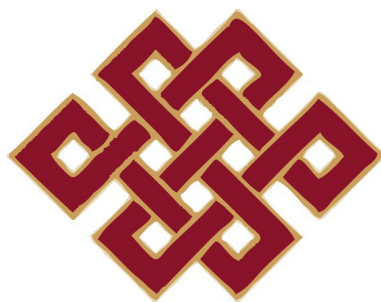


# The Open Secret of Human Happiness

## Mindfulness Meditation in Action

Second Edition

David Paul Boaz  
(Dechen Wangdu)





For

**Adzom Gyalse Rinpoche**

from whom I have learned so much



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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 the cognitive reticulum of your 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, who you actually are prior to your thinking about it? What if your belief in an ultimately 'real' self-ego-I with its habitual certainty of a solid material world of separate 'other' things and beings were suddenly surrendered to your non-conceptual 'primordial wisdom' of a diaphanous, profound 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 your scattered mind and connect to its vast source. Let us then further explore it; perhaps enhance it.

All the buddhas, mahasiddhas, saints and sages of the great Primordial Wisdom Tradition of humankind have told it. The poesis and praxis of 'mindfulness of breathing' (*shamatha, zhine, sati, smrti*), deep contemplative direct experience is a personal protean encounter that provides a *relative* powerful immediate antidote, then an *ultimate* cessation to the bewitchment of our natural intelligence that is innate aboriginal compassionate love-wisdom buddha nature, buddha mind, Christ Presence by the colossus of habitual discursive conceptual mind. How shall we 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 basal nondual primordial awareness-consciousness 'groundless ground'—by whatever grand name—in whom this all arises. We do this upon the mindful *prana/lung* wind (*Lungta/Windhorse*)—life force spirit 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 of breathing is the assiduous effortless practice of that moment to moment choice. But how?

We train concept mind in *awareness management*. As we begin to turn our attentional awareness inward we learn to *rest* in 'clear light luminous clarity' (*ösel, prabhasvara*), that numinous Presence of trans-conceptual primordial love-wisdom Nature of Mind—our 'supreme identity' of that 'supreme source' that is 'basic space' (*chöying*) of the *ultimate* nondual 'groundless ground' of all this arising *relative* spacetime phenomena.

## Human Happiness

Human beings desire most of all to have happiness. Yet, cloaked in the global mindscape of primal ignorance (*marigpa, avidya, ajnana, hamartia/sin*) we fail to see that the real cause of human happiness lies in our awakening to Buddha's *anatman* or 'no-self', Jesus' selfless *kenosis*—kind compassionate conduct—the very secret of human happiness.

Just so, every human being desires to avoid suffering. Yet we do not recognize that the root cause of human suffering lies in the disjunctive afflicted negative emotions of a *relatively* all too real yet *ultimately* illusory self-ego-I that begets negative thoughts, intentions, and then actions. Cause and effect karma. Due consideration of that great truth naturally arouses positive compassionate feeling desire to benefit living beings. That is the providential beginning of our own relative and ultimate happiness—entering in the outer exoteric and inner esoteric teaching of love-wisdom dharma—Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, and Abrahamic Hebrew, Christian, Islam/Sufi. Self-ego-I too often denies that great truth.

That dharma is a vital turning point in our lives. So we have this urgent moment to moment *choice* of our placement of attention/awareness (meditation, *göm*). 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 negative awareness to the positive "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 ego defended biases, our skeptical cultural 'global web of belief' (Quine 1969). That includes our choice to establish a mindful meditation practice in the first place. Through mindful attention upon breath in the body we move beyond habitual web of concepts and beliefs with their often negative, judgmental thinking and emotion, into always present peaceful empty clear light (*ösel*) Presence of our indwelling love-wisdom mind. Bright primordial Presence of That (*tathata*). [Ch. VIII] That 'clear light' is prior, present unity of lucid clarity and wisdom.

### Buddhist Foundations: The Mahayana Middle Way

The First Turning of the Buddha's Dharmachakra Wheel of interdependently arising existence is the Hinayana of 1st century *Pali Canon*, now extant only in the Theravada tradition of Southeast Asia. It is as we have seen foundation of the Second and Third Turnings of the Wheel, namely the Mahayana sutras of the noble bodhisattvas, and tantric Indian and Tibetan Vajrayana, respectively. So what precisely is the Middle Way?

Gautama Shakyamuni the Buddha of this present age taught a subtle Middle Way between life world extremes of severe life denying asceticism, and of sensory indulgence. His Middle Way does as well advocate a balance between two conceptual false absolutes, the metaphysical extremes of absolutism and nihilism—between affirmation of the absolute independent existence of arising spacetime phenomena, ontological Realism, and the absolute negation or denial of any phenomenal existence whatsoever, ontological Anti-

Realism; between absolute philosophical/scientific Local Realism, and absolute Metaphysical Idealism. [Garfield/Nagarjuna 1995; H.H. Dalai Lama 2009] The history of ideas in the West has been a cognitive litany of these false dichotomies. Human concept/belief cognition is after all inherently dualistic. That either-or duality of our thinking believing mind is expressed in our semiotic (linguistic logical syntax, semantics/meaning, and pragmatics) dependence upon language to understand the vast whole of Reality Being Itself. How shall we understand this rather prolix esoteric view?

*Dependent Arising is Emptiness.* For 2nd century Middle Way founder Nagarjuna (1995) Buddha's *shunyata*/emptiness (ultimate truth/*paramartha*, *tathata*/thatness, reality being itself/*chö nyid*) is ultimate mode of being for all relative arising physical and mental phenomena. Emptiness is Ultimate Truth. Dependent arising is Relative Truth. Together they are Buddha's prodigious indivisible Two Truths that are finally *one truth unity* of vast whole of *kosmic* Reality Itself. The spiritual realization of the 'wisdom of emptiness'—liberation, enlightenment—pacifies our brutal grasping at and clinging to an intrinsic existence of a self-ego-I, and the phenomena of its sensory experience, as absolutely real.

What to do? It is, on the accord of H.H. Dalai Lama (2009) Je Tsongkhapa's *Three Principle Aspects of the Path* that culture freedom from this all too human predicament. These essential prospects are: 1) "True Renunciation" or authentic aspiration to liberation from primal ignorance by assiduous engagement of Buddha's Two Truths and his Four Noble Truths; 2) *Bodhichitta* or altruistic 'awakening mind' founded in True Renunciation and the thought, intention and engaged action for benefit of living beings; and 3) *Meditation on Emptiness* which realizes the very nature of mind that is Buddha's Two Truths union of ultimate emptiness and its relative dependent arising.

So Buddhist view and practice of the path is grounded in the profound ontological truth of 'dependent origination' (*pratitya samutpada*), the 'interdependent arising' or interconnectedness of all appearing causal physical, mental, and emotional phenomena arising from its nondual acausal primordial *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground'. That represents a Middle Way that is essence of Buddha's teaching. It is very foundation of Buddhist *shunyata*/emptiness—clear light (*ösel*) luminosity, 'basic space' (*chöying*) of nonconceptual nondual ultimate basal ground in whom all spacetime phenomena arises.

*The term 'dependent' refutes independent absolute existence of this appearing stuff of reality; and the term 'arising' refutes nihilistic absolute nonexistence of it.* In short, a centrist Middle Way between the false dichotomy of these two metaphysical extremes. Thus are philosophical extremes of naïve Realism and negative Nihilism dispelled. That dissolves troubling but adventitious 'explanatory gap' that bestrides the Buddha's prodigious Two Truths—two reality dimensions of conventionally 'real' Relative Truth (*samvriti satya*), and bright emptiness of Ultimate Truth (*paramartha satya*) in whom (Adi Buddha Samantabhadra) this all arises, participates, and is instantiated for us here in Einstein's *ultimately* illusory relative space and time. And yes, this useful Two Truths dichotomy is indeed an ontic prior and phenomenally ever present changeless nondual *one truth unity*

(*dzog*) that is invariant throughout all appearing relative-conventional phenomena. It is that timeless awareness invariant unity that we are now—our 'supreme identity'.

In utterly nondual Ati Dzogchen view, none of this *ultimately* exists! [Ch. III]

*Emptiness of Self; Emptiness as No-self.* We shall soon encounter Nagarjuna's teaching that the Middle Way Madhyamikas express two modes of emptiness/*shunyata*—*emptiness of self (atman)*, and *emptiness of phenomena* that appear to a self. Thus are the reality constituting five *skandas* or 'heaps' of form and formless form of *relative* form aggregates of self-existence—physical form, feeling/sensation, perception/volition, mental formation, and personal consciousness—absent and empty any whit of *ultimate* 'intrinsic existence'.

Well, does that mean that the emptiness of form is the nihilistic nonexistence of form? It does not. Buddhist emptiness/*shunyata* is not nothingness! Our sublime gift (*jinlob*) of this wondrous life as embodied form is absent and empty of inherent *ultimate* existence, but it is alive and well as *relative* existence abiding here in ultimately nonexistent purely physical space and time. Self and its stuff exist relatively, but not ultimately.

Thus is Buddha's emptiness the selfless absence of a duality of a perceiving subject-self, and a separate perceived object—dreadful subject-object split. Nagarjuna told (1995), "The buddhas have taught that neither self nor no-self exists." So the self of the person is empty of intrinsic existence, but so is the *ultimate* existence of selfless no-self—emptiness itself! Emptiness too is free of absolute existence. That is known as *shunyata shunyata*, the 'emptiness of emptiness'. Should we reify emptiness into an existent objective 'thing', some vast vessel that contains everything, then emptiness itself would perforce be intrinsically real. If that were true then the intrinsic existence of arising phenomena to a self could not be negated. Buddha's emptiness of phenomena is correctly understood only as a categorical "nonimplicative negation" of intrinsic existence. Nothing remains to grasp.

How then *does* Buddhist emptiness exist? H.H. Dalai Lama explains, "Emptiness is established by human conceptual minds." All phenomena arising in space and time are absent and empty of inherent existence; and so is the very idea of emptiness. That is Middle Way Prasangika view. However, Middle Way Yogachara Mind Only school views the "perfected nature" that is our buddha nature as inherently existing. [Ch. VI]

*About Time.* Both Albert Einstein and postmodern quantum physics agree with this hitherto radical, but now almost common non-nihilist view of the absence or emptiness of a relative objective time. Postmodern Modern physics has almost universally adopted "presentism"—only the present is 'real'. [Appendix A] As we search for an objective 'local' real time we shall not find it in a past, a future, nor even in this present moment. Past is but a present memory. Future is but a present anticipation. And this brief objective present moment now is but a vanishing illusion, a vacuous concept. We cannot objectively locate any present moment. Only as a *relative* conventional concept is the present 'real'. Thus do we fail to find any *ultimate* intrinsic existence for the three voices of time—past, present or future. As Einstein told, "Time is an illusion; albeit a very persistent one."

Just so, our relative physical and mental phenomena—persons and their perceptions—remain merely pragmatic useful conventional "labels" arising only in a commonsense, semiotic linguistic context, as Longchenpa (2001) has so often pointed out. Therefore, the self in time, and phenomena arising to it 'exist' not intrinsically or ultimately—but only nominally and relatively in dependence upon naming (*namarupa*)—inter-objective and inter-subjective very useful linguistic conceptual constructs.

Relative objective existence, and subjective ultimate existence. Buddha's grand Two Truths, our two ways of being here: objective relative interdependent arising of spacetime stuff, and perfectly subjective ultimate 'groundless ground' in whom that all arises.

How else could we *choose* the daunting spiritual practice of this all too real relative path? So yes, the personal self-ego-I does indeed exist, but only relatively, conventionally, in interdependence with the physical and mental aggregates of form. Yes. Buddhist emptiness is the interdependent arising of form. Interdependent Arising *is* emptiness! As Buddha told so long ago in his monumental *Heart of Wisdom Sutra*: "Form is emptiness; emptiness is form." This often all too real world of ours actually exists dependently, relatively, nominally, just not independently or absolutely. That's good news. How so?

Our all too human physical, mental, and emotional suffering (*dukkha*)—whose *ultimate* cessation is very essence of the Buddha's teaching—is the result of the first of the twelve links of 'interdependent arising', namely atavistic, fundamental *primal ignorance* (*avidya*, *marigpa*)—grasping, clinging attachment to ultimately illusory impermanent self-ego-I. Through the emotional affliction of fear-anger our ego self creates negative karma by harming other beings to get what it thinks it needs. The individual and collective result is terrible human and animal suffering, despotism, genocide, endless war and despair.

Just so, both relative and ultimate human happiness is dependent upon our individual and collective recognition, then realization of Buddha's inherent indwelling 'noself' (*anatman*), always already present Presence of selfless love-wisdom buddha heart, buddha mind, buddha nature (*buddhajnana*, *buddhadhatu*, *tathagatagarba*). And That is the open secret of our harmless (*ahimsa*) human happiness. Buddha's subtle centrist Middle Way Two Truths wisdom reveals all of That (*tathata*). *Emaho! Mahasukaho!*

Nice conceptual understanding—profound analytic penetrating 'discursive meditation'. Well and good. However, should one desire to actually *realize* one's interdependently arisen innate buddha mind Presence beyond such a discursive understanding it is wise to engage directly (*yogi pratyaksa*) the effortless nondual Ati Dzogchen 'nonmeditation' as revealed by a fully qualified Dzogchen master. Thus does one receive, prior to the filtering of it through the reticulum of concept mind (*vikalpa*), lucid realization of nondual emptiness, and so the end of habitual grasping at an intrinsic self and its inherent existence of phenomena, the cessation of afflictive new negative karma and purification of old karma that are both due to primal ignorance. That is liberation from rebirth in cyclic existence. Such freeing realization is nondual "wisdom realizing emptiness". Thus spake Nagarjuna (1995). That wisdom is the result of "The Path of Seeing" that is "cessation" in Buddha's Third Noble Truth. [Dalai Lama 2009 p.78]

## Buddhist Foundations: The Mahayana Tibetan Vajrayana View

Tibetan Buddhist tantric practice has three ostensible stages of emotional-spiritual development: Development (generation, creation) Stage, unified in Completion Stage that bestows clarity to our conceptual *aporia*; then nondual Dzogchen Perfection Stage.

Development Stage practice engages dualistic *yidam* or deity practice, primal *sambhogakaya* archetypes, *arcana* that personify and facilitate our own very real awakened Buddha qualities and attributes—Vajra Guru, Vajra Sattva, Avalokiteshvara/Chenrezig, Menla Medicine Buddha—that reveal and ground our always already present 'innermost secret' buddha heart buddha mind, very Buddha Nature of Mind. That is not other than formless, timeless, selfless, spacious primordial *dharmakaya* ground of all arising phenomena. That is our '*samadhi* of certainty' that arises above and beyond the doleful subject-object split. The limpid mindscape of causal Completion Stage and acausal nondual Perfection Stage—Dzogchen *kadag trekchö* and *lhundrub tögal*, and in Essence Mahamudra (*The Six Dharmas of Naropa*)—may be viewed as nonconceptual contemplative yogic technologies that train in opening trans-physical subtle body 'channels' (*nadi, tsa*), 'winds' (*prana, lung*), and bright 'spirit orbs' (*bindu, thigle*). Thus do we liberate subtle life energy *prana/lung* spirit wind to move freely, then dissolve in the subtle central energy channel (*avadhuti*) thus awakening our indwelling, always present Presence of blissful lucid clear light clarity (*ösel*)—nondual primordial wisdom (gnosis, *yeshe, jnana*)—for compassionate *bodhicitta* benefit of all living beings. And that is the very Heart of Buddha's causal Mahayana teaching vehicle, root of acausal nondual Nyingma Dzogchen, and of Kagyu Essence Mahamudra. Yes, that is the open secret of our human happiness in action.

[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 (*ösel*); and the 'shadow yoga' 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 Vajrayana 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—very nature of our buddha mind Presence that we already are; 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 sattoa*), outer, inner, and 'innermost secret intrinsic awareness itself'. That nature/essence is our very own ultimate 'supreme identity'. In Tibetan Buddhist tradition primary Guru Yoga practice is wondrous *Seven Line Prayer* to Guru Rinpoche. Sakyapa master Lama Jamyang Gyaltsen 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.

*Fourfold Tantric Refuge.* Outer refuge is the Three Jewels—Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. Inner refuge is Guru, Deva, Dakini. Secret refuge is subtle body "channels, energies, and bright orbs/drops". Dzogchen refuge is *essential rigpa*: essence, nature, compassion-energy.

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 *kayas* or buddha bodies of reality, as well as Vajra body, speech and mind of all the buddhas." Thus *OM AH HUM* are the three dimensions of vast boundless whole itself. How shall we understand this?

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

*VAJRA (BENZA)* symbolizes the changeless, formless, timeless, selfless nondual indestructible primordial love-wisdom mind (*buddhajnana*) 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 aboriginal ground and awakened Fruition/Result of that ground. *Invictus Vajra* cannot be defiled by concepts nor destroyed by primal ignorance (*marigpa, avidya*). Free of all defects, like a diamond it cuts through negative illusion, delusion, and all obstructions. It is stainless basic space of *dharmakaya* Nature of Mind, primordial buddahood itself, 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. Ultimately, primordial buddhahood does not have a cause. How so? "It is already accomplished and present from the very beginning"—indwelling supreme identity. [Nagarjuna] So it's useless to seek it elsewhere. That is Secret Mantra Fruitional Refuge.

*GURU* is *sambhogakaya*, flawless clear light lucid clarity and most precious of all beings, represented by Avalokiteshvara. Guru is highest wisdom essence of all pith instruction (*manngag/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 *nirmanakaya* emanation of Buddha Amitabha, who corresponds to the Lotus Family and the speech/voice aspect of all the buddhas." [Khyentse Rinpoche] The Fruit/Result of the Path lies not in some glorious future mind state; it is always already present here and now. And that great primordial love and wisdom is *SIDDHI*.

*SIDDHI* means 'power of spiritual accomplishment'. Recognizing, then resting in the wondrous qualities and actions of Guru Rinpoche, seen in our own outer Guru, we accomplish the supreme nondual primordial wisdom (*jnana, yeshe, gnosis*) *siddhi* of all the buddhas. The profound *Seven Line Prayer* to Guru Padmasambhava is the quintessential Guru Yoga practice. It is profoundly transmitted by Ju Mipham to us. [2007 *White Lotus*]

*HUM (HUNG)* is cleansing dharma rain from *OM*—compassionate Buddhadharmas descending upon the place below, purifying and blessing all living beings—every one of us without a single exception. *HUM* is our 'supreme identity'—who we actually are.

Just so, outer/inner Guru blesses all who pray and have authentic devotion and faith. Reciting the seed syllable *HUM* calls forth our guru to bless us with all *siddhis*, both ordinary and sublime. *HUM* is our essential nature and authentic identity as human beings. *HUM* is the seed syllable of our love-wisdom buddha mind acting in *nirmanakaya* space and time as nondual *dharmakaya* Presence of *OM*, always already present here and now, deep within us. *HUM* is our *Ultimate Bodhicitta* light-form gift (Tib. *jinlob*, Gr. *euengalion*) naturally, effortlessly expressing itself as skillful, spontaneous compassionate *Relative Bodhicitta*—thought, prayer, intention, and engaged human action for the benefit of all living beings. And yes, that is the open secret of our harmless human happiness.

"*Tögal*, the path of spontaneous presence is the self-arisen supreme primordial wisdom, symbolized by the seed syllable *Hung*...expression of enlightened mind of all the Buddhas...inseparability of ground and fruit...actual *dharmakaya*, primordial Buddhahood." [Mipham 2007 *White Lotus*] Thus does Guru Yoga free us from our stifling fear of dying.

Therefore, 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 precious busy lives. That is the wondrous power and poetry of Guru Yoga. The *Vajra Guru Mantra* is recited in Tibetan thus: *OM AH HUNG BENZA GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG*. Thus is the weight of being here in space and time inherently light. And so we smile.



