditation as an antidote

to both long standing pathology, as well as transient pathology secondary to the emotional shock of incarceration.

Many of my students—both inmates and their doctors—came to recognize this indwelling happy Presence that is their 'supreme identity' of that timeless, selfless 'primordial ground' of being. Some of my inmate students went well beyond it. Some have become yogi/yoginis. Some are now teaching mindfulness meditation in Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and Islamic settings—both in prison and upon their release.

Well then, how does one come to recognize, then realize in one's everyday life world this psycho-emotional spiritual miracle? For my incarcerated students mindfulness meditation and contemplative prayer became the *choice* of each one for peace and happiness in an otherwise dreadful world of unrelenting adversity.

These courageous 'students' of mine have taught me, and the prison psychiatrists responsible for their care, the happiness potential of we human beings being here as providential heirs of this rare and inconceivable gift of a precious human life on the Earth.

### **The Emerging Noetic Revolution in Science and Spirit**

Philosophers of physics and Buddhist scholar practitioners understand that there exists no innate dimensional separation between our appearing microcosmic and macrocosmic phenomenal regimes. The boundless whole of physical spacetime appearing cosmic reality, with the recent global quantum holonomy of Quantum Field Theory is perforce always already unified and subsumed in the formless, timeless, selfless, indivisible, nondual primordial awareness-consciousness *kosmic* whole—aboriginal ultimate 'groundless ground', transcending any human frame of reference—in whom our relative spacetime realities arise and play. That is non-conceptual non-reifying nonduality.

That nondual metaphysical understanding must now be integrated into the metaphysics of Schrödinger's inherently subjective random quantum  $\Psi$ -wave function with its objective mathematical formalisms that we may discern a true quantum ontology.

Such a post-quantum metaphysic lies in the integral Noetic Quantum Ontology of our emerging global paradigmatic Noetic Revolution in matter, mind and spirit now abroad in the world. Here we must skillfully engage our human objective cognitive capacity, including the alternative deductive logical systems of Kurt Gödel and others, to quantitatively explicate that always present unity of objective quantum form and its subjective nonlocal entangled quantum emptiness zero point energy (ZPE) ground while remaining present to the prior qualitative, post-conceptual, nondual truth of the matter. That is to say, we maintain an awareness of the nondual invariant one truth unity (*dzog*) of our perennial Two Truths—relative form or Science, and its perfectly subjective Spirit ground. Thus do we establish our Dzogchen kosmopsychic integral Noetic Quantum Ontology. [Appendix A below; Boaz 2023 *The Noetic Revolution: Toward an Integral Science of Matter, Mind and Spirit* Ch. IV]

## The Physics of Mindfulness Meditation

*Wholeness in Physics.* Well, what does "hard science" modern/postmodern physics make of such a soft "spooky" subjectivist noetic consciousness metaphysic? Let us all too briefly survey some of the greatest Nobel laureates of 20th century physics.

In the words of quantum theory pioneer Max Planck (Nobel Prize 1918): "I regard immaterial consciousness as fundamental...matter is derived from it."

Werner Heisenberg (Nobel Prize 1932) on his quantum *Principle of Uncertainty*:

Subject and object are only one. The barrier between them does not exist....  
 There is a fundamental error in separating the parts from the whole.  
 Unity and complementarity constitute reality....Causality can only explain  
 later events by earlier events, but it can never explain the beginning....  
 It will never be possible by pure reason alone to arrive at absolute truth....  
 Scientific concepts cover always only a very limited part of reality; the other  
 part that has not been understood is the infinite.

For Niels Bohr (Nobel Prize 1922), creator of the great quantum *Principle of Complementarity*: "Opposites are complementary....Truth and clarity are complementary." For Bohr, subject and object, self and other, existence and non-existence, quantum wave and particle, quantum position and momentum are a relational, interdependent complementary, nonlocal, 'entangled' nondual prior and present unity. Again Bohr:

We must turn to thinkers like Buddha, or Lao Tzu....I go into the Upanishads to ask questions....Our description of nature is not to disclose phenomena, but to describe our relations with it.

Irwin Schrödinger (Nobel Prize 1933, with Paul Dirac), creator of the prodigious *Schrödinger Quantum Wave Equation*: "Consciousness is absolutely fundamental. It cannot be accounted for in terms of (matter), or anything else."

Paul Dirac (Nobel Prize 1933, with Schrödinger), discoverer of the wondrous *Dirac Equation* which fully unified Einstein's breakthrough 1905 Special Relativity Theory (SRT) with the monumental 1928 Quantum Theory of Bohr and Heisenberg opening the way for Dirac's and Richard Feynman's profound Quantum Electrodynamics (QED). Dirac's sublime equation also predicted the physical reality of antimatter. For Dirac:

All matter is created out of some imperceptible substance not accurately described as material since it uniformly fills all space and is undetectable by any observation...It appears as an empty nothingness—immaterial, undetectable, omnipotent...out of which all matter is created.

As good a definition of ZPE 'quantum emptiness' as ever there was.

Legendary physicist David Bohm, who received 60 nominations for a Nobel Prize, expresses the matter of wholeness beautifully (1980 *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*):

The vast implicate order of the unbroken whole is the ground of existence of everything...In this flow mind and matter are not separate substances. Rather, they are different aspects of one whole...Wholeness is what is real...The notion that these fragments are separate is an illusion. The world is an undivided whole...All the parts unite in one totality.

Albert Einstein (Nobel Prize 1921), a founder (with Planck) of Quantum Theory:

A human being is part of a great whole. We experience ourselves as something separate from it...This delusion is a kind of prison. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in all its beauty.

In the "spooky" (Einstein's *spukhaft*) conceptual explanatory gap of subjective nonlocal (faster than light) quantum chaos abides the non-objective 'one taste' "wisdom of uncertainty", the ironic and paradoxical, subtle, profound, trans-conceptual, direct experience (*yogi pratyaksa*) of perfectly subjective contemplative certainty—for those with good taste anyway. It's flavor is subtle, and quite satisfying. It is indeed a mindfully acquired taste. As Buddha told in his early *Pali Canon Udana*:

Just as the great ocean has one taste,  
the taste of salt, so also my teaching  
has one taste, the taste of liberation.

For practitioners of the prior and present unity of Science and Spirit it is in that profound 'post-empirical' nondual certainty that we arouse our compassionate *bodhicitta* for the benefit of living beings, engage mindful shamatha to ease our fearful weary concept-minds, and effortlessly rest in the ultimate Nature of Mind. That essential mind nature of ours is not but the nondual vast boundless whole of reality itself, our innermost love-wisdom mind Presence of 'basic space' (*chöying*) of the trans-physical, *cosmic*, formless *ultimate dharmakaya* primordial emptiness ground of this arising *relative* phenomenal world of spacetime form. Told Gautama the Buddha, "Form is empty; emptiness is form."

Exoteric post-Standard Model Quantum Field Theory (QFT/QED) is the non-zero quantum emptiness of the unified quantum vacuum energy ground state, or ultimate zero point energy field (ZPE). About as close as dualistic Big Science can get to the nondual perfectly subjective 'supreme source' ground of its objective quantum mathematical formalism. [*Appendix A* below; Boaz 2023 *The Prior Unity of Science and Spirit*]



## Contemplative Science and the New Cosmology

As Adzom Paylo Rinpoche (2002 Santa Fe, NM Retreat) has told regarding the calm abiding of mindful shamatha meditation.

We must have peaceful calm abiding of mind, but not be attached to it! Attachment to this pleasant meditative state of mind stalls our practice...Shamatha does not see the ultimate nature of reality, the Nature of Mind. If you think it does, it's false primordial wisdom. When we have attachment to our meditation we cannot be liberated. Meditative stabilization without liberation is pointless. *Uma*, the Madhyamaka Middle Way meditative state that follows shamatha yields a powerful certainty and equanimity. The meditative state that arises from that is a state of being that has no attachment whatsoever. If this View of *Uma* is not realized one cannot proceed on the path to enlightenment...Therefore, the View of the Ground is the Meditation path of the Fruition of the union of the Two Truths of the Middle Way. That Fruit is the two bodies or *energy dimensions* [*rupakaya* and *dharmakaya*]. And so, this is the way one should practice the profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, the *Prajnaparamita* of the Buddha. Without this practice there can be no realization of the Primordial Awareness Wisdom. Through it all the buddhas of the three times rejoice. And the very nature of reality naturally rejoices with us. And so we smile.

*The New Cosmology*. Meanwhile, the universal quantum ZPE vacuum energy is now the primary candidate for the mysterious 'dark energy' that accelerates our already expanding universe, the end of which in a few trillion years is a quite chilly "Big Chill Heat Death" wherein physical atomic motion-energy peters out entirely. No worries. Stuff still arises via utterly random ZPE energy puffs. [Boaz 2023 *The Noetic Revolution Ch. IV*]

This highly speculative, post-empirical, purely metaphysical, paramystical quantum emptiness 'zero point vacuum energy' ZPE ground state is none other than our old friend Einstein's Cosmological Constant ( $\Lambda$  *lambda*) which in 1917 he inserted into the field equations of his great 1915 General Relativity Theory (GRT) to explain an expanding universe which that theory predicted.

However, Einstein was certain that the cosmos was static; the prevailing cosmological ideology of the time. Thus did the great physics master tweak his wondrous expanding universe GRT with his *lambda*  $\Lambda$  constant "to hold back gravity" and remain true to the "perfect cosmological principle" alternative to the new 'spooky' Big Bang cosmology. That ideological principle was the timeless, ageless "steady state universe" model of his esteemed cosmologist peers Hermann Bondi, Thomas Gold, and Fred Hoyle.

In any case, let us give thanks that the light-matter-energy stardust heavy elements that bestow life on our little blue planet has arisen from its formless, timeless primordial ground as stable matter and not flakey self-destructive antimatter.

Alas, Einstein came to regret his *lambda*  $\Lambda$  Cosmological Constant. In 1929 Edwin Hubble demonstrated that the universe was far from a static 'steady state', but was indeed expanding. Adding factual insult to Einstein's theoretical injury, in 1998 it was discovered independently by the Perlmutter and Schmidt teams that Hubble's expanding universe was actually accelerating! And yes, mysterious nonzero *lambda* dark energy is the probable cause. The very slightly positive value of Einstein's Cosmological Constant *lambda*  $\Lambda$  is the primary suspect for that dark energy acceleration. Discomfiting outcome for Herr Professor Doktor Einstein, to be sure. As quantum physicist Steven Weinberg told, "Perhaps Einstein should have taken his mathematics more seriously."

Yes, the foundational primordial awareness-consciousness ground of our great Wisdom Tradition is alive and well in recent objectivist classical relativistic physics; and even more so in post-classical non-objective nonlocal entangled quantum physics and cosmology with their spooky proto-mystical acausal ZPE quantum emptiness ground.

But this is far from a demonstration that such edgy objective Science "proves" the great nondual wisdom teaching of Buddhist emptiness/*shunyata*. Better perhaps to view it as a dualistic metaphor for an inherently nondual, trans-conceptual truth. That truth of emptiness/*shunyata* is invariant through all human cognitive reference frames; *one truth unity (dzog)* of perfectly subjective ultimate nature, nondual Spirit ground of all-embracing whole of this ever widening gyre of *kosmos* itself in whom this all arises and plays.

Unfortunately, in spite of what we have just heard from our quantum pioneers, lesser minds of recent relativistic quantum physics—the culture *imaginaire* of Big Science—are still trying to reduce the random acausal, observer-dependent, nonlocal entangled subjectivity at the very heart of the quantum theory to the old classical observer-independent paradigm bias that is ideological objectivist, reductionist Scientific Local Realism/Materialism/Physicalism. Philosophers of physics and cosmology, including myself, are tearing their hair out. Let Physicists, philosophers of physics and Buddhist scholar-practitioners dialogue over pizza and ale. Why isn't this happening? Old Big Science hyper-objectivist physicalist paradigm doctrinal 'confirmation bias' perhaps?

It may be useful in this regard to understand that the global cultural mindscape of objective Science cannot give us the whole picture even of objective physical cosmos, let alone the trans-physical perfectly subjective *kosmos*—boundless whole, nondual primordial awareness-consciousness Spirit ground itself in which, on the view of some of our quantum pioneers, not to mention Gautama Buddha, spacetime physical stuff arises, participates, and is providentially instantiated—great phenomenal gift for us all.

As Bertrand Russell suggested in 1927, and cosmologist Arthur Eddington later told, "Physics describes what matter *does*; it doesn't tell us what matter *is*." What this appearing spacetime reality ultimately *is* abides beyond physics, in the only recently respectable domain of metaphysics. Here we begin to understand the prior and ever present unity of objective Science and its perfectly subjective Spirit ground. [Appendix A below; Boaz 2023 *The Prior Unity of Science and Spirit*]

## VI

### **Buddha Nature and Emptiness: *Shentong* and *Rangtong***

When your mind is in calm abiding you can then approach Buddha's primordial wisdom.

—Adzom Paylo Rinpoche

#### **Mind and the Buddha Nature of Mind**

Mind is like empty space. Space is empty. Just so, mind is naturally and inherently empty—no boundary, no limit, no center, and no edge. Mind is empty in essence, like basic space (*dharmadhatu*, *chöying*). Our human mind is essentially spacious, diaphanous and ephemeral. Yet unlike space, mind is cognizant and aware—spacious empty awareness. In the clear words of recent *Dzogchen* master Tulku Urgyen:

The empty essence itself is like the vast space of sky. Our cognizance is like sunshine. The sky itself never changes whether it's sunny or cloudy...We train in recognition of mind essence. [*As It Is, Volume II*]

For 20th century *Dzogchen* master Dilgo Khyentze Rinpoche:

The mind is free of any true inherent reality...To recognize the ultimate Nature of Mind is to recognize its selfless emptiness... That is a realization that occurs in the realm of direct experience. It cannot be expressed in words.

The great 19th century ecumenical *rimé* master Shechen Gyaltzap Rinpoche (2020), root lama of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, unfolds the self-reflexive *Dzogchen* Great Perfection View of this everyday miracle of the vast expanse that is our all subsuming *dharmakaya* primordial love-wisdom awareness-consciousness ground itself:

Self-cognizing awareness is beyond verbal expression. It is the union of primordial purity [*kadag*] and spontaneous presence [*lhundrub*], the sole sphere of self-arisen primordial wisdom... the actual nature of ordinary mind. It is unaltered by dualistic subject-object cognition. It is beyond thought, word and conceptual formulation. It is the great state beyond the ordinary mind... It is the Nature of Mind...free of any arising and cessation throughout the three times [past, present, future]...Empty luminosity,

beyond all movement...ultimate reality, the unconditioned, uncompounded dharmata, the state of great equality...by nature stable, peaceful, unmoving, ever-lasting...one and only sphere... perfect ground beyond movement and change...indwelling primordial wisdom that purifies the mind's defilements...nondual, beyond identity or difference...This is why it is called *perfection*. And because the ground, path, and result is primordial wisdom, it is *great*...the Great Perfection...It is the union of appearance and emptiness, the fourth state of the mind, free of past, present, future... It is wholly untrammled, beyond the extremes of existence and nothing.

So, our human mind is like space. The Nature of Mind may be seen as the original *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground' in whom our spacious mind arises, participates, and is instantiated. The 'basic space' (*dharmadhatu, chöying*) of that natural indwelling primordial nature is our innermost buddha mind, our buddha essence or buddha nature which we shall further explore in this chapter.

We have thus far engaged many words for that deep love and wisdom unity that "cannot be expressed in words". What is the essential truth of that great mystery of liberated human happiness?—"That flower absent from all bouquets." [Mallarmé]

Gautama Shakumuni the Buddha of this present age simplified his vast wondrous teaching in a force of few words. Indeed, we discover in the early *Pali Canon* that entire perfect teaching of all that was to come. The precious *Dhammapada* reveals it thus:

First do no harm.  
Practice what is skillful  
In benefiting living beings.  
Train and purify your mind.  
That is the teaching of all the buddhas.

In these twenty-five words we are given the heart essence of 25 centuries of that wonder that is the prodigious primordial love-wisdom teaching of the Buddha.

### **Finding Nondual Dzogchen Truth in the Buddhist Middle Way**

In Tibetan Buddhist tantric wisdom view and practice the Mahayana Prasangika Madhyamaka Middle Way (*Uma*) is said by those who know to be the conceptual causal foundation of the Great Perfection that is itself the acausal nondual Ati Dzogchen Great Completion of the Mahayana Causal Vehicle.

Broadly construed, the Mahayana teaches cause and effect. If you desire *that* future result, first practice and accomplish *this* cause. However, the non-causal or acausal *Ati Dzogchen* 'Fruitional View' teaches—as Middle Way founder Nagarjuna told twenty

centuries past—"That which you seek is already accomplished from the very beginning; to rest here without seeking, that is the Meditation." So, there is no need to seek liberation elsewhere, in past enlightened beings, or in some future enlightened mind state. That great truth is revealed in the Tibetan tradition via Guru Yoga, as we'll soon see.

The Fruit or Result that we seek, as a self-ego-I, is our always already present love-wisdom Buddha mind (*buddhajnana*), indwelling knowing-feeling Spirit Presence (*rigpa*, *vidya*) of That. That is happy Presence of nondual ultimate primordial spirit ground (*gzhi rigpa*) that is both origin and aim of all our fruitless happiness seeking strategies—even if this timeless wisdom is not part of our present system of concepts and beliefs.

That noetic nondual primordial wisdom (*jnana*, *yeshe*, gnosis) is the self-arising, self-perfected, nondual *Dzogchen* View, Meditation, and Action/Conduct that realizes the "already accomplished" Ground, Path, and Fruition-Result.

And yes, that multi-dimensional mythopoetic noetic understanding abides beyond the conceptual reach of our human semiotic (logical syntax of language, meaning, pragmatics) discursive cognition. Thus are the "central meanings" of the great Secret Mantra fruitional teaching—the Buddha's subtlest and 'highest' nondual teaching—grounded in the *Ati Yoga* fruitional path, and 'pointed out' through the subtle, skillful guidance of the *Dzogchen* master. We instantly unify our mind with that primordial mindstream of the intrinsic awareness that is the outer and inner Guru thus: *AH AH AH*.

### **The Sublime Power of Bodhicitta**

The selfless compassionate *bodhicitta* of the Mahayana Middle Way (*Uma*)—uncontrived, spontaneous, effortless thought, prayer, intention, and engaged human action for both the relative and ultimate benefit of all living beings—requires the cooperation of the self, that unruly, apparitional non-entity that is the narcissistic self-ego-I concerned mostly with, yes, I, Me, and Mine. A bit paradoxical because selfless *bodhicitta* is, well, selfless. As to compassionate *bodhicitta*—the wisdom of kindness—Buddha told, "This cannot be taught." It utterly transcends causality, concept and belief. It cannot be authentically contrived nor fabricated. Effort and goal directed activity shall not accomplish it. William Shakespeare has told it well:

The quality of mercy is not strained.

It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath.

It is twice blessed; it blesseth him that gives and him that takes.

—Portia, *Merchant of Venice*

Thus does our all too often duplicitous self—as we refrain from denigration, denial, and 'pathologizing' of it ('self-loathing')—become our love-wisdom ally as it learns to take refuge in Buddha's selfless prior and present no-self *anatman* primordial love-wisdom

ground. Bright primordial Presence of That (*tathata*), mirrored always by the outer Guru in the clear vivid context of Guru Yoga; utterly beyond "hope and fear".

Now selfless *bodhicitta* becomes the open secret and primary cause of our own human happiness, both relative happiness (*eudiamonia, felicitas*) and supreme ultimate harmless Happiness Itself (*paramananda, mahasukha, beatitudo*). Failure to launch that great spirit gift of *bodhicitta* is a primary cause of human suffering. All the avatars, mahasiddhas, saints and sages of the wisdom traditions of humankind have taught this love and wisdom of *bodhicitta* (*hesed, caris, patheos*). We do have this ethical choice—the second (*silā*) of the Buddha's Mahayana *Six Paramitas/Perfections*. Good karma indeed.

### **Our Kosmic Process: Involution, Evolution, and Buddha Nature Refuge**

Within empty 'basic space' (*chöying, dharmadhatu*)—formless, timeless, selfless primordial awareness-consciousness *dharmakaya* ground, vast expanse of the boundless whole of arising reality being itself—perforce naturally and spontaneously arises an ultimately illusory timeless time, then an oxygen rich environment for living sentient beings to evolve. Some of these beings evolve into human beings with this indwelling if yet to be awakened Buddha nature Buddha mind; and then, in due course and by grace, we may choose the *bodhicitta* of the bodhisattva to become perfectly awakened buddhas.

The natural clarity/bliss of that Buddha Nature of Mind (*sem nyid, cittata*) is too often bewitched by dualistic thinking and the grasping desire-mind of we deluded human beings, mired as we are in 'primal ignorance' (*avidya, marigpa, ajnana, hamartia/sin*) with its destructive afflictive emotions—fear, anger, hatred, grasping desire, greed, and pride of an atavistic personal self-ego-I. That rude awakening begets human suffering—despotism, genocide, despair, and endless war—root causes of our individual and collective human suffering, negative karma, and endless rebirth. Not at all a pretty picture.

Now the good news. Upon Buddha's 'mindfulness of breathing'—foundation of our buddha nature connection—such adventitious destructive thoughts and negative emotions arising in unruly mostly untrained human mind are surrendered and so 'self-liberated' (*rang grol*) at the very instant of their arising in the vast empty space of sky, like a cloud leaving no trace. That happens at the bottom of each conscious mindful breath, on the out-breath. [Ch. VIII] "Let your indescribable awareness remain undistracted in the naked state of basic space...That dissolves our negative karma and disturbing emotions." [Tulku Urgyen] That *choice* is the open door to our human happiness, both relative and ultimate.

