

# **Christianity and Buddhism**

## **Two Paths One Ground**

David Paul Boaz, PhD.  
(Dechen Wangdu)





for

**The Goodrow Family**

**Christina, Kenneth, Samuel, Zoe**



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# Contents

## Chapter I. Christianity: The Gnosis of Light

The Mystical Teaching of Judaism and Christianity: The Omitted Bible .....	1
The Gnostic Challenge to the Early Church.....	1
Orthodox Heresiology and the Survival of the Christian Church.....	12
Hidden Treasure at Nag Hammadi .....	13
Orthodoxy: Anti-Mystical Dualism of the Early Church.....	14
The Nondual Mystical Teaching of Jesus the Christ.....	14
The Gnostic Trinity: Father, Mother and Son .....	15
Martyrdom and the Passion of Jesus .....	18
Physical Experience or Spiritual Experience? .....	19
The Price Paid.....	21
The Transcendence of Self-Ego-I: Faith, Belief, Gnosis.....	21
The Gnosis of Light.....	24
The Presence .....	24
The Betrayal of the Gnosis of Light.....	25
<i>Christos</i> , The Cosmic Christ: Heart Seed of the Gnosis of Light .....	26
Resurrection of the Cosmic Christ.....	27
The Gnostic Christian Nondual View: Kabbalah, Valentinus and Thomas .....	29
Four Voices of Human Knowing.....	32
Jesus and Paul: The Outer, Inner, and Nondual Teaching .....	34
The Gnosis of Light .....	35
The Solar Logos: The Descent and Ascent of All-Embracing Spirit .....	36
New Testament Mythmaking.....	39
The “Christ Myth” and the “Christ Cult” .....	42
The Apostle Paul: Orthodox or Gnostic?.....	43
From Nazareth to Nicaea: The Packaging of Jesus .....	44
The Early Jesus Communities and the Early Gospels .....	45
The Gospel of Thomas.....	46
The Gospel of John.....	48
The Fulfilment.....	51

## Chapter II. The Buddhist View: Sutra, Tantra, Dzogchen

The Buddhist Middle Way: A Very Brief History .....	52
Dharma in a Cold Climate: The Supreme Teaching.....	53
The Triyana and the Three Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma Are One Path .....	54

Buddhist Emptiness: One Ground, Two Truths .....	59
Emptiness: Objective and Subjective .....	61
Relationship: Big Mind, Small Mind, and the Light Bridge .....	63
The Paradox of the Path: Integrating View and Conduct .....	66
The View: Big Picture and the Middle Way .....	68
Mantra: <i>OM AH HUM</i> is our Triune Wisdom Nature.....	70
The Threefold Space.....	71
Timeless Awareness: Sutra, Tantra, Dzogchen .....	72
Ground, Path, Fruition/Result .....	74
Integrating the Ground and the Result Through the Path .....	74
<i>Rigpa</i> : The Main Point .....	75
<i>Shepa</i> and <i>Rigpa</i> : Two Truths Being One Ground.....	78
The Three Samadhis.....	80
Choosing Our Reality .....	82
Who Am I? The Dzogchen <i>Kunjed Gyalpo Tantra</i> .....	83
Being Is Love .....	96
Appendix A: Guided Meditation: The Open Secret of Human Happiness .....	97
Appendix B: Being Happy Now .....	99
Appendix C: Unity of Science and Spirit: Our Noetic Wisdom Imperative .....	101
Appendix D: The Christian Refuge .....	102
Appendix E: The Buddhist Refuge.....	103
Bibliography: Chapter 1.....	105
Bibliography: Chapter 2.....	106





# I

## Christianity: The Gnosis of Light

### The Mystical Teaching of Judaism and Christianity: The Omitted Bible

A great misfortune befell Christianity.

—Eliphus Levi

The Christian Bible, with its absence of sacred texts from the entire intertestamental period—the *Old Testament Pseudepigraphas* (excluded Jewish texts), the *New Testament Christian Apocrapha* (excluded *Gospels, Acts, Letters, Apocalypses*) including all Gnostic and *Essene* texts—has given us an extremely censored and limited view of the actual teaching of Jesus the Christ, and indeed, of the entire Judeo-Christian religious wisdom tradition. The deleted Christian *Apocrypha* gives us a clear picture of life and belief of early Christendom. The Valentinian Gnostic texts reveal the esoteric teaching of Jesus.

The magnificent nondual mystical *Zohar* from the *Kabbalah*; *Hermes Trismagistus*; *Plotinus*; *Enoch*; *The Infancy Gospels*; *The Gnostic Gospels*; *The Essene Dead Sea Scrolls*; *The Apochraphal Acts*; *The Apocalypses*; all were omitted for arbitrary and political reasons by the Orthodox Christian Church during the first four centuries after Jesus. [Heb. Yeshua]

*Nearly all of the esoteric, interior, mystical, spiritual, participatory, experiential literature is omitted—sacrificed to the political ambitions and fears of the early Church bishops, and later, to the prevailing anti-spiritual, anti-metaphysical rationalism of the 17th century European Enlightenment.* This early psychological attitude still characterizes mainstream Christianity to this day. What are the causes of this Christian catastrophe?

### The Gnostic Challenge to the Early Church

Although the essential esoteric teachings of Kabbalistic Valentinian Gnostic Christianity and Thomas Christianity (*Gospel of Thomas, Book of Thomas, Acts of Thomas*) are essentially monistic and even nondual, most Gnostic speculative systems of the first three centuries after Jesus were ontologically dualistic regarding the separation of matter and Spirit, humanity and God. Indeed, this holds true of the 'outer exoteric' views of all religions. The conventional, traditional view is materialistic and dualistic while the esoteric teaching is more subtle. [The wisdom traditions of humankind all possess three levels of understanding: exclusivist conceptual outer exoteric; inner esoteric; and 'innermost secret' noetic non-conceptual unity of knowing subject and its perceived objects in nondual God.]

In much of the Gnostic literature the phenomenal world of matter and humankind ("The Darkness") is but a shadowy Platonic reflection of the perfection of God ("The Light"). Here humanity and God are essentially separated by spacetime material reality, and are

destined to remain so only until reunited with God at physical death of the body. In this exoteric dualistic view, liberation during life is precluded. God is eternally transcendent, physically and spiritually, abiding in a separate cosmic realm—*Pleroma*. God is "other" and "alien" to humanity. [Marcion, the Mandaeans, Basilides] God is unknown and unknowable. Positive qualities appear—light, life, mind (*psyche*), spirit (*pneuma*)—but outer *exoteric* Gnostic theology, including dualistic outer exoteric Gnostic Christianity, is negative.

Christian Gnosticism borrowed heavily from Greek Hellenistic philosophy, particularly Platonic dualism, Orphism and Pythagoreanism, deriving its cosmogony (its origin) and cosmology (its nature) from Plato's *Timaeus*, as well as from the Hebrew *Genesis*. Dualism arises with the creation of matter by an evil Platonic demiurge—a separate Creator God. Humankind is redeemed only by faith—*pistis*: exoterically *belief*; esoterically, self-ego-I *surrender* in the Savior that is Jesus the Christ who descends into spacetime to transmit to humankind true *Gnosis of Light*, primordial awareness love-wisdom—*gnosis*, *noesis*, *yeshe*, *jnana*—indwelling *Presence* of trans-conceptual, nondual formless, timeless *Ground of Being*.

The essential difference between the *esoteric nondual* Gnostics and the Orthodox Church is this: The Church insisted that the way to salvation was simple faith (*pistis* as belief), whereas Gnostics insisted upon intrinsic Gnosis, indwelling Primordial Awareness Wisdom. Those who follow the way of the "Gnosis of Light" will be saved from a hell of continuous reincarnation and death. Reincarnation, the "pre-existence of the soul" and its transmigration through many lifetimes was an important doctrine of Jewish/Christian faith and belief until deleted by the second Christian Council of Constantinople in 553 CE.

The origins of both dualistic exoteric Gnosticism and its esoteric nondual version are highly syncretistic, the authors freely using the ideas of not only Plato and the Greeks, the Egyptians, Plotinus, the Hebrews, but Persian-Iranian-Babylonian speculative religious philosophy as well. Indeed, these two groups form two mainstreams of Gnostic theological speculation—Egypto-Greek culminating in Christian Gnosticism, and the Persian-Iranian culminating in Mani and Manichaeism. It was the Babylonian Mani (215-276 CE) who introduced dualistic Vedic, Buddhist, and Zoroastrian elements into Gnostic Christianity. The great mind of Valentinus (c.100-165 CE) knew and taught the nondual Gnostic view.

Both exoteric and esoteric Gnosticism provided a challenge to the Christian Orthodoxy of the early Church that led to the defining of the dualistic, materialist, rationalist, anti-mystical view of the Church that characterizes contemporary Christianity today. [Pagels 1978, 2003, Meyer 1992] The Christian Roman emperors and early Church bishops responded to the Gnostic challenge by declaring *all* Gnostic teaching heretical, and fixing the *New Testament* canon (Council of Carthage, 397) to the exclusion of all Gnostic *Gospels*, *Acts* and *Letters*, except the *Gospel of John*, which was a Gnostic text, and the authentic *Letters of Paul*, which, although used as polemic by early Church heresiologists, was, at its esoteric heart, profound nondual Gnostic teaching, as we shall soon see.

Foremost among the Gnostic sages were the producers of the heretical, mystical, nondual Valentinian doctrine of the great poet/scholar/mystic Valentinus (100-165), and his disciples Ptolemy, Heracleon, Theodus, and Marcus (2nd century CE). Also of importance were the dualistic exoteric Gnostics Marcion of Sinope (85-165), and the Babylonian, Mani,

founder of pagan Manichaeism which so profoundly influenced St. Augustine.

Valentinus was Egyptian, educated in Alexandria by Theodus, the great disciple of Paul, and taught his nondual monistic Gnostic mysticism in Rome in 135 to 160 CE, to the particular consternation of Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon (in Gaul). That Bishop's treatise against Gnostic heresy (*Against Heresies* 180 CE) is a five volume polemic—written in perfect Greek—against the exegesis of Ptolemy, the great Gnostic synthesizer of the nondual Valentinian doctrine. The Valentinian Gnostics rejected 1) the outer exoteric, vindictive theistic Creator God (demiurge) of the Greeks and Hebrews ("Men make gods and worship their creation", *Gospel of Philip*, Gnostic). 2) They refused to accept the authority of the Orthodox Church bishops. 3) They insisted that spiritual (*pneuma*) evolution and redemption in human beings is an internal, individual, mystical transformation, not an exoteric conventional system of confession and belief. This noble heresy led to the casting out of the great Valentinus and his followers from the early Christian Church in 143 CE.

By the time of the conversion to Christianity of the Roman Emperor Constantine in 313 CE and the first Council of Bishops in Nicaea in 325 CE, Jesus' great monistic nondual mystical teaching of the "Gnosis of Light" had been officially excluded from the Orthodox Catholic Church, and thereby lost to billions of Christians until the recent discovery in 1945 of the *Nag Hammadi Library*, and in 1947 of the *Dead Sea Scrolls*—mainly *Essene Scriptures*.

In due course the Gnostic teaching—both dualistic and nondual—of the first three centuries was assimilated into pagan (non-Christian) Persian-Iranian Manichaeism which had become the dominant religion in Central Asia by the ninth century, before finally succumbing to Islam. It survives today with the Mandaean in Iran and Iraq.

Esoterically, however, the Promethean nondual Gnostic teaching of the Thomas and Valentinian Christians lives today as the radical mystical teaching of the Primordial Awareness Wisdom gnosis (*jnana*, *yeshe*) that is the great nondual Wisdom Tradition of humanity. There it may be rediscovered in the esoteric inner, innermost secret, and nondual teachings—albeit through slightly different metaphors—in the Buddhist tradition through Ati Dzogchen, Essence Mahamudra and Saijojo Zen; in the Taoist tradition of the yoga of the *Returning of the Light*; and in the Vedic/Hindu tradition of the Advaita Vedanta (monistic acausal nondual *jnana* and *rahja* yoga) of the great 8th century Hindu saint Adi Shankara.

### **Orthodox Heresiology and the Survival of the Christian Church**

In the first century after Jesus, Christians were remarkably diverse in their faith and belief, but by 200 CE Christianity had become an institution, headed in Rome by a three rank hierarchy of bishops, priests and deacons, guardians of the "one true faith". All else was heresy. Bishop Irenaeus, himself martyred by the Romans in 202, persecuted and suppressed the Gnostics and others, which led eventually to concealing of the *Nag Hammadi* texts, sometime after the Creed of Nicaea (Council of Nicaea, 325). "Outside of the one true church there can be no salvation". [Bishop Irenaeus] When this Orthodoxy gained military and political support after Roman Emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity in 313, the penalty for heresy was death. The Orthodox teaching on the resurrection led by Irenaeus and

Tertullian legitimized a hierarchy of the Church through which all Christians must approach God. Yet, nondual Gnostic teaching offered *direct* access to God through individual spiritual practice and realization under guidance of a qualified master in context of a spiritual community. For Gnostics the Church hierarchy was unnecessary for salvation. Clearly, such heresy threatened the despotic Orthodox bishops, and their absolute authority over the early Church. Yes. The Orthodox penalty for such egregious heresy was death.

According to Elaine Pagels<sup>1</sup>, had Christianity remained multiform it may not have survived. Its survival may well be due to the organization and authoritarian theological structure of the early church. This process of establishing Christian Orthodoxy ruled out Gnostic/Kabbalistic mysticism, and all other options. The nondual Gnostic inner esoteric view, based on direct spiritual experience, would not again surface until Meister Eckhart (d.1329) and Paracelsus (d.1541), and in the Protestant Reformation through mystics such as Jacob Boehme (d.1624). The outer exoteric Protestant movements however, remained within the framework of basic Catholic Orthodoxy established by 200 CE. Protestantism vigorously continued the suppression of esoteric and nondual Gnostic Christian mysticism.

One cannot help but speculate. Had the nondual mystic Valentinus won election to Pope (Bishop of Rome) certainly the *New Testament* canon developed at the Council of Nicaea in 325 and 'fixed' at the Council of Carthage in 397 would have been very much different indeed. And one wonders what would have been the collaboration of Valentinus and of the former Manichaean Gnostic St. Augustine whose conversion to Orthodoxy so profoundly influenced the fixing of the Canon to the exclusion of the esoteric mystical texts.

### **Hidden Treasure at Nag Hammadi**

In 1945, at Nag Hammadi in Egypt—in one of the most important discoveries of the 20th century—Coptic translations of original Greek "Gnostic Gospels" were found in a cave by the shepherd Mohammed Ali. This spiritual treasure is known as the *Nag Hammadi Library*. Scriptures date from 3rd century CE. They reveal Jesus' teaching suppressed by the Orthodoxy.

Then in 1947 was the discovery of the *Dead Sea Scrolls* in the Qumran Caves near the West Bank on the northern shore of the Dead Sea. These texts, written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek date from the late Jewish Second Temple period *circa* 3rd century BCE to 1st century CE. They reveal original texts from the ancient Jewish religious sect known as the Essenes. These greatly illumine the emergence of Christianity in the 1st century of Jesus the Christ.

These two great discoveries together give us an accurate and penetrating view of the life and belief of early Christianity, and of the actual mystical teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. The *Nag Hammadi* texts include authentic *Gospels*, *Acts* and *Letters*. Sadly, none of these texts are included in any Christian Bible. They are readily available in contemporary translations as the *Nag Hammadi Library* and the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, and in Barnstone and Meyer's *The Gnostic Bible* (2006). Why were these vital texts excluded from our Christian Bible?

<sup>1</sup> Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (1989); and *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas* (2003). There is no more authoritative and readable account of the drama of the emergence of Christianity than these concise books.

## Orthodoxy: Anti-Mystical Dualism of the Early Church

*The Gospel of Mary* (Gnostic) illustrates the Orthodox vs. nondual Gnostic viewpoints. Mary represents the Gnostic, feminine, mystical, visionary; Peter represents the skeptical Christian Orthodoxy, suspicious of seeing Jesus in direct yogic mystical vision.

Each Provincial, General and Ecumenical Council omitted more and more of the authentic esoteric interior, mystical texts. The esoteric content of the *Essene* texts (*Dead Sea Scrolls* 1947) and of the Gnostics (*Nag Hammadi Library* 1945) represents the early monistic, inner, secret and in certain texts, the "innermost secret" nondual direct yogic experiential teaching of Jesus. These texts were suppressed in their time and were permanently omitted from the *New Testament* when it was 'fixed' at the Council of Carthage in 397 CE.

Yes, it is generally agreed by historians and Bible scholars that the conventional Orthodox compilers, editors and revisers of what has become the Christian *New Testament* were ideologically and politically opposed to the esoteric, mystical teachings of the nondual Gnostics, and indeed, of all Gnostic teachings and texts, dualistic and nondual, except *John*, and as we shall see, *Paul*. [Cameron 1982, Mack 1995, Koestler 1996, Pagels 1989, Seely 1994, Layton 1987] That nondual wisdom gnosis is monistic ontological Antirealism.

The conventional, exoteric, anti-Gnostic, anti-mystical, anti-pagan orientation of the Christian Church today reflects Orthodoxy's victory over the esoteric, inward view of the *Gospel of Thomas* and of Valentinian Kabbalistic Gnostic Christianity. Exoteric material bodily salvation ('blessedness') prevailed over esoteric spiritual liberation/salvation, which is 'realization' (*apolutrosis*) of the nondual "Gnosis of Light" of Jesus' Abba, primordial Father of All, very light of perfect love-wisdom Ground Presence that shines at spirit Heart of each human being. What then did Jesus actually teach? And how may we know it 'beyond belief'?

## The Nondual Mystical Teaching of Jesus the Christ

Initiation (*teleosis*) into the Gnosis of Light secret wisdom mysteries was reserved for the spiritually advanced (the "elect") *pneumatic* Christians. To the uninitiated (the "called" *psychic or pistic* Christians) Jesus taught only in parables (*Matthew, Thomas, Peter, James*). The letter of Peter to Phillip (*Nag Hammadi*) speaks of Jesus after his death appearing as light on the Mount of Olives to teach the "mysteries of the *kosmos*". He appears as a bright, luminous Presence, in contrast to Orthodox views where he appears in physical bodily form.

Bishop Irenaeus claimed that the legitimacy of the canonical Gospels was due to their authorship by Jesus' own disciples. Scholars now do not know who wrote the Gospels, but it is universally agreed by Bible scholars that it was not Jesus' original disciples.

*The Apocalypse of Peter* (*Apocrypha*) and *The Secret Book of James* (Gnostic) reveal how Jesus selected his more prepared disciples for special revelations leading to their spiritual liberation/enlightenment, attesting to the fact that Gnostic teaching emphasized realization by direct mystical, meditative/contemplative yogic experience. Lesser prepared priests and bishops were offered only "common" tradition. This 'method of the *siddhas*' that is the essence of the master/disciple relationship further threatened the dualistic exoteric

Orthodoxy of Bishop Irenaeus and Tertullian, ultimately leading to the declaration by the Orthodox apologists that *all* Gnostic teachings were heretical. The Church bishops argued that since no one had access to Jesus as did the apostles, later generations must look to the authority of the Church and its priesthood. The essential esoteric, and more subtle innermost secret and nondual mystical teaching of Jesus—that "the Kingdom of God is within you"—was thereby lost to billions of Christians over the next nineteen centuries.

By the latter part of the 2nd Century Orthodoxy insisted on "One God and One Bishop." Clement's (Clement I, Bishop of Rome) letter to Christians in Corinth (c. 90-100 CE) makes the first argument for dividing "the clergy" (priesthood) from the "laity". Whoever refuses to "bow the neck" to the clergy is guilty of insubordination "against the divine master himself." Bishop Ignatius of Antioch defended the same authoritarian principle.

Valentinus, the great poet master of nondual Gnosticism, received secret initiation from Theodotus, a disciple of Paul, into the "Secret Doctrine of God." This advanced nondual spiritual discipline teaches that the God of Israel—the God of Orthodoxy—is not the highest God but a dualistic Platonic demiurge or exoteric separate Creator God, the external false "I am God and there is no other" of Christian Orthodoxy and of Israel.

According to Valentinian and Thomas literature, the protean encounter with true Gnosis (nondual primordial wisdom, *noesis*, *yeshe*), essential Gnosis of Light, lies in recognition then direct yogic experience through meditative contemplative practice (beyond conceptual belief)—under guidance of a living master—realization of indwelling Presence (*christos*, *logos*, *metanoia*, *vidya*, *rigpa*) of monistic ultimate Spirit Ground of Being of all spacetime phenomenal reality. That true Gnosis knows "The Depth" (*Bathos*) or multi-dimensionality ('many mansions') of selfless, timeless, perfectly subjective nondual God, Supreme Source, one "All-in-All", "I Am That I Am" Presence of Enoch, Moses, and the prophets that is primordial nondual *ultimate* Spirit Ground in whom arises all this *relative* stuff of reality.

*How is Nondual Wisdom Realized?* Through always present indwelling love-wisdom Presence of our primordial awareness Ground of Being the initiate is "released" or liberated (*apolutrosis*)—redeemed from lesser Platonic creator demiurge and separate Creator God of Israel (*Yahweh*, *Elohim*). Here the initiate is embraced by transcendent spiritual truth of nondual godhead—by whatever hallowed name—beyond relative conditional existence, beyond discursive thinking of concept-belief (*dianoia*, *doxa*, *namtok*), indeed, ultimately beyond all distinctions and dualism, including the dualism of dual and nondual, exoteric and esoteric, existence and nonexistence, indeed beyond human concept-mind altogether. That is purity and power of direct yogic contemplative experience—*yogi pratyaksa*.

Such is the ultimate nondual monism of Jesus' teaching on the Gnosis of Light as we discover it in the Valentinian and Thomas literature. It is lucid and present in nondual Nestorian Christianity of the Syriac Nicene Church of the East. It is essentially the same nondual Primordial Awareness Wisdom teaching that is the heart of esoteric Buddhism (*Mahamudra*, *Dzogchen*), Hindu nondual *Advaita Vedanta*, and nondual Taoism (*Tao chia*). It is this great primordial love-wisdom teaching that the masters, mahasiddhas, saints and sages of 'the three times' (past, present, future) have taught to their prepared disciples.

## The Gnostic Trinity: Father, Mother and Son

Nondual Gnostic texts describe God as a unity embracing our masculine and feminine aspects. God is androgynous. The Son of God that descends as “The Mind” (awareness) is androgynous. God is not a theistic separate Creator God. God is the nondual supreme source Ground of everything, the Depth (*Bathos*), ineffable, unspeakable "Primal Father", "The Womb and Mother of All" (Valentinus). Christ speaks to John (*Apocryphon of John*, Gnostic): "I am the One who is with you always. I am the Father. I am the Mother. I am the Son". An esoteric trinity. In the *Gospel to the Hebrews* (Gnostic) Jesus speaks of "My Mother, the Spirit."

In the Gnostic *Gospel of Thomas* Jesus speaks of "Divine Father, the Father of Truth, and Divine Mother, the Holy Spirit." In the *Gospel of Philip* (Gnostic) Spirit is both Mother and virgin, the counterpart and consort of nondual divine God the Father. "The Father of everything united with the virgin who came down." Here, untainted, primordially pure selfless Holy Spirit (feminine) descends from formless, timeless awareness Ground of Being into this physical world of form. Because the process is allegorical and symbolic, not literal, it is Spirit that is virgin. Christ therefore, born of esoteric 'virgin spirit' became interpreted exoterically as "born of a virgin." The Gnostic author of the *Gospel of Philip* ridicules the literal-minded Christians who mistake this ontic process for a magical virgin birth through Mary, Jesus' biological mother, as though she conceived her holy child apart from Joseph.

Adam (primeval humanity), being one, is the androgyne who "contains the female within him." [*Thunder*, Gnostic] "I am androgynous, Mother and Father, I procreate myself, I am the womb of the All, I am the glory of the Mother." Our Divine Mother archetype.

The conventional exoteric view of the trinity is of 'identity of essence' (*homoousia*) of Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Esoterically the view is identity of divine Primordial Father (*Abba* in Aramaic, Jesus Hebrew dialect), nondual primordial source of all relative spacetime phenomena with the divine *Kosmic Mother*, pure, unconditioned virgin Holy Spirit who 'descends' upon *pneuma* Holy Spirit breath in the body into conditional, relative spacetime.

That creative Divine Mother—very Nature of Mind (timeless awareness) and all mental and physical form—and The Son“, The Mind“, divine indwelling *christos*, Christ nature seed of form is unrealized spiritual potential of each human being. Each human incarnation descends from Father/Mother/Creator aspect of nondual primordial Spirit Ground into the world of form, "the Logos made flesh" whose indwelling divine Christ Presence (*christos*) realizes then actualizes and demonstrates through compassionate conduct (*hesed*, *charis*, *patheos*, *bodhicitta*) great nondual truth that "the Kingdom of God is within you", that "Christ liveth in you." That 'Great Love' Jesus the Christ did realize—then gave to all of us.

It is told by our Primordial Wisdom traditions that this timeless, selfless Primordial Awareness Presence is “always already” present in all beings, and that human beings have the potential to actualize or realize it through committed practice of the “spiritual” path in this very lifetime, prior to death of the body. This great truth, according to the Valentinian and Thomas literature is what Jesus taught. It is what the Buddha taught. [*Ch. II*]

The monotheistic incarnation theology of both outer exoteric and inner esoteric views of the foregoing trinity christologies agrees as to the identity of the essential nature



(*hypostasis*) of the three aspects or three natures of the one transcendent yet immanent God. Such an understanding is expressed in the Johannine *Logos* christology derived from monistic Neoplatonic metaphysics of Plotinus and of the Stoics, and is a nondual monistic transcendental theology. This triune essential nature of nondual God is monistic for it is of one sacred substance (*homoousia*): Primordial Father, Mother Holy Spirit, *Christos/Logos/Son*. The three are an inseparable unity. Trinitarian Monotheism. Ontological monism.

Differences in view lie in the emphasis. The exoteric orientation emphasizes separate, material, bodily aspect of the incarnation (descent of Spirit), resurrection and return (ascent of Spirit) to *Logos* Ground as Jesus' mystical *Logos*, Son of the one Hebrew God. Here, Jesus is God. Jesus the *christos* Presence and humanity are viewed as separate. Thus the dualism.

However, esoteric and nondual emphasis of the Gnostic Thomas and Valentinian teaching is of indwelling spiritual Presence (*christos, I Am*) of divine *Logos* that is one essential nature, not just of Jesus who realized it, but as divine potential in each human being. It is this Presence that the incarnation of Jesus—the Son of Man, mortal human avatar—reveals and mirrors to us as our actual identity is awakened and resurrected through the gradual process of spiritual (*pneumatic*) transformation, always already present as luminous, numinous Gnosis of Light.

### **The Gnostics Openness to Women**

The Gnostics showed a rare and remarkable openness to women. Jesus violated Jewish law by speaking openly with women and including them among his companions. Though Paul acknowledges women as his equal "in Christ", he would not advocate their equality socially and politically. By the end of the 2nd Century women's participation in Orthodox worship was explicitly condemned by the Church as heretical.

Meanwhile, the *Dialog of the Savior* (Gnostic) praises Mary the Magdalene above Thomas and Matthew. Her gnosis and compassion surpassed even Peter's, yet she was never recognized as an apostle by the Orthodox Church. In the Gnostic *Gospel of Thomas* Mary Magdalene represents primordial love-wisdom Gnosis, whereas Peter, Matthew and "the disciples" cannot comprehend this nondual esoteric teaching. Although Clement of Alexandria affirmed women's active participation in the Church, the Orthodox majority adopted Tertullian's uncompromising position that women were not worthy of active participation. This blatant noxious global bias against women persists even now in both Catholic and Protestant Christian Churches. Good news. That is ever so quietly changing.

Moreover, the Valentinian Gnostics view of sexual intercourse is unique in the history of Judaism and Christianity. Sex between husband and wife promotes spiritual development! The Hermetic/Gnostic idea of androgyny, the male/female polarity within each human being was further developed by this Christian Gnostic group, and by the Gnostic communities of Thomas and John. Theodotus and his disciple Valentinus may well have had access to Tibetan *Bön* and/or Vedic tantric teaching regarding the use of sexual energy in spiritual practice. The Babylonian Mani (215-276) was certainly familiar with Vedic and Indian Buddhist tantric tradition with its Hindu *maithuna* and Tibetan completion and perfection stage *karmamudra* yogic sexual practices toward final liberation.

## Martyrdom and the Passion of Jesus

The exponents of heresy in the 2nd Century, those Orthodox Christian Bishop apologists—Ignatius, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Justinian—all affirmed martyrdom at the hands of the Romans and considered those who opposed it heretics. Even those Gnostics who were martyred were denied its value—they were merely “a sort of retinue for the true Orthodox martyrs”. [Pagels 1989]

However, most Gnostic heretics opposed martyrdom on religious grounds. They did not believe that martyrdom alone offers redemption. Further, it was a foolish waste of life, an easy way out—as if “through suffering for one hour they purchase for themselves eternal life.” [*The Testimony of Truth*, Gnostic] As if God desires human sacrifice. As if salvation/enlightenment were not about living, but merely dying. *The Apocalypse of Peter* (Gnostic) describes how Peter finally becomes enlightened and discovers the true meaning of the Passion of Jesus. The seduction and coercion of followers and children to be slaughtered, and expressions of joy at this is repulsive to Peter according to the Gnostic author of this text.

The Orthodox view of The Passion of Jesus the Christ is as a sacrifice, an expiation which somehow redeems all of humanity from guilt and sin. The Gnostic view is quite different. Here, Jesus’ death is a Promethean paradigm that recognizes the divine *christos* seed Presence and its divine potential for liberation that is always present within all human beings.

Christ's suffering during his crucifixion is assumed by all Gnostic texts. Most are concerned to show how his incarnation as human was an injunction, an exemplar by a great avatar who incarnated from God the Primordial Father to demonstrate the way to transcend and prevail over suffering and death by virtue of divine light, very Gnosis of Light that lives immortal at Spirit Heart in each human form. He demonstrated the Way to transcend this mortal coil and to “overcome the world.” He taught that to “confess Christ” means not outer confession to being a Christian before a judge, or to friends and associates, but to confess and demonstrate Christ Consciousness, inner *christos* Presence in compassionate, everyday acts and conduct. “The greatest commandment is love,” and love is the daily activity and action of compassionate, loving service; giving wisely to others—*charis*, *hesed*, grace, charity, *tonglen*, loving-kindness, mercy, *ahimsa*, *karuna*-compassion, *bodhicitta*. “Therefore love one another as I have loved you.” That is precisely the Primordial Wisdom view (gnosis, *noesis*, *jnana*, *yeshe*) of our Great Wisdom Tradition, whether Veda/Vedanta, Taoist, Buddhist, Judaic, or Islamic.

Sadly, the exoteric Orthodox view of martyrdom finally prevailed. Roman persecution gave solidity to the Church organization. It encouraged communication—consider Ignatius letter on his way to death in the arena—increasing doctrinal, ritual, canonical, and political uniformity and unity “even to the ends of the earth”. [Irenaeus]

Gnostics however, who resisted this conformity were scattered and lost. [Pagels, 1989] The esoteric truth is that Jesus' sacrifice redeems humanity from “this ocean of incarnation and death” (Paul) only when an individual realizes, then demonstrates the 'Great Love' of nondual God the Father of all through moment to moment kindness, generosity and compassionate service to living beings. Wonder of wonders such harmless happiness begins again and again for each one of us in this eternal moment now, upon each mindful breath.

## Physical Experience or Spiritual Experience?

Orthodox Church tradition insists on a material, bodily interpretation of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Exoterically, bodily, not spiritual experience is the central fact of human life. What one does physically (or abstinence from it): eat, drink, sex, work, death is what marks spiritual life and development. Those esoteric and nondual oriented Gnostics however, viewed the physical dimension as immaterial or illusory (not nonexistent) and emphasized the "inner spirit" and the direct contemplative or mystical experience of the 'divine' within each individual. For these nondual Gnostics it is the mortal human Jesus that incarnated into spacetime to demonstrate this inner spirit of the *christos* Presence or Christ nature within each human being. Unfortunately, this is not the Jesus that Christians have idealized and worshiped for 2000 years. It is an immortal 'Jesus as God' that Christians have worshipped. *During his life Jesus cautioned against such an outer exoteric idealization or deification of any individual human—including himself—at the expense of personal realization of divine christos Presence within each human being.* "Seek the Kingdom of God within you." "Become a disciple of your own mind who is father of truth." "I am not your master...Light the light within you." Jesus' teaching always directs us to turn to the "light within"; that innermost secret spiritual Gnosis of Light that is our authentic 'supreme identity' of supreme source Ground of Being of everything. Indeed, that is the esoteric teaching of all of the spiritual masters and adepts of the great Primordial Wisdom Tradition of humankind.

*The Gospel of John* was a Gnostic primary source. Yet it was included, after much debate, in the Orthodox *New Testament* canon. *John* speaks for the Christ: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me." Here one finds God only through Christ, and one finds Christ only through the Church. Thus Orthodoxy was strengthened. Conversely, the Gnostic *Gospel of Thomas* avoids this connection of agency through the priesthood of the Church. "There is light within a being of light, and it lights the whole world. If he does not shine, he is darkness." Here, one is directed to the innermost Gnosis of Light that is the "disciple of your own mind." The esoteric Gnostic Gospels of *Thomas*, *Philip*, *Mary* and many others were of course, all omitted from the Orthodox *New Testament* Bible.

Dualistic Christian Orthodoxy defined God oppositely from the nondual Gnostics, who considered theology to be anthropology. The perennial truth "Know thyself" (Socrates) is the imperative to know one's own *Gnosis*, one's essential spirit nature. That mind essence is spiritual quest par excellence, for ultimately we are enfolded then unfold within nondual perfectly subjective Spirit Ground. Beyond ethnicity, creed or belief we all share the same God. Yes, on the accord of our Great Wisdom Tradition, this lucid numinous Ground of Being is the 'supreme identity' Presence of each one of us, without a single exception.

*To "know thyself" deeply and authentically is to recognize, realize then manifest that nondual logos/christos heart Presence of very source and nature of timeless, formless, selfless primordial awareness-consciousness Ground of Being, luminous essence and Nature of Mind, by whatever holy name, always already present at spiritual Heart of each and every human being. That is who we are.*

Such was profound esoteric Hebrew, Hellenistic, Hermetic/Orphic/Vedic mysticism which Moses and the Jews, and Jesus, and the nondual Gnostics inherited from the Ancients.

So yes, the nondual Valentinian Gnostic view of our human condition was much different from Christian Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy followed the dualistic Hebrew tradition of the *Old Testament* that sin separates humanity from God. Sin (*hamartia*), "missing the mark," is redeemable only through the agency of Jesus and the Church. Gnostics however, viewed *hamartia* as 'primal ignorance' — *avidya* in the Hermetic, Vedic-Hindu and Buddhist traditions. *Hamartia* or ignorance creates the suffering (*pathos*) that is forgetfulness or *amnesia*, unconsciousness or unawareness of our divine indwelling spirit Gnosis of Light.

The Gnostic *Gospel of Thomas* warns that transcendental self-discovery involves much inner turmoil for *self*. Here Jesus criticized the magical view of "The Kingdom of Heaven" as a literal physical place. "The Kingdom of God is within you and it is outside you; it is spread upon the face of the world, but you do not see it." The Kingdom of Heaven then, is a state of always present *christos* Presence, mystical, transcendental enlightened Christ Consciousness. Human salvation and redemption, liberation, enlightenment (*apolutrosis*) comes not through a future physical historical event—a paracletic Second Coming—but through practice of the spiritual path that is free will and conscious *choice* of ego-self-transcending internal spiritual transformation within each individual. "Who is it that seeks, and who is it that reveals?" It is not an external teacher said Jesus. Nor is it Jesus himself. "I am not your master. Because you have drunk, you have become the luminous spring that I have tended". [ *Thomas 13* ]

The master only guides and mirrors divine *logos/christos* Presence that is always already present at spiritual Heart (*hridayam*) of the disciple. "The one who reveals" is bright indwelling Presence of our Christ Nature, the guru/teacher/knower within each human heart-mind, mirrored always by the outer Guru. That external 'master' however, is necessary to guide the disciple to this inner realization. Master helps disciple to "become a disciple of your own mind which is the Father of Truth." [ *Testimony of Truth*, Gnostic ]

"Each human being is a dwelling place and therein—at the spiritual heart—dwells an infinite reality, the very source of the kosmos, yet it exists in a latent condition." [Simon Magus]

How does one accomplish the Gnosis of Light? Zostrianos (*Nag Hammadi Library*) told that we must transcend physical desires, reduce the chaos of conceptual mind by meditation and mantra prayer (e.g. the "Jesus Prayer"), receive the vision from the "messenger of light," and do not become discouraged along the way. [Compare with the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist *Three Statements of Garab Dorje* in Boaz 2025 *The Open Secret of Human Happiness*]

Such a difficult interior contemplative path was not for the uninitiated masses. One who receives, practices, then realizes the true Gnosis of Light is "no longer a Christian, but a Christ." [ *Gospel of Philip*, Gnostic ] Such a one realizes, then demonstrates through compassionate conduct indwelling Gnosis of Light—the Christ Consciousness that is *christos* Spirit Presence of our Christ Nature/Buddha mind present in all human beings.

Orthodoxy on the other hand required only a confession of the simplest essentials of faith and celebrated simple rituals demanding a minimum of spiritual commitment. It is difficult to see how the Christian religion could have survived without this basic, simple framework. Powerful ideas do not make a religion powerful.

—Elaine Pagels 1989

## The Price Paid

What was the result for future generations of Christians due to the omissions and distortions by the early Orthodox Church of Jesus' ecstatic nondual mystical vision and teaching? Today, in the 21st Century, the vast majority of the world's Christians have not been introduced to Jesus' heart teaching, direct 'innermost' Gnosis of Light that abides beyond simple faith and belief. Nor have the billions of Christians of the past twenty centuries. The profound practice of transcendence of egocentric 'primal ignorance' (*hamartia/sin, avidya*)—direct selfless *kenosis* yoga that Jesus transmitted—is available (at least in written form) in the mystical nondual Gnostic texts of the Valentinians, and of the *Thomas* literature, and of other Christian texts referred to at the beginning of this chapter. The *Nag Hammadi Library* and *The Gnostic Bible* are excellent sources in new translation for this vital material. [Meyer 2007, Barnstone 2006] However, without the physical presence of a living qualified master to mirror the inner love-wisdom Gnosis and to guide the teaching these, and all esoteric texts remain largely exoteric. Buddhism offers such guidance.

