

Shamatha-Vipashyana Meditation
From Jamgon Kongtrul (and Others) to Chogyam Trungpa
A Rime Shedra NYC Course
Tuesdays, January 19 to April 15, 2021, 7-9:15 pm

Class Twelve

1) Syllabus:

a) The Training in Shamatha and Vipashyana Conjoined (cont'd)

- i) The Actual Method of Training
- ii) The Union of Shamatha and Vipashyana
- iii) The Fruition of Shamatha and Vipashyana

b) The Different Categories

- i) Of Shamatha
- ii) Of Vipashyana

2) Readings from Class Eleven

- a) Vipashyana, *Cloudless Sky: The Mahamudra Path Of the Tibetan Kagyu Buddhist School*, Jamgon Kongtrul III, German Trs. by Tina Drasczyk and Alex Drasczyk; English Trs. by Richard Gravel, pp. 54-62, three pages
- b) *The Profound Treasury of the Ocean of Dharma: Volume One, The Path of Individual Liberation:*
 - i) Discovering a World beyond Ego, pp. 134-137, three pages
 - ii) Two Types of Effort, pp. 505-507, two pages
- c) Excerpts from "Beyond Present, Past, and Future Is the Fourth Moment," a lecture in "The Tibetan Buddhist Path" class, first summer session of the Naropa Institute, July 1974. Shambhala Sun, March 2006, four pages

3) Classical Readings:

- a) Supplementary Material, The Stages of Meditation of Shamatha and Vipashyana, Jamgon Kongtrul, *The Treasury of Knowledge*, Translated by Kiki Ekselius and Chryssoula Zerbini, two pages

4) Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche Readings:

- a) *The Profound Treasury of the Ocean of Dharma, Vol. 2, The Bodhisattva Path of Wisdom and Compassion, eight pages:*
 - i) *A taste of Enlightenment*, pp. 6-7
 - ii) Two Aspects of Love: Maitri and Karuna, pp. 15-17
 - iii) Cultivating Wholesomeness, pp. 51-53

- iv) Basic Training, pp. 55-56
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- vi) Shamatha-Vipashyana and the Order of the Paramitas, pp. 239
- vii) The Hinayana Version of Ego Taming, pp. 348
- b) *The Profound Treasury of the Ocean of Dharma, Vol. 3: The Tantric Path of Indestructible Wakefulness, nine pages:*
 - i) Cognition and Deeper Perception, pp. 315-316
 - ii) Shamatha-Vipashyana as Indivisible Emptiness and Luminosity, pp. 291-292
 - iii) Transforming Kleshas through Shamatha-Vipashyana, pp. 331
 - iv) Ngondro and Shamatha-Vipashyana, pp. 356-357; p. 361; p. 365
 - v) Stability, Luminosity and Joy, pp. 400—403
 - vi) The Importance of Shamatha Practice for All Four Yogas, pp. 612-613

The Stages of Meditation of Shamatha and Vipashyana
The Treasury of Knowledge by Jamgon Kongtrul
Chapter Eight: The Progressive Classification of the Training in Superior Samadhi
Part One: The Stages of Meditation of Shamatha and Vipashyana –
The General Basis of All Samadhis
Translated by Kiki Ekselius and Chrissy Zerbini

General Summary of the Categories

Brief Listing of the Categories

The Different Categories of Shamatha

In brief, the meditations on ugliness, love, the cycles of breath, pratyahara, nadis, prana, generating phase, mantra recitation, resting the mind naturally - all are but methods for developing the concentration of shamatha.

In brief, in the common path, one meditates on the nine aspects of ugliness; one trains the mind in love and compassion, and concentrates on the breath by counting its cycles of rising, falling and resting. In the Vajrayana, there are many methods such as the instructions of pratyahara, by which the ordinary connection between the sense faculties and their object is individually cut through and distraction is eliminated; visualization of the nadis as hollow pathways; prana-yoga; concentration on the bliss arising through the melting of bindu; visualization of deities, and mantra recitation. Finally (in the practices of Mahamudra and Maha-ati) one rests the mind in a natural, spacious and uncontrived state. All these are nothing but methods for developing shamatha and must begin with concentration on the object, in accordance with the faculties of each practitioner.

The Different Categories of Vipashyana

Analysis of definiendum, definition and example, and of general and specific character; dependent arising; the five reasons; pointing out the nature of mind by means of scripture, reasoning, spiritual influence and

symbols - all are methods for developing supreme discriminating knowledge in accordance with the faculties of individuals.

When practicing vipashyana, one uses methods such as the analysis of definiendum, definition and supporting example, as in the study of valid cognition; analysis of the general and specific character of phenomena, as in the Abhidharma; investigation of the twelve links of dependent arising in the order of production and in the reverse order; analysis of the cause, the effect, the combination of these and the essential nature of a given phenomenon, as well as interdependence, these being the five great reasons of the Madhyamika tradition by means of which mental fabrications are severed; and various ways of pointing out the nature of mind directly and nakedly, as for example scriptures, reasoning, spiritual influence and symbols. All these are gradual methods for developing supreme discriminating knowledge in accordance with the faculties of individual practitioners. Since one can accomplish the samadhi of shamatha and vipashyana by any of these methods, it is not necessary for a single practitioner to use all of them together.