More good news. Wherever there is such an afflicted suffering mind there is as well the luminous clear light Nature of Mind that embraces, pervades and subsumes it. And That is none other than our inherent, indwelling spacious, luminous love-wisdom mind that is primordial buddha nature buddha essence (*buddhadhatu*) wisdom mind (*buddhajnana*). Indeed, relative mind and the ultimate Buddha Nature of Mind are always already a prior and present one truth unity. We are told by the buddhas and mahasiddhas

that our obstructed human mind and the very Nature of Mind that is nondual Reality Itself abide in a primordial state of relational equality and identity (*samatajnana*).

Yes. That love-wisdom buddha nature of ours subsumes and pervades the mind and body of all sentient beings arising within the vast expanse of 'basic space' (*chöying*), ultimate primordial *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground', vast boundless emptiness whole in whom we all arise and participate. The aboriginal imprint of That I AM That I AM is always already present as 'innermost secret' primordial 'noself' (*anatman*) Presence (*rigpa, vidya, christos*) of that formless, timeless, selfless ground. *Emaho!* How wonderful!

Well, how shall we realize that great truth of lucent selfless indwelling Being Itself Presence in our busy lives? Here again the proverbial plot thickens. What at first blush seems like a really bad show of the impossible task of killing off your self-ego-I now becomes your soteriological liberating saving grace. Although, at the beginning of the 'Path' we are scarcely aware of this *kosmic* miracle, we may still make some rather unlikely providential choices. [Ch. VIII] The prepared mind somehow finds a 'spiritual' mentor, teacher, or master. He or she then introduces us to our aboriginal luminous Buddha Nature and we begin the quiescent and happy shamatha 'mindfulness of breathing' practice that begins the great process that bears this luscious fruit. [Ch. VII]

As Buddha told so long ago, "Now I am breathing in; I am happy and at peace. Now I am breathing out; I am happy and at peace." That is the simple, mindful, basic shamatha that Gautama the Buddha adapted from his ancient Hindu Vedic *Sanatanadharma* and then revealed to humankind. No need to complicate it. Our teachers remind us, that is the dualistic causal foundation of acausal nondual Dzogchen View and Practice.

In this our evolutionary *kosmic* process—as the karmic winds of the movement of mind in space and time cause the fabrications and imputations of dualistic concept-mind (*namtok, doxa*) and its deep cultural background mostly materialist 'global web of belief'—we have 'forgotten' (*marigpa, avidya*) that actual 'supreme identity' of our 'supreme source' ground and fall under sway of an ignorant narcissistic self-ego-I with its odious habitual obsessive 'subject-object split' between perceiving subject and its perceived objects. The result is this terrible suffering for living beings; and for our Mother Earth. What to do?

Should you be so lucky as to have found your spiritual mentor, he or she points out ('pointing out instruction') that the actual nature of your often deluded and ultimately illusory *relative* mind and its all too real phenomena is *already* your *ultimate* buddha nature buddha mind itself—bright luminous, numinous indwelling Presence of That (*tathata*)!

That is the saving grace of the Tibetan 'fruitful view'. Take refuge in That. Take refuge in the prodigious Three Jewels—Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Take refuge in the Fourth Jewel, your precious Lama. As Nyingma Dzogchen master Jigme Lingpa has told, "*Primordial intrinsic awareness itself is absolute Guru, Ultimate Truth.*" Your outer Guru mirrors your indwelling inner Guru which is none other than that pure clear light original awareness-consciousness ground itself. That is who you are. That is your 'supreme identity' of the 'supreme source' that you are now. Numinous bright Presence of That!

## On Refuge, Karma, and Awakened Mind

For *Dzogchen/Mahamudra* Master Adzom Paylo Rinpoche (Dzogchen Retreat, 2006):

Refuge is the foundation of all dharma practice. Refuge is viewed differently in Sutra and Tantra. The Mahayana Sutra view is the Causal Vehicle—cause and effect. We engage now the causes that result in future enlightenment...But Sutra Refuge actually separates us from that final result, the fruition of our already present enlightened *bodhi* mind. Tantric Refuge is the Secret Mantra Fruitional Refuge. It is taking refuge in the 'immediacy of the View'. This fruitional state is our always present enlightened state, our buddha mind free of causal conceptual elaboration. It is the authentic way that is the swift path of non-causal Dzogchen. It occurs here and now, the nondual primordial love and wisdom directly realized upon this very seat! In taking Fruitional Refuge in the immediacy of the View enlightenment is here and now! No contrived effort or seeking is required. Immersion in the nondual authentic Fruitional View of Dzogchen is inseparable from the natural effulgence of bodhicitta, spontaneously present in the luminosity of the View as we rest in the primordial state of equanimity, nondual *rigpa*, the state of perfect Presence.

*On Cause and Effect Karma: Adzom Paylo Rinpoche*

We live in two worlds at once! There is an outer and an inner world. In these two worlds there is an interdependent action of cause and effect. In this causal dimension we act from our egocentric view and desire and thereby sow seeds of karma. Yet there is here as well an innermost secret fruitional world. This too is the result of prior causes and conditions that we have created by our thoughts, intentions, and actions. A positive cause reaps a positive effect or result. A negative cause reaps a negative result. A negative cause cannot reap a positive result. Such a view and its corresponding ethical conduct must go together...The cause of all suffering in the six realms of existence is explained by the non-recognition of this outer and inner cause and effect relationship...Inner negative emotions always reflect in our outer world. So mind your mind. That is your great work for the benefit of the world. [Translated by Anne C. Klein]

—Dzogchen Retreat (Santa Fe, NM 2002)

*On "The Nature of Awakened Mind": Longchenpa.* "Because ultimate truth has never existed as anything whatsoever from the perspective of spacelike awareness, neither has there ever existed any view, meditation, conduct, or fruition, or stages of development and completion...[Timeless] awareness—empty and without identity—is in its very essence beyond all characterization or description...effort and causality are transcended." [2001 *Chöying Dzöd Autocommentary* p. 91.]



## Buddha Nature and Bodhicitta

Compassionate loving *bodhicitta* conduct is our primordial intrinsic indwelling buddha nature expressed through engaged action/conduct for the benefit of living beings.

All beings desire happiness. Peace and happiness arise from our present mind state. So to have happiness and peace we must first train the mind in peaceful calm abiding so as to express skillful means for the benefit of the world. That pursuit is the gradual surrender of our sense of self. This natural antidote stops the negative afflicting emotions and places us at ease that we may benefit others through bodhicitta...Bodhicitta is the one teaching that includes the whole of Buddha's teaching. There are two relative aspects of bodhicitta—intention and engaged action/conduct. We need both. Then we utilize relative bodhicitta to realize gift of ultimate bodhicitta. Non-recognition of our bodhicitta that is ego clinging is the true demon. The causes of our dissatisfaction and suffering are not outside, in others, but in our egocentric ignorance and afflicted emotion.

—Adzom Paylo Rinpoche

Please consider this well. As our hearts and minds begin to open through our compassionate *bodhicitta*, we again and again—'brief moments many times'—profoundly connect with our always already present spacious love-wisdom buddha nature buddha essence (*tathagatagarbha*, *buddhadhatu*, *buddhajnana*), all embracing all subsuming primordial Buddha Nature of Mind (*sem nyid*). Innermost bright Presence of That (*tatatha*).

### Buddhist Emptiness: The *Heart of Wisdom Sutra*

Our intrinsic buddha nature is profoundly revealed in the very familiar, very brief *Perfection of Wisdom Heart Sutra*, the Sanskrit *Prajnaparamita Hridaya Sutra*, known simply as the *Heart Sutra*. It express the definitive nondual Heart Essence of the entire *Prajnaparamita* teaching of the Mahayana vehicle. It's a very brief summary of the *Diamond Sutra*, itself a summary of the first century BCE Indian *Perfection of Transcendent Wisdom Sutra* (8000 lines), the foundation of the Buddhist Mahayana Causal Vehicle and the very Heart Essence of that vast *Prajnaparamita* corpus in 100,000 lines. The PP sutras arrived in 8th century Tibet during the reign of the great Buddhist King Trisong Detsen.

Here we begin to discover that "The mind does not exist as an object but is by its nature, clarity and luminosity." Clear light luminosity (*prabhasa*, *pabhassa*, 'od gsal or ösel, *guang ming*, *komyo*) may be seen as intrinsic purity of the all embracing 'basic space' (*dharmadhatu*) of nondual primordial *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground', wholly positive all pervading 'basic goodness', undefiled by negative afflictive emotion and habitual conceptual elaboration, imputation, and reification.

Immediately the *Heart Sutra* reveals that the ultimate nature of our experience of all relative conventional spacetime phenomena—the 'Five *Skandhas*'—are utterly empty of intrinsic *ultimate* existence. However, they are not empty of *relative* existence. Relative phenomenal appearance does appear after all. Yes, "Form is empty, emptiness is form."

*Buddhist emptiness (shunyata) is so much more than a mere "non-affirming negative" process. It is as well the positive affirming bright clear light luminosity and clarity of light-matter-energy-form ( $E=mc^2$ ) continuously arising from its timeless, selfless primordial emptiness ground as this great gift (jinlo) of our phenomenal spacetime realities. H.H. Dalai Lama has referred to these two faces of emptiness as 'objective emptiness' and 'subjective emptiness' respectively.*

And what is the ultimate nature of boundless emptiness itself? Buddhist Vajrayana emptiness is, as with form, itself also empty of any iota of ultimate intrinsic existence. This absence of belief in the ultimate existence of phenomena is termed the "emptiness of emptiness" (*shunyata shunyata*). Well then, how is emptiness established? On the accord of His Holiness Dalai Lama, "Emptiness is established by human conceptual minds."

The five *skandhas* of our human experience are: 1) physical form, 2) sensory feeling, 3) perception and conceptualization, 4) volition or mental formation, and 5) personal consciousness, our relative human awareness and memory. These are the 'form aggregates' or 'heaps' that comprise our arising phenomenal spacetime realities. From the five *skandhas* arise the human deluded self sense (*atman*) of a separate independent self-ego-I—our all too human ego consciousness (*manas vijnana*). That primal ignorance (*marigpa, avidya, ajnana, hamartia/sin*) is the primary cause of our human dissatisfaction, 'dis-ease', and the terrible suffering of despotism, genocide, and endless war.

Only the first skandha, physical form, empirical matter-energy ( $E=mc^2$ ) is objective. The other four skandhas are inherently subjective mental/emotional states and processes. These four subjective skandhas perceive and interpret objective form. Thus, from the five skandhas does illusory self-ego-I arise—and take over our lives. So, primal human ignorance—*avidya, marigpa*—is expressed in relative spacetime form as such a narcissistic 'self' that begets terrible human and animal suffering (*duhkha*).

*Quiescent mindful introspection* is a wisdom critique of our unruly, mostly negative concepts and beliefs of the self—our unexamined deep cultural background "global web of belief". [Quine 1969] Buddha told, "*You must go beyond your belief in what you see, so that you know how to see it as it is.*" From that understanding arises the *View, Meditation, and Conduct* that bears the Fruit of liberation from suffering, the Tibetan Buddhist Vajrayana *Fruition/Result* that is harmless human happiness itself.

The practice of the *Buddhadharma Path* reveals the non-conceptual direct experience of the inherent emptiness of form and of our innate buddha nature manifested as very real compassionate *bodhicitta* for the benefit of all living beings—including our precious spaceship Mother Earth. And that is the open secret of human happiness.

How is it that the five skandhas of form and formless form are empty of inherent ultimate existence? We see in the *Heart Sutra* the Buddha's "Four Profundities": "Form is empty (*shunya, stongpa*); emptiness (*shunyata, stongpa nyi*) is form." Then we are told that

"Form is not other than emptiness; emptiness is not other than form." 'Form' here includes all appearing phenomena, all five skandhas.

The great Ultimate Truth of the Buddha's teaching on emptiness is that the Relative Truth of appearing spacetime form and its primordial boundless emptiness *dharmakaya* ground are always already an ontic prior and phenomenally present one truth unity! That unity is invariant through all relative human reference frames. *We must learn to see that sublime prior and always present nondual one truth unity (dzog) of Buddha's Two Truths—our singular always present buddha nature—in all of our dualistic relative perceptions.* The natural adversity that mortal flesh is heir to we now perceive as our love-wisdom mind bliss.

It is urgent that we not construe Buddhist emptiness as nihilistic nothingness. Form is empty of any whit of absolute or *ultimate independent* 'intrinsic existence', while yet causally fully *interdependently* existent ('dependent arising' or *pratitya samutpada*) as relatively really real causal conventional phenomena. *Form and its emptiness ground are a prior metaphysical and phenomenal identity. Buddhist boundless emptiness is not the nonexistence of stuff, but the interdependent existence of all physical and mental phenomenal process.* Emptiness is the fullness of the boundless whole of everything that appears. Indeed, it is this wondrous all subsuming Ultimate Truth that permits the very cause and effect 'interdependent arising' of the Relative Truth dimension of this our human experience in spacetime form. *In other words, form exists relatively, conventionally, but not ultimately.*

Quantum physicists and Buddhist philosophers agree: causality—the 'interdependent arising' of a multitude of prior causes and conditions, the scientific and karmic Law of Cause and Effect—is the vital process of our being here in space and time. Physical and mental phenomena do not simply arise *independently*, fully formed. Spacetime forms in themselves do not have an uncaused intrinsic existence by their own power, from their own side. That they do is known in our Eastern wisdom traditions as the delusion (*moha*) of *svabhava*—the impossible independent, unconditioned, uncaused magical arising of ultimately real inherently existent appearing phenomena. The Buddha denied such an unexamined extreme 'scientific' materialist metaphysic. There exists a centrist 'middle path' wisdom cognitive space that gently embraces the destructive false dichotomy of the metaphysical extremes of eternalist existence (Scientific Materialism/Physicalism), and of nihilist nonexistence (Absolute Idealism).

Thus is our being here in form ultimately selfless 'noself' buddha nature (Buddha's *anatman*), always changing and thus impermanent (*anitya*), and empty (*shunya*) of any ultimate intrinsic existence. Because of impermanence and our egocentric insistence upon a permanent self-ego-I we experience suffering and these adventitious causes of suffering. In the Buddha's Middle Way "Selfless noself is the true refuge of self." Self-ego-I and its selfless buddha nature together at last! As if they were ever separate at all. Buddha told, we must learn to kindly befriend the duplicitous ego and make it an ally. And yes, it requires a bit of mature 'ego strength' for such a self to deconstruct itself.

The historical burden of credulity for any metaphysical system that attempts to deny the relative conventional existence of form (nihilistic metaphysical Absolute

Idealism), or that affirms the ultimate intrinsic existence (*svabhava*) of form (eternalist, substantialist) Metaphysical Materialism) is heavy indeed. May dualistic objective Big Science and nondual perfectly subjective Spirit discover Buddha's centrist Middle Way between such false dichotomies, and all physical, metaphysical, and cognitive extremes.

Therefore, because appearing spacetime phenomena arise interdependently as the cause and effect process of emptiness, "Form is emptiness." And because form and emptiness are a prior unity, "Emptiness is form." Boundless emptiness is the interdependent arising (*pratitya samutpada*) of spacetime form.

Assiduous Mayayana/Vajrayana practice of the Path—that choice—makes all such conceptual understanding real via trans-conceptual nondual direct yogic experience (*yogi pratyaksa*). And that wondrous process of awakening begins with the Buddha's shamatha "mindfulness of breathing". That is the providential beginning of the counter intuitive truth of our indwelling always already present Presence of our buddha nature, primordial *dharmakaya* Nature of Mind. Like vast empty space, *dharmakaya* is empty in essence, clarity by nature, compassionate in its energy manifestation—beyond concept and belief—ultimate supreme source of all *relative* phenomenal arising which is but its playful display.

So we take outer, inner, and innermost secret refuge in the precious Three Jewels that includes our *Dzogchen* master via the lovely process that is Guru Yoga. How? *Lama Khyen Lama Khyen* (Lama knows). Practice the *Lama Khyen* mantra and see for yourself.

Our always present indwelling buddha heart buddha mind is our 'innermost secret' source of refuge, prior and present unity of clear, luminous, boundless emptiness Buddha Nature of Mind (*sem nyid*). From that primordial love and wisdom Presence spontaneously and effortlessly arises our compassionate *bodhicitta* heartmind—thought, prayer, intention, and engaged action/conduct for the relative and the ultimate benefit of all living beings. Our all too human negative afflicted thinking and emotion now begins to 'self-liberate' (*rang grol*) at the very instant of its arising, freeing us to practice *bodhicitta* conduct in earnest. And That dear Reader is the open secret of your own human happiness.

This concludes our all too brief exploration of the Buddha's *Heart of Wisdom Sutra*.

*A Very Brief History of Buddha Nature*. By the end of the second century CE many 'Buddha Nature' sutras had arisen in India, Tibet, and China. They revealed generally that early Buddhist notions of nirvana, far from a mere "blowing out" of concept mind—like extinguishing a flame—was indeed the luminous primordial indwelling Nature of Mind itself, very Buddha Nature of Mind that is our 'supreme identity'.

The Buddha told his disciples that his nirvana was not like the extinguishing of a flame of self but a continuity of this profound love-wisdom clarity-bliss that abides as basic space (*dharmadhatu*) of *buddhadhatu*, our buddha nature whose seed is always present within each and every living being. That is our essential buddha nature buddha mind. With the advent of Indian and Tibetan tantra, our buddha nature became the already present inherent indwelling primordial Presence of what was to become the Tibetan Fruitional Vehicle that now pervades the view and practice of much Buddhist tradition.

## The Buddha Nature and Emptiness Controversy: *Shentong* and *Rangtong*

The living history of our precious buddha nature in Tibet was not without controversy. The scholastic *Rangtong/Shentong* debate over the truth of Buddhist emptiness and our buddha nature among Tibetan Vajrayana high lamas has raged for a thousand years. As we surrender the habitual conceptual dualism inherent in such critical dialectics we shall then see that this false dichotomy has a clear centrist 'middle path' resolution.

Most early Indian and Tibetan texts viewed buddha nature in accordance with the two primary schools of Buddhist Mahayana doctrine, namely, Middle Way Prasangika Madhyamaka (*Rangtong* or empty of self) of Tsongkhapa's 14th century Gelug School, and Middle Way Svatantrika Yogachara (*Shentong*, 'empty of other' phenomena) that probably began with Indian Shantarakshita's 8th century enhancement of the 4th century Yogachara of Asanga and Vasubandu.

There is a great variety of the protean Shentong view that pervades all of the extant Tibetan Buddhist lineages: 8th century Nyingma, 12th century 'New Translation' (*sarma*) schools Kagyu, Sakya, Jonang; but decidedly not the Rangtong 14th century Gelug school of Je Tsongkhapa, and today of H.H. Dalai Lama. How is this so?

As Indian Buddhism reached Tibet in the 8th century the various interpretations of buddha nature and emptiness became even more contested. By the fourteenth century Tibetan Buddhism was split between two differing views of buddha nature, namely Rangtong "intrinsic emptiness" or "emptiness of self" (Gelug lineage), and Shentong "extrinsic emptiness" or "emptiness of other" 'noself' phenomena (Jonang lineage).

Broadly construed, Shentong polemics argued that our buddha nature is our inherent indwelling luminous, selfless nondual ultimate Buddha Nature of Mind (*sem nyid*) complete with all inherently existing buddha qualities and attributes, yet empty of all "other" delusional qualities of a Hindu *atman* Self. Our innate indwelling buddha nature truly ultimately exists beyond our relative human reason, our concepts and beliefs about it. For Shentongpas That (*tathata*) alone cannot be reduced to Gulug Prasangika Madhyamaka Rangtong ultimate nonexistence!

*Thus is Shentong ultimate buddha nature selfless yet decidedly not empty of its own inherent nondual buddha nature (buddhadhatu) or buddha wisdom (buddhajnana, buddha gnosis) replete with its awakened enlightened Buddha qualities and attributes. Our Buddha nature exists!*

Ju Mipham's defense of Shentong: (*Lion's Roar Exposition of Buddha Nature* 2002):

Thus, the ultimate is not empty of its own essence, because the ultimate has both a nondeluded subject and a nondelusory object, because what exists there cannot be invalidated (*gnod pa*) by a valid cognition that proves otherwise...Since the ultimate is true and nonmistaken from its own side, it is never empty of dharmas that exist in that way...This ultimate reality that is the nature of things truly exists primordially in this way, but the deluded perceptions

that do not realize it are validly established as untrue and deluded in this context, are called 'deceptive' (*samvrti = kundzob*)...obstruction. So, the ultimate is empty of that deception, it is empty of the very subject and object that comprise the deluded perceptions...Thus, one is very much compelled to accept [this Shentong position over against Rangtong Gelug Prasangika]...So emptiness, which is the absence of subject and object...is perfectly complete in this [Shentong] system... So, the ultimate expanse of phenomena...is not empty of the inseparable buddha bodies and gnoses, and abides in the primordial, spontaneously present essence body (*ngo bo nyid sku = svabhakaya*)...nondual wisdom itself.

Jamgon Ju Mipham Gyatso considered these opposing views of Prasangika Rangtong and Svatantrika Yogachara Shentong to be complementary (though he is often considered a Rangtongpa), but in his above *Lion's Roar* defense of the Shentong view he clearly favors the *chittamatra* "mind only" mentalist or idealist Svatantrika bent of Indian Buddhist philosophy as expressed in the Yogachara school (4th-5th century) of Asanga, and in the 8th century refinement Yogachara of Shantarakshita.

Lama Mipham considered Shantarakshita's 8th century masterful *Madhyamakalamkara* an important text in this regard. Mipham's profound commentary on that great text emphasizes a prior syncretic unity of the two schools of Mahayana Madhyamaka Middle Way, namely Prasangika and Yogachara, as we shall soon see.