*A Buddhist View of Quiescent Shamatha 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 *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 display of our diaphanous *relative* mind within vast boundless *ultimate* ground that is our 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-ego-I that engage them 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. Our concept mind may be a good servant. It's a poor master.

2) The second basic principle of mindfulness is that it is an already accomplished *act of love*, received from deep within to which we *continuously connect* 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. And that includes our precious Mother Earth, little blue planet spaceship home here among the stars in the vastness of finite cosmic space and time—abiding always in perfectly subjective all-subsuming primordial spirit ground that is infinite *kosmos* itself.

How is it that such mindful, non-conceptual attention to the breath is an act of love? Through the 'placement of awareness' upon 'already present' indwelling love-wisdom buddha heart buddha mind Presence of primordial *dharmakaya* ground, you *are* that Great Love! That all-embracing Love naturally enfolds 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 that spontaneously arises in timeless, selfless primordial Great Love that unifies the elements and binds together the worlds. Entropic great gravity of Love. Now place your conscious awareness upon That.

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 conceptual chaos of anxiously busy self-ego-I. That Presence of reality itself does not always comport with our habitual 'global web of belief'. [Quine 1969] Hence we place it all in abeyance and rest in our spacious Buddha Nature of Mind—upon this quiescent peace of mindful breath in the belly. Patience. Great peace.

## 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 noble name. We shall here consider it in its contemplative context as active, compassionate 'mindfulness of breathing'—deep direct non-conceptual contemplative practice as it has risen in our primary wisdom traditions—Eastern Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, and the Western Abrahamic Monotheism traditions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam/Sufi—in the 'mystical' noetic contemplative voice of these our 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' 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, just what is this 'mindfulness of breathing'? What's it good for? How may we use it to benefit beings?

The essence of mindfulness meditation is the inward directed wisdom of seeing clearly—both conceptually and nonconceptually—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'—'steps' on the spiritual Path to human 'innermost secret' happiness, liberation, enlightenment, then 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 human happiness being here upon our Mother 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 of this age.

*The Four Foundations of Quiescent Mindful Shamatha.*

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—urgent

'grounding relation' of Contemplative Science—firmly in this great gift of our spacetime earth body, precious physical vessel for our '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", our emotional responses to being here in time. 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 space and 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 loving crucible of the 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 several holy vestments. [Boaz 2024]

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. Nondual *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 conceptual egocentric relative view—our world of self-ego-I.

4) *Mindfulness of Phenomena (dharmas)* that appear to the mind and body is bringing selfless mindful awareness to any and all arising phenomenal experience, moment to moment, at the instant of its arising in and to our human body-mind. With practice we learn to let such ultimately illusory relative appearing phenomena 'self-liberate' (*rang grol*) at the very instant of its arising, before it sweeps us away in the thought, intention and action that may cause 'negative karma'. That is the ultimate View and its dharma practice.

Buddha's *Four Foundations of Mindfulness* are as well 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 display of the aboriginal basic space (*chöying*) of *dharmakaya* awareness 'groundless ground', bright love-wisdom mind Presence of That—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 observes her child at play. You are that mother. And you are that child.

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

Such an all inclusive View changes everything! From that expansive View arises Dzogchen 'Nonmeditation', and the '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."

Yes, this *ultimate* interdependent nature of all arising phenomena (*dharmata*) is none other than vast empty space of nondual boundless primordial awareness *dharmakaya* ground 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*—thought, intention, and engaged love-wisdom conduct for the relative and ultimate benefit of all living beings, including our precious Mother Earth.

All four *Satipatthanas* are seen to be unified, even if not yet fully realized, through Buddha's 'mindfulness of breathing'. Thus may we see clearly the wisdom of prior and present noetic nondual *ultimate* unity of all *relative* phenomena appearing to mind—beyond duality of a subjective knower and its separate objects of experience; beyond that dreadful 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 see. So now let your relative deity mantra practice recede into its *sambhogakaya* background and *rest* in numinous ultimate Nature of Mind.

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.

'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 Dzöd*):

With no time frame, this spaciousness is equal to space itself...  
The Ati Dzogchen approach reveals the absence of [cause and effect], a single state of equalness...inseparable from the [acausal] nondual ultimate...infinite and boundless without fixed depth or extent...supremely spacious expanse that is the primordially enlightened ground of being...beyond the cage of philosophy...you rest in infinite evenness...openness, oneness...natural place of rest.

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.

The Buddha's Two Truths are then an ontologically prior and phenomenally present 'innermost secret' *one truth unity (dzog)*, beyond and invariant throughout all human reference frames and psycho-emotional-spiritual changes. It is via these Two Truths that we realize our nondual primordial *dharmakaya* ground. And through the Four Noble Truths we enter and exit relative samsara arising within "spacious timeless oneness" of that ultimate "primordially enlightened ground of being"—beyond any concept about it.

Therefore, our scattered limited 'ordinary mind', because it is perforce already embraced and subsumed by perfectly subjective primordial awareness ground itself, is inherently limpid, lucid, open and pure, like vast empty space of sky. Yes, that is Vajrayana ultimate 'Fruitional View'. Here 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.

And yes, in the great Buddhist Mahayana tradition such compassionate skillful means (*upaya*) is known as altruistic *bodhichitta*, literally 'heart-mind of enlightenment'. In the Buddhist Theravada tradition this wisdom of kindness is known as "purity of heart". We'll soon see 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.

So, that is our natural vivid, timeless indwelling love-wisdom mind, by whatever lofty 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 timeless, 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 terrible human suffering caused by atavistic primal ignorance (*avidya, ajnana*,

*marigpa, hamartia/sin*)—the adventitious obscuring 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, very 'clear light' (*ösel*) Buddha Nature of Mind—nondual *dharmakaya* ground personified as all good Adi Buddha Samantabhadra. *There can be no 'cessation' of human suffering without shamatha 'mindfulness of breathing' practice, with the bright clarity of its vipashyana penetrating insight.*

Such wisdom understanding of unity of the *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—Ju Miphan's "coalescence" of relative phenomenal form and its ultimate primordial awareness emptiness 'groundless ground'. That aboriginal ground is 'groundless' because it too is absent and empty any whit of intrinsic absolute existence. How then does that emptiness ground exist? "Emptiness itself is established by relative human conceptual minds." [H.H. Dalai Lama] The Two Truths of form and emptiness are an 'interdependently arisen' one truth unity.

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 ultimately a prior and always present nondual one truth unity.

From the Buddha's own enlightenment realization of this indivisible one truth unity (*dzog*) 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—'Right Mindfulness' of the Noble Eightfold Path. That then opens into the final 8th stage 'Right Wisdom/Samadhi', which itself has four stages of mindful *dhyana* meditation. That all results in ultimate equanimity (*upeksha*) and final fruition of changeless 'unborn, uncreated' buddhahood—our ultimate liberation and enlightenment of all buddhas of the 'three times', past, present, future. And yes, that freedom is human Happiness Itself—ultimate harmless happiness that cannot be lost. [Boaz 2020 *Ch. V*]

*What then is the relationship of the Four Satipatthanas 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 as well *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 indwelling 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 the nonconceptual nondual 'valid cognition' of our wisdom traditions! [Appendix A below]

## **Buddhist Two Truths, Three Turnings of the Wheel, Three Tenet Systems, Four Noble Truths, Four Dzogchen Yogas, 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 primordial unity of the Two Truths of the very nature of reality itself—suchness, thatness, *tathata, tattva, dharmata, chos nyid*. The Two Truths—Ultimate Truth and Relative Truth—are the invariant one truth unity and indivisibility of *ultimate* primordial awareness selfless, formless, spacious, timeless emptiness 'groundless ground', with the *relative* conventional form and we beings that arise in it; and are never separate from that *dharmakaya* ground.

Prince Siddhartha Gautama of the Nepal *Shakya* clan realized with perfect clarity and yogic bliss our nonconceptual primordial wisdom (*jnana, yeshe, gnosis*) of emptiness. Relative form and its nondual ultimate 'basic space' timeless awareness 'groundless ground' abide in an ultimate relation of identity, equality, and sameness (*samatajnana*).

As Buddhist Middle Way founder Nagarjuna told 600 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 *kosmic* primordial love-wisdom mind down to our Mother Earth for us, and providentially, fearlessly grounds it in his own, and our own earth body buddha heartmind—so that ultimate benefit may arise for all living beings. *Emaho!*

A buddha is one who is fully awake (full *bodhi*) to that interdependent Two Truths unity of *relative* appearing phenomenal reality and *ultimate* primordial ground in whom this all arises. Such a one naturally 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 love-wisdom result. The *Dharmachakra Parvartana Sutra* reveals that great process for the benefit of all living beings. Shakyamuni the Buddha taught his love and wisdom Dharma in different ways in accordance with the cognitive capacity of his human listeners. So he taught both outer exoteric and inner esoteric dharma. The notion of Three Turnings was first introduced in the *Samdhinirmocana Sutra* of the Third Turning of Middle Way Yogachara school.

What does this mean for all of us being here in this difficult realm of relative impermanent (*anitya*) phenomenal space and time? It means that we conditioned human beings and our selfless, formless, timeless ultimate awareness source ground—by whatever hallowed name—are not in any way separate from That (*tathata, tattva*) innermost already indwelling buddha mind. Bright Presence of That! Who am I? *That I Am!* What is my mind? *That is my mind!* *Mahasukaho!* Direct non-conceptual nondual certainty (*rigdang*). Yogi's bliss. Lucid clarity. 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, realist, conceptual, and moral understanding of our selfless (*anatman*), impermanent (*anitya*), interdependent (*pratitya 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.

*The Four Noble Truths:* 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 realizes that end of 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, hamartia/sin*); suffering has a cure, namely freedom from primal ignorance; and that cure is practice of the yogic Eightfold 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, breath by mindful breath, our duplicitous conceptual impedimenta and our quixotic apocryphal ego 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 emotional-spiritual wholeness, the end of suffering, and authentic harmless human happiness.

Thus it is, from Gautama Shakyamuni 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 primordial buddhahood. Always we *rest* in That (*tathata*), beyond our concepts and beliefs about resting in That.

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*, our relative thought, prayer, intention, and engaged human action/conduct for the benefit of all living beings.

*Three Turnings of the Dharmachakra.* In the First Turning of the Wheel (Hinayana) appearing phenomena are conceptually, interdependently really real. Ontological Realism. In the Second Turning (Mahayana) spacetime stuff is ultimately illusory and 'empty of intrinsic ultimate existence', utterly beyond human concept and belief. Ontological Antirealism. This is the path not of mere Arhatship or personal liberation, but of the liberation of all living beings, love-wisdom *bodhicitta* great compassion (*mahakaruna*) life



world dimension of the noble bodhisattva. Such a one is imbued with *upaya* or 'skillful means/method', and *prajnaparmita* or the perfection of transcendent wisdom. Such beings manifest the 'Four Immesurables' or 'four boundless states' (*brahmavihara*): loving-kindness (*maitri*); compassion (*karuna*); empathetic joy (*mudita*); all three spontaneously arising within boundless equanimity (*upeksha*). The bodhisattva is in the later ten development stages (*bhumis*) a master of the Buddha's 'mindfulness of breathing' (*shamatha, sati, smrti*) which is practiced from the very beginning.

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 inherently empty nonexistence of form and self of the Antirealist Second Turning. The Vajrayana Third Turning reveals a prodigious Middle Way between metaphysical extremes of essentialist Realism and nihilist Antirealism. Here we find the Metaphysical Idealism ("Mind Only" *Yogachara*) of all subsuming dimension of that nondual one truth unity. [Boaz 2020]

We must conceptually understand the nonconceptual nondual one truth of this timeless 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. Thus 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, India, on Vulture Peak Mountain—Buddha's Mahayana cause and effect teaching on selfless no-self/*anatman*, emptiness/*shunyata*, and compassionate *bodhichitta*. From this great teaching arises the compassionate Buddhist Mahayana Second Tenet System with its bold bodhisattva intention to liberate all sentient beings. Here arises noble *Prajnaparamita Sutra* on the 'wisdom of emptiness', then conceptual Middle Way Prasangika Madhyamaka teaching. Buddha's very concise *Heart of Wisdom Sutra* (*The Heart Sutra*) 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 Vajrayana 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 Metaphysical 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*). Here, 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 conceptual logic to self-reflexively refute conceptual logic. We here skillfully enlist our prodigious human causal conceptual mind to critique its inherent limit and go beyond into the naked,

acausal, spacious nondual *dharmakaya* Nature of Mind itself. Nyingma school nondual Ati Dzogchen and Kagyu Essence Mahamudra both reveal that great selfless dharma truth.

So, the First Turning offered an exoteric conceptual Realist path to liberation. The Second Turning offered an esoteric, trans-conceptual, Antirealist, potentially nihilist, utterly selfless path, absent and empty any whit of the intrinsic existence of the First Turning. The Tibetan Third Turning offers the Third Tenet System with its Middle Way completion of the First and Second Turnings. That is a syncretic foundation of nondual Dzogchen—human liberation grounded in depth of Buddha's 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 most profoundly.

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 as we turn inward toward the pristine, naked, nondual *one truth unity*. Meanwhile, spacetime stuff indeed exists relatively, conventionally. So our relative ethical action/conduct is urgent.

*Hence, in the Tibetan Third Turning, to a Rangtong noself negative absence of existence of anything, including an intrinsic self-ego-I to experience it, is added a positive Shentong always already present living buddha nature essence, an indwelling selfless buddic spirit Presence that is the 'supreme identity' present in every living being, and attainable by human beings. Yogachara thus synthesized the 'Three Natures' and the 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 indeed.]

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 and Kagyu lineages accept both the Second and Third Turnings as definitive. Gelug school accepts only the Second Turning as definitive. Theravada accepts only the First Turning.

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 (*tathata*), our always indwelling buddha heartmind essence and nature, quite beyond the frightfully foolish exuberance of our all too human habitual conceptual ideation.

*The Four Dzogchen Yogas.* From the Tibetan Buddhist Third Turning of the Dharma Wheel naturally arises the Third Tenet System with its Nyingma school *Four Dzogchen Yogas*: 1) Mindful *Shamatha*; 2) penetrating insight of *Vipashyana*; 3) *Kadag* purity of the boundless, formless, timeless, selfless, nondual primordial awareness *dharmakaya* ground; and 4) *Lhundrub* always present indwelling 'pure presence' of that 'groundless ground'.

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

Naropa (956-1040), disciple of Tilopa, learned the *Six Dharmas* in India, synthesized them into a complete tantric dharma system, then transmitted them to his heart-son Marpa, who taught them to Milarepa, then on to *his* disciple Gampopa who further developed the ancient Indian and Tibetan tantric Mahamudra "Great Seal" teaching, the 'highest' of which is direct master-to-disciple Essence Mahamudra—beyond sutra and tantra Mahamudra. The Great Seal is the indelible imprint of prior and present unity of the primordial 'wisdom of emptiness'. Mahamudra and Dzogchen are tantric paths for direct nondual wisdom/gnosis realization of "The Nature of Mind as it is [*sems nyid*]"—just prior to our dualistic concepts and beliefs about it. And that is its buddha nature foundation in the Yogachara buddha nature sutras and shastras, and in the 8th century mahasiddhas of the Indian Pala Dynasty, especially Saraha. Mahamudra practice is also known as *Sahajayoga*. The primary sub-school of Kagyü lineage is Karma Kagyü, headed by the Karmapa. That great Kagyü wisdom has entered all four lineages of Tibetan Buddhism.

Broadly construed, the *Six Dharmas of Naropa* comprise a complete tantric 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 (*ösel*) 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 (*ösel*) of Buddha's wisdom of emptiness. Liminal *bardo* and *phowa* practice then facilitate the 'transference' of the mental body during the dying process.

Hence, the assiduous practice of Buddha's 'mindfulness of breathing' grounds the entire Buddhadharma by transforming vacuous concepts and negative human emotion into prior truth of our always already present *buddic* love-wisdom mind awareness—ultimate *bodhicitta* expressed as relative *bodhicitta*—the very secret of human happiness.

Buddha's shamatha 'mindfulness of breathing' grounds nondual Ati Dzogchen and Essence Mahamudra as we awaken to our own 'innermost secret' bright buddha mind Presence. Some sunny day we shall all together rise and shine in that spacious unborn place where this lucid dream of being is born. *Emaho!*

*Buddhist Ontology.* Ontology is conceptual pursuit of the nature of Being. Middle Way ontology is 'Dependent Arising'. 'Ontology', 'Being', 'Reality' are mere Relative Truth' conceits in pursuit of fundamental nondual 'Ultimate Truth'. The Buddha told that such concepts do not further our release from suffering, nor human happiness. His Four Noble Truths are what we must understand about our being here in relative space and time.

## Meditation: Buddha Nature, Christ Mind, and Selfless I AM Presence

The term 'meditation' in Western Tradition is translated in Hebrew as *haga*, in Greek as *melete*, and becomes *meditatio* in Latin which literally means 'murmur softly the name of God', as in deep contemplative prayer—subtle chanting of deity mantra prayer. That quiet 'murmur' of mantra prayer gently vibrates the entire body-mind in peaceful harmonic clarity and bliss of trans-conceptual nondual primordial godhead, above and beyond our dualistic theistic and religious concepts and beliefs about God. 'Good vibes' indeed.

In the East, vocal or sub-vocal *OM AH HUM* upon the Spirit breath—*prana-lung-ch'i-pneuma*/holy spirit—may be understood as a root mantra prayer that is our instant connection to nondual primordial ground in whom arises both meditation and meditator.

Such *meditatio* practice is the foundation of Greek *metanoia* and Christian *hesychasm*, transcending conceptual *nous* or reason to engage sublime peace and yogic bliss of indwelling immediate innermost Presence of nondual godhead—by whatever glorious name—luminous, numinous, formless, timeless, selfless, empty *ultimate* primordial awareness-consciousness 'groundless ground'; vast boundless enfolded whole of all unfolding arising *relative* spacetime form. Buddha told, "Form is empty; emptiness is form." "The threefold nature of our ground [is] empty essence, luminous nature, and all-suffusing love". [Klein 2023]. Such direct nonconceptual experience (*yogi pratyaksa*) perforce rides the spirit-breath in the belly: Hebrew *ruakh*, Greek *pneuma*, Latin *spiritus*. That life force *prana* spirit energy pervades the whole of the human body-mind, and of Life Itself. Thus do we awaken to the original truth (*aletheia*) as that lucid indwelling Presence.

Jesus the Christ taught foundational mindfulness practice as mindful *kenosis*—'self-emptying' or surrender of self-ego-I via deep contemplative mantra prayer upon the 'holy spirit' breath. Here the troubled self takes refuge in *selfless* Hebrew "I Am That I Am Presence" of Enoch, Moses and the Prophets (*Isaiah 41:10*), and the indwelling *christos* Presence of Jesus the Christ (*Luke 17*, and the *Book of John*). That Presence bespeaks selfless *pneuma-pranajnana* love-wisdom 'breath of life', 'holy spirit', divine breath of *Abba*, infinite, all-embracing nondual God the primordial Father of Yeshua, Jesus the Christ. Thus did he fulfill the Hebrew "Law of the Prophets". [Boaz 2022 pp. 82-85] Indeed, that nondual godhead breathes us all. That *prana holy spiritus* open selfless Presence I AM now!

The masters of our wisdom traditions have taught this great truth of egoless, trans-conceptual mindfulness meditation—by whatever name or concept (*namarupa*)—as skillful means to recognize, then connect to and rest in always present lucid 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 our indwelling nondual Buddha mind, Christ nature, *Hsing ch'i*, Parabrahman—bright, selfless primordial Presence in whom naturally arises the positive, compassionate mind states that we *choose*, always embracing our common, fruitless, apocryphal, materialist happiness seeking strategies. "It is already accomplished from the very beginning. To rest here without seeking; that is the Meditation." [Nagarjuna]

## Mindfulness, Nonmeditation, and the Dzogchen Fruitional View

In Vajrayana Ati Dzogchen Fruitional View our prodigious contemplative path *process* is known as natural, effortless, continuous, non-goal oriented, non-doing; 'already accomplished' "nonmeditation"—ongoing, indwelling, present intimate continuity of selfless, intrinsic, timeless primordial awareness Presence of the 'groundless ground'.