*Now, 2000 years after the death of Jesus the Christ these sacred texts remain taboo for many Christians. An exoteric, anti-mystical conventional Christian religion has prevailed in this Postmodern world of scientific and spiritual materialism. And our essential Primordial Wisdom Tradition teaching of the esoteric transmission of the nondual love-wisdom from master to prepared disciple has been mostly lost to Christianity. Still, qualified esoteric Christian teachers are available.*

Yes. The popularization and "universalization" of Christianity by the early Church offered salvation through mere external exoteric faith, ritual and law, rather than through rigorous ego self-transcending contemplative meditation on and realization of the nondual Gnosis of Light that Jesus actually taught. This popularization allowed the later bishops of the Orthodox Church and their Roman converts to suppress the great monistic, nondual primordial wisdom teaching of Jesus the Christ that is his transmission to us of "The Word" of the *logos christos* Presence that is lucid indwelling Gnosis of Light. Indeed, most scholars agree, the *Gnostic Gospel of Thomas* and the esoteric nondual Valentinian Gnostic record of the teaching of Jesus is far closer to his actual teaching than the orthodox, anti-mystical, exoteric, common Church doctrine represented in the canonical *New Testament* of the Christian Bible. [Cameron 1982; Koester 1990; Layton 1987; Meyer 1992; Barnstone 1984; Kingsland 1970; Pagels 1989; Duling 1979; Funk 1995; Grant 1966; Mack 1993, 1995; Schoedel 1972, 1980; Williams (1988); Wallace 1992; Boaz 2025]

## Christian Metaphysical Ontology

'Ontology' is conceptual pursuit of the *ultimate* nature of Being. What then is essential Christian ontology? Notwithstanding St. Anselm's logically inconsistent *Ontological Proof for the Existence of God*, we have seen that Jesus the Christ taught of 'God the Father', monistic, nondual Ultimate Spirit—timeless, selfless ("*kenosis*"), perfectly subjective 'Ground' in whom all objective spacetime reality arises and abides—beyond any theistic conceptual duality of Creator and Creation. Who am I? Indwelling luminous "I Am" Presence of Ground of Being.

## The Transcendence of Self-Ego-I: Faith, Belief, and Gnosis

"Faith" translates the Greek "*pistis*." Exoterically "*pistis*" is belief; esoterically it is *kenosis* surrender of self-ego-I, an opening to receive innermost love-wisdom Gnosis of Light. That was the nondual Gnostic understanding. But by 189 CE, with the elevation to pope of Demetrius I, Bishop of Alexandria in the Egyptian Roman Empire, "faith" had become for Orthodox *pistic* (*psychic*) Christians merely conceptual belief (*dianoia*, *doxa*) which was demonstrated in legalistic, ritual and moral terms. Faith as ego deconstruction and surrender is contemplative/experiential (*epinoia*/penetrating insight) and emotional (*bhakti*, devotion)—is conducive to esoteric meditative practice of mystical ascent into the indwelling Gnosis of Light—*christos* Presence—Christ mind, Christ Consciousness within us all, here and now.

'Faith' as concept, belief and ritual without surrender of egocentric motives emphasizes objective third person ego-serving conventional conceptual belief and self-serving morality. Faith as ego self-surrender (*kenosis*) opens to *That* that is beyond our objective dimension and perforce enters in the realm of first person subjective, contemplative, mystical experience—ego-transcending deep nondual prayer/meditation. As human heart-mind opens to receive, ego with its concepts and beliefs recedes—breath by mindful breath—into deep subjective cognitive background that is our divine Source Ground, *ultimate* 'supreme source' of all that arises here in *relative* space and time. That *direct* yogic experience of nondual Spirit is essentially a subjective emotional devotional (*bhakti*) and experientially receptive opening (*yin*), and is prior to objective mental operations of concept and belief (*yang*). That is an urgent psychological truth of the traditions of our human Primordial Wisdom Tradition.

Second century theologians Clement of Alexandria (150-215) and his disciple Origen (185-225) at first attempted to mediate between the dualistic conceptual, ritualized, legalistic Mosaic tradition of the Hebrews and Orthodox Christians, and the nondual heretical monistic Gnosticism of emerging esoteric Christianity. Both men were said to later espouse dualistic Orthodoxy and may have engaged in polemics against heretical esoteric Gnostic teaching. Both were almost certainly early initiates of the nondual Gnosis of Light.

*Origen of Alexandria.* Upon Clement's departure from Alexandria in 203 Pope Demetrius I appointed the great early Church Neoplatonic philosopher, scholar, ascetic, and Bible textual theologian Origen of Alexandria to succeed Clement as head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria. Origen was the most prolific Christian author of late antiquity. His grand thesis *On The First Principles* revealed Christianity in an utterly profound esoteric, even nondual text that remains foundational for all later Christian theology. He was fluent in the primary dialects of both Greek and Hebrew, and perhaps Coptic as well. He taught human free will that *chooses* to know the perfection of nondual Ultimate Truth, *paramartha satya* (Plato, Plotinus, Gautama Buddha); reincarnation of the immortal soul; Christ's physical/emotional human nature, and Christian pacifism. Origen was strongly opposed to *docetism*—that Jesus incarnated not into a human body-mind, but as God Himself.

Was Origen Orthodox or nondual Gnostic? Emperor Justinian I ruled him a heretic and condemned his texts to the flames. The Second Council of Constantinople of 553 CE also

condemned his esoteric and nondual work in primordial wisdom tradition of humankind. The subtle mind of Origen had a penchant for philosophical speculation beyond that found in Christian Scripture available to him. Thus was he fluent and comfortable ambulating between authoritarian Christian Orthodoxy and the heretical nondual Gnosis of Light that was the esoteric teaching of Jesus the Christ, and of Gautama the Buddha.

Origen taught that there are three ways we may interpret scripture: 1) "flesh" is exoteric, dualistic, conceptual, objective, literal, textual/historical; 2) "soul" is the ethical/moral dimension of compassionate action/conduct for benefit of living beings; 3) "spirit" is the non-conceptual, nondual, subjective, contemplative mystical Depth (*Bathos*).

Origen was censured by Pope Demetrius I for insubordination, and for introducing nondual Gnostic heresy into his theology. A jealous Demetrius convened in 232 CE a synod which banished Origen from the Egyptian Christian Church of Alexandria.

For Clement and his heart-son Origen, 'faith' had two aspects. With the *pistic* Christians they believed that faith as belief, law, ritual and moral correctness was necessary for salvation. But they also understood and argued that direct, mystical, non-rational, *pneumatic* direct *prana* Gnosis was a necessary aspect, perhaps even the very basis of authentic Christian faith. "From the beginning you are immortal god-children of eternal life." [Clement, *Stromateis* IV, 89 2-3] Told Gautama the Buddha of this present age, "Wonder of wonders, from the very beginning all beings are primordial Buddha." [Chapter II below]

Yes, for early Christianity there were two types of Christian, the exoterically oriented *pistic* or *psychic* (mind) Christian, and the more spiritually mature, esoterically or mystically oriented *pneumatic* (spirit, *prana*, breath) Christian who grew in his/her faith under guidance of an initiated apostolic lineage spiritual master—Jesus, Paul, Theodus, Valentinus.

We have seen, the Gnosis of Light—trans-conceptual nondual primordial awareness wisdom *noesis*, *jnana*, *yeshe*, as *vidya*, *rigpa*, *christos* Presence—whatever the tradition, has always been transmitted via this "method of the *siddhas*"; that is to say by a qualified, or even enlightened/liberated lineage master to prepared mind of a disciple or devotee. Due to the subtlety of nondual *kenosis* or selfless 'noself' (Buddha's *anatman*) nature of innermost luminous Gnosis, and the prodigious defenses of the dualistic, self-centered 'spiritualized ego' in resisting its own deconstruction and evolution—intervention by a qualified master is absolutely necessary to Development Stage success, then to ultimate Completion Stage, then Perfection Stage of that prodigious process. 'Spiritual pride' makes that truth a bitter pill.

The Socratic dictum "know thyself" expresses this noble intention. So yes, "It is impossible to know ourselves by ourselves." [Suzuki Roshi] In the process of the deconstruction and transcendence of the destructive self sense—narcissism of self-ego-I—it is the spiritual master who helps the student 'cut through' (*trekshö*) the maze of *samsara*, "this ocean of incarnation and death" (Paul), all the way to the end of it. That is the spiritual path.

That great esoteric, mystical teaching of Jesus on the bright nondual Gnosis of Light was largely omitted from the *New Testament* of the Christian Bible. Well, what precisely is this numinous Gnosis of Light that dwells at spiritual Heart of each human form? What is its relationship to both our *relative* human flourishing, and our *ultimate* human happiness that is spirit liberation enlightenment? That question concerns the way human life is to be lived.

# The Gnosis of Light

Behold the light!...the true light which lights every one that comes  
into the world. —*Gospel of John*

## The Presence

Jesus taught the truth (*alétheia*) and the goodness/beauty (*agathos/charis/kalos*) of the ancient mysteries, the Primordial Wisdom Tradition of our species that was the radical nondual monistic teaching taught by the great masters of antiquity, and by the great masters who founded the historical religions. This love-wisdom tradition of humankind belongs equally to them all. Esoterically, there is a prior and transcendent unity at the heart of all our human love-wisdom traditions. That unity is subtler or deeper than the exoteric conceptual, moral, theological, epistemological and ontological similarities revealed by philosophy. That unity is the pinnacle where the exoteric traditions merge. That formless timeless unity is base or Source Ground in whom they all arise. Here lies the implicate, monistic, nondual primordial awareness unity that transcends yet embraces the explicate realities of our wisdom traditions. It is that union of *ultimate Being Itself* ('interbeing') that is our heart's desire through the *relative becoming* process of the interdependent continuum of outer, inner, innermost secret nondual religious and philosophical views and practices—albeit expressed through different metaphors, and differing levels of subtlety of understanding. This Ground (*gzhi*) or “supreme source” (*Bathos/Depth, shunyata/emptiness, Trikaya, Ultimate Bodhicitta*) in whom everything arises is nondual intrinsic “Primordial Awareness Wisdom”—bright clarity-bliss of the Gnosis of Light (*noesis, jnana, yeshe*).<sup>2</sup>

That nondual Gnosis of Light is the heart essence of esoteric Christianity. This view is perhaps best stated in the one Gnostic Gospel that was included in the *New Testament Canon*, the *Gospel of John*: “Behold the light!...the true light which lights every one that comes into the world.” It is this light, this potential for enlightenment that is the bright, unawakened “Presence that lives sleep-waiting within each human form”. [Schofield 1973] It is this light that is the subject of our profound primordial mystery, subject of the esoteric transcendental aspect of our descent from primordial Ground of Being, and our ascending path of return. This luminous Presence (*christos, vidya, rigpa*) is the very primordial light of *Genesis*, arising from the Depth (*Bathos, emptiness*) and dwelling at the spiritual Heart of every human being. This true Gnosis is more profound than dualistic doctrines of Gnostic Christian heretics. It is more profound than the transcendental theology of the great theologians Clement of Alexandria and his disciple Origen; more profound even than nondual Valentinian and Thomas teaching. Indeed, the nondual true Gnosis of Light is utterly beyond the grasp of human concept and belief,

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<sup>2</sup> Our Great Wisdom Tradition assumes that this greatest or subtlest Primordial Awareness Wisdom dimension is hidden from egocentric conceptual mind to varying degrees—from slightly hidden to deeply hidden. It is revealed, step-by-step as the spiritual aspirant ascends through practice of the path of Gnosis. Paradoxically, it is given immediately, in this very moment now to the prepared aspirant who will open to receive it. This seeming paradox of the hidden Gnosis *vis-a-vis* its immediate Presence at the spiritual heart is the “paradox of the path.” It defines the “problem of gradualism.” The paradox of seeking happiness, whether relative or ultimate, is this: “We cannot *become* happy later. But we can *be* happy now”. [Adi Da Samraj]



transcending the mind altogether, for it is the 'eternal mystery' of the very clear light Nature of Mind. It is this Gnosis of Light that arises from and opens into the basal primordial Ground of Being Itself. Therefore, this unity of love and wisdom (philosophy as *philos/sophia*) is very Essence of Mind (*Ein Sof*, nondual *Abba*, Primordial God the Father, *Tao*, *Brahman*, *shunyata*, *cittata*, *sems nyid*). That Gnosis of Light is the original creative utterance (*Logos*, The Word), remembrance, recognition and ultimate realization of our primordial 'supreme source' Ground of All.

It is this Gnosis of Light that is the actual supraconscious motive for our apocryphal seeking strategies for happiness. The great adepts and masters of the past and of the present have taught and demonstrated this great truth through the example of their lives. Astonishingly, "It is already present from the very beginning". "For those with ears to hear, let them hear." For those who will, surrender and receive this always already present divine indwelling Presence of lucid Gnosis of Light. That is our 'supreme identity'—who we are.

Why then is this great nondual love-wisdom teaching mostly absent from Abrahamic Monotheism—Jewish, Christian, and Islamic spiritual view and practice?

### **The Betrayal of the Gnosis of Light**

Our conventional religious institutions do not desire to transcend self-ego-I that obstructs realization of Gnosis love/wisdom, but to serve it. Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche has termed this egocentric 'spiritual' motive "spiritual materialism". Our prevailing global massmind ideology is Scientific Materialism whose legacy emotionally conditions us to accept and cling to belief in a complex of divisive conceptual and belief systems ("hang ups," *cathexes*, *samskaras*) that deny this indwelling 'supreme identity'—this primordial love-wisdom light that we actually are. We are reduced by such radical objectivist materialism to "ghosts in a machine." [Ryle, Koestler] The deep subjective realities of God and Spirit have now become no more than 'artifacts of neurochemical brain activity'. We feel guilty and unworthy of the love and the wisdom that is our birthright as "children of the light" (Jesus)—human participants becoming/being the very Gnosis of Light. As Jesus told, "The sins of the parents are visited upon the children"—generation after generation.

A great misfortune befell Christianity. The betrayal of ancient Mysteries by the false Gnostics—for the true Gnostics, that is, those who know, were the Initiates of primitive Christianity—caused the true Gnosis to be rejected, and alienated the Church from the supreme truths of the Kaballah, which contain all the secrets of transcendental theology.  
—Eliphas Levi, *The Mysteries* [A.E. Waite, in Kingsland, 1970]

As we have seen, the esoteric understanding of the indwelling, intrinsic primordial wisdom Gnosis became hardened into exoteric, conventional dogmas and the "True Gnosis of Light" became heresy. We have seen how the power of the early Orthodox Church became gradually vested in an ambitious, material priestly hierarchy who, from the earliest apostolic period established a powerful orthodoxy fanatically opposed to the profound esoteric mystery teaching descended from prehistoric wisdom masters to Hermes, Enoch, Moses, then to Jesus, to Paul, to Theodius and his great disciple, poet-

master Valentinus. That zealous orthodox priesthood was the fanatical "Christ Cult" of the early Christian Orthodox Church of the first and second centuries. Tragically, this betrayal of the true Gnosis of Light came to include the great Gnostic wisdom initiates Clement, Origen, and Augustine upon their coerced conversion to the exoteric Orthodoxy. It became the sworn goal of this group to destroy every trace of the Gnosis wisdom texts throughout all Christendom. [Mack 1995] The catastrophic result was that the Gnosis of Light love-wisdom teaching of Jesus and of those great Hebrew prophets before him was lost to the world until discovery of the *Nag Hammadi Library* in 1945, and the *Dead Sea Scrolls* at Qumran in 1947.

### ***Christos Presence: The Kosmic Christ, Heart Seed of the Gnosis of Light***

The primordial wisdom mystery of the "Gnosis of Light" is this: each individual of our human species has an inherently divine nature, "heart essence", indwelling Christ Buddha Tao love-wisdom Awareness Ground Presence that is our natural 'supreme identity'. "The Nature of Mind is primordially pure from the very beginning." [Nagarjuna]

It is told in our wisdom traditions that such a primordially enfolded and realized humanity unfolded and separated from that formless, timeless, selfless Being Ground and descended into this material world of flesh and ego; yet desires to be released, to realize and return to the actual spiritual perfection or wholeness that is paradoxically, our 'supreme identity' from the very beginning. This return to, or realization of our original, inherently divine nature is the great esoteric truth of the perennial mythical archetype of "the eternal return" to that prior yet always present state of wholeness union with Spirit Ground.

This truth of our apparent descent into material spacetime and the realization-return to essential, nondual perfectly subjective Ground of Being is present in inner esoteric and greater esoteric nondual wisdom teachings in all of our primary religious/wisdom traditions.

That truth is descended to Christianity through the esoteric and innermost secret tradition of the Hebrews (Moses, Jesus, Paul, *Kabbalah*), and the Greeks (Pythagoras, Plato, Plotinus). This teaching was present in the Hellenistic mysteries which were descended from the Hermetic/Orphic and Vedic mystery traditions and their prehistoric antecedents.

That which is called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and never did not exist, from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, at which time the true religion which already existed began to be called Christianity.

—St. Augustine [*Epis. Retrac.*, I, xiii, 3]

Thus it is the nature and destiny of humanity—on the accord of this ancient teaching of our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition as it is embodied in esoteric Christianity—that "in the beginning" humankind was spiritually divine and whole, not separate from our nondual Father-Mother-Creator-God. Humanity descended from this 'Eden consciousness' into matter, became clothed in "coats of skin," polarized into two sexes, evolved a material separate self-ego-I, and became forgetful (*amnesia*) of our primordial divine Spirit Source Ground. This theme is constant in the various creation mythologies of our species. This is the

hell of *samsara*: the sin (*primal ignorance, hamartia, avidya, marigpa*), suffering (*pathos, dukkah*) and death (*thanatos*) that is the story of the *Old Testament*, and in the East of the ancient *Vedas*.

Now in both West and East it is indwelling selfless (*kenosis*) Spirit Presence of this divinity, realized through the *sadhana* of the yoga of practice of the spiritual path (*marga, lam*) that develops our "*paracletic faculty*" to realize the suppressed and forgotten Gnosis of Light. The ripening of this seed of divine potential facilitates the spiritual reunion and return to our primordial Source Ground—by whatever holy name—that is the esoteric innermost teaching of the exoteric *New Testament*, and of nondual Buddhism (Essence Mahamudra, Ati Dzogchen), Advaita Vedanta, and Taoism (the yoga of the *Returning of the Light*).

That indwelling primordial spirit nature (Christ Nature, Buddha Nature, *Ein Sof*), that luminous, numinous "I Am That I Am" Presence of Moses and the Hebrew Prophets—heart-seed always already present at spiritual Heart of each human being—is esoterically, the old news and the 'good news' of the teaching inherited and transmitted by Jesus the Christ and by Gautama the Buddha. That is the primordial awareness Gnosis of Light revealed and demonstrated through the historical person of Jesus as the Christ Principle; and divine "*I Am Presence*" of Buddha Shakamuni (*Tathagatagarbha* heart seed of buddahood). This Christ/Buddha Nature Presence is actual 'supreme identity' of the human being. That is the 'Fruitional View'. Who am I? "I Am That I Am!" "*Tat Tvam Asi! That I Am!*"! *Presence of That*.

Therefore, it is innermost *kosmic christos*, not the person or personality of Jesus, and not Jesus as God that is to be realized by each human being through the teaching and the yoga or spiritual practice of the Gnosis of Light. It is the *christos* that is the 'Kosmic Christ' Presence, "the living Jesus", "the living Buddha" that dwells within the heart and mind of each human being and shall, in due course and by grace, be resurrected and realized by each one of us.

And thereby the collective whole of humanity shall be released, liberated and returned in Spirit to the 'Eden Consciousness' of the nondual divine "That I Am" Presence of our supreme source. That (*christos, vidya, tathata*) 'innermost secret' Presence is the great Primordial Wisdom mindstream of the Kosmic Christ that has been realized and actualized in the world by Jesus the Christ, and by each of the great buddhas and mahasiddhas of the past, and of the present, and will be realized by the avataric christ/buddhas yet to come. Thus it is on the accord of the innermost secret teaching of the noble Great Wisdom Tradition of our kind.

The initiatory levels or degrees of depth of realization of this esoteric perennial mystery teaching remain of course, merely exoteric conceptual understanding until actually realized and demonstrated—gradually step-by-step, then suddenly by the disciple/devotee in the everyday life world—from initiation, to enlightenment, to the realization of innermost *christos* and its actualization in the world through compassionate ethical action. Yes. Such a one, according to the *Gospel of Philip* (Gnostic) "Is no longer a Christian, but a Christ."

### **Resurrection of the Kosmic Christ**

Hence, it is our indwelling Kosmic Christ that is to be realized through the radical nondual Gnosis of Light, promethean blissful "clear light" teaching of our Primordial Wisdom Tradition. Yes. That realization of non-separate innermost secret Kosmic Christ is the realization of Christ Consciousness, Christ Nature, Buddha Nature, infinite Hebrew *Ein*

*Sof*, primordial Presence, by whatever sacred name, divine original face of each human being, of all sentient beings, and indeed, of all relatively manifested spacetime conditional reality. Thus there is the *ultimate* implicate order of perfectly subjective "Big Mind" (Susuki Roshi), the mindstream of *Christ Presence*, *Abba* nondual Primordial Father of Jesus the Christ, buddha mind that transcends and embraces everything. And there is included within *That* the conditional world of spacetime reality—"Small Mind"—*relative* explicate order of the objective world of related things. Again, it is this Christ-Buddha indwelling mindstream essence that is, according to our Great Tradition, luminous Presence (*christos*, *vidya*, *rigpa*) of Primordial Awareness Wisdom (gnosis, *jnana*, *yeshe*), 'supreme identity' of our 'supreme source' Ground—*Bathos*, formless Depth in whom this form arises.

Spirit realization of the Kosmic Christ, according to Paul, must be "found and brought to birth as the Christ in you" in order to be lifted up from "this ocean of incarnation and death." Jesus' resurrection is for Paul, not a temporal "judgment day," but a transcendent Gnostic mystical awakening or enlightening: "Awake thou that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine within thee". [Paul, *Ephesians*]

Throughout the canonical *New Testament* and the noncanonical Gnostic Scriptures, Christ Consciousness—*christos/logos*—as the potential realization of the Gnosis of Light is presented continuously in outer exoteric symbol and allegory as the fall and resurrection of each individual, and thereby of humanity collectively. Humanity has been crucified upon the cross of material form. Today we see this in dreary Scientific and Spiritual Materialism.

Once again, our spiritual ascent—resurrection, liberation and return—is accomplished through view and practice of the spiritual path, the 'yoga' (union of matter and spirit) of the path to realization of numinous always already present Presence, our Christ Consciousness, the indwelling *christos* or Kosmic Christ that is, and shall always be, our original divine nature. From the 'Fifth Gospel', the Gnostic *Gospel of Thomas* Jesus speaks:

If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you. There is light within a being of light, and it lights the whole world.  
If he does not shine, he is darkness.

*Christ is Risen*. The great truth "Christ is Risen" is, esoterically, the personal realization that the conditional self-ego-I of every human being has already been resurrected into the Gnosis of Light that is the "I Am" Presence (*christos*, *vidya*, *rigpa*) that is not other than, or in any way separate from our divine 'supreme source', *Abba* God the Primordial Father, nondual perfectly subjective all-embracing Spirit Ground of All. "Christ is Risen" is truth that "it is already present and accomplished from the very beginning" (Nagarjuna); that each one of us is already resurrected into the light, here, now, at the Heart, when we listen, recognize, awaken and then realize *That* (*tathata*, *noesis*, *christos*) that we already actually are. That is 'innermost secret' primordial awareness Gnosis of Light. That remembrance is moment to moment realization. Happiness Itself. The actualization of it through kind, compassionate action naturally follows. "A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." [Lao Tzu]

## The Gnostic Christian Nondual View: Kabbalah, Valentinus, Thomas

We have seen that some contemporary scholars (Jonas, Rudolph, Churton) view the entire Christian Gnostic record of the first two centuries as theologically and ontologically dualistic regarding the separation of matter and spirit, humanity and God. But it is not so.

Well developed nondual monistic (all reality is of one ground) teaching arises in Gnostic Valentinian literature of the 2nd century CE. [Schoedel, Dawson, Layton] Of God our nondual Primordial Father: "He possessed The All dwelling within Him". [Valentinian Exposition] "In the Unbegotten One, all things exist at once". [Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*] According to Bentley Layton (1987) this teaching assumes a nondual monistic ontology characteristic of "Stoic pantheistic monism [where] all is embraced by God and ultimately all is God". For William Schoedel (1972): "Such theology presupposes a non-dualistic cosmology. For it does not allow that the God who contains all things is limited by any other reality". The Valentinian first principle, Supreme Source of 'The All' is that nondual Primordial Father (*Abba* in Jesus' Aramaic dialect), the Depth (*Bythos* or *Bathos*). From this masculine aspect of godhead emanates 'The Son' that is 'The Mind', intrinsic primordial awareness descended from Source into mental and physical form. Thus, from monistic One arises plurality—'The Many'. This feminine aspect of godhead is called 'The Silence', direct yogic experience (*yogi pratyaksa*) of noetic Primordial Awareness Wisdom that is utter quiescent equanimity. As Jesus told, "the peace that passes all understanding."

In short, this androgynous male/female dyad that is 'The Son' descends as 'The Mind' into spacetime as dimensions (*aeons*) of mental and material form. All together these entities, these "members of The All" constitute the *pleroma* or "fullness" of our original Primordial Father that is nondual godhead. [Layton 1980, Schoedel 1972, Thomassen in Meyer, 2007] Jesus is physical embodiment of the Son (Mind), personal indwelling *christos* Presence who incarnates from empty *Bathos* Ground into spacetime form in order to teach to we suffering human beings the redeeming Gnosis of Light that is indwelling birthright of each one of us.

Two of the great *Nag Hammadi* texts, Valentinus' *Gospel of Truth* (Gnostic) and the *Tripartite Tractate* (Gnostic) explicate this profound, fantasque Gnostic ontology. *These pivotal texts represent a transition in Christian history from the outer exoteric Hellenistic Platonic dualism of earlier Egypto-Greek and Gnostic teaching, and from the dualism—the essential separation of humanity and God, matter and spirit—of the Hebrew Tanakh (The Old Testament), and of the developing Christian Orthodoxy, to the inner esoteric and then radical nondual direct experiential mysticism of Kabbalistic, Valentinian and the Thomas teaching.* Exemplars of this great transition process include, as we have seen, the great Gnostic theologians Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata*, Book IV), and especially his great disciple Origen, and later, Saint Augustine before their probable, lamentable coerced conversion to the Christian Orthodoxy.

And yes, both the Gnostic *Gospel of Truth* and the *Tripartite Tractate* emphasize inward mystical 'metacognitive' *epinoia* (*rigpa*, *dhyana*, *samadhi*). *Epinoia* is the contemplative penetrating insight of immediate nondual wisdom *ultimate* Gnosis (*metanoia*) *vis a vis* relative, exoteric, conventional concept and belief (*dianoia*, *doxa*, *namtok*) in a separate Platonic creator demiurge with its dualistic Creator God of the Hebrews and of Orthodox Christians. Both of

these lovely texts utilize the nondual Kabbalistic mysticism of ancient *Raza Rabba* (The Great Mystery), and 2nd century mysticism of the *Zohar* of Simeon ber Yohai. [*Zohar* is said to have been completed in the 12th century by Moses de Leon.] These secret teachings are antedated by a thousand years in the Hebrew *hekalat*, and through the *logos/christos* incarnation of the great Hebrew patriarch and deathless master Enoch, transcendent Guru to meta-historical Moses.

The *Gospel of Truth* speaks of redemption (*apolutrosis*, release, liberation, enlightenment) as "Revealed to be perfect through the mercies of the Father". That is hidden mystery of Jesus the Christ. Through him he enlightened those who were in darkness because of forgetfulness. [Grant 1961] This forgetfulness (*amnesia*) is atavistic 'primal ignorance' (*hamartia/sin*, *avidya*, *ajnana*, *marigpa*) that perceives the phenomenal world of matter as objectively *ultimately* real and ontologically separate from the *pleroma*—formless, timeless, selfless primordial boundless whole of perfectly subjective nondual Spirit—"The All"—*Bathos*/Depth that is non-conceptual nondual godhead, Primordial God the Father of Jesus the Christ. It is that divine Spirit Presence (*christos*, *logos*) who dwells within us always. Yet, as Jesus told, "You do not see it."

Valentinus laments this condition of "not seeing and not hearing" in which we perforce arise and dwell within nondual God, yet we have not yet awakened to it. Told Jesus to his prepared disciples: "That happiness you seek, the Kingdom of God, is already present within you, and it is spread upon the face of the world, but you do not see it." [Luke 17]

Through this fundamental primal ignorance (*hamartia/sin*) of the nature of Spirit Ground and its realities, and our place and participation herein we see, not luminous primordial unbounded wholeness, *Bathos* of the *Pleroma*, but merely its illusory Platonic shadows that constitute the seemingly separate painful chaos (*samsara*) of this suffering world. What to do?

For Valentinians noetic nondual (body mind spirit subject-object unity) God is monistic One, our only reality, beyond concept and belief. There is only God. Indwelling Gnosis of Light manifests as love and wisdom that dispels divisive darkness of ignorance that brings suffering and death. Thus do we know there is no *ultimate* separation between humanity and God. The world of form arises, dwells and decays within The Depth of our Primordial Father God, who transcends yet embraces every participating fragment of that great *kosmic* boundless whole.

How may we know *That*? We finally decide to consciously *manage our awareness*. We choose gentle conscious 'placement of attention' upon that bright Spirit Presence as it rides the *prana/pneuma/holy spirit* life force breath in the belly—the *hara/dō* chakra deep in the gut near the base of the spine in the vertical 'central channel'. That is 'The Meditation' of our wisdom traditions. [Appendix A] We receive the wondrous benefit of such practice in proportion to our engaged practice of it. Now we wisely engage the perennial "three jewels": the spiritual master in your tradition, the highest teaching in your tradition, and the spiritual community. [Appendix D]

The monistic nondual Gnostic Valentinian view is antithesis of common Gnostic dualism. Just so, this Gnosis narrative partakes in the very innermost secret nondual core of our Primordial Wisdom Tradition, whether Buddhist *Dzogchen*, *Advaita Vedanta*, or *Zohar/Kabbalah*.

When speculating about the "highest" or most subtle nondual "innermost secret" teaching of any tradition it may be useful to note that there are levels of depth of understanding of this greatest teaching—from the subtlest discursive understanding, through the penetrating insight of the union of *shamatha/vipashyana* (*ennoia/epinoia*), to the omniscient

realization of Christ or Buddha. Such *aeons* or dimensions of the *Pleroma/Bythos* (Gzhi) are functions of the psycho-spiritual life stage evolutionary development of the individual aspirant. Moreover, with the exception of Christ, Buddha, or a true mahasiddha, the teacher, speaker, or interpreter introduces a personal subjectivity into the transmission of the teaching. There seems to be a profound impulse, even a *prima facie* moral imperative to share our innate Primordial Wisdom with one another. Yet there exists a protean abyss between our view and our conduct. We shall not be taken seriously until we practice our View. Thus do we proceed.

Yes, for the esoteric oriented Christian *pneumatic* Gnostic, Jesus demonstrated the *logos-christos* that is present as divine Gnosis of Light Presence within each human form, an inherent, already present, divine spiritual potential awaiting recognition, then realization. For these Christians neither the human Jesus, the great exemplar and master teacher of the Gnosis of Light, nor a glorified Jesus as God, was an object of worship. For the nondual Valentinus and Thomas Gnostics it is our *logos-christos*, Christ Nature, Mind of Christ, very Presence of nondual God that abides always at the human spiritual Heart (*hridayam*). That arises as selfless *prana/pneuma* holy spirit breath in the human body. Jesus the Christ great realization exemplified this truth.

*Thus, in the Valentinian Gospel of Truth and in the Tripartite Tractate we see a fully developed nondual, monistic transcendence of the persistent dualism of matter and spirit, humanity and God, body and soul, soul and the divine present in exoteric Hellenism, Orthodox Judaism and Orthodox Christianity.*

Through the Valentinian texts, and also in the Thomas literature we discover the Gnosis of Light that is nothing less than the nondual wisdom teaching found at the esoteric and nondual heart of all of the traditions of our Primordial Wisdom Tradition, as we have seen. That is the great innermost secret spiritual teaching that was descended to Jesus from Enoch, Moses, and the *hekalot*, to the mystical Zohar and Kabbalah, and from the ancient Orphic/Hermetic mystery religions, and passed forth through the esoteric mystical Gnosis teaching of the Apostle Paul, and on to Paracelsus, Meister Eckhart, Saint Teresa of Avila, and Saint John of the Cross. Some of these initiates realized, then actualized through the Gnosis of Light the actual *christos/logos*, indwelling Spirit Presence of Kosmic Christ that abides as heart seed potential, according to the *Gospel of Thomas*, in each and every human being. That is as well nondual teaching of the Buddha.

Clearly, the authors of the great Gnostic Valentinian texts, the *Gospel of Thomas*, and other incipient nondual Gnostic texts (e.g. those non-Christian Hermetic *Nag Hammadi texts: Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth, Asklepios* and the *Prayer of Thanksgiving*) perceived, perhaps realized in the life world esoteric "innermost secret" Nature of Mind that is nondual God the Primordial Father, ultimate source Ground of Being of all arising spacetime stuff. Clement of Alexandria speaks of monistic "Monadic Gnosis," and the metaphysical unity of all relative spacetime being in nondual God. Valentinus tells of "Source of the All, the Ineffable One liveth in the Monad...alone, in the Silence, and none was before him." [*A Valentinian Exposition, Nag Hammadi*] "Your Father in Heaven is One." [*Interpretation of Knowledge, a Nag Hammadi text*]

*The view of the Valentinians and of the Thomas Christian Gnostics then, was that God—Abba the Primordial Father—was the nondual supreme source Ground of all phenomenal being, and that Jesus the Christos was a mortal avatar who, during his human life "overcame the world". That is to say, he realized, then demonstrated the truth of our inherent indwelling Christ Nature, divine Ground Presence—prior and present actual identity as "Children of the Light." Told Jesus: "We come from the Light."*

## Four Voices of Human Knowing: *Epinoia, Dianoia, Metanoia, Gnosis*

Nondual wisdom Gnosis (*noesis, jnana, yeshe*) is ultimate 'primordially pure' luminous clear light *Awareness* that is timeless, formless, selfless Ground of Being Itself. Gnosis is our innate, present, indwelling noetic nondual (body, mind, spirit subject-object unity) primeval love-wisdom, reflexively accessed through subjective knowing-feeling yogic *direct rigpa* experience (*yogi pratyaksa*). Gnosis transcends concept, belief, and objective empirical knowledge (*dianoia, episteme, namtok*). It is beyond relative discriminating wisdom (*sophia, prajna, sherab*) that consumes the *kleshas* (obstructive emotions). It prepares the mind to receive Gnosis. Gnosis uses direct, penetrating contemplative insight/intuition (*epinoia, vipashyana*) to realize itself (*noesis*) as awakened knowing (*rigpa, metanoia*) of nondual Primordial Awareness Wisdom (*jnana, vidya, yeshe, noesis*)—ultimate Supreme Source Ground (God the Father, Tao, *Nirguna Brahman, dharmakaya, Samantabhadra*) in whom arises all *relative* spacetime phenomena.

"Awareness" translates *ennoia*; "mindfulness" translates *aponnoia*; concept/belief translates *dianoia*; "empirical experience" translates "*episteme*"; "relative discriminating wisdom" translates *sophia, prajna*; "nondual primordial awareness wisdom" (*jnana, yeshe, noesis*) translates gnosis; "*primordial presence*" of the Ground is *christos, vidya, rigpa*; "Supreme Source/Depth" translates *Bythos*. This timeless, subjective *ultimate* Source Ground of Being—"Big Mind" (*paramartha, kosmos*)—transcends yet embraces "Small Mind" (*samvriti, cosmos*), our *relative*, perceptual and conceptual knowledge about this vast boundless whole (*mahabindu*).

So, our 'perennial wisdom' Great Tradition teaches the dialectic of the "Two Truths": Relative Truth (*samvriti satya*), finite objective relative-conventional empirical spacetime reality with its physical and mental phenomena, and Ultimate Truth (*paramartha satya*), infinite, nondual perfectly subjective unbounded whole itself. That Ultimate Reality transcends yet embraces the phenomenal dimension of Relative Truth in a *one truth unity*. This world of Relative Truth includes the dyad of outer exoteric and inner esoteric reality dimensions. That esoteric dimension includes yet deeper subtler strata of ontic formation.

Gnosis is the knowing aspect (*buddhi, vidya*) of the nondual essence and Nature of Mind, beyond the duality of subject and object, prior to the discursive and emotive function of mind (*manas, namshe, vijnana*). Thus Gnosis is *yeshe* nondual primordial wisdom in that it transcends, yet embraces temporal relative knowledge (*samvriti*) of spacetime phenomena. "To know oneself at the deepest level is to know God." [Monoimus] Here, knower (*gnostikos*) and known (*gnosis*), subject and object, spirit and matter are not separate but participate together as the spacious unbounded whole in a pristine naked noetic relationship of identity.

Exoterically oriented Jews and Christians have practiced a dualistic separation of humanity from nondual God for 15,000 years. Such a view represents the atavistic primal ignorance (*avidya*) that is *hamartia* (sin), literally "missing the mark." The Gnostic *Gospel of Thomas* speaks not of sin and repentance but of ignorance (*hamartia/sin, alogos, avidya, marigpa*) and enlightenment (*logos, apolutrosis, vidya, rigpa, liberation, bodhi, moksha*). It is this now present liberation/enlightenment that is, according to the highest, subtlest teaching of our wisdom traditions, the end of all our seeking—ultimate harmless Happiness Itself (*beatitudo*,



*mahasukha, paramananda*)—very ground of relative human flourishing (*eudiamonia, felicitas*).

That 'double happiness' spontaneously arises upon our natural timeless primordial awareness as “innermost secret,” nondual Ultimate Reality Itself. Selfless bright Presence of That. Step-functional realization of these ascending levels of knowledge and love-wisdom is a product of present psycho-spiritual lifestage development of the spiritual aspirant.