The Identification of the Essences of Śamatha and Vipāśyanā
From *Moonbeams: An Eloquent Elucidation of the Way*
To Cultivate Mahāmudrā, the Definitive Meaning
By Tashi Namgyal, Trs. Elizabeth Callahan, pp. 30-32

Unraveling the Intent states:

Staying alone in isolation and having correctly settled [their mind] internally, [bodhisattvas] bring to mind those dharma topics upon which they have reflected carefully. They are attentive because their mind continuously engages internally with the mental state that is being brought to mind. The physical and mental suppleness that arises while abiding that way and resting in that repeatedly is called śamatha.

It continues:

Having achieved physical and mental suppleness, they abide there and relinquish mental images. They discern, and have conviction about, the dharma topics being reflected upon as the representations for the sphere of internal samādhi. [50] With regard to those representations for the sphere of samādhi, any differentiation of the meaning of the knowable objects, thorough differentiation, complete discernment, complete analysis, forbearance, interest, differentiation of particulars, view, or thought is called vipāśyanā.

The *Jewel Cloud Sūtra* observes:

Śamatha is the one-pointed mind. Vipāśyanā is discernment of what is true.

The *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras* says:

Know the path of śamatha to be the summary of the names of the dharma.
Know the path of vipāśyanā to be the analysis of their meaning.

It also says:

Because, on the basis of correct stillness, mind rests in mind, and because phenomena are thoroughly differentiated, those are śamatha and vipāśyanā.

In his commentary on that text, Ācārya Vasubandhu remarks:

Because, on the basis of correct samādhi, mind rests in mind and because phenomena are thoroughly differentiated, we should know that those are, respectively, śamatha and vipaśyanā. They are not an absence of samādhi. Those are the characteristics of śamatha and vipaśyanā.

Generally speaking, it is clearly taught that concentrating on any object of meditation and resting the mind one-pointedly without distractions is śamatha. And it is taught that the mind that differentiates and analyzes by discerning the nature of knowable objects is vipaśyanā. Furthermore, everything from the first stages of settling the mind on its object and resetting up through the final stages of creating a single continuum and equipoise is said to be śamatha. Everything from attention and differentiating the characteristics of the nature of knowable objects up through the final stages, the full development of the spontaneous engagement of expertise and prajñā, is said to be vipaśyanā. The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* states:

Focusing the mind with certainty on just an inexpressible entity or an object that is a mere referent brings to mind perceptions that are free from elaborations and mental distractions. With dedication to all objects of meditation, settling the mind on the characteristics of internal samādhi, resetting, and up through the full development of creating a single continuum and the engagement in samādhi are called śamatha.

What is vipaśyanā? The same mental attention cultivated during śamatha that brings to mind the characteristics of those dharma topics being reflected upon, that differentiates, that thoroughly differentiates, that thoroughly differentiates dharma topics, up through that which fully develops expertise and that which engages with prajñā are considered vipaśyanā.

Combined Excerpts on Shamatha and Vipashyana
From *The Profound Treasury of the Ocean of Dharma, Vol. 2: The*
Bodhisattva Path of Wisdom and Compassion
By Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, Edited by Judith Lief

A Taste of Enlightenment, pp. 6-7

With bodhichitta, the heart or chitta comes first, and bodhi comes later: the heart awakens. So we begin by developing a particular kind of heart, one that is not connected with personal longevity, personal entertainment, or egotism. First we develop heart, and then we develop what heart is all about, or enlightened heart. Enlightened heart is expansive and awake. It is not territorial, and it does not demand that we gather our own flock of egotistic companions. When we look into that quality of basic wakefulness beyond our own territoriality, we find ourselves having a taste of enlightenment for the very first time.

In the hinayana, we may have had a glimpse of gentleness, goodness, and precision, but we never had a taste of the mind clicking in and awakening on the spot, as it should. That has not yet happened. But in the mahayana, it is actually happening. That is why it is very important for us to join mindfulness and awareness, or *shamatha* and *vipashyana*.

In *shamatha-vipashyana*, the process of training takes place in your heart. It is not an athletic approach. You are training yourself so that you can be awakened from drowsiness, deep sleep, and the samsaric world. But you are awake already, which is why it is possible to notice that you have fallen asleep—and you can tune yourself in to this awakened state of being by the practice of rousing bodhichitta. Shamatha brings *maitri*, a simple and kind attitude toward yourself, and vipashyana brings *karuna*, a compassionate attitude toward others. So joining shamatha and vipashyana brings about the realization of bodhichitta. When concentration and awareness are working together, for a fraction of a second you may have a taste of what enlightenment might be.

Such a glimpse is highly possible, even by suggestion. You might find yourself with no discursive thoughts. When you discover that your unwholesome discursive thoughts have been pacified and subjugated, there might be a gap. A pure gap of the absolute, ideal state of mind might occur to you. This is not hypothetical, but real. When discursive thoughts are liberated, you may try to cover up that gap, disguising it as absentmindedness. But you may be unable to cover it up, which is lucky, for you are having an actual glimpse of bodhichitta. For everyone, without exception, such a glimpse is always possible. And at some point, you realize that it is more than a glimpse, more

than a possibility. You realize that bodhichitta is not a theory or a metaphysical concept, but a reality. It is more than rain clouds gathering in the sky—it is the actual rain.