Here we learn, as Jigme Lingpa told, "Take the fruition as the path." That is to say, we take as the basis of the path not the Mahayana *causes* of our ignorance and suffering, but the Vajrayana *fruit* of our always present, 'already accomplished' liberation and enlightenment. And yes, awakening to That (*tathata*) great truth requires a bit of practice. Thus do we train unruly concept mind to relax into and rest always in now present union of bliss, clarity, and the wisdom of emptiness—natural profundity of that View and Presence—luminous 'primordial purity' of formless, selfless basic space (*chöying*) that is our original *invictus dharmakaya* reality 'Base' (*gzhi rigpa*). It furthers one to practice That.

[In some Tibetan Buddhist lineages nondual timeless primordial awareness 'truth body' that is *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground' is conceptually portioned into *jnanadharmakaya*, 'wisdom truth body', and *svabhavakaya*, all-inclusive 'nature truth body'.]

In any case, that all-subsuming, all-pervasive continuity of essential, trans-conceptual, luminous intrinsic primordial awareness wisdom (*yeshe, jnana, rigpa*, gnosis) source ground is felt, known, and realized through Ati Dzogchen 'nonmeditation'—fluent, direct "meditative stability without support" of useful deity practice and other dualistic relative meditation practice (*lungdang*). That contemplative essence is directly experienced (*yogi pratyaksa*) in Longchenpa's (2008) effortless, spontaneous nondual (subject-object union) "meditative absorption" (*rigdang*), beyond any meditational object of support.

Middle Way Prasangika Madhyamaka is the causal foundation of acausal Dzogchen view and practice. Here the metaphysical plot thickens. The philosophical Idealism of the Madhyamaka Yogachara Mind Only (*Chittamatra*) school has, since the 4th century CE, argued that all appearances arising from *dharmakaya* ground are essentially subjective illusory emanations and activities of 'mind only', absent any whit of objective solidity. Mind only ultimately exists! In opposition to this view, Prasangika Madhyamaka views even mind itself to be absent and empty of any iota of intrinsic existence. Thus do they accuse Yogachara Mind Only school of the philosophical extreme of absolutism (substantialism, eternalism). Just so does Yogachara view Prasangika as falling into the extreme of nihilism—*nothing* ultimately exists! We shall in Chapter VI resolve this prickly 2000 year old Middle Way false dichotomy as to absolute existence (*svabhava*) or absolute nonexistence (*abhava*)—both of which constitute a falling from Buddha's Middle Way.

*Attention, Attention, Attention!* Mindful shamatha attentional awareness is said to be a proto-conceptual foundation of nonconceptual, acausal, nondual Dzogchen View and Practice—beyond rational 'scientific' cause and effect cognition. The overall result of such acausal nondual practice is deep inner subjective and outer objective peace, yogi's bliss,

and knowing-feeling contemplative *certainty* of Buddha's *one truth unity (dzog)* of his Two Truths, relative and ultimate. That 'innermost secret', indwelling, always present selfless love-wisdom Presence of the Nature of Mind is the open secret of compassionate harmless Happiness Itself. That is what we most desire as we arise in this beloved human form.

Shamatha calm abiding mindfully directed attention/awareness greatly empowers the contemplative object of that attention. Nondual Ati Dzogchen is naked, luminous primordial *consciousness without an object*—utterly free of conceptual ideation.

*'Mindful awareness' may be seen as a conscious cognitive finite portal into infinite, ultimate all-embracing awareness dimension—selfless, timeless, naturally arising nondual (non-discursive subject-object unity) 'basic space' of primordial dharmakaya 'groundless ground'; nonconceptual primordial wisdom of emptiness (chos nyid yeshe) of That (tathata, thatness, tattva, chos nyid, suchness, paramartha, dharmata). That is the unity of bliss, clarity, and nondual wisdom of emptiness, our authentic happiness that passes all conceptual, rational, semiotic/linguistic understanding. That authentic confluent connection is harmless human happiness that cannot be lost. That lucid Presence is "already accomplished from the very beginning" always present at Spirit Heart of the human being. As there is nothing to accomplish and nothing to do, that is the basis of effortless, spontaneous, non-trying, non-doing, nondual 'nonmeditation', fluent 'meditative stability' in essential, spacious, timeless, sublime 'meditative absorption'—as we act in the world.*

In the utterly nondual view of Longchenpa 'the omniscient one' (2001 p.369), as one rests in such quiescent 'meditative absorption' the great nondual truth is revealed:

Even the terms 'awareness', 'dynamic energy', 'display', and 'natural freedom' are merely labels applied to facilitate understanding...  
Since [timeless] awareness does not exist in essence, how could anything that derives from it—a place in which things arise, the process of their arising, or their myriad display—actually exist?

That lucid clarity is mindful 'nonmeditation'. The bleak alternative to such a wisdom outcome is dreaded Postmodern affliction that Dr. Andrew Holecek has renamed "PTSD—Post-Truth Samsaric Disorder". The price paid for that atavistic epic cognitive disaster is a compassionate authentic human life free of illusory hope and fear/anger abiding here in this wisdom crucible of the constant presence of our death.

There can now be no doubt. The profound wisdom *relative* antidote to insidious ego-self-contraction away from *ultimate* buddha mind Presence is intimate conscious continuity of connection to our always already present indwelling nondual awake *buddic* 'I AM Presence'—selfless, timeless, formless, yes ultimately nonexistent 'basic space' (*chöying*) primordial awareness Buddha Nature of Mind—bright spacious *dharmakaya* ground embracing this all. That is our radical nonconceptual 'supreme identity' now.

That omnipresent formless awareness naturally 'manifests' in form as the buddha quality of Longchenpa's "responsiveness"—inherent 'loving kindness' of our precious

*relative bodhicitta* of intention and action/conduct—arising always in this timeless 'primordial purity' of aboriginal 'groundless ground' that is *absolute/ultimate bodhicitta*, our 'supreme identity' of that 'supreme source' condition, very Buddha Nature of Mind.

Dear Reader, no boundary nor limit can ever separate you from *That*. Why? Because as Nagarjuna told so long ago, "It is already accomplished from the very beginning." How? That luminous Presence of the primordial timeless awareness ground—beyond our hopeful skeptical ideation about its existence—is always present within you by virtue of your incarnation from that 'supreme source ground' into your present embodied form. You are perforce an enfolded participating part—luminous Presence—lucid imprint of that vast all-subsuming always unfolding boundless whole, however you choose to name it. Well, who pray tell is that? You can *feel* it—far beyond your present concepts and beliefs about it—via gentle 'placement of your awareness/attention' upon the rising and falling *prana* life force spirit breath in your belly (*lungdang*). Now simply *rest* in that bright empty spacious silence (*rigdang*) that you always are, without thinking about it. Please do it now for 60 seconds or more. [Appendix B] What do you feel? Who are you now?

Such a mindful continuity of enlightened awareness is indeed clear, bright, active, peaceful, even blissful wakefulness—'nonmeditation' of the Dzogchen Fruitional View. Rest now in That (*tathata, tattva, suchness*), even as spacetime stuff continues to arise. Should you be new to such freeing practice, please find a Tibetan Buddhist Dzogchen center, and through that a fully qualified Dzogchen master. You cannot learn highest Ati Dzogchen from reading books, nor from any other conceptual effort. That said, reading dharma books, like this one, may prepare your approach to authentic clarity and peace.

Sense objects, conceptual activity, fear/anger, self doubt and the rest cannot negate your intrinsic buddha mind—indwelling already present bright Presence of That. Please *feel* now that great truth of who you actually are—your 'supreme identity' of that 'supreme source' ground. How shall I awaken to That? Lao Tzu told, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." If you have taken that step, take the next step, which is more difficult. "The only mistake you can make now is to quit." [Suzuki Roshi]

So 'continue in confidence' in realization of that Presence always present. *Feel* it as mantra seed syllable *OM*, formless primordial ground of form. *Feel* it as *AH*, now at Spirit Heart deep within you. *Feel* it as *HUM*, your 'supreme identity' being here in form. *OM AH HUM*. That is your main mantra. *Be* That here and now. It's who you are.

*Feel* now this present relative unity of *sukha* happiness and *dukkha* suffering. Although we may wish it were not so, *sukha* and *dukkha* arise together. In interdependent arising (*pratitya samutpada*) of the Two Truths that are relative form and ultimate emptiness, happiness and suffering are perforce interdependent and indivisible. Please enjoy it all in this timeless bright moment now, upon breath in your body. You can do this!

Who am I? *That* I Am! What is my mind? *That* is my mind! Now upon this wisdom wind rest in unborn secret space where wakeful dreams in Love are born.

*Emaho! Mahasukaho!*

## 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 Hindu *Sanatanadharma* tradition. 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 via its 'mystical' voice in Judaism, Christianity, Islam/Sufi, and Christian/Hebrew Hermeticism.

Mindfulness meditation in the Western Tradition emerged primarily from 12th century CE Hebrew esoteric *Kabbalah* through the foundational *Zohar* that explicates the mystical basis of the Torah. *Zohar* (radiance) is a beautiful spiritual guide to the infinite emptiness of monistic pantheistic primordial *Ein Sof—arcanum* of 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 *Mindfulness Meditation* pp. 82-102]

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

In the East 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 Buddha's Wheel of Dharma. Counter-conceptual mindfulness 'calm abiding' provides a contemplative foundation for the Buddha's Two Truths and his Four Noble Truths with the Eightfold Path to liberation; and as well, of the Ati Dzogchen *Seven Mind Training Steps to the Great Perfection*, as we shall see in *Chapter III*.

How then shall we approach highest Dzogchen teaching? Before or during Dzogchen foundational *ngöndro* practices it is wise that the practitioner engage shamatha mindfulness meditation—the 7th yogic discipline of Buddha's Eightfold Path—to pacify scattered concept mind. *Without foundation in basic shamatha mindfulness to tame the 'wild horse' of concept-mind, nondual Dzogchen rigdang view and practice remains all too conceptual.*

In Dzogchen view and practice quasi-dualistic mindful shamatha ripens into nondual 'womb of basic space' (*chöying*) purity of basal timeless primordial awareness—our liberating vast all-embracing *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground'. That Being Itself is Buddha's 'noself' *anatman*—sublime selfless, spacious *yingrig* nondual noetic knowing feeling Presence of that primordial source. Concepts concretize that empty basic space. Buddhist Ati Dzogchen and Essence Mahamudra free us from that habitual concept mind.



For 14th century Nyingma school Dzogchen master Longchenpa (2001 *Chöying Dzöd Autocommentary*) the "context" of that spacious *dharmakaya* ground is this:

The fundamentally unconditioned state of naturally occurring timeless awareness, which abides in its three aspects of essence, nature, and responsiveness [compassionate energy], is the ground for all that arises. It is from this timeless awareness that rupakaya [sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya] arises...The teacher is Samantabhadra...The teaching is natural great perfection...the environment is the inconceivable basic space [*chöying*] of phenomena." [p. 406]...Therefore, with the unique state of buddhahood being of 'one taste' with dharmakaya, the two aspects of rupakaya manifest, and so benefit is ensured for beings by the spontaneously present qualities of timeless awareness and responsiveness... These manifestations are clearly apparent without truly existing [p. 402]... Whatever manifests, then, is an expression of emptiness, display of awareness... Let whatever manifests manifest...Dharmakaya is the empty essence of being.

Gautama Shakyamuni, the Buddha of this present age, continued his teaching of the path of meditation with its wisdom of no-self (*anatman*), impermanence (*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 ('responsive' *bodhicitta*), and wisdom—both relative discriminating *prajna/sherab* and the ultimate primordial wisdom of spacious nondual gnosis/*jnana/yeshe* in whom (*dharmakaya* Adi Buddha Samantabhadra) 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 Buddha's prodigious Two Truths—relative form and ultimate emptiness—the two reality dimensions of primordial ground of Being Itself.

Yes. Here Buddha teaches conscious "placement of attention", our nonconceptual immediate 'bare awareness' upon the rhythmic rising and falling of the breath in the body. Our bare attention is here gently focused upon life giving *jnanaprana* spirit wind (*lung, c'hi, pneuma/holy spirit*) rising and falling with each breath in the belly. *Prana/lung/pneuma* is subtle esoteric spirit energy voice of physical light-form-matter-energy ( $E=mc^2$ ). Together they constitute the prior (*purva*) and ever present unity of causal objective Science and its acausal, timeless, perfectly subjective nondual spirit ground of being. [*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 experience. 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 is 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 causal sutra '*Seven Factors of Awakening*': *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* (2001) Longchenpa reminds us that in the acausal nondual *ultimate* view none of these *relative Hindrances*, nor the *Factors of Awakening*, not even buddhahood, *ultimately* exist. How shall we understand this radical teaching? From nondual wisdom mind of the 'omniscient one':

Within the essence of basic space [*chöying*] causality is transcended and the ten [Buddha] 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* (1998): In the ultimate heart essence, with no [concepts] 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 or affirmation.

We learn to view our habitual dualistic limited relative conceptual understanding of the Buddhadharmas path 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. Bright Presence of That (*tathata, rigpa*) always embraces this relative all too real yet ultimately illusory dimension of spacetime Relative Truth. That lofty nondual *ultimate* view is a confluence of *relative* "mindfulness of breathing" as Buddha called it so long ago. Thus do we engage skillful means of Relative Truth to realize Ultimate Truth—one truth unity.

*Mindful Caveat.* Highest Ati Dzogchen natural *rigdang* nondual timeless awareness cannot be realized by reading books, nor through dualistic *lungdang* Buddhist practice. Authentic Dzogchen view and practice must be guided by a qualified Dzogchen master.

## 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 airy, heady concept mind in our physical earth body, the spacetime vessel for compassionate engaged *bodhicitta* activity/conduct, 'heart-mind of enlightenment' arising always in this vast, infinite 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, nonconceptual, 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. We may also experience the *Fourth Jewel*—our wise loving Lama who teaches us how to take refuge in these rare and 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 that we as a self choose to bestow upon them. Grounded in 'mindfulness of breathing' we learn *relative* mantra prayer, deity practice, and direct *ultimate rigpa/vidya* Presence of timeless primordial awareness ground, Ati Dzogchen approach, and skillful engaged 'responsiveness'—kind compassionate *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 physical, sensory, mental/conceptual 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 cause and effect 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 an ultimate nondual View an ontologically prior and always phenomenally present one truth unity (*dzog*).

Now none of this *relative* metaphysic possesses a whit of *ultimate* intrinsic existence! In subtlest nondual view such primordial wisdom transcends the all too common false

dichotomy of *either* existence, *or* nonexistence. It is that uncommon 'transcendent wisdom' that we practice on the Path that assumes the Vajrayana Fruitional View. Quiescent shamatha (*zhine, sati, smrti*) with its Four Foundations is the core of Dzogchen teaching.

*As Gautama Shakyamuni Buddha told so long ago, "Mindfulness of breathing is the direct path for purification of the minds of human beings."*

### Awareness Management

*In the Buddhist Vajrayana 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 itself as the interdependent arising of spacetime phenomena. This boundless emptiness whole of physical and mental phenomena is realized by we human beings via nondual primordial wisdom (yeshe, jnana, gnosis). That ultimate reality is none other than the vast empty (shunya) 'basic space' (dharmadhatu, chöying) of primordial awareness dharmakaya 'groundless ground'—Adi Buddha Samantabhadra—boundless unbroken whole itself in whom this great opportune gift of relative spacetime form arises, participates, and is instantiated. Mahasukaho! Great joy for us!*

Through such *awareness management*—attention to bright Presence here in 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'. Together these are the inherent 'selflessness of the person', and the 'emptiness of phenomena' arising for 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 selfless '*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, lucid 'original basal clear light' *wisdom of emptiness*—Mipham's immutable "noumenal Fundamental Mind" (*chös nyid*), pristine vivid clear light mind nature (*ösel yeshe*)—that very love-wisdom gnosis Presence (*rigpa, vidya*) abiding as our primordial ground of being. In the perfect words of 19th century non-sectarian *rimé* Dzogchen master Jamgön Ju 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 nondual 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. So how is it that we 'accomplish' such deep wisdom understanding? In non-causal 'Fruitional View' 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 now at spiritual Heart (*nyingpo, hridaya, kokoro*) of each human being. It is That (*tathata, suchness, chos nyid, epinoia*) to which we awaken upon the Path. So there is no need to seek happiness elsewhere. It lies not in past sacred personages, nor in a future blissful liberated mind state. Past is gone. Future never shows up; it streams through present to become past. Longchenpa's "present moment" is being here in timeless awareness of *now*. Spiritual seeking destroys that now. Self in time is a *relative* illusion. So our indwelling buddha love-wisdom mind cannot be found in habitual apocryphal happiness seeking strategies, not even our future looking spiritual designs and goals. Thus do we wisely make present here now *practice* of wakeful already present *buddic* 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 para-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...Pure 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 natural love-wisdom mind are one and the same (*samatajnana*), nondual wisdom of sameness, balanced equanimity. There exists here not an iota of separation. It has always been thus. It shall always be thus. So *rest* in eternal moment now—upon mindful *prana* spirit breath in your belly—boundless peace that is beyond words; beyond hope and fear. *That* is your 'supreme identity'. Thus is relative *lungdang* practice 'one' with ultimate *rigdang* realization. Enjoy *That now*, beyond concepts.

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

These *Three Essential Statements* arose as the *Three Vajra Verses* that comprise the wondrous 'Final Testament' of first century Dzogchen founder Garab Dorje. They constitute highest 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' that is not other than the acausal, nondual primordial Buddha Nature of Mind.

*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 'timeless 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 that 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 our 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 *manngag* 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 living Dzogchen/Mahamudra master Adzom Paylo Rinpoche regarding Garab Dorje's wondrous, definitive *Three Statements*:

The real state of 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 into 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 Nyingma lineage *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, translating 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 the 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 nondual buddha reality—beyond mind—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 and Dzogchen wisdom we directly encounter naked intrinsic awareness itself. Shamatha calm abiding is the very foundation of advanced Dzogchen teaching...By receiving the secret pith instruction of *mannagag [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', 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, *manngag/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 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. "I have written this work in accord with the three categories—*semde*, *longde* and *manngag*..."

*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], and 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 *The Way of Abiding*

### Dharmakaya: Fruition of the Three Kayas and Their Display

We abide in complete ease (*galso*) in the confluence of awareness and emptiness. Longchenpa: "It is crucial to distinguish the three kayas and their display." [2001 p. 408]

Dharmakaya [OM] is the empty *essence* of being—unobstructed awareness. Its display is the vast reach of completely nonconceptual timeless [*ye*] awareness [*shes* or *chöying yeshe* basic space]. Sambhogakaya [AH] is the *nature* of being—the spontaneous presence of lucidity. Its display consists of the buddhas of the five families, resplendent with the major and minor marks of perfection. Nirmanakaya [Hung/HUM] is timeless awareness as all-pervasive *responsiveness* [loving kindness] in its aspect as a ground for what arises. Its display consists of teachers who manifest in whatever way is necessary to guide [beings] under any circumstances.

From *The Way of Abiding* (1998 p. 205) Longchenpa reveals:

All phenomena have the same source. Awareness—oneness—is the ground of all phenomena...naturally occurring timeless awareness is the single source...Although both samsara and nirvana arise from oneness, self-knowing awareness, their source—ultimate awakened mind—is the same. There is simply the illusion of difference based on whether or not awareness is recognized....Meditative absorption is the supreme, unwavering state...continuous state of natural lucidity...The sacred fruition of the kayas and timeless awareness abides within you.

However, that "oneness" of the "basic space" of "unobstructed timeless awareness" that is *dharmakaya*, "the empty essence of being" are "merely labels applied to facilitate understanding...symbols, in light of the fact that there is nothing to label."

