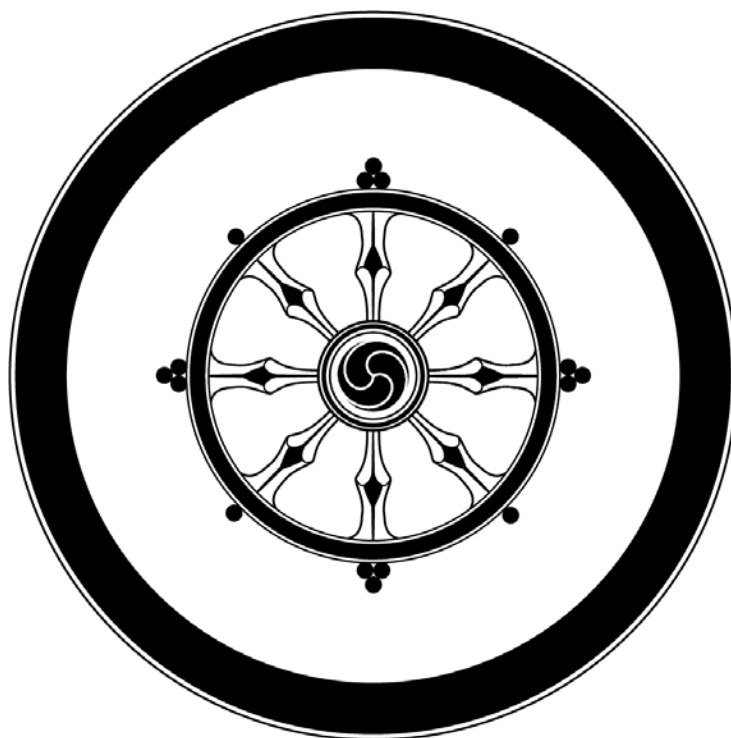


# Shamatha & Vipashyana Meditation

## The Core Practice Manuals Of the Indian and Tibetan Traditions

An Advanced Buddhist Studies/Rime Shedra NYC Course  
Ten Tuesdays from September 18 to December 11, 2018, from 7-9:15 pm  
Shambhala Meditation Center of New York

### Sourcebook of Readings



"All you who would protect your minds,  
Maintain your mindfulness and introspection;  
Guard them both, at cost of life and limb,  
I join my hands, beseeching you." v. 3

"Examining again and yet again  
The state and actions of your body and your mind-  
This alone defines in brief  
The maintenance of watchful introspection." v. 108

--Shantideva, Bodhicharyavatara, Chapter Five

# RIME SHEDRA CHANTS

## ASPIRATION

In order that all sentient beings may attain Buddhahood,  
From my heart I take refuge in the three jewels.

*This was composed by Mipham. Translated by the Nalanda Translation Committee*

## MANJUSHRI SUPPLICATION

Whatever the virtues of the many fields of knowledge  
All are steps on the path of omniscience.  
May these arise in the clear mirror of intellect.  
O Manjushri, please accomplish this.

*This was specially composed by Mangala (Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche). Translated by the Nalanda Translation Committee*

## DEDICATION OF MERIT

By this merit may all obtain omniscience  
May it defeat the enemy, wrong doing.  
From the stormy waves of birth, old age, sickness and death,  
From the ocean of samsara, may I free all beings

By the confidence of the golden sun of the great east  
May the lotus garden of the Rigden's wisdom bloom,  
May the dark ignorance of sentient beings be dispelled.  
May all beings enjoy profound, brilliant glory.

*Translated by the Nalanda Translation Committee*

*For internal use only  
Exclusively for the use of the  
Rime Shedra NYC  
Advanced Buddhist Studies Program  
Shambhala Meditation Center of New York  
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# **The Core Practice Manuals of the Indian and Tibetan Traditions of Meditation *Shamatha & Vipashyana***

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## NINE STAGES OF SHAMATHA

NINE STAGES	FOUR MENTAL APPLICATIONS	FIVE OBSTACLES	EIGHT ANTIDOTES	THREE LEVELS	THREE QUALITIES	SIX POWERS	EXPERIENCE
1. Placing the Attention on the Object	engaging through concentration (stages 1-2)	1. Laziness (stages 1&2) 2. Forgetting the instructions (stages 1&2)	1. Faith 2. Aspiration 3. Effort 4. Suppleness/pliancy (stages 1-3) 5. Mindfulness (stages 1-3)	Preparation (stages 1-3)	Stability (stages 1-3)	hearing (stages 1-3) contemplating (stages 1-3)	movement (waterfall) (stages 1-3)
2. Continual Placement							
3. Repeated Placement							
4. Close Placement (coarse laxity)							
5. Taming (subtle laxity)				Actual Meditation (stages 4-7)	Vividness Clarity (stages 4-5)	mindfulness (stages 4&5) awareness/introspection (stages 5&6)	attainment (brook) (stage 4)
6. Pacifying (subtle elation)							familiarity (slow river) (stages 5&6)
7. Thoroughly Pacifying (subtle elation and laxity)	interruptedly engaging (stages 3-7)	3. Elation/Laxity (stages 3-7)	6. Introspection awareness (sheshin) (stages 3-7)				
8. Making One-Pointed	uninterruptedly engaging (stage 8)	4. Not applying the antidotes (stage 8)	7. Applying the antidotes (stage 8)	Increasing Meditation (stages 7-9)	Strength (stages 5-9)	exertion (stages 7&8)	stability (calm lake) (stages 7&8)
9. Placement on Evenness/Equalness	effortlessly engaging (stage 9)	5. Over-application of the antidotes (stage 9)	8. Resting in equanimity (stage 9)			thorough familiarity (stage 9)	perfection (mountain) (stage 9)

**The Three Qualities of Shamatha**  
**From *Comments on Longchenpa's Final Testament, Immaculate Light***  
**By Nyoshul Khenpo Jamyang Dorje**  
**Translated by David Christensen**

**Page 39 in *The Fearless Lion's Roar:***  
***Profound Instructions on Dzogchen, the Great Perfection***  
**By Nyoshul Khenpo Jamyang Dorje**

The subsequent verses teach us how to meditate with mindfulness (dran pa), attentiveness (shayzhin; shes bzhin), and conscientiousness (bag yod).

Mindfulness, moreover, is like a virtuous hook  
That catches the crazed rampant elephant of the mind,  
Leading it away from all faults and toward what is virtuous.  
Rely on this from now on!

Attentiveness is like an undistracted watchman  
Who affords the thief of nonvirtue no opportunity,  
And protects the supreme wealth of virtue.  
Let your mind rely on it with certainty from now on!

Conscientiousness is like a well-constructed moat,  
Which prevents brigand bands of afflictive emotions from striking.  
It leads an army to victory over the foes of karma.  
Strive to guard your mind from now on!

We must keep the virtuous practices of love, compassion, rejoicing, and so forth, in our minds. Mindfulness is like a hook that can subdue the wild elephant of mind, and attentiveness is like a guard who protects the wealth of our virtuous practice. So we should never separate from them. In essence, we must always practice with mindfulness, attentiveness, and conscientiousness.