As to experience of these hidden dimensions, whether conceptual *dianoia* or contemplative *epinoia* or even *metanoia*, it is most important to maintain the understanding awareness that these dimensional reality realms—these “many mansions of the Father’s house”—arise in a relationship of interconnected interdependence with one another, and with the great noetic nondual (body mind spirit, subject-object unity) whole itself, and therefore empty of inherent, independent intrinsic existence in themselves. This is especially so for the Ultimate Truth dimension that is boundless whole of ultimate Primordial Ground of all arising phenomenal reality. That too is absent and empty of any intrinsic absolute existence. To use a Buddhist metaphor, even the *ultimate* emptiness groundless Ground in whom this all arises is itself empty of any whit of inherent existence.

Meanwhile, spacetime phenomena continue to appear to sentient beings as this continuum of gross *relative* spacetime stuff. Great *Ultimate Bodhicitta* gift (*jinlob*) of our lives. That gift spontaneously manifests as *Relative Bodhicitta*—kind compassionate engaged action/conduct for the benefit of living beings. And *That* is portal into the Ground of Being.

Please do not *believe* any of this lofty, para-schizoid conceptual elaboration. It is quite beyond belief and our concepts about it all. Still, it is essential to fully engage both aspects of our *noetic cognitive doublet*, metacognitive unity of our two human cognitive dimensions—objective conceptual, and subjective contemplative. We learn to reveal, then unpack our deeply subjective *ultimate* spirit love and wisdom (*gnosis, rigpa, metanoia, jnana, yeshe*) not only via subjective meditation, but as well through “discursive meditation”—skillful conceptual *relative* means/method (*dianoia, sophia, namtok, valpana*). Thus do we realize prior and present *one truth unity* of our primordial 'Two Truths' of this boundless Ground—dualistic Relative Truth, arising in nondual Ultimate Truth. Union of Two Truths.

I have elsewhere referred to this great ontic prior *one truth unity* (*dzog*) of these none too tidy epistemic perennial Two Truths as the essential unifying *Principle of Ontological Interdependence*. Indeed, the esoteric and even nondual understanding of our human primary wisdom traditions view relative objective and subjective physical and mental entities as ultimately selfless (*kenosis*), absent and empty (*shunyata*) of inherent intrinsic existence (‘interdependent arising’ or *pratitya samutpada*). And we have seen that this does not deny them their reality status as objectively *real* objects in the realm of Relative Truth that is empirical, scientific, relative-conventional spacetime reality. [Ch. II Buddhism]

Thus do our Four Voices and Two Truths of Knowing aid in understanding our emerging knowledge 'paradigm shift'—the resolution of the “explanatory gap” between mind and matter (the “mind-body problem”), and between Science and Spirit that is the “hard problem of consciousness” with its urgent need of an integral principle to unify quantitative third person methodologies of Western Science with qualitative first person modes of inquiry of noetic Vedic and Buddhist Contemplative Science. [Boaz 2024; 2023]

## Jesus and Paul: Outer, Inner, and Nondual Teaching

The obscurity and contradictions of the canonical *New Testament Gospels, Acts* and *Epistles* clearly show that they have been overwritten, rewritten, interpolated and revised with the anti-mystical Orthodox intent to demystify, de-spiritualize and conceptualize the innermost nondual spiritual teaching of Jesus the Christ. [Pagels, Koester, Robinson, Mack, Funk, Meyer] To further complicate these matters, Jesus and Paul, like all great spiritual adepts, transmitted the ancient nondual Gnosis of Light mystery teaching both exoterically, to those less well prepared to receive, and esoterically, to those whose karma and spiritual practice have prepared them for the "mysteries of the Kingdom."

I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. These things have I spoken unto you in parables: the time cometh when I shall tell you plainly of the Father. [*John* xvi 12, 25]

To the spiritually uninitiated and unprepared the mystery of the Gnosis of Light can be given only through allegory, metaphor and symbol. Whether layperson, priest, or scholar, the true Gnosis of Light can only be transmitted directly, through the mindstream of an adept master to the prepared mind of the disciple/devotee. Self-ego-I cannot purify itself without wise and skillful noetic intervention. The mind cannot come to know itself by itself alone. This is a vital truth of the metanarrative of our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition, whatever the individual tradition narrative. We need *Three Jewels*: master, teaching, sangha.

As to the great Gnosis of Light teaching as it arises in the metaphors and allegories of the canonical and non-canonical *Gospels, Acts* and *Epistles*, it is vital to distinguish the outer materialistic exoteric from the inner esoteric (secret, innermost secret, nondual) connotations of indwelling *Christ Presence, christos/logos*—Kosmic Christ. While the outer exoteric view of Jesus is as Hebrew God incarnate, for the inner esoteric understanding Jesus is the historical human who "overcame the world" to become Jesus the liberated Christ (*christos*, the initiate adept and anointed one), a fully realized human avatar who—like Enoch, Moses, Adi Shankara, Gautama Buddha, Longchenpa, Padmasambhava—incarnated to fully realize our indwelling primordial wisdom, the Gnosis of Light that is pure Presence of the Ground of Being, and further, to demonstrate this great truth that the Kosmic Christ or Christ nature, or Buddha nature is the actual design of each human being.

Each human being is a *kosmic* being of light, potential Kosmic Christ or Buddha, and may, in due course and by grace, realize the potential of that primordial Christ/Buddha nature that abides always already at the subtle human spiritual Heart (*hridayam*).

[*'Kosmic'* here denotes monistic unbounded whole of the Pythagorean *kosmos* (physical, mental, causal, nondual spirit) that transcends yet embraces merely physical cosmos.]

"The only difference between a Buddha and an ordinary person is that one realizes it, the other does not." [Zen Patriarch Hui Neng] Although the wisdom gnosis is fully awake and present at every moment, ego self does not see it; we remain unawakened to that great original truth of reality, so the master reveals it through the mind states and life stages of the

spiritual path as disciple grows into that Gnosis of Light. This ostensible paradox I have elsewhere termed "the paradox of the path." For Paul, great initiate of the Gnosis of Light:

I came unto you not with the excellence of wisdom [Gnosis] proclaiming to you the mystery of God...Howbeit we speak wisdom among the full-grown...I fed you milk, not with meat; for ye were not yet able to bear it. *The psychic* [mind] does not discern *pneumatic* [spiritual] things.

—Paul, *I Corinthians*

The Gnosis of Light—nondual wisdom, *metanoia*, *jnana*, *yeshe*—received by faith/*pistis* (ego surrender) is therefore the great mystery of the ages. The primordial Gnosis of Light is infinite unmanifest *Ein Sof* of the Hebrews; primordial Tao that cannot be named. It is nondual unity of luminous emptiness, awareness, and appearance of Buddhist *shunyata*. It is Hindu nondual Nirguna Brahman of Shankara's nondual Advaita Vedanta.

*The Gnosis of Light is the direct mystical nondual yogic 'experience' of the divine inner love-wisdom Presence (christos, vidya, rigpa, noesis) of the Kosmic Christ, incarnated from Abba, nondual God, Primordial Father of All, selfless base or formless Ground or 'supreme source' in whom energy (spiritus, pneuma, ch'i, lung, prana) arises in space and time as light, mind, matter, breath, voice and all the manifest things of relative, conditional phenomenal existence (E=mc<sup>2</sup>). This great mystery cannot be told. It cannot be grasped by concept mind. It is profound. It utterly transcends discursive understanding. Yet, from such a Ground, through the mind, upon the spirit breath, the Gnosis of Light arises, shines at the heart of all beings. It is realized by human beings.*

That is the "Gospel that has been given in all creation under heaven." [*Colossians*] That is the teaching that has "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." [2 *Timothy*] This is the truth that "existed among the ancients, and never did not exist, from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh." [St. Augustine]

And yes, that great teaching refers not to the historical human person of Jesus, nor to Jesus as God, but to the *christos* Presence, Christ Mind, Gnosis of Light that he realized and demonstrated, not by his death but by his compassionate life. For Paul, as for the Gnostic authors of *John* and *Thomas*, that teaching is the esoteric "Gnosis of Light that passes all understanding." It is indeed the *christos*, the inner Christ Presence that is that very "light which lights every one that comes into the world." "The lamp of the body is the mind." [*Gnostic Dialog of the Savior*] "Enlighten your mind...light the lamp within you." [*Gnostic Teaching of Silvanus*]

Alas, even though this *christos* Presence dwells now, awake, at the heart within each human form, yet we know it not. Told Jesus, "It is spread upon the face of the world, but you do not see it." [Luke 17] Thus it abides alone in 'The Silence' (*Bathos*) awaiting ego self surrender that is our selfless opening (*pistis*/faith) that is *pneuma*/holy spirit *prana* breath teaching *sadhana* of all spiritual paths.

On the road to Damascus, "when it was the good pleasure of God ... to reveal his son in me" (not to me), Paul was initiated (*teleosis*, anointed) by innermost *christos* Presence of God, the "Christ that liveth in me," "the mind of Christ," not by the God Jesus, and not by the man Jesus. [Paul never met Jesus in the flesh.] "For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ." [*Galatians*] In *Ephesians* Paul states, "How

that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery of the Christ." Pure mystical wisdom.

Clearly, Paul understood the distinction between the great manifestation of the *Logos* Presence of nondual non-theistic godhead in Jesus the Christ as the great human teacher, and Jesus the Christ as a holy man made into a singular God by men. Paul loved the great man Jesus for his demonstration of the realization of the Gnosis of Light. But Paul praised and attempted to realize in himself nondual divine *Logos*, the *christos* Presence realized by the mortal human Jesus in order to reveal to each one of us our own divine potential or capacity for this ultimate altruistic happiness—*apolutrosis*, ultimate spiritual liberation/enlightenment.

Exoterically then, the great man Jesus of Nazareth has been molded by humans to be worshipped as "the one and only begotten Son of God," a separate transcendent God, a unique spiritual singularity in the history of the world. In a less parochial, esoteric view, Jesus was one of many historical and pre-historical avatars and Rishi-Christ-Buddhas, the indwelling, non-separate *Logos* incarnated from the very Ground of Being that "All-That-Is", the "I Am Presence" to teach and to demonstrate to self-conscious beings that greatest truth: "No longer I, but Christ lives in me", and "Wonder of wonders, all beings are Buddha...Everything is Buddha from the beginning." It is through this great realization that "Christ shall shine within thee."

### **The Solar Logos: The Descent and Ascent of All-Embracing Spirit**

*Who Am I?* As far into antiquity as we may go, it is told of "that One that dwelleth in the sun." The various mythic sun gods are the *logoic* expressions for us of that Bright One who is very source or base or Ground of everything that appears, whose luminous body is of pure clear light, and in whom an avataric "son" is incarnated into spacetime physical form. [*"Logos"* is a Greek translation of the Hebrew *dabar*, "that which abides prior".]

The *christos* or Kosmic Christ Presence that is primordially enfolded in all-embracing *ultimate* Spirit Ground of everything unfolds and 'descends' into this dimension of *relative* space and time is avataric Solar Logos aspect or expression of nondual Primordial Father of All (*Abba* in Jesus' Aramaic tongue), our very 'supreme source' Ground of Being, perfectly subjective Spirit Itself. For Vedic tradition this nondual primordial awareness source of That-That-Is (*tathata*, *suchness*, *noumenon*) is *Kham Brahm*, "The Bright" that is ultimate nondual *Nirguna Brahman/Parabrahman* in whom Krishna and Shankara incarnate. For Taoists it is the ineffable empty stillness of the "Tao that cannot be told" which manifests as moral/spirit virtue or *Te*; in Egypt it is *Osiris* in whom appears divine son Horus; in Greece Spirit in form is *Apollo*; for mystical Christian Hermetic Kabbalah it is unspeakable *Ein Sof* (space like Infinite One Point); in Persia it is *Ahura-Mazda (Ormazd)*; for Indo-Tibetan Buddhists it is 'primordial purity' of *kadag* Being Ground, union of phenomenal appearance and clear light luminous emptiness/*shunyata* in whom everything arises and participates, embodied as *Samantabhadra* (Tib. *Kuntuzangpo*, Jap. *Fugen*), all-subsuming *dharmakaya* Adi Buddha. [*Ch. II*] For the Hebrews, *Logos* is self-sprung from mystical infinite *Ein Sof*, unmanifest nondual God of Abraham and Moses—*El'elyôn*, the "I Am That I Am" radiant solar Presence in whom Yeshua, Jesus the Christ incarnates to teach the Truth to we suffering human beings.

Hebrew *Yahweh-Elohim* is exoteric, creator aspect of Solar Logos. Just so, *Ishvara* and *Saguna Brahman* are the relative, creator aspects of *Nirguna Brahman*, nondual unqualified Absolute. "And God said unto Moses, 'I Am That I Am' ('*eh yeh aser 'eh yeh*): and he said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, 'I Am' hath sent me unto you." [*Exodus*]

That "I Am" Presence is eternally present as the Solar Logos, *christos* Presence that lives as radiant potential to be realized via direct experience at spiritual heart of each human being. Thus Jesus spoke to the Pharisees: "Before Abraham was, I Am." From *El*, the perfectly subjective, utterly ineffable, primordial absolute Ground, ultimate source, has come *Yahweh-Elohim*, mother-father-creator God in whom arises all phenomenal reality, and we sentient beings to experience and grow through it, and in whom incarnates all of the Christ-Buddhas and great avatars and mahasiddhas of the past, and of the present, and of the future.

According to the Great Wisdom Tradition of our kind, liberation of humanity from our descent into this samsaric "ocean of suffering" of the material world requires nothing less than the periodic manifestation and intervention of primordial Solar Logos into an avataric incarnation, as a human being, who then "overcomes the world" and realizes, then demonstrates the wisdom and compassion of the way and the path of return to nondual Spirit Ground. As if we were ever separated in the first place. "The Word [*logos/christos*] was made flesh and dwelt among us...full of grace and truth." [*Gospel of John*, a Gnostic Gospel]

According to our Great Wisdom Tradition the Solar Logos has manifested through many incarnations throughout human history: Jesus the Christ, Gautama Shakyamuni the Buddha (and all the Buddhas of prehistory), Garab Dorje, Padmasambhava, Longchen Rabjam, Bodhidharma, Dogen Zenji, Ramakrishna, Adi Shankara, Ramana Maharshi, Lao Tzu, mahasiddhas and Saints, all incarnated manifestations of nondual timeless, formless, selfless Spirit Source Ground of Being, descended as divine archetype—avatars into human form, being here for us on this pretty blue planet abiding here among the stars.

From its vast primordial Spirit 'groundless Ground' supreme source does our planetary *Logos* incarnate again and again into human form to realize, then transmit original Gnosis of Light, our indwelling Christ/Buddha Nature, in order to brighten, enlighten and liberate all who will listen, surrender (*pistis*-faith) self-ego-I, and follow that Way.

This "true Gnosis of Light" is the peace and equanimity of *apolutrosis*, *samadhi*, *moksha*, *satori/kensho*, realization of that numinous luminous intimate immediate Presence of the *logos-christos* (*vidya*, *rigpa*) that is our actual 'supreme identity' that is not other than, or separate from all-embracing great expanse of our 'supreme source' itself: *Tao*, *Brahman*, *shunyata*, *dharmakaya*, *Abba* God nondual Primordial Father that is "I Am That I Am," of Enoch, Moses, and Jesus. Esoterically, the teaching is the same. Exoterically it appears a little different. Buddha emphasized wisdom and compassion. Jesus emphasized love and compassion. Esoterically understood, the truth of the Gnosis of Light has its wisdom aspect; it has its love aspect. Wisdom manifests as, and guides Love—kindness and compassionate conduct for benefit of beings. Love and Wisdom are an indivisible prior and present unity.

That eternal dialectic of the nondual primordial wisdom teaching of humankind appears differently in different times, for different peoples, through different cultural metaphors; but the nondual heart essence of the teaching is always the same. At the

pinnacle, where exoteric and esoteric differences merge into greater esoteric or innermost secret identity, all differences are unified in their nondual primordial awareness source Ground, prior yet always present metaphysical ontic unity—spiritual union. Who Am I? That I Am! What is my mind? That is my mind! It has always been, and shall ever be thus.

Something lives within you that lives longer than the stars.  
It abides at the place in the heart...What that subtle being is,  
from which all that is arises, that is the Real, that is Spirit  
Presence, that thou art. *Tat Tvam Asi.*

—Chandogya Upanishad (*Samaveda*)

A billion stars spin through the night  
blazing high above your head.  
Deep within is the presence that will be  
when all the stars are dead.

—Rilke

That monumental yet very subtle always already present indwelling *christos* Spirit Presence of vast *kosmos* whole that is nondual godhead is who we are now—our 'supreme identity' that is 'supreme source Ground'—*Abba*, primordial God the Father of Jesus the Christ. It is "That I Am" (*Tat Tvam Asi*) that is the great "I Am That I Am" Presence of Israel—of Enoch, of Moses, of Jesus, and of Christianity—and of all the buddhas and mahasiddhas of the past, and of the present, and of those yet to incarnate into this difficult dimension of space and time. Who am I? It is That 'innermost secret' Presence of all-embracing Great Love that binds together the worlds. That Gnosis of Light abides now at the heart of each human form, always upon this *prana/pneuma/spirit* living breath in the body. It is that compassion and love that we happily give through our action/conduct for the benefit of all living beings. It is That I Am Presence that arises spontaneously and effortlessly upon the spiritual path. Even when we forget. So we remember great truth of it. It is *That* that is the open secret of our own harmless human happiness. *Feel That Presence Now.* Jesus the Christ incarnated from that vast original Ground of Being to teach we human beings that sublime light. Great joy!

*The Education of Jesus of Nazareth.* Jesus' first teachers were his earthly mother Mary and his father Joseph of Nazareth; and later the love-wisdom master and aesthete John the Baptist who baptized him. Jesus was a disciple of this devout prophet prior to beginning his own ministry. Great spiritual masters after all require guides in the beginning. We often hear John's teaching reflected in the Gospels. Jesus learned the Jewish Law of the Prophets from local Judean and Galilean rabbis, and later came to fulfill that Law. Jesus attracted his first disciples from John's disciples. Jesus spent his early years in schools in Galilee where he learned to read and write in the Aramaic Hebrew dialect. He knew some Hebrew as well. That the *New Testament* was written in Greek suggests Jesus may have learned Greek from the House of Rabbi Hillel and/or from the great local Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria.

## New Testament Mythmaking

That which is called the Christian religion existed among the  
Ancients, and never did not exist until Christ came...

—St. Augustine

The *New Testament Canon* is an extremely limited selection of texts produced from a large body of teaching that evolved among various Jewish/Christian communities during the first two hundred years following the death of Jesus of Nazareth (Yeshua in Hebrew).

The discovery of authentic *Gospels*, *Acts* and *Letters* in Nag Hammadi Egypt in 1945, the wondrous *Nag Hammadi Library*, then the *Dead Sea Scrolls* at Qumran in 1948, and the deconstruction of canonical *New Testament* by postmodern Bible and religious historical scholarship reveals a picture of formation, evolution and content of true teaching of Jesus the Christ that greatly enhances present day Christianity—for those who will explore it.

According to the common conventional view of Christianity, the authors of the *New Testament* were all present, and directly witnessed the divine intervention of Jesus the Christ, the “only begotten son of God” into the world. Further, these writings were all for the sole purpose of implementing Jesus' intention to establish the Orthodox Christian Church. The conventional idea that the *New Testament* is “a singular collection of apostolic documents, all of which bear ‘witness’ to a single set of inaugural events, is misleading.” [Mack 1995]

Scholars and religious historians know that the canonical *New Testament* record is the evolutionary product of two centuries of Christian 'mythmaking', brilliantly constructed by the Orthodox Church leadership to establish its singular view of God's plan for his earthly kingdom, and the absolute authority of the Church over it. Over the centuries the image of Jesus has been molded to fit some earthly view or another. For example, there is near universal scholarly agreement that the gospels and other texts of the *New Testament*, with the possible exception of most of Paul's letters (*Colossians* and *Ephesians* are of questionable authenticity), were actually written anonymously or pseudonymously during the first century by the leaders of what was to become the Orthodox Catholic Church. [Duling 1979; Mack 1995; Butts 1987; Koester 1996]

Various Jesus communities began to develop in the 30's and 40's of the first century. Most scholars now believe that the earliest was the community that produced the *Gospel of Thomas*, followed by the *Sayings Gospel of "Q"* (30 to 70 CE). The *Gospel of Thomas* may well have been the source for “Q” and the *Synoptic Gospels*. The *Letters of Paul* are dated from the 50's, the *Gospel of Mark* from the 70's, the *Gospel of Matthew* from the 80's, the *Gospel of John* in the 90's, the *Gospel of Luke* at the end of the First Century, and the *Acts*, *Letters* and other texts during the first half of the Second Century. [Mack 1995; Butts 1987; Koester 1982; Pagels 1989] Each of the Jesus communities that produced the *Gospels* and other texts of the *New Testament* had a different view of Jesus' teaching. All believed their disciple and his view to be the correct view. Several of these Jesus groups had their own *Gospels*. [Cameron 1982] Some of the early

Jesus groups viewed Jesus as a great esoteric teacher or sage (early Q; *Gospel of Thomas*; *Gospels of Mark and Matthew*). Others viewed him exoterically and dualistically, as a singularly divine magically appearing God, essentially separate from humanity (late Q; *John*).

These various texts then came to be collected by a radical Christian community (the "Christ Cult") that evolved gradually during the second, third and fourth centuries to become the Orthodox Christian Church. [Mack 1995,1993; Koester 1996; Butts 1987] This particular view of Jesus and his teaching, along with its revision of Judaism, became the *de facto* religion of empire following the conversion of Constantine (313) who became sole emperor of the Roman Empire in 325. In 381 Emperor Theodosius declared Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. The Church edited the large body of Christian literature in accordance with its view (the "Christ Myth"); suppressed Gnostic dissent, (the penalty for heresy was death); revised and appropriated the *Old Testament* Hebrew epic in support of its view; created or revised the *Gospel of John* and added it to the *Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke* to complete the "four formed gospel"; attached this "New Testament" to selected and edited exoteric Jewish scriptures (the "*Old Testament*") at the Council of Nicaea (325); "fixed" this *New Testament* canon so that no other version of Jesus teaching could be added or deleted (Council of Carthage 397, and again at the Council of Trent 1545-1563); and thereby created our contemporary Christian Bible, the official word of God for all Christians.

*What is 'Mythmaking'?* The scholarly contention that the exoteric and esoteric history of Christianity is a process of 'mythmaking' should not be construed negatively. Nor is it news. All human cultures create a rational narrative, a complex of stories or 'myths' to explain and understand their particular place in the history of the *kosmos*. Historians call these "myths of origin" and they constitute both the preconscious and supraconscious deep cultural background 'global web of belief' (Quine 1969) of all cultures. Religion—whether the exoteric metaphysical assumptions of Local Realism that is Big Science Scientific Materialism, or the "highest" nondual teaching of our Primordial Wisdom Tradition—always arises in sociocultural space and time. These 'myths' are experienced exoterically or esoterically depending upon one's 'spiritual' maturity. Here, the innermost esoteric understanding transcends and embraces the outer exoteric understanding, but not vice versa.

The common scientific materialist notion that "history" is true, and "myth" is false is misleading, as if history is somehow written completely objectively, and myth is merely its trivial subjective corollary. Indeed, it has been well argued by some that objective reality is a reified concept-belief illusion fabricated by a separated, egocentric observer. This view is present in Mahayana Buddhist and most Hindu religious metaphysics; Eastern and Western philosophical and religious Metaphysical Idealism; and the recent 'nonlocal' quantum theory, itself an incipient Metaphysical Idealism. [Boaz 2023 *The Noetic Revolution*]

Postmodernism—the psychology of the unconscious, General Relativity, and Quantum Field Theory—has taught us the relativity of all conceptual explanation. The quest of Modernism, the quest for a single, certain, absolute system of rational conceptual explanation—a "theory of everything"—has given way to Postmodern "conceptual relativity," the understanding that there are multiple useful (pragmatically true)



explanations for any given phenomenon—epistemic “Principle of Conceptual Relativity”.

The common conventional view of history and myth is therefore that 'history' occurs in a "real time" objectively real reality dimension, and 'myth' occurs in some sort of diaphanous "mythtime", or surreal subjective reality. A synthetic, synchronic view is that these apparently different realities are both present in the metaphysical unity that is a flux or stream of the tantric continuum (a quantum discontinuum) of human preconscious, conscious and supraconscious experience of being here in spacetime reality. Now one view may be manifest in individual and collective experience; now another view. Our attachment to, or identification with a particular view may polarize or separate us from other related or opposing views (*wu li*). The antidote to such cognitive bias is *shoshin*, zen mind, openness of the 'beginners mind', understanding that all views (including syncretic views and sublimely elegant mathematical and physical theories) contain truth as facets of a greater whole; not attaching to any particular view. ["I hold no opinions" told Gautama the Buddha.]

This is more than mere dialectical thinking. This is liberation thinking. The relativity of all views—"conceptual relativity"—arises within an inclusive ultimate nondual view which transcends yet includes our conceptual views about it. This is not to say that "everything is relative." That is, the nondual Ultimate or Absolute—Tao, *shunyata*, *Brahman*, *Ein Sof*), essential *ultimate* Ground Nature of Mind ("Big Mind")—transcends yet embraces *relative* mind ("Small Mind") and all of the conditional, relative phenomena arising therein, including our conceptual theoretical speculations and our closely held beliefs about it.

'Mythmaking' then, is a necessary and inevitable socio-psychological behavior complex in the evolution of the historical identity of any culture. Meta-mythmaking occurs as the various narratives, the icons and epics of a self-conscious species begin to merge and transcend their apparently separate and different iconographies into a more inclusive truth of a prior metaphysical unity that is their perfectly subjective source Ground of Being.

According to greater esoteric, even nondual views of the Primordial Wisdom Tradition of our species, ultimately, all relative conceptual cultural differences abide in nondual primordial Ground of Being Itself, then arise as mythopoetic creation dramas of each cultural historical arc. Indeed, that great unbiased realization is the perennial love-wisdom teaching that Jesus the Christ, and the buddhas and mahasiddhas of the three times have transmitted exoterically to the masses, and esoterically to their prepared disciples from the very beginning. That Primordial Wisdom teaching then, is the goodness, beauty and truth of reality carried forth through relative time and space within the deep background cultural storage vehicle of myths, metamyths, archetypes and metanarratives.

*Therefore, no culture stands cognitively in an objective relation to its own myths of origin.* This includes individual students, scholars, apologists and critics of the culture. Even those scholars of religious myths of a culture remain attached to, or live in subjective relation to certain of these myths, as evidenced by the astounding cognitive gymnastics—cognitive dissonance, both belief and denial—of religious scholars, historians, philosophers, and theologians throughout the history of humankind. [Present company excluded, of course.]

How then shall we understand such prodigious 'mythmaking' in its relation to the early development and evolution of Christianity, and so to billions of later Christians?

## The “Christ Myth” and the “Christ Cult”

If we are to begin to understand our profound Primordial Wisdom Gnosis of Light that is esoteric “innermost secret” nondual teaching of Jesus the Christ, we must understand nature and historical evolution of both outer exoteric and inner esoteric aspects of Christian mythology and ideology. This in turn shall aid our understanding of universal, trans-cultural truth of descent of primordial “divine” Being, the *Logos* itself, our very Ground, into an avataric, logoic human incarnation—Jesus the Christ, Gautama the Buddha—who “overcomes the world” by realizing, then demonstrating—through perfect compassionate activity, the perennial truth of the ascent and Way of return to this ‘supreme source Ground’. It is this primordial nondual teaching that is the inner truth of the outer appearance of the “Christ Myth”, and indeed, of all exoteric religious myths and traditions.

Gradually, over a quarter century of early Christian social experimentation, probably in Syria, one of the several Jesus communities began to shift its focus from the view of Jesus as a great teacher-sage, as it appears in the Synoptic Gospels of the *New Testament*, the *Sayings (logia) Gospel of Q* (early Q), and in the *Gospel of Thomas*, to a new focus on Jesus’ identity, the meaning of his death and related ideas of his death, resurrection and martyrdom. *Jesus the human teacher, sage and spiritual master who realized in his human life the logos/christos became transformed into Jesus the separate one and only begotten Son of God, a unique spiritual singularity in the history of humankind. Emphasis on the esoteric teaching (“The Kingdom of God is within you”) shifted to the exoteric worship of Jesus as God.* Moreover, belief in this story, the “Christ Myth” which became the Nicene Creed of 325, was the only way to salvation for all human beings, now and forever. Today, in the 21st century, this parochial early Orthodox Church soteriology and christology is still held by most Christians. The evidence for such a “Christ Cult” comes from Paul’s letters of the middle of the first century. Indeed, this may be the group to which Paul converted. [Cameron, Duling, Mack]

As the Christ Cult spread, its christology became anchored in the mythology of martyrdom, the ancient multicultural archetype of the honorable death. The conventional, exoteric ‘Christ Myth’ that emerged is expressed in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15: 3-5), known now as the *kerygma* (proclamation): Jesus the Christ died for the sins of humankind; he was buried, and on the third day was magically resurrected from physical death whereupon he appeared in the flesh to Peter, then later to other disciples. This “*kerygmatic* formula” that is root of the Christ Myth is exoterically, the death and resurrection of the actual physical body of Jesus the Christ, *one and only* Son of the Hebrew God. An exoteric reading of Paul’s *Letter to the Romans* (7:21-26) clarifies the formula: God regards Jesus’ death as expiation for the sins of the gentiles, thereby imploring human beings to commit to the Orthodox “one true faith” that was exemplified by Jesus himself.

The Christ Myth provided the emerging Christ Cult—early Orthodox Church—a material solution to two pressing problems: the forgiveness and inclusion of gentiles into the Christian Jewish community, and a miraculous sign from God (the Resurrection) that justified the group’s claim to be the children (chosen people) of the God of Israel, and the inheritors of God’s Kingdom on earth. [Mack 1993, 1995; Koester 1996; Funk 1995]

## The Apostle Paul: Orthodox or Gnostic?

It is important to note that during the period of Paul's *Letters* in the 50's, and indeed until the *Gospel of Mark* in the 70's, Christians regarded themselves as a part of the Jewish temple state in Jerusalem. The Christ Myth was an early mythological solution for a Christian Jewish community who was struggling to assimilate gentiles into its congregation (*ekklesia*) while maintaining its relationship with the Law and the Prophets of Israel (*synagogue*).

Paul understood that the Christ Myth had its exoteric and its esoteric dimensions, and as all great masters, he taught through both modalities. Paul's gospel proclamation of the *kerygma* in his *Letters* to the Corinthians and Romans proclaiming Jesus to be the Christ (*messiah, logos*) was the bedrock upon which the later Orthodox Church built its dualistic *exoteric* theology. This same proclamation is the very basis of the *esoteric* transcendental theology of the great tradition of our monistic nondual Primordial Wisdom teaching, of which Gnostic Thomas Christianity and Gnostic Valentinian Christianity is an example; and which we see in the Gnostic *Gospels of Thomas* and of *John*. The difference lies in the emphasis on Jesus as the one and only "Son of God"; or Jesus as the great teacher and shower of the Way to realization of the *logos/christos* that dwells within each and every human Heart.

The Valentinians revered Paul and viewed his *Letters*, along with the *Gospel of Thomas*, as Gnostic primary sources for their nondual transcendental theology. Indeed, they considered Paul a Gnostic initiate. [Pagels 1975] As noted, Valentinus received initiation into the Gnosis of Light by Theodus, the great disciple of Paul. It must also be noted that some of the theology attributed to the Valentinian school was standard Gnostic dualism. However, a close esoteric reading of the *Nag Hammadi* Valentinian Gnostic teaching in *The Gospel of Truth*, *The Tripartite Tractate*, *The Treatise on the Resurrection (Codex I)*, *The Interpretation of Knowledge*, and *A Valentinian Exposition (Codex XI)* reveals the nondual essence—the pith of the teaching.

Yet Bishop Irenaeus, Tertullian, Justinian, and later Clement and his disciple Origen use Paul's theology in their Orthodox polemic against Gnostic, and particularly Valentinian Gnostic heresy. Indeed, Valentinus was expelled from the Church for heresy in 143 CE.

Well, was Paul a Gnostic or an antignostic? The nondual Gnostics claimed him. Orthodox heresiologists claimed him. Conventional scholarship views Paul as an antignostic. Yet clearly, there is Gnostic terminology and nondual Gnostic exegesis in the Pauline *Letters*. Elaine Pagels suggests that this Gnostic terminology in Paul's *Letters* "may be more plausibly explained as Pauline terminology in the Gnostic writings". [Pagels 1975]

The nascent nondual teaching in both the Pauline and the Valentinian corpuses are derived from the ancient pre-Christian, pre-Greek Orphic/Hermetic and even Vedic mystery teaching: from the "religion that existed among the Ancients, and never did not exist, from the beginning of the human race..." (St. Augustine, *Epis. Retrac.*). Paul, and the Valentinian Gnostics understood this ancient "Gnosis of Light" as the essence of Jesus' teaching and derived their esoteric and even nondual transcendental theology from it. For the Orthodox heresiologists this esoteric mystical Gnostic aspect of Paul's teaching was in direct opposition to their own dualistic exoteric view of *kerygmatic* Christ Myth which understands Jesus as the separate, singular one and only God-man. Their solution: Christian Orthodoxy suppressed and denied both the dualistic and the nondual Gnostic, esoteric aspect of Paul's (and thus Jesus') teaching. They utilized only Paul's exoteric materialist/ physicalist

aspect in their exegesis, and claimed that Paul was thereby antignostic.

That Paul (and Jesus) taught "in two ways at once", is clear not only from an esoteric reading of the Pauline corpus, but from his express statements in the authentic *Letters*: "The *psychic* does not discern *pneumatic* things". [1 Cor. 2:14] As we have seen, the *psychic* (mind) or *pistic* Christian is unprepared to receive the true Gnosis of Light directly, and is given only the exoteric teaching which emphasizes religious law, ritual, and morality. The *pneumatic* (spirit) Christian ("the elect") is prepared through advanced spiritual practice and insight for the direct, esoteric and even nondual transmission of the Gnosis of Light from an apostolic master. In our Primordial Wisdom Tradition every buddha, mahasiddha, saint and sage has transmitted the nondual love-wisdom teaching in this "two ways at once".

This exoteric/esoteric dialectic is useful because without it the teacher and his/her unique transmission of the primordial nondual teaching will usually be interpreted from conceptual exoteric pole only, thereby continuing the dualistic, polarized view at the expense of a more subtle, higher (deeper), more inclusive and comprehensive nondual understanding that is precursor to liberation—ultimate harmless happiness—through lucid Gnosis of Light.

Unfortunately, this is precisely the present situation regarding most contemporary historical interpretation and belief of the teaching of Paul, and of Jesus—and of much Buddhist and Vedic teaching as well. Nondual spiritual experience reduced to concepts and beliefs.

Thus, sadly, does much Postmodern biblical exegesis remain rooted in second century exoteric Orthodox heresiology and its contemporary apologia. "From the Modernism you choose follows the Postmodernism you deserve." [David Antin]

### **From Nazareth to Nicaea: The Packaging of Jesus**

We have seen how the Christian Orthodox Church of the first two centuries gradually replaced the historical Jesus of Nazareth with the 'Christ Myth', Jesus as God or the "Christ of Faith," ultimately codified in the *Creed of Nicaea* (325), and declared the official religion of the Roman Empire in 381. And yes, the Roman penalty for heresy was death.

The nondual primordial wisdom teaching of Jesus—sage who became outer and inner *christos Presence* that emerges from an esoteric understanding of *The Gospel of Thomas*, early Q, the nondual Valentinian teaching and other Gnostic and Hermetic teaching including the esoteric aspect of *John*—was tragically transformed into the dualistic, materialist exoteric dogma of the *kerygma* formula and the later Christian Orthodoxy of the synoptic gospels.

*Lamentably, step-by-step, the Jesus of Paul and Valentinus and their mystical teaching of the Gnosis of Light that dwells within each human being was reduced to simple belief in a separate Jesus-as-God that we get from an exoteric and literal reading of the New Testament Gospels.*

Hence, contemporary Christianity did not originate with the historical Jesus and his actual teaching of the Gnosis of Light, but with the "creedal Christ" (Funk 1995), the "Christ Myth" created, packaged and sold by the apologists of the early Orthodox Church, those "false Gnostics...who caused the Gnosis to be rejected and so alienated the Church from the supreme truths of transcendental theology. [That was] the great misfortune which befell Christianity." [Eliphas Levi] That has indeed become a Christian catastrophe.

The contemporary Neo-orthodox Protestant theology of Bultmann, Barth, Tillich and Niebuhr, along with contemporary Christian fundamentalism, and the Roman Catholic

Church continue the dualism of this materialist, exoteric early Orthodox legacy. 'Myths of origin' evolve predictably. Their inevitable deconstruction and the excavation of more subtle truths abiding in their historical sources is often painful due to our inherited belief and identity in, and emotional attachment to the comfort zones provided by the enduring myth. The antidote? Yes. Post-conceptual direct contemplative yogic experience (*yogi pratyaksa*) expunges attachment to habitual inauthentic conceptual and belief systems. Alas, easier said than done.

Therefore, our challenge and the task of Postmodern, post-critical, post-metaphysical Christianity is to rediscover, re-cognize, then realize the subjective, emotional/devotional experiential, participatory transcendental post-theistic theology of our Great Wisdom Tradition; to free the ancient, primordial nondual gospel teaching of Jesus from the *kerygmatic* grip of modernist, rational, "natural theology" exegesis of the canonical Gospels. "Men make gods and worship their creation." [*Gospel of Philip*, Gnostic]

*Our present task then, is to restore the great esoteric and the 'innermost secret' nondual teaching of Jesus the Christ to Christianity, and to situate it and understand it in the context of the nondual love-wisdom mind teaching of the great Primordial Wisdom Tradition of our humankind.*

### **The Early Jesus Communities and the Early Gospels**

When examining events of the past it is urgent to remember the subjective, cultural, conceptual relativity of evolutionary explanation. History is interpretation. Hermeneutics and textual exegesis yield, at best, a temporary, fallible, relative view. Historical fact, truth and meaning abide in a continuum of pre-conscious, conscious, and noetic supraconscious deep background cultural/historical/spiritual flux, as we have so often seen in these pages.