Mipham praised as well Shantarakshita's Svatantrika Shentong view as to the "conceptual ultimate truth" because it aids Development Stage practitioners to understand the trans-conceptual nondual Ultimate Truth as it is expressed in the *reductio ad absurdum* view of Rangtong Prasangika Madhyamaka. Thus is Shantarakshita known in Tibetan doxography as a Yogachara-Svatantrika-Madhyamika. An unwieldy epithet suitable perhaps for the great Dzogchen *mahasiddha* Mipham himself.

*Svatantrika Yogachara Madhyamaka Shentong*. The 4th century Yogachara of Asanga matured into a profound Buddhist subjective Idealism—Svatantrika Yogachara Madhyamaka—refined by Shantarakshita in his lapidary *Madhyamakalamkara*. It was he who brought Indian Buddhism to Tibet in the 8th century. Bhaviveka (6th century) was critical of Buddhapalita's refusal to use logical syllogistic reasoning. With Bhaviveka and other Svatantrikas Shantarakshita utilizes the logic and epistemology (*pramana*) of Nagarjuna, Dignaga and Chandrakirti to establish the Svatantrika "conceptual ultimate truth" that functions as a relatively true correction of the all too common belief in the intrinsic or essential existence of appearing phenomena (*svabhava*). Prasangika Madhyamaka is grounded in Chandrakirti's criticism of Bhaviveka, the argument in favor of a complete reliance on 'prasanga', the 'logical consequence' of *reductio ad absurdum* argument to refute the absurd consequences of any essentialist view.

By the end of the 8th century the basics of critical Indian dialectical philosophy—*pramana* logic and epistemology, Madhyamaka, and tantric mysticism—were well

established in Tibet. However, Mahayana Madhyamaka scholasticism did not truly arise before the 12th century with the vigorous critical dialectics of 8th century 'ancient' Nyingma school over against the New Translation (*sarma*) schools of Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug. The Shentong/Rangtong critical dialectics are a part of that evolutionary process.

Shentong Yogachara 'mind only' (*chittamatra*) or 'consciousness only' is usually seen nowadays as an ontic and epistemic reaction to the potentially nihilistic apophatic *via negativa* of the Madhyamaka Prasangika *Prajnaparamita* Rangtongpas—to wit, absolutely nothing *ultimately* exists! Not even Buddha's great truth of our indwelling buddha nature. Yogachara Madhyamaka is so much more than that. Still, Nyingma Dzogchen master Longchenpa told that Prasangika Madhyamaka Rangtong is the subtlest "highest" view of Tibetan Buddhist *scholastic* philosophy. Prasangika is closest to the radical nonduality of Ati Dzogchen ultimate nonexistence of all physical and mental phenomena.

Broadly construed, for 'mind only' *chittamatra* Yogachara nothing exists except the *mind* or consciousness who conceives that nothing exists. All of this illusory arising phenomena is 'Mind Only'. With the Yogachara of old, and with the other Madhyamikas, mind, as with all other phenomena, remains absent and empty of any essential nature. Even *that* perceiving mind does not *ultimately* exist. That 'mentalist' view is Svatantrika Yogachara—noble Shentong, some say nihilist, Buddhist ontic Subjective Idealism.

*Prajnaparamita*. In the Tibetan traditions the ultimate meaning of the Indian Buddhist *Prajnaparamita* is revealed in the Five Paths to liberation and full enlightenment. All five paths (*lam, marga*) of the steps to realization of ultimate enlightenment (buddhahood)—Ground, Path, Fruition/Result—are here seen as 1) accumulation, 2) preparation, 3) pure vision, 4) nondual direct meditation, 5) the stage of 'no more learning' or buddhahood itself, the 'full *bodhi*' accomplishment of the first four paths. The first two are the paths of beginners who have not yet realized the nondual nature of emptiness. They experience appearing reality mainly via discursive concept and belief meditation, including the early and middle stages of mindful shamatha (*Ch. VII*), while "sublime beings" experience their realities mostly through yogic direct perception (*yogi pratyaksa*). [Pettit 1999] These two relative cognitive modalities constitute an ultimate prior unity.

*The Great Perfection*. Jamgon Ju Mipham was a Dzogchen master, syncretist and systematic epistemologist of the highest possible excellence. He developed the philosophical tradition of the Nyingma 'ancient ones' (8th century) to a remarkable level of sophistication through his epistemic and gnoseological wisdom exposition and defense of the Nyingma Ati Dzogchen Great Perfection teaching in his great work *The Beacon of Certainty* (2002), a product, with his *The Lion's Roar* (2002), of the *rimé* ecumenism of 19th century Tibetan Buddhism.

In these texts Mipham argues—against critics of the Great Perfection who believed that the nondual fruitional immediacy of the acausal Dzogchen View is incommensurable with the conceptual, polemical, discursive, and critical dialectics of the inherently

gradualist causal approach of Middle Way Mahayana philosophy—that soteriological (salvation) certainty is a function of both critical causal Madhyamaka logic *and* the perfect liberating nondual acausal primordial wisdom-gnosis (*jnanaprana*) of Dzogchen highest *Ati Yoga*, which transcends yet includes critical philosophy. Dzogchen is acausal nondual direct experience, transcending conceptual Rangtong Prasangika.

Therefore, the View of Dzogchen the Great Perfection is not a critical philosophy at all but direct yogic experience of nondual primordial wisdom (*yeshe*, gnosis) itself that is pragmatically useful in reducing relative human suffering. Madhyamaka critical philosophy sees valid cognition as conceptual logical inference (*anumana*) augmented by the calm abiding of shamatha and the penetrating analytical insight of vipashyana.

On the other hand, Dzogchen utilizes valid cognition as *pratyaksa* or non-conceptual direct yogic experience through its 'fruitful nonmeditation'. Together these two voices of wisdom—relative and ultimate valid cognition—result in the nondual ultimate realization of all the buddhas. The assiduous practice of That, with relative *bodhicitta*, is the open secret of human happiness, in this case, *your* happiness. Without these two complementary cognitive modes—objective conceptual and subjective contemplative—your *buddic* love-wisdom mind remains largely conceptual and so cannot flourish.

For Mipham, without this all too rare cognitive unity, the attempt to establish the Buddha's emptiness/*shunyata* through human reason's absolute negation of everything—the Prasangika Madhyamaka Rangtong orthodoxy—is problematic, to say the least. We require *direct experience* of nondual primordial wisdom gnosis to realize our ultimate Buddha Nature of Mind. Yet, in order to understand *that* extraordinary dialectical process we require a bit of conceptual *anumana*. Wisdom gnosis requires nondual direct *yogi pratyaksa* tempered and unpacked via critical conceptual *anumana*.

In his *Beacon of Certainty* Mipham agrees with Gelug school Rangtongpa Tsongkhapa that the 'extrinsic emptiness' of the protean Shentong view of Jonang school Dölpopa does not fully comprehend the nature of Buddhist emptiness. And this view seems to contradict Mipham's vigorous defense of Shentong in his sublime polemic *The Lion's Roar*. Does that render Mipham's view as to the ultimate essence of our buddha nature ambiguous? Is he finally a Shentongpa or a Rangtongpa? Scholars disagree.

As we have seen, Rangtong Gelug scholars have criticized the Shentong view that while relative conventional phenomenal appearance is delusory and so finally nonexistent, trans-conceptual Ultimate Truth with its buddha nature and inherent Buddha qualities do indeed ultimately exist and cannot be denied and reduced to Tsongkhapa's Prasangika 'absolute negation', an ostensibly nihilistic view of emptiness. Well, is our inherent buddha nature finally a delusory Relative Truth; or is it a truly existent Ultimate Truth?

Supreme Head of the Nyingma school the late H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche (1991) has told that the Shentong view of 'extrinsic emptiness' is the highest and most profound view of this Tibetan dialectical scholastic tradition, superior even to mainstream Gelug Prasangika Madhyamaka. Meanwhile, antecedents of Shentong may be found in the early



*Pali Canon*, as well as Mahayana buddha nature sutras and shastras. And yes, Shentong is often considered exemplified in Middle Way Svatantrika Yogachara Buddhist Idealism.

Be all that as it may, Nyingma school Longchenpa (14th century), though sympathetic to extrinsic emptiness was decidedly not a Shentongpa. Although he was a contemporary of Dölpopa and thus familiar with his Shentong view, we saw that Longchenpa never used the epithet 'Shentong'. At least not in his extant works. He clearly stated that the highest of the scholastic dialectical views was Prasangika Madhyamaka, the causal conceptual foundation of acausal nondual supreme Ati Dzogchen the Great Perfection. As Plato told regarding a similar Greek dialectic, "No small matter is at stake here; the question concerns the very way that human life is to be lived." [*The Republic*]

Mipham was of course acutely aware of all this. His seeming ambivalence is palpable. John Pettit (1999 p. 113) reveals Mipham's resolution in *The Beacon* thus:

[Mipham] wanted to preserve the crucial position of the Shentongpas—and the Great Perfection—that the tathagatagarbha was intrinsically possessed of the qualities of enlightenment. On the other hand, if these qualities are asserted to exist ultimately, as the Shentongpas supposedly maintain, then they would have to be immune to an ultimate [Prasangika] analysis. This would contradict the reasoning of Nagarjuna and Candrakirti. Therefore, Mipham used the concept of conventional valid cognition of pure perception in order to validate a type of perceptual content—the spontaneous presence of enlightened qualities in all their diversity for enlightened meditative perception.

So, *The Lion's Roar* defends Shentong and the Great Perfection; and *The Beacon* seems to defend the radical intrinsic conceptually reasoned emptiness of Prasangika Rangtong, which is said to be the conceptual foundation of nondual Ati Dzogchen. These two views are ostensibly incompatible, as we have seen. But are they finally incompatible?

John Pettit suggests that Mipham may have composed *The Lion's Roar* at the behest of his Shentong teacher Khentse Bangpo Rinpoche (1999 p.114). Perhaps. But Mipham's passionate and brilliant defense of Shentong principles appears elsewhere in his 27 volume oeuvre, in for example his sublime *White Lotus* (2007). Moreover, contrary to Pettit's view, Mipham does indeed state that putative Shentong 'extrinsic emptiness' is superior to Rangtong Prasangika 'intrinsic emptiness'. [CF *Lion's Roar* quote above]

*Further, in both The Beacon and The Lion's Roar Mipham often reveals his preference for Shantarakshita's Svatantrika Yogachara Shentong vis à vis Chandrakirti's Prasangika Rangtong. That said, we must remember that false dichotomies are based in primal ignorance, and poorly considered dualistic 'comparisons are odious'—that Rangtong and Shentong are in the final analysis a prior and present complementary unity. I believe that was indeed Ju Mipham's view.*

Just so, it remains my own opinion that Mipham was, in his Heart of hearts, probably a Shentongpa, even as his master Patrul Rinpoche and most, but certainly not all, of the Nyingma school were not. A more nuanced view is that Mipham did not fall prey to

any falsely dichotomous view but understood the subtle inherent complementarity of the Rantong and Shentong views. That indeed is the view of many post-scholastic scholars.

It is often told that the Great Perfection is the acausal nondual Dzogchen Great Completion of the inherent causality of the noble Mahayana Causal Vehicle. With that in mind, Ati Dzogchen, The Great Perfection—considered by many to be the subtlest and highest nondual spiritual teaching of any tradition—may be seen as a paramystical, acausal, nondual teaching founded in the inherent complementarity of *both* of the causal Mahayana schools—Rantong Prasangika and Shentong Svatantrika Yogachara.

*The Nature of Buddhist Emptiness.* So yes, Mipham viewed Yogachara *buddha nature* and Prasangika *shunyata emptiness* not as inherently contradictory, but as complementary approaches to the nondual Ultimate Truth of this Relative Truth spacetime dimension of appearing Reality Being Itself—a one truth unity (*dzog*) of Buddha's prodigious Two Truths that are relative form and its ultimate *dharmakaya* emptiness ground. Both views understand enlightened primordial wisdom awareness (*rigpa'i yeshe*) to be inherently self-liberated from duplicitous atavistic dualistic human perception and conception.

Therefore, the "non-affirming negative" that is Prasangika Rantong 'objective emptiness' and the positive clear light luminosity and clarity of Shentong 'subjective emptiness' constitute a natural complementary unity. This view has arisen several times in the history of the dialectic. Still, we must choose and commit to a synthetic post-conceptual strategy as to how this is so. We shall further pursue that below in "Toward a Unifying Synthesis".

Yes. Buddhist emptiness is so much more than a mere negative nihilistic void dictated solely by human reason. It is as well the bright luminosity of light, matter, energy spacetime form ( $E=mc^2$ ) arising as awakened enlightened human yogic awareness—pure joy of That. That is Mipham's lovely ultimate nondual "coalescence" of appearing form and its boundless emptiness *dharmakaya* ground. Told the Buddha, "Form is empty; emptiness is form." That is the ontologically prior and phenomenally present one truth union of Buddha's Two Truths that are relative form and its ultimate emptiness ground (*gzhi rigpa*). That one truth unity is invariant through all relative reference frames as it arises, outshines, and is perforce instantiated in human cognition as our intrinsic buddha nature.

Therefore, phenomenal spacetime stuff—the dimension of Relative Truth arising from its Ultimate Truth primordial ground—is relatively conventionally real! Buddhist *shunyata* emptiness is not a negation of *relative* conventional phenomenal existence! Rather, it is a denial of the intrinsic *ultimate* existence of form. Relative phenomena are absent and empty any whit of Ultimate Truth *intrinsic* existence. *Phenomena exist relatively but not ultimately!* That is the one truth unity of *Uma*, the Mahayana Madhyamaka Middle Way that bestrides the metaphysical extremes of absolute existence and absolute nonexistence (*medpa*). Recall, for Longchenpa's Dzogchen both realms are *ultimately* illusory.

As a brilliant proponent of Dzogchen View, Ju Mipham, with Longchenpa before him, understood well that enlightened naturally indwelling ultimate buddha nature/essence is an undivided "oneness", unbounded whole "perfect exactly as it is",

utterly beyond the subject-object split of the tedious conceptual dialectical cognitive gymnastics of scholastic critical analysis. Our ultimate buddha nature with its wondrous qualities and three *kayas* of existence is thereby perforce *ultimately* established. These naturally and spontaneously manifest in spacetime form through the luminous Presence of *definitive* primordial wisdom gnosis as the present *bodhicitta* of intention and engaged action/conduct for the benefit of all living beings, including our precious Mother Earth. That this definitive selfless nondual one truth is ultimately inherently the truth of the matter need not entail provisional assent to any species of conceptual dualistic philosophical idol of absolute self existence. Longchenpa reminds us that in nondual "naturally occurring timeless awareness nothing has ever existed as anything whatsoever".

*We must maintain a nondual awareness of discursive linguistic semiotic false dichotomies without habitually conflating them—while still seeing the outshining perfect 'sameness' (samatajnana) and oneness of the primordial ground in whom they arise and are instantiated. Our usually preconscious habituation to the causal objective relative existence of spacetime stuff is dishabituated via acausal perfect subjective yogic direct awareness of its inherent ultimate absence.*

Please consider this. The conceptually fabricated dimension of inherently dualistic relative 'provisional' reality, and the 'definitive' nondual ultimate dimension of 'reality itself' are both marked by an empty (*shunya, stongpa*) absence of *either* sameness or difference. That such a surprisingly positive understanding is absent in the contemplatively untrained mind is due to the continuous error (ignorance, *marigpa, avidya, ajnana, hamartia*) of human dualistic cognitive reifying perception and conception. To rest here in empty, quiescent, naked clarity—that is continuity of Dzogchen 'nonmeditation'.

Noetic nondual (body mind spirit subject-object unity) acausal primordial wisdom gnosis (*yeshe, jnana*) may be seen as the recognition, then ultimate realization of the utterly absent empty nature of such seductive conceptual dichotomies as provisional/definitive, relative/ultimate, form/emptiness, appearance/reality, existence/nonexistence. To fully understand this cognitive *process* requires the wisdom surrender of that pernicious adventitious split between perceiving subject and its perceived objects revealing the prior and present emptiness and radiant clarity unity of such gratuitous worrisome dichotomies. Our enlightened love-wisdom buddha mind knows the duality of 'appearance and reality' as the perfect bright clarity and equality of ultimate nondual sameness (*samatajnana*). Primordial 'oneness'. Meanwhile, we may appreciate a bit of self-effacing humor in this inherent delusional duality of all our conceptual semiotic (logical syntax of language, meaning, pragmatics) attempts to understand and verbally express such nondual wisdom—sublime *samadhi* of certainty of That (*tathata, tat, sat*).

As to this nondual view, Nagarjuna told long ago, "It is already accomplished from the very beginning; to rest here without seeking is the Meditation." The contemplative continuity of That is the open secret of our own human happiness.

Thus does the truth of the matter require both voices of our human *noetic cognitive doublet*—both objective conceptual cognition, and subjective contemplative cognition, even perfectly subjective nondual noetic gnosis (*yeshe*). That is the innermost secret

'nonmeditation' upon the Heart Essence of the Nyingma school Longchen Nyingthig of our lineage masters Garab Dorje, Longchenpa, Jigme Lingpa, and H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche.

In *The Beacon of Certainty* Mipham distinguishes between these two voices of wisdom—relative discriminating analytic wisdom (*prajna, sherab*), and nondual primordial wisdom gnosis (*yeshe, jnana, rigpa*) of the ultimate Nature of Mind as expressed in the Dzogchen highest *mangagde/upadesha* pith instruction teaching class.

*Ati Dzogchen Instruction Classification and Practice Levels.* The Great Perfection view and practice are classified into three classes of teaching instruction: mind (*semde*), space (*longde*), and direct master to disciple pith instruction (*mangagde* or *upadesha*). That 'innermost secret' instruction class is the direct mind to mind transmission of nondual essential primordial wisdom (gnosis, *yeshe, jnana*) directly and non-conceptually via the "pointing out instruction" of the Dzogchen master. That constitutes the 'direct introduction' to the nondual Buddha Nature of Mind (*cittata, sem nyid*), trans-conceptual love-wisdom nature of primordial awareness gnosis (*yeshe, jnana, jnanaprana*), beyond our residual habitual concepts and beliefs about clarity and emptiness.

The *longde* space class teaches the essential emptiness of awareness and clarity of mind which corrects emotional clinging to the peace and 'clear light' clarity of our primordial awareness *dharmakaya* ground that the *semde* teaching has not yet expunged.

Great contemporary Dzogchen scholar Lama Tulku Thondup Rinpoche—who introduced me to Tibetan Buddhism so long ago—has told it well. As to the *semde* (mind) instruction class: "All appearances are mind, that mind is emptiness, emptiness is intrinsic awareness, and emptiness and intrinsic awareness are in union."

Still, profound *semde* instruction does not liberate all of our habitual attachment to this great treasure of mind nature. Thus does the practitioner proceed from *semde* to *longde*, to *mangagde*, all under the bright love-wisdom guidance of the Dzogchen master.

The Great Perfection contains two practice strata of formation within the pith instruction of the *mangagde* (*upadesha*) class: 1) *kadag trekchö* or "cutting through" conceptual obscurations to reveal the nondual primordial wisdom Nature of Mind ('basic space' *dharmadhatu* of *dharmakaya*), and 2) *lhundrub tögal*, primordial Presence of that all subsuming realization which reveals through its "four visions" the essential nature of the other two buddha bodies of reality, *sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya* (*rupakaya*). Altogether that *Trikaya of the Base* may be, in a direct relation to the capacity and commitment of the disciple, fully realized in this life, prior to the death of this physical body.

Meanwhile the prepared Dzogchen practitioner assiduously engages, after the daunting *ngondro* 'preliminary practices', the so called lesser or lower stages of the Nyingma nine vehicles of enlightenment. This is done in one or more one year solitary meditation retreats practicing Development Stage and Completion Stage yoga. In Completion Stage *Tögal* retreat the Dzogchen yogi or yogini is said to surrender hitherto attractive but contrived practice ritual and now meditates and rests in the great silence of the primordial Deep as phenomenal appearance naturally returns to its source ground.

In short, Ati Dzogchen view and practice offers the prepared yogin the non-conceptual (*nirvikalpa*) wisdom gnosis immediate recognition and nondual realization of our original Nature of Mind, always already present 'innermost secret' Ati Presence of the primordial awareness basic space (*chöying, dharmadhatu*) of *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground' of all this arising phenomenal reality. And yes, that Fruition/Result is, in the prepared mind of the yogin, directly proportional to the capacity and commitment thereof. How so? Because that precious fruit is "already accomplished" prior to its causal practice.

*Ju Mipham's Dzogchen: Unification of Shentong, and Rangtong.* Lama Mipham affirms our need to go beyond the critical dialectics of dualistic conceptual Prasangika Madhyamaka Rangtong logical epistemic tradition (*pramana*) and enter in the direct (*yogi pratyaksa*) certainty of the nondual Dzogchen View of the primordial ground. That view must be realized, not through exoteric critical concept and belief, but via esoteric direct personal spiritual experience (*rigpa*). Such a view represents a profound centrist 'middle path' between the conceptual false dichotomy of the two "metaphysical extremes" (*medpa*) of *either* Prasangika Rangtong absolute nonexistence, *or* Shentong ultimate existence of our buddha nature. Yes. The truth of the matter requires a rather subtle balance of both of these cognitive modalities, as we have so often seen in these pages.

Thus does Ju Mipham affirm the pragmatic utility of human reason and logic, yet he points out the inherent wisdom limit of mere human concept and belief. He self-reflexively utilizes our concept-mind to deracinate and critique its own inherent limit.

For Buddhist scholar-practitioner John Pettit (1999):

The *Beacon* is meant to show that reason, as employed in critical philosophical study [Madhyamaka], and personal intuition of wisdom gnosis [*yeshe, jnana*] as the principle of the Great Perfection, are complementary paradigms that converge on the same soteriological goal.

