

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 Six

1) Topics:

a) Shamatha: The Accomplishment of Shamatha and its Benefits

- i) The Way Shamatha is Accomplished
 - (1) Suppleness; Synchronization of Body and Mind
- ii) The Signs of Correct Mental Engagement
 - (1) The Three Signs of Correct Mental Engagement
- iii) The Necessity of Accomplishing Shamatha

b) Transition from Shamatha to Vipashyana

- i) Processing habitual patterns and the six realms
- ii) From hot boredom to cool boredom
- iii) The refinement of mindfulness and awareness
- iv) Ego and its projections

2) Reading Materials

a) Classical Readings:

- i) The Measure of Accomplishment of Shamatha and its Benefits, The Stages of Meditation of Shamatha and Vipashyana, Jamgon Kongtrul, *The Treasury of Knowledge*, Translated by Kiki Ekselius and Chrissy Zerbini, three pages

b) Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche Readings:

- i) Cool Boredom, *Mindfulness in Action*, pp. 32-35, three pages
- ii) Excerpt on Shamatha, from Competing with Our Projections, in *The Lion's Roar: An Introduction to Tantra*, pp. 92-95, three pages
- iii) Trapping the Monkey, *The Teacup and the Skullcup: Chögyam Trungpa on Zen and Tantra*, pp. 71-80, three pages
- iv) Mindfulness and Awareness, *The Myth of Freedom and the Way of Meditation*, pp. 48-51, two pages
- v) Cognition and Deeper Perception, from "The Outer Mandala, in *The Profound Treasury of the Ocean of Dharma, Vol. 3*, two pages
- vi) Transition from Shamatha to Vipashyana, from Continuing Your Confusion, in *The Path Is the Goal: A Basic Handbook of Buddhist Meditation*, pp. 20-25, two pages
- vii) The Portable Stage Set, *The Path Is the Goal: A Basic Handbook of Buddhist Meditation*, pp. 88-103, two pages
- viii) Talk 4: Shamatha and Vipashyana, *The Path of Meditation Seminar*, by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Naropa Institute, June 12 to July 8, 1974, rough transcription, eight pages
- ix) Talk 9. Comparison of Vipashyana with Shamatha, *1973 Seminary Talks: Hinayana-Mahayana*, pp. 107-111, four pages

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

Shamatha: Conclusion

The Measure of Accomplishment of Shamatha and its Benefits

The Way Shamatha is Accomplished and the Signs of Correct Mental Engagement

Shamatha is accomplished when suppleness is brought to perfection. The signs are bliss, clarity and no concepts of designations, as if merged with space.

Even if one has accomplished the fourth mental engagement and the ninth mental abiding, if one has not also attained suppleness of body and mind, it is not perfect shamatha. The *Sutra Unraveling the Thought* says:

“Oh Bhagavan, from the moment a Bodhisattva turns his mind inwardly, focusing on mind, until he attains suppleness of body and mind, what is this mental engagement called? Maitreya, this is not shamatha, but should be known to be the associated mental factor of belief, which is a similitude of shamatha.”

And the *Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras* says:

“From familiarity with shamatha comes non-application; from this comes the attainment of great physical and mental suppleness, which is known as 'having mental engagement'.”

Mental engagement is, in this context, shamatha. In short, shamatha is explained as being suppleness, which is workability of body and mind. Therefore, until that is attained, the samadhi is not actual shamatha, but is included in the levels of the

desire realm and is known as “the one-pointedness of a mind of the desire realm.”

Suppleness is referred to in the *Compendium of Knowledge* as follows:

“What is suppleness? It is that which dispels all hindrances to workability of body and mind, since it breaks the continuity of physical and mental rigidity.”

“Physical and mental rigidity” refers to the inability to use body and mind for whatever virtuous purpose one wishes. The remedy to this is suppleness, where the body and mind, being free from rigidity, are completely workable, when employed in virtue.

Furthermore, if one exerts oneself to remove the affliction of obstructing physical rigidity, one becomes free from unworkable states such as heaviness etc. and the body becomes light, as if made of cotton-wool. This is workability of body. Similarly, if one makes effort to remove the affliction of mental rigidity, one becomes free from the inability to take joy in correct meditation and one can concentrate without hindrance, which is workability of mind.

Mental suppleness arises first, and by its power, a particular prana flows throughout the body, causing the overcoming of physical rigidity and the attainment of physical suppleness. This is the explanation given in the Levels of Hearers. This physical suppleness is a particular and extremely pleasant inner physical tactile sensation, but not a mental factor.

As to the manner of development of suppleness, it is explained in the Levels of Hearers as follows: First a subtle experience of suppleness arises, which is difficult to recognize, and then a more obvious one, which is easier to recognize; after this, great bliss and joy pervade both body and mind. At that point, one feels very confident due to this joy and, by continuing to meditate without attachment to it, eventually the ‘shadow-like suppleness’ will arise, by the power of which one attains shamatha.

Having perfected suppleness, the measure of accomplishment of shamatha is that one abides free from laxity and agitation, unhindered by inner or outer distraction, the concentration being naturally stable and clear. The attainment of

this mental engagement results in the attainment of the lesser level of a mind of the form realm, as well as the physical and mental suppleness and the one-pointedness of that same realm; and by means of the path of the truths and their attributes or of the coarse and subtle levels of the concentrations, one is able to purify the afflictions. When resting in equipoise, suppleness of body and mind arises very quickly and the five obstructions such as longing for sense objects, sleep, etc. for the most part do not occur. Upon rising from meditation, one may occasionally experience suppleness of body and mind. This is explained in the Levels of Hearers.

The Signs of Correct Mental Engagement

The signs of correct mental engagement are: the bliss of physical and mental suppleness; extraordinarily clear appearances, such as visibility of subtle particles; and no concepts of the ten designations — the five sense objects such as form etc., the three times, male and female — as if mind had merged with space. Due to this experience, there is no feeling of the body during the absorption phase and mind is merged with space; upon rising from meditation, one feels as if the body had suddenly reappeared.

The Necessity of Accomplishing Shamatha

It is the foundation of all the concentrations taught in the Sutras and Tantras, and it suppresses all suffering and afflictions.

This ultimate shamatha, which is the attainment of suppleness, is the foundation of all the concentrations, whether with or without an object, taught in the Sutras and Tantra, just as a fertile field is the ground for the desired crop. This samadhi has also the power to suppress and pacify all evident suffering and afflictions. Furthermore, the realization of the genuine suchness or selflessness just as it is depends solely on the phase of absorption.

It is said in the *Stages of Meditation I*:

“A mind not resting in equipoise will not know the genuine, just as it is. The Bhagavan also has said that by resting in equipoise, the genuine will be known just as it is.”

Cool Boredom

From *Mindfulness in Action* by Chögyam Trungpa

Compiled, arranged, and edited by Carolyn Rose Gimian, pp. 32-35

In everyday life, we habitually try to conceal the gaps in our experience of mind and body. These gaps are a bit like an awkward silence around the table at a dinner party. A good host is supposed to keep the conversation going with his or her guests, to put them at ease. You might talk about the weather or the latest books you've read or what you are serving for dinner. We treat ourselves similarly. We occupy ourselves with subconscious chatter because we are uncomfortable with any gaps in our conversation with ourselves.

The purpose of the practice of meditation is to experience the gaps. We do nothing, essentially, and see what that brings—either discomfort or relief, whatever the case may be. The starting point for the practice of meditation is the mindfulness discipline of developing peace. The peace we experience in meditation is simply this state of doing nothing, which is experiencing the absence of speed.