Bible and religious historical scholarship has identified, through documentary evidence, at least six distinct Jesus communities that arose during the first fifty years after the death of Jesus. [Mack 1995; Duling 1979; Koester 1990] We have seen that one of them developed into the Orthodox Catholic Christian Church that emerged from what some scholars have termed the radical "Christ Cult" of early first century Christianity. [Mack 1995; Funk 1995] It was this Jesus group that created and enforced, during the first three centuries, a body of carefully selected and edited literature that was to become the epic 'myth of origin' of Christianity as it now appears in contemporary versions of the Christian Bible.

At least five other Jesus communities produced their own Christian texts. The earliest was probably the Gnostic Thomas community that produced the *Sayings Gospel of Thomas* which was similar to the *Gospel of Q*, also a sayings gospel. "Q" arises from *quelle* or "source" in German. Either *Thomas* or the mysterious *Q* was the primary source of the three Synoptic Gospels, namely, *Mark*, *Matthew* and *Luke*. [Pagels; Mack 1993; Duling 1979; Koester 1996] Some scholars now believe that *Thomas* was the earliest (30-60 CE) and therefore the source of the lost *Q Gospel*, and of the later extant Synoptic Gospels. [Pagels, Koestler, Meyer]

Another early Jesus community was the "Jerusalem Pillars" (Peter, James and John) mentioned by Paul in his *Letter to the Galatians*. There was also the "Congregation of Israel" who created the pre-Markan miracle stories—stilling the storm, feeding the multitudes, walking on water, the blind man, the deaf mute, and the rest—that were incorporated into the early canonical *Gospel of Mark*. Finally there was the Jesus community that produced the pre-Markan "pronouncement stories." These were instructive anecdotal stories in the Greek

*metis* (*chreiai*) tradition wherein the master dramatically demonstrates the *metis* aspect of his love-wisdom (exoteric discursive knowing, *i.e. sophia/prajna/epinoia*) arising from the depth of his nondual wisdom (gnosis/*jnana/yeshe*) in a pithy rejoinder to a challenge. For example: "Can the rich enter the kingdom of heaven?" "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle." "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?" "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, give to God what is God's." When asked why he shared the table with the 'unclean' tax collectors, Jesus said in this pronouncement story, "Those who are well, do not need a physician."

The primordial stream of the Gnosis of Light that entered the Christian religion through the incarnation and esoteric nondual teaching of Jesus continued through some of these early Jesus communities to Paul, and to the communities that produced the Gnostic *Gospels of Thomas* and *John*, the Gnostic Valentinus, then the later Christian mystics. Along the way the nondual Gnosis of Light teaching clashed with the dualistic exoteric apocalyptic trend of the emerging Orthodox Church (the Christ Cult), thereby contributing to the refining of the Orthodox view (the Christ Myth), and the eventual fixing of the *New Testament Canon*, to the exclusion of all Gnostic texts (except *John*) at the Council of Carthage in 397. That is the present limit of Jesus' wondrous teaching for most Christians.

The early Jesus people—including the people of the Synoptic Gospels, the *Gospel of Thomas* and the people of early *Q*—viewed Jesus as a master teacher, prophet and sage. The Christ Cult made him God, divine and inherently separate from humankind. The esoteric and nondual Gnostic view is of Jesus as great exemplar (*mimesis*, to become the pattern) of liberation into love-wisdom Gnosis of Light, always already present *Presence* within each human form. That (*christos, rigpa, metanoia, tathata*) is the implicate, hidden or cloaked (*maya*) ultimate 'supreme identity' of all human beings. This mystical view was evident in the first century Gnostic communities that produced the *Gospels of Thomas* and the *Q Gospel* (*Q*<sup>1</sup>). That trans-conceptual esoteric view was further developed in the nondual teaching of Valentinian and Hermetic literature of the second century, as we have seen above.

### **The Gospel of Thomas**

*The Gospel of Thomas* is a Coptic (Egyptian) translation of an authentic Greek text discovered in 1945 with the *Nag Hammadi Library* (Codex II, 2). Scholars date it from the 30's to the 70's of the first century and consider it a source for the *Matthew* and *Luke Gospels*, and possibly the lost *Q Gospel* as well. It is considered by most scholars to be an authentic "Fifth Gospel." It is a Gnostic wisdom 'sayings gospel' (*logos/sophon*) transmitting 114 *Zen koan*-like instructions on awakening and ethically expressing the inner Gnosis of Light. It is of monumental importance for it is the only extant text authentically documenting that the Jesus communities produced 'sayings gospels' based solely upon the actual teaching of an *historical* Jesus. Because it is early, and very much like the hypothesized but undocumented *Sayings Gospel of Q*—possible "source" of the three Synoptic Gospels—it reveals much about the historical development of Jesus' teaching from its early formulation in *Q*, through the mythmaking process of later *Q*, and the later synoptic *Gospels, Acts* and *Letters*.

Unlike the other Gospels—Gnostic or Synoptic—*Thomas* contains no *christos* Presence, no Jesus narrative, no dualism, no nihilism, no ontological speculation and no fantasque theology nor cosmogony. It is the voice of Jesus transmitting wisdom of the

ages in its earliest, purest Christian formulation. Thomas is a Zen-like testament in that it is interpretive and performative. It does not preach. It does not condescend. It demands first person, present tense life world response from the hearer, here and now. It is radical in that, unlike the synoptic *Gospels*, *Acts* and *Letters*, its teaching is nondual, that is, no separation between God and humanity. The subtext: Presence of God is always present in everyone.

The Gnostic *Gospel of Thomas* then, reveals authentic historical documentation of Jesus' actual radical esoteric teaching of the Gnosis of Light, the primordial nondual wisdom mindstream that flowed from Jewish Kabbalistic mysticism through the Gnostic teaching of Paul, the *Gospel of John*, the Valentinian school and some of the Sethian literature, all the way to the Catholic and Protestant mystics of the Reformation. This is the inner, esoteric teaching that would begin a polemical battle between the Christian Gnostics and the Orthodox Church that would rage for three centuries. This is the great inner nondual teaching that would ultimately be lost to Christianity with the victory of the dualistic, exoteric, separate theistic Creator God theology of the early Orthodox Church.

The inherently nondual view of the *Gospel of Thomas* transcends yet includes the Q people's early view of Jesus as a prophet and sage who teaches law and morality ( $Q^1$ ). It transcends and includes the exoteric martyrology of late Q ( $Q^3$ ), and of the later "Christ Cult" that transforms Jesus into the separate transcendent God of the "Christ Myth," the Christ who died and whose physical body was magically resurrected from the dead in *kerygmatic* expiation for the alleged 'original sin' of humankind. This later view served the early Christ Myth of the developing Orthodoxy by transferring the emphasis from Jesus' heretical mystical esoteric teaching to the exoteric, fabulous event of his physical, bodily resurrection and ascension. As if by demonstration of miracles and magic his divinity were proven. The esoteric and even nondual view of both the Valentinian school and the *Gospel of Thomas* avoids such dualistic exoteric materialist proof strategies. [See also the *Greek Gospel of Thomas*, *Nag Hammadi Codex II*, and the *Book of Thomas* NHC II, a question/answer dialogue (*erotapokriseis*) in which Jesus nondual teaching is expressed in terms of dualistic Platonic ontology and ethics.]

The Jesus people of the Gnostic Thomas and Valentinian communities, steeped in Jewish mysticism, could not believe, did not need to believe the outer exoteric *kerygma* martyrology of the Orthodox Christ Myth. With the conviction of their inner, esoteric direct contemplative experience of Jesus' teaching with its emphasis on personal spiritual enlightenment of each human being, the notion of the necessity of Jesus' death as atonement for our inherent 'original sin', and of a magical, supernatural physical body resurrection was absurd. Indeed, even in the canonical *New Testament*, *Paul*, *Matthew*, *Luke* and even *John* made it clear that Jesus first appeared after the resurrection as a blinding luminous spiritual Presence, not in physical, bodily form. [Pagels 1989; Funk 1995; Robinson 1988]

As to Jesus' death as *kerygmatic* expiation of the sins of humankind, these early Gnostics told that an act of forgiveness begins with the individual. Forgiveness is seen as a compassionate (*hesed*, *charis*, *karuna*) act of love. We are forgiven our sins to the degree that we forgive ourselves, and others. This is the reciprocal nature of love. Forgiveness is accomplished—by grace—within the individual. No Church agent nor belief is necessary. What we give is what we get. What we sow is what we reap. Our Primordial Wisdom Tradition understands this truth as the Law of Cause and Effect—inexorable Law of Karma.

The framers of the Orthodox view—codified in *John*—needed the doctrines of the exoteric physical resurrection and its vicarious atonement in their materialist polemic against the deeper, subtler esoteric view of the Gnostics. For nondual Christian Gnostics the emphasis was on our original goodness—indwelling Gnosis of Light—not our original sin, our separation from God. What was important was our spiritual life, not our death. Jesus was "the living one," the "living Jesus" who mirrors "the light that is over all things," living Presence of the *christos*—"I am" Presence of God that dwells within each human form, and indeed in all phenomena. "If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you..." "The Kingdom of God is within you, and it is outside you." "Become a disciple of your own mind." "Light the light within you." "There is light within a being of light, and it lights the whole world..." "Look to the [inner] living one as long as you live". Then not only in death (the Orthodox view), but in this relative life may you realize primordial Kingdom of the Gnosis of Light that is *ultimate* Spirit Ground of Being in the world with all its beings.

Jesus transmits this love-wisdom in *Thomas* in saying 108: "Whoever drinks from my mouth will become as I Am, and I myself will become that person, and the mysteries shall be revealed to him." *Thomas* traces this always present wisdom seed Presence of the Gnosis of Light to *Genesis* where humanity (Adam) descends in the image of the first primordial light. Jesus speaks: "We came from the light, the place where the light came into being by itself...We [humanity] are its children, the chosen of the living Father." [*Thomas* 50]

As the "true disciple" initiate realizes, then demonstrates in the life world his/her actual identity as a spiritual 'being of light'—as the true Gnosis of Light—enlightenment (salvation, *apolutrosis*) arises and eventually, through this Christ Consciousness one may become as Jesus, a living Christ. Yes. One who receives (*paralambano*), then demonstrates in one's life world this Gnosis of Light "is no longer a Christian, but a Christ." [*Gospel of Philip*, Gnostic] With such an inward view the Gnostic Christians of the early *Thomas* community did not need the external magic and miracles that we see in the *Gospel of John* to establish objective credibility of their personal subjective spiritual experience—indwelling Presence of primordial Gnosis of Light.

## The Gospel of John

The Gnostic Jesus community that produced the *Gospel of John*, probably in the 90's of the first century, seems to have developed its view of Jesus and his teaching independently of the other Jesus communities, as a polemic against gnostic heresy. [Pagels, Koester, Mack]

The *Gospel of John* became the locus of controversy between Irenaeus, the architect of the emerging Orthodox view of Jesus as God, and nondual Gnostic view of Valentinus and his disciples, of Jesus as our great teacher of the Gnosis of Light, that "luminous *epinoia*" that outshines from a "being of light and lights the whole world." Irenaeus, and later, Athanasius warn Christians to avoid the direct penetrating insight (*vipashyana* in Buddhism) of mystical yogic *epinoia* and to experience God only through *dianoia*—Church approved doctrine and belief. Thus was Christianity gutted of its essential esoteric mystical core. This bias persists in Catholic and protestant Christianity today. [Pagels, Meyer, Layton, Koester]

The Johannine community developed, over time, both an exoteric and an esoteric view of Jesus' teaching that shows little resemblance to the three Synoptic Gospels. For the esoteric faction, the story of Jesus is the Hermetic/Hellenistic, Jewish Kabbalistic Gnostic



story of the descent and ascent of the *christos*, the Kosmic Christ—unfathomable mystery of divine *Presence* of our indwelling 'supreme source' Ground, "Primordial Father" incarnated into human form to realize and demonstrate great perennial truth that this same result is the potential destiny of each human being. There is little interest here for either the exoteric or the esoteric factions of this community in producing a historical narrative of Jesus' life that we see in the Synoptic Gospels. The general concern of the Synoptic Gospels is the story of the appearance (descent) of the divine Presence as it evolves (ascends) and becomes manifest in Jesus the great human spiritual exemplar. There is no *kerygmatic* attempt here to identify Jesus with God, nor to portray him as immortal super human God.

But in the dualistic exoteric reading of *John*, Jesus bursts forth into spacetime reality not as human, but as the fully formed Christ, incarnate *Logos* itself, immortal and singular Son of God. Here, Jesus is not only God's divine messenger, but God Himself in a human form. Although the Synoptic Gospels refer to Jesus as the "Son of God" and "Messiah," these epithets referred to human spiritual functions and Jesus would have been considered a great sage, a man, and not, as in *John*, "Lord and God". [Pagels, Koester] It bears repeating: "Men make Gods and worship their creation." [*Gospel of Philip, Gnostic*]

Hence, the *exoteric* oriented members of the *John* community emphasized the miracle stories (the "signs source") and his magical physical resurrection as proofs of the supernatural singular divinity of the God Christ, the one and "Only begotten Son of God."

The members with *esoteric* understanding would have understood these stories as exoteric mythical signs outpicturing deeper esoteric and even nondual truth of the divine *Logos* working through Jesus in the world. That view aids limited mind of humankind toward the evolutionary purpose of revealing the true Gnosis of Light—that indwelling Christ Presence (*christos*) abiding within each human being that is the divine potential awaiting its innermost, trans-conceptual, contemplative recognition and then realization.

The exoteric aspect of the *Gospel of John* clearly intends the *seven miracles* as signs "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Some scholars think this exoteric material in *John* was added much later. The exoteric magical martyrology of the resurrection is to the same purpose.

However, at esoteric Gnostic core of the *Gospel of John* abides primordial wisdom teaching of the descent and yogic ascent of Spirit, nondual God the Primordial Father—our supreme source Ground—as incarnate *logos/christos*, divine Presence at Spirit Heart of the human being. Esoterically, as with the *Gospel of Thomas*, magical signs and martyrdom are not required. "I lay down my life to receive it back again. I lay it down of my own free will."

On this view, Jesus did not intend to die in *kerygmatic* atonement for our sins. It is not his death, but demonstration of his holy life that is core of this noble Christian teaching.

The *Gospel of John* contradicts the Synoptic Gospels on several points. Why then did Ireneaus and the Christian Orthodoxy select the *Gospel of John* to complete the "four formed gospel" that became, in 397 CE—Council of Carthage—through the agency of Constantine and Athanasius, the woefully incomplete *Four Gospel Canon* of the *New Testament*?

An exoteric reading of the *Gospel of John* holds that *only* Jesus embodies God the Father and therefore, humanity can know God only through the agency of Jesus, and therefore the agency of the priestly Church hierarchy. This view clearly served the Church Orthodoxy.

However, the Thomas and the Valentinian nondual Gnostic Christians—drawing from

the deep (*Bathos*) love-wisdom well of esoteric and nondual teaching of Jewish mystical Kabbalah (and much earlier the *hekalat*), and of Greek Hermetic mysticism—came to see Jesus' intervention in the world in a much different way. Here we recognize that within each human being abides luminous, numinous inherent imprint of the "image of God" as *christos* Spirit Presence—Gnosis of Light of our nondual Primordial Awareness-Consciousness Ground of Being itself—divine heart seed of liberation from suffering always already present deep within every human spirit heart-mind. *We feel That as we surrender self-ego-I.*

["Religious belief can be an ego defense against religious experience." —Carl Jung]

Clearly, the christology of the *Gospel of John* did not serve the purposes of Irenaeus, Tertullian and the later Bishops and Popes of the Orthodox Christian Church in their ideological war against Jesus' radical nondual primordial love-wisdom teaching.

As the Johannine Jesus community evolved, the exoteric view and the esoteric view began, more and more, to differentiate. According to some scholars (Mack 1995, Duling 1979), around the beginning of the second century the exoteric faction of the *John* community split off to join with the emerging 'Christ Cult' that was the incipient Orthodox Church. The esoterically mystically oriented faction continued to develop in the Christian nondual Gnostic tradition of the lineage of Paul, Theodotus, Valentinus and his disciples.

That there is a protean exoteric/esoteric amalgam in the canonical *Gospel of John* is clear. How and when this came to be, what was added or deleted, and by whom will perhaps never be known. What is also clear is that in the *Gospel of John* there is a fully developed eschatology.

The descent, resurrection and ascension of Jesus the Christ (whether in bodily or spiritual form) is now fulfilled. Jesus final words are, "It is finished." The *eschaton* (end time) is always already present in the primordial Presence of Jesus the Christ, fully realized *christos*, and in a latent unawakened form as the *christos* Presence here now present in each and every human being.

That is the gospel "good news" of the great Primordial Wisdom teaching of our species that is made manifest through the nondual teaching of Jesus the Christ as it is given directly (*yogi pratyaksa*) to us through an 'innermost secret' greater esoteric love-wisdom understanding of the wondrous mystery of the *Gospel of John*.

### The Fulfillment

In the three Synoptic Gospels—*Matthew, Mark, Luke*—we await the *eschaton* (end time) and fulfillment of our final realization of primordial *parousia*—'groundless Ground' *Bathos Deep* that is our ultimate Ground of Being itself. Through an inward esoteric love-wisdom understanding of the *Gospel of John* that mystery is revealed. The 'end time' is today—this 'eternal present' timeless moment now. It has always been. And shall always be. That is our moment-to-moment attention/awareness *choice* to enter in now present lucid *Presence* of Gnosis of Light.

For esoteric Christians, *christos* is *That* indwelling numinous Spirit Presence of timeless, formless, selfless nondual Godhead—divine primordial awareness-consciousness Ground, 'supreme source' of all arising appearing spacetime physical and mental phenomena.

For 'the elect' *pneuma*/spirit esoteric Christian *That* (*tathata, suchness, noumenon, Presence*) is nondual Abba, God the primordial Father of All—perfectly subjective Ground of everything that is. That spiritual profundity is utterly above and beyond belief in a dualistic

conceptual theistic Creator God separate from "His" creations. *That* lies beyond any concept or belief about it. *That* awakens luminous innermost Presence of the Gnosis of Light—by whatever holy name—that is our ever present unity of divine and human love and wisdom—abiding always here among the stars.

We may *choose* to place our attention/awareness upon *That* in this timeless present moment now! Whatever lofty name we might bestow upon that primeval non-conceptual *noesis/noumenon*, our nameless, moment-to-moment conscious love-wisdom *choice* is the *practice* of the spiritual path that bespeaks our final fulfillment. It is each human being who chooses to recognize, then realize this innermost indwelling Christ Presence. *Feel That now upon each prana Holy Spirit breath*. Doctrine and belief has very little to do with it.

Fulfillment of this holy promise occurs, not vicariously through mere *belief* in a sacred doctrine, or through the death of a singular, eternally transcendent sacred personage, and not through a future *paracletic* Second Coming, but here and now through each one's opening to receive—faith/*pistis* as self-ego-I surrender—this already present bright Presence (*christos, epinoia, rigpa*) of the Gnosis of Light that abides at spiritual heart-mind of each and every human being—breath by mindful breath. That numinous Ground of Being is 'natural place of rest', far beyond our conceptual sociocultural 'global web of belief' (Quine 1969).

Our human happiness rests always in that spacious trans-conceptual, nondual primordial Ground. Inward looking prayer and mantra practice recognizes, then realizes *That*. Contemplative 'mindfulness of breathing' makes it so. That is the simple basic practice of the Gnosis of Light. Find a qualified spiritual mentor and a like-minded spiritual community to guide the way. We cannot awaken by self alone. [*Appendix D and E*]

Wonder of wonders, for we human beings "That happiness you seek...the Kingdom of God...is already present within you...and it is spread upon the face of the world, but you do not see it." [Jesus, Luke 17] Now we can see it.

Hence, we need not seek it elsewhere, in fruitless material and spiritual seeking strategies. We awaken to both relative and ultimate happiness through yogic contemplative practice, upon mindful *prana pneuma* Holy Spirit breath in our body, and through skillful compassionate action/conduct for the benefit of all living beings, for as long as we live.

This liberation/enlightenment is—on the accord of the subtlest Primordial Wisdom Traditions of humankind—fruition/fulfillment that ends our adventitious seeking and suffering. That is open secret of the great happiness that cannot be lost—ultimate harmless human Happiness Itself. One precious life at a time. Praise Be! *Beatitudo! Mahasukaho!*

*consummatum est*

## II

### The Buddhist View: Sutra, Tantra, Dzogchen

#### The Buddhist Middle Way: A Very Brief History

The Vajrayana, Indo-Tibetan Buddhist view of the noble Mahayana Vehicle, consists of Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya and Gelug lineages. The latter three are New Translation Tantra schools (*sarma*) that developed from the translations of Rinchen Sangpo (958-1055), during the time of Atisha and Marpa. H.H. Dalai Lama has shown that the view and basic structure of these lineage schools are essentially the same as the Indian Middle Way Consequence School (Prasangika Madhyamaka) of Nagarjuna (2nd century), Chandrakirti (7th century), and Tsongkhapa (14th century), that is founded in 8th century 'ancient' Nyingma school Dzogchen, Great Completion of Mahayana. H.H. Dalai Lama has referred to this *rangtong* Prasangika Middle Way 'conceptual foundation' of Dzogchen as "that perfect harmony between the teachings on emptiness (Madhyamaka), and the *shentong* Yogachara [buddha nature] teachings on the clear light."

So Prasangika evolved from Nagarjuna's 2nd century CE Madhyamaka (MMK), the great Mahayana teaching of the Two Truths (relative and ultimate) that arose from *Pali Canon* at the time of the Third Council (2nd century CE) when over four centuries of Indian Buddhist oral transmission was finally committed to writing. This teaching continued the ancient tradition of the Hindu *Sanatanadharma*—the hoary Vedas, Upanishads, Vedanta, and especially Adi Shankara's nondual Advaita Vedanta, great completion of ancient Vedic wisdom transmission.

That Buddhist Middle Way teaching then entered China with Bodhidharma (521 CE), the twenty-eighth patriarch of Indian Buddhism and the first patriarch of the Ch'an/Zen tradition lineage. In China, Indian Mahayana Buddhism blended with the Taoism of the *T'ang* and *Sung* periods to give rise to *Ch'an* and *T'ien T'ai* Buddhism in the 6th century.

In the late 12th century *Ch'an* entered Korea, then Japan with Eisai and Dōgen, founders of the Zen Rinzai and Soto Zen schools, respectively. *T'ien T'ai* entered Japan (*Tendai*) with Saicho in the 8th century. This great Chinese tradition is codified in the *Chinese Canon* (983 CE).

Middle Way Madhyamaka teaching also entered Tibet from India in the 8th century with Shantarakshita, Kamalashila, Sri Simha, and in the Shambhala Garab Dorje Dzogchen teaching of Padmasambhava, the "Second Buddha", where it assimilated the indigenous Bön religion. The Tibetan transmission reached its pinnacle through the translation and transmission of Tsongkhapa (1357-1419), founder of the Dalai Lama's Gelug School in the 14th century. This Indo-Tibetan tradition of the Buddha's teaching is voiced in the *Tibetan Canon* (1742).

The 19th and 20th century Tibetan non-sectarian *rimé* movement (Ju Mipham) further developed and aligned the great Buddhist Middle Way teaching with the nondual views of the highest or innermost tantras of both the New Translation schools (Highest Yoga Tantra Essence Mahamudra), and the earlier Nyingma school (Ati Dzogchen).

The basic thought of Kagyu, Sakya and Gelug lineages is the same with respect to the philosophical views in that they are all of the Middle Way Consequence School [Madhyamaka Prasangika].

—H.H. Dalai Lama [*Kindness, Clarity and Insight* 1984]

## Dharma in a Cold Climate: The Supreme Teaching

Buddhism has changed, and been changed by each culture that it has entered. Just so, Buddhism on Western ground has offered a subjective spiritual antidote to the radical objectivity of para-religious Scientific Local Realism, while benefiting from objective Western neuroscience.

That said, what shall we make of the Secret Mantra translations of the earlier Tibetan wisdom dissemination, the 'Old Translation School' of Nyingma, with its supreme nondual teaching that is *acausal* Dzogchen *Atiyoga*, The Great Completion of the Mahayana Causal Vehicle? That Dzogchen teaching began with its primordial founder, Garab Dorje (Prahevajra) in Uddiyana (Orgyan). From there it spread to Zhang Zhung, and in the 8th century to Tibet with the great translations of Vimalamitra, Sri Simha, and Padmasambhava. [Shantarakshita is Sutra].

According to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, certain Ati Dzogchen (Skt. *Mahasandi*) tantras reveal that the Dzogchen lineage includes the "Twelve Teachers of Dzogchen" (see Dodrupchen Nyima's primary text, *Tantric Doctrine According to the Nyingmapa School*), prehistoric masters some of whom pre-date even the ancient Bön Dzogchen master Shenrab Miwoche who taught in Olmo Lung Ring *circa* 1600 BCE. Indeed, the *Grathal gyur tantra* states that the great nondual Dzogchen *Atiyoga* teaching, by whatever name, has arisen in inhabited star systems for countless *kalpas*, and will endure long after the earth and its sun have passed. In our star system the Ati Dzogchen innermost secret teaching—*manngag/upadesha*—is considered by many Buddhist masters to be the quintessential nondual (*nyi med*) teaching. On the accord of 20th century Nyingma Dzogchen master Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, the View and Result/Fruit of Kagyu Essence Mahamudra is the same as that of Ati Dzogchen, though the Path differs a bit.

On the accord of His Holiness Dalia Lama, who bases his analysis in part upon the definitive teaching of the aforementioned Nyingma Master, the Third Dodrupchen Jigme Tenpe Nyima (1865-1926), the tantric View of Dzogchen, and the Middle Way of sutra and the lower tantras are not essentially the same, although the practices of the path are similar and its Result or Fruit—Buddhahood—is the same. [H.H. Dalai Lama, 2000 *Dzogchen*] However, the View of the highest nondual teaching of both the New Translation Schools—*Anuttara Yogatantra* or Highest Yoga Tantra with its Essence Mahamudra 'co-emergent wisdom' practice—and the Nyingma Old Translation school's Ati Dzogchen do indeed come to the same essential point.

The substance of all these paths comes down to the fundamental innate mind of clear light [*ösel*]. Even the sutras...have this same fundamental mind as the basis of their thought in their discussion of our buddha nature, although the full mode of its practice is not described as it is in the systems of Highest Yoga Tantra.

—H.H. Dalai Lama (1984)

"We become what we think." [*Dhammapada*] Well, who am I beyond a thinking self-ego-I?

How then do the highest tantric teachings of the ancient Nyingma lineage Dzogchen, and of the New Translation school's Essence Mahamudra differ from the sutra view of the Middle Way of Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti, and how are they the same? Is there an essential difference between Buddhist Sutra and Buddhist Tantra? Between Tantra and Dzogchen? For these answers we must first look to the Buddha's prodigious *Three Turnings of the Wheel of the Dharma*.

## The Triyana: Three Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma Are One Path

Shakyamuni (Siddhartha Gautama) the historical Buddha (*circa* 563-483 BCE) transmitted exoteric/outer, esoteric/inner, and nondual or greater esoteric 'innermost secret' teaching for followers and disciples of different levels of spiritual acumen. The mahasiddhas of our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition have taught in this exoteric/esoteric "two ways at once."

*Indo-Tibetan Doxography.* Broadly construed, Buddha's *Three Turnings of the Wheel (Dharmachakra)* reveal the temporal and soteriological progression of the Buddha's teaching. The *Three Vehicles* reveal the *paths* of Buddhist practice. The *Three Tenet Systems* reveal doctrinaire philosophical *views* as to the essence and nature of Primordial Ground of Being itself, by whatever grand name. These metaphysical Tenets do not address chronology, intention, or practice. Finally, acausal Ati Dzogchen non-reductively unifies *kadag* emptiness and its luminous clarity *lhundrub* Presence of the *Three Turnings*, the *Three Vehicles* and the *Three Tenet Systems* with that timeless, formless, selfless, enfolded nondual 'groundless' *dharmakaya* Ground in whom this all unfolds and arises for us. This often confusing classification triad presents as differing pedagogical interpretations, even as it abides in prior interdependent understanding.

Thus is the Buddha's teaching classified into *The Three Vehicles (yanas) of Enlightenment—The Triyana*, the Three Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma. They represent one Buddhadharma or one practice *Path* with differing emphases. We all need the appropriate level of teaching for our present mind state/life stage development. Well then, just what is this wondrous *Triyana*?

On the accord of Indo-Tibetan Vajrayana, these Three Turnings of the *Dharmachakra*—broadly construed—represent the Buddha's three primary teaching Vehicles: 1) The Metaphysical Realism of the *Shravakayana* (Hinayana), with its Four Noble Truths, the very foundation of all three of Buddha's 'three tenet systems'; 2) The Antirealism of the Mahayana Causal Vehicle, *Prajnaparamita* emptiness (*shunyata*), and the Two Truths, relative and ultimate; 3) The Indo-Tibetan Vajrayana Vehicle—buddha nature (*tathagatagarbha*)—Shantarakshita's unity of middle way Prasangika Madhyamaka (*rangtong* emptiness), and Middle Way "mind only" (*chittamatra*) Yogachara (*shentong* buddha nature) with its Three Natures or Three Emptinesses. [Boaz 2025 Ch. VI *The Open Secret of Human Happiness 3rd Ed.*] How shall we understand this?

Yes. The Three Vehicles include 1) the Foundational Vehicle or the Hinayana (*Sautrantika* and *Vaibhashika* sub-tenet systems) of the *Pali Canon* that flourishes today in Southeast Asia as the Theravada, and throughout the world in *Shojo* Zen of both the *Soto* and *Rinzai* schools; 2) the Mahayana or Great Vehicle (the Causal Vehicle of the Bodhisattvas or *Bodhisattvayana*) of India, China and Japan that includes *Daijo* and nondual *Saijojo* Zen, and includes both the *rangtong* emptiness of Prasangika, and the *shentong* buddha nature of the Yogachara (*chittamatra*/mind only) tenet systems; and 3) the Vajrayana or Diamond Vehicle, the Tibetan acausal 'Great Completion' of the noble Mahayana Causal Vehicle. This is the Buddha's Third Turning of the Wheel of Dharma and reveals inherent nondual wisdom Gnosis (*yeshe*) seed of buddha nature Ground *Presence* that abides at the spiritual heart of all beings. Vajrayana Secret Mantra includes the subtlest tantric teachings of Indo-Tibetan view—Ati Dzogchen and Essence Mahamudra.

The *Shravakayana* vehicle that is now only extant as the Theravada path holds that there is only one true Turning of the Dharma Wheel, the First Turning as told in the noble *Pali Canon*.

The 8th century early Nyingma school classifies these Three Vehicles of the

Buddhadharma into the *Nine Vehicles of Enlightenment*. The first three are the *Shravakayana* (listeners or disciples), the *Pratyekayana* or the vehicle of the *Pratyekabuddhas* (the Way of Solitary Awakening), and the Mahayana or Great Vehicle. These first three *metacognitive* (beyond thinking) vehicles comprise the *Sutra Tradition*, often known as 'Outer Vehicle' of 'renunciation'.

The 'Inner Vehicle' or 'transformation' *Tantric Tradition* is classified into three 'development stages', Outer Tantras (*Kriya Tantra*, *Charya Tantra* and *Yoga Tantra*), and the 'completion stages' of the three Inner Tantras (*Mahayoga*, *Anuyoga*, and the *Atiyoga* of Dzogchen). This ninth vehicle, Atiyoga Dzogchen, the Great Completion or Great Perfection is, on accord of the Nyingma school, the sublime acausal nondual perfection life stage wisdom teaching that completes the Mahayana Causal Vehicle Two Truths duality—relative and ultimate—and transcends yet includes, embraces and subsumes all of the teachings of the previous vehicles. This then is the Nyingma school reckoning of the *Triyana*, Buddha's three main teaching vehicles.

"There is a refinement of understanding that becomes progressively more subtle through the vehicles" [Tulku Urgyen], culminating in the highest nondual teaching of both Old and New Translation lineage schools—Dzogchen, and Highest Yoga Tantra (Essence Mahamudra) respectively. These two views are a *one truth unity* as to the Fruition/Result—buddhahood.

It is sometimes told that the Buddha taught many contradictory doctrines. But it is not so. Although hermeneutical views will differ, we must remember that through all the teaching vehicles the skillful means (*upaya*) and love-wisdom (*prajna* and *jnana/yeshe*) of the Buddha's teaching varies in subtlety and depth according to the capacity of his listeners. "In order to lead living beings to understanding I taught all the different *yanas*"... [*Lankavatara Sutra*]

*The Buddha's Four Noble Truths*. In the First Turning of the *Dharmachakra*, in the little Deer Park at Sarnath, Buddha taught his Four Noble Truths of our human happiness being here in spacetime form. Here he taught the great truth of "noself" (*anatman*, *rangtong* emptiness of self), gentle deconstruction of self-ego-I that is the foundation of all that was to come. It is this great truth of selfless *anatman* that gradually surrenders our desire-mind attachment to self-ego-I, and to its impermanent (*anitya*) world of phenomena that is the main cause of human suffering.

All the evil, fear and suffering of this world is the  
result of attachment to the self. All the happiness of  
this world is the result of selfless service to others.

—Shantideva

Siddhartha Gautama, the awakened one, taught his Four Noble Truths (*Dhammacakkapavattana sutra*) in order to lead human beings to ultimate harmless happiness that abides within and throughout the inescapable adversity and suffering of a human life. The First Noble Truth, the all too real relative *Truth of Suffering*, and the Second Noble Truth that *Suffering Has a Cause*, naturally require the Third and Fourth Noble Truths. The pain and suffering of "birth, old age, sickness, and death" is indivisible from this precious mortal life we've been given. Birth, life, death. It's part of the deal of our incarnation into spacetime form. So we accept it.

The Buddha's Third Noble Truth—*The Cessation of Suffering*—asks us not to retreat from the inevitable adversity of human life into retro-romantic cupidity of desire-mind attachment to pleasurable material experience, but to skillfully and compassionately *engage* our suffering and

dissatisfaction with the love and wisdom present in his Fourth Noble Truth, *The Eightfold Path* to liberation from the 'primal ignorance' (*marigpa*, *avidya*) that is the Cause of Suffering, then *ultimate full bodhi* enlightenment—harmless *buddic* happiness that cannot be lost. Assiduously engaging this *relative* causal Path bears the fruit that is *ultimate* Happiness Itself. *Mahasukaho!*

*Four Truths, One Path.* So yes. We begin with an understanding that Buddha's Eightfold Path was not intended by him to offer a naïve *escape* from human suffering thereby bestowing an idealized hope for a nonexistent *future* perfect happiness. Rather, we discover our gradual *liberation* from suffering through wisely and skillfully *engaging* adversity through his contemplative "mindfulness of breathing". Adversity and suffering are an inescapable condition of human happiness being here in relative space and time. In our desire to be happy and to avoid suffering we learn to surrender the foolish dualistic false dichotomy of *either* suffering *or* happiness. Suffering and happiness, like birth and death are a prior and present unity. "Birth, old age, sickness, and death" are included in this diverse, wondrous package that is our great gift of a human life on this little blue planet abiding here among the stars. Adversity happens. Wonder of wonders its actual nature is luminous 'basic space' (*chöying*) of primordial *dharmakaya* Ground of Being itself in whom (Samantabhadra) this all arises, participates, and is instantiated.

*A Brief Summary.* Buddha's Four Noble Truths: 1) *Life is filled with suffering (dukkha).* We don't get the happiness we desire (*sukha*), and we too often get the adversity we don't want. *Dukkha* and *sukha* arise together. 2) *Suffering has a cause:* 'primal ignorance' (*avidya*, *marigpa*) which causes *Attachment* as random grasping desire, greed and pride; and *Aversion* as fear-anger, hostility, hatred. We grasp and attach to self-ego-I, to permanence, and to a separate self independence as if they were intrinsically real/existent. 3) *Suffering has a cure,* the cessation of primal ignorance with its attachment and aversion. 4) *The Eightfold Path* is that cure—wise and kind 'skillful means' to engage our inevitable adversity and suffering, and the way to realize genuine selfless, harmless happiness—beyond any adversity/happiness duality—in this rare and precious life we've been given. That liberating Eightfold Path consists of engaging and practicing the eight yogic disciplines of 'right' or authentic view, right intention, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort/discipline, right mindfulness, and right wisdom—the two faces of wisdom—*prajna/sherab* and *jnana/yeshe*. [Boaz 2020 *The Teaching of The Buddha*]

Five hundred years after Sarnath, in the Second Turning of the Wheel at Rajgir on Vulture Peak, the 'Cosmic Buddha' in his spirit form taught the Great Vehicle, the Causal Vehicle that is the Mahayana; the subtler truth of the Great Emptiness (*mahashunyata*); the Great Compassion (*mahakaruna*), *Ultimate Bodhicitta* and the *Relative Bodhicitta* that flows from it; and the Three Buddha Bodies that are the unity of nondual *Trikaya of the Base*—*nirmanakaya*, *sambhogakaya*, *dharmakaya*. It is development of *Relative Bodhicitta*—aspiration, then engaged action that furthers the liberation from suffering for all living beings that is our ultimate happiness (*mahasuka*). It is this noble intention that is the defining motivation of the great Mahayana Path.

Now all of this love and wisdom is embodied in the *Prajnaparamita Sutra of Transcendent Wisdom*—perfection of nondual wisdom that is ultimate realization of emptiness (*shunyata*); realization of 'noself' (*anatman*); the wisdom of impermanence (*anitya*); and final cessation of *duhkha* or suffering. Here we discover *one truth unity* of the "Two Truths" (*denpa nyis*)—ultimate and relative—centrist Middle Way Madhyamaka view between the two metaphysical extremes



of absolute existence (eternalism, essentialism, materialism), and absolute nonexistence (solipsism, nihilism). In his very brief seminal *Heart Sutra* we hear: "Form is empty (*shunya, stongpa*); emptiness (*shunyata, stongpa nyi*) is form. Emptiness is not other than form; form is not other than emptiness." It is this great 'transcendent wisdom' that is "the mother of the four noble beings" of the Three Tenet Systems—the *Arhats* of the *Shravakayana*; the *Pratyekabuddha Arhats*; the Bodhisattvas of the Mahayana/Bodhisattvayana; and the perfect buddhas of the three times.