*So it is clear that for Mipham, while reason alone cannot personally realize Dzogchen nondual primordial wisdom, the proto-Shentong view of the Great Perfection must be subjected to the critical analysis of Rangtong Madhyamaka. On that both Mipham and Tsonkhapa agree.*

As to Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhist view and praxis these two great minds have profound epistemic and ontic differences. Yet they agree that 1) Madhyamaka reductionist critical analysis is necessary to a complete understanding of both Indian Mahayana and Tibetan Vajrayana, which of course includes Ati Dzogchen; thus 2) conceptual philosophical view supports and guides non-conceptual contemplative practice; therefore 3) both conceptual logical reasoning and trans-conceptual contemplative practice are necessary qualities of the Buddhist Path. [Pettit 1999]

Opposing the Shentong view, 'intrinsic emptiness' or 'self-empty' Gelug Rangtong views all arising phenomena, whether relative or ultimate, including our essential buddha nature, as *equally* absent and empty of intrinsic existence. And that is the Dzogchen View.

Thus *both* Relative Truth and Ultimate Truth here share the same ontic reality status—*ultimately* deceptive and deluded. Shentongpas too often see this as blatant nihilism.

In other words, in the Shentong view, while the phenomena of the spacetime dimension of "concealer, deceptive, delusory" Relative Truth (*samvriti satya*) are empty of *svabhava* or inherent existence, all subsuming ultimate reality or the dimension of Ultimate Truth (*paramartha satya*) is not empty of its own inherent existence. However, that multiform Shentong view was too often incorrectly seen by Gelug Rangtongpas as affirmation of a permanent Hindu/Vedic *Atman Self*, proscribed by the Buddha who rejected the Hindu Vedic permanent transmigrating "Supreme Self" in favor of selfless *anatman* or empty no-self. Buddha told, "Selfless no-self is the true refuge of self."

Clearly, there are several ways that this Shentong/Rangtong dialectic may be understood. For the sake of brevity we shall herein mainly consider Tibetan Buddhist Shentong as per the great Tibetan Buddhist master Dölpopa Shérab Gyeltsen (1292-1361) of the Tibetan Jonang lineage. He argued that our nondual Buddha Nature of Mind is finally ultimately existent and so not empty of its own inherent existence, while all other deceptive relative-conventional phenomena are entirely empty of inherent intrinsic or absolute existence (*svabhava*).

*So yes, for Shentong the Buddha's Ultimate Truth (paramartha satya) or primordial ultimate reality dimension embraces and subsumes the spacetime dimension of Relative Truth (samvriti satya) arising therein. Our ultimate inherent buddha nature (buddhadhatu) cannot be absent and empty of its own nondual intrinsic existence. Told Mipham, "The ultimate reality is not empty of being the ultimate reality, but it is surely empty of deceptive [relative] reality."*

Again, buddha nature, our precious buddha love-wisdom mind (*buddhajñana*) is indeed empty of the *conceptual* 'concealer' phenomena of Buddha's Relative Truth dimension, but decidedly not empty of the *non-conceptual* awakened qualities of a buddha—of our innermost nondual *ultimate* buddha nature; indwelling bright Presence of That. That (*tathata*) is so much greater than any mere relative existence. That alone cannot be denied, or reduced to Gelug Rangtong ultimate nonexistence. In any case, that is Mipham's compelling Shentong argument in *The Lion's Roar* (2002), and elsewhere.

Thus it is, so the Shentong argument goes, that our inherent buddha nature truly ultimately exists! We've seen that it cannot be reduced or denied by the opposing Middle Way Prasangika Rangtong *reductio ad absurdum* ontic reduction (*epoche*) which argues that *both* relative phenomenal arising *and* our ultimate Buddha nature and buddha body *kayas* and qualities are equally empty of inherent existence. For Rangtong, our buddha nature is not finally an ultimate reality but—along with all other phenomena—merely a nominal Relative Truth conceptual imputation. Astoundingly, Prasangika arrives at this audacious conclusion by way of dubious, capricious conceptual human reason alone!

For this general understanding of the protean Shentong view, the all embracing reality of Ultimate Truth, acausal primordial wisdom ground (*kungzhi yeshe, kungzhi nomshe*) of all relative arising phenomena is unborn and unconditioned, transcending even the phenomenal chain of relative causal interdependent arising (*pratitya samutpada*) that is

the Buddha's *shunyata* emptiness. Ultimate Truth is thus the ultimately real aboriginal ground of the vast boundless whole that embraces all of samsara and nirvana. Indeed, it is the invariant one truth unity (*dzog*) of these two truth reality dimensions. It is that luminosity, the basic space (*chöying*) ultimate primordial *dharmakaya* ground, very buddha nature buddha essence (*tatagatagarbha, buddhajnana, buddhadhatu*) that is intrinsically present in all living beings—indeed in Life Itself. That (*tathata*) cannot be relegated to a Prasangika Madhyamaka Rangtong realm of ultimate nonexistence. *Our relative concepts and beliefs about buddha nature do not exist. Yet our nondual ultimate buddha nature exists!* A denial of an existence requires that existence in the first place. That is the Shentong View.

And the Prasangika Madhyamaka Rangtong 'empty of self' view? Dölpopa considered it the common *provisional* view of Tibetan Middle Way Madhyamaka of those apostate Rangtongpas who would later include Tsongkhapa (1357-1419), founder of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism. On the accord of Dölpopa, by practicing that provisional conceptual Rangtong lesser view it becomes possible for the yogin to finally accomplish the *definitive* trans-conceptual Shentong ultimate view.

So, Dölpopa's syncretic view considered even the 'provisional teaching' of the Prasangika Rangtongpas on buddha nature as a mere relative truth. It is the very same buddha nature as the definitive Shentong teaching and so the two traditions share in the truth of buddha nature while differing substantially on its precise interpretation, and on its final ontological status—nominal relative or nondual ultimate.

Several Kagyu and Nyingma lamas have told, while rejecting Jonang Shentong as eternalistic, that Rangtong and Shentong are not ultimately contradictory, but are in one way or another commensurate. That prior and present complementary unity is our repeating underlying theme in this heady scholastic Shentong/Rangtong critical dialectic.

Yes, for Shentong, although the causal dimension of phenomenal Relative Truth is surely illusory (*samvriti*), yet there exists that nondual acausal ultimate reality which truly exists—always present primordial love-wisdom gnosis Presence of our indwelling nondual transcendent buddha nature, the very *dharmakaya* Buddha Nature of Mind.

*So yes, while our concepts and beliefs about ultimate buddha nature are indeed delusory, non-conceptual nondual timeless, formless, selfless truly ultimate Buddha Nature of Mind—bright indwelling primordial Presence of That—is always already present and awake at the spiritual Heart of Reality Itself, whether or not we choose to accept it. That is the Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen.*

Shentong, while not the primary view the Nyingma School, many great Nyingma lamas have embraced it. Among them are 20th century Nyingma Supreme Head the late H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Kalu Rinpoche, and Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche who also offered an integration of Shentong with Prasangika Madhyamaka. We have seen that the great 19th century *rimé* master and polymath Jamgön Mipham composed texts both in praise of, and critical of some interpretations of the Shentong view. We shall address further his putative ambivalence below.

We saw above Mipham's penetrating defense of Shentong in *The Lion's Roar*. I have dared to argue here and elsewhere that Ju Mipham was, like his master Jamyang Khyentse

Wangpo, finally a Shentongpa who managed a prodigious reconciliation of the views of tantric nondual Dzogchen with sutric conceptual, logical Madhyamaka Rangtong. That synthesis is decidedly not a traditional Nyingma school view which conceived nondual Dzogchen tantra as far superior to sutric dualistic conceptual Prasangika Madhyamaka.

Now we can see the possibility of a syncretic unity of nondual Dzogchen View and its direct *rigpa* gnosis wisdom Presence of primordial intrinsic awareness itself, with the clarifying if dualistic conceptual critical reason of Prasangika Madhyamaka View. Do we not require both? Once again, does not a full human understanding require both voices of our *noetic cognitive doublet*—both objective conceptual cognition and perfectly subjective spiritual cognition; both knowledge and wisdom; both Science and Spirit? [Appendix A] The great ecumenical mind of Ju Mipham has demonstrated that *ultimately* Buddha's Two Truths are embraced and subsumed in a prior and present indivisible nondual one truth unity while remaining *relatively* conceptually distinct. Longchenpa has told that *nothing* in this display of samsara and nirvana arising in 'basic space' *ultimately* exists! [Chöying Dzöd]

Mipham's profound unification of these ostensibly opposed philosophical views is grounded in his profound "Gnosis of Coalescence" (*yuganaddha*), the prior and present nondual unity of the Buddha's Two Truths—relative and ultimate reality dimensions—and of primordial wisdom (*yeshe*, gnosis) and its emptiness *shunyata* ground. Thus did Mipham help to establish the nondual unity of the Buddha's "form and emptiness"—phenomenal form and its primordial emptiness ground, boundless *kosmos* whole itself.

From the *Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra* arises Buddha's Fourfold Profundity: "Form is empty; emptiness is form. Form is not other than emptiness; emptiness is not other than form." Far from emptiness as an absolute negation of all phenomena, as in the Gelug Prasangika Rangtong view, Mipham's emptiness is a fluent complementary 'coalescence' of Buddha's Two Truths that are form and emptiness. Mipham brings a refreshing non-sectarian ecumenical *rimé* clarity to the one truth unity of these foundational Two Truths of Buddha's great nondual teaching as it arises in tantric Ati Dzogchen View and Practice.

*Mipham's penetrating wisdom synthesis represents a coming to meet of the Second Turning of Buddha's Wheel of Dharma, the Rangtong Prajnaparamita sutras, and the Third Turning, the Shentong Buddha nature and Yogachara sutras. Both of these views may be seen as definitive, and together provide a centrist 'middle path' between the 'metaphysical extremes' of nihilistic absolute nonexistence of phenomena (Metaphysical Idealism), and the 'eternalism' and substantial essentialism of absolute phenomenal existence (Metaphysical Scientific Materialism/Physicalism).*

Many Kagyu and Nyingma lamas have embraced forms of the Shentong view, often a syncretic view that integrates Rangtong Prasangika with Shentong Svatantrika Yogachara. These include several of the Karmapas, Jamgön Kongtrul, Dilgo Khentse Rinpoche, Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, Kalu Rinpoche, and Trangu Rinpoche.

*Jamgön Kongtrul told that "Shentong Madhyamaka" is the ultimate and highest view of the Third Turning of Buddha's Wheel of the Dharma. It best represents Buddha's highest teaching and "the primordial wisdom of emptiness free of defiling conceptual elaborations". Here the ultimate wisdom of all the buddhas is finally fully established. If that is not so, the*



Ultimate Truth nature of our appearing Relative Truth spacetime realities would amount to little more than nihilistic nothingness; would it not?

*Some Difficult Scholastic History.* The Jonang school Shentong view of Dölpopa and other Shentongpas was banned by the prevailing Rangtong Gelug School authority in the 17th century. Vigorous suppression of Shentong was as well practiced by Kagyu and Nyingma acolytes. Most fortunately the 19th century ecumenical *rimé* Tibetan Buddhist renaissance witnessed a renewal of the vital Shentong view, now being taught by high lamas in the Nyingma, Kagyu, and Sakya lineages, but not the Rangtong Prasangika Gelug school of Tsongkhapa, and more recently H.H. Dalai Lama.

While both sides of this vital but often tedious Buddhist scholastic dialectic understand the *concept* of the ultimate Buddha Nature of Mind (along with relative appearing phenomenal existence) as always deceptive while still relatively conventionally existent—Svatantrika Yogachara Shentong accepted a metaphysic that affirms an ultimate intrinsic buddha nature that is not negated in the radical emptiness *epoche* reduction or 'absolute negation' by Rangtong Prasangika Madhyamaka philosophy, as we have just seen. We've also seen that Prasangika Madhyamaka Rangtong (Gelug School) views buddha nature, along with everything else, as ultimately empty of intrinsic existence. Middle Way Madhyamaka Shentong (e.g. Svatantrika Yogachara school) often sees this as flagrant 'nihilism', while Rangtong sees the Shentong Ultimate Truth existence of buddha nature as blatant substantialist, essentialist 'eternalism', as we have seen above.

Again, Rangtongpas—Gelugpa School of Tsongkhapa—hold that not even our innermost nondual buddha nature is *ultimately* existent. Here Shentong buddha nature is not empty enough. Even our intrinsic buddha nature and our metaphysic of the unity of the *trikaya* of the base that is the three buddha bodies of reality, and of primordial wisdom (*yeshe, jnana, gnosis*) are as well in the correct ultimate view merely delusional conceptual Relative Truth entities. Not even buddha nature survives the radical Gelug Rangtong emptiness *reductio ad absurdum* reduction to a nihilist ultimate nonexistence. That *reductio* position denies that it has any position of its own. Its goal is merely to show that its opponent's view is contradictory. No additional existential statement may be ventured.

Well, asks Lama Mipham, "Do the Madhyamikas [Prasangika] have a position or not." Mipham here defers to Longchenpa's rescue of Prasangika. During meditation and during debate with philosophical adversaries Prasangika asserts no position of its own as to the existence or nonexistence of anything at all; but in post-meditation it affirms the relative-conventional realities of common sense and ordinary human perception.

Still, for Ju Mipham the dimension of Ultimate Truth transcends the conceptual false dichotomy of relative form and an emptiness ground; and of the metaphysical extremes of absolute existence and of absolute nonexistence of any phenomenal reality.

*For Shentongpas the Rangtong View entirely misses the point that the ultimate wisdom gnosis of buddha nature cannot be deceived.* In the final analysis it ultimately 'exists' as the very nondual primordial Buddha Nature of Mind that it actually is. Once again, only as a

*conceptual object* of human inference can our buddha nature, or its emptiness, be authentically reduced to an absolute negation of nonexistence. Yet the authentic *subject* of these two concepts can be directly experienced by the Buddhas and mahasiddhas.

Therefore, the Mahayana *emptiness* of Buddha's Second Turning of the Wheel of Dharma constitutes for Shentongpas a profound 'provisional' teaching while the *buddha nature* of the Third Turning is the 'definitive' ultimate teaching of Gautama the Buddha.

Thus, broadly construed, Shentong extrinsic emptiness sees the precious qualities of our enlightened buddha nature, full *bodhi* of primordial buddha love-wisdom mind, with the three *kayas*, as empty of conceptual essence yes, but not empty of its own trans-conceptual nondual buddha nature or buddha essence, as we have here so often seen.

*Buddha nature cannot be empty of its own primordial basic space dharmakaya ground because in the ultimate View it is that very ground. Buddha nature is the nondual primordial purity (kadag) that cannot be empty of its own spontaneous presence (lhundrub).*

Yes. For Shentongpas buddha nature cannot be logically or metaphysically negated and reduced to ultimate nonexistence via Nagarjuna's conceptual absolute Prasangika Rangtong *shunyata* emptiness *epoche*/reduction. Ju Mipham understood this well.

Just so, for Shentong 'extrinsic emptiness' the precious qualities of our buddha nature exist ultimately, while the apparitional phenomenal realities of our relative conventional samsaric being here in space and time exist only relatively and are indeed ultimately nonexistent. Meanwhile, Rangtong 'intrinsic emptiness' sees everything, all arising phenomena, even our intrinsic buddha nature itself, as ultimate nonexistence.

Perhaps I belabor that point. So, does our buddha nature ultimately exist at the nondual spiritual Heart (*hridayam, nyingpo, kokoro*) of the human being, beyond our relative concepts and beliefs about it; or is it a mere Relative Truth established, imputed, and reified by human relative conceptual minds? No small matter is at stake here.

*The highest or subtlest nondual views of 'metaphysically identical' 2nd century through 8th century Nyingma Dzogchen and 11th/12th century Kagyu Essence Mahamudra rise above such scholastic dialectical ultimately false dichotomies and altogether transcend our much belabored dualistic scholastic critical concepts and beliefs about existence and nonexistence.*

In the Tibetan Secret Mantra View of Ati Dzogchen our 'innermost secret' buddha nature buddha mind—far beyond our concepts and beliefs about it—embraces, subsumes, pervades, and is not other than the basic space (*chöying*) of nondual primordial *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground', self-liberating knowing-feeling awareness of That; the Path which reveals That; and the Fruition/Result which is That. That is the ultimate View of the 'highest', subtlest nondual Buddhist teaching: Dzogchen, Essence Mahamudra, Madhyamaka of the Definitive Meaning, Saijojo Zen (*mujodo no taigen*) which are, on the accord of H.H. Dalai Lama, all equal with respect to the *ultimate* Fruition/Result of buddhahood, while they all differ as to their view and *relative* practices.

It is told by those who know that Nyingma nondual Ati Dzogchen and nondual Kagyu Essence Mahamudra are 'metaphysically identical', and perforce transcend yet embrace the conceptual dualistic doctrinaire dialectics of the Rangtong/Shentong

deliberation. Indeed, the dualism of the Rangtong causal Prasangika Madhyamaka view is here seen as the conceptual foundation of acausal nondual Ati Dzogchen view and praxis which transcends and embraces it. The truth of the matter is experiential, utterly nondual, above and beyond our discursive dualistic concepts and beliefs about it. What a relief!

This 'highest' subtlest trans-conceptual, nondual, non-deceptive definitive teaching must be in its essence free of dualistic concept and belief. It must deracinate such inherently misleading relative conceptual cognition. It admits of no logical or scientific proof, and so is not subject to logical nor hermeneutical refutation. It is beyond Physical Science. It is Contemplative Science, an integral aspect of our emerging East-West Science of Consciousness. Contemplative Science does not limit itself to mere empirical cause and effect 'scientific' knowledge. Rather, it utilizes both voices—objective conceptual and subjective contemplative—of our syncretic *noetic cognitive doublet*, Mipham's two wisdoms.

Direct spiritual transmission (*yogi pratyaksa*) from the luminous mindstream of the Dzogchen master to the prepared mind of the disciple transcends all conceptual elaboration and so cannot be known through a discursive thinking mind. Yet it may be conceptually unpacked and integrated into the whole of our compassionate View and Conduct—the whole of our human cognitive potential. As to that perfectly subjective dimension, we experience dualistic contemplative practice, which grounds nondual direct yogic experience. As Guru Rinpoche told so long ago, "You shall realize nondual ultimate truth only through dualistic relative truth. Practice these two as a unity."

As to the unity of Rangtong conceptual emptiness and Shentong non-conceptual buddha nature, we have seen that for Yogachara Shentong the conceptual reason and analysis of Rangtong Prasangika Madhyamaka is not adequate to the non-conceptual nondual direct realization of our ultimately existing Buddha Nature of Mind.

*The radical 'absolute negation' of inherent existence of all aspects of appearing physical and mental reality by Prasangika Rangtong—including our selfless indwelling ultimate buddha nature with its buddha qualities—is established by human reason alone! Oh human hubris! What shall we make of a world spiritual philosophy grounded entirely in the capriciousness and coarseness of our dualistic conceptual human mind? Clearly we require a nondual, acausal, subtler, 'higher', and more inclusive view—to wit, the nondual Dzogchen View.*

Thickening the plot, Prasangika argues that the normalizing buddha nature of Svatantrika Yogachara, sometimes referred to as a 'Buddha Self', is not but an apostate return to the metaphysical commitment to an ultimately existing Hindu Atman Supreme Self that the Buddha rejected in favor of his selfless *anatman* no-self. What to do?

### **Toward a Unifying Synthesis**

Yogachara Shentong Middle Way Madhyamaka Indian Nalanda University Abbot Shantarakshita (725-788) in his lapidary *Madhyamakalamkara* accomplished a remarkable synthesis of these ostensibly opposed Rangtong and Shentong views—a kind of middle

path between Nagarjuna's future Madhyamaka Rangtong metaphysical *ontology*, and the metaphysical Idealism of Svatantrika Madhyamaka Shentong, the chittamatra 'mind only' *phenomenology* of Shantarakshita's 8th century Yogachara Madhyamaka refinement of the 4th century Yogachara of Asanga and Vasabandu.

Shantarakshita's syncretic centrist version of Shentong prevailed until it was superseded by Tsongkhapa's return to classical Prasangika Madhyamaka in the 15th century dominant Gelug School which he founded. The iconoclast Jamgön Mipham utilized Shantarakshita's synthesis in what many Nyingmapas consider a decisive critique of Tsongkhapa's Prasangika view. [Pettit 1999] Dzogchen master Longchenpa (14th century) was clearly sympathetic to the Yogachara Shentong view although he did not use the term Shentong. That said, he has stated that the "highest" Middle Way causal dialectic was Prasangika Madhyamaka, the conceptual foundation of acausal Ati Dzogchen View and Praxis. Still, "In spacelike awareness...ultimate truth has never existed as anything..."

Well, what is the upshot of Shantarakshita's great synthesis? H.H. Dalai Lama has offered what some have seen as an imperative rendering of this unifying view. *Prasangika Madhyamaka Rangtong emptiness is the correct view of the Buddha's Ultimate Truth (paramartha satya), while Yogachara Madhyamaka Shentong buddha nature is the correct view of Buddha's Relative Truth (samvriti satya)*. Thus does Yogachara Shentong *phenomenology* offer the best account of our objective relatively real conventionally appearing spacetime reality; while Tsongkhapa's Rangtong Prasangika *ontology* offers the best account of our non-conceptual nondual ultimate reality. After all, Yogachara is a metaphysical presupposition about the existential status of *relative* phenomenal appearance, while Prasangika is an ontic metaphysical presupposition about the *ultimate* nature of that appearing reality. Satisfying synthesis, or not? Let's probe a bit more deeply.

Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso suggests that Prasangika Rangtong is the "highest view in terms of conceptual analysis", and Yogachara Shentong is "the most profound view in terms of understanding non-conceptual meditation". In short, Rangtong Prasangika is best for analysis; Shentong is best for contemplative practice. Rangtong is grounded in exoteric logical '*reductio ad absurdum*' human reasoning, while Shentong is grounded in esoteric direct contemplative, even nondual practice (*yogi pratyaksa*). Does not the truth of the matter abide in a higher synthesis of the two? That is after all the result of a nondual Dzogchen synthesis of this seeming interminable Rangtong/Shentong debate.

Kagyü scholar-practitioner Karl Brunnhölzl holds that, for these and other reasons, Svatantrika Yogachara Shentong, correctly understood, is entirely commensurate with Prasangika Madhyamaka Rangtong. [*In Praise of Dharmadhatu* 2008]

Conceptual Prasangika Rangtong correctly bespeaks what our appearing realities are not; yet it is not at all clear how we human beings contemplatively directly realize such a liberating truth. Shentong ultimate buddha nature provides that, but only in the acausal nondual context of highest Ati Dzogchen View and Practice. [Boaz 2020 *Ch. V*]

This concludes our brief review of a thousand years of the Buddhist Mahayana Middle Way Madhyamaka Rangtong/Shentong scholastic critical dialectic.

## Buddha Nature As It Is

Now, some straight talk on our indwelling buddha nature. Almost everyone agrees on the soteriological (salvation) importance of what is called 'buddha nature'—whether it be conceived 1) as an *ultimate*, inherently indwelling timeless, selfless, trans-conceptual, acausal, perfectly subjective nondual living spiritual Dzogchen *tögal* Presence (not a mere relative objective conceptual *thing*) of the *chöying* basic space of *ultimate* primordial *dharmakaya* ground of all arising spacetime phenomena; or 2) as an expedient *relative* step function about the ultimate existence of a human *concept* regarding our buddha nature.

As to my own not especially astute view, I shall follow the lead of Ati Dzogchen masters Longchenpa, Jigme Lingpa, Jamgön Mipham, H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche, and the not always definitive voice of Tibetan Nyingma School teaching only insofar as these embrace the Great Perfection View of 1) above.

After all is said and done we must make an often uncomfortable, less than conceptually certain *ontological commitment!* And compassionately act upon it. Our contemplative direct experiential certainty facilitates this urgent cognitive process. The alternative is too often an uncommitted slothful scholarly apathy. From the metaphysical ontology you choose arises the life world realities you deserve. Buddha told long ago, "What you are is what you have been; what you will be is what you do now." As good a definition of cause and effect karma as ever there was.

As to human karma, I may now reveal, with no hint of facetiousness, that our sacred karmic cows shall in due course come home to roost.

Be that as it may, the cognitively cloddish dialectical dualistic 'either-or' ultimately false dichotomies that we habitually indulge must surrender to the non-conceptual, nondual Dzogchen wisdom gnosis resolution that transcends mere conceptual critical dialectics, whether scholarly or our not always conscious mundane everyday choices.

In due course and by grace we shall learn to understand our arising, often adverse relative phenomenal realities from the wholly positive no-self *anatman* view of Buddha's all embracing nondual Ultimate Truth, quite beyond the fearful angry cognition of a lonely frightened separate self-ego-I wandering about in a vast meaningless cosmos.

Just so, the liberating view of our buddha nature—Buddha's Third Turning of the Wheel of Dharma—affirms an enlightened human worldview that is wholly positive, even spiritual. Our common habitual pessimism, cynicism, materialism, authoritarianism and the inherent human and animal suffering that inexorably arise from such fearful negative mind states are quite difficult to believe and engage in light of the purely positive View of our always present buddha nature—indwelling love-wisdom mind gnosis Presence of That—should we choose to remain cognitively connected to it via contemplative practice.

Nearly everyone agrees that primal human ignorance (*marigpa*, *avidya*, *ajnana*, *hamartia/sin*) with its negative afflictive emotion—fear, anger, hatred, grasping desire, greed, pride—is lifted and healed in the already present Presence of our innate buddha

nature that is always the very Buddha Nature of Mind. Without That (*tathata*) we are indeed poor in Spirit.

Our wondrous trans-conceptual perfect indwelling buddha nature/essence with all its buddha love-wisdom qualities is not at all diminished when expressed as the kindness of *bodhicitta* by a non-practitioner; nor is it improved by the great love and wisdom of the enlightened mindstream of a *mahasiddha*, or of a living buddha.

*In the Ati Dzogchen fruitional ultimate "immediacy of the View"—immutable, formless, timeless, selfless, unconditioned, utterly uncontrived and beyond all conceptual elaboration—our innate always already indwelling buddha nature Spirit Presence is neither permanent nor impermanent, neither existent nor nonexistent, neither affirmed nor denied. That is the nondual view. Buddha nature just is; present here and now at the human spiritual Heart "just as it is". Our Buddha Heart Buddha Mind transcends any conceptually contrived Rangtong/Shentong distinction, or any other cognitive dichotomy or duality. It transcends affirmation and negation. What a relief! Clearly this cannot be logically proven by merely causal objective 'Big Science'.*

Indeed, our human cognitive dualities inherent in the semiotic nature of thinking and of language are actually the natural clarity and luminosity of our innate buddha heart buddha mind, the *ultimate* primordial nondual indivisibility of naked, empty cognizance/awareness and living compassionate *bodhicitta*—"perfect exactly as it is", well beyond our *relative* dualistic dialectical critical concepts and beliefs about it.

Our innate Buddha Nature is the directly experienced empty basic space (*chöying*, *dharmadhatu*) of original formless, timeless, selfless primordial *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground' in whom (Adi Buddha Samantabhadra) this all arises and is instantiated. That nondual Ultimate Truth buddha nature love-wisdom gnosis (*yeshe*, *jnana*) abounds with all good qualities and attributes of the essence and nature of all the buddhas in every cosmic reality dimension of vast boundless whole (*gzhi rigpa*) that is nondual *kosmos* ground itself.

That innate indwelling cognizant wakefulness/awareness of our ultimate mind nature—our 'supreme identity' of the 'supreme source' of reality itself—transcends, enfolds, and subsumes spacetime causes and conditions and so cannot be a causal product or condition of our conventional spacetime dimension of Buddha's Relative Truth.

And yes, that nondual always present Buddha wakefulness is quite beyond our semiotic concepts and beliefs about it. Rather, it abides simply and utterly beyond the inherent causal limit of a relative knowing subject and its objects of perception and conception—the false dichotomy of a cognizing subject inherently separate from its perceived objects—odious subject-object split. "Emptiness is the absence of subject and object." [Longchenpa]

That trans-conceptual nondual View (*darshana*, *lta ba*) constitutes our always present luminous wakefulness—bright numinous Presence of invariant nondual one truth unity (*dzog*) of the Buddha's monumental Two Truths that constitute infinite boundless whole of Reality Being Itself. We awaken to that great truth upon the *prana* spirit wind (*Lungta*) life force of each mindful mantra breath. As both the Buddha and the Christ told, that bright happiness Presence that we seek is always already present deep within us. Great joy!

Just so, on the accord of the buddhas, buddha nature, by whatever grand name or concept, is the actual identity, nature and design of every living being—infinite primordial purity (*kadag*) that pervades all arising spacetime phenomena—luminous Presence (*rigpa*, *vidya*) of That (*tatatha*). Thus for we human beings all appearance, even negative afflictive emotion, are manifestations of inherently 'primordially pure' love and wisdom, spontaneously arising compassionate energy of the one truth unity of Buddha's prodigious Two Truths—relative form and its ultimate boundless selfless perfect *dharmakaya* ground.

How so? All arising finite spacetime form is but adornment of the infinite "*Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen*", primordial basic space (*chöying*) *dharmakaya* emptiness ground, always "perfect exactly as it is", utterly invariant through all human relative reference frames as it spontaneously arises and adorns this 'natural timeless awareness'. Yes. This stuff of *relative* physical/mental form is indeed *ultimately* 'primordially pure' however it may appear in the dimension of spacetime Relative Truth. That is the nondual Dzogchen View gently 'pointed out' through the loving kindness of the Dzogchen master—the outer Guru.

Our Buddha Nature of Mind does not cause, act, function, or provide a nice comfy antidote to adverse afflictive phenomena. Nor does assiduous dharma practice cause or create or produce our buddha nature for that is not an object or thing subject to cause, creation, action, production, or any self-ego-I happiness seeking strategy. In the nondual view, our buddhahood does not have a cause. It is always already primordially present.

Told the Buddha, our buddha nature is inherently already present within every living being. It is inherent in the sacred process of Life Itself. Longchenpa reminds us, it is utterly useless to seek our always already present buddha nature. Within the human being we directly experience it (*yogi pratyaksa*), beyond our concepts about it, that bright luminous clarity and the peaceful "great ease" that is vivid nondual primordial Presence of our innate Buddha Nature of Mind. How? Mindful 'placement of awareness/attention' upon it as it rides the *pranallung* breath in the belly. Here, negative emotions cannot prevail. They are spontaneously surrendered on the mindful shamatha out-breath.

Meanwhile compassionate practice, for example *Tonglen*, or basic 'compassion meditation' (*Chapter VIII*), cultivates our sharing and natural expression of Buddha Presence with suffering living beings trying to survive in this adventitious *samsara* of relative spacetime existence. Nagarjuna told, "There is not the slightest difference between [relative] *samsara* and [ultimate] *nirvana*." Two Truths unity. What a relief that is!

["Chaos Theory"—the 'butterfly effect'—has demonstrated in a relative objective scientific cognitive modality that the "deterministic initial conditions" of the seemingly random utter chaos of relative *samsara* is, in the big picture, ultimately an underlying prior holistic interconnected interdependent (*pratitya samutpada*) orderly natural process.]

Well, how exactly shall we awaken to this wonder that is our very own buddha nature? On the accord of Gautama Shakyamuni the Buddha this prodigious Buddha Nature of Mind may be directly experienced by *choosing* to rest in the inherent Great Perfection of our busy distracted mind precisely as it is now—to 'let it be just as it is'. In Dzogchen tradition we know it as the 'naked open awareness' of *Ati Yoga* 'nonmeditation'.

## Mindful Bright Interlude

Whether or not you have directly discovered, beyond your concepts and beliefs about it, the always already present Presence of "Absolute Guru—*primordial intrinsic awareness itself*" that is your innate indwelling buddha nature—let us do so for this brief eternal moment now. Buddha nature peace and happiness is always present now as a conscious mindful *choice* of your 'placement of attention' upon that gentle Presence.

1) *Give Thanks* for the great blessing of your rare and precious life exactly as it is here and now—adversity and all. Pray that all living beings may experience happiness and the causes of happiness; and that they avoid suffering and the causes of suffering.

2) *Placement of Attention*. Now place your conscious attention/awareness upon the life force *prana/lung* spirit breath in your belly, your *hara/do* chakra. Breathe normally for a few moments and directly *feel* that bright Spirit Presence, without thinking about it.

3) *Mantra*. Now begin your mantra: *OM AH HUM*, or *LAMA KHYEN*, or the *Vajra Guru Mantra*, or the *Vajra Sattva Mantra*, or *Menla Medicine Buddha*, or the wisdom mantra of *Manjushri*, or of *Tara*. *Feel* the soft numinous luminous Presence of the deity in your *sambhogakaya* 'upper room', about three feet above your "great bliss crown wheel" chakra at the crown. *Feel* that center open as deity essence enters in and pervades your bodymind.

4) *Light Up Your Chakras*. From the *hara* or *do* center in your belly now place your attention briefly at your *hridayam/nyingpo* heart chakra/center. *Feel* that. Now your throat center (voice, speech, *vishuddha*). *Feel* that. Now your 'third eye' *ajna* center, the prefrontal cortex just behind your forehead. Rest here for a few moments. Relax and enjoy.

Close your eyes and raise your eyebrows. This 'posture' instantly produces peaceful alpha, 'waking theta', and a bit of gamma brain rhythm. That is the 'neuroscience of meditation'. *Feel* the subtle stirring, lifting, and peace in your forebrain. Now throughout your entire body and mind, right down to the subatomic level of your physical being, and the subtle and causal levels of your spirit being. Now relax all such concepts and beliefs. No need to *believe* any of it. It's far beyond belief. *Feel* quiescent bright Presence now.

Now again move your awareness to your "great bliss crown wheel". Without effort *feel* your crown center open. Now the deity, or your spiritual mentor, or the Buddha, or your own Buddha Presence dissolves and enters in your crown chakra and downward throughout your head and neck, chest, upper and lower back, gut, pelvic area, arms and hands, feet, indeed throughout your entire body and mind, all the way down to our Mother Earth. *Feel* your fearless stability deep in Earth. That is your *full body scan*. Rest effortlessly and profoundly in the *dharmakaya* 'basic space' of that luminous numinous buddha mind Presence that you always already are here and now. "The basic space of all phenomena is naturally occurring timeless awareness, awakened mind". [Longchenpa]



5) *Energy Focus and Release*. Open your eyes slightly. Sharply focus your *prana* life energy wherever you feel a physical or emotional obstruction to life energy flow—tension, pain, confusion, fear/anger/hatred, grasping desire. Release the blockage. Surrender it all on the out-breath. Now enjoy peaceful blissful relief throughout your entire body-mind.

6) *Nonmeditation*. Simply relax and rest your busy mind just as it is here and now, without following your thoughts and feelings into a past or a future; without trying to block thinking and feeling; without *trying* to meditate, without *doing* anything at all. Past is but a present memory. Future is but a present anticipation. Simply be present here now. You are not here *seeking* any particular peaceful or happy experience (*nyam*). You seek nothing at all. For this timeless moment now you have no goal whatsoever. You are letting your luminous mind *be* exactly as it is, adversity and all. As Buddha told so long ago, "Rest your weary mind and let it be as it is; all things are perfect exactly as they are." *Feel* that!

Simply *observe* without evaluating or judging. Thoughts, feelings, concepts naturally arise. Well and good. No need to stop them. No need to follow them. They come and they go. They are absent and empty of any substance or power that you do not choose to bestow upon them. Simply allow whatever arises in the scattered obsessive concept mind, good or not so good, to pass away of its own accord. Patience. It all shall pass. Observe that wondrous process. Relax and enjoy this bright Presence that you are now.

7) *Return to Your Breath*. Now return your awareness to the quiescent *prana* breath in the belly. Breathe normally. In this quiet space abides peace and joy that passes all understanding. Quietly *rest* in that living Presence, that 'supreme identity' that you actually are, here and now, beyond your concepts about it all. *Feel* That now.

8) *Your Buddha Nature*. Now you are aware, without thinking about it, that you are resting in your selfless open empty boundless Buddha Nature of Mind. Peace and bliss of That (*tathata*). *You have now become aware of the vast selfless boundless space of your awareness*. Feel that clear light luminous reflexive self-knowing-feeling *certainty* of this Presence of 'original wakefulness'. That is primordial awareness itself in whom you, and this all arises. Whatever arises in your mind—simply 'let it be as it is'. No need to judge or analyze anything. Simply *feel* it, the 'felt sense' of it. This natural, clear knowing-feeling quality of awareness is always present—awareness background or awareness foreground.

Now *rest* quietly for as long as you like in that sweet love-wisdom Presence that you always already are now. That is the profound mindful connection to your very own essential buddha nature. Practice it "brief moments many times", day and night.

You may engage this essential mindfulness practice from 60 seconds to 60 minutes, or more. Make it your own. Adapt it. But don't push the river. Relax, rest, and enjoy.

Christians, Hindus replace 'buddha nature' with 'Christ nature', or 'Parabrahman'.

This bright, clear 'nonmeditation' we shall further explore in *Ch. VII* on the so called 'stages' of mindful shamatha practice. The 'Brief Course' appears in *Ch. VIII*.

## Take Refuge in Your Love-Wisdom Mind

To awaken to the Fruitional View—"The happiness you seek is already present within you"—we rely on the Guru's compassion and the love-wisdom of the holy Dharma. We *choose* to practice 'mind training' and 'take refuge' in the *dharmakaya* ground of it all, and then through that recognize, pacify, stabilize, then realize the already present body, voice, and mind of all the buddhas. Yes, Buddha told, "Selfless no-self is the true refuge of self." And "wonder of wonders", that Guru Yoga Refuge is now already your love-wisdom buddha mind (*buddhajnana*), your indwelling spacious buddha nature (*buddhadhatu*).

As Buddhist Middle Way Madhyamaka founder Nagarjuna told, "It is already accomplished from the very beginning; to rest here without seeking is the Meditation." That is the Fruitional View. Our Buddha Presence is always already present here and now. No need to seek it elsewhere—in the past or in the future. The past is but a present memory. The future is but a present anticipation. We cannot *become* happy in the future; we can only *be* happy in this present moment now. *Emaho!* Great clarity. Great joy!

As you begin to tame the 'wild horse of the mind'—breath by mindful breath—obsessive 'self-referential' ('selfing') thinking is partially liberated, and you learn to relax into, then rest in that empty 'basic space' (*dharmadhatu*, *chöying*) of phenomena—peace and yogi's bliss, your 'supreme identity' actual *dharmakaya* Buddha Nature of Mind.

Soon you begin to notice that you are actually happy, even as inexorable adversity continues to arise in your busy life world. Your hopeful idealized expectations of dharma practice are now 'gone beyond'. In due course, from that beginning your 'meditative stability' spontaneously arises as your kind compassionate *bodhicitta*—the thought, intention, and engaged action for the benefit of all living beings. Yes, that most of all.

That "wisdom of kindness" is after all the open secret of your own human happiness. The 'two limbs' of the Buddha's teaching? Love guided by Wisdom.

Compassionate *bodhicitta*, and *relative* discriminating wisdom (*prajna*) arising in the *ultimate* primordial wisdom (*yeshe*, *jnana*, *gnosis*) of the boundless infinite expanse of the aboriginal ground (*gzhi rigpa*) of Being Itself in whom this all arises—That (*tathata*) is your 'innermost secret' buddha nature. As Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava told, "Keep your View as high as the sky; and your deeds as fine as barley flour...You accomplish Ultimate Truth only through the means of Relative Truth. Practice these two as a unity."

As you learn to continuously take refuge (the Refuge Vow) you can now feel your buddha nature buddha mind in midst of the scattered activity of your mostly negative concept mind—without imputing and reifying any difference—the '*samadhi* of certainty' enters in and adventitious negative thinking and narcissistic "selfing" is 'self-liberated' (*rang grol*) at the instant of its arising, before you act upon it, creating negative karma.

Great Perfection clarity/bliss! Stop and *feel* that now just for this brief moment. Stop and smell the roses. Those who know tell that our innermost buddha Presence has a very subtle scent of roses. "Come and see for yourself—*ehi passika*." [Shakyamuni Buddha]

Please do it now again for 60 seconds. We are told by the wise that the open secret of peaceful meditation practice of the Path is "brief moments, many times", throughout the day and night. Let it be a brief bright continuity of your present awareness, your present mind state. When it's not, breathe consciously and briefly place your attention/awareness upon the *prana* spirit life force in your belly. Remain close to your breath.

### **Introduction to the Nondual Fruitional 'Immediacy of the View'**

The present moment intimacy of our always present enlightened buddha mind was expressed in the sublime prose of great 16th century Zen master Hakuin Ekaku:

From the beginning all beings are Buddha...  
Nirvana is right here now. As we turn inward  
and see our true nature, that self now is no-self,  
our form now is no-form, our thought now no-thought...  
This earth where we now stand is the lotus pure land,  
and this very body the body of Buddha.

Notice that in this nondual ultimate Fruitional View no egoic nor even yogic *effort* whatsoever is required. No thinking is required. No effortful *seeking* of something greater is required. Nagarjuna told long ago, "It is already accomplished from the very beginning." That happiness you seek is already present. That is the nondual fruitional "immediacy of the View". Here we quite naturally and effortlessly surrender the foolish drama of our fruitless happiness seeking strategies as our future-looking goal now becomes moment to moment mindful practice itself. *Make your goal the here now present practice itself.*

Indeed, all that you think and do is 'practice'. Buddha's boundless emptiness of mind and your own innermost buddha nature are no longer merely conceptual. Yes, That (*tathata*) is who you actually are—your 'supreme identity' of the 'supreme source', primordial basic space (*chöying*) of *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground' itself. You have this *choice* to connect. Again, don't *believe* any of it! It's far beyond belief and your concepts about it. As Buddha told, "Come and see for yourself." Healthy skepticism indeed.

That then is the noetic nondual (body mind spirit subject-object unity) *process* of liberating the relative conflicted mind in its own prior and present Nature of Mind. Yes, as Buddha told so long ago, "Rest your weary mind and let it be as it is; all things are perfect exactly as they are." That is the 'Fruitional View' that you have now accomplished. Indeed, it was always "already accomplished from the very beginning". [Nagarjuna] Who am I? What is my mind? That buddha heart buddha mind is who you actually are; the 'supreme source' of your mind. That is your mind. Who am I? That I Am.

Therefore, this is the 'skillful method' that assures your awakening now to the already present realization of your 'innermost secret' *nondual* buddha mind. Dualistic perception perforce arises within oneness of the singular spacious ground of being. Longchenpa told, "All things are pure by nature, spontaneously present...and nondual [for

they] arise within a single basic space...they do not, in essence exist separately." Now you have nondual yogic certainty of it! *Feel* that vast whole for just this timeless moment now.

At the instant of receiving your subtle introduction to the Nature of Mind by the Dzogchen master—here on your cushion, perhaps from across the sea—you no longer need seek it elsewhere, in material or spiritual stuff, nor in the past nor in the future. *That happiness you seek is already present within your ordinary mind!* And now you know and feel it with trans-conceptual nondual certainty. You now know what to do with your life!