Two Aspects of Love: Maitri and Karuna, pp. 15-17

[page 15] The soft heart of mahayana can only develop by paying attention to your existence and your state of being by means of shamatha and vipashyana. Mahayana experience evolves from being in a state of tranquillity as well as by gentleness to yourself and others, and the only way to develop that is by being fully aware and mindful. So the state of compassion and love grows out of awareness. In the Buddhist tradition, we do not usually use the term *love*. Instead, we use the two terms *maitri* and *karuna*.

Maitri / Loving-Kindness

The primary glimpse of experience that is closest to love is maitri, or loving-kindness. In Tibetan it is *champa*. *Cham* means “tender,” or “gentle” and *pa* makes it a noun; so *champa* is “tenderness” or “loving-kindness”; it is being kind and gentle to oneself. Maitri arises as the result of shamatha discipline. When we begin to be very precise with ourselves, we experience wakefulness and gentleness.

At the hinayana level, your attitude toward discipline is very acute and precise, but at the bodhisattva level, you begin to relax. That relaxation is a form of maitri, or loving-kindness. When you are free from ego fixation altogether, you gain some kind of relief. You realize that you don't have to be all that intense and tight. When you let go of ego fixation, you develop freedom and relaxation, and as an automatic response to that freedom and relaxation, you develop gentleness and compassion.

With maitri you are actually trying to confront the ego directly, to insult the ego. That may seem aggressive, but it is always good for you to insult your ego. Maitri is known as the source of all dharmas, because maitri is the basis of losing the ego. By losing the ego, you automatically give birth to kindness toward yourself and gentleness toward others. It is important to understand that by losing the ego you are becoming benevolent. You realize that caring for others is intrinsic. Once you have removed the fixation on “me” and “my-ness,” behind that fixation you discover a general and natural kindness toward others. It is like removing the skin and flesh from the body and discovering the bones and the marrow. With maitri, it is possible for even ordinary people to appreciate enlightenment.

[page 16] Because of maitri, you can begin to awaken your buddha nature. You can awaken your ability to be in love. Everybody is capable of falling in love; everybody is

capable of being kind to others. Everybody who has an ego can reverse their ego fixation and rediscover their buddha nature. You may not achieve complete liberation right away, but you can begin the occasional back-and-forth journey from confusion to freedom. Anybody can make that journey; anybody can have a taste of freedom. That is always possible. If you want it, it can be done. It doesn't mean that you are going to become a living buddha on the spot, but you could still experience a taste of enlightenment. That taste of enlightenment makes you nostalgic; it makes you want to go further and to practice more. The Black Crown Ceremony is an example of such a taste of enlightenment.¹ It gives you a taste of how to be open and to experience oneness. In this ceremony, you are in a gigantic hall with the Karmapa, the head of the Kagyü lineage, and you just dissolve. When you identify with that experience, enlightenment ceases to be a fairy tale, and begins to become real.

Maitri is based on being gentle with yourself, and at the same time respecting yourself. Often people suffer from depression and other psychosomatic problems because they are unable to respect themselves. They kill themselves because they hate themselves. The idea of maitri is to have sympathy and a gentle attitude toward yourself, to feel that your own existence is worthwhile. You are a would-be buddha, and you have the inheritance of buddha nature already, so you don't need to feel poverty-stricken.

With maitri you begin to experience a quality of delight. You feel that you are worthwhile and delightful in spite of your little thingies. You begin to feel that you can stick your neck out. Your attitude toward yourself begins to lift like a cloud, and you feel as if you have been freed [page 17] from twofold ego completely.² You begin to have fewer hang-ups and less aggression. This experience is not earthshaking, it is just a little shift whereby you begin to feel that you are capable and that you have no reason to hide in your depression. At that point, you are ripe and ready to take the bodhisattva vow and formally enter the mahayana path.

Karuna / Compassion

The second aspect of love is karuna, or compassion. In Tibetan it is *nying-je*. *Nying* means "heart," and *je* means "noble"; so *nying-je* means "noble heart." Nying-je is connected with dealing with others. Because we feel gentleness to ourselves, we are able to feel

¹ In the *Black Crown Ceremony*, the Karmapa, as the official head of the Kagyü lineage, holds a black crown on his head. This ceremonial crown is a replica of the one given by the Chinese emperor Yung-lo (1360-1424) to the fifth Karmapa (1384-1415). The original crown was said to have been made from the hairs of *dakinis* (female deities who protect the teachings) after Yung-lo had a vision of the crown on the fifth Karmapa's head. As the Karmapa holds the crown on his head, he slowly recites the mantra of Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion. It is said that during those few minutes, he brings to earth the transcendent form of Avalokiteshvara and radiates the bodhisattva's pure egoless compassion.

² Twofold ego includes both the fixation on self and the fixation on phenomena as solid, independent, and real.

compassionate to others. We begin to experience vipashyana, to be aware of our environment. We see that our friends, relatives, and the people around us are suffering, and they need help. We see that our building is beginning to have cracks in its walls and leaks in its plumbing, and we have to fix it. So we first learn how to love ourselves with the help of shamatha discipline, and from that we begin to develop vipashyana, so that our attention is not stolen by distractions or surprises. Therefore, we begin to develop good compassion.

Traditionally, maitri is connected with the desire to join the path of the bodhisattva, and karuna is connected with actually going along the path. Maitri is the way to overcome aggression; it is the mentality of egolessness. Karuna liberates us from ignorance so that we know how to conduct our affairs, and know how to relate with the world at large. So first we tame ourselves, and after that we develop bodhichitta. But we have a long way to go. Until we have maitri and karuna, loving-kindness and compassion, it is not possible to experience bodhichitta. Therefore, we need to work with shamatha and vipashyana. So hinayana discipline is the preparation for realizing mahayana vision. Without that preparation, we cannot experience what mahayana is all about.