Often, in considering the practice of meditation, the question arises as to what you are meditating *on*. In this approach, [page 33] meditation has no object. You do work with your body, your thoughts, and your breath, but that is different from concentrating wholeheartedly on one thing. Here, you are not meditating upon anything; you are simply being present in a simple way.

The practice works with what is immediately available to you. You have your experience of being alive; you have a mind and you have a body. So you work with those things. You also work with whatever is going through your mind, whatever the content is, whatever the current issues are, whether painful or pleasurable. Whatever you are experiencing, that's where you begin. You also use your breath, which is part of the body and is also affected by mind. Breathing expresses the fact that you are alive. If you're alive, you breathe. The technique is basic and direct: you pay heed to breath. You don't try to use the mindfulness of the breathing to entertain yourself, but you use the mindfulness of breathing to simplify matters.

You develop mindfulness of the rising and falling of the breath. You go along with the process of breathing. In particular, you go along with each exhalation. As the breath goes out, you go out with it. And when the outbreath dissolves, you feel that you are

also dissolving. The inbreath is a gap, a space, and then you breathe out again. So there is a constant sense of going out and slowing down.

At the beginning, the technique may be somewhat fascinating, but it quickly becomes boring. You get tired of sitting and breathing, doing nothing again and again and again—and again. You may feel like an awkward fool. It is so uninteresting. You might resent having gotten yourself into this situation. You might also resent the people who encouraged you to do this. You may feel completely foolish, as if the cosmos were mocking you.

Then, as you relax a little bit, you start to call up past experiences, memories of your life as well as your emotions, your aggression and passion. Now you have a private cinema show, and you can review your autobiography while you sit. Then, [page 34] after a while, you might come back to your breath, thinking that you should try to be a good child and apply the technique.

In meditation we have the opportunity to meet ourselves, to see ourselves clearly for the first time. We have never met ourselves properly or spent this kind of time with ourselves before. Of course, we take time for ourselves; we go off to the country or the ocean for a vacation. But we always find things to do on vacation. We make little handicrafts or we read something. We cook, we talk, we take a walk, or we swim. We never just sit with ourselves. It's a difficult thing to do.

The practice of meditation is not merely hanging out with ourselves, however. We are accomplishing something by being there properly, within the framework of the technique. The technique is simple enough that it doesn't entertain us. In fact, the technique may begin to fall away at some point. As we become more comfortable with ourselves and develop more understanding of ourselves, our application of the technique becomes less heavy-handed. The technique almost seems unnecessary. In the beginning we need the technique, like using a crutch to help us walk when we're injured. Then, once we can walk without it, we don't need the crutch. In meditation it is similar. In the beginning we are very focused on the technique, but eventually we may find that we are just there, simply there.

At that point, we may think that the efficient system we've organized around our practice is breaking down. It can be disconcerting, but it's also refreshing. We sense that there is more to us than our habitual patterns. We have more in us than our bundles of thoughts, emotions, and upheavals. There's something behind this whole façade. We discover the reservoir of softness within ourselves.

At that point, we begin to truly befriend ourselves, which allows us to see ourselves much more honestly. We can see both aspects, not just the bright side of the picture, how fantastic and good we are, but also how terrible we are. Good and bad somehow [page 35] don't make much difference at this point. It all has one flavor. We see it all.

As your sympathy toward yourself expands, you begin to appreciate and enjoy simply being with yourself, being alone. Or at least you are not as irritated with yourself as you used to be! As you become ever more familiar with yourself, you find that you can actually put up with yourself without complaint—which you have never done before. Your thought patterns, subconscious gossip, and all of your mind's chatter become much less interesting. In fact, you begin to find them all very boring. However, this is slightly different than our normal experience of boredom, because behind the boredom, or even within it, you feel something refreshing: cool boredom. You're bored to death, bored to tears, but it is no longer claustrophobic. The boredom is cooling, refreshing, like the water from a cold mountain stream.

Hot boredom is like being locked in a padded cell. You are bored, miserable, and irritated. You will probably experience lots of that in your meditation practice. Beyond that, however, with cool boredom, you don't feel imprisoned. Cool boredom is quite spacious, and it creates further softness and sympathy toward ourselves. In that space, we are no longer afraid of allowing ourselves to experience a gap. In other words, we realize that existence does not depend on constantly cranking up our egomaniacal machine. There is another way of existing.

Excerpt on Shamatha
From the chapter “Competing with Our Projections”
From *The Lion's Roar: An Introduction to Tantra*
Chögyam Trungpa; Edited by Sherab Chödzin, pp. 92-95

[page 92] The meditation practice in the hinayana goes right along with what we have been describing philosophically. Meditation practice at this level is establishing a relationship with yourself. That is the aim of meditation. There are various techniques for doing that. It is not a question of achieving a state of trance or mental peace or of manufacturing a higher goal and a higher state of consciousness at all. It is simply that we have not acknowledged ourselves before. We have been too busy. So finally we stop our physical activities and spend time—at least twenty minutes or forty-five minutes or an hour—with ourselves.

The technique uses something that happens in our basic being. We just choose something very simple. Traditionally, this is either the physical movement of walking or sitting or breathing. Breathing seems to have the closest link with our body and also with the flux of emotions and mental activities. Breathing is used as the basic crutch. This is the hinayana way of relating with oneself to begin with.

When we talk about making a relationship with ourselves, that sounds quite simple. But in fact it is very difficult. The reason we are unable to relate with ourselves is that there is fundamental neurosis that prevents us from acknowledging our existence—or our nonexistence, rather. We are afraid of ourselves. However confident or clever or self-contained we may be, still there is some kind of fear, paranoia, behind the whole thing.

Neurosis in this case is inability to face the simple truth. Rather than do that, we introduce all kinds of highfalutin ideas—[page 93] cunning, clever, depressing. We just purely bring in as much stuff as we like. And that stuff that we bring in has neurotic qualities. What “neurotic” finally comes down to here is taking the false as true. The illogical approach is regarded as the logical one. So just relating with ourselves in meditation practice exposes all this hidden neurosis.

That may sound fantastic. We might think there has to be some secret teaching, some semimagical method—that we can't expose ourselves just by doing something simple like breathing or just sitting and doing nothing. But strangely enough, the simpler the techniques, the greater the effects that are produced.

The sitting practice in hinayana is called *shamatha*. This literally means “dwelling on

peace” or “development of peace,” but let us not misunderstand *peace* in this case. It does not refer to tranquility in the sense of a peaceful state. *Peace* here refers to the simplicity or uncomplicatedness of the practice. The meditator just relates with walking or breathing. You just simply be with it, very simply just be with it.

This technique is especially designed to produce exquisite boredom. It is not particularly designed to solve problems as such. It is very boring just to watch one's breathing and sit and do nothing; or walk, not even run, but just walk slowly. We may think we have done that many times already. But usually we don't just breathe and sit and walk. We have so many other things happening at the same time, millions of projects on top of those things. But in this case we relate to the boredom, which is the first message of the nonexistence of ego.

You feel as if you are in exile. You are a great revolutionary leader. You had a lot of power and schemes and so on, but now you are in exile in a foreign country and you're bored. Ego's machinations and administration have no place in boredom, so boredom is the starting point of realization of the egoless state. This is very important.

Then at some point, within the state of boredom, one begins to [page 94] entertain oneself with all kinds of hidden neuroses. That's okay, let them come through, let them come through. Let's not push neurosis away or sit on it. At some point, even those entertainments become absurd—and you are bored again. Then you not only draw out the discursive, conceptual side of hidden neurosis, but you begin to become emotional about the whole thing. You're angry at yourself or at the situation you managed to get yourself into. “What the hell am I doing here? What's the point of sitting here and doing nothing? It feels foolish, embarrassing!” The image of yourself sitting on the floor and just listening to your breathing—that you let yourself be humiliated in this way—is terrible! You are angry at the teacher and the circumstances, and you question the method and the teaching altogether.