Dharmakaya, the state of emptiness, is the nonconceptual basic space of naturally occurring timeless awareness...the heart essence of empty yet lucid awareness. It is timeless awareness, empty and without identity, and the state of great perfection, the spontaneous presence of all phenomena... It has never existed as anything whatsoever...[Longchenpa 2001 p. 385]

Since [timeless] awareness itself does not exist in essence, how could anything that derives from it—a place in which things arise, the process of their arising, or their myriad display—actually exist?...Although it is referred to by various conventional designations, ultimate reality—the bare essence of awareness—is beyond any statement that proves or refutes that it is this or that. Therefore, it has never known existence as anything that could be termed 'samsara' or 'nirvana'...[or] 'display', [or] the context in which things arise'...Awareness...is free of the extremes of being one thing and being many, in fact it transcends any context of conceptual or verbal elaboration...In its very essence, awareness has never existed as anything whatsoever...devoid of substance or characteristics...'free of the phenomena of samsara and nirvana'... The essence of the ground for all that arises and the nature of its dynamic energy are timelessly free...There is no division or exclusion, no union or separation. [2001 pp. 368-372]

Vajrayana Madhyamaka constitutes a Middle Way path that bestrides yet unifies Buddha's Two Truths—dualistic conventional Relative Truth of this interdependently arisen dimension of physical space and time—and nondual Ultimate Truth that embraces it. Thus are the sublime Two Truths a priori yet always present one truth unity (*dzog*); perfectly subjective *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground'. Profound words and concepts indeed.

Longchenpa points out above that ultimately these "are merely labels applied to facilitate understanding". In the ultimate nondual view "there is nothing to label." Middle Way founder Nagarjuna: "Dharma taught by all the buddhas is based upon the two truths." That unity is inherently empty and free of our concepts and beliefs about it.

### III

## The Seven Mind Training Steps of the Great Perfection

There can be no better foundation for practice!

— Adzom Paylo Rinpoche

The great Nyingma lineage *vidyadhara* Jigme Lingpa (1730-1798)—ecumenical synthesizer of Longchenpa's great *Longchen Nyingthig*—presented for us his precious Dharma treasure *The Steps to Liberation* (2016). Here he introduces the universal all-embracing "Sevenfold Mind Training" instructions of Longchenpa (Longchen Rabjam 1308-1364), itself based upon Garab Dorje's 2nd century *Seven Trainings in Bodhicitta*. For Longchenpa, these are the Dzogchen "Essential Instructions on the Preliminary Practices".

[These]vital points on the exceedingly profound essentials 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.

Longchenpa unified the two main Dzogchen lineages—*Vima* and *Khandro*—as his Nyingma *Longchen Nyingthig*. It pervades all four Tibetan Buddhist lineages. Jigme Lingpa's *Seven Steps* were first profoundly revealed in Dzogchen Great Perfection tradition as it arises in 8th century Nyingma school of the "Ancient Ones". That natural Great Completion ecology of mind with its six singular but essentially same (*samata*) lineages is considered by the wise to be the pinnacle of all Buddhist sutra and tantra/mantra enlightenment teaching vehicles. This prodigious 'Sevenfold Mind Training' instantly connects us to our non-judgmental, bias free indwelling primordially present love-wisdom buddha mind Presence. Compassionate heartmind *bodhicitta* is present from the beginning in all of them, and indeed in all the Buddhist Mahayana 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 a definitive liberating phenomenology for awakening 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 all Tibetan Buddhist view and practice. It is foundation of *kadag trekchö* and *lhundrub tögal* stages within the secret *manngag* Dzogchen teaching cycle. *Invictus*: ultimate triumph over this inevitable adversity of our being here in relative time.

Here Jigme Lingpa's *Seven Steps* bestow clarity as to 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 Nyingma school 'nine vehicles' reckoning.

Jigme Lingpa's *The Steps to Liberation* with its Seven Mind Trainings are steps to the pith instructions of nondual 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 (1846-1912), then to *terton* Adzom Drukpa and Adzom Paylo Rinpoche. These mindful pathways teach the Buddhadharma from foundational *relative* selfless "*anatman*", "impermanence" and "compassion", to *ultimate* nondual "wisdom", the seventh step *dharmakaya* primordial wisdom ground, very nature and essence of all-embracing primordial awareness-consciousness itself, ultimate 'basic space' (*chöying*) in whom arises our relative conventional human consciousness.

All too briefly, Jigme Lingpa's Dzogchen mindful *Seven Steps* to liberation are: Impermanence; Karma and Happiness; Suffering and Compassion; The Guru; Meditation; Negativity; Wisdom: threefold union of bliss, clarity, and wisdom of emptiness. [Jigme Lingpa 2016; Klein 2023] Thus do we settle into Ati Dzogchen View and Practice.

In the curative oracular advice of 14th century Tibetan *Dzogchen* master Longchenpa, the 'omniscient one' [*Chöying Dzöd* with Commentary 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... 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 a few moments in that conceptually uncontrived compassionate numinous ground. You will be mostly free of conceptual thinking. Take refuge in That, "just as it is". What do you feel? Where in your body do you feel it? Who are you now? What is your mind? So many questions. Simply *rest* and enjoy what is "already accomplished from the very beginning" by virtue of your precious human birth; clear light (*ösel*) lucent Presence deep within you this very moment. *Feel* that now.

That primordial basic space (*chöying*) of all-embracing *dharmakaya* ground Presence has always been your 'supreme identity'. Connect to That (*tathata*) and rest 'one-pointedly', brief moments many times. Lama Anne Klein's profound *Being Human* (2023) is essential.

## IV

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

Mindfulness of breathing is the direct path for purification of the minds of human beings.

—Gautama the Buddha

*Mindful Prelude.* Human beings being here in time and space desire, require and deserve some semblance of happiness and well being. We have seen that there are natural happiness mind states already innately present within the human bodymind. We access them through the conscious choice of "placement of awareness/attention" upon our always present love-wisdom mind Presence of all-embracing primordial ground in whom this all arises. That bright Presence rides life force *prana* spirit breath in physical and subtle body.

Hence, for both neuroscience and metaphysics 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 *buddic* peace—subject-object unity (*samadhi*), 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, how do we learn "placement of attention" upon such always already present happiness states? How do we abide at the bright confluence of our innate human *and* our clear light (*ösel*) awareness? We have examined some of the contemplative considerations. Let us now briefly explore recent neuroscientific research on the Buddha's ancient art and science of *shamatha*—"mindfulness of breathing"—*resting* in non-modal 'great ease' (*galso*).

### **The Neuroscience of 'Advanced Mindfulness Meditation'**

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

*Beyond Basic Mindfulness Meditation.* In the last decade the revolution in the contemplative science of meditation has entered its 'third wave' of research, known to university research programs as "advanced meditation". These programs study the objective neuroscience and even the subjective 'spiritual' mind states and life stages of

highly advanced Tibetan and Theravada Buddhist meditators. Leading edge research is centered at the Harvard Medical School, Brown University's Mindfulness Center, the University of Wisconsin, the University of Virginia, and Rice University. [*Scientific American* July/August 2024] To be sure, 'advanced meditation' exceeds the secular "mindfulness" that arose in the 'first wave', and the *shamatha, sati, bhavana* mindfulness meditation of the 'second wave'.

'Advanced meditation' research is concerned with what is described as "advanced concentrative absorption meditation" (ACAM)—acausal samadhi states of Ati Dzogchen, Essence Mahamudra, Theravada *jhana, nirodha* and other 'nondual mind states'—which may cause profound positive psychological transformation, deep and lasting feelings of personal well-being, and healing intervention in mental health, for example generalized anxiety disorder, depressive disorder, bipolar I and II, schizoaffective disorder, PTSD, and much more. 'Advanced meditation' has in hundreds of recent studies correlated specific ACAM brain states to 'felt experience' of enhanced attention, mental clarity, joy, self confidence, emotional ease, enhanced feelings of well-being, and lasting reduction of 'self referential' ('selfing') self-ego-I cognitive processing. The auspicious result is empathy, altruism and compassionate engaged action/conduct for the benefit of other beings, both human and animal. Other benefits include enhanced immune function, post-surgical healing, enhanced business communication and increased work production.

Advanced meditation research on ACAM intervention has now begun a therapeutic revolution in the domains of medicine, mental health, clinical psychology and psychiatry, but as well in our emerging 'post-empirical' understanding of the theory and praxis of quantum physics and quantum cosmology; neurobiology, and of the prior and present unity of objective Science and its perfectly subjective Spirit ground. [*Appendix A*]

ACAM "cessation events" as determined by a new investigative protocol that combines objective electroencephalographic (EEG) and fMRI data with subjective first person experience reports by the advanced meditative subject are characterized by "alpha functional connectivity", a near complete cessation of 'normal' human consciousness. In this deep trans-conceptual 'meditative absorption' sensory object awareness and the pervasive sense of a substantially 'real' self-ego-I are utterly transcended in their aboriginal nondual source condition—perfectly subjective primordial awareness-consciousness ground of all arising phenomenal reality—by whatever grand name or concept. These uncommon supra-cognitive events should not be conflated with the common unconsciousness of deep dreamless sleep, coma, anesthesia, or head injury. Following a cessation event the yogin experiences subtle penetrating insight, clarity, bliss, *kosmic* connectedness and interdependence with all life and life forms—'Great Completion' of our inherently indwelling nondual love-wisdom mind essence (*jnana, yeshe, gnosis*).

Due in no small part to the psycho-emotional profundity of such Buddhist 'advanced meditation', the view and practice must be guided by wisdom beyond that of skilled academic researchers. Indeed, such contemplative mind training must be transmitted and supported by Buddhist meditation masters of the highest possible order.

*The Benefits.* Advanced Mindfulness Meditation transcends our Western 'taboo of subjectivity'. It supports parasympathetic function (alpha and 'waking theta' brain rhythm "rest and digest" approach behavior), and so 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 human brain (vmPFC) activated in both beginning and advanced mindfulness meditation has been shown to dampen painful response to negative emotional mind states, while enhancing positive states. Just so, the right prefrontal cortex is activated in negative mind states. The amygdala is responsible for such negative internal states as fear and anger, which are then expressed ('projected') through egocentric, often destructive and self destructive behavior. fMRI reveals underdeveloped amygdalas in such subjects; especially so in the adolescent brain.

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, judgment, 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 (*vm*) prefrontal cortex. These subjects 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 egocentric 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 hundreds of studies since 2000, has demonstrated the following positive psycho-emotional 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]

Meditation research of 'wave one' secular 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 a human sense of self is a function of the *ventral medial prefrontal cortex* (vmPFC), the fundamental psychological model of a self-ego-I in mental time. Here Buddhist emptiness/*shunyata* manifests as 'interdependent arising' of phenomena to the self; the 'unity of appearance and emptiness'. How shall we understand this?

### **The Neuroscience of Meditation and Our Experience of Self**

We have very briefly surveyed the neurobiological influences of mindfulness meditation and advanced 'ACAM meditative absorption' on human conduct/behavior. How do these influences effect our sense of self-ego-I (*ipseity/selfhood*); our brain structure and function; relative human flourishing and happiness (*eudiamonia, felicitas*); and ultimate happiness and freedom of 'spiritual' liberation/enlightenment (*paramananda, mahasukha, beatitudo*)—our post-materialist compassionate harmless happiness that cannot be lost?

Both Zen masters and neuroscientists agree: "mindfulness of breathing" ('focused attention meditation'), 'compassion meditation', and 'advanced meditation' (ACAM) all facilitate 1) a beneficial shift of attention from obsessive, usually fraught self-referential thinking ("selfing") with its overriding concern for 'I, Me, Mine'; which 2) bestows a sense of inner peace, self-acceptance, emotional clarity, and 'cosmic connectedness'; which 3) reduces anxiety and anger toward self and thus toward others; which 4) enhances empathy, altruistic thought, intention and action ('prosocial interaction') for the benefit of living beings (altruism, *bodhicitta*); 5) enhancing feelings of individual well-being and experienced happiness. Both basic mindfulness meditation and advanced ACAM promote all-important prosocial behavior. The former appears in nearly all our social institutions.

For Mahayana and Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhists the self-ego-I is *relatively* an all too real yet *ultimately* illusory conceptually reified elaboration/imputation. How shall we understand this in the 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 ego self-referential attention—'selfing'—with its often 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 altruistic bodhicitta behavior.* [Patricia Lockwood, Univ. of Birmingham and Oxford Univ.]

With the ACC, the dorsomedial prefrontal cortex encodes *empathy*—felt experience of the thoughts and feelings of others—foundational social cohesion of our human interaction. We may choose to utilize our empathy, or not. Altruistic conduct requires that we do. Thus do we feel more secure, confident, happy, less judgmental. And it feels good.

Such engaged empathetic altruistic action/conduct is for most Buddhists the primary cause of human happiness. Such 'prosocial behavior'—engaged *feeling* conduct for the benefit of others—is required for our individual and social well-being. Clearly it has both neurological and ethical components. We must engage both.

Buddhist contemplative experience with its 'advanced ACAM meditation' research has demonstrated that when 'grasping at self' ceases, so does the yogi ego who chooses to transcend such self centered cognition. Within the ambit of this profound 'wisdom of emptiness' arises liberating freedom of nondual (subject-object unity) enlightenment.

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

Pathology of the ACCg (anterior cingulate cortex gyrus) includes schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety disorder, depressive disorder, schizoaffective disorder, PTSD, autism spectrum disorder, antisocial behavior. Cortical thickness of the ACC predicts increased risk of psychopathology. Mindfulness meditation, through its ego disquieting quiescence and its capacity to produce peaceful alpha, theta and gamma brain rhythm has a healing impact in all of them. [Siegel 2013; Wallace 2009]

In short, scientific meta-research synthesizing data from thousands of research projects since 1970—but especially the neurophysiology and neuro-imaging of 'advanced meditation' ACAM research since the advent of our post-2000 'third wave'—reveal substantial human benefit through each of the four primary classes of meditation practice.

These classes include 1) *shamatha mindfulness focused attention meditation*, usually upon the breath, or 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*, manifesting

our natural empathy, even love for all living beings; and 4) the 'meditative absorption' of ACAM advanced meditation. [*Scientific American*: November 2014; July/August 2024]

All four of these meditation modalities resulted in beneficial outcomes by conclusively reducing or deactivating neural processing in some brain structures, while enhancing activity in others. Healthy "ego strength" notwithstanding, all four cognitive contemplative modalities function as relative conventional cognitive antidotes to an all too often troublesome, duplicitous, materialist, personal power hungry self-ego-I. How is this so? And what are the clear, present personal and sociocultural benefits? How will it impact our all too human mass cognitive 'conformation bias' that is our deep cultural background Scientific Materialist/Physicalist "global web of belief"? [Quine 1969]

### Scientifically Proven Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation

These are as we have seen: 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 beneficial 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; July/August 2024]

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) enhanced subjective feelings of connection, well-being, good will; 4) prosocial behavior; 5) 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 positive experience. That results in enhanced production of beneficial alpha, waking theta, and 25-42 hertz gamma band oscillation upon mindful belly-breath—our here now connection to the infinite aspect of our being here—while shifting self-referencing or 'selfing' attention away from chronic unfocused wandering mind with its obsessive clinging/attachment to a self-ego-I, and

toward ACCg produced altruistic compassionate thought, intention, and action for the benefit of living beings (*bodhichitta, karuna, patheos, charis, hesed, lovingkindness, rahmah*).

[Mindfulness "polyvagal breathing"—5 seconds in, 7 seconds out—blocks excessive stress inducing cortisol production by the *zona fasciculata* of the adrenal cortex and thus its circulation throughout the upper body along the vagus nerve (CN-X)—Porges 2014. Chronic exposure to supraphysiologic levels of endogenous cortisol produces the high ACTH associated with Addison's disease, Cushing's syndrome, and other pathology.]

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 ("responsiveness") in and through this *relative* gift of our 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 terrible suffering secondary to our human too often pervasive sense of a fearful lonely separate self adrift in a hostile, dangerous, meaningless cosmos. Mindfulness 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 our 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, buddhajñana*), nondual love-wisdom mind Presence of That, by whatever grand name. Our habitual dualistic thinking is in its essence nondual! Use mantra to connect. [Appendix B] It's useful to notice excuses and resistance of self-ego-I to practice this powerful mindful antidote to our suffering.

Just so, neuroscientific meta-research demonstrates the profound value of contemplative mindfulness meditation (*shamatha, zhine, 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 gentle guidance of a qualified meditation master—into the mindful continuity of self-liberating non-doing 'nonmeditation' of *Ati Dzogchen* and *Mahamudra* View and Praxis. [Ch. II above; Boaz 2023 *Mindfulness Meditation*]

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

*Awareness Management: Human Happiness is a Choice.* On this neuro-metaphysical view then, human happiness is very much dependent upon an *awareness management* skill set—where, when, and how we *choose* to place our conscious 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"—or not.

Please be advised: the scope and result of contemplative 'advanced mindfulness meditation' opens and engages cognitive dimensions beyond reach of secular mindfulness approaches. Both are based in historical Buddhist *shamatha* calm abiding. [Ch. VII]

In short, human happiness is a result of conscious placement of our cognitive attention/awareness in this present moment here and now naturally upon the belly-breath—indwelling bright Presence of primordial spirit 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**

Contemplative 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* of '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 neurobiological, 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 negative 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 results were profound 'peace of mind' and enhanced feelings of altruistic harmless happiness and well being. Please try it.

For highly skilled ACAM meditators habitual fantasy-reverie self-referential thinking of the untrained mind is absent during formal sitting meditation, and following sitting meditation. Here, processing activity of the 'selfing' *default mode network* is nearly quiescent. [Davidson 2017] These skilled practitioners abide in a calm mindful 'nonmeditation' 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 ACAM meditators' have demonstrated in hundreds of studies since 2000 (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. Yes. Skilled meditators demonstrate a radically decreased presence of a self-ego-I. [Ch. I]

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 *directly experiential mode* (*yogi pratyaksa*) almost at will. The cause and result of *shamatha* 'calm abiding' quiescent peace of mind, with the 'meditative stability' of ACAM 'meditative absorption', results in a felt sense of harmless happy, blissful connection and interdependence with all living beings; indeed, with the *ultimate* unbroken whole of *kosmos* itself—even as inexorable human adversity continues to arise in the *relative* world of samsaric spacetime conditioned lived experience.

It is then the mindful calm abiding of foundational *shamatha* practice through which the mindfulness practitioner lays the proverbial ground for meditative stability of highest nondual *Dzogchen Ati Yoga*, the Great Perfection/Great Completion of Mahayana. [Ch. II]

### **Happiness is a Choice: 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, with *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 ego-free, 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. However, conceptual understanding accomplishes very little. Wisdom and bliss require *practice!*

*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 'relative' cause and effect karma as ever there was. Yes. Human happiness is a mindful choice!

As we assiduously practice simple "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—a subtle luminous numinous *Presence*—that is mostly 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 causal objective Science and its acausal, 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, diaphanous, ever changing, selfless (*anatman*) and impermanent (*anitya*). Perhaps we should take them less seriously, with a bit of self-effacing humor. Perhaps after all, our narcissistic self-ego-I is not the egocentric center around which the universe revolves. Thus have I come to call this prodigious cognitive process mindful *awareness management*. [Appendix B; 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 indwelling love-wisdom Buddha nature, Christ mind, *Ein Sof*, Brahman, *Hsing-ch'i*—aboriginal Presence of all embracing primordial ground of being in whom this all arises is, in a word, *nonlocal*. It cannot be objectively located in or reduced to physical brain, heart, gut, or in any local spacetime place, or 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. Nonlocal Primordial Presence pervades everything!