**Dharma and the Modern World**  
**An Interview with Buddhist Scholar John Dunne on Mindfulness**  
**Mandala Magazine, January-March 2014**

*What do we think of when we hear the word mindfulness? Does it change depending on the context? How has the term been understood in the past? Is its popularity significant to Buddhism's future? John Dunne, associate professor of religion at Emory University and a fellow of the Mind and Life Institute, has both the technical Buddhist philosophical background and connection to contemporary scientific research exploring mindfulness necessary to address these questions. During a visit in October 2013 to Maitripa College in Portland, Oregon, US, John spent a half-hour summing up for Mandala readers the many centuries of meaning that have collected around the word "mindfulness."*

Mandala: I wanted to talk to you about the concept of mindfulness and how it has been articulated and used both historically and in contemporary settings. Within the FPMT, Lama Zopa Rinpoche has encouraged FPMT students to understand mindfulness within the Mahayana tradition. Could you talk about how mindfulness has been used in classical Indian Buddhist philosophy and then whether subsequently that evolved and changed within Tibetan Buddhism?

John Dunne: If we just think about the contemporary use of mindfulness, there is a lot of interest in mindfulness on many levels. You could say it has even become a kind of cultural trope in the United States. I heard it on the radio sometime when I was listening to NPR during a pledge drive. Someone was talking about "mindful pledging" - and this is in Atlanta! I was surprised to find that; you see that everywhere, in Europe and among the educated elites of the big cities worldwide as well. There is a lot of interest in mindfulness. It is a cultural meme that has taken off to an unbelievable degree. And maybe that's part of the reason why it is also very hard to say what it is. It is in some way whatever you make of it, and there really are many different varieties of mindfulness.

One of the ways in which my scientific colleagues and I have been trying to understand it is therefore not in terms of finding a single version of what is the one true mindfulness, but rather to think of it as a family or range of practices and a range of practice styles that come out of different kinds of Buddhist contexts. That is actually a very useful way to think about it in Buddhist terms as well, because it is really not the case that there is just one version of mindfulness even within Buddhism, possibly ever. Certainly by the time Buddhism reaches Tibet, there is already some significant differentiation in how it would be proper to use that term.

You probably know that the term tracks back tracks back to the Pali word *sati* which is

the Sanskrit word *smṛti* which is the Tibetan word *drenpa*. That word itself is used in many different ways. If we just think of the term *sati*, there is actually quite a lot of variety. My colleague Rupert Gethin has written a number of really great pieces in which he talks about that term and also Bhikkhu Bodhi has done some great work on this. Ven. Analayo is another one who has done some great work on this on the use of the term in the context of the Pali cannon and in Theravada practice. In a famous text called the Questions of the King Milinda, the term is used very much just in the sense of memory - how do you recall what is beneficial, recalling what one has done in the past and what one intends to do in the future. Those three words - *sati*, *smṛti*, and *drenpa* - all actually literally mean memory, often memory connected to the sense of who you are as a practitioner, what your larger goals are, and that meaning of mindfulness is something that has become a little bit lost in the contemporary context.

However, when we talk about it as mindfulness practice, actually that sense of mindfulness is not the main meaning probably. The main meaning is cultivating a particular kind of mental facet of any mental moment, or according to some Buddhist Abhidharma theorists, it is always a facet of every mental moment (it depends on who you talk to). The Theravada Abhidharma says it is only in virtuous mind states. The Abhidharma that the Tibetans follow says it can be both in virtuous and nonvirtuous mind states, and this is what they call a *semjung* in Tibetan or *caitasika* in Sanskrit, basically, a "mental function" or a "mental facet."

This particular mental facet is what is being especially trained in formal mindfulness practice. What is that particular mental facet? It is not really about memory in any very direct way; it is really the facet of mind that keeps the mind from wandering. It is actually what keeps the mind not in a positive sense on the object, but in a negative sense off of other objects. There are other mental facets that keep the mind focused that account for how acute the mind is and how sharp the focus is, but this particular facet is really just about a kind of stability.

I haven't seen any account of why this becomes the main facet that is trained in this form of practice. But it may be that the human mind has this tendency to fly all over the place, and that the best way to guarantee that the mind is stable is to focus the training on that particular kind of facet. You could say that later as this develops in the Tibetan tradition, this thing connects to a general feature that we can call "stability in meditation." *Nocha* is a term that you will find in some traditional Tibetan meditation manuals. The *nocha* is stability of a meditative state on the one hand - and that is provided by mindfulness - but mindfulness is not the end of the story by any means.

There are two other important features of this factor that are really critically important

and that develop later, that really are more about the Mahayana version of mindfulness. They are there in the earlier materials, but they are much more emphasized in the Mahayana, and they change their meanings a little bit. One of them, in Sanskrit, is called *samprajanya*. In Tibetan, it is called *shezhin*, and this is a kind of capacity to keep track of the state of mind and body. Depending on the theorist you talk to, that either is something that occurs simultaneously while you are on the object, or it requires you to drop the object momentarily and sort of introspect on the mind (and that will be important for another reason in a second). Basically, if you are trying to maintain awareness on the breath, mindfulness is what keeps the mind from wavering off of that object, but you also need to assess the quality of your awareness as you are watching your breath, because as you get more and more advanced, of course, you are not just dropping the object entirely, you are actually able to stay on the object and notice before you lose the object when the mind is becoming unstable in some fashion. The faculty that is doing that - that is sort of monitoring the quality of the mind - is called *samprajanya* or *shezhin*. That is actually so integral to mindfulness practice that the Tibetans usually compound *drenpa* and *shezhin* to make *drenshe*, which means mindfulness, and some people translate that as "discriminating alertness."

What is interesting about *shezhin* is it then has a little bit of a life of its own. It is something Shantideva talks about a great deal. He has an entire chapter devoted to it - the fifth chapter of *The Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. It becomes, in some ways, almost more of what we think of as mindfulness practice, which is a kind of moment-by-moment awareness of what you are doing. Where is your mind? Where is your body? What are your intentions? Are you in a virtuous mindstate or in a negative mindstate? That is really all the work that is done by *shezhin* or *samprajanya*, this sort of monitoring capacity or discriminating alertness.

Along with that then, a third quality is usually mentioned in the Tibetan texts, which is called *bagyo* or *apramada* that basically means "heedfulness." Those three together - *drenpa*, *shezhin* and *bagyo* - really give you the package of mindfulness in the Tibetan Mahayana context. The kind of practice we are talking about is stability, but also this kind of stability with awareness, not a just dumb focus on an object, but a rich awareness of what is happening to you on the subject side. What emotional states are you in? What is the quality of your awareness? Are you holding too tightly onto the object? Are you so loose that you are about to lose it? Are negative emotions beginning to arise? Are you in a positive emotional state? This capacity to sort of monitor that even while remaining on the object is really the main thing that is cultivated in mindfulness practice. Then the larger context of it is your spiritual goals, and that is where heedfulness comes in - to be heedful of what your vows are, what your goals are, what your motivations are, all of that together.

The other thing though that really becomes important in Tibetan mindfulness is the development of mindfulness in the Mahamudra context. What is different and what really is significantly different from non-Mahayana versions of mindfulness is that now there is a notion of being mindful without being focused on an object. You'll see this is in the Gelugpa version of Mahamudra, but it is perhaps more strongly stressed by the Kagyu style of Mahamudra, and then you see similar aspects to Dzogchen. This is the notion that one can retain that kind of awareness - an awareness of what is the state of mind, what is the quality of the awareness, what types of mental states are occurring, what is the quality of consciousness itself - by taking that monitoring faculty and in a sense, ramping it up, and no longer focusing on an object, dropping the object entirely so that now what you have left is that monitoring awareness itself. You are still going to latch onto objects now and then, so it is not truly a nondual awareness, but it is moving toward a nondual awareness because it is no longer sort of thematizing focus on the object such as the breath. Alan Wallace has a nice way of describing this where it is as if the breath becomes kind of like a buoy out in the water that you keep your hand on, and then you sort of let go and slowly learn how to not need to hold on to that anymore, and are simply aware of the mind itself without focusing on any particular object.