Cultivating Wholesomeness, pp. 51-53

In the Mahayana there is a quality of wholesomeness, which comes from shamatha, vipashyana, and the union of the two. Shamatha leads to freedom from aggression; it brings gentleness, maitri, and kindness to yourself. Vipashyana leads to freedom from ignorance; it brings clarity and intelligence. The combination of the two produces wholesomeness. That is how to develop an enlightened person.

Shamatha-vipashyana practice is utterly important in all three yantras, so you should not drop it. Otherwise, you might find yourself behaving calmly in the hinayana, kindly in the mahayana, and then freaking out in the vajrayana. With mindfulness practice, you do not behave differently in each yana. It is not that you graduate from the first grade and then get into the second grade and the third grade. It is more like making butter out of milk. In the hinayana, when you make butter from milk, you find that you have something called buttermilk left to drink; in the mahayana, you drink the milk; and in the vajrayana, you enjoy the butter itself.

Joining shamatha precision and calmness with vipashyana awareness brings the realization that the world is not attacking you. The world is no longer an obstacle; in fact, the world is actually helpful to you. This is the [page 52] beginning of entering into the mahayana, which brings the possibility of egolessness. Instead of hanging on to yourself, trying to grasp “me” and “my-ness,” you could let go by means of shamatha and vipashyana. You could loosen up a little bit more.

Mindfulness: Freedom from Aggression

When you practice mindfulness at the mahayana level, instead of simply trying to be mindful, you also have to tame your aggression. The more you tame your aggression, the more mindfulness you develop. If you are so energized that you are unable to concentrate or have difficulty paying attention to details, those problems are a result of underlying aggression. Generally speaking, aggression tends to come up in the form of boredom. Because you are bored, you want to find some way of occupying yourself other than what you are doing on the spot, whether it is watching your breath, eating your food, or whatever you are doing.

Aggression is an obstacle to mindfulness. If you are pushed to follow your breath or to watch your thoughts, you are bound to get angry. Such aggression is completely inevitable. Aggression affects your span of attention; it is the reason you cannot sit still for more than a few minutes, why you fidget, why you are irritated, why you have to bring up the pain in your back or your knees. Triggered by aggression, the intelligence of boredom is manifesting itself. Your subconscious gossip tells you, "Don't obey any of those rules. You should be an individual. Do anything you want." That is the voice of aggression, manifesting through impatience and boredom. But with mindfulness practice, you can develop gentleness and nonaggression.

Awareness: Freedom from Ignorance

Vipashyana is trickier than shamatha because in order to pay greater attention to more details, you need to expand yourself further. To be aware of what is around you, you have to become less self-centered. The conventional approach to awareness is based on the idea that if you do your best, you can win a gold medal. But in the mahayana, we don't think of awareness in terms of having a particular purpose. You are simply trying to pay more attention to the environment around you. For example, in oryoki practice, you learn to be fascinated by your napkin, your bowls, [page 53] your spoon, and your chopsticks. Paying more attention to them is better than paying attention to yourself, to good old Joe Schmidt. You do not have to handle two things at once. Hopefully, while you are cleaning your bowl, Joe Schmidt is completely forgotten. While you are eating in that way, there is no ego of self. At least on a simple level, that is one way of realizing egolessness.

If you have awareness in whatever you do, you always have a sense of basic decency. You do not cheat. You do not do things just because they are traditional, and you don't just do something this year simply because you did it last year. You always try to practice your discipline as genuinely and honestly as possible—to the point where the honesty

and genuineness begin to hurt. In fact, such hurting is regarded as good. If you begin to get hurt by being genuine, it is the beginning of warriorship. It is the level at which you are capable of exchanging yourself for others.

Basic Training, pp. 55-56

[page 55] To work for others, you first have to develop composure. If you have no basic stability, when you try to help others, they will not benefit from your help. If you are trying to prevent someone from falling out of a window, you will both go out the window together. To prevent that, you have to stay inside so you can pull them back. In order to do this, training in shamatha and vipashyana is absolutely necessary. With that basic training, you are able to maintain yourself properly. This is why it is so important to develop hinayana self-discipline first, before going on to mahayana vision. You can then learn how the whole thing works, and watch yourself progressing.

Shamatha and vipashyana, or mindfulness and awareness, allow you to be stable and precise. Mindfulness allows you to become stable, to develop tranquility and peace; awareness allows you to be precise, to be able to pay attention to details. Out of that stability and precision, there naturally arises a quality of gentleness and kindness, an attitude that you will never cause harm to others or create the basis of such harm. When you carry that attitude slightly further, you begin to develop the [page 56] mahayana view that not only will you refrain from creating harm for others, but you will actually try to benefit them. You try to create a helpful attitude in yourself, and at the same time perform helpful actions for others. So the ground of mahayana comes from training in shamatha and vipashyana.