Then you try more questions, seeking out another kind of entertainment. This involves believing in mystery. “Maybe there is some kind of mystery behind the whole thing. If I live through this simple task, maybe it will enable me to see a great display of higher spiritual consciousness.” Now you are like a frustrated donkey trying to visualize a carrot. But at some point that becomes boring as well. How many times can you seduce yourself with that? Ten times, twenty times? By the time you have repeated the same thing seventy-five times, the whole thing becomes meaningless, just mental chatter.

All those things that happen in sitting meditation are relating with ourselves, working with ourselves, exposing neuroses of all kinds. After you have been through a certain

amount of that, you master the experience of breathing in spite of those interruptions. You begin to feel that you actually have a real life that you can relate to instead of trying to escape or speed [along without having to connect with it]. You don't have to do all those things. You can be sure of yourself, you can really settle down. You can afford to slow down. At this point you begin to realize the meaning of pain and the meaning of egolessness and to understand the tricks of ignorance that the first skandha has played on you.

[page 95] So shamatha meditation practice is very important. It is the key practice for further development through all the yanas of Buddhism.

Trapping the Monkey

**From *The Teacup and the Skullcup*:
Chögyam Trungpa on Zen and Tantra
Chögyam Trungpa, pp. 71-80**

In discussing Zen and tantra, we should first understand what seems to be their common ground and affinity: the practice of meditation. Zen and tantra can be understood if we understand basic meditation practice and its meanings and applications. Since both Zen and tantra belong to the Buddhist tradition, they both have that process. The Sanskrit word *dhyana*, which is connected with the word “zen” means “concentration,” “stillness of mind,” or “dynamic stillness;” and the Sanskrit word *samadhi* means “absorption,” or “entering further into a wakeful state.” So dhyana comes first and samadhi comes later.

According to Buddhist tradition, when we talk about meditation, we are not referring to meditating upon something or entering into a particular state. Fundamentally, meditation is about training the mind without using any technique. Meditation is a process of training, and that training is the goal as well as the path. Such training is very gradual, very slow, but very definite at the same time. There is a sense of simplicity. One cannot just embark immediately on the practice of Zen, or dhyana practice, but one has to go through the beginning of the beginning, which is called hinayana discipline, or the narrow path. This is very important. So dhyana, or Zen, could be divided into three categories: the beginners level, the intermediate level, and the final level.

At the beginner’s level, there is what is called “training your mind.” The mind is like a crazy monkey, which leaps about and never stays in one place. It is completely restless and constantly paranoid about its surroundings. The training, or the meditation practice, is a way to catch this monkey, to begin with. That is the starting point. Traditionally, this training is called *shamatha* in Sanskrit, or *shi-ne* in Tibetan, which means simply “the development of peace.” When we talk about the development of peace, we are not talking about cultivating a peaceful state, as such, but about simplicity. If we try to rush toward this monkey or to catch it by chasing after it, that exaggerates the monkey’s paranoia so that it is impossible to catch. The only way to catch this mind-monkey is to camouflage a trap with earth that is seemingly still. Then, hopefully, the monkey will step on that ground and become trapped.

Like the trap, the practice of the development of peace is one of imitating stillness. You are pretending to be still, although the mind is, of course, constantly jumping and restless. Nevertheless, that is the basic starting point, in which you use what you have:

your body, speech, and mind. That is, you use the breathing, your eyes, and the movement of your body as a way of camouflaging yourself in the stillness. But that doesn't mean that you have to stop breathing or completely stop moving.

Another form of camouflage is to go along with the rhythm, so that the stillness pretends to be movement at the same time. In this form of camouflaging, your mental attitude goes along with the breathing, and you visually go along with whatever is in front of your eyes. There is also in Zen a tradition of *kinhin*, or walking meditation, which is similar to the breathing practice. The only difference is that instead of a subtle sense of attention and wakefulness, in walking practice, the whole process becomes much more definite. The moment your foot comes down is more the point, and the sensation of your feet as they carry you around: touching the ground, lifting, putting weight on them, and so forth. Such practices at the shamatha level may almost seem to be competing with stillness, in that they use movement, but all of them are based on trying to capture this crazy monkey by setting a trap. Therefore, taking on the physical discipline of being still and the discipline of carrying out a certain schedule every day is necessary.

At the beginner's level, most of the emphasis is put on the sitting practice, on working with the breathing and walking. In everyday life, being awake and paying attention, bare attention, to what you are doing also becomes important. The way to do that is not so much by trying to slow down your physical movement or by deliberately trying to speak more softly, but by a sense of presence. It is by a glimpse of wakefulness, a sense of bare attention without any purpose or object behind it but just taking a look or a glimpse at oneself. In extending your arm, touching your cup, lifting and drinking; talking and experiencing speech, your own speech and other people listening to you; and in physical movement, you are constantly being there with just bare attention. In doing so, you just touch on the verge of that particular activity rather than wholeheartedly plunging yourself into heavy awareness practice. You are just touching the highlights—which acts as a kind of teaser, in that awareness is suggested or implied—rather than constantly plunging in really deeply, which provides further discursive problems—thoughts, rebounds, reactions, and all kinds of things.

So the idea is to touch just the verge of activities, just pinpoint the verge of activities, which tends to bring a very strange form of slowness or stillness, somehow, that is not deliberate. If you are trying to hold onto awareness very hard, then your activities become rigid rather than slow and peaceful. In this case, the practice is just touching the verge of awareness, which brings a sense of slowness and peacefulness.

We are trying to trap this mad monkey. We have no idea what this monkey is or where it is wandering or even who this monkey is; but at this point it seems to be unnecessary

to talk about who or what this monkey is—we are just practicing our entrapment. That seems to be one of the first disciplines of the practice of meditation. It is a very important basic foundation for dhyana practice, or Zen practice, if you would like to call it that.

That seems to be the starting point. Before going on, it would be good to concentrate on trying to understand what we have already discussed and also to have a chance to sit and meditate, so that we have an idea of what we are discussing.

Selected Questions

Student: How long should the beginner practice daily—short or long periods?

Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche: At the beginner's level it has to be a definite amount of time: traditionally, forty minutes...There is really no set pattern, but one should do a sizable amount of sitting practice. And of course, if there is more hesitation, then one has to push further; and if there is too much ambition, then one has to minimize.

S: I don't understand how to identify with the outbreath and why to identify with the outbreath rather than both in- and outbreath.

CTR: This is a particular technique called, "mind mixing with space." In this tradition, inbreathing has the notion of confirming one's existence and outbreathing is an expression of openness. On the outbreath, you have plenty of breath inside your lungs, so you can breathe out. There is a sense of generosity and a sense of not being paranoid or feeling under attack. The outbreath also has a sense of openness, expanding yourself into the atmosphere, into space. It is a gesture of letting go and a very literal attempt to imitate the notion of egolessness. Inbreathing is regarded as just a gap. You breathe in anyway, but your attitude is that it is just a gap, and you go along with the outbreathing. That is what is called the "mixing mind and space" technique...You see, the breathing is a sort of life force that takes place in space, according to this approach. It has nothing to do with anything inside your body, particularly, at all. That is the tradition of mind mixing with space.

Mindfulness and Awareness

From *The Myth of Freedom and the Way of Meditation*

By Chögyam Trungpa, Pages 48-51

Meditation is working with our speed, our restlessness, our constant busyness. Meditation provides space or ground in which restlessness might function, might have room to be restless, might relax by being restless. If we do not interfere with restlessness, then restlessness becomes part of the space. We do not control or attack the desire to catch our next tail.