Seeking already present happiness to avoid suffering is itself a kind of suffering. Once again, you cannot *become* happy in some exalted future enlightened mind state. But you can *be* happy here and now. Yes. "It is already accomplished from the very beginning", deep within you. [Nagarjuna] That assiduous practice of the Path, with selfless *bodhicitta*, is your skillful means for a happy life in the midst of often unrelenting adversity. *Emaho!*

In my own not especially special case, upon the light touch to my forehead of my root Guru's fingers during *semtri* I instantly realized my clear joyous identity with the primordial buddha essence of my own mind. The details are secret, but that great truth has remained present in my mindstream for twenty-six years. My noetic nondual (subject-object unity) ultimate 'Big Mind' was revealed with great clarity and bliss. And yes, many happy years of my *relative* 'Small Mind' unfolding and unpacking that *ultimate* gnosis love-wisdom buddha mind Nature of Mind have naturally happily followed.

My mind, your mind, any human mind, and the luminous mind essence of all the buddhas of the Three Times (past, present, future) abides in that eternal relationship of noetic, trans-conceptual, nondual identity of your mind with its always already present essential Buddha Nature of Mind. That is the Great Perfection Fruitional View that your Dzogchen Master transmits directly to you, often when you least expect it. It may be quite subtle with little or no idealized emotional drama. So remain open to receive it. How? Avoid expectations. Remain close to your mindful breath in the belly; and at the Heart, throat, forebrain, and your "great bliss crown wheel". Make your goal present practice.

Unify your heartmind with the clarity and bliss of the mindstream of your Dzogchen master via the ancient mantra *AH AH AH*. Please do it now for a few moments.

[Mahayana and its Vajrayana source texts on the basic space of buddha nature (*tathagatagarbha*): *Lankavatara Sutra*; *Tathagatagarbha Sutra*; *Mahaparinirovana Sutra*; and *Ratnagotravibhaga*. These foundational texts emphasize a profound liberation phenomenology over against the often dry dualistic dialectical philosophical concerns with emptiness/*shunyata* and no-self/*anatman*, and all the concepts of buddha nature of Buddhist scholastic critical dialectics. Depend upon your Dzogchen master's teaching.]

### **Shamatha Calm Abiding**

Whether we name it *sati*, *zhine*, *smrti*, *bhavana*—mindful shamatha begins with your conscious 'placement of attention/awareness' upon the foundational 'object of meditation', usually the life force *prana/lung* spirit breath in the belly. That wise courageous conscious

placement of attention instantly connects you to your spiritual home, innermost secret 'basic space' of Spirit *dharmakaya* primordial ground of everything; of all arising phenomena. Bright wide open nondual harmlessly happy Presence of That (*tathata*).

[The Mahayana Buddhist source texts for shamatha calm abiding include Indian Buddhist master Kamalashila's *Bhavanakrama*, the Buddha's own *Satipatthana* Sutra and his *Anapanasati* Sutra, and the *Arya Ratnamegha* Sutra. Good ancillary reading indeed.]

Shamatha calm abiding meditation is, for Indian Buddhist Mahayana and Tibetan Vajrayana, the foundation and necessary prerequisite for the analytic penetrating insight of 'clear seeing' vipashyana meditation. A calm quiescent mind is perforce prior to analytic penetrating insight. During the nine stages of shamatha, analytic vipashyana and mindful shamatha are naturally practiced together and so constitute a unity that approaches the profundity of Buddha's *one truth unity (dzog)* of his Two Truths—relative form and its ultimate boundless emptiness *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground'. Shamatha engages the 7th discipline of Buddha's Eightfold Path to the cessation of human suffering, and to our already present compassionate happiness. [Boaz 2020 *Ch. II*]

We are advised by the wise that the 'attainment of shamatha'—its nine stages—should not be considered the full *bodhi* of Buddhist enlightenment. [*Ch. VII*] Rather, it provides post-conceptual understanding of later stages of Buddha's noble Eightfold Path, and of Dzogchen and Mahamudra. It serves to relieve much pain and suffering; and offers the profound peace and yogi's bliss that utterly surpasses mere conceptual understanding.

*Just so, the Buddha told that shamatha "mindfulness of breathing" does not sever the root cause of suffering that is primal ignorance (marigpa, avidya, ajanana), but prepares a contemplative foundation for the seventh and eighth yogic disciplines of his Eightfold Path. In Tibetan Buddhism those stages involve Ati Dzogchen kadag trekchö ground and tögal lhundrub Presence of that ground. We discover that in the supreme nondual Great Perfection teaching.*

In all cases of shamatha and vipashyana, and of later Ati Dzogchen, practice is motivated by compassionate *bodhicitta*—the thought, intention, and engaged action/conduct for the benefit of all living beings—and to liberate all human beings from the suffering of cyclic existence that is birth, old age, sickness, death, and rebirth.

*Shamatha in Dzogchen and Mahamudra.* "The View of Dzogchen is the perfection of wisdom...Emptiness is the transcendent perfection of wisdom...The conventional path is *Anu Yoga*. The dawning of primordial *rigpa*, beyond mind, is highest *Ati Yoga* of Dzogchen...Shamatha calm abiding is the foundation of advanced Dzogchen teaching." [Adzom Paylo Rinpoche] Indeed, it is the first of the four Nyingma Dzogchen Yogas.

*Shamatha is an urgent prerequisite practice for approaching Dzogchen View and Practice. Without such pacification of dualistic concept mind nondual Dzogchen remains all to conceptual.*

Primordial buddhahood, the ground of fully evident enlightenment, unchanging, spontaneously present, the basic space [*chöying*] of the Vajra Heart Essence—the Nature of Mind is natural Great Perfection...

The vast expanse of the inexpressible nature of phenomena, the very pinnacle of the View is the Great Perfection.

—Longchenpa 1998, *Precious Treasury of the Way of Abiding*

So yes, in the Nyingma School *Dzogchen semde* (mind) teaching cycle shamatha is the first of the four Nyingma School *Dzogchen* yogas, followed by Vipashyana, Kadag nondual 'primordially pure' ground, and Lhundrub primordial Presence of that ground. These four parallel the Four Yogas of Kagyu school highest *Essence Mahamudra*.

*Nonmeditation On Your Buddha Nature.* In the non-goal directed, non-doing 'nonmeditation' of Nyingma *Dzogchen* and of Kagyu *Essence Mahamudra* we do not attempt to create or conceptually contrive a state of quiescent calm abiding by actively *doing* something. Beyond the duplicitous duality of meditator and meditation, on this ultimate view there is nothing to seek, nothing to meditate on, and nothing to accomplish. Therefore we simply let it be as it already is. As Buddha told, "It's perfect just as it is." Now there is only the primordial purity of Being Itself. Here there is only self-liberated 'basic space' of empty, nondual primordial awareness *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground'.

Hence, we allow the mind to directly experience (*yogi pratyaksa*) then *rest* in that always present ground state of nondual 'open primordial Presence'. We need not try to meditate. We do not *try* to do anything at all. Our only 'goal' is to rest in nondual body-mind-spirit 'openness'. Thus do we open our hearts and minds to spontaneously receive that which is always already present at the Heart (*nyingpo, hridayam*) as—if we must name it—the very Buddha Nature of Mind; non-conceptual, nondual indwelling bright wisdom Presence of That (*tathata*). That is who we are, our indwelling 'supreme identity'.

So simply resting effortlessly in that 'basic space' (*chöying, dharmadhatu*) of phenomena is in the *Dzogchen* tradition 'nonmeditation'. We "leave it alone" that non-conceptual Ultimate Truth and "let it be as it is"—radically non-fabricated and non-reified truth of the matter. Yes, that nondual truth is who we actually are, our 'supreme identity' of that primordial 'supreme source' ground, as we have so often seen in these pages.

And yes, that supreme 'meditation' is undistracted, non-seeking, non-doing 'nonmeditation'. It is quite natural because vast infinite *chöying* basic space of primordial *dharmakaya* ground is always already present for we have never departed it. It is 'supreme source' of all that arises in the 'concealer' Relative Truth dimension of space and time—whether or not we choose to name it. And That is Buddha's all subsuming nondual Ultimate Truth dimension. That spacious essential mind nature is formless, timeless, and selfless, utterly transcending the 'three times' that are past, present, future—always abiding in *turiya*, singular empty 'nowness' of the fourth time, nondual 'fourth state'.

In the clear words of 21st century *Dzogchen* master Adzom Paylo Rinpoche:

When you fully realize this view and this practice, everything is the infinite display of buddha bodies of light, and of primordial wisdom. These are the stainless and spontaneous displays of nondual reality

itself. Like the rays of the sun they are utterly pure, for all impure appearances have vanished...May you all become buddhas for whom there is no bias; for whom all is of one taste so that infinite benefit arises.

Nyingma Dzogchen *rimé* master Jamgön Mipham (*White Lotus* 2007) expresses his protean Shentong view of our inherent buddha nature:

Because buddha nature consists in all the qualities of enlightenment, which are all spontaneously present from the very beginning, all the paths render the primordial wisdom luminosity of the dharmakaya ground manifest...When that primordial wisdom of buddhahood is realized your mind is inseparable from all the buddhas.

We've seen that past and future are gone beyond. Nothing happens there. Once again, past is but a present memory. Future is but a present anticipation. And this 'eternal' present moment now is too brief to be grasped and held. It is already past. So there is nothing to which we may grasp and cling. What remains? Just this precious natural spacious empty cognizant luminous timeless awareness upon the mindful *prana* spirit breath in the belly. And that's enough. "The rest shall be given unto you." [Jesus the Christ]

In the "immediacy of the View" of acausal nondual Dzogchen we are therefore not encouraged to strive for a conceptually contrived temporal hierarchy of preconceived "stages" of contemplative accomplishment that progressively eliminates discursive thinking and negative cognition, but rather to simply recognize such habitual cognition as adventitious impermanent transient phenomena that naturally 'self-liberates' (*rang grol*) back into its *ultimate* primordial awareness-consciousness ground at the very instant of its arising to *relative* mind. The "stages" of that process naturally unfold as mindful shamatha.

In that most subtle teaching shamatha means ever present 'mindfulness of breathing', as the Buddha called it so long ago. Here we are not ostensibly concerned with "development stages" of anything. Thus do we view the mind itself 'just as it is', the empty selfless 'object of meditation' (*sattipathana*). The analytic penetrating insight of vipashyana then follows quite naturally. That is the foundation of "the immediacy of the View".

Nonetheless, as Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava told, "We accomplish the ultimate view only by way of relative practice." Therefore, as engaged Buddhist practitioners we do require the step functional stages of relative shamatha mindfulness practice. Meanwhile, Buddha's Two Truths—relative and ultimate—are a priori yet ever present one truth unity.

*Historiographic Note.* Shamatha as mindful placement of awareness upon the breath need not be construed as a purely Buddhist invention. It is present in its various contemplative raiment in all of the primary wisdom traditions of humankind—Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, and the too often missing esoteric contemplative voice of Abrahamic monotheism—Hebrew, Christian, and Islam. Buddha's shamatha 'mindfulness of breathing', by whatever grand name or concept (*namarupa*) is indeed universal.

## VII

### The Nine Stages of Shamatha

The ancient progressive mindfulness stages of shamatha are useful to our *relative*, dualistic, linear, conceptual, objective understanding that is the cognitive support for our *ultimate* nondual perfectly subjective 'spiritual' moment to moment continuity of realization of our indwelling, always already present intrinsic Buddha Nature of Mind.

We have seen that human cognition, our *noetic cognitive doublet*, has two interconnected interdependent voices—objective conceptual, and subjective contemplative—which itself is embraced by and enfolded in the nondual perfectly subjective basic space (*chöying*) *dharmakaya* Spirit ground in whom we, and all of this arises. We learn to engage both of these voices, at first more or less individually, then with a bit of practice, simultaneously, as the prior and present unity that they are. Our habitual, obsessive conceptual activity then begins to be observed by mindful clarity of our non-judgmental 'witness presence' (*saksin*). Here the adventitious duality and incessant dichotomies and judgments of self-ego-I begin to drop away. That is the shamatha/vipashyana mindful miracle that changes the course of our lives! That is the dualistic mindful foundation of liberating nondual Ati Dzogchen practices that follow.

We shall see that the first four stages of shamatha allow us to develop a bit of contemplative 'meditative stability'. These stages are 1) conscious *directed placement of attention* upon the 'object of meditation'—usually the mindful *pranallung* breath in the belly; 2) *continuous attention*; 3) *repeated attention*; and 4) *close attention* of our awareness.

Here the mindful practitioner maintains focused attentional awareness upon that 'object of meditation' (*sattipathana*). Stages five, six, and seven bestow easeful, restful, mindful clarity in order to tame and pacify the distracting 'laxity and excitation' that inhibit the profound quiescent equanimity of the final two stages of shamatha.

Just so, stages eight and nine bestow that equanimity (*upeksha*)—single pointed pacification of our habitual conceptual and emotional distractions from natural selfless, peaceful, blissful clarity that is always present deep within us; conscious mindful primordial Presence of That. Here more remaining distractions are freed as perceptual and conceptual attention is happily placed in the clear bright vivid introspective purity of awareness of primordial all embracing, all subsuming nondual basic space *dharmakaya* ground of all this arising appearing display of dualistic duplicitous phenomenal reality.

The nine stages of shamatha presented below are drawn primarily from the great Indian Middle Way Madhyamaka *mahasiddha* Kamalashila—*The Stages of Meditation*—who, with Shantarakshita, and later Padmasambhava brought the teaching to Tibet in the eighth century at the behest of the great Buddhist King Trisong Detsen.



Please understand that no matter how intelligent and intellectually well trained is your concept mind, it is in the beginning woefully untrained in quiescent trans-conceptual contemplative mindfulness of breathing, as many of my readers are well aware.

Conscious 'placement of attention' upon the mindful *pranallung* love-wisdom breath (*jnanaprana*) in the belly begins with conscious surrender of busy scattered concept mind that allows the instant connection with your indwelling always already present numinous Presence of Adi Buddha Samanthabhadra—personification of formless, timeless, selfless, all embracing primordial *dharmakaya* ground—vast boundless whole that is basic spacious (*chöying*) ultimate reality being itself in whom all relative spacetime stuff arises, participates, and is instantiated. And yes, that ground is your natural, indwelling, always already present buddha nature buddha heartmind whose luminous numinous Presence is always mirrored and transmitted by the Dzogchen Guru master.

The *nine stages of shamatha* are a natural continuity of the prior and present unity of nondual primordial awareness-consciousness itself, always already embodied in our human form. These 'developmental stages' are as follows.

1) *Directed Placement of Attention*. Beginning stage shamatha. Here we may utilize 'discursive meditation', clear contemplative conceptual insight before, but not during, the actual breathing practice in order to understand just what it is that we are about in our calm abiding practice. We now begin to concentrate upon the cyclic rhythmic rising and falling of the life giving *pranallung* breath in the belly—on the in-breath, then the out-breath (*Ch. VIII*). Counting the breaths may be useful. Course 'laxity' along with mental 'agitation' are to be expected. Conceptual and emotional distraction is the norm. Here we manage to go from distraction to distraction without losing enthusiasm.

Placement of conscious focused attention upon a chosen object of awareness—usually the *pranallung* breath in the belly—now begins. Even though you may have a bit of mantra and deity practice under your belt, scattered random thoughts continue to arise in your untrained mind like a wild horse—the untamed 'wild horse of the mind'.

Quite oddly, shamatha calm abiding practice is often neglected—sometimes for years—even though the Buddha and your meditation master encourage "mindfulness of breathing" to de-conceptualize your contemplative practices. "Shamatha calm abiding is the foundation of all advanced Dzogchen teaching." [Adzom Gyalse Rinpoche]

Buddha's "mindfulness of breathing" now begins in earnest. Your self-ego-I here discovers creative excuses for forgetting, or for being too busy to practice. You are far too busy with very important stuff to do! And you already have a bunch of meditation practices to which you are committed. It's a matter of priorities after all. Yet mindful breathing happens each conscious breath. Just do it with awareness! Learn to use the energy spent in avoidance behavior to actually practice now. *Emaho!* How wonderful!

Awareness of the urgency of compassionate *bodhicitta*—the thought, prayer, intention, and engaged action/conduct for the benefit of all living beings—not just your favorites, is now greatly enhanced. You can *feel* it. It feels good. It feels bright and vivid.

'Self-referencing mind' ('selfing') is quite full of itself. Use basic mantra deity practice—*OM AH HUM, LAMA KHYEN, Menla Medicine Buddha, Vajra Guru Mantra, Vajra Sattva Mantra, Tara*—to connect to your already present love-wisdom mind Presence. Use your 108 bead mala. Remain present to your breath for a minute or so 'brief moments many times' as you go about your day. If you are not too resistant, practice 10 minutes or more before retiring, and first thing upon arising, even—Yikes!—before your morning coffee. [Chapter VIII] Yes, the change you wish to see must after all begin somewhere. Now begins 'Development Stage' practice. Soon your egocentric wandering mind begins to stabilize and you remain clear, firm, and close to the *prana* spirit wind (*Lungta*) of the breath in the belly. Do not stray from That. All of your practices are thereby enhanced.

Some straight talk. You are now beginning the surrender of extremely subtle *pride* that you may have in your practice, and in other aspects of your life. Self-ego-I pride is very difficult to bring up into conscious awareness, though you may have considerable 'accomplishment' in your practice. We are told by those who know of such things, that pride is the most hidden and difficult emotional affliction of the bunch. Step back and begin to see it now. The flip side of pride is 'the worthless'. "I am no good at my practice, or much of anything else worthwhile". Or self-destructive variations on that theme. Most such negative self judgment is of course projected onto others. You no longer need it.

You are good at what you do. Yet you have this *choice* to enhance the now present *management of your awareness*. It's the potential of each human being. It will save you time (if time exists) spent in anxious worry and obsessive negative thinking. It will heal your negative karma. When is the best time to begin? After the holidays? On your next breath?

2) *Continuous Placement of Attention*. You have now accomplished brief focused unbroken attentional continuity of awareness upon the mindful breath. The gap (*schnitt*) between your habitual thoughts may extend for a minute or more. Mostly conceptual 'selfing' and random scattered wandering thinking in and out of the natural quiescence of the breath is still present. There is frequent distraction from your mindful breath. Course excitation and agitation alternating with laxity ('sloth and torpor') remain in your mindstream. The only mistake you can make now is to quit.

You have by now engaged with a qualified meditation teacher, or even a qualified Dzogchen master to gently and subtly guide your practice. A bit of peace and bliss begin to arise in your mindstream. You can now see, if you have not already seen, that such contemplative happiness is right for you. You can now actually *feel* your indwelling buddha nature Presence, beyond your habitual concepts and beliefs about it. Merge often your mindstream with your Guru's mindstream via the ancient mantra *AH AH AH*.

3) *Repeated Placement of Attention*. Mindfulness or calm abiding reveals anew and in greater depth your natural non-conceptual, indwelling buddha nature buddha heartmind Presence (*rigpa, vidya*) of the spacious primordial *dharmakaya* ground of being in whom you and everything else arise and participate. You now observe your recovery of distracted

scattered attentional awareness and return it to the mindful breath—again and again. You are gaining confidence. It's working! Non-judgmental loving *introspection* begins to develop. Frequent distraction from the breath via random obsessive conceptual 'selfing' is further reduced. Course agitation and laxity continues. *Bodhicitta* and the 'wisdom of kindness' increases as your mindful practice and prayer become less narcissistic—'all about me'. Your *bodhicitta* now expands phylogenetically to embrace non-mammalian life forms. You no longer intentionally take the life of 'lower' life forms. You take refuge in the precious Three Jewels—the Guru as the Buddha, the Dharma teaching of the Buddha, and the *Sangha* spiritual community, holy body of the Buddha—day and night. Your precious Lama may be seen as the Fourth Refuge Jewel. Your attention/awareness does not stray far from the always indwelling buddha nature Presence that you actually are now—your 'supreme identity'. Begin dream yoga. Do some retreats. All good. Rest and enjoy.

4) *Close Mindful Attention*. Indwelling primordial buddha Presence becomes really real. Clarity and precision of focused attention further develop. You remain close to the mindful breath most of the time. Thoughts and feelings, negative and positive, pass on the out-breath, or flow by in the vast empty space of sky, like a cloud leaving no trace. You now have *contemplative certainty* that you can 'continue in confidence' upon this path. Tempered agitation and laxity remain. Distractions begin to subside quite naturally and effortlessly. Kind, non-judgmental self-introspection further develops. Some selfless peace at last for the scattered troubled mind of self-ego-I. Selfless *bodhicitta* becomes more and more skillful through your kind engaged action. Perhaps you are now a volunteer helping animals, or feeding the homeless. The *paramitas* of generosity, ethical conduct, patience, and perseverance are becoming stable as spontaneous 'nonmeditation' becomes more constant. Your mindfulness of breathing focus of attention may be extended to include attention/awareness of this busy mind of yours, and its essential primordial nature. Bright indwelling Presence of That. Depend upon your Dzogchen master's teaching guidance.

5) *Mindfully Tamed Attention/Awareness*. Distractions during meditation are becoming tamed. The 'wild horse of the mind' has come home and is accepting advanced, even nondual training. Some *samadhi* insight brings peace of mind and a bit of 'yogi's bliss'. You may experience profound *samadhis* as to the joyous utter perfection of this wondrous reality process. Distraction, excitement and laxity remain. Still, you dwell more and more in the ease of always present subtle spirit buddha mind Presence of the *ultimate* primordial awareness spacious *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground' of all *relative* spacetime reality. You can now peacefully rest for a few minutes without concepts in that natural ground state that is the very Nature of Mind. That '*samadhi* of certainty' now transcends your concepts and beliefs about it. You are able to engage disturbing thoughts and emotions with less fear and anger, without grasping or repression. You 'manage' adventitious anger a bit more skillfully. You may even choose to engage psychotherapy to finish unfinished psychological business, as for example deep psychic trauma. Self-ego-I more and more

becomes background without repressing it. You have entered into nondual practices with your Dzogchen meditation master. Your intimate family relationships, as well as working relationships, are now stable, generous, patient, kind, and loving. You have earned almost everyone's respect. You have now extended your precious *bodhicitta* to those 'difficult people' who may wish to harm you or others, even as you wisely avoid them. You now realize, if you have not already done so, that you have liberated through Buddha's basic 'mindfulness of breathing', *bodhicitta*, and through 'compassion meditation' thousands of years of negative karmic imprints. You are becoming free of it. Great joy! That selfless joy is the only true human emotion. *Feel* That now and rejoice!