Through shamatha and vipashyana, you become like a young thoroughbred horse, somewhat responsive and well trained. You have an understanding of egolessness and the four noble truths, and you have achieved a relatively good state of control over mental distraction. But it is possible that you lack real conviction, so you are unable to fulfill the practice completely. You do need to have mental discipline and control over your mind, but in the mahayana, it is necessary to develop a greater level of commitment. No matter how contemplative the practices of shamatha and vipashyana may be, there is still an element of mechanicalness. Therefore, it is absolutely important to be awakened and to be encouraged to join the mahayana path. Shamatha-vipashyana experience and treading on the mahayana path are complementary to one another and equally important.

As a result of shamatha and vipashyana, you are shijang-ed, or flexible. You can climb rocks, you can swim—you are capable of doing anything. When you are no longer rigid and tough, when you stop trying to hold on to things, when you stop trying to make everything meaningful to you, when you no longer want to do everything in your own original samsaric style—when all that has fallen apart—you become very soft, gentle, and pliable. In fact, you are so soft that you become almost wormlike. Once you are soft, there are many ways to connect with sentient beings, and there are all kinds of sentient beings you could work with. You could work with very tough ones or very mushy ones.

Hinayana discipline, the inspiration of taming the mind, never dries up. It has been around quite a long time, twenty-six hundred years, and it is still going on. You have to work with your own training first. If you want to become a professor, you must first learn to read and write. Even someone like Mozart had to go to school to learn about music in order to wake up his talent. Likewise, although *tülkus*, or "incarnate lamas," may be very highly developed, they still have to go through an extremely [page 57] excruciating, painful training—even more so than other people. That was my personal experience as well.

Sitting practice is important, but attachment to sitting practice can become a danger. There can be too much emphasis on the heroism of sitting practice and on the idea that there is nothing to do but meditate. Basing your life on sitting practice alone may be a true approach, straight from the books and the experience of your teachers. Nevertheless, you cannot just look at practice in that way. There is a greater world than your little meditation world, your little meditation hall, and your little meditation cushion. There are other seats—there are saddles and chairs and green grass you can sit on. Everywhere you sit does not have to be a meditation cushion.

In the hinayana practice of taming the mind, you are working with the various forms of unmindfulness. In the mahayana, since your mind has already been tamed, you can work on training the mind. Having domesticated your mind, you can make further use of it. It is like capturing a wild cow and domesticating it to the point that the cow becomes completely willing to relate with its tamer. In fact, the cow likes being domesticated; it becomes a part of your household. So first you tame the mind by means of shamatha discipline, and then you train the mind by means of mahayana contemplative practices such as *tonglen*, or exchanging oneself for others, as well as by the actual fieldwork of helping others.

The Paramitas and Shamatha-Vipashyana, pp. 230

[page 230] The paramita of patience continues the pattern of alternating shamatha and vipashyana through the paramitas. That is, the first paramita, generosity, is connected with shamatha; the second paramita, discipline, is connected with vipashyana; and with the third paramita, we are back to shamatha. Patience is the way to quell the heat of aggression by following the way of shamatha tranquillity and peacefulness—but it is a highly [page 231] advanced level of shamatha discipline. As we go on to higher and higher levels of paramitas, the standard of shamatha and vipashyana escalates, so the paramita of patience involves a higher level of shamatha than the paramita of generosity.

The sequence of the paramitas is significant. Generosity is the stripping-off process, and discipline is remaining in the loneliness. Having gone through those two processes, we find our situation unbearable, as if we were being beaten by hundreds of people. All kinds of pain come up in our life, not as the result of punishment but as the result of

being generous and disciplined. We actually invite pain by being alone and keeping our discipline. We are like an owl in the daylight, physically and psychically attacked from all directions by visible and invisible forces. The paramita of patience means not getting resentful about that.

Shamatha Vipashyana and the Order of the Paramitas, p. 239

Another way to look at the paramitas is in terms of how a paramita is paired up with either shamatha or vipashyana. In the development of the paramitas, shamatha and vipashyana alternate six times. So it is shamatha (generosity), vipashyana (discipline), shamatha (patience), vipashyana (exertion), shamatha (meditation), and vipashyana (prajna). In this process, the residues of shamatha and vipashyana from the previous paramitas are not rejected, but the underlying, heightened point of each of the previous paramitas continues. At the level of exertion, we have a lot of residues piled up already, but at the same time we are working on a particular, very powerful point.

The Hinayana Version of Ego Taming, p. 348

The hinayana version of taming ego is to cut through sloppiness and wandering mind by the application of shamatha discipline. Shamatha practice undermines the fundamental mechanism of ego, which is that ego has to maintain itself by providing lots of subconscious gossip and discursive thoughts. Beyond that, vipashyana brings awareness of the whole environment into our discipline. That allows us to become less self-centered and more in contact with the world around us, so there is less reference to "me" and "my-ness." Vipashyana allows us to cut through our ego. When we enter the bodhisattva path and begin to practice bodhichitta, our concern is more with warmth and skillfulness, with karuna and upaya. We realize we have nothing in ourselves to hang on to, so we can give away our attachment each time it arises.

The Trajectory of Shamatha-Vipashyana
Combined Excerpts from *The Profound Treasury of the Ocean of Dharma, Vol. 3: The Tantric Path of Indestructible Wakefulness*
By Chögyam Trungpa, Compiled and Edited by Judith L. Lief

Cognition and Deeper Perception
From “The Outer Mandala” Chapter

Cognition, pp. 315

Once we have the sense perceptions, we then make use of cognizing faculties of all kinds. As human beings, we perceive pain, pleasure, and indifferent sensations by using any one of those sense perceptions to cognize or re-cognize. We develop our mode of behavior patterns, including such things as the feeling that we want to cry, we want to complain, we want to absorb, we want to take advantage of things—the simple, ordinary level of experience. We conduct ourselves in that way.