Meditation practice is not a matter of trying to produce a hypnotic state of mind or create a sense of restfulness. Trying to achieve a restful state of mind reflects a mentality of poverty. Seeking a restful state of mind, one is on guard against restlessness. There is a constant sense of paranoia and limitation. We feel a need to be on guard against the sudden fits of passion or aggression which might take us over, make us lose control. This guarding process limits the scope of the mind by not accepting whatever comes.

Instead, meditation should reflect a mentality of richness in the sense of using everything that occurs in the state of mind. Thus, if we provide enough room for restlessness so that it might function within the space, then the energy ceases to be restless because it can trust itself fundamentally. Meditation is giving a huge, luscious meadow to a restless cow. The cow might be restless for a while in its huge meadow, but at some stage, because there is so much space, the restlessness becomes irrelevant. So the cow eats and eats and eats and relaxes and falls asleep.

Acknowledging restlessness, identifying with it, requires mindfulness, whereas providing a luscious meadow, a big space for the restless cow requires awareness. So mindfulness and awareness always complement each other. Mindfulness is the process of relating with individual situations directly, precisely, definitely. You communicate or connect with problematic situations or irritating situations in a simple way. There is ignorance, there is restlessness, there is passion, there is aggression. They need not be praised or condemned. They are just regarded as fits. They are conditioned situations, but they could be seen accurately and precisely by the unconditioned mindfulness. Mindfulness is like a microscope; it is neither an offensive nor a defensive weapon in relation to the germs we observe through it. The function of the microscope is just to clearly present what is there. Mindfulness need not refer to the past or the future; it is fully in the now. At the same time it is an active mind involved in dualistic perceptions, for it is necessary in the beginning to use that kind of discriminating judgment.

Awareness is seeing the discovery of mindfulness. We do not have to dispose of or keep the contents of mind. The precision of mindfulness could be left as it is because it has its own environment, its own space. We do not have to make decisions to throw it away or keep it as a treasure. Thus awareness is another step toward choicelessness in situations. The Sanskrit word for awareness is *smriti* which means “recognition,” “recollection.” Recollection not in the sense of remembering the past but in the sense of recognizing the product of mindfulness. The mindfulness provides some ground, some room for recognition of aggression, passion and so on.

Mindfulness provides the topic or the terms or the words, and awareness is the grammar which goes around and correctly locates the terms. Having experienced the precision of mindfulness, we might ask the question of ourselves, “What should I do with that? What can I do next?” And awareness reassures us that we do not really have to do anything with it but can leave it in its own natural place. It is like discovering a beautiful flower in the jungle; shall we pick the flower and bring it home or shall we let the flower stay in the jungle? Awareness says leave the flower in the jungle, since it is the natural place for that plant to grow. So awareness is the willingness not to cling to the discoveries of mindfulness, and mindfulness is just precision; things are what they are. Mindfulness is the vanguard of awareness. We flash on a situation and then diffuse that one-pointedness into awareness.

So mindfulness and awareness work together to bring acceptance of living situations as they are. We need not regard life as worth boycotting or indulging in. Life situations are the food of awareness and mindfulness; we cannot meditate without the depressions and excitement that go on in life. We wear out the shoe of samsara by walking on it through the practice of meditation. The combination of mindfulness and awareness maintains the journey, so meditation practice or spiritual development depends upon samsara. From the aerial point of view, we could say that there need not be samsara or nirvana, that making the journey is useless. But since we are on the ground, making the journey is extraordinarily useful.

Cognition and Deeper Perception
From “The Outer Mandala” Chapter
of *The Profound Treasury of the Ocean of Dharma, Vol. 3*
By Chögyam Trungpa, Compiled and Edited by Judith L. Lief

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.

Transition from Shamatha to Vipashyana
An Excerpt from Continuing Your Confusion
The Path Is the Goal: A Basic Handbook of Buddhist Meditation
By Chögyam Trungpa, pp. 20-25

In the case of breathing, there is a particular tradition that has developed from a commentary on the *Samadhiraja-sutra* written by Gampopa. There we find the notion, related to breathing, of mixing mind and space, which is also used in tantric meditative practices. But even at the hinayana level, there is a mixing of mind and space. This has become one of the very important techniques of meditation. Sometimes this particular approach is also referred to as *shi-lhak sung juk*, which is a Tibetan expression meaning “combining shamatha and vipashyana meditation practices.”

Combining shamatha and vipashyana plays an important part in the meditator’s development. Mindfulness becomes awareness. Mindfulness is taking an interest in precision of all kinds, in the simplicity of the breath, of walking, of the sensations of the body, of the experiences of the mind-of the thought process and memories of all kinds. Awareness is acknowledging the totality of the whole thing. In the Buddhist tradition, awareness has been described as the first experience of egolessness. The term for awareness in Tibetan is *lhak-thong*, and there is an expression *lhakthong dagme tokpe sherap*, which means “the knowledge that realizes egolessness through awareness.”

This is the first introduction to the understanding of egolessness. Awareness in this case is totality rather than one-sidedness. A person who has achieved awareness or who is working on the discipline of awareness has no direction, no bias in one direction or another. He is just simply aware, totally and completely. This awareness also includes precision, which is the main quality of awareness in the early stage of the practice of meditation.

Awareness brings egolessness because there is no object of awareness. You are aware of the whole thing completely, of you and other and of the activities of you and other at the same time. So everything is open. There is no particular object of the awareness.

If you’re smart enough, you might ask the question, “Who is being aware of this whole thing?” That’s a very interesting question, the sixty-four-dollar question. And the answer is, nobody is being aware of anything but *itself*. The razor blade cuts itself. The sun shines by itself. Fire burns by itself. Water flows by itself. Nobody watches--and that is the very primitive logic of egolessness.

I'm sure the mahayanists would sneer and think that this is terrible logic, very crude. They probably would not hold high opinions of it. But from the point of view of hinayana, that's extraordinarily fantastic logic. Razor blade cuts itself; fire burns itself; water quenches thirst by itself. This is the egolessness of vipashyana practice.

Traditionally, we have the term *smriti-upasthana* in Sanskrit, or *satipatthana* in Pali, which means resting in one's intelligence. This is the same as awareness. Awareness here does not mean that the person practicing vipashyana meditation gives up his or her shamatha techniques of, say, *anapanasati*--mindfulness of the coming and going of the breath--or of walking in walking meditation practice. The meditator simply relates with that -discipline in a more expansive way. He or she begins to relate with the whole thing. This is done in connection with what is known as the four foundations of mindfulness: mindfulness of body, of mind, of livelihood, and of effort.

If you relate with every move you make in your sitting practice of meditation, if you take note of every detail, every aspect of the movement of your mind, of the relationships in everything that you do, there's no room for anything else at all. Every area is taken over by meditation, by vipashyana practice. So there is no one to practice and nothing to practice. No you actually exists. Even if you think, "I am practicing this particular technique," you really have no one there to relate to, no one to talk to. Even at the moment when you say, "I am practicing," that too is an expression of awareness at the same time, so you have nothing left, nothing whatsoever, even no "I am practicing." You can still say the empty words, but they are like a lion's corpse, as it has been traditionally described. When the lion is dead, the lion's corpse remains lying in the jungle, and the other animals continue to be frightened of the lion. The only ones who can destroy the lion's corpse are the worms who crawl up from underneath and do not see it from the outside. They eat through it, so finally the lion's corpse disintegrates on the ground. So the worms are like the awareness, the [page 24] knowledge that realizes egolessness through awareness--vipashyana.