That capacity is the way, theoretically, where shezhin or samprajanya, this sort of discriminating alertness, is now what is mostly thematized. Stability is still important, and they still talk about smrti, or drenpa, but now it is drenpa without an object. Instead what they speak about is what is called in Tibetan - and you will see this in the famous Mahamudra text that His Holiness the Dalai Lama just taught at Emory by Losang Choekyi Gyaltsen, and also in the earlier Kagyu Mahamudra materials - ma-yeng tsa-mgyi drenpa which means "mindfulness of mere not distraction." That mindfulness of mere nondistraction is now not about focusing on any particular object, but simply being aware moment-by-moment of all that is occurring in mind. That type of awareness, of course, is part of the goal. Part of the reason you cultivate that type of awareness is so that you really understand what is the nature of your mind, what is the nature of your negative mental states. It is a tool for that purpose.

**Mandala:** Why has mindfulness become such a popular theme in our modern culture?

**John:** Modern mindfulness is very heavily influenced by its psychological use. My good friend and colleague Jon Kabat-Zinn has not been single-handedly responsible for that, but almost. One of the things is that Jon comes out of a primarily nondual, Zen background (with Korean Zen, or Chan Buddhism, as one of his main sources for this style). The style of mindfulness that he develops is a style of mindfulness that is very

much more of the nondual direction. One of the features of the nondual traditions in general is that they claim that somehow the qualities of enlightenment are fully innate to the mind itself, so that, in a way, practice is just about getting out of the way. It is not about doing something; it is really mostly about not doing something, and the natural qualities of enlightenment will emerge when you do that. Hence on that model of practice, there is not a lot of emphasis on ethics or compassion, because it is thought that those will emerge naturally if you simply become aware of the nature of mind itself and allow that nature of mind to become fully evident to you, to, in a sense, blossom or "buddha," literally (which is what "buddha" means whenever its meaning is to blossom), then the ethical activity and compassionate activity and so on will just spontaneously manifest.

Now, that is a totally legitimate Buddhist position. There is nothing at all problematic about that, but it also happens to align very well with certain features of our modern lives and what you might call the style of modernity. There is great work on this. There is a book by David McMahan called the Making of Buddhist Modernism in which he discusses some of this. David also has recently received a Mind and Life Contemplative Studies fellowship to take some of that work to the next step. You could say that, as David points out and some other people as well, there are some basic features of liberal religiosity or spirituality in modernity that that style of mindfulness very easily adapts to. They go hand-in-hand to a certain degree.

There is a whole story about the turn away from rationality and toward affect or emotion in the 19th century. Some people say that the paragon of this is Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, the 19th-century German theologian who basically says that true religiosity is about feeling. It is not about what you believe. Of course, with scientific rationality critiquing so much of what religions believe and with his audience being largely artists and so on who already are alienated from the church that was telling them, "Oh, this is the creed you need to accept." So this is a way to kind of insulate religiosity from scientific rationality. Science can have all of the natural world; religion is just about feeling. It is just about some inexpressible feeling even.

Another feature is the tendency toward Western individualism that emerges in modernity that is [characterized by] a sense of the individual being one's own authority, and that then one is standing in opposition to traditional religious institutions acting as authorities. Not only is their authority declining - people call it the "secularization thesis," meaning religious tradition or religious authority declines as modernity grows (there is some question about whether that is true, but in any case, certainly [its applicable] for people who are liberal in their religiosity) - but the reaction to the critique of traditional religious authority is not to fight back.

There was a great article in the New York Times about two rafting trips down the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon. One is a group of Darwinists who go down and look at all the fossils and say, "See, so evolution works." The other is creationists who go down and look at all the same fossils and say, "Yeah, so the world was created by God." The creationists are not being irrational. They are being rational. They are fighting against science using what they think counts as good evidence, which includes scripture. A person liberal in their religiosity says, 'We're not going to fight against science.' So what's left? Just a sense of spirit, just affect, just feeling. That is what left. Since the institutions are based upon that type of authority and since there is also the sense of individual authority growing in modernity, then the move away from institutional religion to a kind of personal religion - no need to hold a creed, an ability to sort of have your own practice, so to speak - is a big appeal of modern mindfulness.

Another feature that is very important in modernity is that life is about now, especially the new now, the fresh now. Those are very traditional metaphors. For example, in Dzogchen and Mahamudra too, the idea of freshness - the freshness of the present moment - exists. Those kinds of metaphors in the nondual traditions align very well with this spirit of modernity which is all about the now, not about the next life, not about the transcendent, but the here and now. Those various aspects of modernity just align with these traditions such that they are in many ways challenging mainstream traditions and that deliberately exist in opposition or on the margins. They were always in the minority; in some ways now they've become the majority. It is interesting.



## Sati (Buddhism) from Wikipedia

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**Sati** (in Pali;<sup>[1]</sup> Sanskrit: *smṛti*) is **mindfulness** or **awareness**, a spiritual or psychological faculty (*indriya*) that forms an essential part of Buddhist practice. It is the first factor of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment. "Correct" or "right" mindfulness (Pali: *sammā-sati*, Sanskrit *samyak-smṛti*) is the seventh element of the Noble Eightfold Path.

### Definition

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The Buddhist term translated into English as "mindfulness" originates in the Pali term *sati* and in its Sanskrit counterpart *smṛti*. According to Robert Sharf, the meaning of these terms has been the topic of extensive debate and discussion.<sup>[2]</sup> *Smṛti* originally meant "to remember", "to recollect", "to bear in mind", as in the Vedic tradition of remembering sacred texts. The term *sati* also means "to remember". In the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* the term *sati* means to maintain awareness of reality, whereby the true nature of phenomena can be seen.<sup>[2]</sup> Sharf refers to the *Milindapanha*, which explained that the arising of *sati* calls to mind the wholesome dhammas such as the four establishments of mindfulness, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven awakening-factors, the Noble Eightfold Path, and the attainment of insight.<sup>[3]</sup> According to Rupert Gethin,

[*sati*] should be understood as what allows awareness of the full range and extent of *dhammas*; *sati* is an awareness of things in relation to things, and hence an awareness of their relative value. Applied to the *satipaṭṭhānas*, presumably what this means is that *sati* is what causes the practitioner of yoga to "remember" that any feeling he may experience exists in relation to a whole variety or world of feelings that may be skillful or unskillful, with faults or faultless, relatively inferior or refined, dark or pure."<sup>[4]</sup><sup>[note 1]</sup>

Sharf further notes that this has little to do with "bare attention", the popular contemporary interpretation of *sati*, "since it entails, among other things, the proper discrimination of the moral valence of phenomena as they arise".<sup>[4]</sup> According to Paul Williams, referring to Erich Frauwallner, mindfulness provided the way to liberation, "constantly watching sensory experience in order to prevent the arising of cravings which would power future experience into rebirths".<sup>[5]</sup><sup>[note 2]</sup> According to Vetter, *dhyana* may have been the original core practice of the Buddha, which aided the maintenance of mindfulness.<sup>[6]</sup>

The Buddhist term translated into English as "mindfulness" originates in the Pali term *sati* and in its Sanskrit counterpart *smṛti*. Translators rendered the Sanskrit word as *trenpa* in Tibetan (wylie: *dran pa*) and as *nian* 念 in Chinese.