All-embracing Spirit Presence of the *kosmic* bright 'primordial awareness ground of being' in which, or in whom the stuff of spacetime cosmos arises is nonconceptual, nonlocal, perfectly subjective, contemplative direct experience (*yogi pratyaksa*), beyond the grasp of our concepts and beliefs—try as we may to objectively reduce it to or locate it in a purely physical thinking brain. And lest we become romantically inured to desire-mind cupidity of human ego, know now that Presence is untrammelled and utterly nondual.

But don't *believe* any of this! It's quite beyond belief, and our concepts about it. As Buddha told, "*Ehi passika*—Come and see for yourself." So yes, practice That!

### **The Two Dzogchen Paths to Buddhahood**

Dzogchen master Longchenpa (2001 pp. 298-299) reveals "The two kinds of minds—those who are involved in effort and those who are not." Yogins who use spiritual effort in engaging subtle body channels, winds, and bright orbs of 'rainbow light'

Rest in their natural state...emotions are purified within basic space without being renounced...self-knowing awareness is unobstructed... In this approach, freedom comes about through the effortful cultivation of the visions of *tögal*, which manifests in a natural state of rest. Alternatively, freedom comes about effortlessly through the realization of *trekchö*, the bare state of naturally free awareness.

Prepared *trekchö kadag* ('cutting through' concept mind) practitioners are "not involved in effort". Via the Guru's 'pointing out instruction' they ultimately realize that relative conceptual and emotional cognition effortlessly self-liberates (*rang grol*) at the instant of its arising to relative mind. "*Trekchö* is immediate directly perceived realization...superior intimate instruction for the lazy." [Vimalamitra] Again Longchenpa:

Afflictive emotions are themselves naturally free just as they are...  
Rest without seeking anything. Supreme bliss unfolds without being cultivated in meditation. One directly experiences it as one's [Buddha] nature...  
*Trekchö* is the ultimate meaning of the ground of being—for those of the very highest acumen—to effortless freedom...Basic space [*chöying*] is buddha nature—buddhahood that is spontaneously present [the state of presence] by its nature...beyond supreme emptiness and sublime knowing, ancestor of all the buddhas, unborn naturally occurring timeless awareness—utterly lucid awakened mind—marvelous and superb, primordially and spontaneously present...Awakened mind...is ultimate truth, fully evident [by] direct experience of it so there is no need to seek it elsewhere.  
Vividly lucid it does not entail dualistic perception and is free of conceptual elaboration...and so it is called the 'essence of being'. All arising form and wisdom is the adornment of unborn basic space...innermost buddha nature.

That is the noetic nondual 'innermost secret' Great Perfection Ati Dzogchen *trekchö* view and practice as transmitted through Longchenpa's wondrous *Chöying Dzöd* (2001). *Trekchö* is grounded in all three Dzogchen teaching cycles—*semde* mind series, *longde* space series, and the secret *manngag/upadesha* personal pith instruction series transmitted directly from Dzogchen master to the prepared mind of the student. That is considered by Tibetan Buddhists to be the very heart essence of all spiritual teaching. It "establishes the Base, Ground, Path, and Fruition/Result of all aspects of Ati Dzogchen." [Zechen Rabjam] *Ati Yoga* of Dzogchen (*dzog* means complete/perfect, *chen* means great) is the ninth and subtlest of the nine vehicles of Nyingma lineage Dzogchen tradition. [Boaz 2020 *Ch. V*]

*Tögal*. The prepared *tögal lhundrub* practitioner—'the practice of vision' of subtle body 'clear light' (*ösel*)—assiduously 'cultivates' the meditative practice of the Four Visions that result in ultimate purification of concepts and afflictive emotions as all *relative* phenomenal appearances return to the *ultimate* expanse of their nondual primordial *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground'. That is the sublime nondual fruition/result of *tögal* vision.

### **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 the human awareness-consciousness processional that constitutes our four cognitive dimensions—mind states and life stages—of great whole of human body, mind, spirit



knowing/feeling experience. Yes. That dualistic objective human consciousness is always already embraced in its perfectly subjective nondual primordial awareness-consciousness 'groundless ground', vast boundless whole of That. 'Groundless' because it is nonobjective.

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 feeling cognition (*dhyana, samadhi, shamatha, bodhicitta*); and 4) perfectly subjective acausal 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 of That—*Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen*. That is the cognitive abode of all the buddhas and mahasiddhas of the great love-wisdom tradition of humankind. To wit, the four state/stages are: perception, conception, contemplative, and nondual.

State/stage 3) may be understood as 'Development Stage' practice—(a) the Spiritual Seeking Stage, and (b), the Spiritual Discovery Stage—followed by 'Completion Stage', the Spiritual Grounding Stage. Finally, these sub-stages of Stage 3) facilitate Stage 4) Ati Dzogchen Great Completion—utterly selfless nondual Perfection Stage.

Just so, deeply subjective love-wisdom mind, our indwelling Christ mind Presence (*christos*), or clear light bliss (*ösel*) of our Buddha nature love-wisdom Presence (*buddhajñana*), or *Atman* that is Brahman (*Kham Brahm*), or primordial mystic *hsing-ch'i* breath of Tao, or Hebrew infinite unmanifest *Ein Sof*, or purifying Sufi *Dhikr* of *fitra*—are all our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition exemplars of this all-pervading indwelling instant pure Presence 'always present from the very beginning'. That all is completed in the crowning love and wisdom of yogic nonconceptual, nondual *buddhic* state/stage four—our freeing liberation into ultimate Nature of Mind—formless, timeless, selfless, perfectly subjective primordial awareness-consciousness ground itself (*kosmos*) of all arising physical mental phenomenal spacetime form (cosmos). That is our acausal, nondual ultimate perfect enlightenment: *samyak sambuddha, ming*. Indestructible Vajra *invictus*.

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 Dzogchen master—that opens into the adept mastery of buddhas, saints, sages, and mahasiddhas dwelling in the clarity, bliss, and wisdom of life stage four.

And wonder of wonders, the love-wisdom '*samadhi* of suchness' and '*samadhi* of illumination' lucid mind states of life stage four are always present and available to the experience of any 'ordinary mind' at any moment, in any life stage! Thus do contemplative *mind states* become skillful, wise personality *mind traits*. This is so because the cognitive processional of these four cognitive dimensions of our human being are inherently an indwelling, indivisible prior and present *one truth unity* of human experience. The clear light (*ösel*) lucidity and happiness of state/stage four is always present to those who choose to access it via conscious constant 'placement of attention' upon our already present

primordial Presence of all-embracing, all-subsuming, all-pervading perfectly subjective 'ground of being' here in objective phenomenal space and time. Great *kosmic* gift. *Emaho!*

To be sure, it is the art and Contemplative Science of the ancient practice of 'mindfulness of breathing' that reveals and grounds the 'relative' phenomenology and 'ultimate' metaphysical ontology of this trans-conceptual, numinous 'primordially pure' nondual Spirit Presence that subtly and gently pilots us through the prior and present unity of these four cognitive dimensions of our being here in space and time. [*Appendix B* below; Boaz 2023 *The Noetic Revolution: Toward an Integral Science of Matter, Mind 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, troubled, obsessively thinking and self-referencing ('selfing') concept-mind. We experience that nonconceptual luminous Presence of primordial *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground' through the lovely face of our beloved spouse, or *devotion* to the Guru, or at the moment of the birth of our first born child. That *process* of recognition, then realization is our inherent indwelling buddha mind basic 'wakefulness'. [Davidson 2017; Siegel 2013; Begely 2007]

Please recall our human consciousness *noetic cognitive doublet*—exoteric objective conceptual cognition, and esoteric subjective contemplative cognition—that together embrace 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 prior and always present unity is implicate order of the vast expanse of nondual *kosmic* unbroken whole—basal, spacious (*chöying*) primordial awareness-consciousness *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground' itself in whom (Adi Buddha Samantabhadra) all of this explicate cosmic spacetime stuff, and all of us, self-reflexively arises, unfolds, participates, and is cognitively and physically instantiated.

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

As we open that propitious cognitive portal we discover, upon each mindful breath, the primary cause of human happiness and well-being—known to Tibetan Buddhists as great *kosmic* gift of our being here—*Ultimate Bodhicitta*—manifested and expressed in relative spacetime as the compassionate *Relative Bodhicitta* of thought, intention and engaged ethical action/conduct. Absolute or *Ultimate Bodhicitta* and its relative expression through engaged human action may be understood as the nondual primordial love-wisdom that realizes Gautama Shakyamuni Buddha's *buddic* emptiness/*shunyata*. *Emaho!*

And yes, That—ultimate and relative union of *bodhicitta* (*tathata*, *tattva*, thatness, suchness)—is the open secret of our own human happiness. And so we smile. *Mahasukaho!*

*Ontological Minimalism*. The venerable ontic principle of 'Occam's Razor' informs us that "Entities must not be multiplied beyond necessity." The stuff of reality may not be as solid as it appears to the senses. Our human sense experience can be deceived.

## Pride is the Rub

How is it that we so often fail to *choose* this Presence of our indwelling harmless human happiness; that we remain stuck in our all too familiar uncomfortable comfort zones of not seeing and not loving—of self-ego-I? How indeed. We are fixed in very subtle egocentric *pride!* That includes all of us who have not yet 'accomplished' the supreme enlightenment of buddhahood. Pride is the most subtle, most difficult to recognize of the destructive 'afflictive emotions'—fear/anger, hostility, hatred, grasping desire, greed, and pride—especially at the so-called 'higher' life stages of Spirit realization. Here the ruinous 'spiritualized ego' skillfully defends its wondrous narcissistic self from growth.

Pride has four stages, from gross egotistical to very subtle 'spiritual'. Where are you in this prideful hierarchy of evolutionary human development? Now, be thankful for this rather uncomfortable exercise in awakening to Buddha's always present 'noself' (*anatman*).

What next? Begin by *observing* your barely conscious nearly continuous judgments as to the inferior, even stupid behavior of others. And your narcissistic ideational superiority that is the cause of these nasty judgments. Not so easy. Now *feel* your always present kind compassion for this prideful self-ego-I that chooses to indulge each one of these unsavory mind states. Forgive yourself as a loving mother forgives her willful child.

## 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 *unity* of their embodied self-ego-I with innermost 'spiritual' love-wisdom 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 chia*—by whatever lustrous name deep within their body-mind. [For moving personal expressions of such experiences 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—their 'supreme identity'—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, hostile, unruly self-ego-I with or without clinical symptoms, or a legal problem, or the dispiriting stigmata of 'mental disease'.

My students—and in many instances staff psychiatrists whom I also trained in mindfulness practice—learned that the ultimate answer to the urgent personal and 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, happy, and utterly beyond materialist Big Science. All of the Buddhas, *mahasiddha* 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 prodigious benefits of contemplative mindfulness meditation as an antidote to long standing pathology, transient pathology secondary to the emotional shock of incarceration, and habitual antisocial behavior with its all too human despair.

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 accomplished yogins. Some are now teaching 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**

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

That minimalist 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. This all toward a post-doctrinaire, unifying integral noetic quantum ontology that transcends yet embraces the seven 'interpretations' now on offer. [*Appendix A* below; Boaz 2023 *The Noetic Revolution* pp. 417-421]

In such a post-quantum metaphysic lies the integral Noetic Quantum Ontology of our emerging paradigmatic Noetic Revolution in matter, mind and spirit now abroad in

our global cognosphere. Here we must skillfully engage and manage our human objective cognitive capacity that includes 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 Vacuum Energy (ZPE) ground of all the physical stuff of cosmos, while remaining present to the prior *qualitative*, post-empirical nondual truth of the matter as it arises forever in all-embracing *kosmos*.

In short, we learn a conscious focused continuity of awareness of the nondual 'invariant throughout all cognitive changes' one truth unity (*dzog*) of our perennial intrinsically indivisible Two Truths—*relative* form or Science, and its perfectly subjective nondual *ultimate* Spirit 'groundless ground'. Buddha's relative form and its ultimate emptiness. Told Shakyamuni Buddha: "Form is empty; emptiness is form. Form is not other than emptiness; emptiness is not other than form." *Ontological Minimalism*.

Thus do we establish our urgent Ati Dzogchen panpsychic/kosmopsychic integral Noetic Quantum Ontology that illumines that ontic prior and phenomenally present unity of objective Science and the perfect subjectivity of its trans-conceptual noetic nondual Spirit ground—primordial *dharmakaya*, Tao, infinite *Ein Sof*, nondual *Nirguna Brahman*.

There is great joy in this seemingly fortuitous gift of our lives being here in space and time as it emerges from all-subsuming *kosmos*—widening gyre of timeless, aboriginal primordial awareness-consciousness itself—nondual Absolute Spirit, vast formless selfless ground in whom this all arises, participates, and is physically, mentally, and emotively instantiated in spacetime form. [Appendix B below; Boaz 2023 *The Noetic Revolution Ch.V; Mindfulness Meditation: The Complete Guide Ch. VIII*]

*Nonduality*. Should you choose to pursue further this ontic minimalism of the 'logic of the nonconceptual' please visit again the lucid nondual teaching of Longchenpa [1998]:

The Vajra Premise...The four vajra themes...The consummate meaning of the heart essence of natural great perfection is...all phenomena are by nature *ineffable*. They are timelessly and *spontaneously present*. They are *openness*, in that they are not defined by restrictions or extremes. And they are encompassed within *oneness*—naturally occurring timeless awareness...

Awareness, empty yet lucid, without limit or center, is *dharmakaya* as an uninterrupted openness—*atiyoga*, the spacious mind of Samantabhadra—like space in that it is not defined by restrictions or extremes. It is 'the supreme and inexpressible state beyond ordinary consciousness'...All phenomena are shown to be one in naturally occurring timeless awareness...All phenomena have the same source. Awareness—*oneness*—is the ground of all phenomena...naturally occurring timeless awareness is that single source...Although *samsara* and *nirvana* arise from *oneness*, self-knowing awareness, their source—ultimate awakened mind—is the same...Everything is of one basic space...

primordially pure single sphere, naturally occurring timeless awareness...  
The emptiness of awareness and that of apparent phenomena are indivisible, of one taste in the unique nondual sphere of uninterrupted emptiness. This is referred to as 'having the same source within the basic space of dharmakaya'....

Dharmakaya is not to be sought or achieved elsewhere, since it abides within you, and such [conceptual] factors as view, meditation, conduct, and fruition obscure unobstructed awareness. [2001 p.324]

*Kant.* Perhaps the most cogent Western mind in this nondual post-empirical regard is German European Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)—"the father of Modern philosophy". In his minimalist, holistic *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant introduced to the Western mind his "Transcendental Idealism" wherein he reveals that our spacetime appearing realities are but "forms of human intuition" that cognitively structure most of our human experience. In Kant's "Transcendental Aesthetic" of *The Critique of Pure Reason* appearing space and time are "empirically real", yet "transcendentally ideal". Relative space and time are absent and empty any *ultimate* existence, yet appear as "subjective" forms of our experience. We knowing human subjects perceive the objects of our experience not as they actually are ultimately, but only relatively, as they appear to our sense experience and our limited concepts and beliefs about that great transcendental *process*. Human reason is perforce limited to 'knowledge' filtered through cognitive reticulum of our sociocultural "global web of belief". [Quine 1969] Phenomenal objects as our "categories of experience" are but ineffable fleeting "appearances" absent 'noumenal' or ultimate essential essence, just as Shakyamuni the Buddha of this present age has told. Therefore, with Leibniz but against Newton, Kant's spacetime objects appearing to mind, and to the empirical sciences are not objective *things* but subjective *relations* descended from perfectly subjective, formless, timeless awareness ground that is nondual "noumenon". The ultimate identity of relative phenomena, and all of us, are that selfless primordial noumenon. Well, how may we human beings come to know, and to be That?

Noumenon (plural is noumena) is 'supreme source' of ultimate nondual wisdom gnosis that transcends the relative phenomena of sense experience. Noumenal "things in themselves" (*ding an sich*) are ultimately nonconceptual "apparitions". Human beings can see and *be* that ineffable numinous noumenal reality source through "receptive intuitive" even contemplative cognition. For Kant we do possess ultimate "*a priori*" (prior to experience) "intuition" that transcends our relative "determinate concepts" and sense experience of temporal objects arising in this relative dimension of sociocultural space and time. Our two reality dimensions? Relative phenomena (sense experience), and ultimate sense-transcendent noumena. Kant's Western Two Truths. Buddha's Eastern Two Truths.

In his *Critique of Judgment* Kant explains that there exists an *a priori* foundational "supra-sensible substrate of humanity"—ultimate nondual primordial awareness-consciousness timeless ground of all relative dualistic spacetime form arising therein. And yes, that is the bright supreme identity of we human beings. *Tat Tvam Asi*. That I Am!

## 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 great 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 monumental quantum *Principle of Complementarity*: "Opposites are complementary....Truth and clarity are complementary." For Bohr, subject and object, self and other, existence and nonexistence, quantum wave and particle, quantum particle position and momentum are a relational, interdependent complementary, 'nonlocally 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 seminal *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 prodigious *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 basal universal ZPE 'quantum emptiness' as ever there was.

Legendary physicist David Bohm, who received 60 nominations for a Nobel Prize, expresses this matter of wholeness beautifully in his 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), the 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 mindful contemplatively 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. Yes, told Gautama the Buddha, "Form is empty; emptiness is form."

Exoteric Standard Model Quantum Field Theory (QFT/QED) describes the non-zero quantum emptiness of the unified quantum vacuum energy ground state, or ultimate zero point energy field (ZPE). Dirac's 'zero womb'. 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

*Contemplative Science.* 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 from 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 Fruition of union of the Two Truths of the Middle Way. That Fruit is the two bodies or *energy dimensions [rupakaya]* of *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. Now 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 a few trillion years hence 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 hypothesized by cosmologists to be 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.

Einstein was certain that the cosmos was static; the prevailing cosmological ideology of the time. Thus did the great physics master dare to 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 fluke weird 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 ideological injury, in 1998 it was discovered independently by the Perlmutter and Schmidt teams that Hubble's expanding universe was actually accelerating! And wonder of wonders, 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 subjective 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 nondual Spirit ground of all-embracing whole of this perfect *Ati* sphere of *kosmos* itself in whom physical cosmos 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 causal 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 that 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 whom, 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 human beings.

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 objective physics, in the now recently respectable domain of academic, scientific, and Buddhist metaphysics. Here we begin to understand the prior and ever present unity of causal objective Science and the acausal perfectly subjective Spirit ground (*dharmakaya*) in whom that all arises. [Appendix A below; Boaz 2023 *The Prior Unity of Science and Spirit Ch IV*]

## VI

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

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

—Adzom Paylo Rinpoche

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

The nature of mind is empty like space. That 'Big Mind' is naturally and inherently empty—no boundary, no limit, no center, no edge. For Tibetan Buddhists mind nature is 'empty in essence', like basic space (*dharmadhatu, chöying*). Just so, our human 'Small Mind' is essentially spacious, diaphanous and ephemeral. Yet unlike space, mind, and 'mind essence', our very Buddha Nature of Mind is cognizant and aware—spacious empty lucid 'timeless 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 Ati *Dzogchen* Great Perfection View of this everyday miracle of spacious vast expanse that is our selfless, all subsuming *dharmakaya* primordial love-wisdom awareness-consciousness ground:

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 through-

out 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 extremes of existence and nothing.

Yes. Our human mind is like space. Our nondual Buddha Nature of Mind may be seen as the original *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground' in whom our spacious 'ordinary mind' arises, participates, and is instantiated. The 'basic space' (*dharmadhatu, chöying*) of that natural indwelling primordial *dharmakaya* Nature of Mind is our innermost buddha mind, our buddha essence and 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 Gautama the Buddha.

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

In Indo-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 nondual truth is revealed in the Tibetan tradition via Guru Yoga, as we saw in Chapter I.

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

That noetic nondual primordial wisdom (*jnana, yeshe, gnosis*) is the self-arising, self-perfected, nondual Ati 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, semantic 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*.