Deeper Perception, pp. 315-316

Then we go beyond that a little bit, if we can. Along with those perceptions that happen to us, and the cognizing faculties that we possess, we cannot reject that there is deeper perception taking place. That deeper perception is full perception; it is the fresh experience of all of those perceptions. We begin to use smelling, seeing, hearing, and every perception not only as one of our sense faculties, but to experience some clarity. Ordinarily, hearing is often conflicting with tasting, smelling is conflicting with feeling, and thinking is conflicting with smelling. But we begin to experience the clarity and precision beyond those senses—beyond smelling, beyond hearing, beyond tasting. We begin to experience a kind of clarity that can govern all of those situations.

Ordinary experiences could be regarded as sometimes having a clouding effect. Hearing too much or tasting too much might have a numbing effect. But here, we are talking about going beyond that. Beyond ordinary perception, there is supersound, supersmell, and superfeeling existing in our state of being. This kind of perception can only be experienced by training ourselves in the depths of the hinayana. It can only be developed through shamatha practice, which clears out that cloudiness and brings about the precision and sharpness of the perceptions of hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, and all the rest.

In shamatha practice, we develop the precision of experiencing our breath going in and out; and in walking meditation, we experience the movement of our heel-sole-toe. That begins to bring out precision that goes beyond the cloudiness of seeing, smelling, and tasting. Meditation practice brings out the supernatural, if I might use that word. By supernatural, I do not mean that you are going to see ghosts or become [page 316] telepathic or anything like that, but simply that your perceptions become super natural. You feel your breath; it is so good. You breathe out and dissolve your breath; it is so sharp and so good. It is so extraordinary that your ordinary techniques become superfluous. Usually we think of how to become smarter than somebody else, but with shamatha, we simply see better, hear better, and smell better.

Through shamatha, the best cognition begins to arise in your system and elevate your sense of existence. This happens purely through the means of being with your body, mind, and breath, through simply surviving on your meditation cushion. This process starts in the hinayana, so even at that point, your path is tantra already. Like tantra, the hinayana is continuity; it is dharana, or binding together. The continuity is already there, and the clarity and precision begin to come out of that continuity.

By experiencing the clarity and the precision of the hinayana, we begin to find ourselves in the realm of utter, complete, and thorough reality. You might ask, "What is reality?" Reality, in this case, means seeing absolutely clearly and thoroughly. You can clearly see how you conduct yourself, how you manifest yourself, how you perceive, how you see, how you hear, how you smell, how you taste, how you feel, how you think, and so on and so on. You might say this is nothing particularly extraordinary; it is how you operate anyway. You might even say that you could get the same result out of any form of training. But that is not quite so. You do not begin to experience the mandala principle automatically, without this kind of training.

Shamatha-Vipashyana as Indivisible Emptiness and Luminosity

From PTOD Vol. 3, pp. 291-292

The experience of the mandala principle is based on having received abhisheka. It is based on realizing the nonduality of shamatha and vipashyana as the body, speech, and mind of the guru, and recognizing that as indivisible vajra nature. So in discussing the mandala principle, it is most important to realize that the discovery of ultimate wisdom derives from the indivisibility of shamatha and vipashyana.

Shamatha-vipashyana is sometimes referred to in vajrayana terms as the indivisibility of emptiness and luminosity. Emptiness is connected with shamatha, for slowly but surely, by means of shamatha practice, we try to eliminate the things that are not necessary to us. Discursive thoughts are not necessary, so we try to avoid them; therefore, we attain emptiness, or vacancy of some kind. Luminosity is connected with vipashyana. It means seeing brightly and clearly. By means of vipashyana, awareness begins to pick up what needs to be done.

Shamatha-vipashyana is also known as the combination of emptiness and skillful means. Emptiness, again, is the shamatha process of eliminating mind's occupations and preconceptions, slowly removing them altogether. "Skillful means" refers to vipashyana awareness, which sees all the possibilities of the environment around oneself. So as you can see, shamatha-vipashyana is a very powerful discipline and a very definite experience.

In the vajrayana, shamatha and vipashyana are indivisible. We are not practicing just one or the other alone, but we are trying to join together emptiness and its brightness, emptiness and its skillfulness. So the Vajrayana practitioner begins to feel that situations are being handled, but without being regarded as a dualistic feat, pleasurable to mind's duplicity and fickleness. Therefore, indivisible shamatha-vipashyana is known as ultimate. It is ultimate because we have practiced it and we have achieved the result: we have achieved freedom from the fickleness and duplicity of mental activities.

In the nondual experience of shamatha-vipashyana, we have achieved the ultimate shunyata or the emptiness possibilities of shamatha, free from all preoccupations; and with the vipashyana aspect, we have achieved brightness and luminosity as well. Because such an achievement has taken place already, on the spot, it is real and definite. Because it is real and definite, it is known as the ultimate wisdom, or *tongyi yeshe*. And because of the achievement of ultimate wisdom, we can experience the results of abhisheka.

Transforming Kleshas through Shamatha-Vipashyana

From PTOD Vol. 3, pp. 331

[page 331] On top of that, it is also very helpful to understand the experiences of vipashyana awareness and shamatha tranquillity. Without that understanding, you will have difficulty in relating with or experiencing the five wisdoms.