### Translations

#### Pali

The Pali-language scholar Thomas William Rhys Davids (1843–1922) first translated *sati* in 1881 as English *mindfulness* in *sammā-sati* "Right Mindfulness; the active, watchful mind".<sup>[7]</sup> Noting that Daniel John Gogerly (1845) initially rendered *sammā-sati* as "Correct meditation",<sup>[8]</sup> Davids explained,

Translations of Mindfulness	
<b>English</b>	mindfulness, awareness, inspection, recollection, retention
<b><u>Pali</u></b>	sati (सति)
<b><u>Sanskrit</u></b>	smṛti (स्मृति)
<b><u>Chinese</u></b>	nian, 念
<b><u>Japanese</u></b>	念 (ネン) (rōmaji: <i>nen</i> )
<b><u>Korean</u></b>	염 (RR: <i>yeom</i> / <i>yŏm</i> )
<b><u>Sinhalese</u></b>	සති
<b><u>Tibetan</u></b>	ཏར་པ། ( <i>Wylie</i> : <i>dran pa</i> ; <i>THL</i> : <i>trenpa/drenpa</i> )
<b><u>Vietnamese</u></b>	<i>niệm</i>
Glossary of Buddhism	

*sati* is literally 'memory' but is used with reference to the constantly repeated phrase 'mindful and thoughtful' (*sato sampajāno*); and means that activity of mind and constant presence of mind which is one of the duties most frequently inculcated on the good Buddhist."<sup>[9]</sup>

Henry Alabaster, in *The Wheel of the Law: Buddhism Illustrated From Siamese Sources by the Modern Buddhist, A Life of Buddha, and an Account of the Phrabat* (1871), had earlier defined "Satipatthan/Smrityupasthana" as "The act of keeping one's self mindful."<sup>[10]</sup>

The English term *mindfulness* already existed before it came to be used in a (western) Buddhist context. It was first recorded as *myndfulness* in 1530 (John Palsgraves translates French *pensee*), as *mindfulness* in 1561, and *mindfulness* in 1817. Morphologically earlier terms include *mindful* (first recorded in 1340), *mindfully* (1382), and the obsolete *mindiness* (ca. 1200).<sup>[11]</sup>

John D. Dunne, an associate professor at Emory University whose current research focuses especially on the concept of "mindfulness" in both theoretical and practical contexts, asserts that the translation of *sati* and *smṛti* as mindfulness is confusing and that a number of Buddhist scholars have started trying to establish "retention" as the preferred alternative.<sup>[12]</sup>

Bhikkhu Bodhi also points to the meaning of "sati" as "memory":

The word derives from a verb, *sarati*, meaning "to remember," and occasionally in Pali *sati* is still explained in a way that connects it with the idea of memory. But when it is used in relation to meditation practice, we have no word in English that precisely captures what it refers to. An early translator cleverly drew upon the word mindfulness, which is not even in my dictionary. This has served its role admirably, but it does not preserve the connection with memory, sometimes needed to make sense of a passage.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Sanskrit

The Sanskrit word *smṛti* स्मृति (also transliterated variously as *smṛiti*, *smṛti*, or *sm'Rti*) literally means "that which is remembered", and refers both to "mindfulness" in Buddhism and "a category of metrical texts" in Hinduism, considered second in authority to the Śruti scriptures.

Monier Monier-Williams's *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* differentiates eight meanings of *smṛti* स्मृति, "remembrance, reminiscence, thinking of or upon, calling to mind, memory":

1. memory as one of the Vyabhicāri-bhāvas [transient feelings];
2. Memory (personified either as the daughter of Dakṣa and wife of Āṅgiras or as the daughter of Dharma and Medhā);
3. the whole body of sacred tradition or what is remembered by human teachers (in contradistinction to Śruti or what is directly heard or revealed to the Rishis; in its widest acceptation this use of the term *Smṛti* includes the 6 Vedāṅgas, the Sūtras both Śrauta and Grhya, the Manusmṛti, the Itihāsas (e.g., the Mahābhārata and Ramayana), the Puranas and the Nītiśāstras, "according to such and such a traditional precept or legal text";
4. the whole body of codes of law as handed down memoriter or by tradition (esp. the codes of Manusmṛti, Yājñavalkya Smṛti and the 16 succeeding inspired lawgivers) ... all these lawgivers being held to be inspired and to have based their precepts on the Vedas;

5. symbolical name for the number 18 (from the 18 lawgivers above);
6. a kind of meter;
7. name of the letter *g*- ण्;
8. desire, wish<sup>[14]</sup>

## Chinese

Eastern Zhou dynasty (771-221 BCE) Large Seal Script graph for *nian* 念

Buddhist scholars translated *smṛti* with the Chinese word *nian* 念 "study; read aloud; think of; remember; remind". *Nian* is commonly used in Modern Standard Chinese words such as *guannian* 觀念 (观念) "concept; idea", *huainian* 懷念 (怀念) "cherish the memory of; think of", *nianshu* 念書 (念书) "read; study", and *niantou* 念頭 (念头) "thought; idea; intention". Two specialized Buddhist terms are *nianfo* 念佛 "chant the name of Buddha; pray to Buddha" and *nianjing* 念經 (念经) "chant/recite sutras".

This Chinese character *nian* 念 is composed of *jin* 今 "now; this" and *xin* 心 "heart; mind". Bernhard Karlgren graphically explains *nian* meaning "reflect, think; to study, learn by heart, remember; recite, read – to have 今 present to 心 the mind".<sup>[15]</sup> The Chinese character *nian* or *nien* 念 is pronounced

as Korean *yeom* or *yŏm* 염, Japanese ネン or *nen*, and Vietnamese *niệm*.

*A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* gives basic translations of *nian*: "Recollection, memory; to think on, reflect; repeat, intone; a thought; a moment."<sup>[16]</sup>

The *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* gives more detailed translations of *nian* "mindfulness, memory":

- Recollection (Skt. *smṛti*; Tib. *dran pa*). To recall, remember. That which is remembered. The function of remembering. The operation of the mind of not forgetting an object. Awareness, concentration. Mindfulness of the Buddha, as in Pure Land practice. In Abhidharma-kośa theory, one of the ten omnipresent factors 大地法. In Yogâcāra, one of the five 'object-dependent' mental factors 五別境 ;
- Settled recollection; (Skt. *sthāpana*; Tib. *gnas pa*). To ascertain one's thoughts;
- To think within one's mind (without expressing in speech). To contemplate; meditative wisdom;
- Mind, consciousness;
- A thought; a thought-moment; an instant of thought. (Skt. *kṣana*);
- Patience, forbearance.<sup>[17]</sup>

## Alternate translations

The terms *sati*/*smṛti* have been translated as:

- Attention (Jack Kornfield)
- Awareness
- Concentrated attention (Mahasi Sayadaw)

- Inspection (Herbert Guenther)
- Mindful attention
- Mindfulness
- Recollecting mindfulness (Alexander Berzin)
- Recollection (Erik Pema Kunsang, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu)
- Reflective awareness (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu)
- Remindfulness (James H. Austin)<sup>[18]</sup>
- Retention
- Self-recollection (Jack Kornfield)

## Practice

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According to Paul Williams, referring to Erich Frauwallner, mindfulness provided the way to liberation, "constantly watching sensory experience in order to prevent the arising of cravings which would power future experience into rebirths."<sup>[5]</sup><sup>[note</sup>

<sup>3]</sup> Mindfulness is an antidote to delusion (Pali: Moha), and is considered as such one of the 'powers' (Pali: bala) that contribute to the attainment of nirvana. The faculty of mindfulness becomes a power in particular when it is coupled with clear comprehension of whatever is taking place. According to Vetter, dhyana may have been the original core practice of the Buddha, which aided the maintenance of mindfulness.<sup>[6]</sup> Nirvana is a state of being in which greed, hatred and delusion (Pali: moha) have been overcome and abandoned, and are absent from the mind.