### **Sublime Power of Bodhicitta**

Training the mind in loving kindness of *bodhicitta*—compassionate 'mind of enlightenment'—frees us from painful grasping at, and clinging to narcissistic, often self-destructive self-ego-I. Yet 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-ego-I, that unruly, apparitional non-entity that is concerned mostly with, yes, I-me-mine. A bit paradoxical to dualistic concept-mind because selfless *bodhicitta* is, well, selfless. To assuage the suffering of living beings is the *ultimate* purpose of *relative* Buddhist practice. That is union of love and wisdom. As to this gracious '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 ego-I learns to take refuge in Buddha's selfless prior and present no-self *anatman* primordial awareness

ground. Bright indwelling Presence of That (*tathata, thatness*), mirrored always by the outer Guru in clear lucid context of Guru Yoga; utterly "beyond hope and fear". [Ch. I]

Hence does selfless *bodhicitta* become the open secret and primary cause of 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 the 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, charis, ahimsa, patheos*). We do have this ethical choice—the second (*sila*) 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 pernicious 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, random 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 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 into 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. [Appendix B] "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 bodymind there is as well the luminous clear light Nature of Mind that embraces, pervades and subsumes it. And That (*tathata*) inherent, indwelling, love-wisdom ecology of mind is our spacious primordial buddha nature/essence (*buddhadhatu, buddhajnana*). Indeed, relative mind and the ultimate Buddha Nature of Mind are always already a prior and present one truth unity (*dzog*). We are told by the buddhas and mahasiddhas that deluded human mind and that very Nature of Mind in whom it arises—nondual Reality Itself—abide at this blissful

bright confluence in an awakened primordial state of relational equality and identity (*samatajnana*). That is the authentic provenance of this *kosmic* process of our human being.

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 clear, lucid selfless indwelling Being Itself Presence in our busy lives? Here again the proverbial dharma 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 indwelling luminous buddha nature and we begin the quiescent and happy calm abiding of *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 simple, mindful, basic *shamatha* that Shakyamuni Buddha adapted from his ancient Hindu Vedic *Sanatanadharma*, then revealed it to humankind. No need to complicate it. Our teachers remind us, *shamatha* is dualistic causal foundation of acausal nondual Ati 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*) with its deep cultural background materialist 'global web of belief'—we have 'forgotten' (*amnesia, marigpa, avidya*) actual 'supreme identity' of our 'supreme source' ground and fall under sway of a narcissistic self-ego-I with its odious habitual obsessive 'subject-object split' between knowing subject and its objects known. The result is terrible suffering for living beings; and for our precious Mother Earth. What to do?

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

That is the saving grace of the Tibetan 'fruitful view'. Take refuge in That. Take refuge in the prodigious Three Jewels—Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. Take refuge in the Fourth Jewel, your precious Guru/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 (*ösel*) original awareness-consciousness ground itself. That is who you actually are. That is your 'supreme identity' of this basal 'supreme source' that you always are now. Numinous bright Presence of That! Count these many blessings, breathe, and be happy here and now!

## 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 essential *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 also 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)

*The Nature of Awakened Mind*. "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 emotions.

—Adzom Paylo Rinpoche

Please consider this well. As our hearts and minds begin to open through 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 (*tathata*). Great Vajra Guru Mantra: *Om Ah Hum Benza Guru Pema Siddhi Hung*. Connect with that!

### **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 expresses the definitive wisdom Heart Essence of the entire *Prajnaparamita* teaching of the Mahayana vehicle. It's a concise 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 Indian 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*, *chöying*) of nondual primordial *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground', wholly positive all-pervading 'basic goodness', undefiled and untrammelled 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 *ultimate* intrinsic 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 is so much more than a mere "non-affirming negative" process. It is as well the positive affirming clear light luminosity and clarity (ösel) of light-matter-energy-form ( $E=mc^2$ ) continuously arising from its timeless, selfless primordial awareness emptiness ground as this great gift 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? We saw in Chapter I that Buddhist Vajrayana *shunyata*/emptiness is, as with form, itself also empty of any iota of *ultimate* intrinsic existence. This is termed the "emptiness of emptiness" (*shunyata shunyata*). Well then, how is emptiness established? Yes. On the accord of His Holiness Dalai Lama, "Emptiness is established by human relative conceptual minds."

The five *skandhas* of our human experience are: 1) physical form, 2) sensory feeling, 3) perception and conceptualization, 4) mental formation and volition; 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 independently real 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 spacetime light-matter-energy-form ( $E=mc^2$ ) 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, agnosis*—is expressed in relative spacetime form as such a narcissistic 'self' that begets terrible human and animal suffering (*duhkha, dukkha*).

Quiescent mindful introspection is a love-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 Ati Dzogchen View, Meditation, and Conduct that bears fruit of liberation from suffering, Vajrayana Fruition/Result of Meditation Path that is self-liberated harmless human happiness itself.

The practice of that Buddhadharma Path reveals nonconceptual direct experience of the inherent ultimate emptiness of form and of our innate buddha nature manifested as this relatively 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,

"Form is not other than emptiness; emptiness is not other than form." 'Form' here includes all arising appearing objective and subjective spacetime 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 an ontic prior and phenomenally present *one truth unity!* That unity (*dzog*) is invariant throughout all relative human reference frames. *We must learn to see that sublime prior and always present nondual one truth unity of Buddha's Two Truths—our singular already present buddha nature—in all of our dualistic relative perceptions.* The natural adversity that mortal flesh is heir to is always now our love-wisdom buddha mind clarity and bliss.

It is crucial 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.* Perfectly subjective emptiness is always present as fullness of the vast boundless whole of everything that objectively appears in space and time. 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 existing appearing phenomena. The Buddha denied such an unexamined extreme materialist metaphysic. There is a Kantian, centrist middle path wisdom cognitive space that gently embraces the destructive false dichotomy of the metaphysical extremes of eternalist, substantialist absolute existence (Scientific Materialism/Physicalism), and of nihilist absolute 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. Yes, it requires a bit of mature 'ego strength' for such a bogus self to gradually 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 absolute intrinsic existence (*svabhava*) of form (eternalist, substantialist Metaphysical Materialism) is heavy indeed. May dualistic objective Big Science and our concepts about 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 from its emptiness ground as a cause and effect process, "Form is emptiness." And because form and emptiness are a prior unity, "Emptiness is form." Yes. Boundless emptiness *is* the interdependent arising (*pratitya samutpada*) of this stuff that is 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*). That wondrous *process* of awakening begins with Buddha's *shamatha* "mindfulness of breathing". That is the providential beginning of the counter intuitive truth of our indwelling always already present Presence of buddha nature, primordial *dharmakaya* Nature of Mind. Like vast empty space, *dharmakaya* is empty in essence, clarity by nature, and compassionate in its energy 'responsiveness'—beyond concept and belief—*ultimate* supreme source of all *relative* phenomenal arising which is its dynamic 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. [Ch. I]

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 both relative and 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 Nature of Mind itself, very Buddha Nature of Mind that is our 'supreme identity'. Bright indwelling Presence of That.

The Buddha told his disciples that his nirvana was not like 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 every living being. That is our essential buddha nature buddha mind. With the advent of Indian, then 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 recent Buddhist tradition.

## The Buddha Nature/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 of 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 soon see that this false dichotomy has a clear centrist 'middle path' resolution.

Early Indian and Tibetan texts viewed buddha nature in accordance with the two primary schools of Buddhist Mahayana doctrine—Middle Way Prasangika Madhyamaka (*Rangtong* or empty of self) of Tsongkhapa's 14th century Gelug School, and Middle Way Svatantrika Yogachara (*Shentong* or 'empty of other' phenomena) that began with Indian Shantarakshita's 8th century enhancement of the 4th century Yogachara teaching of Asanga and Vasubandu—a Kantianesque 'critique of pure reason' by radical Prasangika.

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 of 'emptiness' became even more contested. By the 14th century Tibetan Buddhism was split between two differing views of emptiness and buddha nature, namely Rangtong "intrinsic emptiness" or "emptiness of self" (Gelug lineage), and Shentong "extrinsic emptiness" or "emptiness of other" phenomena (Jonang lineage).

Broadly construed, Shentong polemics argued that 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. Here, 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 Gelug Prasangika Madhyamaka Rangtong ultimate nonexistence. Such an extreme view is surely nihilist!

*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. Surely 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 [buddha] 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, svabhavakaya*]...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 epistemic Idealism of the Svatantrika bent of Indian Buddhist philosophy as expressed in the Yogachara school (4th-5th century) of Asanga, and in the 8th century refinement of Yogachara by the great Shantarakshita.

Ju 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 thus praised 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 ecumenical *rimé mahasiddha* Mipham himself.

*Svatantrika Yogachara Madhyamaka Shentong*. The 4th century Yogachara of Asanga matured into a profound Buddhist Kantian-like centrist 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 vigorous critical dialectics of 8th century 'ancient' Nyingma school over against the New Translation (*sarma*) schools of Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug. Our Shentong/Rangtong critical dialectic is part of that critical 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. How so? Prasangika is most akin 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 mind/consciousness who conceives that nothing exists. All this illusory arising phenomena is 'Mind Only'. As with the Yogachara of old, and with the other Madhyamikas, mind, with all other phenomena, remains absent and empty of essential nature. So even *that* perceiving mind does not *ultimately* exist. That 'mentalist' view is Svatantrika Yogachara, the noble Shentong Buddhist ontic Transcendental Idealism. Well, where is the middle?

*Prajnaparamita*. In Tibetan traditions the ultimate meaning of Middle Way 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 concept and belief 'discursive meditation', including the nine stages of mindful shamatha (*Ch. VII*), while "sublime beings" experience their realities mostly through nondual yogic direct perception (*yogi pratyaksa*). [Pettit 1999]

That is the basis for Longchenpa's (2001 p.223) urgent distinction between 'ordinary mind' dualistic "meditation with support" of a conceptual dualistic "frame of reference" (mantra, deity visualization), and nondual "meditative stability" without support (Ati Dzogchen View)—"the ongoing and naturally settled state that is the true nature [ground] of phenomena." These two cognitive modalities constitute an ultimate prior unity because causal dualistic 'meditation' is in a syncretic ultimate view embraced and subsumed in acausal *Ati Yoga* Great Perfection 'meditative stability'—nondual 'meditative absorption'.

*The Great Perfection*. Jamgon Ju Mipham (1846-1912)—Manjushri himself—was a Dzogchen master, syncretist and systematic epistemologist of the highest possible excellence. He developed the philosophical tradition of the Nyingma school '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 works *The Beacon of Certainty* (2002), a product, with his *The Lion's Roar* (2002), of the *rimé* ecumenical renaissance of 19th century Tibetan Buddhism.

*The Lion's Roar* is an exposition of our Shentong buddha nature. *The Beacon* is a very early profound guide to certainty of the view of the unity of appearance and emptiness. It is a scintillating elucidation of the Great Perfection View. Exoterically it is commensurate with conceptual Rangtong Prasangika emptiness; and esoterically it is consistent with nondual Ati Dzogchen, and with Shentong buddha nature ultimate existence. Indeed, we have seen that Prasangika is the conceptual foundation of non-conceptual Ati Dzogchen.

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 causal, conceptual, polemical critical dialectics of the inherently gradualist 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 yogic experience, transcending and embracing its foundational conceptual Rangtong Prasangika. In this way Dzogchen may be seen as a critique of Prasangika pure reason, as we've seen.

Therefore, the View of Dzogchen, the Great Completion, is not a critical philosophy at all, but direct 'meditative stability' of nondual primordial wisdom (*yeshe*, gnosis) itself that is so pragmatically useful in healing 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 'fruitional nonmeditation'. Together these two voices of wisdom—relative and ultimate valid cognition—result in nondual ultimate realization of all the buddhas. The assiduous practice of That (*tathata*) 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 mostly dualistic and conceptual, and so cannot flourish.

For Lama Mipham, without this all too rare cognitive unity, the valiant attempt to establish Buddha's emptiness/*shunyata* through a human reason 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*. We need both.

In his very early *Beacon of Certainty* Mipham agrees with Gelug school's Rangtongpa Tsongkhapa that the 'extrinsic emptiness' of the protean Shentong view of Jonang school's Dölpopa does not fully comprehend Buddhist emptiness. And this view seems to contradict Mipham's vigorous defense of Shentong in his sublime later polemic



*The Lion's Roar*. Does that render Mipham's view as to ultimate essence of our buddha nature ambiguous? Is he finally a Shentongpa or a Rangtongpa? Scholars do not agree.

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 so cannot be negated and reduced to Tsongkhapa's Prasangika 'absolute negation', an ostensibly nihilist view of emptiness. Well, is our inherent buddha nature finally a delusory Relative Truth; or is it a truly existent Ultimate Truth? Or both?

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), while 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 ostensible ambivalence is palpable. John Pettit (1999 p. 113) reveals Mipham's early cognitive process in *The Beacon*:

[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 [meditative absorption].

So, *The Lion's Roar* defends Shentong and the Great Perfection; and the much earlier *Beacon* appears to defend the radical intrinsic conceptually reasoned emptiness of the Prasangika Rangtong view, which approximates the trans-conceptual nondual Ati Dzogchen View. Hence these two views are not inherently incompatible. By utilizing the two voices—objective and subjective—of our cognitive capacity we win a complementary conceptual Relative Truth and nondual Ultimate Truth unitary understanding. Or do we?

John Pettit suggests that Mipham may have composed *The Lion's Roar* at the behest of his Shentong teacher Khentse Wangpo Rinpoche (1999 p.114). Perhaps. But Mipham's passionate and brilliant defense of Shentong principles also appears elsewhere in his 32 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 Ju Mipham 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'. Are Rangtong and Shentong 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 later 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 Rangtong and Shentong views. That indeed is the view of some 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—Rangtong Prasangika and Shentong Svatantrika Yogachara.

*Buddhist Emptiness and Dzogchen.* 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—one truth unity (*dzog*) of Buddha's prodigious Two Truths that are relative form and 'basic space' (*chöying*) of 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 cognition—perception, conception, and even common paraconceptual 'meditation with support'.

*Therefore, the "non-affirming negative" that is Prasangika Rangtong '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 scholastic 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 negation 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 of these 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. That *ultimate bodhicitta* naturally and spontaneously manifests in spacetime form through the luminous Presence (*rigpa*) of *definitive* primordial love-wisdom gnosis (*yeshe, jnana*) as the present *relative bodhicitta* of intention and engaged human 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, while arising as anything at all." *Emaho!*

*We must maintain a nondual awareness of dualistic 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. 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 in empty, quiescent, naked clarity—that is bright 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 false 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 a perceiving subject and its perceived objects revealing the prior and present emptiness *and* radiant clear light unity of such gratuitous worrisome dichotomies. Our enlightened, indwelling love-wisdom buddha mind knows the duality of 'appearance and reality' as the perfect bright clarity and equality of ultimate nondual sameness (*samatajnana*); Longchenpa's primordial 'oneness'. Meanwhile, we may appreciate a bit of self-effacing humor in this inherent delusional duality of all our conceptual, discursive semiotic (logical syntax, semantics/meaning, pragmatics/usage) attempts to understand and verbally express such nondual wisdom—sublime *samadhi* of certainty of That (*tathata, tattoa, tat, sat, thatness, suchness*).

As to this nondual fruitional view, Nagarjuna told, "It is already accomplished from the very beginning; to rest here without seeking, that is the Meditation." And yes, the contemplative continuity of that union 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 continuity of easeful 'nonmeditation' upon the Heart Essence of the Nyingma school Longchen Nyingthig of lineage masters Garab Dorje, Longchenpa, Jigme Lingpa, and H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche.

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

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

The *longde* space class teaches the essential emptiness of awareness and clarity of mind which corrects emotional clinging to peace and 'clear light' lucidity 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 foundational *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 *mannagag*, 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 *mannagag* (*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, *rupakaya* (*sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya*). 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 impermanent physical body.

Meanwhile, the prepared Dzogchen practitioner assiduously engages, during or after the daunting *ngondro* 'preliminary practices', the so called lesser or lower stages of the Nyingma nine vehicles of enlightenment. This is often done in one or more one year solitary meditation retreats practicing Development Stage and Completion Stage yoga. In Perfection Stage *tögal* retreat the Dzogchen yogi or yogini is said to surrender hitherto attractive but contrived practice ritual and now rests alone in great silence of primordial Deep as habitual 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 then 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. And yes. 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 nondual 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 pragmatic utility of limited human reason with its deductive, inductive and later alternative 'paraconsistent' logics, yet he points out inherent wisdom limit of mere human concept/belief. He self-reflexively utilizes our concept-mind to deracinate and critique its own inherent limit. I have hitherto noted correlation of this wisdom view to that of Immanuel Kant's Western *Critique of Pure Reason*.

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 Tsongkhapa 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 both 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) cannot be empty of its own inherent existence. Our ultimate buddha nature exists! 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 'noself'. Yes, Buddha told, "Selfless noself 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, including our concepts and beliefs *about* buddha nature, 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 spacious 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 empty of deceptive [relative] reality."

Once again, buddha nature, our precious buddha love-wisdom mind (*buddhajnana*) is indeed empty of the *conceptual* 'concealer' phenomena of Buddha's Relative Truth dimension, but decidedly not empty of the *nonconceptual* 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, negated, 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 ultimately reduced or negated 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* of existence and precious *buddic* qualities are all 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. Prasangika arrives at this audacious conclusion by way of dubious, capricious dualistic conceptual human reason alone! Nondual *Ati Yoga*, wherefore art thou?

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, embracing 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, that is the invariant one truth unity (*dzog*) of these two truth reality dimensions. It is that luminosity, that basic space (*chöying*) ultimate primordial *dharmakaya* ground, very buddha nature buddha essence (*tathagatagarbha, 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 lineage 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 (*samvriti*) is surely illusory, 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, ultimate *dharmakaya* Buddha Nature of Mind.

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

We can now see the possibility of a syncretic unity of nondual Dzogchen View and its direct *rigpa* gnosis wisdom Presence of primordial intrinsic awareness itself, with clarifying conceptual critical 'pure reason' of Prasangika Madhyamaka. 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. Yet, Longchenpa has told that *nothing* in this display of samsara and nirvana arising in 'basic space' *ultimately* exists! [Chöying Dzöd]

Ju 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 that *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', substantialism and essentialism of absolute phenomenal existence (Metaphysical Scientific Materialism/Physicalism).*

Yes, 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 the Karmapas, Jamgön Kongtrul, Dilgo Khentse Rinpoche, Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, Kalu Rinpoche, and Adzom Paylo 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". In Shentong the ultimate wisdom of all the buddhas is finally fully established. If that is not so, Ultimate Truth essence and nature of our appearing Relative Truth spacetime realities would amount to little more than nihilistic nothingness. That is the Shentong view.

*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 centrist Shentong view, now being taught by high lamas in Nyingma, Kagyu, and Sakya lineages, but not the Rangtong Prasangika Gelug lineage of Tsongkhapa. More recently H.H. Dalai Lama has embraced that *rimé* view.

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 have 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 para-Hindu 'eternalism'.

Again, Rangtongpas—Gelugpa School of Tsongkapa—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 is *ipso facto*. Here, 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 mahasiddha masters.

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 seen as the 'definitive' ultimate teaching of 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 herein 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. Once again, Rangtong 'intrinsic emptiness' sees everything, all arising phenomena, even our intrinsic buddha nature itself, as an ultimate nonexistence.

Perhaps I belabor that point. The dichotomy: does our buddha nature ultimately exist at the nondual spiritual Heart (*hridyam, nyingpo, kokoro*) of the human being, beyond our relative concepts and beliefs about it; or is it a 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 (medpa).*

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-liberated self-arising knowing-feeling awareness of That; the Path which reveals That; and Fruition/Result which expresses That. That is the ultimate View of the 'highest', subtlest acausal 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 that is buddhahood—while they all differ as to their *relative* practices to realize it.