6) *Mindfully Pacified Awareness*. 'Distractions' are further pacified. The calm gap between thoughts has become 15 minutes or longer. Conscious suppression of thinking is long gone. Conceptual thinking is present but tamed and controlled. You still work with laxity and agitation. As the solid fearful defensive boundary between 'self and other' is softened, long repressed negative psychic material may arise and 'self-liberate'. As to deep psychic trauma don't let subtle pride rule out skillful psychotherapy. You now know that none of your thoughts has any reality beyond what you choose to bestow upon them. Resistance and excuses to mindfulness practice have fallen away. As Buddha predicted, your duplicitous demanding self-ego-I is now an ally. You have come to be kind to and love your unruly self, like the faithful mother loves her willful child. You are that mother. You are that child. You now pray for those who would harm or obstruct you.

Buddha told so long ago, "Selfless noself is the true refuge of self." Now you know that. Introspection, analytic penetrating insight, and peace/bliss continue. 'Sloth and torpor' and the yogi's mild depression are no longer suppressed and repressed and so enter in enlightened awareness to be 'self-liberated'. Your chakras at belly, heart, throat, forebrain, and crown are all open for business. Connect to your deities via their approach and root mantras. The first four *Paramitas* of the path are imperfectly stable. You now *feel* That (*tathata*) happiness in your Heart of hearts. Attachment of self-ego-I to your peace and bliss persists. You understand the infallible *Seven Line Refuge Prayer*. You joyously practice Guru Yoga as the root of all spiritual practice. Guru is always present here now.

7) *Fully Pacified Awareness*. "Shamatha is radical pacification of the mind. It is the great peace that passes conceptual understanding. It affords the mental and emotional stability required for Dzogchen *trekchö* and *tögal* practice." [Adzom Gyalse Rinpoche] Your always already present peace and equanimity has emerged into your life world. You avoid harmful negative people. You pray for your enemies. Your enhanced *bodhicitta* wisdom of kindness no longer surprises you. Your communication with both family and non-family 'others' is motivated by strong desire to help them be free of ignorance and suffering. You have become a non-proselytizing non-judgmental good listener. You have accomplished the devotion, faith, and conviction of Guru Yoga to enter Completion Stage practice—

*Yeshe Lama*, and perhaps Dzogchen *trekchö* and *tögal* practice. You here now experience the easeful *samadhi* of certainty that knows and feels it. Yogi's bliss. Great peace.

Attraction and Aversion of the negative afflictive emotions born in primal ignorance (*avidya, marigpa, ajnana*)—fear/anger, hatred, grasping desire, greed and pride—become present to awareness and are allowed to 'self-liberate' (*rang grol*) at the instant of their arising, moment to moment upon the mindful *prana/lung* spirit breath. Subtle distractions and imbalances in attentional awareness (laxity and excitation/agitation) remain present but are quickly recognized and surrendered to your now very real Buddha Nature of Mind upon the quiescent mindful breath. Habitual obsessive conceptual mind is mostly pacified. You no longer obsess over slights to your self-ego-I. You have come to enjoy your self-effacing good humor. The *paramitas/perfections* of contemplative stability are largely stable. 'Selfing' is further minimized. Your angry 'critical eruptions' are (almost) a thing of the past. You are doing longer retreats. You love and pray for your 'enemies'.

Peace, clarity, and bliss are yours for the asking. Your *bodhicitta* is a light to all who enter your sphere. You have come to understand that That (*tathata*) as the open secret of human happiness; of *your* happiness. As if self and other were ever separate at all. You are now authentically happy! And you *feel* it. *Om Ah Hum Benza Guru Pema Siddhi Hum*. "Primordial intrinsic awareness itself is absolute Guru, ultimate truth." [Jigme Lingpa]

8) *One Pointed Awareness*. Your awareness is single pointed upon your indwelling buddha heart buddha mind Presence, most of the time. Non-self absorbed contemplative meditative concentration has now fully emerged from the cushion to your everyday life world. Clarity, bliss, happiness manifest abundantly in your sphere. It is quite contagious. That 'samadhi of suchness' is extended in time and space and effortlessly, spontaneously manifests as profound selfless engaged *bodhicitta*. You are still attached to your yogi's bliss.

Fear/anger are mostly "gone, gone beyond". You may direct your attention to directly experience (*yogi pratyaksa*) indwelling peace and yogi's bliss at will. Distractions to your awareness are now very subtle; and you have the *patience* to surrender them. Anger/anxiety eruptions may still arise. Meditation and meditator are still often separate.

You may be teaching and writing what you have learned. Excitation and laxity remain subtly present. Conceptual activity is mostly a choice. Your cognitive activity is creative thinking and perhaps writing and teaching, non-judgmental introspection, and mantra prayer. Your yogic 'practice of the night' offers profound access to your Guru.

Your *bodhicitta* is abundantly active in word and deed. Adversity happens. Yet you are happy! You understand that the best way to help a suffering world is to be present to your own indwelling primordial buddha mind Presence of all embracing *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground'. Your peace, clarity, and bliss may not yet be profound, but border on it. A bit of "spirit pride" for what remains of your "self" is now in order. *Emaho!*

9) *Equanimity: Awareness Stability in Primordial Wisdom*. Great peace, clarity, and 'spiritual' stability manifest through your practice. Shamatha calm abiding, with

vipashyana is well established and nearing completion. *Samadhi* clarity joy/bliss is effortlessly sustained in your sitting, walking, working, and teaching. Effortless quiescence in sitting and walking 'meditation' may be maintained for hours with minimal distraction. The peaceful *prana/lung* (*jnanaprana*) spirit life energy of the primordial *dharmakaya* ground pervades your entire body and mind. You *feel* it. 'Spiritualized' egocentric attachment to peace/bliss is now mostly surrendered. Non-conceptual clarity and its bliss are no longer separate but a present body mind spirit subject-object unity! 'Doubt' is gone beyond.

Subtle latent attentional awareness imbalance may arise until the full *bodhi* of buddhahood. You accept it. Your conceptual discursive mind is mostly quiescent. Conceptual activity is minimal. Love-wisdom mind *bodhicitta* is nearly free of self. Self-referencing cognition is present but minimal. All *Six Paramitas* are well grounded in conduct. The sixth *paramita* of relative *prajna* discriminating wisdom is nearly stable in its ultimate primordial wisdom (*yeshe*) gnosis *dharmakaya* ground. *HUM* is your essential nature of That, effortlessly expressing itself as your loving wisdom of kindness, readily manifested to all living beings—the immeasurable magic metric of a life well lived.

For practitioners of *Dzogchen*, Completion Stage *kadag trekchö* and *lhundrub tögal* may or may not be complete. A constant continuity of *Dzogchen* 'nonmeditation' is nearly always present. Realization of the one truth unity of Buddha's Two Truths—that happiness of liberation from adventitious human suffering—is present most of the time. It helps to manage and even heal your physical afflictions and pain. Your concern for others equals or exceeds your concern for yourself. Self referential thinking ('selfing') is mostly surrendered. Much negative karma is redeemed in this great light.

Still, you are not yet complete. And you know it. Mindful shamatha is a prodigious beginning. It is not ultimately free of discursive thinking. Nor is it buddhahood. Subtle attachment to shamatha peace and bliss are still present. For Adzom Paylo Rinpoche that is a "contamination of shamatha that may stall further growth...Shamatha is not nondual primordial wisdom." Yet you are truly happy in this great work for the benefit of living beings. Indeed, that is the open secret of our human happiness. And of *your* happiness.

Buddha's last words: "Make of yourselves a light." At all 'stages' of shamatha you have always had that intention. It is the purpose of your life. It's like coming home. So you smile. You shall be a light for all living beings for as long as you live. *Emaho! Mahasukaho!*

\* \* \*

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## VIII

### Let It Be: Brief Course in Basic Mindfulness Meditation

*Enjoy the clear bright space between your thoughts.*

#### Awareness Management

*"Happiness Arises From Your Present Mind State"* [Adzom Paylo Rinpoche] Therefore, train your mind in happiness: peace, free of the habitual thinking of self-ego-I with its unhappy fear, anger, hatred, grasping desire, and pride. "Mindfulness of breathing" is after all a conscious finite portal into infinite basic space—peace and happiness of the vast boundless primordial awareness whole itself, original ground of everything arising therein—bright love-wisdom mind Presence of That, always already present within you now. Train your mind in placement of awareness/attention upon that aspect, or imprint, or Presence that you actually are, in this present moment now. You do have this choice.

'Mindfulness of breathing' is 'the meditation' that begins the accomplishment of this open secret of human happiness. Below are Ten Steps that will make you happy, not in some glorious future mind state, but here and now. Good news! It's easier than you think. Indeed, correct mindfulness practice is effortless! It requires little more than conscious breathing. So begin now by *feeling* the *prana* spirit life energy breath deep in your belly.

Now sit in a chair, your back straight, hands in your lap or on your thighs, legs uncrossed, feet flat on the floor. Or sit on a cushion, legs crossed. After sitting practice try consciously walking in the peaceful meadow of your mind. That is known as 'walking meditation'. Then back to sitting. And now the ten steps of "mindfulness of breathing".

#### 1. Thank You!

*Experience deep thanks for the great gift of your life, just as it is now. Accept yourself—all your positive and negative experience—exactly as you are, here and now. Feel your selfless good will intention to benefit living beings. That is the open secret of your own human happiness.*

*Sitting Meditation:* slightly lower your gaze so that your neck is straight. Relax jaw, neck, gut, anus. *Feel* for a minute or two the life giving *prana* spirit wind upon the breath in your belly. Breathe normally. Now *place your attention/awareness* behind your forehead, in the forebrain. *Close your eyes, and raise your eyebrows.* This 'posture' will produce alpha and 'waking theta' brain rhythm, the 'peace response', replacing habitual stressful 'fight or

flight' beta rhythm. *Feel* the gentle stirring here, a subtle focused fullness in the forebrain. Let the crown of your head open as light of your indwelling love-wisdom Presence streams in from above and instantly pervades your entire body and mind, and deep down into our precious Mother Earth. Now return to the *prana* life energy rising upon each conscious breath. *Rest* here for a few moments in that quiet peaceful space of the lovely Presence of the primordial awareness ground in whom everything arises. That Presence you are now—your 'supreme identity' of the 'supreme source'—whole spirit ground of all.

## 2. Attention!

*Once again gather the scattered 'wild horse of the mind' by placement of attention/awareness upon your breath. Be present to your breath as it rises and falls in your belly. No need to block your thoughts. No need to follow your thoughts. Simply observe whatever arises, positive or negative. In this safe space it's all good.*

Let your basic mantra prayer begin. Softly recite *OM AH HUM* (see below). That is your 'alpha mantra breath': about 5 seconds in; 7 seconds out through pursed lips (12 seconds). That is your stress reducing "polyvagal breath". Do it 3 to 9 times (36 to 108 seconds). Count them or not, as you wish. Let this, or other mantra prayer (e.g. *Lama Khyen*) continue, either consciously, or in your awareness background, day and night.

*Each mindful breath feel your busy mind settle into its quiet natural state of wakefulness; beyond your concepts and beliefs about it. Here rests your clear light love-wisdom mind Presence—that aspect of you that is utterly connected with the great spirit source of everything—your safe place, beyond all thoughts, concepts, beliefs; free of judgment, fear, anger, hatred, grasping desire, greed, pride; just for a moment utterly free of self-ego-I. No need to think about it. Open and feel it! Be that stillness. Now say to the busy mind, "Peace, be still". Say to the frightened grasping self, "Peace, I Am". Take refuge in your bright selfless "noself" (anatman) Spirit ground.*

Thoughts, questions, feelings naturally arise. Briefly greet whatever arises in your busy mind. Negative or positive thinking, planning, mind wandering, worry/anxiety, doubt, anger: label whatever arises "distraction", or "thinking". Then surrender it all on the out-breath. Or let it flow by in the vast empty space of sky, like a cloud, leaving no trace. *Again and again return your attention to the breath.* After three or four minutes open your eyes and breathe normally, mouth closed, tongue on the roof of your mouth, behind your front teeth. *Feel* for just this eternal moment *now* that indwelling naturally arising happiness that is always already present deep within you.

As you settle into, and rest in your selfless *love-wisdom mind Presence*, your breath will naturally be uncontrived, slow and gentle. Enjoy this feeling of delight within you. Feel your connectedness to everything. No need to try to create it; or grasp at it; or seek it. Mindful Presence upon the breath is always present—your "Supreme Source Identity". That is the "Fruitional View". Who Am I? *That I Am!* Rest here for as long as you wish.



### 3. In-Breath

Open to receive luminous purifying 'life-force energy', sustainer of all life. It has many names. In the East this energy is *prana* or *lung*, or *ch'i* (spirit/breath). For the West it is *pneuma*/Holy Spirit, the very 'breath of life'. For neuroscience it is 'bio energy', the subtle presence of gross physical light/energy/form ( $E=mc^2$ ) arising from formless, timeless, selfless, non-conceptual, spacious unbounded whole itself; vast nondual primordial awareness-consciousness 'groundless ground' in whom this all arises. *Breathe*, you are alive! Open and receive. Feel it pervade every space of your body-mind. Rest and enjoy.

### 4. Out-Breath

Release on the out-breath thoughts, feelings, past, future, all self-ego-I grasping. Feel your stability deep in our precious Mother Earth. Whatever arises—thoughts, feelings, doubts, happy or not—release it all on the out-breath. Surrender it all. Witness it all dissolve as you return to your mindful mantra breath, again and again. *Let it be just as it is* in this great gift of peaceful luminous sky-like space of your mind.

As Buddha told so long ago: "Now I am breathing in; I am happy and at peace. Now I am breathing out; I am happy and at peace." No need to complicate it. Recite that a few times, even count your breaths, or both, if it helps you to calm the 'wild horse of the mind'. Give up counting and reciting when you no longer need it. If you are new to "mindfulness of breathing" you will be astounded at your 'addiction' to constant self-referential thinking ('selfing')—I, me, mine. It shall pass in due course and by grace.

*Please consider this well: Thoughts are only thoughts. They come and they go in dependence upon your present mind state choices. Your thoughts are not a solid reality! You are now learning to choose your realities by choosing your present mind state. All of the love-wisdom Masters of our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition have taught this great liberating freedom to be happy right here now. You accomplish that through conscious mindful "placement of attention/awareness" upon life force prana spirit wind of the mindful breath in the belly. Your bright spirit Presence of That!*

So, as thoughts and feelings begin to retreat, *feel* your selfless, natural clear light *love-wisdom mind Presence*—peace, clarity, subtle 'yogi's bliss'. From this natural spacious mind state the kind, compassionate *activity* of love spontaneously arises in your mind stream—the very open secret and primary cause of human happiness. That is known as *bodhicitta*, the thought, intention, and engaged action/conduct for the benefit of all living beings. Now, place your *attention* on that. Let it be always present in your mind stream.

So it is, that deep blissful peace you desire rides the breath. Remain close to the breath. When distracted by fear/anxiety, anger, hatred, or self-doubt simply return to already present Presence of the nondual primordial ground upon your conscious mindful

mantra breath, again and again. When your mind is filled with this light of love-wisdom mind Presence, there is little room for the negative stuff. Practice that and be happy. Now, rest naturally in That for as long as you wish. Practice being here now while working, loving, running endless errands, arguing with the kids, sleeping. Practice begets peace.

## 5. Presence

*Now simply breathe peacefully and naturally. Open your heart and mind and feel your always present indwelling love-wisdom mind Presence of vast open primordial awareness whole in whom this all so naturally and spontaneously arises. It's right here! That you are now! Subtle Presence of That (tathata) may be directly experienced, prior to thinking, even during thinking, as luminous clear-light mind essence—the essential Buddha-Christ-Tao-Brahman-Ein Sof Nature of Mind, utterly beyond name, concept, or belief. It is yours for the doing.*

*Your Full Body Scan.* While sitting, or prone on your back, now once again experience this *prana* spirit light-life energy in the belly, heart, forebrain, and at the open crown of your head. Feel the Presence of the Buddha, the Guru, or the Christ in the 'upper room' about three feet above your crown center. Feel that subtle Presence stream in from above upon each mindful breath. Open your heart to receive. Feel the *prana* spirit energy instantly pervade your entire body-mind—like a purifying flash of light energy. Relax into it, and observe as it spontaneously flows downward from your 'upper room' through your crown center throughout your head, throat, heart center in your chest, upper and lower back, *hara* center in the belly, pelvic area, and deep into Earth. Feel your natural fearless stability deep in our Mother Earth. Let any obstructions to your *prana* spirit life energy that you are ready to release flow out and away through the soles of your feet and the palms of your hands. Yes. Release any negative thoughts and emotions that are ready to go, whether or not you as a self-ego-I are aware of that readiness. Trust this ancient process.

That is your healing 'full body scan'. "Just like that it is." So simple. But not always easy due to endless distractions and excuses. Practice it upon retiring, just before sleep. Rest in it all through the night. Rekindle it immediately upon waking.

So now let this energy of Presence penetrate any discomfort—that self-contraction from your natural life-energy flow: physical tension and pain, sense desire, grief, self-doubt, guilt, fear/anxiety, anger/hostility, harsh judgments of self and others. Patient love and wisdom heal fear and anger. Be a little patient. So now, wonder of wonders, you know what to do! "Instant Presence" of your polyvagal alpha mantra breath is your touchstone to being happy now. And for truly restful, apnea free sleep through the night.

Now experience the emotional lift as any and all presently activated 'attachment and aversion' are pervaded by loving Presence of clear light life energy. *Be* for a moment

with whatever arises—attractive or aversive. Then surrender it all on the out-breath. Know now you are free of it. Tomorrow you shall once again free yourself of it.

Now once again *feel* this light penetrate and pervade the space of your entire emotional and physical body-mind: brain, nervous systems, heart, organs, cells, the very atomic structure of your physical/emotional/spiritual being. Now, *rest* in this feeling of delight within you. Told Buddha, "Let it be as it is, and rest your weary mind, all things are perfect exactly as they are...Wonder of wonders all beings are Buddha." "That which you seek...the Kingdom of God...is already present within you...and it is spread upon the face of the Earth, but you do not see it." [Jesus the Christ, *Luke 17*]

With each breath *feel* your healing life energy Presence fill and overflow into your subtle energy field, this light of you that embraces and pervades your whole body-mind and fills your spacious non-physical nonlocal *akashic* energy field. Awaken to this 'basic goodness' that you are, prior to your deep background cultural skeptical 'global web of belief'. But don't *believe* it. It's beyond belief. *Feel* it. Self-ego-I is now at peace. Now that you can feel it, rest fearlessly in that Presence. Now arise and do some good. It will make you happy, not in some glorious future mind state, but right here and now.

## 6. Wisdom Mind is a Choice

*"What you are is what you have been; what you will be is what you do now."* [Gautama the Buddha] As good a definition of cause and effect karma as ever there was. This bright *basic space* upon the breath is your spacious natural wakefulness—your primordial love-wisdom mind Presence. *Choose* to be that space/peace, here and now, beyond ego: no past nor future; no attachment nor aversion; no true nor false; no judgment at all—just for this moment. No need to think, try, or do anything. *Know that your clear-light mind is always already awake, kind and wise. Rest in That, each breath. Let it be as it is; calm and clear.* When you forget, remember again. The *OM AH HUM* mantra is your gentle conscious constant connection to your primordial love-wisdom mind. Those who know have told it: that always already present Presence has a subtle scent of roses. Stop and smell the roses.

Your *choice* of this love-wisdom mind practice is your relative Path to ultimate liberation from egocentric ignorance and delusion, root cause of our human suffering. And of *your* suffering. Stay with it! Remain close to your conscious breath. Your self-ego-I may resist. After all, you have for many years established a rather uncomfortable 'comfort zone' that defends against healing and deep emotional/spiritual growth. Notice the bogus excuses. It may be useful here to suggest that *the emotional and psychological 'disorders' that obstruct human growth and happiness are disorders of the self*, with its mostly unconscious ego defenses of that ultimately illusory self-ego-I. So, please don't take your 'self' too seriously.

As you begin to see the foolishness of your obsessive reactions to disrespect of your wonderful self, you discover the refreshment of self-effacing humor.

That said, this courageous compassionate awareness *choice* of yours to heal the ancient atavistic wounds visited upon our humankind is gentle, karma free *relative* human flourishing; and *ultimate* happiness-liberation from suffering; the harmless happiness that cannot be lost. As Zen Master Suzuki Roshi told, "The only mistake you can make in your practice is to quit."