## Satipaṭṭhāna

The Theravada Nikayas prescribe that one should establish mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna) in one's day-to-day life, maintaining as much as possible a calm awareness of one's body, feelings, mind, and dhammas.<sup>[note 4]</sup> The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (Sanskrit: Smṛtyupasthāna Sūtra) is an early text dealing with mindfulness. A key innovative teaching of the Buddha was that meditative stabilisation must be combined with liberating discernment.<sup>[20]</sup>

## Anapanasati

Ānāpānasati (Pali; Sanskrit: ānāpānasmṛti; Chinese: 安那般那; Pīnyīn: ānnàbānnà; Sinhala: අනාපාන සති), meaning "mindfulness of breathing" ("sati" means mindfulness; "ānāpāna" refers to inhalation and exhalation), is a form of Buddhist meditation now common to the Tibetan, Zen, Tiantai, and Theravada schools of Buddhism, as well as western-based mindfulness programs. Anapanasati means to feel the sensations caused by the movements of the breath in the body, as is practiced in the context of mindfulness. According to tradition, Anapanasati was originally taught by the Buddha in several sutras including the Ānāpānasati Sutta.<sup>[note 5]</sup> (MN 118)

## Vipassanā

Satipaṭṭhana, four foundations of mindfulness, c.q. anapanasati, "mindfulness of breathing," is being employed to attain Vipassanā (Pāli), insight into the true nature of reality as impermanent and anatta, c.q. sunyata, lacking any permanent essence.<sup>[21][22]</sup>

In the Theravadin context, this entails insight into the three marks of existence, namely the impermanence of and the unsatisfactoriness of every conditioned thing that exists, and non-self. In Mahayana contexts, it entails insight into what is variously described as sunyata, dharmata, the inseparability of appearance and emptiness (two truths doctrine), clarity and emptiness, or bliss and emptiness.<sup>[23]</sup>

Vipassanā is commonly used as one of two poles for the categorization of types of Buddhist practice, the other being samatha (Pāli; Sanskrit: *śamatha*).<sup>[24]</sup> Though both terms appear in the Sutta Pitaka<sup>[note 6]</sup>, Gombrich and Brooks argue that the distinction as two *separate* paths originates in the earliest *interpretations* of the Sutta Pitaka,<sup>[29]</sup> not in the suttas themselves.<sup>[30][note 7]</sup> Various traditions disagree which techniques belong to which pole.<sup>[31]</sup> According to the contemporary Theravada orthodoxy, samatha is used as a preparation for vipassanā, pacifying the mind and strengthening the concentration in order to allow the work of insight, which leads to liberation.

Vipassanā-meditation has gained popularity in the west through the modern Buddhist vipassana movement, modeled after Theravāda Buddhism meditation practices,<sup>[32]</sup> which employs vipassanā and ānāpāna meditation as its primary techniques and places emphasis on the teachings of the Satipatthāna Sutta.

### ***Sampajañña, apramāda and atappa***

In Buddhist practice, "mindfulness" also includes sampajañña, meaning "clear comprehension" and apramāda meaning "vigilance".<sup>[33][note 8]</sup> All three terms are sometimes (confusingly) translated as "mindfulness", but they all have specific shades of meaning.

In a publicly available correspondence between Bhikkhu Bodhi and B. Alan Wallace, Bodhi has described Ven. Nyanaponika Thera's views on "right mindfulness" and sampajañña as follows:

He held that in the proper practice of right mindfulness, sati has to be integrated with sampajañña, clear comprehension, and it is only when these two work together that right mindfulness can fulfill its intended purpose.<sup>[34][note 9]</sup>

In the Satipatthāna Sutta, sati and sampajañña are combined with atappa (Pali; Sanskrit: *ātapaḥ*), or "ardency,"<sup>[note 10]</sup> and the three together comprise *yoniso manisikara* (Pali; Sanskrit: *yonīśas manaskāraḥ*), "appropriate attention" or "wise reflection."<sup>[35]</sup>

### **"Bare attention"**

Georges Dreyfus has expressed unease with the definition of mindfulness as "bare attention" or "nonelaborative, nonjudgmental, present-centered awareness", stressing that mindfulness in Buddhist context means also "remembering", which indicates that the function of mindfulness also includes the retention of information. Dreyfus concludes his examination by stating:

[T]he identification of mindfulness with bare attention ignores or, at least, underestimates the cognitive implications of mindfulness, its ability to bring together various aspects of experience so as to lead to the clear comprehension of the nature of mental and bodily states. By over-emphasizing the nonjudgmental nature of mindfulness and arguing that our problems stem from conceptuality, contemporary

authors are in danger of leading to a one-sided understanding of mindfulness as a form of therapeutically helpful spacious quietness. I think that it is important not to lose sight that mindfulness is not just a therapeutic technique but is a natural capacity that plays a central role in the cognitive process. It is this aspect that seems to be ignored when mindfulness is reduced to a form of nonjudgmental present-centered form of awareness of one's experiences.<sup>[36]</sup>

English	Pali	Sanskrit/Nepali	Chinese	Tibetan
mindfulness/awareness	sati	smṛti स्मृति	念 (niàn)	trenpa (wylie: dran pa)
clear comprehension	<u>sampajañña</u>	samprajñāna संप्रज्ञान	正知力 (zhèng zhī lì)	sheshin (wylie: shes bzhin)
vigilance/heedfulness	appamada	<u>apramāda</u> अप्रमाद	不放逸座 (bù fàng yì zuò)	bakyö (wylie: bag yod)
ardency	atappa	ātapaḥ आतप	勇猛 (yǒng měng)	nyima (wylie: nyi ma)
attention/engagement	manasikara	<u>manaskārah</u> मनस्कारः	如理作意 (rú lǐ zuò yì)	yila jeypa (wylie: yid la byed pa)
foundation of mindfulness	satipaṭṭhāna	smṛtyupasthāna स्मृत्युपासना	念住 (niànzhù)	trenpa neybar zagpa (wylie: dran pa nye bar gzhag pa)

Robert H. Sharf notes that Buddhist practice is aimed at the attainment of "correct view", not just "bare attention":

Mahasi's technique did not require familiarity with Buddhist doctrine (notably abhidhamma), did not require adherence to strict ethical norms (notably monasticism), and promised astonishingly quick results. This was made possible through interpreting sati as a state of "bare awareness" — the unmediated, non-judgmental perception of things "as they are," uninflected by prior psychological, social, or cultural conditioning. This notion of mindfulness is at variance with premodern Buddhist epistemologies in several respects. Traditional Buddhist practices are oriented more toward acquiring