It is told by Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche and others 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 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 directly experiential "primordial intrinsic awareness itself is absolute guru" (Jigme Lingpa), utterly nondual noetic Presence, above and beyond our discursive dualistic cause and effect concepts and beliefs about it.*

This 'highest' subtlest trans-conceptual, nondual, non-causal, non-deceptive definitive teaching is in its essence free of dualistic concept and belief. It deracinates such inherently misleading relative causal conceptual cognition. It admits of no logical or scientific proof, and so is not subject to logical nor hermeneutical refutation. Highest *Ati Yoga* transcends yet includes dualistic objective 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 objective conceptual '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, manngag/upadesha*) 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—boundless whole of our human cognitive potential. As to that perfectly subjective dimension, we do 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 prior 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 'pure 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, nondual Dzogchen View.*

Thickening the plot, we've seen that Rangtong Prasangika argues that the normalizing buddha nature of Shentong Svatantrika Yogachara, sometimes referred to as a 'Buddha Self', is 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* noself. Does this pesky dialectical conceptual conundrum remain unresolved?

### **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 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 some 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 dialectic is Prasangika Madhyamaka, the causal conceptual foundation of acausal Ultimate Truth Ati Dzogchen View and Praxis. And yet, in the nondual mind of Lonchenpa, "In spacelike awareness...ultimate truth has never existed as anything..." Radical *prasanga*.

Well then, 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 yogic 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 an even higher synthesis of these two? And that is the acausal, nondual Ati Dzogchen synthesis of this seemingly interminable Rangtong/Shentong deliberation.

Kagyü scholar-practitioner Karl Brunnhölzl holds that, for these and other reasons, the protean 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 all too 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, non-conceptual, acausal, perfectly subjective nondual living spiritual *process*, the Dzogchen *tögal Presence* (not a mere relative objective conceptual *thing*) of the *chöying* basic space of *ultimate* primordial *dharmakaya* ground, enfolded intrinsic wholeness of objective unfolding spacetime phenomena; or 2) as an expedient *relative* step function about the ultimate existence of a human *concept* regarding our buddha nature. The Great Perfection unifies these two processes as a prior 'oneness'. [Semiotically, verbs represent dynamic *processes*; nouns represent objective *things*. We tend to reify nouns into essentially existent objects.]

As to my own view, I shall follow the lead of Dzogchen masters Longchenpa, Jigme Lingpa, Jamgön Mipham, Adzom Drukpa and Adzom Paylo Rinpoche. And as well the voice of Tibetan Nyingma lineage insofar as it embraces the nondual *process* of Great Perfection/Great Completeness View of 1) above as to the always already present union of bliss and emptiness, and of clarity and emptiness—that open secret of human happiness.

After all is said and done one must make an often uncomfortable, less than certain *ontological commitment!* And compassionately act upon it. Mindfulness meditation in *action*. Our contemplative nondual direct experiential certainty (*yogi pratyaksa*) facilitates this urgent cognitive process. The alternative is too often an uncommitted, inactive 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.

Be that as it may, the cognitively cloddish dualistic 'either-or' false dichotomies that we habitually indulge must be surrendered to the nonconceptual, nondual primordial wisdom reality gnosis (*chos nyid yeshe*) Ultimate Truth that transcends relative conceptual critical dialectics, whether scholarly, or our not so 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 that already embraces 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 an ecology of fear 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 our 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 this *selfless* indwelling very Buddha Nature of Mind. Without That (*tathata*) we are indeed 'poor in Spirit'. So why don't we do it? Self-ego-I *pride* is the rub.

Our wondrous trans-conceptual perfect indwelling buddha essence buddha nature with all its *buddic* 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 causal conceptual elaboration—our innate always already indwelling buddha nature Spirit Presence is neither permanent nor impermanent, neither existent nor nonexistent, neither affirmed nor negated. That is the Ati nondual view. Buddha nature always 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 all semiotic linguistic cause and effect judgment, affirmation and negation. Intimations of perfection.

Clearly this cannot be logically or empirically 'proven' by objective 'Big Science'.

Indeed, our human cognitive dualities inherent in the semiotic nature of thinking and language are actually the natural clarity and luminosity of our innate buddha heart buddha mind, *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*, *dharmadhātu*) 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 unfolding spacetime causes and conditions. So it cannot be a *causal* product or condition of our conventional spacetime dimension of Buddha's Relative Truth.

Thus our nondual always present *buddic* 'wakefulness' is quite beyond our semiotic linguistic concepts and beliefs about it. Rather, it abides naturally, 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—dreadful 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 Buddha's monumental Two Truths that constitute infinite boundless whole of Reality Being Itself. We awaken to that great truth upon life force *prana/lung* spirit wind (*Lungta*) of each spacious breath. As the Buddha and the Christ told, that bright quiescent 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 (*tathata*). Thus for we human beings all appearance, even negative afflictive emotion, are manifestations of inherently 'primordially pure' love and wisdom, 'spontaneously present' compassionate energy/responsiveness of the one truth unity of Buddha's prodigious Two Truths—relative form and ultimate boundless emptiness whole.

How so? All arising finite spacetime form is but adornment of infinite "*Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen*", primordial basic space (*chöying*) *dharmakaya* emptiness ground, always "perfect exactly as it is", utterly invariant through all human cognitive 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 nondual Dzogchen Fruitional View gently 'pointed out' through loving kindness and wisdom of the Dzogchen master.

Our buddha nature 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 'primordially present' from the very beginning.

Hence, on accord of Buddha, our buddha nature is innately 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 present buddha nature. It's already here, now. Within the human being we directly experience it (*yogi pratyaksa*), beyond our concepts and beliefs about it, that bright luminous clarity and 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 *prana* spirit breath in the belly. Here, negative emotions cannot prevail. They are all spontaneously surrendered on the mindful *shamatha* out-breath. With a bit of patience all such *thinking*—negative or positive—shall pass.

Meanwhile, compassionate practice, for example *tonglen*, and basic 'compassion meditation' (*Chapter VIII*), cultivate 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 a greater view, an underlying prior holistic interconnected interdependent (*pratitya samutpada*) natural orderly process.]

Well, how precisely shall we awaken to this wonder that is our indwelling buddha nature? On the accord of Buddha Gautama Shakyamuni this prodigious Buddha Nature of Mind may be directly experienced by *choosing to rest* in the inherent natural Great Perfection of our busy distracted mind precisely as it is now—to 'let it be just as it is'. That is the 'innermost secret' teaching given by the Buddha to his disciples of the 'highest spiritual acumen'. That nondual teaching was revealed to us in Buddha's Third Turning of the Wheel of Dharma—Indo-Tibetan Vajrayana Secret Mantra arising as nondual acausal Ati Dzogchen, the Great Perfection—Great Completion of the Mahayana Causal Vehicle.

In Dzogchen tradition we know it as the 'naked open awareness' of *Ati Yoga* 'nonmeditation'—effortless, spontaneous, natural, luminous stream of being here awake.

We enter in this quiescent mindstream of ours—selfless, lucent primordial Presence of That (*tathata*)—by simultaneously engaging both voices of our human cognitive potential: objective conceptual form, and subjective contemplative emptiness; union of Buddha's Two Truths. Recall, "Form is empty; emptiness is form." Padmasambhava told, "You shall accomplish ultimate truth only through relative truth. Practice them together."



## Mindful Bright Interlude: The Open Secret of Human Happiness

Whether or not you have contemplatively discovered, beyond your concepts and beliefs about it, the always already present Presence of timeless *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 selfless bright 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*. Expel the stale breath 9 times. Place your conscious attention/awareness upon the life force *pranallung* spirit breath in your belly (*lungdang*). Breathe normally. *Feel* your bright Spirit Presence—without thinking about it.

3) *Mantra*. Now begin mantra: *OM AH HUM*, or other mantra. Unify with Guru's mindstream thus: *AH AH AH*. *Feel* luminous Presence of that in your *sambhogakaya* 'upper room' three feet above your crown chakra at the crown of your head. *Feel* your crown center open as *thigle* deity essence descends and pervades your body-mind. From the life force *prana* in your belly experience selfless bright purity of your subtle central channel.

4) *Light Up Your Chakras*. From the *hara* or *do* center in your belly place your attention briefly on the White *AH* at your *hridayam/nyingpo* heart chakra. Now your throat center (voice, speech, *vishuddha*). Now your 'third eye' *ajna* center, prefrontal cortex behind your forehead. Now your crown center. 'Let there be light'. *Rest* here for a few moments.

*Now 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* this 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* that quiescent bright Presence now.

Again move your awareness to your "great bliss crown wheel". Without effort *feel* your crown center open. Now *yidam* deity, or your spiritual master, 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 into 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. Sharply focus your *prana* breath energy wherever you feel a physical or emotional obstruction to life energy flow: tension, pain, anxiety, anger, random desire, pride, drowsiness. *PHAT!* Blockage released! Surrender it all on the out-breath. *Rest*. Enjoy clear, blissful peace 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* peace, clarity, or happy experience (*nyams*). 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 any substance or power that 'self' does not choose to bestow upon them. Simply allow whatever arises in the mind to 'self-liberate' of its own accord leaving no trace. Patience. It all shall pass. So *rest* now (*rigdang*) in "bare awareness in its pristine nakedness...pure expanse of space"—*primordial ground of being itself*.

7) *Return to Your Breath*. Be awareness of quiescent *prana* wind in the belly. Breathe normally. In this quiet space abides peace beyond all understanding. *Feel* living Heart Essence of *AH*. Your essential nature is *HUM*—'supreme identity' of *OM*. *OM AH HUM*. Now place your mantra in awareness background. Rest in pure Presence of the ground.

8) *Your Buddha Nature*. Now you are aware, without thinking about it, that you are resting in selfless, open, empty, luminous awareness itself—Buddha Nature of Mind. Peace and bliss of That (*tathata*). *You are now aware of the vast timeless, selfless, boundless space of your awareness*. Self-centered self reference ('selfing') is absent. *Feel* clear light luminous knowing-feeling *certainty* of this Presence of 'original wakefulness'. That is primordial awareness itself. Whatever arises, 'let it be as it is'. No need to judge. Jigme Lingpa: "Simply observe....Intrinsic awareness is absolute Guru." That knowing-feeling love-wisdom awareness is always present—awareness background or foreground. *Be That Now*.

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

Engage this essential mindfulness practice from 60 seconds to 60 minutes. Make it your own. Adapt it. That Presence you are. Don't push the river. Relax, rest, and enjoy.

Christians: replace 'buddha nature' with *christos*: 'Christ nature', 'Presence of Christ'.

This clear, bright, selfless, active 'nonmeditation' we shall further explore in *Ch. VII* in the 'stages' of mindful shamatha practice. "Brief Course" summation appears in *Ch. VIII*.

## Refuge, Meditative Stability, and Fruition

To awaken to the Fruitional View—"That happiness you seek is always already present within you"—we rely on the Guru's compassion and the love-wisdom of the holy dharma. We *choose* to practice mindfulness, and 'take refuge' in the Three Jewels and *dharmakaya* ground. Now we recognize, pacify, stabilize, then *realize* present body, voice, and mind of all the buddhas. Yes told Buddha, "Selfless noself is the true refuge of self." "Wonder of wonders", that Guru Yoga Refuge is now already your love-wisdom buddha mind (*buddhajnana*), your now present, 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, that 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; but we can *be* happy in this present moment now. *Emaho!* Bright clarity. Great joy!

As you begin to tame the 'wild horse of the mind'—breath by mindful breath—obsessive 'self-referential thinking' ('selfing') begins to 'self-liberate' (*rang grol*) at the very instant of its arising as you learn to relax into, then rest in that empty 'basic space' (*dharmadhatu, chöying*) of phenomena—peace and yogi's bliss, your 'supreme identity' of that 'supreme source' *dharmakaya* ground—natural wakefulness of Buddha Nature of Mind. 'You' begin to notice that you are happy, even as inexorable adversity continues to arise in your busy life-world. Hopeful idealized expectations of dharma practice are gone.

*Should you desire to enter in more deeply—beyond concepts about self and noself—Longchenpa (1998 p.236) told, from that common dualistic 'meditation' spontaneously arises the "natural meditative stability of meditative absorption"—nondual "meditation without support"—without dualistic deity mantra support. "Meditative absorption is the supreme state of natural abiding...[that] natural meditative stability permeates awareness." And from that ultimate awareness ground naturally arises Longchenpa's "responsiveness"—relative kind compassionate bodhicitta response to human and animal suffering—thought, intention, and engaged action/conduct for the benefit of all living beings. Yes, that most of all.*

That 'wisdom of kindness' engaged *action* is after all the open secret of your own human happiness. The 'two limbs' of the Buddha's teaching: *Love* guided by *Wisdom*. Love as compassionate *bodhicitta*. Wisdom as *relative* discriminating wisdom (*prajna*) arising in nondual *ultimate* primordial wisdom (*yeshe, jnana, gnosis*) of the boundless infinite expanse of 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 we continuously practice nondual refuge we can now *feel* our buddha nature buddha mind in midst of the scattered activity of our 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 very instant of its arising, before we act on it, creating negative karma.

Great Completion/Perfection clarity/bliss! Stop and *feel* that just for this brief moment now. Stop and smell the roses. Our innermost buddha mind Presence has a very subtle scent of roses. "*Ehi Passika*: Come and see for yourself". [Shakyamuni Buddha]

Now stop reading and *feel* Presence *directly* for 60 seconds. We are told by the wise that 'success' of our meditation practices of the Path is "brief moments, many times", 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. It's always present.

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

The present moment intimacy of our always present enlightened buddha mind was expressed in the lovely prose of great 16th century Ch'an 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.

Sublime. In this nondual ultimate Fruitional View no ego 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 within you." [Jesus the Christ] 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 goals now become the moment to moment practice itself. *Make your goal the path*.

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 nondual 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; '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 that singular spacious ground of being. Longchenpa told, "All things are pure by nature, spontaneously present, nondual. They arise within a single basic space...they do not, in essence exist separately." Now you have nondual yogic certainty of it! *Feel Presence of that vast whole for 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 grounding that ultimate gnosis love-wisdom buddha mind Nature of Mind have naturally 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 Presence of essential Buddha Nature of Mind. That is 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 receive it often. How? Avoid expectations. Remain close to your mindful breath in the belly; and at the Heart, throat, forebrain, and your "great bliss crown wheel". Your goal is this always 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 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 entirely upon your Dzogchen master's guidance.]

## Shamatha Calm Abiding and Dzogchen

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 *pranallung* spirit breath in the belly. That wise courageous conscious placement of attention instantly connects you to your spiritual home—*nonobjective* 'basic space' of nondual 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. These two together prepare the body and mind to receive nondual Dzogchen teaching from the master. A calm quiescent mind is perforce necessary to Ati Dzogchen practice. During the 'nine stages of shamatha', analytic vipashyana and mindful shamatha are naturally practiced together and so constitute a unity that prepares for 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 so to our already present compassionate harmless 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 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 eighth yogic wisdom discipline of his Eightfold Path. In Tibetan Buddhism that stage involves Ati Dzogchen kadag trekchö ground, and tögal lhundrub Presence of that ground. We discover, then realize That in the supreme nondual Great Perfection teaching.*

In all cases of shamatha and vipashyana, and then of Ati Dzogchen, practice is motivated by compassionate *bodhicitta*—the thought, prayer, intention, and engaged action/conduct for the benefit of all living beings—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 [relative] mind, is highest *Ati Yoga* of Dzogchen...Shamatha calm abiding is the foundation for advanced Dzogchen teaching."

[21st century Dzogchen master Adzom Paylo Rinpoche] Indeed, it is the first of the four Nyingma Dzogchen Yogas, as we shall soon see.

*Shamatha is an urgent prerequisite practice for approaching Dzogchen View and Practice. Without such pacification of dualistic concept mind nondual Dzogchen remains all too 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 ancient Nyingma lineage Dzogchen *semde* (mind) teaching cycle shamatha is the first of the Four Dzogchen Yogas, followed by vipashyana, *kadag* (*trekcho*) nondual 'primordially pure' ground, and *lhundrub* (*tögal*) primordial Presence of that ground. These four parallel the Four Yogas of Kagyu lineage highest *Essence Mahamudra*.

### **'Nonmeditation' is Spontaneous Action of Your Buddha Nature**

We've seen that 'nonmeditation' is an active, effortless, spontaneous continuity of natural enlightened awareness. In non-goal directed, non-doing of nondual Ati Dzogchen we do not culture, fabricate, or conceptually contrive any meditative state by actively *doing* something. We simply remain present to already present indwelling primordial Presence.

But wait! Freedom from such contrived 'doing' elaborations is not the liberating freedom of nondual primordial awareness wisdom (gnosis, *yeshe*, *jnana*). Yes, "Mind is like space". Yet mind is so much more than *negative* empty space. "Mind is cognizant and aware". Mind is naturally pervaded and suffused with the very Nature of Mind—*positive* bliss and luminous clear light clarity (*ösel*) of always present Presence of selfless, timeless primordial awareness wisdom itself (*yeshe*, *jnana*, gnosis). That dynamical awareness Presence of *ultimate bodhicitta*—wondrous love-wisdom gift that realizes the wisdom of emptiness—spontaneously expresses itself in the dimension of human time and space as the *relative bodhicitta* of intention and engaged action—kind, compassionate 'responsiveness' or 'enlightened intent' for benefit of all living beings. And that active *nonmeditation in action* is the open secret of our own human happiness. *Emaho! Mahasukaho!*

Active nonmeditation abides beyond the duplicitous duality of meditator and meditation. On this subtle ultimate view there is nothing to seek, nothing to fabricate, nothing to meditate on, and nothing to accomplish. We simply 'let it be' as it already is. That is wisdom of *Wu Wei*. Buddha told, "It's perfect just as it is." What remains? Only 'primordial purity' of easeful Being Itself. Now there is only self-liberated 'basic space', empty, timeless, selfless, nondual primordial awareness *dharmakaya* 'groundless ground' of luminous spacious fullness, our precious being here in form and time. And that's enough.

Hence, active nonmeditation facilitates the mind's continuous direct experience (*yogi pratyaksa*), then *rest* in that always present ground state of nondual 'open primordial Presence'. We need not try to meditate. We need not *try* to do anything at all. We just sit and walk. Our only 'goal' is continuity of rest in nondual body-mind-spirit openness. 'Oneness'. Thus do we open our hearts and minds to receive that which is already present at the spiritual Heart (*nyingpo, hridayam, kokoro*) 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 now—*HUM*, our indwelling, bare, purely present instant Presence of primordial awareness 'groundless ground'. We abide fearlessly in that blissful clarity of the 'wisdom of emptiness'. Why? For the "two benefits, self and other", of course.

So yes, simply resting effortlessly in that 'basic space' (*chöying, dharmadhatu*) of phenomena is in the Nyingma Ati 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. That nondual truth is who we actually are now, our 'supreme identity'. And so we 'simply sit with no gaining idea': no effort, no expectations.

And yes, that 'meditative stability' is undistracted, non-seeking, non-doing, active 'nonmeditation'. It is quite natural because vast infinite *chöying* basic space of primordial *dharmakaya* ground already embraces and pervades us. We have never departed it. It is ultimate 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, the nondual 'fourth state'.

Again, 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 indwelling 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 can happen there. Yes, 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? 'Nonmeditation' on 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 causal "stages" of contemplative accomplishment that progressively eliminates discursive thinking and negative cognition, but rather to recognize such habitual thought 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 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', bright, lucid, selfless 'object of meditation' (*sattipathana*). The analytic penetrating insight of vipashyana then follows quite naturally. That is mindful 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 indeed require the step functional mind training stages of dualistic *relative* shamatha mindfulness practice as the causal foundation of acausal *ultimate* Ati Dzogchen View and practice. Meanwhile, Buddha's Two Truths—relative and ultimate—are a priori yet ever present natural, noetic nondual all-subsuming *one truth unity* (*dzog*).