All five wisdoms originate from the basic wisdom called dharma, and the definition of dharma is passionlessness. The opposites of dharma are grasping and holding oneself as more important than others. So in this teaching, we are reminded once again that not grasping comes from the hinayana practice of shamatha-vipashyana, and we are reminded that not holding oneself as more important than others comes from the mahayana practice of exchanging self for other. When you are so adaptable that you begin to realize that you could change places with other people, and that pain and pleasure could be exchanged, you will no longer have any difficulty understanding the universality of the five wisdom principles. So in order to understand vajrayana thoroughly and fully, both the hinayana and mahayana are extraordinarily important.

It is necessary to understand that shamatha and vipashyana are also vajrayana techniques. Even at the level of vajrayana, they play a key role. Through shamatha and vipashyana, you can realize the sacredness of the Buddha, the sacredness of the dharma, the sacredness of the sangha, and their indivisibility.

At that point, the kleshas could arise: you breathe that in. Then as you breathe out again, with the beginning of the out-breath, you surrender your holding on. So as the breath goes out, it is actually transforming the kleshas. At the end of the out-breath, the kleshas are being transformed into sacred world.

Ngondro and Shamatha-Vipashyana

From PTOD Vol. 3, pp. 356-357; 361; 365

Prostrations are connected with shamatha practice. Like shamatha, offering prostrations is a repetitious exercise, and you always come back to the same spot. At the same time, you are dealing with any irritations that arise. You have a body and you have to relate with your body, the same as you relate with the breath. In prostration practice, you are trying to burn up the fuel of restlessness. Although prostrations do not exactly develop calmness, they are working toward calmness. So they are correlated with the shamatha discipline of making sure that there is a sense of peace, harmony, and gentleness in us, because there is no arrogance and pride.

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In order to do that, the proper dish-washing process is needed. By reciting the Vajrasattva mantra, you take the attitude 100,000 times that you are basically and intrinsically pure. You do this by identifying yourself with the intrinsic goodness and purity of Vajrasattva himself and the Vajrasattva mantra altogether. You also develop the vipashyana quality of general awareness of the environment. You are completely aware of your blockages and your habitual tendencies and neuroses, and through this practice you look into all that. You realize that even having surrendered your arrogance and pride, you still have more cleaning up to do.

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Mandala offering is definitely a shamatha discipline. You are training your mind not to expect anything in return, but instead you are constantly giving, giving, giving. Therefore, this practice is very much related with the out-breath, much more so than any of the other ngondro disciplines. This emphasis on the out-breath means a lot. In order to breathe out, we naturally have to breathe in, but we do not put any emphasis on the in-breath. Instead, we constantly go out again and again. By doing so, we discover natural dignity and richness. We see that we are intrinsically rich. We have basic richness because we are capable of giving lots of gifts, and we have a lot to give because we have nothing to lose. If we had anything to lose, we would have lost it already in the previous yantras and in the earlier parts of the discipline. So at this point, we have nothing left to lose. And because we have nothing to lose, we have lots to gain.

Stability, Luminosity, and Joy

From PTOD Vol. 3, pp. 400-403

Joining Shamatha and Vipashyana

[page 400] Throughout the path, shamatha discipline produces one kind of experience, and the vipashyana experience furthers that particular situation. For instance, the shamatha aspect of mandala offering brings about the vipashyana aspect of guru yoga. So all along the way, you alternate shamatha and vipashyana, the development of steadiness and awareness.

Steadiness is the way to be on the spot thoroughly and fully, as much as possible. It is developed by means of vajrayana techniques, such as mandala-offering practice. So shamatha is the skillful means, the discipline; and that type of discipline tends to bring about the vipashyana aspect of vajrayana practice. It brings greater awareness, devotion, and longing for the teacher. Through vipashyana, you unify your emotions with your appreciation of the teacher.

That union, or bringing together of the teacher and yourself, makes it possible for you to work together. It is the experience of tokpa gak, the cessation [page 401] or stopping of thoughts. By stopping thoughts, we are not talking about becoming zombies. You have to be quite careful about that. We cut conceptualization, but the natural, functioning mind and general awareness still goes on continuously. In fact, it is cultivated further by the vipashyana experience. Later on, it becomes the upaya of the vajrayana disciplines as well. So that particular aspect of mind could be sharpened. There is never a need for conceptual thinking. Nobody needs it. It is absolutely unnecessary because it produces pain and the unnecessary fortification of ego. That is what conceptual mind is for: to build your ego fortification. It is for “me,” for “I.” It is about how to be “I,” how to build “myself” up—and that is not necessary. There could be a world without “I.”

Stability and Luminosity

The abhisheka experience is a combination of shamatha and vipashyana put together completely. At the point when you receive abhisheka, you do not have any separation of those two at all. When you begin to share your reality with the vajra master, when you begin to enter into the vajra master’s world, your experience becomes very dynamic, direct, and basic. You have the solidness and stability of shamatha, and at the same time you are not completely solidified in hanging on to your ego. Therefore, an expansion of vision takes place on the level of *prabhasvara*, or luminosity. That luminous quality goes

along with your vipashyana practice. So things become bright and luminous, and at the same time they are very steady, direct, and simple.