The Portable Stage Set
The Path Is the Goal: A Basic Handbook of Buddhist Meditation
By Chögyam Trungpa, pp. 88-103

We should probably discuss the various types of backgrounds with the help of which we operate in our lives. These backgrounds are vague, uncertain, dubious for us. I am talking about the kind of background we create in our minds in every situation--when we enter somebody's room, when we sit by ourselves, when we meet someone. This kind of background is partially made up of the sense of basic space that we carry around with us all the time, and it is also colored by our particular mood of the moment. It is a kind of portable stage set that we carry around with us that enables us to operate as individuals. We constantly produce a display, a theatrical scene. For each situation we create the appropriate backdrop and the appropriate lighting. We also have the appropriate actors, mainly ourselves, who appear on the stage. We carry on this kind of play, this theatrical game, all the time, and we are constantly using our antennae, so to speak, to feel out the total effect our stage set is having.

In vipashyana meditation, we deal with this kind of background, our portable theater. Whether we are a big deal or a small deal, there is always some kind of a deal happening. Vipashyana works with that big deal or small deal, that great deal, large deal, littlest, expansive, cunning, or clever deal--whatever setup you have chosen to establish. In practicing vipashyana, instead of keeping very busy setting up your theater, your theatrical stage, your attitude is changed so that there is a sense of questioning how we produce this background, why we do it, whether we have to do it or might not have to do it. This is still on the level of inquiry in some sense, but at the same time it is experiential.

In vipashyana, you as the practitioner experience the game that you are playing in setting up your theater. From that you pick up a new way of dealing with the whole thing without its being a game. This is the sitting practice of meditation. When you sit, you don't sit for the sake of creating a display or a particular effect. It's a very private thing in some sense. In sitting practice, you relate to the radiation you are creating. Before you begin sitting, this radiation was being created purely in order to impress or overpower the audience. In this case, the situation is reversed. You experience your own radiation face to face rather than playing with it in order to impress or overpower your audience. You have no audience when you sit and meditate, or you are your own audience.

Even in this situation, however, it is possible for subtle little tricks to take place. You congratulate yourself for sitting and being such a good boy or good girl, and try to make that into a display. It's very subtle. The games can be peeled away one after the other like the layers of an onion. The games continue to happen, obviously, but somehow you can deal with this.

You have had the basic training of shamatha practice and from there you begin to expand. I would like to stress again that the shamatha experience is extremely important. Without that foundation, the practitioner is not at all in a position to experience vipashyana. But with that foundation, the practitioner can begin to expand the meaning of mindfulness so that it becomes awareness. Mindfulness is being fully there, and awareness is a total sensing. In awareness, all happenings are seen at once. This could also be called panoramic vision.

Panoramic vision, in this case, is having a sense of the entire radiation that we create. We possess a certain mannerism or a certain style that is reflected outward. When you sit, this becomes purely a thought process. You develop a sense of appreciation of things around you, not one by one, but totally. It's like light radiating from a flame or a light bulb that expands outward. However, we find that this radiation has no radiator. If you look into who is doing all these tricks, producing this display, this radiation, there is nobody. Even the *idea* of somebody doesn't exist. There is a pure sense of [page 91] openness, a sense that you can relate with the living world as an open world.

At this point, we are only just introducing the vipashyana experience. Later we will go into it in greater detail. What it is necessary to understand now is that the vipashyana experience does not proceed to the level of a game, but remains purely at the level of experience, the living experience of awareness (as opposed to mindfulness).

Awareness, in this case, is not awareness of self but awareness of the other. The difference between the two is that if you are aware of yourself, it is awareness of yourself being aware of yourself aware of yourself aware of yourself. There is some kind of incest taking place. Whereas, if you are just being aware, that is openness, a welcoming gesture. You include your doings within your realm of awareness, so you don't punish or you don't watch. You don't question, particularly, but you just be. That seems to be the basic approach or the basic policy in insight meditation, vipashyana.

Talk Four: Shamatha and Vipashyana

The Path of Meditation Seminar by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche

Naropa Institute, July 1, 1974

Hopefully, that we have established some basic understanding about practice of meditation on the basis of shamatha level of simplicity and directness. Seem to be necessary to also present the question of vipashyana, which comes after shamatha practice of meditation. According to the tradition, that vipashyana is regarded as further experience of egolessness and developing prajna, which means “transcendent knowledge.” That compared with shamatha, that vipashyana is more concerned with, in dealing with one’s inquisitive mind and taking full advantage of it, and exploring that and developing and so fundamentally or finally that sense of exploration of one’s mind become openness, egoless.

That there is a problem that we have a general concept or idea that one should control oneself constantly until the point that one begin to obey one’s basic given training, and accomplishing training is trying to tighten up unnecessary habits and trying to create a different form of imprisonment. And that has become problem and misunderstood a great deal. So the question here that what we presenting in terms of vipashyana, is sense of freedom, sense of enlightenment, if you like to call it. That sense of freedom is exploring the sense of basic awareness which is basic, fundamental state of our mind of inquisitiveness.

That when we talking about inquisitive mind, we are talking about sense consciousness, which includes the sixth sense, that is, the “sem” that we talked about the other day, the mind. That you’d hear sound, you would smell smell, that you would taste, that you have a feeling, bodily sensations, and you have the sense of being alive. That there is a mental faculty also functions, that those six sense consciousness are need to be used. As so far what we have been discussing in this area, is that those sense perceptions are disregarded, sense consciousness are disregarded. And we haven’t even got that level yet. That we are simply just working on the basic simplicity of keeping our attention with the breath and keeping our experience as simple as possible.

Having developed already some sense of simplicity, and some sense of accuracy in our practice, that thoughts come and go, but however, that they are expression of simplicity. They come and they go, and so what? However, I am sitting here on a meditation cushion and practicing meditation, which is boils down to absolutely doing nothing, and watching your thoughts come and go and then disappear, they come back. And you have your basic breathing is taking place, that sense of precisions as to what’s happening there is completely wakeful, because whenever you are drifted your mind

into thought patterns of the past, present or future, conceptual memories, or whatever, you come back. You come back very simply. Just come back to the breath and very simply to the breath, not analyzing, not visualizing breathing but just simply doing it, precisely, very ordinarily doing it, very consciously, conscientiously in fact doing that. And day to day and repetition after repetition, years and years and weeks and weeks and days and says, hours and hours, that we keep on doing that.

A lot of problems come up which seemingly to be complicated, confused, but however, if you could get back to that particular practice level of simplicity, that complication is dissolved by itself. Because things are so complicated, therefore they take care of themselves. And what you have afterwards is nothing. Very simple situation. That complication took care of themselves being complicated, and there is nothing left behind, anything at all. So things become somewhat encouraging.

But on the other hand, there is possibilities of memories, emotions, aggression, passion, fantasies of all kinds begin to churn up. But even though those are also part of the complications, they take care of themselves. We have nothing to do with them, or we have everything to do with them, whatever. Doesn't matter who is who, what is what, but just simply, simply keep sitting and doing it. That's the shamatha experience of simplicity that is taking place there. It's very honest thing to do. We are not taking advantage of our emotions. We are not dreaming up any new experience or exotic, rich, fantastic dreams, spiritually or otherwise. We are not inventing anything new at all. We are simply just *being* at what we are, what we have. We have our body, we have our breath, we have our mind, and just deal with those three principles. Just very, very simply.