Yes. The Indo-Tibetan Vajrayana, final and subtlest teaching, is the Third Turning of the *Dharmachakra*. Here the Buddha revealed that all living beings are inherently endowed with "buddha nature" (*tathagatagarbha*), indwelling, innate capacity for ultimate awakening, realization, and enlightenment (*full bodhi*)—heart-seed liberation from primal ignorance (*avidya, marigpa, ajnana*) that is the cause of human suffering. And that is, astoundingly, primordial love-wisdom '*essential rigpa*' Ground Presence always already present at the spiritual Heart in each human form, and indeed in all sentient beings. As "it is already present and accomplished from the very beginning" we need not seek it elsewhere. It is indwelling within us! Yet, we require the Eightfold Path to remove the ignorance that cloaks our lucid clear light (*ösel*) awakening to it.

Thus, it is not that we need to *seek* Buddha nature, or that we *have* Buddha nature, but that we already *are* Buddha nature. That heart-seed, bright buddha mind Presence (*vidya, rigpa, christos*) of spacious boundless whole (*dharmakaya/OM*), subtle wisdom (*gzhi rigpa*) of perfectly subjective "groundless" Ground of Being abides always at spiritual Heart (*hridayam, nyingpo*) of each human being. It is that perfect *kadag* 'primordial purity', utterly undefiled by thinking, that manifests *lhundrub* Presence of buddhahood, fundamental clear light (*ösel*) wisdom Nature of Mind, our inherent indwelling buddha mind. From nondual *direct experience* of this numinous lucid clear light awareness flows his supreme teaching that emptiness is not a nihilistic negation of phenomenal reality, but that "The nature of mind is clear light." Bright luminous clarity.

Yes, that is the 'Third Turning' Indo-Tibetan Vajrayana Fruitional Vehicle—path to already present ultimate realization and fruition of prior unity of the Two Truths and the Three Buddha Bodies of highest Indo-Tibetan teaching of the Buddha's Mahayana Great Vehicle.

Therefore, our ultimate Buddha Nature of Mind is not mere negative nihilistic emptiness, a "non-affirming negative", but "the nature of mind is clear light [*ösel, prabhasvara*]", affirming unity of awareness and emptiness. This prior and present unity is vast whole of undifferentiated, lucid ultimate primordial awareness love-wisdom (*jnana, rigpa, gnosis*), bright boundless whole of lucid clear light—the very Gnosis of Light—completely free of any conceptually fabricated object, thought, or emotion; utterly beyond our habitual concepts and beliefs about it.

Just so, as vast expanse of sky cannot truly be obstructed by storm clouds, so our always already present space-like stainless primordial buddha nature cannot be tainted by adventitious concept-belief, nor by any negative afflictive phenomena (adversity, suffering) whatsoever.

But don't *believe* this heady Buddhist doctrine. It is far beyond belief and concepts. Yet we may *experience* Presence directly (*yogi pratyaksa*) through Buddha's "mindfulness of breathing".

*A Note on Religion.* The English term 'religion' is etymologically, semiotically derived from the ancient Sanskrit term 'yoga'—*union of relative* phenomenal appearance with its nondual *ultimate* primordial emptiness Ground of Being—prior and present unity of the Buddha's Two Truths. Because spacetime Relative Truth arises in Ultimate Truth, the Two Truths of cause and effect Mahayana may be seen as an ultimate acausal *one truth unity (dzog)*, invariant through all

relative conventional human cognitive reference frames. Thus Sanskrit 'yoga' is the root of the Latin term '*religio*' from which emerges that protean diaphanous English term 'religion'.

Hence, 'religion' may be understood as a present moment love-wisdom yogic spirit path that realizes, conceptually (belief) and in direct experience, this always already present Presence of our 'metacognitive' noetic nondual (body, mind, spirit, subject-object unity) formless, timeless, selfless primordial Source/Ground in whom we and everything else arises and is instantiated for all of us being here upon our precious little blue planet Earth. ["Religious belief is often a an ego defense against religious experience."—Carl Jung] Our wildly busy relative 'Small Mind' is always embraced by luminous Presence of ultimate 'Big Mind'. That indwelling love-wisdom Presence is always present upon life force *prana* spirit breath in the belly, and the Heart.

Thus may you readily accomplish clear light (*ösel*) clarity and 'yogi's bliss'—that love-wisdom yoga *connection* via a continuity of simple 'placement of attention/awareness' upon 'innermost secret' Buddha mind, Christ mind gnosis, very Ground of Being Itself—upon *prana* wind riding the breath. *That numinous dharmakaya primordial pure perfect Presence (rigdang) abides beyond the subject-object dualism of any yogic experience. Meanwhile, life force prana spirit wind (lungdang) rides the natural breath at chakra/centers in the gut, heart, throat, forebrain, and crown. These are 'central channel' (avadhuti) seats of your clarity, peace and harmless human happiness. A la la ho!*

That all begins here and now as we effortlessly enter in that timeless essential *rigpa* 'natural place of rest', nondual primordial timeless awareness—*dharmakaya* Ground, Buddha Nature of Mind. Begin by simple placement of your attention/awareness upon *That (tathata)*. Then breathe normally. That is the Buddha's "mindfulness of breathing". [Appendix A below]

*The Ultimate View.* Please now consider the utterly profound Fruition/Result beyond even assiduous yogic practice. In the rather uncomfortable (to our concepts about a Ground), utterly nondual view of 14th century Dzogchen master Longchenpa, 'the omniscient one' [2001 p. 340]:

There is only timeless awareness...There is no orderly process, there are no phenomena, no identifiable frame of reference. The ground collapses, the path collapses, any sense of fruition collapses...the division between samsara and nirvana collapses—not even basic space exists innately...Since these are absent you turn away from any view in which a contrived ground [is] fabricated.

In nondual Dzogchen our wondrous Buddhist doctrine with its wisdom of emptiness and buddha nature are "labels"—do not *ultimately* exist! *Parasamgate!* What remains? *Bodhi Svaha*.

"That happiness you seek is already present and accomplished from the very beginning." [Nagarjuna, Jesus] As self-ego-I we do not see it. We require assiduous *relative* dualistic Development, Completion and Perfection Stage practice to *realize* that *ultimate* nondual truth of Buddha's luminous *Triyana*. Primordial pure perfect Presence—perplexing paradox of the path.

Seeing the point. Missing the point. All of it the point. None of it the point. Ideation and judgment fall away. What remains? Empty ultimate bright *bodhi* Presence upon embodied mindful breath—always being here now in Einstein's 'spooky' relative illusory space and time.

Knowing That—*tathata, tattva*, suchness, *quidditas, ma gom, noesis*—we wisely "continue in error" (Jap. *Uji: shoshaku jushaku*) as self frees itself of duplicitous conceptual impedimenta—thinking, judgment, effort—all the way to the end of it. One Ground. Many paths.

## Buddhist Emptiness: One Ground, Two Truths

Emptiness of mind is not a state of mind, but the original essence of mind...  
our original mind that includes everything within itself.

—Suzuki Roshi

What shall we do with this precious life we've been given? The main point of all the Vehicles of the one Buddhist Path is implicit or express love-wisdom teaching of prior and present unity of Great Emptiness (*mahashunyata*); Great Compassion (*mahakaruna*); and our innate Buddha Nature of Mind. We have seen that essential nature of all interdependently arisen (*pratitya samutpada*) phenomenal physical and mental appearance is infinitely spacious (*chöying*) vast expanse of boundless emptiness—nondual primordial *dharmakaya* 'groundless' Ground of all arising spacetime phenomena. That Great Emptiness is indivisible from *Ultimate Bodhicitta*.

Therefore, from that 'Great Love' understanding and experience of the fullness of the Buddha's *ultimate* emptiness/*shunyata* Ground spontaneously arises everyday life world *Relative Bodhicitta* (*karuna*, compassion) for all suffering beings, and *devotion* to the master, but also to all enlightened beings (*vidyadhara*, *rigzin*) of the three times—past, present, future. Thus does compassion and Guru devotion enhance our realization of luminous emptiness. Relative practice of the Path awakens both this wisdom of *ultimate* emptiness Ground, and as well the purifying intention and motivation of *relative* compassion-devotion that arises therein. The Two Truths.

Our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition knows this unity of 'basic space' (*chöying*) and compassion as the wisdom of kindness—*bodhicitta*, *karuna*, *ahimsa*, *hesed*, *charis*. All the masters and mahasiddhas of the three times have taught it. Without this view and ethical action/conduct, spiritual practice remains some species of self-ego-I 'spiritual materialism'. Through our ultimate and relative *bodhicitta* lies the *cause* of both relative and ultimate human happiness.

*Bodhicitta* is the "mind of enlightenment"—loving, kind, compassionate thought, prayer, intention, and action to benefit living beings. That is our protean encounter with great "mind of light" of a buddha. "The practice of union of emptiness and compassion is the basis of the path." [Jamgön Kongtrül, *Lamrim Yeshe Nyingpo*] "The true path of the buddhas is the unity of skillful means/method [*upaya*] and wisdom [both relative *prajna/sherab* and ultimate *jnana/yeshe*]." [Tulku Urgyen, *Repeating the Words of the Buddha*, 1996] That is what we do with our precious lives.

Liberation from 'primal ignorance', then enlightenment—our ultimate harmless happiness—rests in breath by breath compassionate activity (*Apramana*, The Four Immeasurables or Four Boundless States), the relative-conventional means/method that is expression in action of spontaneous lived love-wisdom, *prajna/sherab*, that realizes *jnana/yeshe*, ultimate nondual 'wisdom of emptiness'. And this emptiness is the 'buddha nature' of *Yogachara*. On the accord of H.H. Dalai Lama, there is no *essential* difference between these "two wisdoms"—between *rangtong* emptiness/*shunyata*, and *shentong* buddha nature. "Realizing emptiness we realize our buddha nature; realizing our innate buddha nature, we realize emptiness." The great teaching of 'noself' (*anatman*), impermanence (*anitya*), and interdependent arising (*pratitya samutpada*) are grounded in these two wisdoms. [Boaz 2025 Ch. VI] Such is ontic prior and phenomenally present *one truth unity* (*dzog*) of our ultimate *kadag* primordial awareness Ground of Being itself.

## A Tale of Two Truths

Our perceptually imputed and conceptually-emotionally designated *provisional meaning* of Buddha's Relative Truth (*samvriti satya*) of dynamic phenomenal spacetime reality arises from *definitive meaning*—'emptiness' that is Ultimate Truth (*paramartha satya*)—primordial 'groundless' Ground of Being, our 'supreme source'. But that is not *ultimately* findable under *relative* scientific, philosophical or even noetic (subject-object unity) epistemological and ontological conceptual analysis. Rather, Ultimate Truth is revealed via assiduous nondual yogic practice (*yogi pratyaksa*).

Therefore, *relative* spacetime reality is perforce empty (*shunya*) of *ultimate* inherent intrinsic existence or self-nature, even though local arising phenomena are undeniably “real” by our inter-subjective and inter-objective dualistic conventional semiotic linguistic agreement.

Indeed, twenty-five hundred years of inter-theoretical, metaphysical and scientific analytic scrutiny—in both West and East—has revealed not a whit of innate, permanent, *independently* existing phenomenal particulars or *things*; no enduring or eternal concrete purely objectively physical or mental objects, selves, or souls. Postmodern, postclassical scientific theory—Relativistic Quantum Field Theory—is in essential agreement with this view. [Boaz 2023] Yeshe Tsogyal, the great female Buddha of the Tibetan Vajrayana expresses it definitively:

Since life is conditioned by time, it has no permanence.  
Since objects of the senses are but relative perceptions,  
they have no ultimate existence.  
Since the spiritual path is filled with delusion,  
it has no essential reality.  
Since the ground of everything is ultimately nondual,  
it has no essential solidity.  
Since mind is only thinking, it has no basis or ground.  
Therefore, I find nothing that ultimately exists.

—Yeshe Tsogyal

If "nothing" (no thing) ultimately exists, and if all objective and subjective phenomena are "ultimately nondual" (*advaya, nyi med*) we must now ask: how is it that they *appear* to exist? H.H. Dalai Lama on Middle Way Madhyamaka Interdependent Arising (*tendrel, pratitya samutpada*):

The question is not *whether* they exist but *how* they exist. They exist, but not in the manner in which we perceive them. They lack any discrete, *intrinsic* reality. This absence, or emptiness of inherent existence is their ultimate nature...It is critical to understand that Madhyamika does not say that things are absent of inherent existence mainly because they cannot be found when sought through critical analysis. This is not the full argument. Things and events are said to be absent of inherent or intrinsic existence because *they exist only in dependence on other factors*...In other words, anything that depends on other factors is devoid of its own independent nature, and this absence of an independent nature is emptiness...Nagarjuna says that things and events, which are dependently originated, are empty, and thus are also dependently designated...[He] concludes there is nothing that is not empty, for there is nothing that is not dependently originated. Here we see the equation between dependent origination and

emptiness...the path of the Middle Way, which transcends the metaphysical extremes of absolutism and nihilism.

—H.H. Dalai Lama, *Buddhadharma*, Winter 2004, p. 20

The true and ultimate nature and source of all relative phenomenal appearance therefore, is pregnant luminous emptiness (not void, empty nothingness), Ultimate or Absolute Truth (*paramartha satya*), the *definitive meaning* that is the “ultimate mode of existing of everything” — *tathata*, suchness, *chönyi*. Astonishingly, this luminous emptiness is *intrinsically aware*! Therein abides empty, formless, timeless, selfless primordial awareness-consciousness Ground of Being in whom living beings arise, participate, and are instantiated, whether or not they realize it. This 'fact' is our immediate potential for enlightenment—indwelling *Presence* of our already present buddha nature, christ nature (*christos*), Tao that cannot be named, Zen, *Atman* that is nondual *Nirguna Brahman*, infinite *Ein Sof*—being now within all living beings. *Tat Tvam Asi*. That I Am!

Moreover, we may utilize causal *Sutrayana* discriminating wisdom (*sherab/prajna/sophia*) of empirical Relative Truth as skillful means/method (*upaya*) to recognize, then realize *Tantrayana* Dzogchen acausal nondual Primordial Awareness Wisdom (*yeshe/jnana/gnosis*) that is *rigpa* Ultimate Truth (*paramartha satya*). *Upaya* is embodied Ultimate Truth *acting* wisely, skillfully and compassionately in the world of spacetime *shepa* mind Relative Truth (*samvriti satya*). This Middle Way is our ever-present *one truth unity* of Buddha's Two Truths—relative form and ultimate emptiness—that extends through all Vehicles of the Buddha's Wheel of Becoming.

However, according to His Holiness Dalai Lama, these teaching Vehicles (*yanas*) differ as to the subtlety or depth of their View and their Meditation on emptiness, on the *ösel* clear light, and even on the altruistic intention and conduct of *bodhicitta*. So the views of emptiness in sutra and tantra are the same, yet they are different. How shall we resolve this seeming contradiction?

## Emptiness: Objective and Subjective

Let us now consider the tantric distinction between objective and subjective emptiness.

So from the point of view of objective emptiness we can say that there is no difference between sutra and tantra with regard to the view of emptiness. However, from the view of subjective experience there is a difference in the understanding or view of emptiness between sutra and tantra.

—H.H. Dalai Lama (*Dzogchen* 2000)

His Holiness teaches that the contemplative view and practice of 'meditation' on the *ultimate* intrinsic emptiness of existence of appearing *relative* phenomena is essentially the same in the first six of the nine Nyingma vehicles, that is to say, the three sutra vehicles and the first three or outer tantric vehicles. These are the six vehicles that are founded upon the Middle Way of Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti, as we have seen.

Just so, in the final three tantric vehicles—the inner tantras of Nyingma lineage, including Dzogchen with its *Atiyoga*, and of *Anuttara yoga*/Highest Yoga Tantra (Essence Mahamudra) of Kagyu lineage and the new translation (*sarma*) tantra lineages—the levels of subtlety or depth regarding emptiness as the intentional object of meditation are again the same. This is the view of “objective emptiness”, the objective clear light clarity (“objective luminosity”), “the emptiness

which is the *object* of a wisdom consciousness.” Here emptiness is viewed as a nihilistic negation of phenomenal existence (*prasanga*), and therefore of an ontic independent perceiving *shepa* self that experiences it. Objective emptiness is thus a “non-affirming negative phenomenon” that is not augmented with anything positive, affirming, more inclusive or transcendent. That is essentially the *rangtong* Prasangika Madhyamaka view of emptiness. Is it a nihilistic view?

However, from the view of “subjective emptiness” (*nay lug*), the direct subjective yogic *essential rigpa* ‘experience’ of clear light mind (*ösel*)—“subjective luminosity”—which is perhaps the more subtle wisdom consciousness of primordial, basal buddha mind itself, there is indeed a difference in view between these tantras—highest Ati Dzogchen and Essence Mahamudra on the one hand—and the less subtle ‘provisional’ Indian tantra and sutra vehicles on the other.

So, *Mahashunyata*, the Buddha’s Great Emptiness is not *ultimately* a non-affirming negative void. In more inclusive highest or subtlest view, the Prasangika negated phenomena appearing to a self as relative-conventional phenomenal reality is enhanced by the *affirming* luminosity of direct (*yogi pratyaksa*) yogic *rigpa knowing* ‘clear light’ (*‘od gsal*, *ösel*, *özer*, *prabhasvara*)—selfless, egoless positive pure bright clarity of intrinsic dynamical emptiness of form—*shentong* Yogachara buddha nature. “Form is empty; emptiness is form.” [From Buddha’s *Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra*] Indeed, in the ultimate view there is no enduring *permanent* reality or self to negate! And that includes our buddha nature! Yet there appear these perceptual and conceptual imputed and designated relative-conventional *samvriti* “concealer truths” of arising phenomenal appearance. For Prasangika Madhyamaka our innate Yogachara buddha nature is one of them! Here, our ultimate buddha nature does not ultimately exist! Confusing? Let us proceed.

The old scholastic critical dialectical debate between Prasangika *rangtong* absolute ‘objective emptiness’, and Yogachara *shentong* subjective ‘buddha nature’ has raged in one form or another for a thousand years. I have dedicated a chapter to resolve this ancient dialectic in my recent book *The Open Secret of Human Happiness, 3rd Edition*. [Boaz 2025 Ch. VI; [coppermount.org](http://coppermount.org)]

Hence, from negative ‘objective emptiness’ emerges a subtle, outshining *ösel* clear light luminosity as *ultimate* emptiness/*shunyata* manifests as *relative* spacetime form ( $E=mc^2$ ) from its formless, timeless, selfless primordial purity (*kadag*) of the ‘Base’ (*gzhi*)—basal nonobjective ‘groundless’ Ground as mere appearance of arising physical and mental forms. That ‘form’ is our apparent, relative-conventionally perceived and imputed spacetime phenomenal reality.

That reality of our often all too real appearing *relative* spacetime stuff is utterly absent any iota of intrinsic *ultimate* existence! This radiance is ultimate nature of Reality Being Itself (*chönyi*), clear light (*ösel*) *rigpa* wisdom Nature of Mind (*sems nyid*) in whom all *shepa* minds arise and play. It is that lucid ‘basic space’ (*chöying*, *dharmadhātu*) perfectly subjective primordial Presence of *dharmakaya* Ground of Being that is our ‘natural place of rest’ (*rigdang*), quiescent peace of mind and yogi’s love-wisdom bliss that cannot be lost. To be happy here we rest in *That* now.

However, we are cautioned throughout the teaching that this essential selfless mind nature is not a self-ego-I, nor is it an *atman* “higher self”, eternal soul nor logocentric theistic Creator God. Nor is luminous continuity of mind essence a separate objective *thing*—something “other.” *Dharmakaya* Ground of all is not a *thing*. It is perfectly subjective Ground of everything!

Such relative-conventional dualism—attachment to appearing phenomena, attachment to our beliefs and concepts about mind-created God or gods, and attachment to our egocentric self-sense—believes Ultimate Truth prior and present *one truth unity* (*dzog*) of the Two Truths that is singular ‘oneness’ of Mind Nature. So the Two Truths, relative and ultimate, are indeed this

selfless (*anatman*) nondual one great truth, invariant through all impermanent (*anitya*) modes of human cognition—objective exoteric, subjective esoteric, and perfectly subjective nondual.

So yes, paradoxically (but only to concept-mind), this Ultimate Truth, ultimate emptiness, *dharmakaya*, unbounded *mahabindu* whole, is not itself an independently existing objective entity or *thing*. According to H.H. Dalai Lama, all relative conventional phenomenal things are subject to the prior causes and conditions of previous universes and *kalpas*. They are subject to the causal natural law of scientific and karmic cause and effect Interdependent Arising (*pratitya samutpada*). That is to say, from the view of conceptual Relative Truth, we have the ultimate paradox of the groundless 'emptiness of emptiness' (*shunyata shunyata*). Yet from the nondual view of Ultimate Truth there is no dilemma, no problem, indeed, no conceptual thinking or belief whatsoever.

Do you understand the two minds: Big Mind which includes everything, and Small Mind that is related to something?

—Suzuki Roshi

Hence, there is a profound difference between the direct and immediate actuality of spontaneously arising, perfectly subjective love-wisdom Presence (*vidya, rigpa, christos*) of the trans-conceptual, vast boundless emptiness whole, and indirect perceptual-conceptual 'objective emptiness'. So here the nondual view of 'subjective emptiness' of the subtlest or highest tantras of both old and new tantra schools—the Middle Way of the Madhyamikas of the *Svatantrika* Yogachara, but also of Prasangika—yields to deeper, subtler more direct acausal contemplative direct yogic experience that dialectically transcends, yet includes and pervades it all.

Therefore, in highest 'Perfection Stage' innermost secret nondual Dzogchen *Atiyoga*, 'meditation on emptiness' is an "affirming negative" in which the *actuality*—not an indirect concept but the direct experience of clear light (*ösel*) wisdom mind nature appears directly to the yogin, yet is "known to be empty of intrinsic existence." This crucial distinction between objective and subjective emptiness is the difference that makes a difference between the Madhyamaka of sutras and of lower/outer tantras *vis-à-vis* the highest innermost nondual tantras with regard to the view of emptiness as our indwelling buddha nature which may feel-know it.

As to Dzogchen view of Buddha's first noble truth—the Truth of Suffering—fear of suffering is itself a kind of suffering. So we need not exhaust our lives in a continuous effort to escape naturally arising adversity by seeking pleasurable experiences. *We discover profound liberation from our inexorable human suffering by actively engaging it with skillful love and wisdom.*

## **Relationship: Relative Light Bridge to Ultimate Ground of Being**

Can this direct, greater esoteric or nondual (*advaya, nyi med*, "not one, not two", "two in One") teaching of innermost secret, highest *Atiyoga* be reduced to the understanding of the less direct, lesser esoteric or even exoteric causal view and practice of the less subtle teaching of 'provincial' sutra or lower tantra, as Evans-Wentz, Carl Jung and too many other non-practitioner scholars have done? No. In Vajrayana Buddhism, and indeed throughout the great wisdom traditions of humankind exoteric outer and lesser esoteric inner views cannot accomplish the greater esoteric, innermost, acausal, monistic, nondual realization—despite protests of pathologically pluralistic, independent, facile, uber-egalitarian Postmodern self-ego-I.

*Under sway of 'primal ignorance' (avidya, marigpa) of this pseudo-scholarly separate ego self-sense we become the fearful, hopeful advocates of the preconscious developmental limits of our present life stage with its conceptual uncomfortable "comfort zones"—arguing and defending the painful result.*

As we have seen, cross-cultural psycho-spiritual development—spiritual evolution—our relative-conventional growth through culturally universal sequential mind states and life stages, and of the body-mind-spirit (gross, subtle, causal and nondual) continuum of consciousness, is invariant and state-specific. 'Life stages' comprised of their defining 'mind states' presuppose earlier, less subtle emotional, phenomenological states and stages of consciousness development.

Although life stages overlap, and unfinished psycho-emotional trauma must be revisited unpacked and healed, life stages cannot be skipped. While the wisdom understanding of the subtler, deeper or "higher" life stages subsumes, includes and transcends the earlier, less subtle life stages, the lesser understanding cannot grasp, accomplish or realize the higher. The parent's understanding transcends yet embraces the child's understanding. Of course there are surface differences—relative-conventional perception, concept and belief—in the structural constitution of developmental life stages across socio-cultural space and time. But the deeper, subtler mental/emotional/spiritual mind state/life stage structures are the same. And mere conceptual surface understanding cannot comprehend the selfless formless timeless *rigpa* primordial depth.

Let's unpack this a bit. In the prevailing East/West 'stage model' of our human cognitive continuum of psycho-emotional-spiritual evolutionary development, deep background, pre-conscious, culturally conditioned, semiotic (logical syntax, semantics/meaning, pragmatics), relative-conventional symbols (language) emerge just before concepts, which emerge before rules and morality, which usually precede exoteric (outer) religious belief, and so esoteric (inner), and finally greater esoteric (nondual or innermost/secret) subtle spiritual mind states and life stages. Surface conceptual and belief systems and deity icons differ within the numinous Deep (*Bathos*)—*kosmic* primordial womb that is their singular matrix and basal ontological structure—metaphysical Ground of Being in whom this *relationship process* arises for us all.

Just so, this nondual perfectly subjective, luminous clear light wisdom Ground Nature of Mind (*purusha/cittata/sem nyi*), Suzuki Roshi's "Big Mind" supreme source subsumes, pervades, embraces, yet transcends all dualities of conditional existence—relative conceptual limits of physical/mental experience that are the interdependently arisen subjective content and objective 'production' of dualistic "Small Mind" (*prakriti/citta/sems*). Objective conceptual Small Mind cannot grasp or realize the perfect subjectivity of nondual Spirit, great emptiness that is Big Mind, although paradoxically, the *rigpa* "pure presence" of it is always already present at the spiritual Heart of each human being. It is *That (tathata, gzhi rigpa)* to which we finally awaken via confusion of the spiritual path. That *sambhogakaya* Presence is *light bridge* to *dharmakaya* resolution of the paradox, and ultimately to realization of this great truth beyond all relationship. "Just as the steps of a staircase, train step-by-step, steadily to the end of it". [Gautama Buddha]

His Holiness Dalai Lama teaches that the interdependent arising or dependent origination (*pratitya samutpada*) of physical and mental form—relative-conventional reality—is the "natural law" that all arising phenomena are "dependent upon their causes in connection with their particular conditions." Without this natural interrelationship—this contextual, interdependent and coincident aggregation of causes and conditions—such appearing physical and mental phenomena (*shepa*) could not, logically or empirically, arise and exist in the first place.



If we can understand that all perception and all seeing is the great truth of dependent arising, then we can understand emptiness...the true nature of reality. Why? Because dependent arising is that reality...Emptiness and compassion must be unified...So develop both compassion and the wisdom of emptiness.

—Adzom Paylo Rinpoche (*Upaya Zen Center Retreat, Santa Fe, NM, 2002*)

In the *Prasannapada*, Chandrakirti's great commentary on Nagarjuna's 2nd century *Exposition of the Middle Way* (MMK), we learn of this natural interrelationship of emptiness and interdependent arising in relation to the Buddha's *Four Noble Truths*. Chandrakirti reasons that, if we will first postulate interrelated prior unity of emptiness and its arising interdependent phenomenal appearances ("Form is empty; emptiness is form"), we can then postulate causal connection, cause and effect relationship between the first two noble truths—Truth of Suffering and Truth of the Origin/Cause of Suffering. This causal connection is natural Law of Karma—thought, intention, action and effect—positive and negative imprints. Karma is an example, in behavioral terms (conduct/ethics), of the general scientific Law of Causality that governs the objective conceptual realm of relative-conventional quantum spacetime reality ( $E=mc^2$ ).

Hence, from 'primal ignorance' (*avidya, marigpa, hamartia/sin*) arises concept mind (*manovijnana*), the egocentric negative afflictive emotions—fear-anger, hatred, greed, pride—and desire-mind cupidity/attachment to self-ego-I (*klesha-mind/klishtamanovijnana*) that results in the mental and emotional imbalances that produce our destructive behavior that causes human and animal suffering. The positive emotions of tantric Buddhism's Four Boundless States (The Four Immeasurables), our wisdom tradition's Great Love—arising as kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity—result in mental and emotional balance that produces the kind altruistic behavior that is the open secret of human happiness. It's so very natural and logical; so lawful. We reap what we sow. What we give is what we get. What goes around, comes around. "What you are is what you have been; what you will be is what you do now". [Shakyamuni Buddha]

Thus, on the accord of Chandrakirti, from an understanding of these First and Second Noble Truths, we may consider that there is a possible way to the final cessation of suffering—of its cause or origin—a path or light bridge to freedom from this primal ignorance and imbalance (*avidya, marigpa, ajnana, hamartia-sin*) of self-ego-I that is root cause of the suffering of human beings. Thus follows the Third Noble Truth, the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.

And if this cessation is possible—and by demonstration of the exemplary lives of all the buddhas, *mahasiddhas*, sages and saints of our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition it clearly is possible—we can then postulate the Fourth Noble Truth, yogic Eightfold Path that is the precise Contemplative Science yogic mind training Path that transforms habitual negative mental, emotional and attentional imbalances into our natural inherent indwelling transcendent wisdom, the *Prajnaparamita*, Great Mother of all the buddhas of the Three Times. That is the great truth that realizes and actualizes in human form our primordial Source Ground state—'basic space' (*chöying, dharmadhatu*) of *dharmakaya* Ground of Being, ultimate perfection of buddha mind, perfectly awakened state and activity of being here in form that is always present within each one of us from the very beginning. "The child knows the mother". We are both at once.

*Refuge is the Bridge.* How then does an ordinary human being become a buddha? Who is a buddha? A buddha is awake: realized one truth unity of the Two Truths. Who am I? I Am

indwelling buddha nature. The Four Noble Truths with the Eightfold Path leads, step-by-step, breath by breath, to wise skillful engagement with human suffering. We take refuge in the Three Jewels—Buddha, Dharma, Sangha—that are the Three Roots (Guru, Deva, Dakini), and in the Trikaya of the Base (*gzhi*) or three *kayas* or Buddha bodies. In short our identity, here and now, is our 'innermost secret' buddha nature, mirrored by the Vajra Master. Thus do we receive great gift (*jinlob*) of *Buddhadharma* and archetypal intervention of mantra and the deities. All in context of the *Sangha*, fiery crucible of spiritual community that also includes our spiritual lineage and all the enlightened ones—the *vidyadhara/rigzin* of the three times—past, present and future.

Hence, we have always this primordial refuge *relationship* that is the light bridge and path of all the buddhas continuously revealing the prior and ever present unity of these precious 'three refuge sources'. Who is a buddha? We are all always already buddha Presence. *Emaho!*

So we take refuge in the Three Jewels, the Three Roots, and the Trikaya of the Base, and begin to develop the great thought, intention, and engaged action/conduct of compassionate heartmind that is *bodhicitta*—for the benefit of all living beings. In Indo-Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism we approach that through *shamatha* or 'mindfulness of breathing' practice with its *vipashyana* or penetrating insight, perhaps with the foundational practices (*ngöndro*) that are the prelude to Perfection Stage Ati Dzogchen, or to Kagyu Essence Mahamudra view and practice.

The point of practice of this Middle Way Mahayana foundational path is recognition, then realization of the prior and present *ultimate* unity of the wisdom of emptiness *and* our buddha nature with *relative* compassionate *bodhicitta*. That is gradually integrated into our everyday life world of relative-conventional thought, intention and action. And that is the integration of View and Conduct, integration of Ultimate Truth with Relative Truth, integration of the Ground with the Fruit or Result, integration of *nirvana* with *samsara*—step-by-step. Meanwhile, the fearless warrior-yogin of “uncontrived wisdom conduct” knows such an integration has never left the unity of perfect sphere of spacious *dharmakaya*. Herein arises a most unusual paradox of these very subtle Buddhist paths that are numinous nondual Ati Dzogchen, and Essence Mahamudra.

## **The Paradox of the Path: Integrating View and Conduct**

Gradually, through non-seeking practice of the Path, the veils of primal ignorance (*avidya*, *marigpa*, *maya*) that mask this great pre-conceptual, nondual truth of reality are lifted and healed, and the understanding of the unity of the wisdom of emptiness and the wisdom of compassion is revealed. Then, wonder of wonders, upon *prana* breath arises mindful and aware equanimity, evenness, direct yogic recognition that is timeless, selfless, always present Presence—*vidya/rigpa* primordial “pure presence”—naked, unborn, uncreated ineffable peace and 'yogi's joy bliss'.

Here, the prior unity of compassionate method/means (*upaya*, function) and wisdom (*prajna*, *yeshe*, structure) of all development and completion life stages (*Mahayoga*, *Anuyoga* and *Atiyoga*), mind states, *yanas* and wisdoms are, just for this eternal timeless moment now (*turiya*), nakedly seen and known as 'basic space' (*chöying*) of perfectly subjective *dharmakaya* Ground of Being, utterly free of fear and hope—free of the duality of all emotional affliction and conceptual elaboration. “Who are you in the space between two thoughts?” In this quiescent nondual “state of presence” ego-attachment, grasping clinging desire, fear and anger “self liberate” (*rang drol*) at the very instant of their arising. Like a bird in the vast empty sky, thought and action “leave no

trace." Thoughts and appearances—happy and sad—rise up from the great primal ocean of luminous clarity, then return again to that supreme source with no change in identity or essence.

When one realizes that the actual nature of our thinking and emotion is this bright luminous clarity (*ösel*) there is no need to suppress or repress thoughts and emotions. There is no need to believe that which we think, nor to defend that which we believe. No need at all to seek happiness. It's already present as our innate, indwelling buddha mind Presence. "The Nature of Mind is Buddha from the beginning." That is the refreshing paradox of the spiritual path. But it's just very ordinary—"nothing special" (*wushin*). It's merely the actual nature of our all too human spacetime existence. It appears special and dramatic only from the view of a subject/self-ego-I in a seemingly separate objective reality. Atman self is *anatman* no-self. "No problem at all".

Hence, it is ascending Development Stage of the path—refuge, devotion to the master, ordinary compassionate living, and the surrender (*Wu-Wei*) or "letting go" that is repetitive 'renunciate' practice that transforms such extraordinary, special but temporary *samadhi* "states" into the permanent ordinary "altered traits" of 'meditative stabilization'; of Ati Dzogchen Perfection Stage realization, with its compassionate life world *bodhicitta* conduct. Then, in due course and by grace, there manifests the singular *bhumi*—ultimate perfection of buddhahood. "Descend with the View while ascending with the Conduct. It is most essential to practice these two as a unity." [Padmasambhava] And yes, "It is already present and accomplished" here now.

Thus do we engage this "paradox of the path" that is the paradox of seeking—the causal effortful foundational practices of the Buddha's teaching—while standing firmly in effortless View and Conduct of highest nondual tantras. That is the Buddha's great teaching in "two ways at once." Thus, through skillful diligence (*upaya*), while "letting it be as it is" we *choose* to exhaust our apocryphal seeking strategies of the adventitious 'great search' and awaken to our indwelling present happiness—buddha nature Presence at spirit Heart already within us all.

The great nondual truth of the descent and ascent of Spirit through form is told again and again throughout the subtlest "innermost secret" teaching of our primordial wisdom traditions. This is "the light of the Tao that is beyond heaven and earth," very "Gnosis of Light that lights every one that comes into the world." This is *Kham Brahm*—"All is *Brahman*"—"The Bright" of the hoary *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, and *Vedanta*. In Sutrayana this view is Ultimate Truth, the final third truth of T'ein T'ai' nondual "Middle Way Buddha Nature" (*Chih-i*), beyond dualistic false dichotomy of the 'metaphysical extremes' of permanent, substantial, eternal absolute existence of form, and the nihilistic absolute nonexistence of form. The Truth abides in *Uma*, the Middle Way.

In Dzogchen this practice is "swooping down from above (with the ideal of the View) while climbing up from below (through the action of the Conduct)." Padmasambhava advises, "Keep your view as high as the sky, and your deeds as fine as barley flower." Yet here, Guru Rinpoche cautions us not to "lose the view in the conduct," and not to "lose the conduct in the view." We must not lose the acausal nondual View of Ultimate Truth—Great Emptiness—in the dualistic ignorance of hope and fear of relative causal conceptual political truths and the ethical conundrums of right and wrong conduct. Just so, we must not lose the relative truths of compassionate *bodhicitta* ethical conduct—valuation, choosing kindness while rejecting unkindness—for an idealized, but unrealized view of the Great Completion of Ultimate Truth.

If you lose the view in the conduct, you will never have the opportunity to be free.  
If you lose the conduct in the view, then you ignore the difference between good  
and evil...you stray into black diffusion.

—Tulku Urgyen, *At It Is*, 2000)

In brief, we must continue the compassionate altruistic ethical conduct of our relative-conventional spiritual practice in midst of the afflictive continuous error (*shushaku jushaku*) of our all too human self-ego-I, its hope and fear, its negative judgment, its accepting and rejecting. Meanwhile we remain mindful and aware (*shamatha* and *vipashyana*) of our innate indwelling Presence of buddha mind which is utterly free of such dualistic bias—perfectly free of the emotional poisons arising from primal ignorance (*ajnana*, *marigpa*, *hamartia*/sin) that manifest as desire/attachment and fear/anger—mindless “black diffusion” of losing our *bodhicitta* conduct.