*How May We Realize That Unity?* Our habitual cognitive life evolves from a deep cultural background of concepts and beliefs—our "global web of belief" (Quine 1969), from atavistic biased opinions about everything—to open questions about everything. Only in such an unbiased, 'openness' mind state may we cultivate contemplative direct experience (*yogi pratyaksa*) of unified subject-object certainty that we desire, quite beyond good questions about nature of our conceptually reified (*namtok, dianoia*) appearing realities. Now we may receive, then *rest* in nondual primordial wisdom (*yeshe, jnana, gnosis realization* at spiritual Heart—*selfless* 'supreme identity'—prior and present unity of objective experience with boundless wholeness of perfectly subjective Spirit ground in whom this all arises, participates, and is instantiated in illusory realm of space and time.

Finally, through such *awareness management* have we realized 'meditative absorption', nonmeditation 'meditative stability'—beyond retro-romantic cupidity of desire-mind attachment to our joyous but impermanent meditative experiences (*nyams*). That love-wisdom *realization* awakens yogi's bliss (*sukha*), lucent clarity (*ösel*), and the *prajna/sherab* 'logic of the nonconceptual' arising in our nondual primordial wisdom (*yeshe/jnana*) as altruistic harmless human Happiness Itself; happiness that cannot be lost.

*Historiographic Note.* Shamatha as mindful placement of awareness/attention upon the breath need not be construed as a purely Buddhist invention. It is present in its various contemplative array 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/Sufi. Buddha's shamatha 'mindfulness of breathing', by whatever splendid name or concept (*namarupa*) is indeed universal.

### **Buddhist Metaphysical Ontology**

Mahayana Buddhist ontology is relativistic 'Dependent Arising'. 'Ontology'—conceptual pursuit of ultimate nature of Being—can be a human conceit, a fabrication, a relative exercise in grasping at an empty nonexistent metaphysical absolute.

As the interdependent Two Truths of Buddha Shakyamuni our ultimate Buddha Mind awareness subsumes and embraces our relative concept mind. We utilize Relative Truth to approach Ultimate Truth. Thus may we use conceptual metaphysical ontology as 'discursive meditation' to self-reflexively transcend itself in utterly nonconceptual nondual formless, selfless, timeless primordial awareness *dharmakaya* ground of all phenomenal spacetime appearing existence. That (*tathata, tattva*, thatness) is ultimate Buddha Nature of Mind—lucid bright Presence of our 'supreme identity'. That is centrist Buddhist ontology.

Yes, the Buddha encouraged us to avoid metaphysics and instead engage an assiduous joyous relative practice of his Four Noble Truths. That is the main Buddhist way to cessation of suffering that is realization of harmless (*ahimsa*) human happiness—both relative (*eudiamonia, felicitas*), and ultimate (*paramananda, mahasukha, beatitudo*).

Be that as it may, conceptual philosophical ontology and epistemology may, if engaged with the above healthy skepticism and a devotional motive for nondual truth, further a deeper understanding of the various Buddhist tenet systems in relation to one another, and to the other wisdom traditions that have arisen in the great Primordial Wisdom Tradition of humankind. To wit, the Hindu Vedic *Sanatanadharma* of our Buddha, Chinese Taoism, and Western Abrahamic monotheism—Hebrew, Christian, Islam/Sufi, and 'mystical' Hermetic Christian Kabbalah. We must engage both voices of our innate *noetic cognitive doublet*—objective conceptual, and subjective contemplative-meditative.

As to Buddha's Three Turnings of his Wheel of Dharma, the *First Turning* is the so called 'Lesser Vehicle', the Hinayana, codified in 1st century *Pali Canon*. It is an *Ontological Realism*—arising appearing phenomenal reality is objectively substantial and really real just as it appears to the six senses. Stuff exists! In the Mahayana *Second Turning* appearing spacetime stuff of reality is ultimately illusory and nonexistent—*Ontological Antirealism*. The Tibetan Mahayana Vajrayana *Third Turning* of the *Dharmachakra* presents a Middle Way between these two metaphysical extremes—Ontic Realism and Ontic Antirealism. That view arises in the two schools of Madhyamaka—antirealist Prasangika, and the ontic Idealism of Yogachara. Nondual acausal *Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen* transcends and embraces all of it—Great Completion of Mahayana Causal Vehicle.

## VII

### The Nine Stages of Shamatha

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

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 in 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 dualistic mindful foundation of liberating nondual Dzogchen practices that may follow.

We shall see that the first four stages of shamatha develop a bit of 'meditative stability' to the wild horse of the mind. These stages are 1) conscious *directed placement of attention* upon the 'object of meditation'—usually the mindful *pranallung* spirit breath in the belly; 2) *continuous attention*; 3) *repeated attention*; and 4) *close attention* of our 'timeless awareness'. Here the mindful practitioner maintains focused attentional awareness upon that 'object of meditation' (*sattipathana*). Stages five, six, and seven bestow easeful, restful, mindful bliss and 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 lucid 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 nonconceptual contemplative 'mindfulness of breathing', as many of my readers are already aware.

Conscious 'placement of attention' upon the mindful *prana/lung* love-wisdom mind breath (*jnanapрана*) in the belly begins with conscious surrender of busy scattered concept mind that then 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 space' (*chöying*) ultimate reality being itself in whom all relative spacetime stuff arises, participates, and is instantiated. And yes, that ground is your natural, indwelling, already present buddha nature buddha heartmind whose luminous numinous Presence is always mirrored and transmitted to you via the luminous mindstream of your Dzogchen master.

The *nine stages of shamatha* are an introduction to the natural continuity of prior and present unity of nondual primordial awareness-consciousness itself, always already spontaneously 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 *prana/lung* spirit breath in the belly—on the in-breath, then the out-breath (*Ch. VIII*). Counting the breaths may be useful. Course 'laxity' and drowsiness 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 *prana/lung* 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—proverbial 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, vivid, lucid.

'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. [Appendix B] 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 life world is thereby enhanced.

Some straight talk. You are now beginning the surrender of extremely hidden *pride* that you 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. Surrender it now.

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, then 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 Guru/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 effortless 'nonmeditation' becomes more constant. Buddha's 'mindfulness of breathing' focus of attention is extended to include the attention/awareness of your obsessively busy mind. Bright indwelling Presence of That. You can *feel* the release/relief. 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 *samadhi* 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 may 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/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 Completion Stage practices with your Dzogchen meditation master and his/her disciples. Your intimate family relationships and working relationships are stable, generous, patient, kind, and loving. You have earned almost everyone's respect. You have 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 approach freedom. Great joy! That selfless joy is the true human emotion. *Feel* That now and rejoice with all the buddhas!

6) *Mindfully Pacified Awareness*. 'Distractions' are further pacified. The calm space between thoughts may approach 10 minutes, or more. Conscious suppression of thinking is absent. Conceptual thinking is present but tamed and controlled. You still work with laxity and agitation. As solid fearful defensive boundary between 'self and other' is softened, 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 your 'self' chooses to bestow upon them. Resistance and excuses to mindfulness practice have fallen away. As Buddha predicted, your duplicitous demanding self-ego-I is now a selfless ally. You have come to be kind to your unruly self, like a 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.

As Buddha told so long ago, "Selfless no-self is the true refuge of self." You take refuge in 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. *Feel* Guru's Presence within you.

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 them. 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 further Completion Stage practice—*Yeshe*

*Lama*, and perhaps Dzogchen *trekchö* and/or *tögal* practice. You here now experience the easeful 'samadhi of certainty' that knows and feels it. Good job! 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, 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 more 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. 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] *Meditative Stability*: Along with your dualistic deity mantra practice you now *rest* in nondual "meditative absorption"—state of Longchenpa's "meditation without support".

8) *One Pointed Awareness*. Your awareness is single pointed within 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*—intention and action to benefit beings.

Fear/anger are mostly "gone, gone beyond". *Parasamgate*. You may direct your attention to directly experience (*yogi pratyaksa*) indwelling peace and yogi's bliss at will. You may still be attached to it. Distractions to your awareness are now very subtle; and you have the *patience* to surrender them. Anger/anxiety eruptions may still arise. In nondual "meditative absorption" meditation and meditator are a prior and present unity.

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 approach stability, but are not yet profound. A bit of "spirit pride" for what remains of your "self" is now in order. *Emaho!*



9) *Equanimity: Awareness Stability in Primordial Wisdom*. Peace, clarity, and 'meditative stability' manifest through your practice. Shamatha calm abiding, with vipashyana is well established. *Samadhi* clarity joy/bliss is effortlessly sustained in your sitting, walking, working, and teaching. Rest in 'meditative absorption'. Effortless quiescence in sitting and walking 'nonmeditation' may be maintained for hours with minimal distraction. The easeful *prana/lung (jnanaprana)* spirit life energy of primordial *dharmakaya* ground pervades your entire body and mind. You *feel* it. 'Spiritualized' pride, and egocentric attachment to yogic peace/bliss is mostly surrendered. Appearance and its emptiness ground are a present noetic, nondual, body mind spirit, subject-object unity!

Subtle latent attentional awareness imbalance may arise until the full *bodhi* of buddhahood. You accept that. 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 identity 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*, Perfection 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. 'Doubt' is gone beyond.

Still, you as a self-ego-I are not yet whole. 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. Your mindful shamatha has become wisdom in action.

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!*

Thank you Adzom Paylo Rinpoche, Adzom Gyalse Rinpoche, H.H. Dalai Lama, Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, Lama Dr. Harvey Aronson, Lama Dr. Anne C. Klein, Lama Tsultrim Allione, Dr. B. Alan Wallace, and many others for your help with this ambitious task of describing the inherently indescribable essence of our indwelling buddha nature; and for venturing to classify the indefinite 'stages' of the miracle that is this great gift of our shamatha awareness, always already present upon each mindful breath. *Mahasukaho!*

## VIII

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

*The Open Secret of Human Happiness: Being happy now!*

#### 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, random desire, greed 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'. And now the ten steps of "mindfulness meditation".

#### 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 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 bright 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 ground 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 fearful grasping self, "Peace, I Am". Take refuge in your bright selfless "noself" (anatman) Spirit source ground.*

Thoughts, questions, feelings naturally arise. Very 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 Presence that is always already present at Spirit Heart, 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 like.

### 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, your 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

Surrender on the out-breath all negative and positive thoughts, feelings, past, future, all self-ego-I grasping and clinging. Feel your stability deep in our precious Mother Earth. Whatever arises—thoughts, feelings, doubts, happy or not—release it all on the out-breath. Let it all go. 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 natural gift of peaceful luminous sky-like space of your mind—abiding here among the stars. That happy embodied mind is you!

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 '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. Patience.

*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 liberating freedom to be happy right here now. You accomplish that through conscious mindful "placement of attention/awareness" upon your 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 our 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 mindstream.

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 already 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's 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 chakras at belly, heart, throat, forebrain, and the crown of your head. *Feel* 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. 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.

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 about 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 upon the breath.

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 the 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 eternal moment now. 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 Presence 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 foolish comedy of your obsessive reactions to any 'disrespect' of your not so secure self, you discover and share 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." Discover again and again your mostly hidden *patience*.

*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 eternal spirit 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 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 (tathata).*

## 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 mentor. 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 in time. 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 virtue 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 mindful spiritual 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 is *bodhicitta*. It's the immeasurable magic metric for a good life. So arise from your mostly self-centered spiritual practice and do some good. It will make you happy here and now.

## 9. Real Practice

Practice requires patience and courage. Please don't say that you lack that. You demonstrate both in your life every day. Patience is the antidote to anger and ill will, which arises from basic 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, between your thoughts, each mindful breath. As H.H. Dalai Lama told, "Just open the door." Now enter in.

*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 six 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 Healing and Relaxation*: experienced as profound peace, bliss, forgiveness.
- 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—adversity, self doubt, fear/anxiety/anger, and the Great Love.
- 5) *Love-Wisdom Mind Presence*: authentic deep happiness expressed as your kind, compassionate engaged action for the benefit of living beings. Yes. That most of all.

Make your own list. Science has 'scientifically proven' many benefits of mindfulness meditation: reduced stress; feelings of happiness, goodwill and well-being; body-mind healing; treatment of depression, anxiety disorder, bipolar I and II; and many more.



## 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*. Once 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 spirit 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 quiescent life-light *prana* energy pervade your entire bodymind all the way down to the subatomic level.

Quietly relax and into this subtle 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* gentle 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 mind 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 2-3 times daily—108 repetitions each 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 gross dimension of spacetime form.

*HUM* is luminous Presence of primordial ground of *OM*. *HUM* is our 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 indwelling ultimate one truth unity (*dzog*). Relax, rest, 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 do have that choice. You can do this! But don't *believe* it. It abides utterly beyond belief and our concepts about it. 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 *Appendix B* below: "Mindful Bright Interlude: The Open Secret of Human Happiness".]

\* \* \*

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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 awareness-consciousness ground—formless, timeless, selfless boundless whole of physical/mental/spiritual nondual *kosmos*—Reality Being Itself. That all-subsuming aboriginal 'supreme source' of cosmos pervades all spacetime phenomena. That is mereologically (part-whole relations) the perfectly subjective 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 necessarily a greater whole that embraces them. Just so, for any whole, there are constituting parts subsumed therein. Writ large this 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, that great whole in which it arises exists.

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

Gautama Shakyamuni the Buddha of this present age told, "Wonder of wonders, all beings are primordial Buddha." Yeshua as 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 ardent Mereological Proof is a mere conceptual proof, absent the non-conceptual, nondual direct experiential profundity that provides indubitable certainty.

Hence, 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 yogic certainty of it. As 'the omniscient one' 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 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; numinous primordial awareness-consciousness ground—nondual Being Itself.

For Indo-Tibetan Buddhists that vast emptiness infinite boundless whole is 'basic space' (*chöying*, *dharmadhatu*) of all embracing primordial *dharmakaya* 'groundless 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 vehicles—conceptual causal foundation of highest acausal nondual Ati Dzogchen, *The Great Perfection* view and practice. [Ch. II above]

The blissful, peaceful clarity of that indwelling innermost Presence is the urgent 'grounding relation'—'grounding by subsumption'—that is the primary cause or modality of our 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 heart essence of 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 whence 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, Islamic Sufism.

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 whom 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, sophia*). These two compassionate voices of wisdom constitute the root cause 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 compassionate *bodhicitta*—thought, intention, and engaged action/conduct for benefit of all living beings, including our Earth.

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

In *The Prior Unity of Science and Spirit* (Boaz 2023) we explored the prodigious Relativistic Quantum Field Theory (QED) 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, and its zero-point energy field (ZPE), but of all this arising physical and mental form in space and time—embracing 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 explore that wisdom.

*Relative* nonlocal entangled quantum 'ZPE zero point vacuum energy' of the Unified Quantum Vacuum—which I have termed quantum emptiness—and *ultimate* Middle Way boundless Buddhist emptiness, emerge as nominally real spacetime phenomena within that aboriginal primordial ground that is vast whole of nondual 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, Relative Truth dimension of space and time. The numinous, 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 our 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* ultimate nondual reality are indeed a philosophical and spiritual cage. With little or no direct realization (*yogi pratyaksa*) of the natural equality of that conceptually uncorrupted 'emptiness of emptiness' (*shunyata shunyata*)—the vivid lucid clarity of the natural state absent any self-other dichotomy, and 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" *about* that non-conceptual, nondual ground of Reality Being Itself—have become our false 'idols of the tribe'. That perfectly subjective Spirit ground in whom arises 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." Yes, 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 now describe as a panpsychic precursor to what I shall term all-subsuming Dzogchen Kosmopsychism wherein a centrist integral Noetic Quantum Ontology naturally arises. [Boaz 2023 The Noetic Revolution, Ch. V]*

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 union, 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 praxis.

Our *noetic cognitive doublet*: 1) relative, exoteric, objective, conceptual, mental, scientific cognition; and 2) noetic, esoteric, higher mental, contemplative, spiritual, even oracular ultimate perfectly subjective nondual cognition. These two cognitive modalities that are conceptual objective Science and its perfectly subjective nondual Spirit ground 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 highly unlikely 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 Hsing Ch'i* Presence. As to the mindful love-wisdom *jnanaprana* breath in the belly, the gut chakra, place and maintain your awareness-attention upon That (*tathata*) luminous, numinous Presence now as it becomes a bright continuity of your awareness. [*Appendix B "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*] That is the trans-conceptual, nondual primordial kosmopsychic ground of Quantum Field Theory—our integral Noetic Quantum Ontology. [*Boaz 2022 Mindfulness Meditation: The Complete Guide; Boaz 2023 The Noetic Revolution*]

As Gautama Shakyamuni the Buddha of this present age 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. And so we smile. I shall conclude this book with the lovely words of all-knowing Longchenpa.

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

## Appendix B

### Mindful Bright Interlude: The Open Secret of Human Happiness

Whether or not you have contemplatively discovered, beyond your concepts and beliefs about it, the always already present Presence of timeless *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 selfless bright 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*. Expel the stale breath 9 times. Place your conscious attention/awareness upon the life force *prana/lung* spirit breath in your belly (*lungdang*). Breathe normally. *Feel* your bright Spirit Presence—without thinking about it.

3) *Mantra*. Now begin mantra: *OM AH HUM*, or other mantra. Unify with Guru's mindstream thus: *AH AH AH*. *Feel* luminous Presence of that in your *sambhogakaya* 'upper room' three feet above your crown chakra at the crown of your head. *Feel* your crown center open as *thigle* deity essence enters in and pervades your body-mind. From the life force *prana* in your belly experience selfless bright purity of your subtle central channel.

4) *Light Up Your Chakras*. From the *hara* or *do* center in your belly place your attention briefly on the White *AH* at your *hridayam/nyingpo* heart chakra. Now your throat center (voice, speech, *vishuddha*). Now your 'third eye' *ajna* center, prefrontal cortex behind your forehead. Now your crown center. 'Let there be light'. *Rest* here for a few moments.

*Now 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* this 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* that quiescent bright Presence now.

Again move your awareness to your "great bliss crown wheel". Without effort feel your crown center open. Now *yidam* deity, or your spiritual master, 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 into 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. Sharply focus your *prana* breath energy wherever you feel a physical or emotional obstruction to life energy flow: tension, pain, anxiety, anger, random desire, pride, drowsiness. *PHAT!* Blockage released! Surrender it all on the out-breath. *Rest*. Enjoy clear, blissful peace 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* peace, clarity, or happy experience (*nyams*). 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 any substance or power that 'self' does not choose to bestow upon them. Simply allow whatever arises in the mind to 'self-liberate' of its own accord leaving no trace. Patience. It all shall pass. So *rest* now (*rigdang*) in "bare awareness in its pristine nakedness...pure expanse of space"—*primordial ground of being itself*.

7) *Return to Your Breath*. Be awareness of quiescent *prana* wind in the belly. Breathe normally. In this quiet space abides peace beyond all understanding. *Feel* living Heart Essence of *AH*. Your essential nature is *HUM*—'supreme identity' of *OM*. *OM AH HUM*. Now place your mantra in awareness background. Rest in pure Presence of the ground.

8) *Your Buddha Nature*. Now you are aware, without thinking about it, that you are resting in selfless, open, empty, luminous awareness itself—Buddha Nature of Mind. Peace and bliss of That (*tathata*). *You are now aware of the vast timeless, selfless, boundless space of your awareness*. Self-centered self reference ('selfing') is absent. Feel clear light luminous knowing-feeling *certainty* of this Presence of 'original wakefulness'. That is primordial awareness itself. Whatever arises, 'let it be as it is'. No need to judge. Jigme Lingpa: "Simply observe....Intrinsic awareness is absolute Guru." That knowing-feeling love-wisdom awareness is always present—awareness background or foreground. *Be That Now*.

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

Engage this essential mindfulness practice from 60 seconds to 60 minutes. Make it your own. Adapt it. That Presence you are now. Don't push the river. Relax, rest, and enjoy.

Christians: replace 'buddha nature' with *christos*: 'Christ nature', 'Presence of Christ'.

This clear, bright, selfless, active 'nonmeditation' we have explored in *Ch. I*. The "Brief Course" summation appears in *Chapter VIII*.



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