And because of that simplicity, then you begin to find new dimension of experience, what is known as the vipashyana experience, or "lhagthong" in Tibetan, which literally means "development of insight," or, literally speaking, it means "clear seeing, seeing things very clearly, very precisely, extremely clearly and precisely." Lhagthong. "Lhag" means "superior" or "clear" or "exquisite," "thong" means "looking, seeing." So "seeing things exquisitely, very precisely." And a shift between shiné and lhagthong or vipashyana, shamatha, is: in the level of shamatha, that there is very specialized attentions be put on your practice and just breath and breath. Very direct and very simple. Very narrow from that point of view. And in the case of awareness of vipashyana is concerned, it's a slightly extended version of openness. That you begin to find that there is lots of room apart from the object of concentration or breath or your bodily sensations or your whatever you have, that there is lots of more room, great deal of more room that there is, is experiencing the environment, as well as experiencing the object of our attention, namely our technique of breathing.

According to Buddha, that he described the state of lhagthong or vipashyana is state of clear seeing, egoless, because that we don't have to concentrate on our particular thing too heavy-handedly, but we begin to realize the environment around our practice, around our breath. So when you start with your breath, you begin to experience that environment around you is also part of the breathing, part of the whole basic being. You begin to feel the space around you, sense of being-ness is extended at the level that there is also state of awareness that we all have our antenna sharpened constantly. That you begin to feel that if you sit and meditate very honestly, earnestly, you begin to find somebody is watching behind your back, and looking at your neck, and examining you. And you begin to feel that there is heavy, heaviness coming down to you. You begin to feel that your bodily sensations are as if you are wearing heavy coat or turban, and all kinds of tensions happen in the back of your neck and your buttocks, your legs, and your arms feels awkward. And your body becomes more than there is, at some point. But those are the vanguard of that of the vipashyana experience. That there is something is taking place around you apart from the object of concentration, which is breath. There is something more than that is taking place, more than that is happening. Extended version of that is taking place.

And vipashyana is the seed or beginning point of developing meditation-in-action attitude. That you are able to extend your state of awareness to everyday life situation constantly. That being watchful, being aware of whatever you are doing in your life. But we can't just simply practice on the meditation-in-action level immediately, because we begin to find ourselves not practicing meditation, but we begin to find ourselves entertaining ourselves. That there is tension that is taking place. If you wash up dishes, that you begin to feel entertained by it. You have little spots of dirt to relate with, that you have a plate, that you have the soap, you have the faucet, the water tap. There is lot of things happening there, and the whole thing becomes somewhat delightful experience, and entertaining. That is become the problem, so we shouldn't try to practice meditation-in-action in early stages, which people would say, "well, whatever I do is meditation. I feel good about it. I do everything deliberately. I do my gardening, I do my piano, and I do my washing of dishes, I cook for my husband, my wife, whatever. And I take ride in countryside, I read books, and I feel that I am doing everything very consciously, and I feel very good, and I think I'm meditating."

Well, that's very tricky, and there are a lot of deceptions taking place in such kind of naïveté experience, that things hadn't happened in 100% level. Things are happening in a 50 – 50% level, which is not so good. If we are going to tread the path and going to practice meditation properly and thoroughly and fully as the Buddha had experienced it, or given the message to us, we got to do it much better than that, much simpler than that, much more orthodox than that. That room for meditation-in-action is possible *of course*, but we have to prepare the ground for that before we do anything. We have to

first find out what is the span of our awareness, span of our concentration, span of our watchfulness.

That there is a term “mindfulness” applies to shamatha experience, which is being fully there with our techniques and everything, being completely watchful. Then we have the term “awareness” which applies to vipashyana experience, the second stage. If you being too watchful, too mindful, it is possible you will lose your awareness. That is to say that if you are watching your highway more than necessary, you begin to miss the signposts around the highway, because you haven’t been aware of them, aware of that you are driving, but you have been mindful of your driving, watchful of your driving, mindfully driving that you are so much concerned with your driving, and watching the guy in front of you or behind you too much that you lost your exit, because you haven’t been *aware* of it. So that’s the situation relationship, that it is necessary, to *begin* with, to develop that kind of caution and directness of watching the guy in front of us and behind us as we drive on the highway and keep your speed limit or whatever, and watch for cops. [laughter]

But then you need something else than that, that that is just adolescent level of being careful; but you can be much greater being careful is developing *awareness*, aware. In the Tibetan term, there are two words. The first one is called “trenpa,” which literally means “recollection, memory, sharpness,” like our mindfulness, trenpa. And then there’s another word called “sheshin.” “Shenpa” is “knowing.” “Shin” means “as it is.” So “knowing things as they are.” There is some kind of sense of perspectives involved, and so it is necessary to have both trenpa and sheshin working together, and particularly paying more attention to the sheshin experience as you develop later on in your practice of meditation.

But I wouldn’t suggest students to shift their practice of meditation at this point, but I would recommend still that you should stick to the shamatha practice of the concentration practice at the beginning that we have been discussing, and working with the outbreath and so forth. That seem to be necessary. But if you keep doing that, certain period of time, and maybe at some point that you begin to find that you, that’s not the only thing that’s happening to you alone, but you begin to developing some sense of expansion, some sense of greater awareness, greater mindfulness taking place, which is awareness. And that is possible, that should happen, that would happen provided if you keep faithful to this particular technique was presented to us, and what we are doing. So sheshin, or the “knowing as it is,” “knowing things as they are,” which is sharpening our antenna, perceptual, visual, smell, sound, feeling, and everything, sense of expansion is taking place.

Taking a second look at same analogies of driving a motor car on the highway, if we rent a car, at the beginning we are concerned about the accelerations of the car, and how to

work with the little gadgets goes with on the dashboard, and sense of power, and sense of speed at the same time. If you are experienced driver, then you begin to feel you can tune yourself immediately into the size of the car, how big is the car, how small is the car. Your whole awareness becomes car, as if car is your body, if you are good driver. And you don't miscalculate your size of your being there on the highway. Or even for parking, for that matter. And you begin to get instant knowledge of awareness, rather than mindfulness at that level. That you know how to handle your car, how to park your car, how big is your car, how big you are for that matter, at this point. And that is the question of the awareness of vipashyana that we are talking about, is that we should adapt ourselves to that particular situation of sense of perception, sense of radiation, how far our feelings extend, and so that working situation becomes also appropriate and applicable to our every day-to-day running situation.

So the question of vipashyana at this point is sheshin, or the awareness experience. And when you have that sense of awareness experience taking place in you, you begin to find new discovery, which is that it is not new, that exp, that operating, necessarily. That you really don't exist particularly. It is *that* is operating, the relationship, the vibration is operating, rather than *you* are conducting that particular show. And one begins to feel a sense of hollowness inside you. At the same time, sense of being and very careful and sense of, sense of being appropriate and real, at the same time, of course. But nevertheless, there is sense of hollowness, that you feel that you are not operating that, but it is taking happen, it's happening.

That in fact the car is driving you rather than you are driving the car, in some sense. That car goes by itself, and you just put little energy, but it is not up to you particularly. Whereas if you are bad driver, that you begin to feel lots of *you*, because you are taking all kinds of chances and you do all kinds of dangerous things, and there is more a sense of *you* involved. Whereas if you are confident driver, you have a proper relationship with your motor car, that you have a sense of being there, that you just move a little bit and the car just goes. Which is not *your* movement, but it's movement of the car dictates to you. So awareness dictates to you, from that point of view, that awareness becomes part of your basic being, part of your behavior, that you don't have to meditate as such, but meditation is conducting you, rather than you are conducting practice of meditation as such. That there is a sense of delightfulness taking place and a sense of openness taking place. And that level maybe then we could look in terms of meditation-in-action, in terms of lhagthong or vipashyana experience.