"correct view" and proper ethical discernment, rather than "no view" and a non-judgmental attitude.<sup>[37]</sup>

Jay Garfield, quoting Shantideva and other sources, stresses that mindfulness is constituted by the union of two functions, *calling to mind* and vigilantly *retaining in mind*. He demonstrates that there is a direct connection between the practice of mindfulness and the cultivation of morality – at least in the context of Buddhism from which modern interpretations of mindfulness are stemming.<sup>[38]</sup>

## Āgamas

The Āgamas of early Buddhism discuss ten forms of mindfulness. The Ekottara Āgama has:<sup>[39]</sup>

1. mindfulness of the Buddha
2. mindfulness of the Dharma
3. mindfulness of the Sangha
4. mindfulness of giving
5. mindfulness of the heavens
6. mindfulness of stopping and resting
7. mindfulness of discipline
8. mindfulness of breathing
9. mindfulness of the body
10. mindfulness of death

According to Nan Huaijin, the Ekottara Āgama emphasizes mindfulness of breathing more than any of the other methods, and provides the most specific teachings on this one form of mindfulness.<sup>[40]</sup>

## Mindfulness (psychology)

Mindfulness practice, inherited from the Buddhist tradition, is being employed in psychology to alleviate a variety of mental and physical conditions, including obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety, and in the prevention of relapse in depression and drug addiction.<sup>[41]</sup>

## Notes

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1. Quotes from Gethin, Rupert M.L. (1992), *The Buddhist Path to Awakening: A Study of the Bodhi-Pakkhiyā Dhammā*. BRILL's Indological Library, 7. Leiden and New York: BRILL
2. Frauwallner, E. (1973), *History of Indian Philosophy*, trans. V.M. Bedekar, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. Two volumes., pp.150 ff
3. Frauwallner, E. (1973), *History of Indian Philosophy*, trans. V.M. Bedekar, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. Two volumes., pp.150 ff
4. According to Grzegorz Polak, the four *upassanā* have been misunderstood by the developing Buddhist tradition, including Theravada, to refer to four different



foundations. According to Polak, the four *upassanā* do not refer to four different foundations, but to the awareness of four different aspects of raising mindfulness:<sup>[19]</sup>

- the six sense-bases which one needs to be aware of (*kāyānupassanā*);
- contemplation on *vedanās*, which arise with the contact between the senses and their objects (*vedanānupassanā*);
- the altered states of mind to which this practice leads (*cittānupassanā*);
- the development from the five hindrances to the seven factors of enlightenment (*dhammānupassanā*).

5. In the Pali canon, the instructions for anapanasati are presented as either one tetrad (four instructions) or four tetrads (16 instructions). The most famous exposition of four tetrads – after which Theravadacountries have a national holiday (see uposatha) – is the *Anapanasati Sutta*, found in the Majjhima Nikaya (MN), sutta number 118 (for instance, see Thanissaro, 2006). Other discourses which describe the full four tetrads can be found in the Samyutta Nikaya's *Anapana-samyutta* (Ch. 54), such as SN 54.6 (Thanissaro, 2006a), SN 54.8 (Thanissaro, 2006b) and SN 54.13 (Thanissaro, 1995a). The one-tetrad exposition of anapanasati is found, for instance, in the *Kayagata-sati Sutta* (MN 119; Thanissaro, 1997), the *Maha-satipatthana Sutta* (DN22; Thanissaro, 2000) and the *Satipatthana Sutta* (MN 10; Thanissaro, 1995b).

6. **AN 4.170 (Pali):**

“Yo hi koci, āvuso, bhikkhu vā bhikkhunī vā mama santike arahattappattim byākaroti, sabbo so catūhi maggehi, etesaṃ vā aññatarena.

Katamehi catūhi? Idha, āvuso, bhikkhu samathapubbaṅgamaṃ vipassanaṃ bhāveti[...]

Puna caparaṃ, āvuso, bhikkhu vipassanāpubbaṅgamaṃ samathaṃ bhāveti[...]

Puna caparaṃ, āvuso, bhikkhu samathavipassanaṃ yuganaddhaṃ bhāveti[...]

Puna caparaṃ, āvuso, bhikkhuno dhammuddhaccaviggahitaṃ mānaṃ hoti[...]

English translation:

Friends, whoever — monk or nun — declares the attainment of arahantship in my presence, they all do it by means of one or another of four paths. Which four?

There is the case where a monk has developed insight preceded by tranquility. [...]

Then there is the case where a monk has developed tranquillity preceded by insight. [...]

Then there is the case where a monk has developed tranquillity in tandem with insight. [...]

"Then there is the case where a monk's mind has its restlessness concerning the Dhamma [Comm: the corruptions of insight] well under control.<sup>[25]</sup>

**AN 2.30 Vijja-bhagiya Sutta, A Share in Clear Knowing:**

"These two qualities have a share in clear knowing. Which two? Tranquility (*samatha*) & insight (*vipassana*).

"When tranquility is developed, what purpose does it serve? The mind is developed. And when the mind is developed, what purpose does it serve? Passion is abandoned.

"When insight is developed, what purpose does it serve? Discernment is developed. And when discernment is developed, what purpose does it serve? Ignorance is abandoned.

"Defiled by passion, the mind is not released. Defiled by ignorance, discernment does not develop. Thus from the fading of passion is there awareness-release. From the fading of ignorance is there discernment-release."<sup>[26]</sup>

**SN 43.2 (Pali):** "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, asaṅkhatagāṃimaggio? Samatho ca vipassanā".<sup>[27]</sup> English translation: "And what, bhikkhus, is the path leading to the unconditioned? Serenity and insight."<sup>[28]</sup>


7. Brooks: "While many commentaries and translations of the Buddha's Discourses claim the Buddha taught two practice paths, one called "shamata" and the other called "vipassanā," there is in fact no place in the suttas where one can definitively claim that."<sup>[30]</sup>
8. [I]n Buddhist discourse, there are three terms that together map the field of mindfulness [...] [in their Sanskrit variants] *smṛti* (Pali: *sati*), *samprajañña* (Pali: *Sampajañña*) and *apramāda* (Pali: *appamada*).<sup>[33]</sup>
9. According to this correspondence, Ven. Nyanaponika spend his last ten years living with and being cared for by Bodhi. Bodhi refers to Nyanaponika as "my closest kalyāṇamitta in my life as a monk."
10. Dictionary.com:adjective
  1. having, expressive of, or characterized by intense feeling; passionate; fervent: an ardent vow; ardent love.
  2. intensely devoted, eager, or enthusiastic; zealous: an ardent theatergoer. an ardent student of French history.
  3. vehement; fierce: They were frightened by his ardent, burning eyes.
  4. burning, fiery, or hot: the ardent core of a star.

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3. *Sharf, Robert (October 2014). "Mindfulness and Mindlessness in Early Chan" (PDF). Philosophy East and West. 64 (4): 943. ISSN 0031-8221. Retrieved 2015-12-03. Even so, your Majesty, sati, when it arises, calls to mind dhammas that are skillful and unskillful, with faults and faultless, inferior and refined, dark and pure, together with their counterparts: these are the four establishments of mindfulness, these are the four right endeavors, these are the four bases of success, these are the five faculties, these are the five powers, these are the seven awakening-factors, this is the noble eight-factored path, this is calm, this is insight, this is knowledge, this is freedom. Thus the one who practices yoga resorts to dhammas that should be resorted to and does not resort to dhammas that should not be resorted to; he embraces dhammas that should be embraced and does not embrace dhammas that should not be embraced.*
4. *Sharf 2014*, p. 943.
5. *Williams 2000*, p. 46.
6. *Vetter 1988*.
7. T. W. Rhys Davids, tr., 1881, *Buddhist Suttas*, Clarendon Press, p. 107.