*Such a marvelous paradox! In order to integrate the View and the Conduct we must distinguish the duality of their relative difference—so that we don't lose one in the other—while yet abiding effortlessly in this selfless continuity of nondual ultimate formless, timeless primordial awareness love-wisdom mind nature that is their essential ontic prior yet always present phenomenal unity. A la la ho!*

This then is the skillful yet imperfect practice of the integration of view and conduct, of wisdom and merit, prior *one truth unity* of the Two Truths—ultimate and relative—that is both origin and aim of the activity/conduct of the ascending and the descending aspects of Refuge in the Three Jewels of the Buddhist Path. And indeed, of all the “greater esoteric” or nondual ‘innermost secret’ spiritual paths of the entire great love-wisdom tradition of humankind. This unity is “already accomplished from the very beginning”, nothing special, ever present and never absent from our inherent always present Presence that is harmless human happiness—not in a glorious future mind state, but right here now. Wondrous paradox indeed! *Mahasukaho!*

## **The View is the Ground: Big Picture and The Middle Way**

According to His Holiness Dalai Lama, the innate clear light wisdom Nature of Mind, infinite, ineffable singularity of primordial “groundless Ground” of being, luminous base (*gzhi ‘i ‘od gsal*, *ösel*)—our indwelling buddha nature—may be viewed from two levels of subtlety of understanding, namely, sutra and tantra. *Sutrayana* understanding is, as we have seen, the “objective clear light.” *Tantrayana*, especially *Anuttara Yogatantra* (Highest Yoga Tantra) and highest Ati Dzogchen View is, according to His Holiness, subjective *experience* of clear light (*nay lug*) that is nondual primordial awareness Ground of Being, essential clarity of Mind Nature (*sem nyi*), our basic clear light (*ösel*) love-wisdom mind. This ‘naked awareness’ (*rigpa jenpa*) of “fundamental innate clear light mind” is essential, “ultimate root of consciousness,” Ultimate Truth of Reality Being Itself. This “affirming negative” of the luminosity of clear light mind is the basis and essential or ultimate way of abiding for the Vajrayana practitioner. Here we have an ultimate solution to that *really* “hard problem” of the essential nature of consciousness itself, the realization and actualization in conduct of our ultimate mind nature that is Happiness Itself.

As we have seen, in *actuality* this primordial transcendent wisdom dialectically subsumes and transcends not only the exoteric objective understanding of the less subtle teaching on emptiness, but even its esoteric direct subjective yogic experience, for such wisdom is utterly nondual—“not two, not one,” “two in One,” “*neti, neti*—not this, not that”. This resplendent clear

light awareness is for the yogin “essential rigpa” (*paravidya*)—prior unity of appearance and emptiness, of clarity/luminosity and emptiness, of bliss and emptiness, of awareness and emptiness (the four *wangs* or empowerments) of development, completion and perfection life stages of the path. *Rigpa* then, is not a mere concept (thought) or an experience (*nyams*), but the *apriori* bright naked Presence of Primordial Awareness Wisdom (gnosis, *yeshe*, *jnana*, *epinoia*) itself, Ground Gnosis of Light, *Prajnaparamita*—Wisdom Mother of all the buddhas—Here Now.

Yes. The transcendental unity of clear light mind nature (*ösel*) has its objective and subjective voices. The former is “object emptiness” (*lhundrub*/presence) that is always already united with the latter, subjective voice of luminous clear light (*kadag*/purity)—spacious *dharmakaya* (*chö ku*)—Ultimate Reality (*chönyi*). That reality is the Ultimate Truth (*don dam denpa*, *paramartha*) that is “all empty” nondual primordial *dharmakaya* Ground, emanation base (*gzhi rigpa*) of all phenomena of our great Wisdom Mother (*Yeshe*), primordial womb of all descending subtle and gross appearing phenomena of the relative truths of *sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya* dimensions. Told the Buddha, “Form is empty; emptiness is form.” There is no emptiness other than its presence as form. There is no form that is not an emptiness. Form is nondual emptiness.

Form and its emptiness Ground of Being are not separate conceptual objects or “things,” as we have seen. They are utterly interdependent, interconnected and interpenetrating—prior and present perfectly subjective *one truth unity* (*dzog*). “This is the Buddha’s great truth of ‘interdependent arising’—final View free of the metaphysical extremes of absolute existence, or the nihilism of absolute nonexistence” [*medpa*]. [Adzom Paylo Rinpoche 2002 Retreat]

*The future is entirely causally dependent upon what is occurring now. “What you are is what you have been. What you will be is what you do now.”* [Shakyamuni Buddha] This great truth is the basis of our great wisdom tradition’s natural law of cause and effect—inexorable Law of Karma—our behavior and conduct, the way we must live to be happy in this mad, mad world.

Phenomena have never departed their formless, timeless, selfless, perfectly subjective primordial *dharmakaya* ‘groundless’ Ground. That View is clear light *ultimate* ‘Big Mind’. Spacetime phenomena—‘concealer’ *relative* ‘Small Mind’—appears dualistically, as subject and object, pure or impure, but their *energy essence* and Basis or Source, their actual nature, is always luminous numinous nondual *shunyata*/emptiness Ground, ever free of perceptual imputation, conceptual designation, and emotional hope and fear. “There is nothing other than that.”

*That* (*tathata*, suchness) is the natural, post-critical, post-metaphysical, centrist Middle Way balance between materialist permanent existence and idealist nihilist nonexistence. That is prodigious nondual view of prior ontic one truth unity of Buddha’s Two Truths—relative form and its ultimate emptiness *dharmakaya* ‘groundless’ Ground. Groundless because it too is empty and absent innate intrinsic existence. That View transcends yet embraces the endless false dichotomies of our conceptual judgment—beyond crazy or sane, good and evil, utterly “gone beyond” (*parasamgate*) concept, belief, deity, icon, and archetype. So the View is the Ground.

Still, we must evaluate—polarize/dichotomize—to live in this realm of empirical, relative-conventional spacetime reality. As we have seen, ethical conduct requires that we discriminate between good and evil, between unifying pure view, and destructive false views, between kind intention and action, and harmful thought and action. Yet, there is this great primordial unifying View—the big picture “as high as the sky”—abiding in love-wisdom of the nondual middle (*madhya*), always in timeless fourth time (*turiya*), deep at the Heart of this timeless moment now. That is Siddhartha Gautama the Buddha’s all-subsuming Middle Way. That is the ‘correct’ View.

## Mantra: OM AH HUM is our Triune Love-Wisdom Nature

In the classical tantric metaphor basal formless perfectly subjective *dharmakaya* Ground, Source, or Base (*gzhi*) is like an infinite expanse of sky. *Rigpa* is like the sun, the sky's vast capacity for *knowing* this perfect clarity of awareness. The descending light/energy/motion/form ( $E=mc^2$ ) of this infinite awareness continuum is like the sun's rays ('*od gsal, ösel*), prior yet present Primordial Awareness Wisdom (*yeshe, jnana, gnosis*) penetrating and illuminating dark clouds of ignorance (*avidya/marigpa, maya*) that obscure our original clear light wisdom Nature of Mind.

These three manifest as the five rays or five colors of great Mandala of the Five Buddha Families, interdependently arisen phenomena emerging as five aggregates (*skandhas*) of relative empirical spacetime reality. These three—sky, sun and rays—are respectively, *dharmakaya, sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya*; the Three Vajras of Body, Voice, and Mind respectively: OM ÂH HUM. The nondual unity of these three *buddha bodies of light* are inseparable, unborn, stainless *Trikaya of the Base, Absolute Bodhicitta, Svabhavakaya*—The Fourth Body—prior and present unity of vast expanse of this boundless whole, infinite awareness-consciousness continuum that is our unborn primordial mind nature itself (*sem nyi*). Yes. That powerful mantra is OM AH HUM.

This unified *Trikaya of the Base* is the perfectly subjective deep background continuum that is unobstructed *pure alaya (amala vijnana)*, the ninth consciousness revealed in the highest tantras. Its luminous Presence is our buddha nature heart seed, present in all the *tathagatas*, the Buddhas of the three times—past, present and future—transcending yet pervading our waking, dreaming and deep sleep mind states throughout this timeless moment now, primordial abode of the fourth time (*turiya*). “The three times are one...Now is the time to enter into it”. [Garab Dorje]

Therefore, from the view of relative-conventional truth, these three *kayas* or buddha bodies are the three faces of love-wisdom truth of our non-separate participation and growth through relative *exoteric* (gross/outer/waking state), *esoteric* (subtle/inner/dream state), and ultimate *greater esoteric* (very subtle innermost secret deep sleep state) development life stages—all the way to the end of it—nondual yet luminous buddha mind that is perfect buddhahood.

However, from this nondual view of Ultimate Truth—the view of a buddha—all of these heady concepts are merely playful display of prior *one truth unity* of spacious, empty, trans-conceptual *dharmakaya*, utterly “gone beyond” sentient perception, concept, belief, archetype and all negative and positive emotion. The 'stages of the path' and the transcendent wisdom revealed and grounded herein is perfectly expressed in sutra in the great *Prajnaparamita Mantra: Om Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha* (Buddha's Heart Sutra); in tantra as the Great Mantra of Avalokiteshvara: *Om Mani Peme Hum* (*Hung*); and in Vajrasattva Mantra: *Om Benza Satto Hung*.

An equally profound Tibetan Buddhist mantra for practitioners on this profound Buddhist path is Vajra Guru Mantra: *Om Ah Hum Benza Guru Pema Siddhi Hung*. It is told that the twelve syllables of this foundational Guru Yoga mantra bestow the complete blessing of Buddha's twelve kinds of teaching that purifies—breath by mindful breath—negative emotional obstructions of the twelve links of dependent arising on the *Dharmachakra*, Buddha's cyclic Wheel of Becoming. It furthers one to recite and practice these powerful Relative Truth mantras.

Such a Promethean participatory epistemology and ontology has been called, in the gloss of our emerging Noetic (body-mind-spirit union) Revolution, the “wholeness principle”—*telos, agape*, 'movement that connects' (growth) to always present ultimate luminous Spirit Presence of

our indwelling buddha nature buddha mind—open secret of harmless human Happiness Itself.

This is the Path that is the inter-theoretical, meditative-contemplative and practical antidote to *thanatos* (death), the destructive “separation principle” embodied as the afflictive emotional poisons: primal *avidya*/ignorance that is *Attraction* (attachment, pride, greed), and *Aversion* (fear-anger, hostility, hatred). Within unbroken wholeness of the spacious *dharmakaya* Ground—ultimate Nature of Mind—arises these twelve links of mind-generated positive and negative thought and emotion. Hence, 'primal ignorance' of the essential 'basic goodness' of this formless Ground is *avidya* or *marigpa*, and deathly *thanatos*—human evil that manifests in our collective conduct as human suffering (*dukkha*)—alienation, genocide, endless war and despair.

Thus all limbs of the Buddha's teaching have this one purpose—to reveal in us the nondual Transcendent Wisdom. It participates in and pervades all views and paths for one who is capable of accessing it...All things flow from emptiness, and return again to emptiness, like space, the sun, and its rays. This is interdependent arising...dynamic display of mind...ultimate nature of all arising phenomena—buddha nature of the Ground of Being. —Adzom Paylo Rinpoche (2002 Retreat)

## The Threefold Space

According to recent Dzogchen master Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, the two innermost principles of Ati Dzogchen view and practice are Space (*ying*, *dhatu*) and Awareness (*rigpa*, *vidya*). Timeless, selfless 'basic space' (*chöying*, *dharmadhatu*) of *dharmakaya* Ground is pregnant luminous emptiness, unity of emptiness and nondual wisdom of radiant clear light clarity (*ösel*).

In Ati Dzogchen practice of the View 'basic space' is often seen as a threefold unity. 1) Outer *ying* is like clear vast empty sky, the Great Emptiness (*Mahashunyata*) in which, or in whom arises all relative spacetime phenomena. That is *Akashadhatu*. 2) Inner *ying* is essential mind essence, very Nature of Mind (*citatta*, *sems nyi*). That is *Vajradhatu*. 3) Innermost Secret *ying* is 'essential *rigpa*', luminous clarity of nondual recognition, then realization, bright knowing-feeling awareness of prior and always present primordial unity of these three. That is *Jnanadhatu*, radiant *rigdang*. That unity is the 'threefold space' of highest Dzogchen *Atiyoga*. That we are now.

In Dzogchen, this nondual 'innermost secret' *rigpa* realization of space, of the infinite “Vast Expanse” is *klong*: beyond these reified concepts, beliefs, judgment and bias; beyond good and evil; beyond even the subtlest subject-object duality; beyond objective and subjective emptiness; beyond ground and path luminosity. Utterly 'gone beyond'. *Parasamgate. Bodhi Soha*.

As space pervades, so awareness pervades...like space, *rigpa* is all encompassing...Just as beings are all pervaded by space, *rigpa* pervades the minds of beings...Basic space [*chöying*] is the absence of mental constructs, while awareness [*rigpa*] is the knowing of this absence of constructs, recognizing the complete emptiness of mind essence....The ultimate dharma is the realization of the indivisibility of basic space and awareness [that is] *dharmakaya* Samantabhadra.

—Tulku Urgyen *As It Is* Vol. I 1999; *Rainbow Painting* 1995

Here is neither samsara nor nirvana, neither self nor other, neither buddhas nor sentient beings. This [nondual] state is known as primordial purity [*kadag*] because

it is not stained or obscured by any hint of confusion or dualistic thought; it is the original, pure nature of all existence...

—Francesca Fremantle *Luminous Emptiness* 2001

“The dharmakaya arises unnecessarily out of infinite basic space.” [Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche] And the great natural beauty of it? “It is already present and accomplished from the very beginning” (Nagarjuna)—here, now, for each one of us as our indwelling, always present intrinsic Buddha Nature of Mind—bright indwelling Presence of that very Ground of Being itself. It is That (*tathata, sattva, chönyi*) ultimate Samadhi of Suchness through which we awaken—breath by mindful breath—via the *relative* practice of this happy, difficult spiritual Path. Pure direct 'naked awareness' of this great timeless truth facilitates the altruistic, compassionate *bodhicitta* conduct that lifts and heals pain and suffering of living beings, and generates both relative happiness (human flourishing, *eudiamonia, felicitas*), and ultimate harmless Happiness Itself (*mahasukha, paramananda, beatitudo*). *Mahasukho! A la la ho!*

## The Primordial Awareness Ground: Sutra, Tantra, Dzogchen

We may now review the three essential awareness *yanas* of the Buddhist path—Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen. According to the Third Doderupchen, with His Holiness Dalai Lama, the Inner Tantras of both *Anuttarayoga tantra* or Highest Yoga Tantra (nondual Essence Mahamudra), and nondual Ati Dzogchen (*semde, longde, manngag/upadesha* teaching cycles) are essentially nondual tantras, while the less subtle, less direct Outer Tantras with the sutras of the *Triyana* remain the fundamental and foundational vehicles of the Buddha's transmission to us. And all these vehicles of the Path provide the same Fruit/Result—*Prajnaparamita*—great nondual already indwelling Primordial Transcendent Awareness Wisdom (*jnana, yeshe*, gnosis)—love-wisdom truth of all the buddhas of the three times, past, present, future, always present now!

H.H. Dalai Lama reminds us that without this early foundation of the Path; indeed, without all three Turnings of Buddha's *Dharmachakra* that comprise the Buddha's speech (*buddhavaccana*), the wisdom temple cannot be built. Thus, for Indo-Tibetan Vajrayana the preliminaries or foundational practices (*ngöndro*) are actually the most profound. They introduce the very highest nondual teaching of both the *Sutrayana* and *Tantrayana* (*Mantrayana*) vehicles.

They continue to be fundamental through development, completion and Dzogchen perfection stages of all the Vajrayana lineage paths. Let us then forsake the traditional hubris inherent in the lesser/greater, *hina/maha*, provisional/definitive (*neyartha/nitartha*) dualistic scholastic dialectics and honor Buddha's speech/voice in a nonsectarian *rimé* spirit of mind.

The Indo-Tibetan Vajrayana or Secret Mantra Mantrayana thus contains both *Sutrayana* and *Tantrayana* teaching vehicles: the *renunciation* practices of the Sutras, the *transformation* practices of the Outer and Inner Tantras, and the *fruition* View of nondual highest Essence Mahamudra, and the “spontaneously self-perfected” (*lhundrub*) state of Ati Dzogchen, nondual Great Completion of cause and effect duality of the Two Truths of the Mahayana Causal Vehicle.

*The profound and 'spooky' paradox of Dzogchen fruition/resultant view is that in this ultimate nondual view there 'exists' no afflicted consciousness nor negative emotions to be renounced, purified or transformed! Indeed, there is no ultimate phenomenal spacetime reality to negate; and so no beings to*



negate; and so no ultimate ontological ground to be fabricated! There is only this basal primordial Awareness Being Ground (*rigdang*). "Awareness is the timeless, nondual integration of emptiness and lucidity—naturally lucid and unobstructed awareness in all its nakedness, within the context of originally pure basic space [*chöying*] free of [conceptual] elaboration." [Longchenpa] That is the ultimate View.

An ontic Middle Way. Well then, what is it that *seems* to appear in that mysterious 'basic space'? And *how* does it appear? What arises and appears from nondual formless timeless awareness is all too real diaphanous domain of spacetime ( $E=mc^2$ ) Relative Truth—all of it utterly absent and empty any whit of *ultimate* or absolute intrinsic existence! Still, there 'exists' perceptually and conceptually imputed *relative* appearances, and our sensory experience of them. Thus our rather ambiguous epithet "groundless ground" for the non-logocentric, ultimately absent emptiness Source Ground of all this relatively arising illusory phenomena.

On the acausal nondual Dzogchen View the primordial nature of *ultimate* reality itself, very heart-essence, is "perfect from the very beginning"; is "buddha from the very beginning". This prior indivisible unity of emptiness, lucid luminosity, and nondual awareness is blissful "primordially pure" Presence of androgynous Samantabhadra, primordial *dharmakaya* Adi Buddha. That is our Supreme Identity of the Supreme Source Ground—always present within and throughout embodied mind, ascending and descending upon *prana* breath of mindfulness, indestructible *thigle* essence at spiritual Heart of each human being—without a single exception.

This indwelling, timeless, intrinsic primordial awareness buddha nature of ours—bright Presence of That (*tathata*)—is the essence of Buddha's Third Turning of the Wheel of Dharma. Again we understand, this our bright "innermost secret" Presence (*rigpa*, *vidya*) is our *relative* interdependent participation in *ultimate* nature of reality itself (*chönyi*), *dharmakaya* (*chö ku*), just as it is (*thamel gyi shepa*). It utterly transcends any thought, concept or spiritual experience (*nyams*) of it. *Tat Tvam Asi!* That I Am!—selfless supreme identity, always present here and now.

When we forget ourselves we are actually the true activity of the existence of Big Mind, reality itself. When we realize this fact, there is no problem whatsoever in this world...Our practice is to be aware of this fact...It may be too perfect for us, just now, because we are so much attached to our own feeling, to our individual existence...When you can sit with your whole body and mind, and with the oneness of your mind and body under the control of the universal mind, you can easily attain this kind of right understanding...When we reach this understanding we find the true meaning of our life...How very glad the river must be to return to its original ocean!

—Suzuki Roshi, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* 1970, 2020

In this way then, through great lucid clarity of nondual *direct* understanding, the two seemingly contradictory theses of views on emptiness in Sutra and Tantra—objective and subjective, ascending and descending—are dialectically transcended, yet included and embraced in the higher or deeper synthesis of the supreme view and practice of subtlest Dzogchen *Atiyoga* without reducing the great nondual teaching to explanatory experiences and conceptual expressions of our unconscious deep background cultural "global web of belief". [Quine 1969]

Ultimately nondual awareness of emptiness of Madhyamaka is the emptiness of Ati Dzogchen and of Essence Mahamudra, although the relative-conventional view and practices

differ slightly. And the result or fruition of all three is identical—primordial buddhahood.

And yes, that is Shakamuni Buddha's perfect teaching in "two ways at once...natural unity of one identity with two aspects." One ground, two truths, three buddha bodies are a present union that is a prior *apriori* unity of this Buddhist Two Truths trope—Ultimate Truth and Relative Truth—subsumed in an ineffable nondual awareness *one truth unity (dzog)* that is invariant through all of our cognitive states—objective, subjective, contemplative, and nondual. Indeed, a most amazing paradox! But only to conceptual mind. There is always only Awareness.

Each and every one of us has the potential to realize fruition. It is you yourself who make the decision...Open the door...follow the path right to the end.

—H.H. Dalai Lama

### **Ground, Path, Fruition/Result**

The fruition is no different at the pinnacle of enlightenment than it is at the primordial base.

—Adzom Paylo Rinpoche

### **Integrating the Ground and the Fruit Through the Path**

In Dzogchen View the Fruition of the Path—liberation, enlightenment, buddhahood—is always already present as our Supreme Identity with ultimate *dharmakaya* Ground of Being, primordial intrinsic awareness itself, empty of any *concept* of Ground or Fruition. Fruition arises as *active essential rigpa awareness Presence* through the gift of 'interdependent arising' of Body, Voice and Mind of our all too human relative *shepa* awareness. Ground and Fruit are prior unity.

The essence of enlightenment—very heart-seed of buddha nature (*tathagatagarbha*) "is a continuity that extends throughout our journey along the stages of ground, path and fruition." [Kenchen Thrangu Rinpoche] The precious *samaya*/covenant between Vajra Master and disciple facilitates, after development/creation and completion stages of the path, Ati Dzogchen perfection stage. That is necessary to awaken and integrate the prior already present unity of Ground and Fruition in this confusion context of our everyday life world, and of the spiritual Path. If this *process* is to bear the fruit of liberation, the student must continuously dedicate the merit and benefit of these profound practices, not to self, but to the benefit and ultimate happiness of all beings, great and small, everywhere. What then is the Ati Dzogchen method of clarifying the confusion of the Path? It is present union of View, Meditation, Action/Conduct.

In Dzogchen, on the basis of the clear light itself, the way in which clear light abides is made vivid and certain by the aspect of *rigpa* or knowing. That is free from any overlay of delusion and from any corrupting effect of conceptual thought that will inhibit the experience of clear light...It is not accomplished as something new, as a result of circumstances and conditions, but is present from the very outset...an awareness that can clearly perceive the way in which basic space and wisdom are present. On the basis of that key point, the realization of clear light

radiates in splendor, becoming clearer and clearer, like a hundred million suns...Here the aware aspect of clear light or effulgent *rigpa* [which arises from nondual 'essential' *rigpa*] is stripped bare and you penetrate further into the depths of clear light...even as objects seem to arise...It is on this basis that you train.

—Third Dodrupchen Jigme Tenpe Nyima (in H.H. Dalai Lama, *Dzogchen* 2000.)

### ***Rigpa: The Main Point***

Nyingma head Dodrupchen teaches that “The main point is that the *rigpa* taught in the Dzogchen approach and the wisdom of clear light [*Anuttarayoga tantra*] are one and the same.” Twentieth Century *rimé* master Tulku Ugyen agrees. Regarding Buddhist “three great views”:

The view of Mahamudra, Dzogchen and Madhyamaka is identical in essence. Although it is said, ‘the ground is Mahamudra, the path is the Middle Way, and the fruition is the Great Perfection,’ in the view itself there is no difference whatsoever...The awakened state of Mahamudra doesn’t differ from the awakened state of Dzogchen or Madhyamaka. Buddhahood is the final fruition of all these regardless of which of these paths you follow.

—Tulku Ugyen *Rainbow Painting* 1999

Thus, the awakened state of Presence—*essential rigpa*—does not differ in Dzogchen, or the Essence Mahamudra of Highest Yoga Tantra, or the highest *Madhyamaka of the Definitive Meaning*. However, H.H. Dalai Lama cautions us not to conflate this highest, greater esoteric or innermost secret nondual teaching with the lesser esoteric *Mahamudra* and *Madhyamaka* of Sutra and lower Tantra. This difference in subtlety is the essential difference between the “definitive” nondual Dzogchen teaching, and the “provisional” teaching of the lower sutras and tantras.

Dodrupchen’s “*effulgent rigpa*” (*lungdang*) of the clear light is the ‘active’ aspect of *rigpa* that is “directly experienced” (*yogi pratyaksa*) when conceptual thoughts (*vikalpa*) of the less subtle mind states are still present—“*rigpa* that arises from the ground, and is the appearance of the ground.” “*Essential rigpa*” [*paravidya*] of Dzogchen is the indwelling, pure direct Presence in the yogin—free of even the slightest conceptual elaboration—the experience of nondual ultimate fundamental “innate mind of clear light.” Moreover, this essential clear light mind (*ösel*) is about the same as the Sutrayana nondual “transcendental wisdom” of the *Prajnaparamita Sutra*, beyond or prior to subject and object, self and other, and all the dualistic conceptual false dichotomies of conditional spacetime *shepa* dimension of the world of objective empirical relative truth.

*There is ‘effulgent rigpa’ of the appearances of the Ground or base, and nondual ‘essential rigpa’ (rangjung yeshe) of the formless, timeless, selfless primordial dharmakaya ‘groundless’ Ground of Being.*

Thickening the plot, Dodrupchen also identifies *rigpa* that is both, and *rigpa* that is neither. In the former there is *rigpa* union of the conceptual appearances arising from the base, *effulgent rigpa* with nondual *essential rigpa*. As to the latter, in “*rigpa* attaining its full measure” the yogi takes a “firm stance within the essence of the base [*gzhi rigpa*]” that is neither ‘*essential rigpa*’, nor ‘*effulgent rigpa*’. That *rigpa* abides as empty ‘basic space’ beyond any concept about *rigpa*.

In this rather prolix conceptual exposition of *rigpa*, we have both *relative* effulgent and *ultimate* essential qualities and experiences of primordial wisdom gnosis that is *jnana/yeshe*. Direct feeling-knowing awareness of Presence of That is nondual *rigpa/vidya*, beyond our

concepts and beliefs. Drodrukchen's above fourth alternative—*rigpa* that is neither effulgent nor essential *rigpa*—that is utterly non-conceptual nondual "*rigpa* of all-embracing spontaneous presence (*lhundrup*), spacious *dharmakaya* wisdom of ultimate fruition...ultimate state of freedom...exhaustion of phenomena beyond [conceptual *shepa*] mind". [H.H. Dalai Lama, 2000]

Longchen Rabjam (1308-1364), great synthesizer of the *Dzogchen* transmission clarifies:

Timeless self-arising wisdom is [essential] *rigpa* that is empty, clear and free from all elaboration, like an immaculate sphere of crystal...it does not analyze objects...By simply identifying that nonconceptual, pristine, naked *rigpa*, you realize there is nothing other than this nature...This is nondual self-arising wisdom...Like a reflection in a mirror [*melôn*], when objects and perceptions manifest to *rigpa*, that pristine and naked awareness which does not proliferate into thought is called the 'inner power' (*tsal*), the responsiveness that is the ground for all the arising of things...For a yogin who realizes the naked meaning of *Dzogpachenpo* [*Dzogchen*], *rigpa* is fresh, pure and naked, and objects may manifest and appear within *rigpa*, but it does not lose itself externally to those objects.

—Longchen Rabjam, *The Treasury of the Dharmadhatu*, (Commentary), Adzom Chögar edition, quoted in H.H. Dalai Lama, *Dzogchen* 2000.

Hence, atavistic self-arising clear light wisdom *rigpa* awareness is primordially pure, and in Longchenpa's words, "empty and clear"—the unity of emptiness and clarity that is lucid, clear light *ösel* luminosity. That is prior "natural unity of one identity with two aspects." *Shunyata* means empty, *ta* is awareness; *shunyata* then is empty luminous awareness—utter absence of perceiving knowing subject, and its *separate* known objects, spooky subject-object split. That timeless, formless, selfless nondual Supreme Source Ground or primordial base (*gzhi*) of the chaos of dynamical appearing energy forms arising therein is both empty and aware—unity of emptiness with its interdependent energy appearances arising upon *prana* spirit breath of 'intrinsic awareness'. Its *Essence is emptiness, primordial purity/kadag* (*trekchö* practice)—subjective "inner lucidity," nondual wisdom, *chöying* basic space *dharmakaya* Ultimate Truth (*paramartha satya*). Its *Nature is clear light awareness, spontaneous presence* (*lhundrup*) of emptiness in every spacetime form (*tögal* practice). That 'vision' arises as "outer lucidity," *upaya*/skillful means, "responsiveness" of compassionate loving kindness in the *rupakaya* dimensions of Relative Truth.

The nondual ontic prior and phenomenal always present unity of these Two Truths is *Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen*, natural Great Perfection or Great Completion of the Two Truths wisdom of both Mahayana Sutra and Tibetan Vajrayana Tantra, realized through practice of Nyingma ninth vehicle *Atiyoga*, utterly liberated and free of the 'twofold ignorance'—forgetting and thinking—grasping at a self and grasping at phenomenal reality. This clinging/attachment results from the 'impure view' that is the reifying conceptual elaboration (*namtok*) of relative-conventional phenomena and states of experience of self-ego-I—dualistic *shepa* mind (*sems*), conceptual, semiotic "global web of belief" abiding in the three times—past, present and future.

The relative antidote? "Without past, present, future; empty, awake mind." [Ju Mipham] As we have seen, this primordial awareness awakened mind is nondual unelaborated spontaneity of eternal fourth time *turiya*, the fifth state *turiyatita* that abides within this timeless moment now in a concept free ultimately illusory space and time. [Albert Einstein's  $E=mc^2$ ]

According to Tulku Urgyen this luminous inner union of emptiness and form is personified in the tantric deity Vajrayogini (Yeshe Tsogyal/Vajra Varahi). "Knowing one, liberates all." *Rimé* master Ju Mipham on the Dzogchen view of these Two Truths of the Buddha—that final *one truth unity* of ultimate emptiness and its relative form:

Within the essence, original wakefulness which is primordially pure [*kadag*],  
manifests the nature, a radiance which is spontaneously present [*lhundrup*].

—Ju Mipham Gyatso

### ***Shepa and Rigpa: Two Truths Being One Ground***

In the Indo-Tibetan Vajrayana Mantrayana Buddhist tradition—Buddha's final Third Turning of his Wheel of Dharma—there is typically a doctrinaire distinction made between the cognizance of ordinary human mind (*sems*), dualistic *relative* objective conceptual consciousness that is *shepa*—and perfectly subjective *ultimate* cognizance (*sems nyi*) that intends its 'essential *rigpa*' Ground of Being. Our auto-noetic cognitive doublet. That *rigpa* intrinsic awareness *Presence* is selfless primordial wisdom—*rangjung yeshe*—our "original wakefulness". That loving Presence is revealed in Dzogchen Atiyoga Great Perfection—nondual, formless, timeless, self-liberated Fruition/Result—free of a conceptually contrived Ground. Thus is *acausal* Dzogchen the Great Completion of the Mahayana Causal Vehicle—Second Turning of the *Dharmachakra*.

Alas, we often conflate primordial *rigpa* awareness with conceptual knowing—as if *rigpa* were mere discursive *shepa* awareness. Resting the mind (*yogi pratyaksa*) in *rigpa* is knowing-feeling *buddic* wakefulness of 'noself' (*anatman*) Ground Nature of Mind. It transcends and embraces dualistic 'self' *shepa* mind—'gone beyond' even deep samadhi *experience*. This love-wisdom buddha mind utilizes the three voices of great gift of human consciousness: objective conceptual, subjective contemplative, and perfectly subjective nondual—threefold way of the yogin of 'uncontrived wisdom conduct'—a middle way between ontic extremes of 'being and nothingness'. That is potential union of objective Science and its subjective Spirit Ground. [Boaz 2023 *The Noetic Revolution: Toward an Integral Science of Matter, Mind and Spirit*]

Just so, the Relative Truth dimension of *shepa*, and Ultimate Truth dimension of *rigpa*, are two voices of the *one truth unity* of Shakyamuni Buddha's Two Truths: relative form and its primordial Ground (*dharmakaya*, *dharmata*, *chönyi*, *neluk*). That Ground of Being has three faces: Essence (luminous emptiness), Nature (lucid clarity), and Energy (compassionate action).

*Chö* is nature. *Nyi* is ultimate essence. Thus *chönyi* is Ultimate Truth essential nature—*dharmata*, *dharmakaya*, *chöying*, *tathata-suchness* of all relative appearing phenomenal reality—empty and absent any iota of absolute intrinsic existence, even as spacetime phenomena continue to arise in this all too real suffering regime of Relative Truth. Adzom Gyalse Rinpoche has told that these four dharma terms are synonymous as to our understanding of essence and nature of that unborn, uncreated, formless, nondual emptiness/*shunyata* Ground of Being.

*Chönyi* is heart essence of Middle Way Madhyamaka view, philosophy, and practice. Here abides sutra *Prajnaparamita*—Mother of the Buddhas—nondual Perfection of Wisdom. We may choose to connect to *That tathata* suchness via the great *Prajnaparamita* Mantra: *Om gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha*. "Gone gone gone beyond, gone utterly beyond, perfect wisdom presence." Harmless Happiness Itself. That is 'basic space' perfect primordial purity of *kadag*—awareness Ground Nature of Mind as it continuously manifests *lhundrup*—spontaneous

presence as *essential rigpa* replete with infinite "all good basic goodness" qualities of a buddha. Yes. That is *dharmakaya* Adi Buddha Samantabhadra/Kuntazangpo/Kunjed Gyalpo, our Supreme Source Ground. That Presence is our Supreme Identity—who we are now, who we've always been, who we'll always be. Some sunny day we shall all together arise and shine in that timeless always present Spirit Presence. "Wonder of wonders", that fine day is already today.

So, let us remain ever present (*lungdang*) to that ontic prior, phenomenally present one truth unity of these two dimensions of vast whole that is perfectly subjective formless, timeless, selfless, nondual 'groundless' Ground of Being itself (*rigdang*). The Buddha told it well: "Form is empty (*shunya, stong pa*); emptiness (*shunyata, stong pa nyi*) is form." That great *kosmic* process of the 'Interdependent Arising' (*pratitya samutpada*) of cosmos is luminous clear light (*ösel*) union of relative form and its ultimate emptiness Ground—primordial *rigpa* Awareness Being Itself.

Meanwhile, dualistic *shepa* cognition presumes a real separation between a knowing subject and its known objects—spooky subject-object split—dreadful 'primal ignorance' (*avidya, marigpa*). *Dualistic mind's two-valued (either true or false) 'truth functional' semiotic logical syntax of language can only cognize an object other than itself. Shepa mind cannot grasp nondual unity of 'self' and 'other'.* This logical limit of language perforce precludes self-reflexive direct knowing of subtle nondual *rigpa* identity/union of we knowing subjects with our 'separate' objects known.

Our nondual direct knowing-feeling *rigpa* Presence realizes intimate ultimate unity (*tathata, tattva, suchness, chönyi, quidditas, metanoia*)—pre-conceptual singular 'suchness' of being here in relative space and time. Longchenpa on that self-arising, self-knowing *rang rig*: "Rigpa is authentic primordial presence (*rang zhin gyi rigpa*) transcending *shepa*—deluded by its own display—seeing appearances as ultimately real." Whereas *shepa* illumines external objects—including our concepts about *rigpa*—*essential rigpa* is self-luminous, like sun in empty space, illuminating all that it touches. *Rigpa Presence illumines an open shepa mind.*

*Rimé* 19th century Nyingma Dzogchen master Ju Mipham Gyatso—Manjushri himself—on this subtle *ultimately* false dichotomy of relative *shepa* and ultimate *essential rigpa*:

*Shepa* is mistaken cognition; *rigpa* is pure unmistakable awareness.  
*Shepa* apprehends outer objects. *Rigpa* abides in its own primordial nature—the undivided whole itself [embracing *shepa*]. *Rigpa* knows itself directly, beyond conceptual elaboration. [*The Beacon of Certainty*]

"Two Truths Being One Ground" is realized as the one truth unity of *shepa* and *rigpa*. Being happy here in time requires it. This formless ultimate dimension—timeless *kosmos*—embraces, pervades, and grounds our relative dimension of spacetime cosmos. That boundless vast primordial whole (*mahabindu*) of the 'basic space' (*chöying*) Ultimate Truth Ground of Being (*dharmakaya, dharmata*) mereologically (part-whole relations) transcends and includes the phenomenal parts of its Relative Truth spacetime dimension. "Grounding by subsumption" in/as the Ground Itself. So *rigpa* Presence grounds all phenomenal arising for a sentient *shepa* consciousness. Hence, these Two Truths of the great whole are all-subsuming *rigpa* nondual one truth unity—beyond our dualistic *shepa* concepts and beliefs about this grand process. Yes. This prior unity of relative *shepa* and ultimate *rigpa* is singular Ground of Being Itself. And that's good news. *Relative shepa mind gives us the here now choice to abide in ultimate rigpa Presence!*

How shall "I" realize "That"? Here now place your present attention/awareness upon always present Presence of Spirit Ground as it rides your healing life force *prana* spirit breath in the belly. OM AH HUM. Happiness Itself. Who Am I? *Tat Tvam Asi!* That I Am! *A la la ho!*

### **The Three Samadhi Liberations of Nyingma Mahayoga Development Stage Practice**

Adzom Gyalse Rinpoche has told it well. The Three Samadhis (*grol sum*) are Development Stage approach to Perfection Stage Dzogchen. In Atiyoga these three are not cultivated as in Mahayoga meditation (*gom*), but are perfected as effortless 'nonmeditation' (*ma gom*), present unity of form and emptiness of the nondual Ground—unity of empty Essence, clarity Nature, compassion Energy. Sanskrit *sam* is unity; *dhi* is awareness. Samadhi: 'meditative absorption' in *ma gom rigpa* self-knowing awareness of prior union of meditator and meditation.

These 'three liberations' of the *Trikaya* are: 1) *Dharmata Samadhi of Suchness*—resting in *essential rigpa* emptiness of all spacetime phenomena, Buddha's nondual Ultimate Truth that is great gift of *Ultimate Bodhicitta*. 2) *Samadhi of Illumination of All Phenomena* is Great Compassion clarity, *mahakaruna* for living beings that spontaneously arises from resting in *rigpa* 'basic space' of emptiness. That is manifested as action/conduct of *Relative Bodhicitta*. 3) Unity of these two results in cause-effect display of *Samadhi of the Seed Syllable*—HUM (HUNG)—great 'potential' for realization of one's personal *yidam* deity—indivisible unity of form and emptiness. That ultimate primordial wisdom (*yeshe*, *jnana*, *gnosis*) in whom arises relative *prajna*, *sherab* skillful means/method (*upaya*) liberates the suffering of relative samsara into ultimate nirvana.

Samsara and nirvana are therefore an indivisible ultimate *one truth unity*, even as adversity continues to arise here in relative time and space. For the yogin of Perfection Stage Dzogchen that nondual trans-conceptual *essential rigpa* realization may be easier done than said; beyond words—present Ground of Being itself—perfect just as it is. The 'labels' here are *mi gom*; nonmeditation; *Wu-Wei*: free of subject-object duality of meditator and meditation (*gom*). "That is *mi sgom*, the natural abiding of *rigpa* awareness". [Longchenpa 2001] That is *essential rigpa* Presence—primordial awareness dwelling in self-knowing *ösel* clarity—beyond *gom med* effort.