These abhisheka principles are very much connected with transforming your ordinary mind and your ordinary concepts into another form of ordinary concept. When you see, hear, or think about things, your first glimpse might be extraordinary; you might hear something extraordinary or you might think something extraordinary. But when you go beyond that, when you do a double take, you begin to realize that things are not so extraordinary after all. That comes as a kind of relief. It is not a relief because there have been any misunderstandings or problems, but rather because a fundamental relaxation or fundamental freedom takes place. Finally, you can relax.

However, when you receive abhisheka, it is not so much that you are relaxing, but that your mind is relaxing with the mind of the vajra master and the mind of the lineage altogether. Your mind is relaxed with the [page 402] minds of Tilopa, Naropa, Marpa, Milarepa, and all the rest of the lineage teachers, including the Buddha and Vajradhara as well. There is a sense that the ordinary hang-ups of the phenomenal world, which are heavy and painful, begin to dissolve. They are no longer dragging you down, and because there is no fixation or feeling of being imprisoned, you are uplifted. You are not completely blissed-out, but you feel somewhat lighter. Your dirt and your obscurations have been removed.

At this point, you begin to realize that the inanimate and animate worlds could be seen as the living mandala principle on the spot. In other words, that situation is no longer mythical; it has become very real and very direct. Abhisheka is the first entrance into the world of the yidams and the world of the guru's mind altogether. It is the point at which we have finally joined the shamatha and vipashyana principles together. That is the way we are able to receive abhisheka fully and thoroughly.

Luminosity is vipashyana, and steadiness is shamatha. This combination of shamatha and vipashyana shows up in Tibetan terms such as *nangtong*, or "appearance-emptiness," in which the *tong*, or emptiness part, is shamatha, and the *nang*, or appearance part, is vipashyana. It shows up in the term *traktong*, or "sound-emptiness," in which the *trak*, or sound part, is vipashyana, and the *tong* part is shamatha. Shamatha is an expression of emptiness, and vipashyana is an expression of luminosity. Shamatha is overcoming complications, which is a kind of cessation or negation, while vipashyana is something positive and vast. Vipashyana is the absence of fixation; it is that which sees egolessness. It is postmeditative awareness.

In the vajrayana, it is said that skillful means come out of luminosity, which is considered to be synonymous with compassion. So prajna and shunyata develop into compassion and skillful means; that is the combination of shamatha and vipashyana on the highest level. Shamatha and vipashyana produce each other automatically. If you have a feeling of tremendous space, that automatically brings a sense of detail, and the unity of the two is the abhisheka itself. You cannot have Vajradhara without shamatha and vipashyana.

Working with the Trikaya Principle

The combination of shamatha and vipashyana is also connected with the trikaya principle. The practice of shamatha brings the dharmakaya, and the practice of vipashyana brings sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya. [page 403] Broken down that way, the three kayas are sometimes known as the two kayas: the formless kaya and the form kayas.

It is interesting that at the beginning of the path, we think we are working on a very crude level when we do shamatha practice: we just learn how to breathe, how to stop our thoughts, and things like that. It seems to be quite a primitive level, but in fact we are actually working with the dharmakaya, or with potential dharmakaya, which is very advanced. The dharmakaya is a very high level, particularly from the vajrayana point of view. It is jnana-dharmakaya, the wisdom aspect altogether.

So first we have to manifest dharmakaya, and after that there are the postmeditation experiences or awareness practices, the sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya principles. We have to rescue the pure strictness of shamatha by relating with our day-to-day living situation through vipashyana experiences, which are luminous and bright.

The Importance of Shamatha Practice for All Four Yogas

From PTOD-3, pp. 612-613

[page 612] Going back to the original practice of shamatha is important for these four yogas of mahamudra. Even at the level of nonmeditation, you still do not give up the technique and the style of shamatha and vipashyana discipline. You use the same technique, have the same posture, and the same sense of uprightness all the time.

In order to maintain the one-pointedness of the first yoga, it is important to concentrate on mindfulness and awareness. Shamatha is also important for the second yoga, simplicity, since it is still necessary to give up any possibility of having some kind of ground to hang on to. It is important for the third yoga of one taste, for through shamatha practice you begin to realize that you are not using your technique as a saving grace. Therefore, at the level of the fourth yoga, or nonmeditation, you begin to realize that sophistries such as meditating or not meditating are all used up. Because you have overcome the habitual patterns of your original backache and your original grandmother problems and your original “what have yous,” you begin to develop a sense of freedom. From that point of view, shamatha practice is quite practical.

Shamatha is always important. You have to maintain a shamatha-like precision of body and speech. You have to be in that state all the time. In Tibet we used to have calligraphy lessons. First we wrote very slowly, making big letters; then we wrote at a medium pace; and finally we tried to write the cursive letters very fast, using the same format. In that way [page 613] we learned to do excellent calligraphy, and even our cursive handwriting became elegant.

If you had seen the Buddha giving his teachings, you would have seen that he sat upright. Even in vajrayana sadhana practices, we visualize the various deities in precisely prescribed postures, which are the product of shamatha practice. They may be holding symbols and scepters and so on, but they still have their form. It is a mark of ultimate training, a mark of being noble. Further accomplishment is referred to as the royal attainment. More accomplished people always have a quality of regalness. They eat properly, and they deal with things properly.

Over time, the shamatha technique becomes ingrained. So even when you have attained nonmeditation, you do not just collapse and you do not become an idiot. You always carry your dignity. But at this point, you have realized what is known as coemergent wisdom.