8. D. J. Gogerly, "On Buddhism", *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1845, pp. 7-28 and 90-112.
9. Davids, 1881, p. 145.
10. *The Wheel of the Law: Buddhism Illustrated From Siamese Sources by the Modern Buddhist, A Life of Buddha, and an Account of the Phrabat* by Henry Alabaster, Trubner & Co., London: 1871 pg 197<sup>[1]</sup>
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**Chapter Eight: The Questions of Maitreya**  
**From *Wisdom of Buddha: The Samdhinirmocana Sutra***  
***Translated by John Powers***

1. [149] Then the Bodhisattva Maitreya asked the Bhagavan, “Abiding in what and depending upon what do Bodhisattvas in the Great Vehicle cultivate shamatha and vipasyana?”

The Bhagavan replied “Maitreya, abiding in and depending upon an unwavering resolution to expound doctrinal teachings and to become unsurpassably, perfectly enlightened, [Bodhisattvas cultivate shamatha and vipasyana].

2. The Bhagavan has taught that four things are objects of observation of shamatha and vipasyana: conceptual images, non-conceptual images, the limits of phenomena, and accomplishment of the purpose.”

- a. “Bhagavan, how many of these are objects of observation of shamatha?”

The Bhagavan replied "One, non-conceptual images."

- b. "How many are objects of observation of vipasyana?"

The Bhagavan replied "Only one, conceptual images."

- c. "How many are objects of observation of both?"

The Bhagavan replied "There are two: the limits of phenomena and accomplishment of the purpose.

3. “Bhagavan, abiding in and depending upon these four, objects of observation of shamatha and vipasyana, how do Bodhisattvas seek shamatha and become skilled in vipasyana?”

[151] “Maitreya, I have set forth these [twelve forms of] doctrinal, teachings to Bodhisattvas Sutras, discourses in prose and, verse, prophetic discourses, verses, purposeful statements, specific teachings, narratives, historical discourses, stories of, [the Buddha’s] former lives, extensive discourses, discourses, on miraculous phenomena, and discourses that delineate [topics of specific knowledge]. Bodhisattvas hear well, apprehend, well, repeat well, analyze well with their minds, and, through insight, fully realize these [teachings].”

“Then, remaining in seclusion, having genuinely settled [their minds] inwardly, they mentally attend to those doctrines just as they have contemplated them. With continuous inner attention, they mentally attend to that mind which is mentally contemplated by any mind. The physical and mental pliancy that arises through engaging [in this practice] in this

way and continuing in this [practice] is shamatha. This is how Bodhisattvas seek shamatha.”

“Having obtained physical and mental pliancy, they abide, in only that. Having abandoned [certain] aspects of the mind, they analyze and inwardly consider those very doctrines in the way they have been contemplated as images that are the, focus of samadhi. The differentiation, thorough differentiation, thorough investigation, thorough analysis, forbearance, interest, discrimination, view, and investigation of the objects, that are known with respect to images that are the focus of [153] such samadhi is vipashyana. This is how Bodhisattvas become, skilled in vipasyana.”

4. "Bhagavan, prior to attaining physical and mental pliancy, when a Bodhisattva inwardly attends to the mind observing the mind, what is this mental activity called?"

“Maitreya, this is not shamatha. Know that it resembles intensified interest concordant with shamatha.”

5. "Bhagavan, prior to attaining physical and mental pliancy, when a Bodhisattva inwardly attends to those doctrines just as, they have been contemplated as images that are the focus of, samadhi, what is this mental activity called?"

“Maitreya, this is not vipasyana. Know that it resembles intensified interest concordant with vipasyana.”

6. "Bhagavan, are the path of shamatha and the path of vipashyana different or not different?"

The Bhagavan replied: “Maitreya, although they are not different, they are also not the same. Why are they not different? Because [shamatha] observes the mind, which is also the object of observation of vipasyana. Why are they not the same? Because [vipasyana] observes a conceptual image.”

7. "Bhagavan, what is the image, the focus of samadhi which perceives [an image]? Is it different from the mind or is it, not different?"

[154] “Maitreya, it is not different. Why is it not different? Because that image is simply cognition-only. Maitreya, I have, explained that consciousness is fully distinguished by [the fact that its] object of observation is cognition-only.”

8. "Bhagavan, if that image, the focus of samadhi, is not different from the physical mind. How does the mind itself investigate the mind itself?"

The Bhagavan replied: "Maitreya, although no phenomenon apprehends any other phenomenon, nevertheless, the mind that is generated in that way appears in that way. Maitreya, for instance, based on form, form itself is seen in a perfectly clear round mirror, but one thinks, I see an image. The form and the appearance of the image appear as

different factualities. Likewise, the mind that is generated in that way and the focus of samadhi known as the image also appear to be separate factualities.”

9. "Bhagavan, are the appearances of the forms of sentient, being and so forth, which abide in the nature of images of, the mind, not different from the mind?"

The Bhagavan replied: "Maitreya, they are not different. However, because childish beings with distorted understanding do not recognize these images as cognition-only, just as, they are in reality, they misconstrue them.

10. "Bhagavan, at what point do those Bodhisattvas solely cultivate [the practice] of vipasyana?

[157] The Bhagavan replied: "When they attend to mental signs, with continuous mental attention."

11. "At what point do they solely cultivate shamatha?"

The Bhagavan replied: "When they attend to the uninterrupted, mind with continuous mental attention."

12. "At what point, having combined the two, shamatha and vipasyana, do they unite them?"

The Bhagavan replied: "When they mentally attend to the one-pointed mind."

13. "Bhagavan, what are mental signs?"

"Maitreya, they are the conceptual images that are the, focus of samadhi, the objects of observation of vipasyana."

14. "What is an uninterrupted mind?"

"Maitreya, it is a mind that observes the image, the object of observation of shamatha."

15. "What is the one-pointed mind?"

"It is the realization that: 'This image which is the focus of samadhi is cognition-only.' Having realized that, it is mental, attention to suchness."

16. "Bhagavan, how many kinds of vipasyana are there?"

"Maitreya, there are three kinds: that arisen from signs, that arisen from examination, and that arisen from individual investigation."

17. What is vipashyana arisen from signs?

“It is vipasyana that mentally attends to just a conceptual image, the [159] focus of samadhi.

18. What is that arisen from examination?

“It is vipasyana that mentally attends to its object in order to understand well through wisdom just those phenomena that were not well understood with respect to this or that image.”

19. What is that arisen from individual investigation?

“It is Vipasyana that mentally attends [to its object] in order to contact great happiness through liberation regarding phenomena that have been understood well through wisdom with respect to this or that image.”

20. "How many kinds of shamatha are there?"

The Bhagavan replied, “Since shamatha engages an uninterrupted mind, it is also said to be of three kinds.

Alternately, Maitreya, shamatha is of eight kinds: the first concentration, the second, third, and fourth concentrations, the sphere of limitless space, the sphere of limitless consciousness, the sphere of nothingness, and the sphere without coarse discriminations but not without subtle discriminations.

Alternately, there are four kinds: immeasurable love, immeasurable compassion, immeasurable joy, and immeasurable equanimity.”