*Dharmata Samadhi of Suchness. Dharmakaya.* Emptiness. *Rigpa ma gom* realization. That primordially pure *dharmakaya* emptiness nature of all arising physical and mental phenomenal reality is utterly free of conceptual elaboration. This liberating samadhi realizes *relative* spacetime phenomena to be empty of *ultimate* intrinsic existence. That is realization of *Ultimate Bodhicitta*. That self-knowing, feeling *essential rigpa* wisdom Presence frees us from desire-mind cupidity of grasping at this illusory stuff of relative samsara as ultimately real. That *marigpa* process is primary cause of our dissatisfaction, suffering, and human evil. Suchness (*tathata*, *thatness*, *noumena*, *chönyi*, *rigpa*, *quidditas*) is pure perfect Presence of our being here in formless, timeless, selfless *dharmakaya* Ground of Being just as it is—before we think about it—quite free of conceptual elaboration. That is always present primordial *buddic* state of *essential rigpa* Presence.

This empty 'suchness of being' is natural imprint of the human being—Being Itself, our authentic actual nature—Buddha Nature of Mind. That is Buddhist emptiness above and beyond any concept of emptiness. 'Suchness' is intrinsically empty of our concepts and beliefs about it. Buddha's Two Truths: "Form is empty; emptiness is form." Empty suchness is the primordial equality/sameness (*samatajnana*) of emptiness, clarity, energy. Realization of this 'wisdom of

emptiness'—*rigpa* Presence—is the 'purifying agent' that is the open secret of human happiness.

Emptiness—vast openness—is not created. It is empty, formless primordial pure Ground Presence already present since before the beginning of spacetime stuff ( $E=mc^2$ ). "Emptiness free of qualities and characteristics." This nondual fruition of emptiness is not about 'wishing'. It is wholly free of desire and intellectual elaboration—primordial purity (*kadag*) of innate Presence (*lhundrup, rigpa*) of essential groundless Ground of Being Itself. Such is the Samadhi of Suchness.

*The Samadhi of Illumination of All Phenomena. Sambhogakaya.* Luminosity. All arising phenomena are illumined by timeless Great Compassion—*mahakaruna*. That is sublime gift of *Ultimate Bodhicitta*; prior and always present unity of *The Great Love*: great gravity of Relative Truth spacetime cosmos that binds together the worlds; great gravitas of Ultimate Truth *kosmos* that expresses itself as human love. That love naturally and spontaneously manifests in time as 'Buddha responsiveness', and as *buddic* 'human responsiveness'—*Relative Bodhicitta*—thought, intention, prayer, and action-conduct for both relative and ultimate benefit of all living beings.

What is the actual design and purpose of *Ultimate Bodhicitta* and its *mahakaruna*? To bring living beings to peace and clarity of *sambhogakaya* fruition of buddhahood—liberating harmless Happiness Itself. What must we 'purify' to be this? As we free 'self' of 'primal ignorance' (*avidya, marigpa, ajnana, hamartia/sin*)—grasping desire of self-ego-I—*The Great Love* spontaneously manifests primordial *essential rigpa* 'noself' (*anatman*) love-wisdom Presence of the *ultimate* Ground of Being itself, very Nature of Mind. How so? Through *relative* ethical action/conduct in our precious lives. Nothing special (*wushin*). Natural gentle loving kindness. What is the 'purifying agent/factor'? It is step by step, breath by breath here now *rigpa* realization that all appearing physical and mental phenomena are inherently already illumined by the Buddha's ultimate luminous emptiness/*shunyata*—suchness/*tathata* expressed through kind relative compassion that so naturally already pervades our being here in *shepa* space and time.

*Samadhi of the Seed Syllable. Nirnanakaya.* Compassion energy. Causal manifestation of the deity. The Mahayoga Development Stage union of empty 'Suchness' and all-illuminating Great Compassion together comprise the causal *nirmanakaya* Seed Syllable—*HUM* (*HUNG*)—potential or cause for realizing one's personal meditational 'Inner Refuge' *yidam* deity. In Vajrayana the *yidam* deity is one of the Three Roots that form the Inner Refuge. "Ultimate realization of your personal *yidam* deity is realization of all deities of the great Mandala." [Adzom Gyalse Rinpoche]

There are three 'seed potential causal aspects' here present: 1) seed potential or cause of primordial buddhahood; 2) seed potential or cause of all living beings; 3) seed potential or cause of beginning *relative* Development Stage of the Buddhadharma Path toward Dzogchen *ultimate* Perfection Stage realization of buddhahood. What is being 'purified' here? The cause and effect karmic cycle of ignorance and attachment that is cause for the states of rebirth in samsara. The fourth state of rebirth is 'womb birth'. The fruition of the Seed Syllable *HUM* is then the rebirth of a *buddic nirnanakaya* being. Such a one demonstrates by his/her life that wondrous *samadhi* seed potential for both relative and ultimate benefit of all living beings—in accordance with their present capacity. That *Ati* union of emptiness/suchness and skillful luminous compassion is from before the beginning of space and time already descended and present for us as perfectly subjective nondual *dharmakaya* 'groundless' Ground of Being itself. Great Joy! *Mahasukaho!*



## Choosing Your Ultimate Reality

What shall we do with this rare and precious life we've been given? According to the great living Buddhist Dzogchen and Mahamudra master Adzom Paylo Rinpoche: "*Peace and happiness arise from your present mind state. To be happy you must train your mind to be free of negative afflicting emotions. This places you at ease so that you can act to benefit the world.*" That freedom is the open secret of our human happiness. "It is only by training the mind that one reaches peace of mind." [H.H. Dalai Lama] Thus do we *choose* our *essential rigpa* ultimate reality Ground of Being.

"The Meditation" of the Path is practice of training our mind in equanimity (*upeksha, shanti, peace*); recognizing, upon *prana* breath—"brief moments many times"—one taste of bright nondual *one truth unity* of the Ground, ever present *state of pure Presence*, marvelous nondual transcendent Primordial Awareness Wisdom (*yeshe, jnana, gnosis*), 'pointed out' and mirrored (*semtri, darshan, denbo*) by the Vajra Master in this intimate context of your heartfelt *devotion*.

Through such 'meditative stabilization' we see: "Without changing anything, let being be as it is." [Wu-Wei] "Make of yourselves a light," the Buddha's last words to his disciples. Then let it shine. That is the difference in view and conduct between *shepa* dualistic Scientific Materialism of narcissistic consumerist mass-mind that has colonized the Western mind—and *essential rigpa* primordial wakefulness (*rang jung yeshe*). This, our beautiful original face is *yeshe* wisdom, unborn buddha heart buddha mind that is "single sphere of *dharmakaya*." Indwelling bright Presence of That (*tathata, suchness*). Thus do we *choose* our individual and so collective destiny.

Remaining naturally [in primordial state of *rigpa*] is the meditation. The nature of mind is buddha from the beginning...Realizing the purity essence of all things, to remain here, without seeking, that is the meditation.

—Garab Dorje (from *The Three Statements* in *Kunjed Gyalpo*)

Regarding knowing subject and its object of meditation, this perfectly subjective transcendent wisdom of emptiness—ineffable Supreme Source that is androgynous, primordial *dharmakaya* Adi Buddha Samantabhadra—Longchenpa reveals that formless, timeless, selfless, *ultimate* fundamental awareness Ground in whom all *relative* appearing phenomena arise and participate is without beginning and without end. It is unborn, uncreated and unceasing, ontologically prior yet phenomenally present to us in vast luminous relative-conventional 'Interdependent Arising' causal matrix of great gift that adorns our appearing spacetime realities.

What never existed cannot cease to exist. Thus, arising objective phenomenal particulars, universals, and beings of the perfectly subjective Supreme Source Base who abide in a spacetime transcendent relation of essential identity with this basal Ground of Being can have no Creator for they are originally and primordially inseparable and always already embraced and pervaded by that Primordial Ground "from the very beginning". Miracle of being here. *A la la ho!*

Dynamical phenomena, living beings, and human self-ego-I are, in actuality, a perfectly subjective unity, beyond belief, beyond concepts, prior to all present interdependent spacetime arising. The painful perennial duality of creator/creation, of self and other—our conceptual uncomfortable comfort zones—is thereby transcended in its ultimate infinite nondual source condition, Ultimate Truth of Reality Being itself (*chönyi, dharmata*), the very Ground of Being. In the perfect words of 14th century Tibetan Dzogchen master Longchenpa, the 'omniscient one':

Original purity in its essence has never existed as anything; rather its nature, like that of space, is primordially pure so that anything whatsoever can manifest. The origin of all samsara and nirvana is atemporal, with no beginning or end...The unique vast expanse...spontaneous presence...is [selfless], not created by anyone. All things that emerge from it—all possible phenomena without exception—are one within the fundamental ground from which they emerge, since causality is negated...The ultimate heart essence, which transcends existence and nonexistence...is truly beyond all conventional expression and description...From the standpoint of enlightenment, the heart essence from which everything arises, there is no duality...Buddhas, beings, and the universe of appearances and possibilities are evident, yet do not waver from the single nature of phenomena, just as it is...Leave everything as it is...Primordial buddhahood, the ground of fully evident enlightenment, unchanging, spontaneously present, basic space of the vajra heart essence—the nature of mind is natural great perfection.

—Longchen Rabjam, *The Precious Treasury of the Way of Abiding* (Autocommentary), Padma Edition 1998

This same heart essence of our innate clear light mind, this “*essential rigpa*” that is joyous blessing gift (*jinlob*) of the state of Primordially Pure *kadag* Presence, our compassionate buddha nature dwelling within us was earlier transmitted directly through the Buddha’s Second Turning of the Wheel of Dharma, revealed and elaborated, as we have seen, in the *Prajnaparamita Sutra* (*The Great Sutra of Transcendent Wisdom*), heart essence of which is expressed in the Buddha’s sublime, very brief *Heart Sutra*. That transcendent *one truth unity* (*dzog*) of the Two Truths of Madhyamaka—the Perfection of Wisdom of Sutrayana and Tantrayana—and the acausal nondual View of the prior and ever present unity of the Ground, Path and Fruition of Highest Yoga Tantra and of Ati Dzogchen are expressed in that 260 word nondual *Heart Sutra*:

Form is empty; emptiness is form. Form is not other than emptiness, emptiness is not other than form...The nature of mind is the unity of awareness and emptiness...The mind is devoid of mind, for the nature of mind is clear light...Leave everything as it is and rest your weary mind, all things are perfect exactly as they are...And all the *Tathagatas* [buddhas] will rejoice.

—Shakyamuni Buddha from his *Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra*

Now there is nothing left to seek. Nothing left to do. *Wu-Wei; ma gom*. Nondual 'nonmeditation' Ground of Being itself. So all that we do is selfless, authentic and kind. That is selfless compassionate *bodhicitta*—thought, intention, prayer, and action/conduct for the benefit of all beings—open secret of human happiness. Buddha's last words, "Make of yourselves a light." Now shall you be a light to all living beings for as long as you live.

## Who Am I? The Dzogchen *Kunjed Gyalpo Tantra*

In whom does this all arise?

The fundamental Dzogchen tantra, *The Kunjed Gyalpo (The Supreme Source)*, must surely be considered one of humankind's great spiritual treasures. According to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (1999) that supreme teaching has been transmitted from master to disciple directly, heartmind to heartmind, for many thousands of years. Its current Tibetan Vajrayana version arose with Garab Dorje (7th century). It is the fundamental tantra of Ati Dzogchen *semde*/mind teaching cycle.

Tantra means 'continuity', uninterrupted emanation of subtle wisdom energy of the state of pure Presence of the Source/Ground of all phenomena. *Kunjed* is the original Ground state of primordial purity (*kadag*) of all arising phenomena manifesting as a continuity of pure perfect indwelling Presence (*lhundrub, rigpa*)—union of clarity and bliss of nondual love-wisdom emptiness/*shunyata*. *Gyalpo* is 'King', the higher or inner tantras of Dzogchen *semde, longde*, and *manngag/upadesha* teaching cycles. *Kunjed Gyalpo* is the Supreme Source of Ati Dzogchen tantric practice that reveals, in due course and by grace, realization of Presence of the Ground of Being.

Just so, *Kunjed Gyalpo* is great nondual primordial wisdom that embraces the prepared yogin in that *essential rigpa* Ground of Being itself—Nature of Mind. Its truth essence streams, like a golden thread, through the grand tapestry of humankind's Primordial Wisdom Tradition.

*Kunjed Gyalpo, Wise All Creating King* is Samantabhadra/Samantabhadri in inseparable *yabyum* embrace—androgynous primordial Adi Buddha—state of perfect pure Presence, clarity, bliss, and emptiness, our buddha nature: Supreme Source, primordial womb of Being. *Dharmakaya* Adi Buddha Samantabhadra (Kuntazangpo, Vajradhara), formless awareness Ground (*rang rig yeshe*), instructs Vajrasattva (*dorje sempa*), *sambhogakaya* Buddha of form:

Listen! The essence of all the buddhas exists prior to samsara and nirvana...It transcends the four conceptual limits and is intrinsically pure; this original condition is the uncreated nature of existence that always existed, the ultimate nature of all phenomena...It is utterly free of the defects of dualistic thought which is only capable of referring to an object other than itself...It is the base of primordial purity...Similar to space it pervades all beings...The inseparability of the two truths, absolute and relative is called 'primordial Buddha'...If at the moment the energy of the base manifests, one does not consider it something other than oneself...it self-liberates...Understanding the essence...one finds oneself always in this state...dwelling in the fourth time, beyond past, present and future...the infinite space of self-perfection...pure dharmakaya, essence of the vajra of clear light.

—Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, *The Supreme Source* 1999

Thus do the sutras and tantras of Buddha's teaching, with the dependently arisen dualities of the path—objective and subjective, self and other, self and buddha mind, observer and data, true and false, good and bad, right and wrong, relative and ultimate—abide in prior yet present *one truth unity* of all-embracing *Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen*. That 'Supreme Source' is our Supreme Identity, primordial 'groundless' Ground of reality itself, luminous indwelling clear light love-wisdom Presence that is always already this bright unity of awareness and emptiness.

*Brief History of the Kunjed Gyalpo Tantra.* Longchenpa (1308-1363) revealed in his *Jewel Ship* (Lipman 2010) that circa 100 CE Garab Dorje of Oddiyana (Orgyen) received primordial Dzogchen *Kunjed Gyalpo* from *dharmakaya* Ground of Being through *sambhogakaya* Vajrasattva in a series of pure visions. [Garab Dorje's dates are problematic: 1st century or 7th century]

*Kunjed Gyalpo* is present in both *Nyingma Gyüd Bum* and *Nyingma Kama*. It is the only Atiyoga text present in the *Kangyur*, definitive Tibetan Buddhist Canon. It is presented in eighty-four chapters as three wisdom tantras: the 'Root Tantra' for those of highest spiritual acumen; the 'Further Tantra' for those of normal capacity; and the 'Final Tantra' for those of lesser capacity. The Root Tantra is fundamental in that it transmits and explicates the Ati Dzogchen View of primordial pure state of Presence of the Ground of Being—very Nature of Mind. [Norbu 1999]

The Supreme Atiyoga of 8th century Tibetan Nyingma lineage is seen as the final ninth teaching vehicle of the nine love-wisdom vehicles that comprise the Buddha's Three Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma—Hinayana/Theravada, Mahayana, and Indo-Tibetan Vajrayana. That ninth Atiyoga path reveals to the prepared disciple ultimate full *bodhi* realization of the Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen, great boundless whole that is primordial Ground of Being Itself.

From that nondual, formless, timeless primordial *dharmakaya* Adi Buddha *Kunjed Gyalpo* naturally arises three buddha body *kayas*—singular *Trikaya of the Base/Ground*—dimensions of *dharmakaya*, *sambhogakaya*, *nirmanakaya* (OM AH HUM). *Dharmakaya* is said to be the Supreme Source of the three Nyingma inner or higher vehicles. From *sambhogakaya* arises the three outer vehicles. *Nirmanakaya* is the source of the three sutra vehicles—Shravakayana, Pratyekabuddhayana, and Bodhisattvayana. The three tenet systems: Hinayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. [Vajrayana is the Tibetan Mahayana.] The Buddha taught these three *yanas* to serve the varying capacities of his listeners. The highest is Atiyoga 'perfection stage' path of effortless, non-seeking, nondual 'self-liberation'—beyond sutra 'renunciation' and tantra 'transformation'. *Dharmakaya* Adi Buddha *Kunjed Gyalpo* transmits Atiyoga to *sambhogakaya* Buddha Vajrasattva.

*Kunjed Gyalpo and the Three Vajra Verses.* While not textually derived from the tantra, it is told that Garab Dorje received these *Three Statements* as a direct mind *terma* from *dharmakaya* via *sambhogakaya* Adi Buddha Vajrasattva. Upon his death he transmitted them to his heart son Arya Manjushrimitra, emanation of Manjushri himself, who received this perfect Ati Dzogchen teaching as the *Three Statements That Strike the Essence* (Reynolds 1996). These are: 1) Recognize through direct introduction (by the master) your natural state of intrinsic awareness *rigpa* pure Presence; 2) Choose and remain in that state of Presence, beyond doubt; 3) Continue in that state of Presence with confidence in liberation. That is Dzogchen triune *process* of buddhahood.

Broadly construed, the Dzogchen master first introduces the disciple to nondual *Ultimate Bodhicitta*, the Ground of Being Itself. The disciple then spontaneously realizes *That* (*tathata*, *suchness*) beyond concepts about it. That is the Ati Dzogchen *semde* teaching cycle. *Longde* realization then becomes the pure perfect Presence of *essential rigpa* which stabilizes the profound initial recognition. In *manngag/upadesha* the nondual living love-wisdom Presence of knowing-feeling *rigpa* ripens and becomes integrated, through the master's 'pointing out' pith instruction, as altruistic *Relative Bodhicitta*—'the mind of enlightenment'—kind, compassionate action/conduct in the everyday *shepa* lifeworld of the practitioner. Knowing, stabilizing, and integrating. Each one of these three interdependent teaching cycles may in itself be a complete path to realization of primordial pure perfect *lhundrub* Presence of *kadag* Ground of Being.

On the accord of Chögyal Namkhi Norbu (1999), in Dzogchen the primordial state of Absolute or *Ultimate Bodhicitta* is the 'Supreme Source' of all manifestations of both subtle (*tukje*), and compassion (*nyingje*) energy forms. It transcends yet embraces causal 'renunciation' emptiness practice of the sutras, and 'transformation' practice of the tantras. It is uncontrived, natural, spontaneous 'self liberation'—pure nondual Being Itself, beyond thinking, concept, or belief about it. That state of pure perfect Presence of the Ground of Being that is Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen is the 'path of self-liberation'. Pure Presence does not try to fix, renounce, transform or purify Freud's "normal neurosis" of our narcissistic self-ego-I. Whatever affliction arises in awareness—fear-anger, hatred, grasping desire, greed, pride—is allowed to 'self liberate' (*rang drol*) at the instant of its arising. Nor does Dzogchen require conceptual, historical, or cultural knowledge. Still, *full bodhi* realized *nirmanakaya* emanations utilize dualistic human language and culture to transmit the great nondual teaching. Yes. That original state of *ultimate* Ati Dzogchen is acausal and nondual—quite beyond *relative* 'scientific' conceptual cause and effect.

Again, the quintessential *Three Statements of Garab Dorje* reveal that the state of pure Presence (*rigpa*, *vidya*, *gnosis*) is 1) *The View is the Ground*: recognize your own intrinsic awareness via direct introduction by the Dzogchen master; 2) *The Meditation is the Path*: Choose or 'decide' upon that primordial state, and enter in always beyond any remaining doubt; 3) *The Fruition/Result*: Continue in that lucid compassionate nondual state of Presence throughout all of your physical and mental action/conduct. Continue now with great confidence in liberation.

Thus do these *Three Statements of Garab Dorje* represent Ati Dzogchen View of the Ground, the Path of Meditation, and the Fruition/Result—Action/Conduct which itself manifests as compassionate *Relative Bodhicitta* as it arises spontaneously and effortlessly within its *Ultimate Bodhicitta* Ground. That is realization of 'heaven' of the Ground, in 'earth' of embodied existence. Thus do we bring heaven into earth upon this Path to both relative and ultimate happiness.

Arya Manjushrimitra (7th century) then parsed these great teachings into the three Dzogchen teaching cycles: oral *semde* (mind), symbolic *longde* (space), and master to disciple direct transmission that is *manngag* or *upadesha*. *Semde* explicates mind as nondual Nature of Mind. *Longde* explores Voice/Speech in terms of manifest energy structures. *Manngag* transmits nondual love-wisdom Presence of *semde* and *longde* to body, voice and mind of the prepared disciple. The *semde* lineage teaching, which includes 2nd century CE Nagarjuna, reaches Sri Simha, teacher of the great Tibetan translator Vimalamitra, in the 8th century. That *Kunjed Gyalpo* translation of the *Vima Nyingthig* we receive through Longchenpa's *Longchen Nyingthig*.

Told Nagarjuna upon receiving his realization from the yogini master Dagnyima: "Beginningless dharmakaya, empty of separate parts, is happiness itself." Sri Simha told: "Bodhicitta transcends all concepts; yet it pervades the whole universe." Vimalamitra told: "Bodhicitta cannot be found in meditation. Like space, it is present from the very beginning."

In his monumental *Chöying Dzöd* Auto-commentary Longchenpa reveals twenty-one Dzogchen *semde* tantras. The *Kunjed Gyalpo* is the nineteenth. The 'omniscient one' has composed two commentaries on Garab Dorje's wondrous *Kunjed Gyalpo*: *Kunjed Dudön*, and *Rinchen Druwo*.

Yes. *Kunjed Gyalpo* is formless, timeless, selfless, unborn perfectly subjective Primordial Pure Perfect Presence, *essential rigpa*, acausal nondual Ultimate Truth *dharmakaya* 'groundless' Ground of Being Itself. It utterly transcends, embraces, and pervades the relative spacetime dimension ( $E=mc^2$ ) that is common cause and effect Relative Truth. Such 'self-liberation' abides beyond the 'correcting' and 'seeking' effort of renunciation and transformation mind states and

life stages of sutra and lower tantra. The Supreme Source is as the Buddha told. "Perfect as it is."

*Essence, Nature, Energy.* Kunjed Gyalpo as ultimate *dharmakaya* Samantabhadra/Kuntazangpo "Supreme Source" Ground of Being primordially enfolds, then continuously unfolds for us as the relative "three primordial wisdoms": *Essence, Nature, and Energy* of compassionate liberating clear light *essential rigpa* Ground Awareness—enlightenment, buddhahood itself—quite beyond (*paröl*) our habitual concepts/beliefs about it. These three voices of the singular energy expression of the Ground are inherently indivisible. Let us then quite imperfectly conceptually unpack them. Yes, these three energy manifestations are continuous, natural, dynamical expressions of perfectly subjective primordial awareness Ground of Being itself that have never departed that vast boundless whole (*mahabindu*)—Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen that is always already the 'Supreme Source Identity' of each one of us.

*The Essence.* That is said to be emptiness/*shunyata*, utter absence of intrinsic existence of all arising phenomena. 'Emptiness' is an abstract concept, yet in its auto-noetic nondual essence it is true identity of all physical, mental, and emotional phenomena. Perceiving subjects and their apprehended objects are "absent and empty" of ultimate existence! Shakyamuni Buddha told it well: "Form is empty; emptiness is form." Spacetime stuff is empty of *ultimate* intrinsic existence, yet it manifests ceaselessly in this realm of *relative* existence. Relative and Ultimate. Buddha's Two Truths—nondual *one truth unity*. [Boaz 2025 *The Open Secret of Human Happiness* Ch. I]

*The Nature* is cognizance (*shepa*) and luminous clarity (*salba*), skillful *relative prajna* discernment of the *ultimate* emptiness of form as it arises through our all too real 'karmic vision' as truly existing spacetime stuff— $E=mc^2$  *tsal* energy manifesting as mass times 'c', the speed of light squared—a massive physical quantity! That *prajna/sherab* relative discriminating awareness wisdom arises from ultimate *yeshe/jnana*, primordial essence nature of cognizant clarity (*ösel*).

Seeing through the illusory 'karmic vision' that is sensory and mental phenomena in *quantitative* scientific 'local realist' materialist space and time requires *qualitative* cognizant cognitive clarity. It's good to know that *essential rigpa* Ground, even beyond our sublime *samadhi* experience of it, is the perfect interdependently connected *process (pratitya samutpada)* of nondual vast *kosmos* itself—Pythagorean boundless whole that embraces, subsumes, instantiates and grounds all of this appearing spacetime physical cosmos. That (*tathata, chönyi*, suchness, *quidditas, metanoia*) is *Ultimate Bodhicitta* of primordial awareness Ground of Being—very Nature of Mind.

*The Energy.* Primordial energy (*tukje, gzhi tsal, prakriti*) arising in spacious (*chöying*) nondual compassionate *Ultimate Bodhicitta* Ground manifests as unity of three subtle to gross energy forms: *dang, rolpa*, and *tsal*. That unborn, uncreated primeval energy is the natural dynamical expression in time of timeless, formless Primordial Awareness Ground. The *Relative Bodhicitta* empathy of kindness and compassion is Tibetan *nying je*; Sanskrit *prabhasvara-shakti*.

Ultimate *thugs rje (tukje)* is Longchenpa's "responsiveness"—heart essence of the Great Compassion, *mahakuruna*—compassionate manifestation of the luminous energy of the awakened heart-mind as it spontaneously arises in *nirmanakaya* spacetime form.

In Relative Truth of sutra Mahayana Causal Vehicle *tukje* unfolds *nying je* ethical, altruistic compassionate energy of *Relative Bodhicitta* that 'responds' to the suffering of living beings.

In the Indo-Tibetan tantra Vajrayana Vehicle *tukje* is causal dynamical wisdom energy expression of deity-mantra 'wisdom conduct' of awakened heart-mind realization.

In the acausal nondual Ultimate Truth dimension of Ati Dzogchen *tukje* is, for Longchenpa, the "compassionate energy that is inseparable from ground awareness itself." That is 'primordially pure' basal *kadag* Awareness Ground manifesting itself as active responsive *lhundrub* Spontaneous Presence of that Ground—for both the relative and ultimate benefit of all sentient beings. Self-liberating (*rang drol*) nondual *rigpa* primordial wisdom (*yeshe, jnana*) energy.

And yes, enfolded Dzogchen *rigpa* Presence unfolds in time and space as empty *Essence* (*ndo bo*), luminous clarity *Nature* (*rang zhin*), and active responsive compassionate *Energy* (*tukje*).

*Dang* energy is skylike radiance/luminosity of primordial pure Presence of *dharmakaya* Ground. While *dang* is in its essence formless infinite energy potential, it has the capacity to manifest in any relative modality. Like infinite sky, *dang* is unconditioned energetic nature of the human mind. *Dang* energy is neither internal nor external. Yet it manifests as 'inner' *rolpa* and 'outer' *tsal*. Enfolded energy of vast boundless whole unfolds and expresses through meditation and 'nonmeditation' of the Path. Then, Fruition-Result that is selfless compassionate *bodhicitta* conduct happens—the open secret of human happiness. *Essential rigpa* knowing feeling Presence grounds original *dang* energy arising from its changeless timeless selfless unborn Being Ground.

*Rolpa* energy is rainbow-like *sambhogakaya* formless-form energy expression of our Ground of Being. *Rolpa* is subtle internal energy that manifests as self-display of spiritual vision, of the deities, of *trekchö* clarity, of *tögal* vision, and as well our dream-life formless forms arising within *dang* energy of the Base/Ground. *Rolpa* energy expresses as nonphysical 'formless form'.

*Tsal* energy is mirror-like external dynamical interactive display of *nirmanakaya* energy manifestation, via human cognition, in spacetime dimension of 'relativistic' physical-mental form ( $E=mc^2$ ). The buddhas and mahasiddhas of the three times, past present future, are *nirmanakaya* energy expressions of basal *gzhi tsal*. That unfolds as *Relative Bodhicitta* compassionate conduct arising in nondual *Ultimate Bodhicitta* primordial awareness acting in relative world of quantum space and time. The Buddha's Two Truths. Like the three buddha body *kayas* of Being—the *Trikaya of the Base/Ground*—these three energy expressions (*tukji*) of it are ultimately indivisible and nondual, even as we here artificially reify them to further our dualistic conceptual clarity.

*The Crystal and the Mirror.* The crystal symbolizes pure perceptual transparent lucid clarity (*ösel*) of the limpid stainless nondual primordial awareness Ground of Being—by whatever lustrous denotation. That pure state of energy manifestation is enfolded as liminal *dang* which unfolds and displays color and form in time as subjective inner *rolpa* and objective luminous *tsal*.

Just so, the mirror symbolizes reflective self-reflexive clarity. *Dang* as empty luminous clarity naturally, spontaneously, reflexively mirrors the internal and external energies of *rolpa* and *tsal* with no change in its essence. The unborn uncreated Ground remains changeless and immutable throughout manifest arising and ceasing of its energetic reflections. The primordial Presence of the *ultimate* Ground of Being is mirrored via the energetic potential or capacity of *dang*. Yet the Ground remains changeless through all its *rolpa* and *tsal* relative energy expressions.

*Review of Energy of the Ground.* In Ati Dzogchen View the three energy forms are an *energy potential* of the primordial awareness-consciousness Ground of Being itself. These three forms of energy manifestation of Dzogchen Base/Ground are an indivisible unity of form and emptiness, and of emptiness and clarity. From within that perfectly subjective ultimate nondual Base or 'groundless' Ground these three energy facades manifest objectively through the three buddha

body *kayas* of being—the *Trikaya of the Base*. Just so, *dang* is like the vast empty space of sky. *Rolpa* is a luminous inner vision display of nondual Spirit Ground. *Tsal* is objective dynamical quantum energy 'dance of geometry' interacting in perfect subjectivity of its emptiness Ground.

These three *relative* energy manifestations are in no way separate from that *ultimate* formless, timeless, selfless Ground of Being in whom they arise. They represent merely a conceptual understanding as to how that ultimate *Kunjed Gyalpo* Perfect Pure Primordial Presence continuously manifests, internally and externally, as relative spacetime energy of form—with utterly no essential separation. Our judgments, concepts and beliefs about the ontic, epistemic, and moral qualities of these energy expressions are adventitious, dualistic, and beside the point that is nondual primordial love-wisdom *essential rigpa* (*yeshe, jnana, gnosis*). *Kunjed Gyalpo*, *Samantabhadra*, *Kuntazangpo* is the 'all good basic goodness' of radiant fullness of empty singular, ultimate, perfectly subjective *dharmakaya* Ground of Being, by whatever holy name, in whom our objective world of form arises. Human Happiness Itself. *Mahasukaho!*

That (*tathata, rigpa*) indwelling ultimate love-wisdom (*yeshe, jnana, gnosis*) pure Presence of formless 'groundless' Ground abides above and beyond a perceiving knowing subject and its separate objects of perception—the notorious subject-object split; quite beyond our conceptual distinctions of relative and ultimate; beyond seeking, struggle, hope and fear. How so? In this nondual ultimate state there 'exist' no phenomena of samsara or nirvana! So there is nothing to accept or reject. Nothing to affirm or deny. In this ultimate View of the Ground, "There is not the slightest difference between samsara and nirvana." [Garab Dorje] Buddha told, "Rest your weary mind and let being be as it is; all things are perfect exactly as they are." Nondual wisdom indeed.

All relative appearing spacetime stuff is ultimately that numinous Supreme Source Ground, beyond our concepts, sacred names, and beliefs about form and emptiness. "All phenomena are the unborn self-arising primordial awareness pure presence, like all-pervading empty space..." [Longchenpa] So there is no self (*atman*), and no 'noself' (*anatman*); nor anything else to meditate upon. So now there is nothing to fear, nothing to strive for. Beyond attainment or non-attainment, affirmation or negation, that which we so desperately seek is "Already present and accomplished from the very beginning." [Nagarjuna] Effortless nondual *rest* in *dharmakaya* Ground of Being: beyond skillful analysis; beyond our firm beliefs; beyond good and evil; positive and negative, self and other, deity and other objects of meditation; beyond the Three Gates of Body, Voice, Mind, beyond *lungdang* and *rigdang*, beyond even our clarity/bliss *samadhi* experience of that perfect Source Ground. *Parasamgate*. Utterly gone beyond. *Bodhi Svaha!*

*Meditation, Nonmeditation, and Pure Presence of the Ground of Being.* Atiyoga embraces Guru Yoga. Why? Because Guru Yoga is unification with perfect mindstream of the Dzogchen Vajra master who provides the *trekchö* "direct introduction of the state" that is pure perfect primordial intrinsic awareness itself. We approach that State through meditative quiescent 'calm abiding' of the natural unity of mindful shamatha and penetrating insight of vipashyana. Hence, *relative* "meditation" (*gom*) offers a bright continuity of here now present awareness of the 'State of Presence' of that vast *ultimate* Supreme Source Ground of Being itself. Here 'meditation' (*gom*) becomes 'contemplation'—spontaneous instant *essential rigpa* of pure Presence of that Ground. It is in that fluent continuity of noetic nondual *ma gom* nonmeditation state of body mind spirit subject-object unity that we surrender stress and confusion of our being here in relative form. So now we relax into, then *rest* (*rigdang*) in indwelling present awakened Buddha Nature of Mind.



Both wisdom and ignorance share this same *dharmakaya* 'groundless' Ground of ineffable, indescribable Pure Perfect Presence. So what remains for us after this radical reductive *epoche*? Essence-less essence of very subtle *dang* clear light *rigpa* energy of timeless Ground. That I Am!

Told Longchenpa, "The essence of the primordial source is pure nonduality of appearance and emptiness, beyond all concepts and dualistic limits." Primordial freeing nondual enlightenment—'*nonmeditation*' (*ma gom*) beyond meditation goals; beyond seeking and attainment. So *be* consciously present to that always present pure Presence of luminous Ground of Being. In this wakefulness our inexorable human suffering becomes sufferable. *A la la ho!*

Dzogchen Atiyoga nonmeditation—*ma gom*, *trekchö*, *metanoia*—is uncorrected, letting 'being be as it is': not thinking, not trying, not seeking, not doing. Nonmeditation is uncontrived, present, empty, spontaneous continuity-flow of basal nondual 'intrinsic awareness'. Being here now without *trying* to fix samsara. Timeless, formless, selfless *dharmakaya* Ground in whom this all arises. So we relax, then *rest* (*rigdang*) in nondual essential Nature of Mind—Longchenpa's "meditative absorption without support" of deities and shamatha/vipashyana basic 'meditation'.

The *Kunjed Gyalpo* reveals radical truth that in the ultimate view the ten development/completion stages or *bhumis* of the bodhisattva path are a singular *bhumi*! Pure perfect primordial state of Presence as *essential rigpa* knowing is transmitted directly from Dzogchen master. When disciple finally gets it, further 'practice' is a refining, a 'ripening' of *That*.

Moreover, that self-arising, selfless, formless, timeless, immutable primordial awareness wisdom—*rang jung yeshe*—from *Ultimate Bodhicitta*, is already present and awake from before the beginning. While *yeshe* wisdom has many names (*namarupa*), it is not an *object* of knowing. It is not a *thing*. It is all-embracing all-pervading formless *dharmakaya* Ground of everything!

Therefore, *ultimately*, there is no Path to tread. All arising physical, mental, and spiritual phenomenal existence are essence of our *Ultimate Bodhicitta* gift. In this causal spacetime Relative Truth dimension we 'meditate' upon *That*. In perfectly pure realm of acausal nondual Ultimate Truth there is no meditation, no meditator, and no Presence of the Ground. There is always only this ever present Primordial Awareness itself. How does Dzogchen View realize that happiness?

*Ground, Path, Fruition.* Dzogchen is typically presented through three fundamental aspects or voices: Ground, Path, Fruition/Result. The View is the Ground. The Path is the Meditation. The Fruition is liberation from the suffering of desire mind/concept mind, then nondual *buddhic* enlightenment. That nondual *ultimate* Fruition of the Ground is made possible via the dualistic *relative* practice of the Path. The Ground or Base (*gzhi rigpa*) is nondual Primordial Awareness state of pure Presence in the human being. That Presence manifests, as we have seen, through the 'three wisdoms': *Essence, Nature, Energy*. The Essence is emptiness; the Nature is clarity; the Energy naturally and spontaneously manifests as wise compassionate *bodhicitta* action/conduct.

Hence, Buddhist emptiness is not a mere 'non-affirming negative' void. Emptiness is *ultimate* absence of intrinsic existence of form. It is as well *relative* lucid, luminous 'clear light' *ösel* energy of form and formless form. Told Buddha, "Form is empty; emptiness is form." Yes. The 'mode of manifestation' of this relative energy (*tukje*) of form as it arises for us from its ultimate primordial Ground of Being—the 'three wisdoms'—is threefold: *dang* as *rolpa* and *tsal*.

Without the dualistic relative practice of the Path we remain caged in mostly unconscious habitually conceptual 'distraction'. Notwithstanding such natural distractions we are indeed primordially enlightened buddhas, of course. Ati Dzogchen Ground, Path, and Fruition. That

happiness is what the Dzogchen way realizes. Relatively required. Ultimately "already present and accomplished from the very beginning." [Nagarjuna] That state of pure Presence of the Ground is *Kunjed Gyalpo*, our Supreme Source—who we are now; who we shall always be.

Our interminable 'effort' to conceptually fabricate such a Ground of Being is ultimately doomed to fail. How so? While we may wish it were not so, *ultimate* Ground of Being is *ipso facto* beyond grasp of our *relative* semiotic concepts and beliefs about it. Thus is our pragmatic joyful relative practice of mindful shamatha/vipashyana transcended and embraced in trans-conceptual nondual ultimate mystery. Spooky indeed for the yogin of "uncontrived wisdom conduct" whose relentless desire to grasp and understand 'liberation' too often stalls the *process*.

The good news? We are already Presence of That (*tatatha*, *tattva*, suchness, *noumena*, *rigpa*). *Feel* that clarity and joy now. Human Happiness Itself. So simply *be That* here and now—upon each mindful breath. That great truth rides *prana* spirit wind upon the breath throughout our whole body-mind. That is Buddha's "mindfulness of breathing". Thus do we *choose* our reality.