*Thus is human happiness very much an awareness management skill set! Happiness arises, not so much from desirable stuff, but from the choice of your placement of awareness/attention upon your breath, in this present moment now! Bright Presence of That. No belief, no leap of faith, no authority but your own is required. Simply settle your mind, open your heart, and be fully present to your alpha mantra breath now. OM AH HUM. That is your choice of instant connection to peace and happiness already present within you. That is the foundation of your love-wisdom mind practice of the spirit Path. That is your awakening to indwelling Presence of That. Who am I? That I Am. What is my mind? That is my mind. Feel that now, beyond your thoughts about it. Rest now in That (tatata).*

## 7. Refuge

Now you know this precious *dharmakaya* basic space primordial ground—peace of your *love-wisdom mind Presence*. Take refuge in it often. Breath by mindful breath purify, pacify, stabilize, beautify your mind; a most courageous act; your most urgent activity. Find a qualified meditation master. Let him or her guide you. Make mindful breathing a priority, '*brief moments; many times*', all day, all night. Soon it becomes a quiet conscious continuity of foreground or background awareness. Who am I? Feeling *Presence* of that vast primordial whole—'*Tat Tvam Asi; That I AM*', without a single exception. You have never been separate from That! Feel it upon each conscious mindful breath. That is your 'supreme identity' of the 'supreme source' ground of everything arising therein. Take Refuge in That. *That is the View. That is the Teaching. That is the Practice. It's like coming home.*

## 8. Compassion Meditation

By this good generated by each conscious mindful breath make this aspiration for the benefit of all living beings: "*May all beings be free of suffering, and the causes of suffering. May all beings have happiness, and the causes of happiness*". That powerful mantra prayer is your *Compassion Meditation* when practiced for a few minutes at a time. It moves your attention/awareness from self to others. It frees a potentially narcissistic practice from the

burden of self-ego-I. As Buddha told, "Come and see for yourself" what it does for your present state of innermost peace and happiness.

Is not your happiness already linked to the happiness of others? We're all in this reality boat together. Accomplish your own happiness through compassionate thought, intention, and engaged action to benefit living beings. It's called altruism. In the East it's *bodhicitta*. It's the immeasurable magic metric for a good life. So arise from your mostly self-interested spiritual practice and do some good. It will make you happy now.

## 9. Real Practice

Practice requires patience and courage. Please don't say that you lack that. You demonstrate them in your life every day. Patience is the antidote to anger, which arises from fear. It takes courage to face our fear. Practice 10 minutes or more upon rising and retiring; and many '36 seconds of bliss' alpha mantra breaths during the day. 'Brief moments many times'. Peace is always here, among your constant thoughts, each mindful breath. As H.H. Dalai Lama told, "Just open the door."

*Take refuge often in your love-wisdom mind Presence, and in your spiritual mentor.* Feel it at your heart before sleep; and all night long. Be present while waking, eating, walking, working, reading, thinking, loving. Lovingly accept yourself as the patient mother accepts her willful child. You are that mother. You are that child. No blame. Pure love.

Anxious, angry? No time? *Take three effortless OM AH HUM mantra belly breaths now!* Go ahead and do it now. That's enough. Your goal is *not* peace and happiness in some ideal future mind state. *Make the practice itself your goal*—each mindful breath. "Mindfulness of breathing is the foundation for all wisdom and happiness." [Buddha]

## 10. The Five Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation: An Always Present Unity

- 1) *Body-Mind Relaxation*: experienced as profound peace, bliss, forgiveness, healing.
- 2) *Non-Conceptuality*: beyond self-ego-I thinking, concept, belief, fear and anger.
- 3) *Clarity*: mental and perceptual acuity, luminosity, vividness, wakefulness.
- 4) *Deep Appreciation*: acceptance of your life, and yourself, just as you are now.
- 5) *Love Wisdom Mind Presence*: authentic deep happiness expressed as your kind, compassionate engaged action for the benefit of living beings.

## Good Sleep

This works! Engage your alpha mantra belly breath for a few minutes near your bed just before sleep. In bed recite *OM AH HUM* silently, on your back, hands over your solar plexus, or at your side, palms down. Settle into your clear light love-wisdom mind Presence, beyond thinking about it. Feel that peace throughout your entire body-mind.

Now begin your *full body scan* (see above). Again feel *prana* life force on the breath in your belly. Close your eyes and raise your eyebrows. Feel the 'relaxation response' behind your forehead as you produce alpha and 'waking theta' brain rhythm. *Feel* that gentle peace of *prana* spirit life energy throughout your entire body and mind. With a touch of attentional awareness your crown center opens. Feel Presence of Buddha or Christ or your teacher in the 'upper room' three feet above your "great bliss crown wheel". Breath by mindful breath receive this love, wisdom and peace from above through your crown and into your head, neck, shoulders, chest; belly and back, pelvic area, legs and feet, and deep into our precious Mother Earth. That is your "grounding relation". Let this life-light *prana* energy pervade your body-mind all the way down to the subatomic level.

Relax into this light. Now gently rest in it. Let any obstruction to energy flow—tension, pain, worry, anger, obsessive thinking—flow away on the out-breath, and out through your hands and feet. "Rest your weary mind and let it be as it is." Feel life energy *prana* peace pervade your entire body and mind. Now say quietly, "May all beings be free of suffering and the causes of suffering. May all beings be happy, and have the causes of happiness." Thus do you go beyond 'self' to the quiet peace of Christ-Buddha selfless 'noself' Presence of the *ultimate* primordial ground of everything that arises here in this all too real *relative* dimension of space and time.

As your breath naturally becomes slow and regular, let your *OM AH HUM* mantra prayer (see below) settle into your awareness background as you assume your normal sleeping position. Rest in That. Let this quiet peaceful spirit breath be your love-wisdom lullaby and goodnight. Please be patient. Give your new sleep practice a couple of weeks. Make it your own. For a week or two review this 'Brief Course' daily.

*Common Sense Sleep Hygiene.* Avoid caffeine or stimulants after noon; don't read or watch TV in bed; consider sleeping alone for a week; taper off or quit sleeping meds and recreational drugs. Remain close to your mindful breath. Relax and rest in Presence.

### ***OM AH HUM: Our Three Reality Dimensions***

Use this powerful mantra prayer as a touchstone in your practice—all that you think and do is practice—to instantly connect to and protect your primordial love-wisdom mind Presence. Let it be always in your awareness foreground or background. Free your

mind by reciting it 3-4 times daily—108 times while walking, or sitting. Use your 108 bead mala. These three 'Buddha Bodies' are a prior and present *one truth unity*.

*OM* is nondual noetic (body mind spirit subject-object unity) primordial *dharmakaya* dimension—formless, timeless, selfless, empty 'basic space' (*chöying*, *dharmadhatu*). *OM* is all-pervading, always present primordial awareness ground of all arising spacetime phenomena, infinite vast unbounded whole of Reality Being Itself. That is who you are.

*AH* is *sambhogakaya* dimension, like the sun in empty space; Logos; cognizant, lucid clear light awareness—subtle light-bridge into the dimension of spacetime form.

*HUM* is luminous Presence of primordial ground of *OM*. *HUM* is our true essential nature. *HUM* is dream-like display of *nirmanakaya* form dimension—Buddha mind acting in space and time as love and wisdom—always already present now within you. *HUM* is light-form gift naturally expressing itself as skillful loving *bodhicitta*—thought, intention, prayer, and engaged action for the relative and ultimate benefit of all living beings.

*OM AH HUM*. These three dimensions of the vast singular whole of reality itself are always already an indivisible ultimate one truth unity (*dzog*). Relax, rest and enjoy.

What is your mind? That (*tathata*) is your mind. Who am I? *I AM OM AH HUM*: body, voice, and mind of all the Buddhas and wisdom masters of the Three Times—past, present, future. That is your Buddha nature Christ mind *Presence*—instant connection to That! 'Three Gates' to peace. Feel it purify your cause and effect karma. Don't think so much. *Feel your way here. The benefit of 'mindfulness of breathing' is immeasurable.*

Now you know the open secret of human happiness. Please consider it well. If you desire to be free and happy, then *choose* to practice it here and now. You have that choice. You can do this! But don't *believe* it. It abides utterly beyond belief and our concepts about it. As Gautama Buddha told so long ago, "*Ehi Passika; Come and see for yourself.*"

Now that you know, arise and do some good. It will make you happy, not in a glorious future mind state, but here and now. It's like coming home.

*Emaho! Mahasukaho!*

[For a very brief version of this mindfulness practice please see Chapter VI "Mindful Bright Interlude".]

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## The Prior Unity of Science and Spirit: A Panpsychic Noetic Quantum Ontology

We shall herein very briefly explore the prior and present unity of objective Science and perfectly subjective nondual Spirit that is its primordial ground—formless, timeless, selfless boundless whole of physical/mental/spiritual nondual *kosmos*—Reality Being Itself. That all subsuming aboriginal 'supreme source' or 'basis' (*gzhi rigpa*) of all cosmic spacetime reality is mereologically (part-whole relations) the ground for our foundational integral panpsychic *Dzogchen* Kosmopsychic Noetic Quantum Ontology. [Boaz 2023 *The Prior Unity of Science and Spirit*]

### A Mereological Proof for the Existence of Nondual God

The multiplicity of arising spacetime cosmic parts are perforce included in the Pythagorean *kosmos*, singular primordial boundless whole that embraces, subsumes and pervades them all. Mereologically, where there are parts, there is a greater whole that embraces them. Just so, where there is a whole, there are constituting parts subsumed therein. Writ large that constitutes a mereological 'proof' of the indwelling always already present numinous Presence of that primordial 'groundless ground', by whatever grand name or concept. If anything exists the greater whole in which it arises must exist.

Hence, the aboriginal ground state of all appearing phenomenal reality—that great vast formless, timeless, selfless all subsuming whole—necessarily ultimately exists. As good a 'proof' for the existence of all subsuming, post-theistic, non-anthropomorphic, non-creator, trans-conceptual nondual primordial 'Godhead' as we are likely to encounter.

Gautama Buddha told, "Wonder of wonders, all beings are primordial Buddha." Jesus the Christ to his advanced disciples: "That happiness you seek, the Kingdom of God, is already present within you; and it is spread upon the face of the Earth, but you do not see it." [Luke 17]

Still, this Mereological Proof is a mere conceptual proof. It is absent the trans-conceptual, nondual direct experiential profundity that provides indubitable certainty.

Yes, by letting go or surrendering all such conceptually contrived fabrications and engaging contemplative direct experience (*yogi pratyaksa*) of that non-conceptual nondual numinous ground that is "The naturally occurring timeless awareness of awakened mind" we may have direct certainty of it. As Longchenpa (2001) told,

Rest in that ground of being where everything is the spacious expanse  
of awakened mind—Samantabhadra [*dharmakaya Adi Buddha*]...

This brings about natural rest in the state [of Presence] that cannot be



[conceptually] reified as anything...All phenomena are timelessly free in awakened mind, equally existent and equally nonexistent... Awareness is 'basic space' [*chöying*] because whatever manifests occurs within that single state of equalness. It is 'the ground of being'...It is 'the vast expanse of being'...It is 'awakened mind', like space, primordially pure...Everything is subsumed and completely pure within awakened mind...So awareness—awakened mind is always spontaneously present as the basic space, or ground, of all phenomena...The entire universe of appearances and possibilities does not stray from the expanse of awakened mind...timelessly free...There is primordial freedom in that unborn expanse, the single state of evenness—vast expanse of timeless awakening.

### **Objective Science and its Perfectly Subjective Spirit Ground**

Just so, objective *Science* (grounded in physics) arises in the relative-conventional domain of inherently but not ultimately subjective Quantum Field Theory (QFT/QED) which itself arises—along with everything else—in the perfectly subjective noetic nondual whole itself, primordial *Spirit* ground—*dharmakaya*, *kadag*, Tao, nondual *Nirguna Brahman*, infinite *Ein Sof*, *Abba* God the all subsuming nondual Primordial Father of Jesus the Christ.

Thus does the conventional physical and mental phenomena of our *relative* spacetime cosmos—and our science and philosophy about it—arise and participate in its ontic prior all embracing *ultimate* Pythagorean *kosmos*, its formless timeless cognizant source condition; nondual primordial awareness-consciousness ground of Being Itself.

For Tibetan Buddhists that vast infinite boundless emptiness whole is 'basic space' (*chöying*, *dharmadhatu*) of all embracing primordial *dharmakaya* ground. That indwelling always already present indwelling luminous Spirit Presence (*rigpa*, *vidya*) then manifests through the centrist Mahayana/Vajrayana Middle Way Yogachara and Prasangika Madhyamaka teaching vehicle—conceptual causal foundation of highest acausal nondual *Ati Dzogchen*, *The Great Perfection* view and practice.

The blissful, peaceful clarity of that innermost Presence is the urgent 'grounding relation'—grounding by subsumption—that is primary cause or modality of the open secret of human happiness: *relative* human flourishing (*eudiamonia*, *felicitas*), and harmless *ultimate* Happiness Itself (*paramananda*, *mahasukha*, *beatitudo*).

Near the end of our journey we were introduced to the essential Nyingma Four *Ati Dzogchen* Yogas—1) mindful quiescent calm abiding of *shamatha*, Buddha's 'mindfulness of breathing'; 2) analytic penetrating samadhi insight of *vipashyana*; 3) formless timeless primordial ground of all phenomena that is purity of *kadag*; and 4) natural spontaneous 'primordially pure' Presence of that ground that is *lhundrub*. The prior and present unity of these four *Dzogchen* Yogas constitutes the essence of the Tibetan Vajrayana spiritual Path.

We have learned in these pages that our understanding of the ontic prior and phenomenally present unity of objective Science and its noetic nondual perfectly subjective Spirit ground requires that we conceptually recognize, then contemplatively directly realize (*yogi pratyaksa*) that unity of the Science of dualistic *relative* Quantum Field

Theory with *ultimate* Spirit ground in whom it perforce arises. That basic space (*chöying*) 'ground of being' as expressed in subtlest *Ati Dzogchen*, "the heart essence of all spiritual teaching". [Longchenpa] *Dzogchen* naturally embraces the highest nondual teaching of each noetic 'innermost secret' path of our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition—Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, and Abrahamic monotheism—Hebrew, Christian, and Islam.

We now understand that the reality dimensions of objective conceptual spacetime Relative Truth (*samvriti satya*) and trans-conceptual, contemplative, perfectly subjective Ultimate Truth (*paramartha satya*) in which it all arises and is instantiated are, in an integral noetic view, an indivisible prior yet present one truth unity-equality (*dzog, samatajnana*).

That compassionate knowing-feeling love-wisdom *buddic* mind—naturally occurring timeless, selfless 'unborn awareness', lucid all embracing basic space (*chöying*) buddha nature of naturally *awakened mind*—is 'spontaneously present' for human beings as acausal nondual primordial wisdom (*jnana, yeshe*, gnosis) which naturally embraces its practical expression as cause and effect 'discriminating wisdom' (*prajna, sherab*). These two compassionate faces of wisdom are the root causes of our altruistic human happiness, both relative human flourishing and Happiness Itself, harmless ultimate happiness that cannot be lost. That peace and good will is spontaneously and effortlessly present through "the wisdom of kindness"—our altruistic compassionate *bodhicitta*—the thought, intention, and engaged action/conduct for the benefit of all living beings.

### **Toward an Integral Noetic Quantum Ontology**

In *The Prior Unity of Science and Spirit* (Boaz 2023) we explored the prodigious Quantum Field Theory (QFT) of modern physics and cosmology; and as well the 'paraconsistent' intuitionist logical mathematical foundation of a 'post-empirical', post-quantum centrist Middle Way integral Noetic Quantum Ontology. That modern metaphysic constitutes a conscious finite awareness portal, cognitive bridge into the infinite timeless, selfless, formless all subsuming nondual noetic primordial emptiness ground of not only quantum formalist mathematics, but of all this arising physical and mental form—including all of us.

We discovered there that such a panpsychic *Dzogchen Kosmopsychic* Noetic Quantum Ontology is required should we desire to fathom the deeper meaning of the inherent subjectivity of the quantum theory beyond its arcane mathematical formalism and the prevailing metaphysical ontic biases that lie hidden in our deep cultural background 'global web of belief' (Quine 1969)—the bygone classical ideology of Scientific Local Realism/Physicalism. In this all too brief *Appendix* we shall review that wisdom.

*Relative* nonlocal entangled quantum 'ZPE zero point vacuum energy' of the Unified Quantum Vacuum—quantum emptiness as I have termed it—and *ultimate* Middle Way boundless Buddhist emptiness, emerge as nominally real spacetime phenomena within that aboriginal primordial ground that is the vast whole of Reality Being Itself. As Buddha told, "Form is empty; emptiness is form." What is destined to become spacetime form is primordially enfolded in its prior nondual formless, timeless, selfless, emptiness Ultimate

Truth dimension 'groundless' Spirit ground. That great *kosmos* whole naturally spontaneously unfolds and 'descends' as cosmos, the Relative Truth dimension of space and time. The luminous present indwelling Presence of that great nondual Spirit process—that vast whole—is who we actually are now, our individual 'supreme identity' of that 'supreme source' ground that is the monumental Spirit gift (*jinlob*) of being here in form.

That nondual ultimate emptiness ground of everything is 'groundless' because it transcends all dualistic concepts and beliefs about any such 'nondual ultimate ground'. Middle Way founder Nagarjuna told that Buddhist emptiness is itself utterly "empty of any iota of intrinsic ultimate existence." That is known as the "emptiness of emptiness". "Buddhist emptiness is established by human conceptual minds." [H.H. Dalai Lama]

Our cognitively cloddish dualistic concepts and beliefs *about* ultimately nondual nature are indeed a philosophical and spiritual trap. With little or no direct realization (*yogi pratyaksa*) of the natural equality of that conceptually uncorrupted 'emptiness of emptiness' (*shunyata shunyata*)—the vivid clarity of the natural state absent any self-other dichotomy, indeed absent any cognitive reference frame whatsoever—we remain inured to an uncomfortable comfort zone of primal ignorance (*avidya, marigpa, ajnana, hamartia/sin*). Here our apocryphal unexamined concepts and beliefs, our naïve "global web of belief" (Quine 1969) *about* that non-conceptual, nondual ground of Reality Being Itself have become our false 'idols of the tribe'. That perfectly subjective Spirit ground of our noble objective Science is decidedly not conceptual; try as we may to make it so.

That said, Einstein's colleague the great quantum physicist David Bohm (1993) has told it well, "The vast implicate order of the one enfolded vast unbroken whole is the ground for the existence of everything." That is the completion of physics' prodigious Relativistic Quantum Field Theory (relativistic quantum electrodynamics or QED) as it opens into and adorns the nondual infinite source or ultimate Spirit ground dimension in which, or in whom, all dualistic relative Science arises, participates, and is instantiated.

### **Dzogchen Kosmopsychism**

*That vast boundless whole, primordial awareness-consciousness ground of appearing phenomena is the metaphysical foundation, the 'grounding relation' for Jon Schaffer's (2010) post-micropsychic 'priority monism cosmopsychism' that I shall now describe as a panpsychic precursor to what I shall term all subsuming Dzogchen Kosmopsychism in which a centrist integral Noetic Quantum Ontology naturally arises. [Boaz 2023 The Noetic Revolution]*

We have seen that our perennial Two Truths trope—*relative*, dualistic, causal objective Science (form) and its perfectly subjective nondual acausal *ultimate* Spirit emptiness ground—is an ultimate unified invariant *one truth unity (dzog)*, an ontic prior and phenomenally present nondual unity, the all embracing *Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen*. In short, that is the prior and present unity of objective Science and perfectly subjective Spirit.

We have come to know this all subsuming noetic unity via the contemplative practice of 'mindfulness of breathing' or *shamatha*, and the direct penetrating insight that is

the causal meditative contemplative analysis of *vipashyana*. These two provide a contemplative approach to acausal nondual Dzogchen View and Practice.

Our *noetic cognitive doublet*: 1) relative, exoteric, objective, conceptual, mental, scientific cognition; and 2) noetic, esoteric, higher mental, contemplative, spiritual, even ultimate perfectly subjective nondual cognition. These two cognitive modalities that are conceptual objective Science and perfectly subjective nondual Spirit unified at last! In practice a real balancing act, to be sure. But good to know as we consciously engage this difficult joyous precious love-wisdom mind life path we've been given as esteemed guests of a beautiful phenomenal world on this precious little blue planet of ours. How remarkable. How rare. How utterly sublime.

So please practice and remain present to that always present enlightened awareness Presence of your 'already accomplished' indwelling love-wisdom Buddha nature, Christ mind, *Ein Sof*, *Tao Chia* Presence. Upon the mindful love-wisdom *jnanaprana* breath in the belly, place and maintain your awareness-attention upon That (*tatatha*). [Ch. VI "Mindful Bright Interlude"]

### Awareness Management

*Human happiness arises from conscious placement of your moment to moment attention/awareness.* I have come to call that urgent cognitive process *awareness management*. We do have this choice. So stay mindful (*shamatha*) and aware (*vipashyana*) of That, your 'supreme identity' that is compassionate luminous Presence of the primordial 'supreme source' in whom everything is embraced and enfolded. Relax often into that trans-conceptual quiescent aboriginal awareness-consciousness ground in whom this all unfolds and abides. Rest here always in that peaceful bright numinous 'basic space' (*dharmdhatu*)—*buddic dharmakaya* ground. Feel and know That now, beyond your concepts and beliefs about it. *Tat Tvam Asi*. That I Am! That is the nondual original Buddha Nature of Mind. Perfect just as it is. [Chapter VIII above] And that is the trans-conceptual, nondual primordial kosmopsychic ground of Quantum Field Theory; our integral Noetic Quantum Ontology. [Boaz 2023 *The Prior Unity of Science and Spirit*; Boaz *The Noetic Revolution* 2023]

As Gautama Shakyamuni the Buddha of this present eon told so long ago: "Rest your weary mind and let it be as it is; all things are perfect exactly as they are." Incomprehensible to our dualistic *relative* conventional scientific thinking mind. That non-conceptual great perfection is our nondual 'innermost secret' *ultimate* truth in whom arises the noetic prior unity of objective Science and its perfectly subjective Spirit ground.

Now that you know, arise and do some good. That will make you happy here and now. That is after all the open secret of human happiness. It's like coming home. *Emaho!*

I shall conclude this work with the glorious words of Longchenpa.

By this virtue, may all beings without exception  
effortlessly reach the primordial ground.



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