In the experience of vipashyana, there is sense of dignity, there is sense of completion, definite completion and definite sense of dignity, sense of knowingness, somewhat familiarity. That as if you've done this in some time ago, many times in your past you've done this, and now you're doing it again. That sense of familiarity begins to arise. And awareness is that not only pointing your attention to a spotlight alone, but space around

that spotlight, maybe it's the darkness that around that spotlight. Or if you are concentrating on piece of stone, piece of pebble, that you not only see the pebble, but you only see the, also you see the environment around the pebble. And sense of expansion, sense of openness begins to take place.

And one of the interesting points about vipashyana experience is that the sense of exertion, sense of discipline is not so much of *your* discipline, but it is self-existing experience. And that seems to be the basic point that we should understand. That certain point that you have to of course hassle yourself and push yourself into situation that you are going to meditate. Those are just common problems we all have, even if we are advanced meditator for that matter. Once we get into the practice, we might find it different but before we begin to push ourselves into the practice, we have all kinds of hesitations as if we are naughty child. That you try to calculate that anything that you could make excuses that why you are not meditating seem to be valid point to us. That I have to make phone call to my friend, or I have this and that to do, do my laundry, or wash up the dishes, or take the meat out of the freezer. Any little point that comes to us, that usually we usually play against ourselves, particularly if person is living individually rather than at community level, that meditation becomes mandatory. That we usually play games to ourselves all those areas which we have to cut through anyway, whether we are practicing the shamatha level practice or vipashyana level practice, whatever we do, doesn't really matter.

But once we begin to get into the practice and begin to break the ice, so to speak, then we begin to feel that there is a definite sense of difference. That we could glide in, into it, we could swim into it. There is a sense of familiarity, maybe sense of slight irritation that you are doing the same thing all over again, and sense of slight being bored, and being lonely that you are doing this thing to yourself rather than you are doing with anybody. Even if you are doing with group of people, it's same thing. That you are doing this practice by yourself, although the others doing same thing, but they are doing their thing, I am doing my thing. So there is sense of loneliness, sense of individuality takes place. But nevertheless, there is general notion of sense of gliding into the practice of meditation of vipashyana type. Whereas at the level of shamatha type, it is actually struggle; training ourselves, we can't glide in ourselves, we have to catch ourselves constantly. And there is lot of struggle, there are lot of personal effort is involved, keep yourself alive, that particular meditation. But in the case of vipashyana level that there is a sense of gliding into it because of your training.

So that seems to be the basic point, that students should know about the vipashyana experience. Before you can access the vipashana experience, by the way, that one should get into the shamatha experience thoroughly and completely and fully and being very faithful to your technique, which is absolutely important. And sense of fearlessness and sense of cutting through your boredom, whatever. And having done that already,

then it is possible to glide into your technique, your experience. At some point, students find things are very easy, very comfortable, that your physical, physiological situation is adapting itself to the sitting practice, that you are used to sit down on the cushion cross-legged and straighten your back and everything is a natural thing, that it comes very naturally to you. And psychologically much simpler, much easier, because you can glide yourself into that situation.

But, however, there is need to keep the basic sense of openness, awareness, the basic sense of what we could almost say cleanliness, the cleanliness, that things done properly and literally, that meditation becomes a real thing. There are no areas left that we are deceiving ourselves no longer. In fact, that sense of wholesomeness and healthiness into the practice which ignites further light into the experience of vipashyana experience. The experience becomes very personal, very real, very healthy, and very direct. And the purpose of this training is being eventually that you are going to become warrior. That warrior should keep his basic being intact, including his alertness; otherwise, that warrior doesn't become warrior.

So therefore, practice of meditation at this level could be regarded as the experience of training your mind, and training your sense of feeling, sense of touch, sense of smell in appropriate level. That no mysterious areas left at all; that every area has been explored and trained and worked on, so that we have different kind of sense of pride, in the positive sense, that no mysterious dark corners left. That there is sense of enormous pride, enormous wholesomeness, completeness, that the universe or spiritual search does not become still mysterious any more. It's, it's very real to us. And one begin to develop also sense of intellect at the same time, that you can cut yourself, or cut others for that matter, and it becomes a very real experience.

I think that's the purpose of vipashyana experience, vipashyana technique, is to bring us, ourselves down and down and down to the ground, much more than those of the concentrated experience of shamatha, which is okay, but still needs more down-to-earth level. That finally we begin to realize that sight, smell, sound and all the other experiences are very direct, very literal, and very simple. And of course maybe it's beautiful, but no longer mysterious as such. And perhaps you would like to ask questions, maybe. That's better than me talking.

Q. Is there any difference in, between the technique of shamatha and vipashyana? Is the technique the same?

CTR. Well, as far as the technique is concerned, it's pretty much the same, but in the vipashyana level, you watch the boundaries more than point of concentration. The boundary of feeling around you. That you are not purely working on your breath, but you are working on the boundary around the breath, that sense of expansion is taking place, the radiation is taking place. That's simply question of

attitude. You see, the point is that there is literal teaching, and as literal, direct, simple teaching begin to develop, then you begin to expand yourself greater and greater, more and more wider level. And one begin to get a sense of you begin to use your intellect subconsciously and imagination at the same time subconsciously as well. So at the time that attainment of enlightenment, that you got everything together. [laughs]

Q. I have two questions. In the practice of moving from shamatha to vipassana, does, does one just move in that or is there, does it, does one need to push in some way? In other words, is there danger of becoming comfortable in the practice?

CTR. Well, I think as we have discussed already, that it is necessary to have someone to check your practice and we make, develop a personal friendship or reference point with somebody is necessary. But at the same time, you could develop your own intelligence for that, is that when you begin to feel that you have to expand yourself, rather than your practice is strictly at the level of being too faithful. And you begin to feel slightly different, that you can expand yourself. And at that level, if you examine yourself, your particular style of experience is concerned, you begin to find yourself actually doing vipashyana experience already, vipashyana technique already. That you transcended the shamatha experience in any case, so one has to take that kind of, it's like growing up, you know. When you grow up, you have this ceremony called "birthday party," which isn't quite really so. You haven't suddenly become a different person by the time when you blow your candles off or when you get your presents. But you have been growing up all the time. So and I think it's forced you to make just to make random and maybe specialized time and moment. That now everything's okay, you have become different because you had bar mitzvah or whatever, you know.

Q. Also, where do these two techniques fit in terms of Hinayana and Mahayana paths?

CTR. The vipashyana experience is still in Hinayana level. And the sense of the inspiration and sense of awareness is preparing yourself to become Bodhisattva in the Mahayana level. That you need more requirements of awareness and egolessness. That's just a first hint. But basically technique is included according to the doctrine, is that you are doing Hinayana practice still, but preparing yourself to become a Bodhisattva.

Talk 9. Comparison of Vipashyana with Shamatha

1973 Seminary Talks: Hinayana-Mahayana

By Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, pp. 107-111

We are going to discuss today the notion of lhagthong, vipashyana practice, in terms of actual meditation practice. But before we get into that, let me further clarify the attitude towards shamatha and vipashyana practice. Shamatha practice could be regarded as a way of quieting, pacifying the mind, and vipashyana could be regarded as a way of sharpening the potentials of psychological development. Shamatha is regarded as a cutting down process, in a way that gives you very little reference point, very little stuff to work on except its own ground. Slowly cutting into what is basically needed in order to quieten one's self. Shamatha is therefore development of peace.

As far as vipashyana is concerned, having already quietened, having already developed some basic work, one would be able to settle into what one has already practiced or created, settle into what one has achieved. Then we could expand from that level, extending ourselves into sharpening awareness rather than cutting down any mental perceptions. So there's an entirely different approach.