*The Trikaya of the Base/Ground.* As to the Fruition of that Ground, Ati Dzogchen View posits the three *kayas* of being, "three buddha bodies" or dimensions of vast timeless, boundless whole (*mahabindu*) of Reality Being Itself. That singular unity of these inter-dimensional realms of being are known as *dharmakaya*, *sambhogakaya*, and *nirmanakaya*. OM AH HUM respectively. The three *kayas* are indivisible, a prior and always present unity of primordial pure perfect Presence of the mereologically necessary monistic unbounded whole that is nondual Ground of Being itself. That vast Pythagorean *kosmos* whole/ground embraces the entirety of spacetime physical and mental cosmos, and all of the microcosmic and macrocosmic stuff that arises herein.

*A Note on Ontology.* 'Mereology' is the metaphysical study of the logical and mathematical relationship of parts to their wholes. 'Mereological Priority Monism' (Schaffer 2010) holds that the whole is ontologically prior to and necessarily embraces its parts. Seemingly separate parts are logically and ontologically grounded in a greater more inclusive all-subsuming whole. Writ large that *kosmic* whole is singular ultimate fundamental Ground of the plurality of all physical, mental, and even spiritual phenomenal parts arising and abiding therein. This 'grounding relation' is known as "grounding by subsumption". Facts about small stuff are grounded in more inclusive facts about big stuff—all ultimately embraced in nondual fundamental Ground of Being itself—by whatever grand name. Such a mereological ontology turns the ontic Pluralism of Scientific Realism/Materialism on its micropsychic head. The panpsychic *kosmopsychism* of monistic Dzogchen ontology naturally arises in a Priority Monism metaphysic, as it avoids predicates of existence or nonexistence—ontic extremes of Scientific Local Realism (Scientism, Essentialism, Physicalism), and the nihilism of both Western and Eastern Metaphysical Absolute Idealism. [Boaz 2025 *The Open Secret of Human Happiness*, Third Edition Ch. VI]

Mereological Priority Monism abides historically in very good company indeed. In the West: Jesus the Christ, Plato, Plotinus, Proclus, Spinoza, Hegel. In the East: Gautama Shakyamuni Buddha, Garab Dorje, Nagarjuna, Padmasambhava, Yeshe Tsogyal, Longchenpa, Jigme Lingpa, Adzom Drukpa, Adzom Paylo, Adzom Gyalse and many many more.

*Dzogchen Ontology.* The Trikaya of the Base/Ground is the three buddha bodies of vast boundless *kosmos* whole itself. We have seen that primordial Being Ground has three faces.

*Dharmakaya* (OM) is formless, timeless, selfless, ultimate all-embracing dimension of that *mahabindu* whole. *Rupakaya* is the dimension of form and formless form that includes both *nirnanakaya* and *sambhogakaya*. Ultimate *dharmakaya* is nondual 'essence' whole of that Supreme Source Trikaya of the Base", beyond dualistic limit of any relative concept/belief understanding.

*Sambhogakaya* (AH) is the "enjoyment body", light bridge emanating from all-pervading *dharmakaya* Ground as formless form of the whole Mandala of the deities. The 'pure vision' of the Mandala. That is the realm of Buddhist deities and of Indo-Tibetan tantra. It corresponds to the "nature" or clarity of the pure primordial awareness-consciousness Ground State—*kadag*.

*Nirmanakaya* (HUM) is "manifestation body", emanation dimension of the flow of primal subtle energies from ultimate *dharmakaya* Supreme Source Ground—*Kunjed Gyalpo*—into relative spacetime form ( $E=mc^2$ ). That corresponds to the subtle "energy" of the primordial state. Essence, Nature, Energy—the 'three primordial wisdoms' of nondual ultimate *buddic* enlightenment—always already present pure Presence "from the very beginning", or before. All arising appearing phenomena are thus 'pure vision abode' of the three indestructible states of 'Three Gates' of Vajra Body, Voice and Mind. Luminous numinous Buddha Nature of Mind—Ground of Being itself.

*HUM* is innermost 'supreme identity' of the human being. Thus a '*full bodhi*' realized being—a Buddha or a Christ—is a '*nirmanakaya*', an avataric emanation incarnated into space and time to teach the truth of the matter as a relative conventional 'path' to we human beings shrouded in 'primal ignorance' (*marigpa*, *avidya*, *ajnana*, *hamartia/sin*). Such a one receives that great trans-conceptual truth directly through *sambhogakaya* as that arises and descends from all-subsuming, all-pervading *dharmakaya* Ground—personified in Ati Dzogchen teaching as *Kunjed Gyalpo*—Adi Buddha Samantabhadra. Guru Yoga with the Dzogchen master reveals That.

*Higher Inner and Lower Outer Tantra*. The Six Yogas of Naropa of the Mahamudra of Kagyu lineage, and higher/inner tantras of the 'ancient ones' of Nyingma lineage—*Mahayoga*, *Anuyoga*, and *Atiyoga* Dzogchen—constitute the Indo-Tibetan Vajrayana teaching vehicle of the final Third Turning of the Dharma Wheel of Gautama Shakyamuni Buddha. Both Dzogchen *Atiyoga* and Kagyu Essence Mahamudra transcend the renunciation and transformation practices of the lower or outer tantras via *manngag* 'direct introduction' of nondual state of Presence by the Dzogchen master. Nyingma outer/lower tantras are *Kriya*, *Charya*, and *Yoga Tantra*. Yes, the inner/higher tantras are *Mahayoga*, *Anuyoga*, and *Atiyoga* Dzogchen as it arises in *Kunjed Gyalpo*.

*Kunjed Gyalpo*, the Supreme Source arose as Vimalamitra's early Dzogchen tantra, the *Three Vajra Verses* (*rig pa'i khu byug*). That is transmitted in the great truth of Garab Dorje's 'final testament', *Three Statements That Strike the Essence*. Let us now consider it in greater depth.

*Verse One*: "The View is the Ground. Recognize through direct introduction your own 'self-sprung' intrinsic awareness (*rig pa'i tsal*) State of Presence of it (*rigpa*, *vidya*, gnosis)." That immediate pristine pure present moment now of perfectly subjective, formless, timeless, selfless, nondual basal primordial awareness 'groundless' Ground utterly transcends, yet embraces and subsumes all conceptual activity related to 'the three times'—past, present, future. "The ultimate nature of all arising phenomena is nondual, beyond the limits of the mind." [Longchenpa] From that ultimate View of the Ground arises the Dzogchen *semde* (mind) teaching cycle.

*Verse Two*: "The Path is the Meditation. Choose/decide on the state of presence, beyond doubt." All of this appearing phenomena of Relative Truth *samsara* and of Ultimate Truth *nirvana* are but the play of one's own indwelling always already present intrinsic awareness—'supreme

identity' of the Supreme Source that is formless timeless Ground of Being. One must "decide" upon that nondual state of Primordial Perfect Pure Presence, and realize that nothing else ultimately exists. "There is no concept that defines 'what is', yet vision nevertheless manifests: all is good." From that Path that is the Meditation arises the Dzogchen *longde* (space) teaching cycle.

*Verse Three:* "The Fruit/Result is the Action/Conduct. Continue in the state of presence with confidence in liberation." The Action/Conduct naturally manifests as effortless energy (*nying je*) of our precious *Relative Bodhicitta* activity for the benefit of all living beings as it spontaneously arises in *Ultimate Bodhicitta*, the very Nature of Mind—Ground of Being itself.

The contemplatively untrained human mind is such that gross and subtle (unconscious) thoughts and negative emotions habitually arise within it. By immediately *realizing* their ultimate illusory nature they 'self-liberate' (*rang drol*) at the very instant of their arising, and naturally return to boundless 'infinite expanse' of formless *dharmakaya* Ground of Being in whom they arise. In that lucid spacious Ground emptiness and awareness are always a prior, present nondual *one truth unity*. That self-perfected nondual state of Primordial Pure Presence is joyous Fruit of the Dzogchen View, Meditation, and Action/Conduct. That wondrous Fruition/Result spontaneously arises from the Dzogchen *manngag/upadesha* teaching cycle—Heart Essence (*nyingthig*) direct master to disciple mind to mind 'pith instruction'. It is that relative Path that bears the ultimate Fruit of Shakamuni Buddha's Three Turnings of his Dharma Wheel—Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen teaching on the uncontrived equanimity that is our sublime *essential rigpa* awareness. That always already present lucid Presence of the Ground is our Supreme Identity!

As to this our indwelling "intrinsic awareness state of presence", Jigme Lingpa told,

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 and actualize bodhicitta.

The relative dualities of cause and effect conduct in *samsara* are ultimately nondual, singular *nirvana* one truth unity (*dzog*), "perfect as it is", beyond relative or ultimate cause or condition—Primordial Pure Perfect Presence of *dharmakaya* Supreme Source Ground of Being.

*Longchenpa's Guide to the Kunjed Gyalpo.* The legacy of Longchen Rabjam (1308-1364), great Nyingma school Tibetan Ati Dzogchen scholar-master is the *Longchen Nyingthig* Great Perfection Dzogchen lineage. It embraces Vimalamitra's *Vima Nyingthig*. This prodigious work of Longchenpa is understood as the definitive expression of Dzogchen wisdom for the 8th century Tibetan Nyingma "ancient ones", as well as the modern New Translation *sarma* lineages of 11th through 14th century Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug. So it is no surprise that Longchenpa composed commentaries on the ancient foundational Dzogchen *Kunjed Gyalpo Tantra*.

Kennard Lipman and Merrill Peterson (2010), under the guidance of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, have offered a translation and commentary on Longchenpa's Guide which they have titled *The Jewel Ship: A Guide to Pure Presence of the Creative Energy of the Universe*. Both Longchenpa's commentary and the Lipman-Merrill translation are refreshingly free of tedious scholastic idiom and ideology. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, an early teacher of mine, has been intimately involved in all three of our present references to the sublime *Kunjed Gyalpo Tantra*.

Longchenpa utilized the translation of the *Kunjed Gyalpo* by Sri Simha and Vimalamitra from what was probably an ancient language of Oddiyana (Orgyen). There is no extant evidence

that this ancient text ever existed in Sanskrit or other Central Indian Prakrit language—a bit of a problem for purist Buddhist scholars who insist that Sanskrit is sacrosanct. Thus they reject any text, including Tibetan texts, not originally composed in Sanskrit. Biased scholarly overreach?

Hence, the *Jewel Ship* is Longchenpa's perfect Guide to the *Kunjed Gyalpo Tantra*, direct introduction to the ultimate Nature of Mind—very Ground of Being Itself. That is Dzogchen View, Path, and Fruition/Result of spiritual awakening to that Supreme Source pure Presence of primordial *dharmakaya* Ground. Encounter in this book: "The Spiritual Quest, The Spiritual Advisor, The Student, The Teaching, The Spiritual Heritage, The Meditation, The Result".

*21st Century Dzogchen Master Adzom Gyalse Rinpoche on that Dzogchen View.*

The View is the Nature of Mind. It is the very Ground of Being. Without a clear understanding of the View—the Meditation, Action/Conduct, and the Fruition will be deficient. The correct View opens the way to the Fruition of buddhahood. From the View arises the Path of Meditation, and kind *bodhicitta* Conduct. Dzogchen Atiyoga is the Ultimate View. It abides beyond mere conceptual view. It is the nondual fruitional state of pure Presence itself, the actuality of the buddha reality, beyond mind—very Nature of Mind itself. This View of Dzogchen is transmitted through the *Three Statements of Garab Dorje*.

When we realize that all-inclusive definitive quintessential teaching of Guru Yoga, then the Meditation and the Action follow automatically...Thus the Buddha taught Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen. Through perfection stage Dzogchen Atiyoga we awaken to pure Presence of nondual Primordial Intrinsic Awareness itself. Shamatha calm abiding is the very foundation of advanced Ati Dzogchen teaching. Now we begin to know mind as the primordial Nature of Mind—unborn and unceasing...So View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition are a preexisting present unity. Contrived conceptual mind cannot accomplish that.

So now rest in primordial Presence of the Ground of Being itself. That essential *rigpa* intrinsic awareness is always present here and now within every human being.

—Adzom Gyalse Rinpoche Retreat, 2024. [For complete text translation see Boaz 2025 *The Open Secret of Human Happiness, Third Edition* Ch. II.]

*The Golden Letters: The Three Statements of Garab Dorje* (1996) by John Myrdhin Reynolds, with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche is perhaps the definitive explication in English of the *Kunjed Gyalpo Tantra*. In *Part One* appears "A Short Commentary by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche."

I. As for the direct introduction to one's own nature: This fresh immediate awareness of the present moment, transcending all thoughts related to the three times, is itself that primordial awareness wisdom (*yeshe*) that is self-originated intrinsic Awareness [Rigpa Presence].

II. As for deciding definitively upon this unique state: Whatever phenomena of Samsara and Nirvana may manifest, all of them present the play of the creative energy of one's own immediate intrinsic Awareness Presence (*rig pa'i tsal*).

III. As for continuing with confidence in liberation: Whatever gross or subtle thoughts

may arise, by merely recognizing their nature, they self-liberate [*rang drol*] in the vast expanse of Dharmakaya, where emptiness and awareness are inseparable.

Patrul Rinpoche on Ati Dzogchen Great Perfection View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition from *The Three Essential Statements of Garab Dorje of the Kunjed Gyalpo Tantra*:

These three points are the unerring essentials that alone are sufficient to carry the individual into the state of directly penetrating awareness, which represents the unity of view, meditation, conduct, and fruit of natural Great Perfection...All three essential points represent the practice of the View... This practice, being the summit of the Nine Vehicles to enlightenment [of the Nyingma lineage] is the unerring essential point of the path of the state of primordial purity [*kadag*] which is the natural Great Perfection...And as well, the innate disposition of emptiness, having arisen as the great compassion, becomes a compassion which loves all beings universally and impartially... [That] is 'the meditation which links together wisdom and compassion'...This unification of view, meditation, and conduct is truly the summit of all vehicles.

*Review of the View: Kunjed Gyalpo and the Three Statements of Garab Dorje by Patrul Rinpoche.*

All of the teachings concerning the path of Dzogchen Atiyoga may be subsumed under the three topics of the Base, the Path, and the Fruit... The texts that teach matters relating to these three topics are generally known as the Three Series of Dzogchen teachings [*semde, longde, manngag*].

We have seen that it was the great disciple of Garab Dorje, Arya Manjushrimitra who gathered together and redacted this lovely whole of the primordial wisdom teaching into the present Dzogchen three teaching cycles: *semde, longde, and manngag/upadesha*. That "Final Testament of Garab Dorje", expressed in the *Three Vajra Verses*, are the 'three essential points' of primordial Base/Ground of Being; the Path/Meditation; and the Fruition that is enlightened buddhahood. These *Three Vajra Verses* of Vimalamitra arise in the 'root tantra' of Dzogchen *semde* series *Kunjed Gyalpo: The Wise All-Creating King*. On the accord of Namkhi Norbu Rinpoche, "The *Three Vajra Verses* embodies the life essence of all the Dzogchen teachings and it further represents ultimate realization of the essential points of Dzogchen Dharma."

*Who Am I?* The Dzogchen masters of the three times have told it well. *Kunjed Gyalpo*, infinite boundless expanse (*longchen*) of our formless, timeless, selfless, nondual Primordial Awareness Wisdom Ground continuum is who we actually are now—our Supreme Identity. Pure Perfect Presence (*vidya/rigpa/christos*) of *That*, abiding always at the spiritual Heart (*hridayam, nyingpo, kokoro*). *That* (*tathata, suchness, chönyi, rigpa, metanoia*) sublime Presence is our Supreme Identity, Great Perfection, Great Completion, always present Buddha Nature of Mind—deep heart-seed of relative and ultimate happiness that is both origin and aim of our all too human fruitless happiness seeking strategies. Indwelling already present radiant 'Primordial Pure Perfect Presence' of *That*. That is the manifest *Essence, Nature, and Energy* of we fortunate human beings abiding upon this little blue planet here among the ancient stars.

Gautama Shakyamuni Buddha, Jesus the Christ, and the masters, mahasiddhas, sages and saints of the three times—past, present, future—have told it well: *Tat Tvam Asi!* That I Am!

May all living beings incarnate as human beings who then realize that always present, 'already accomplished' innermost secret love and wisdom harmless happiness—this very moment now. By this profound merit may all living beings abide in happiness and the causes of happiness; and be free of suffering and the causes of suffering. May we all awaken to our indwelling buddha nature buddha heartmind that is nondual Ground of Being itself, the very Nature of Mind. Great joy! *Mahasukaho!*

## Being Is Love

Before the beginning is vast formless, timeless, selfless primordial awareness-consciousness Ground—the *Great Love* gravity that binds together the worlds. That is all-embracing, all-pervading, nondual perfectly subjective Spirit Itself. That always is, in deep silent night, abiding as timeless, empty 'basic space', very foundation of physical space and time. That Great Love is singular ultimate Source Ground of everything that arises therein.

This perfectly subjective Spirit Ground is its own self-reflexive, self-aware luminosity—*ultimate* timeless Ground of Being that manifests as *relative* spacetime form—objective light-energy-matter-motion ( $E=mc^2$ ). That formless boundless whole naturally evolves in *ultimately* illusory relative time to become Life, Mind, Voice of all living beings.

In due course and by grace some of these fortunate beings evolve to become human beings. Some of these have awakened to their always already present luminous indwelling *Presence* of boundless Great Love and so incarnate into spacetime form as '*full bodhi*'—a living Christ or Buddha being. Thus does vast empty *Logos*, primordial wisdom Gnosis of Light descend from empty 'basic space' to be Spirit fullness in form.

Now that light shines always at the heart of the darkness. Yet in darkness living beings perceive it not. Our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition knows this as 'primal ignorance'.

Yes. From time to time bright primordial Spirit Love manifests itself, awake—utterly beyond our contrived, reifying concepts and beliefs about it—into human form to light our way home. Such a one outshines as timeless perfectly subjective Spirit Itself—becomes way of kind compassionate return to our very 'supreme source'—'groundless' Ground spacious *kosmos* whole in whom this cosmos so naturally arises and plays. *A la la ho!* How wonderful!

As The Great Love spirit light fills the world it manifests as human love. That Way of Love is guided by spontaneous compassionate wisdom—harmless engaged activity for benefit of living beings. That love-wisdom mind is the open secret of our human happiness.

Yes. Spirit being form spontaneously manifests as love. Beings in form have never departed that love. That love is who we are—our 'supreme identity' of spacious Ground of Being itself in whom this all arises. And into love it all returns. Great gravity of Love. That Great Love loves us for as long as we all shall live—through all our many lives.

The perfect words of Jesus the Christ: "Love one another as I have loved you." The perfect words of Gautama the Buddha: "Make of yourselves a light....Wonder of wonders, all beings are Buddha." We need not seek that innate indwelling happiness elsewhere. "It is already present, accomplished from the very beginning". Now present indwelling Presence of Great Love naturally abides deep within each living being—without a single exception. We human beings awaken to that ultimate harmless happiness, in midst of unrelenting adversity, through "mindfulness of breathing"—*prana* spirit breath in this body—guided always by the spiritual master in this wondrous fiery crucible of the spiritual community.

Some sunny day we shall all together awaken, arise and shine as our already present love-wisdom mind. And that fine day is always today. Great Joy! Great Love.

*consummatum est*



## The Open Secret of Human Happiness

Whether or not you have contemplatively discovered—beyond your concepts and beliefs about it—this innate, indwelling, always already present Presence of timeless *primordial intrinsic awareness itself*, let us do so for this brief eternal moment now. Peace and happiness is always present now as a conscious mindful *choice* of your 'placement of attention' upon that selfless bright Presence of the very Ground of Being that rides the *prana/lung* spirit breath in your body.

1) *Give Thanks* for the great blessing of your rare and precious life exactly as it is now—adversity and all. Pray that all living beings experience happiness and the causes of happiness; and that they be free suffering and the causes of suffering. Abide always in thanksgiving.

2) *Placement of Attention*. Expel the stale breath nine times. Place your conscious attention/awareness upon life force *prana/lung* spirit breath in your belly. Breathe normally. *Feel* innermost bright *rigpa* Spirit Presence. That is who you are. Relax brow, jaw, neck, gut, anus.

3) *Mantra*. Now begin your mantra prayer: *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' above your crown chakra at the crown of your head. Feel your crown center open as mantra deity essence enters in from above and pervades your entire body-mind. From life force spirit *prana* breath in your belly *feel* selfless bright purity of your subtle central channel.

4) *Light Up Your Chakras*. From the *hara* or *dō* center in your belly place your attention briefly upon the White *AH* at your *hridayam/nyingpo* heart chakra. Now your throat center (voice, speech, *vishuddha*). Now your 'third eye' *ajna* center, medial prefrontal cortex behind your forehead. Now your crown center. 'Let there be light'. *Rest* here for a few peaceful 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, and our concepts about it. Simply *feel* that quiescent bright Presence now.

*Open your eyes*. Move your awareness to your "great bliss crown wheel". Effortlessly *feel* your crown center open. Now *yidam* deity, your spiritual master, the Buddha, and your own Buddha essence dissolves and enters in your crown chakra, streams 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. The Buddha told, "Earth is my witness." That is your *full body scan*. Rest effortlessly in the *dharmakaya* 'basic space' of that luminous numinous buddha mind Presence of very Ground of Being 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*. Now focus your *prana* spirit breath light energy wherever you feel physical or emotional obstruction to life energy flow: tension, pain, anxiety/anger, grasping desire, pride, grief, drowsiness. *PHAT!* Blockage released! Surrender it all on the out-breath. Relax. Rest in *rigpa* Presence. Enjoy clear blissful peace throughout your whole body and 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. *Be present here now*. You are not here *seeking* peace, clarity, or happy experience. Now you desire nothing at all. For this timeless moment now you have no goal whatsoever. Let your luminous mind *be* exactly as it is, adversity and all. Buddha told so long ago, "Rest your weary mind and let it be as it is; all things are perfect exactly as they are." 'Meditative absorption' in nonmeditation peace. Your own *Essential Rigpa Presence*. Relax. Enjoy.

Now place your deity mantra support in awareness background. Just *be*, without doing, fixing, judging. Thoughts and feelings naturally arise. 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 busy mind to 'self-liberate' of its own accord leaving no trace. *Patience*. It all shall pass. Rest now in "bare awareness in its pristine nakedness...pure expanse of space"—formless, timeless, selfless, suchness—primordial awareness Ground of Being. Be That Now. Happiness Itself. Who am I? That I Am! Let being be.

7) *Return to Your Breath*. Be awareness of quiescent *prana* spirit breath in the belly. Breathe normally. In this quiet space abides peace beyond all understanding. *Feel* living Heart Essence of *AH*. Your essential nature is *nirmanakaya HUM*—'supreme identity' of *dharmakaya OM*. *OM AH HUM*. Again place that 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, numinous clarity of pure awareness itself—Buddha Nature of Mind. Peace and bliss of That (*tathata*, suchness). *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 *certainly* 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 itself is absolute Guru." That knowing-feeling love-wisdom awareness is always present—awareness background or foreground. *Be That Now*. Rest. Enjoy.

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

Engage this essential mindfulness practice from 30 seconds to 30 minutes. Make it your own. Adapt it. That Presence you are now. No need to push the river. Easy. Relax. Rest. Enjoy.

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

This clear, bright, selfless, active 'nonmeditation' we shall further explore in *The Open Secret of Human Happiness 3rd Ed.* (Boaz 2025). The "Brief Course" appears there as *Ch. VIII*.

## Appendix B

### Being Happy Now

For no small matter is at stake here. The question concerns  
the very way that human life is to be lived.

—Plato, *The Republic Book I*

“Come and See.” What is the essential truth of human happiness? It is this: *both happiness and unhappiness arise from your present mindstate*. So now gently place your attention/awareness upon selfless life force *prana* spirit wind that rides the natural breath in the body. “Train your mind!”

Our happiness lies not in the future; nor in the past. Past is gone. Future has not yet arisen. Everything happens only *now*, in this timeless present moment. We cannot *become* happy later. But we can *be* happy now—eternal present moment here and now. *Bright Presence of That!*

Please consider this great primordial wisdom teaching: within vast empty 'basic space' of our incessant stream of thoughts and feelings abides blissful clarity and perfect peace. Upon each breath in this luminous natural space of mind-nature abides authentic happiness. It accumulates with each mindful breath—not toward some grand future happiness mind state, but our happiness here and now. It's always already present within us, this *ultimate* happiness that embraces our *relative* conventional happiness and human flourishing. It's present even in adversity. Remembering this great truth, moment to moment, lies our awakening to Happiness Itself—selfless, harmless happiness that cannot be lost. Intimate peaceful Presence of That! But don't *believe* it. It's utterly beyond belief. Buddha told, “*Ehi Passika*: come and see for yourself”.

Therefore, the essential question of human happiness is this: if happiness is the selfless, present natural state of my mind, how shall "I" 'accomplish' a continuity of such positive mind state moments while simultaneously surrendering the worrisome negative mind states?

Clearly, the “wild horse of the mind”—our self-ego-I—requires a bit of training in order that we may *choose* positive states and surrender negative states. After all, human emotional pathology is pathology of a self. No self, no problem. How then shall we accomplish this selfless cognitive state of pure primordial Presence—Hamlet's “consummation devoutly to be wished”?

We gently train the mind in selfless “noseI” (*anatman*). We learn “calm abiding”—Buddha's “mindfulness of breathing”. For 15,000 years, in both the West and the East, human beings have learned to rest in this already present indwelling bright Presence, our 'essential wakefulness'. All the wisdom masters of the three times—past, present, future—have taught this open secret of selfless human happiness. *Thus is human happiness inherently an awareness management skill set!* To simple to believe—until one practices it. Told Buddha, “Selfless noseI is the true refuge of self.”

Perhaps the most ludicrous fiction of human self-ego-I is belief that the cause of my ever-present dissatisfaction with my arising and appearing realities is always some external person, out-group, or outer condition. Surely the causes of my suffering cannot be *me*! The cause of my adversity must always be outside, in someone or something else; never the result of my own egocentric thought, intention and action (karma). That bad habit is known as 'primal ignorance'.

The 'true demon' of our continuous dissatisfaction with the inevitable adversity of being here in space and time is the demon of ego-created 'failure of recognition' of our indwelling *bodhicitta*—our always enlightened heart-mind love-wisdom mind that is thought,

intention, prayer, and action for benefit of living beings. Understanding this 'primal ignorance' (*avidya*, *marigpa*, *hamartia*-sin) we take full responsibility, each moment, for our present mind state, ego projections and the inexorable "karma"—both good and bad—that it bestows upon us.

We 'accomplish' such an enlightened mind state by: 1) subjective mindful breathing; 2) objective 'healthy skepticism' as to our well defended 'web of belief'; 3) engaged *bodhicitta* action.

We cannot control the past, nor the future, nor the actions of others, nor the near continuous adversity that besets us being here in time. But we *can* control our *reactions and responses* to what happens to us, and within us now. We may, with a bit of mindfulness practice control the reactionary, impulsive 'wild horse of the mind'. We can train our obsessive 'monkey mind' to *choose* selfless, kind, compassionate thought, intention and action for the benefit of beings, which of course benefits ourselves. Thus do we take control of our karma. What we manifest is what we receive. Clearly, such mindfulness has everything to do with our happiness.

Have we not by now, at long last learned that we cannot trust the bogus, reactionary negative thoughts and ego-projections of our frantic mind? Unless it's kind compassionate action for the benefit of beings—*bodhicitta*, the primary cause of human happiness—it's likely just narcissistic ego self-stimulation. So we make ego an ally. Compassion is the antidote to hatred!

All the happiness in this world comes through  
compassionate service for the benefit of others;  
and all the suffering comes from serving oneself.

—Shantideva

Thus do the wise aspire to help human, and other beings. And, wonder of wonders, such conduct makes us happy! We accomplish our own happiness, not so much through acquiring material stuff and relationship benefits for ourselves, but by helping to lessen the suffering of others—family, strangers, animals—and to help to bring others to their own happiness; even those who, in our self-centered judgment, will not help themselves; or may even harm us or others. We all require love. We are already Love. So we learn to give it. We already know this.

It is this altruistic aspiration, then engaged action/conduct that is primary cause of a happy mind state. Mindful *prana* spirit breath makes it present to us right here and now, and motivates such selfless, kind, compassionate feeling, intention, then engaged action. "Mindfulness of breathing is the foundation of peace and all higher knowledge." [Gautama Shakyamuni Buddha]

Even if for the moment you cannot actually help  
a sentient being in an external way, meditate on  
love and compassion until compassion is knit  
inseparably into the very fabric of your mind.

—Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche

Buddha's *Mindfulness Sutra*, the practice of *Full Awareness of Breathing* with his *Four Foundations of Mindfulness*—body, feeling, mind, and phenomena appearing to mind—gives us capacity to "let being be as it is", prior to self. Such self-surrender, relaxing narcissistic self-ego-I, leads us to "complete unsurpassed enlightenment"—liberation from suffering—harmless Happiness Itself. That is "*full bodhi*" realization of our indwelling love-wisdom mind. Begin with simple *placement of your attention* upon mindful breath in the belly. Now do some good!

## Unity of Science and Spirit: Our Noetic Wisdom Imperative

Our titular concern: with the quantum nonlocal collapse of hitherto objective spacetime 'local reality', what remains of this our beautiful world of objectively real stuff? What now is really real? And 'who am I' being here in Albert Einstein's haunting "illusory time"? What hath relativistic quantum physics wrought upon our comfy Local Scientific Realism/Materialism?

Our venerable *quantitative* physics Standard Model of particles and forces with its two incommensurate and incomplete epistemic pillars—Quantum Field Theory and General Relativity Theory—is in process of a profound and quite "spooky" (Einstein's *spukhaft*) *qualitative* 'post-empirical', post-metaphysical Kuhnian human cultural "knowledge paradigm shift".

We have of late learned to understand this inchoate scientific and cultural revolution in our habitual "global web of belief" (Quine 1969) by the lights of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Middle Way *Prasangika*, and acausal, nonlocal, nondual *Atiyoga* Dzogchen ontology, epistemology and psychology. [Boaz 2023 *The Noetic Revolution: Toward an Integral Science of Matter, Mind and Spirit*]

At the end of the 19th century Rudyard Kipling told, "Oh East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." Now on the cusp of our 21st century global Noetic Revolution, the subjective Wisdom of the East has *ever* so gently encountered the objective Science of the West. Yet Western Science and culture still clings to its bygone Local Realism. That is the rub.

Does not this Promethean global drama point to a providential coming to meet of the subjectivity of the wisdom of Pre-modern East and the scientific objectivity of the Modern West through an emerging 21<sup>st</sup> century epistemic colloquy of ancient wisdom of centrist Buddhist Middle Way philosophy with recent nonlocal quantum physics and cosmology? Through that prior unity arises a rapprochement of conceptual causal objective Science and perfectly subjective, all-embracing, acausal, nondual Spirit Ground in whom Science arises and is instantiated. [Boaz 2023 *The Prior Unity of Science and Spirit: Toward a Noetic Quantum Ontology*]

Indeed, is not this natural confluence of our human *noetic cognitive doublet*—objective conceptual and subjective contemplative—Hamlet's very "consummation devoutly to be wished" for conscious human life? This lucent, singular, indwelling wisdom *Presence* that is our 'always already present' prior ontic *one truth unity* (*dzog*) resolves the false dichotomy of naïve pretense to a purely objective Science perforce removed from its subjective primordial awareness Ground. Objective conceptual; subjective contemplative. 'Awareness management' requires skillful use of both of these our innate human cognitive gifts. Now the third factor is the unifying nondual wisdom gnosis clarity that embraces these two voices. *Our myriad human dilemmas are wisely approached through interdependent unity of our indwelling, singular, lucid love-wisdom mind Presence*.

That unified objective/subjective view and praxis—with its emerging Contemplative Neuroscience of Consciousness, and its 'post-empirical', post-formal numinous soteriology—reveals a propitious opening for an Integral Noetic Science that is both origin and aim of our emerging 21st century Noetic Revolution in matter, mind, and spirit. That 'suchness' is present compassionate healing wisdom—noetic Presence of the very Ground of Being itself, by whatever holy name—that abides always already at the human spiritual Heart (*hridayam*, *nyingpo*). That happy awakening is our heart's desire. It's like coming home. Now let it be so.

## The Christian Refuge

We all take refuge in something. Too often this refuge is hedonic and materialistic. The *engaged* Christian spiritual practitioner takes refuge in something far more powerful. There are here *three refuge sources*: 1) Jesus the Christ as Supreme Master who mirrors bright innermost Christ Presence (*christos*) dwelling always at the human spiritual heart; 2) *The Teaching* of the living Jesus contained in the *New Testament* canon, the *Nag Hammadi Library* Christian Gnostic texts, and the *Dead Sea Scrolls*; and 3) *The Church*, the spiritual community that includes *all* Christians, *all* the apostles, the early nondual Gnostic masters, and the holy saints.

These three refuge sources are like three precious gems. Each gem has three levels of meaning or understanding: 1) outer, exoteric, objective meaning (prayer, scripture study, concept-belief); 2) inner, esoteric, subjective meaning (mindfulness meditation, non-petitionary deep contemplative prayer); and 3) ultimate, innermost esoteric or nondual meaning—non-conceptual subject-object, matter-spirit unity. These three dimensions of meaning are in no way separate. Indeed, they are a prior and always present knowing-feeling heart mind unity.

'Taking Refuge in the Three Gems'—body, voice and mind of the Christ—taps our inner peace and fearless wisdom energy that nourishes, holds and protects the engaged practitioner on this joyous, difficult path. 'Taking Refuge' stabilizes our understanding which motivates the courage and commitment to this path that the Master has asked each one of us to engage. That understanding is called the *View*. Penetrating understanding of the View, with engaged practice of the *Path* yields the *Result/Fruition*—great peace of liberation from adventitious ignorance and suffering. That primordial wisdom is ultimate harmless Happiness Itself (*beatitudo, paramananda*), the Great Love that unifies the worlds, naturally expressed as human love—kind, compassionate intention and engaged action/conduct for benefit of human and animal beings. "God is Love."

That awakened happiness lies not in the future. We cannot *become* happy later; we can only *be* happy now. The past is gone, but a present memory. The future has not yet arisen, but a present anticipation. Everything happens in this present moment now. Therefore, our *goal* cannot be some heavenly future happiness state. Our goal is this mindful loving-kindness practice of His Path itself, this present moment here and now. Thus do we "make the goal the path". Thus do we awaken now—breath by mindful breath—to our already present innermost Christ Nature—indwelling luminous Christ Presence (*christos*) that abides within each human form. It arises upon this contemplative mindful breath in the body. Deep contemplative prayer.

So we assiduously *practice* such 'awareness management'—being mindfully present to the Holy Spirit (*pneuma*) breath as it rises and falls in this lovely rare gift of our human body. "Now is the time to enter in to it." "Awaken thou that sleep, and Christ shall shine within thee." "That which you seek is already present..." "The Kingdom of God is within you now."

Our happy, selfless indwelling Christ Nature—luminous *christos*, divine Presence of nondual God the Primordial Father, always present—already knows this great inner truth. So we enter in this wondrous love-wisdom awareness, radiant mindstream of Jesus the Christ with each conscious breath—*beyond belief*. That is after all, who we actually are, our 'supreme identity'—without a single exception. In *That* we take refuge. It's like coming home. Let it be so.

## The Buddhist Refuge

Human beings all take refuge in something. Often such refuge is hedonic and materialistic. The *engaged* Buddhist practitioner takes refuge in something far more powerful. The Buddhist *Three Refuge Sources* are the precious Three Jewels: 1) the living Guru as The Buddha; 2) The Dharma, teaching of the Buddha; 3) The Sangha, relationship crucible of the spiritual community that includes the luminous *rigzin sangha*, the *vidyadhara* lineage of all the buddhas and mahasiddhas of all the Buddhist vehicles of the three times—past, present, future.

These precious Three Jewels have four refuges, each with its own understanding or meaning dimension: 1) an exoteric “outer” refuge (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha); 2) an esoteric “inner” refuge (The Three Roots); 3) a “secret refuge” (*nadi, prana, bindu*); and 4) an “innermost secret” nondual refuge (Essence/OM/*Dharmakaya*, Nature/AH/*Sambhogakaya*, Energy-compassion/HUM/*Nirmanakaya*)—all together *Svabhavakaya*, the *Trikaya of the Base*. These four refuges are in no way separate, but comprise a prior and present blissful knowing/feeling unity.

Taking refuge generates the *la/energy* that nourishes and protects the practitioner on this joyous difficult spirit path. That stabilizes understanding, or *The View*, which then motivates the commitment to *The Path* (The Meditation), resulting in *The Action/Conduct* that bears *The Fruit* of enlightenment, compassionate ultimate harmless Happiness Itself (*mahasuka, paramananda*).

Such clarity, bliss, and happiness lies not in a glorious future mind state. Nor does it exist in the past. Past and future are 'gone beyond'. *Parasamgate*. What remains? *Bodhi Svaha*: present nondual wisdom. So we cannot *become* happy in the future; we can only *be* happy now. Thus do we 'make the goal the path'. Our selfless, indwelling, awake buddha mind already knows this. And *That (tathata)* is who we actually are, our 'supreme identity'—without a single exception.

On the accord of His Holiness Dalai Lama, all states of consciousness—negative or positive—indeed all phenomena are pervaded by luminous clear light love-wisdom of emptiness, 'basic space' *dharmakaya*, innermost “wish fulfilling jewel”, self-reflexive primordial awareness wisdom (gnosis/*jnana/yeshe*) that is 'supreme source' of our 'supreme identity'. In emptiness this all arises, abides, and into emptiness it all returns, with no essential separation. Dynamic intrinsic awareness love-wisdom (*gzhi rigpa*) inner Presence (*vidya*) of that primordial Ground of Being is always present buddha heart-mind—very Buddha Nature of Mind.

The two limbs of the Buddha's teaching [love and wisdom] have this one purpose—to lead us to the nondual primordial wisdom—buddha mind. This love and wisdom participates in and pervades all views and paths for one who is capable of accessing it.

—Adzom Paylo Rinpoche

Let us then remember, moment to moment, the great truth that this always already present indwelling selfless love-wisdom *Presence* is the very heart essence of the Buddhist Refuge, our 'supreme identity' arising upon each mindful breath. Told the Buddha of this present age, "Selfless no-self is the true refuge of self. "Who am I? *Tat Tvam Asi!* That I Am! In that authentic truth we take refuge. It's like coming home. Now that you know, arise and do some good. Mindfulness in action. That is the open secret of our human happiness. Let it be so now.





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