So from that point of view, vipashyana is referred to as insight, and also it is the seed of prajna at the same time. The seed of prajna means preparing ourselves, so that we become worthy of listening to the teachings, and can hear them properly. We are able to perceive the subtleties of the teaching and the depth of the teaching. That is precisely the reason why vipashyana becomes an important practice—it is the start of opening the door of wisdom, the gate of wisdom.

As I mentioned yesterday, any contemplative approach toward the teaching is also included into the vipashyana practice. That is to say, pondering on the subject of the Dharma intellectually is also regarded as vipashyana practice. Moreover, there is the meditative practice of vipashyana which is development of awareness.

And that awareness comes from several different conditions, fundamentally being without aggression. The definition of Dharma is absence of aggression. In order to perceive such Dharma, in order to understand, such Dharma, we also have to develop a state of mind without aggression as well. Dharma in this case is any materials involved with our experience which are workable, which could be woven into the pattern of the path.

The absence of aggression in this case means a sense of non-ego, non-speed. You might

find it difficult to understand this tall order because it would be impossible for beginners to develop such perfection. But the idea is that there is a momentary state of mind which occurs, in which there is an element of non-aggression and non-ego. That is to say, when we talked about the eight types of consciousness at the beginning, the eight types, of consciousness, including the five skandhas are all momentary things. We develop our first skandha after the gap, and from there onward up to the fifth skandha, and then it goes back and comes out. So ego is not a constantly smooth running, highly secured situation at all, but there are gaps of all kinds. There is a psychological gap which allows disorder for the ego, or the possibility of reasserting its position at the same time. There is that kind of gap which goes on constantly, a gap of non-ego, and then starting from the first skandha developing up to the fifth skandha and so forth. So ego in this case, the five skandhas, are regarded more as fickleness than continuity.

Because of that, the application of vipashyana is possible, to relate with those momentary open gaps which are unconditioned psychologically, unconditioned by dualism, unconditioned by passion, aggression and so forth. But it's very sudden, it's a fraction of—it could be 100 percent of a moment. It's very fast, but also there is still that possibility in us, 100 percent of gap. The reason we can arouse the potential prajna in us by means of vipashyana is because there are those gaps, the possibility to insert, or to relate with the unconditional mind.

The technique or means of developing vipashyana practice is exactly the same as we discussed the other day—the third foundation of mindfulness, effort, or the sudden glimpse of awareness which brings us back, unconditioned awareness which brings us back to the practice. One of the subtleties of this practice is that one could still apply exactly the same methods of meditation practice that we used in the shamatha practice at the beginning. One can use breathing, but in this case instead of being mindfulness of breathing, it becomes awareness of breathing. Awareness of breathing in this case means that there is a sense of precision, accuracy, and also there is a sense of accommodating in that one doesn't have to nurse the experience of being mindful constantly. In the case of mindfulness, we still tend to trust a great deal in the messenger, so to speak, who brings back the message of what's happening and being mindful on the spot. The messenger also checks the sense of totality, the sense of well-being. The sense of thisness is still happening, rather than the otherness.

[Page 109] That seems to be the difference between shamatha and vipashyana. In the case of shamatha, some kind of importance is still made on thisness, in spite of going out with the outbreath and dissolving oneself into the atmosphere. Still it belongs to this area, rather than the other, or that. In the case of vipashyana, there is less emphasis on this and there is a very subtle and very faint emphasis on some kind of security and letting go, letting be. The other is more important. We can afford to let go more with

the breathing.

Do you remember in the beginning, we discussed that the shamatha practice is purely relating with the verge of breathing, the outline of breathing, a light touch? In vipashyana it's slightly more than that. Not more in the sense of letting go of your breathing, mindfulness of breathing, awareness of breathing, making it much looser and more casual. But in the sense that the attitude to the breathing has the otherness involved. The breathing happens not only in its own accord, but also in the realm of the atmosphere around it. When we talk about the otherness, we are talking about the sense of atmosphere, the sense of totality completely outside of our body, and completely outside of our antennae's radiation.

Q: Does that make the difference between the physical space? Shamatha would be the physical space around you and vipashyana would be the psychological space?

R: Yeah. And it could be very difficult to actually understand exactly what we are getting into. But if a person has a really good understanding of the shamatha practice in its own sense of space, then the vipashyana practice becomes much easier to work with. In some sense the difference between the two practices of meditation is that shamatha is extraordinarily literal. In spite of its visions, its feelings, its sense of inspiration and discipline, it is very literal. Vipashyana or lhagthong practice is somewhat romantic in a way, idealistic. There is room for some kind of ventilation or fresh air. Quite possibly a person of early vipashyana practice who is used to shamatha practice would feel extremely guilty about that, for doing something unkosher. But that is just a kind of hesitation, like when at a public swimming pool you don't want to undress. Although you have swimming suits available and can put one on, still even that's regarded as a big deal.

Actually it's deliberately designed that way. First there is shamatha practice to tighten up the whole thing, make it into a really definite and ordinary thing. Beyond that, you try to let go of any notion of inhibition, product of that practice of meditation, while still retaining the heart of the practice. Which is to say that a sense of precision is still carried over, but a sense of freedom is added onto it. After we have practiced shamatha meditation, [Page 110] from then onward up to Tantric practices, most of the techniques are letting go techniques of all kinds. We think we have been letting go completely, but we find, because of the dogma that we were involved in, that we have been keeping something private, personal. And we find something to let go of constantly, each time, each practice that we are involved with—Shunyata, Mahamudra, or whatever.

In a sense vipashyana practice also brings appreciation of art—art in the sense of how to

handle ourselves in body, speech, mind, communication, anything. There is a sense of being resulting from shamatha practice and there is also the confident sense of how to be as well resulting from vipashyana practice. So the practice of vipashyana is more the study of movements, interactions. Sitting practice, for instance, relates with the breathing. Breathing is felt: you go out with your breath and breathing dissolves; you dissolve. But there is also a sense of some kind of echo. Not exactly a moderator, but a sense of echo. You have developed your mindfulness practice; you breathe out—"I'm breathing out"—being mindful of that. And then at the same time, you are aware of your mindfulness, so there is a kind of delayed action of going out and going out. Dissolve and dissolve. Space, and space. And then going out and going out. There is some kind of shadow created by vipashyana practice, which is almost on the level of verbalization, of feeling that "it's happening, it's happening." It is not a confirmation but just a remark, a careless remark that sees things.

In other words, mindfulness is a very serious thing, and if you have awareness with mindfulness, you begin to see the seriousness of mindfulness. Your mindfulness is also lightened by it. It becomes much lighter, less heavy. But it doesn't become completely free and careless because you are still continuing your practice on the one base of basic training, basic practice. You can't develop a completely free style of practice outside the technique. The whole thing is still boring and technical in some sense. That kind of secondary spokesman, secondary mindfulness which is awareness, allows the possibility of extending ourselves to greater awareness practice.

In this case, we are not discussing Mahavipashyana or shamatha-vipashyana practice, or anything of that nature. We haven't gotten to the level of advancing enough or playing about enough. At this point what we are discussing is just the little shadow, the light shadow that goes along with your mindfulness. This is what is known as awareness practice. And we learn how to handle ourselves, how to work, because the whole thing is no longer awkward. With a one-shot deal, it becomes very awkward. But since there is a one-shot deal as well as a soft landing of a secondary something, it allows us at least to be less awkward. The function of early vipashyana practice is to make one less awkward. I think I have discussed enough of that particular subject. As far as technique is concerned, it's identical with the anapannasati practice of coming and going with the breath; it's the same thing. Maybe we should have a discussion, to make sure everybody understood.