21. "Bhagavan, if shamatha and vipasyana dwell on doctrines, and also do not dwell on doctrines, what is dwelling on doctrines? What is not dwelling on doctrines?"

"Maitreya, shamatha and vipasyana that relate to meaning—through engagement with the signs of the doctrine in accord, with how they have been apprehended and contemplated—dwell on doctrines. [161] Shamatha and vipasyana that relate to meaning by relying on instructions and teachings from others, without attending to doctrines in accord with how they have been apprehended and contemplated—[focusing] on discolored or putrefying corpses or on what is concordant with that, or on the impermanence of compounded phenomena, or on suffering, or on the selflessness of all phenomena, or on the peace of nirvana, or on what is concordant with that—are shamatha and vipasyana that do not dwell on doctrines.

Maitreya, I designate Bodhisattvas who follow the teaching, depending upon shamatha and vipasyana that dwell on doctrines, as having sharp faculties. I designate those who follow with faith, depending upon shamatha and vipasyana that do not dwell on doctrines, as having dull faculties.”



22. "Bhagavan, if shamatha and vipasyana observe unintegrated doctrines and also observe integrated doctrines, what is observation of unintegrated doctrines? What is observation of integrated doctrines?"

"Maitreya, if a Bodhisattva cultivates shamatha and vipasyana that observe particular doctrines of the Sutras and so forth from among the doctrines. Just as [those particular doctrines] have been apprehended and contemplated, this is the shamatha and vipasyana that observe unintegrated doctrines.

But if [a Bodhisattva] gathers these doctrines from the Sutras and so forth together, groups them comprehensively, draws them into an aggregated unit, and takes to mind the thought—[163] 'All these doctrines flow into suchness, descend into suchness, have descended into suchness; now into enlightenment, descend into enlightenment, have descended into enlightenment; flow into nirvana, descend into nirvana, have descended into nirvana; flow into transformation of the basis, descend into transformation of the basis, have descended into transformation of the basis. All these doctrines have been expressed through the manifest expression of innumerable and measureless virtuous doctrines'—this is shamatha and vipasyana that observe integrated doctrines."

23. "Bhagavan, if shamatha and vipasyana observe somewhat integrated doctrines, and also observe highly integrated doctrines, and so observe immeasurably integrated doctrines. What is observation of somewhat integrated doctrines? What is observation of highly integrated doctrines? What is observation of immeasurably integrated doctrines?"

"Maitreya, know that shamatha and vipasyana mentally attending to [doctrines]—from the sutra section up to the extensive discourses, the discourses on miraculous phenomena, and the discourses that delineate—as one unit are the observation of somewhat integrated doctrines.

Know that shamatha and vipasyana mentally attending to the Sutras and so forth, as many as have been collectively apprehended and contemplated, are the observation of highly integrated doctrines.

Understand that shamatha and vipasyana mentally attending comprehensively to all the immeasurable Dharma teachings [165] of the Tathagata, to the immeasurable words and letters of the doctrine, and to immeasurable ever-increasing wisdom and inspiration are the observation of immeasurably integrated doctrines.

24. "Bhagavan, how is it that Bodhisattvas attain shamatha and vipasyana that observe integrated doctrines?"

"Maitreya, know that they attain them through five causes. In each moment of mental attention they destroy all of the bases of errant tendencies. Having abandoned various motivational factors, they attain joy in the joyousness of the Dharma. They correctly

understand that the appearances of the Dharma are measureless in the ten directions and that their aspects are unlimited. They are endowed with accomplishment of the purpose and the non-imaginary signs that are partially concordant with purification arise in them. In order to attain, perfect, and accomplish the Dharmakaya, they take hold of the causes of increasing goodness, the greatest auspiciousness.”

25. "Bhagavan, on what [stage] are shamatha and vipasyana that observe integrated doctrines realized, and on what [stage] are they understood to be attained?"

The Bhagavan replied "Maitreya, know that having been realized on the first stage, the Very Joyous, they are attained on the third stage, the Luminous. Nevertheless, Maitreya, even beginning Bodhisattvas should not neglect training in them and mentally attending to them."

26. [167] "Bhagavan, at what point are shamatha and vipasyana conceptual and analytical samadhi? At what point do they become non-conceptual and only analytical? At what point do they become non-conceptual and non-analytical?"

"Maitreya, analytical shamatha and vipasyana that experience the clear and coarse signs of doctrines that are analyzed in just the way that they have been apprehended and investigated are samadhis that are conceptual and analytical.

The shamatha and vipasyana that are not analytical in experiencing the clear and coarse signs of these very doctrines, but are analytical in experiencing a mere subtle mindfulness of their approximate appearances, are a non-conceptual and solely analytical samadhi.

Shamatha and vipasyana that are completely analytical due to mentally attending to the experience of doctrines spontaneously and totally with respect to all their signs are a non-conceptual and non-analytical samadhi.

Moreover, Maitreya, shamatha and vipasyana that arise from investigation are a conceptual and analytical samadhi. Shamatha and vipasyana that arise from individual realization are a non-conceptual and solely analytical Samadhi. [Shamatha and vipasyana] that observe integrated doctrines are a nonconceptual, non-analytical samadhi."

27. "Bhagavan, what is the cause of shamatha? What is the cause of thorough stabilization? What is the cause of equanimity?"

[169] "Maitreya, when the mind is excited, or when one fears that it will become excited, mental attention to sobering phenomena and to the uninterrupted mind is the cause of shamatha."

"Maitreya, when the mind becomes dull, or when one fears that it will become dull, mental attention to pleasant phenomena and to the characteristics of the mind is the cause of thorough stabilization.

Maitreya, when those following a path that is singly dedicated to shamatha, or that is singly dedicated to vipasyana, or that is a union of those two, naturally engage their minds in a [state] unafflicted by the two afflictions [of excitement and dullness], this spontaneous mental attention is the cause of equanimity.”

28. "Bhagavan, when Bodhisattvas cultivating shamatha and vipasyana comprehend doctrine and objects, how do they comprehend doctrine? How do they comprehend objects?"

"Maitreya, they comprehend doctrine through five aspects names, words, letters, individuality, and integration.

- What are names? They are what is attributed to afflicted or purified phenomena as the designation for entities or particulars.
- What are words? They are what depends upon collections of those very names which are associated through conventional designations of objects as being afflicted or pure.
- What are letters? They are the units that are the bases [171] of these two.
- What is comprehended through their individuality? It is comprehension due to mental attention that observes unintegrated [doctrines].
- What is comprehended through their integration? It is comprehension due to mental attention that observes integrated [doctrines].

All of these are collectively known as ‘comprehension of doctrine’. That is how [Bodhisattvas] comprehend doctrine.”

"Bodhisattvas comprehend objects through these ten aspects:

1. Through what exists relatively;
2. Through what exists in fact;
3. Through apprehending objects;
4. Through apprehended objects;
5. Through objects that are abodes;
6. Through objects that are resources;
7. Through mistaken objects;
8. Through non-mistaken objects;
9. Through afflicted objects; and
10. Through purified objects.”

"Maitreya, the totality of all the types of divisions among afflicted or purified phenomena is ‘that which exists relatively’. This [totality] includes the fivefold enumeration of the aggregates, the sixfold enumeration of the internal sense spheres, the sixfold enumeration of the external sense spheres, and so forth.

Maitreya, the suchness of those same afflicted and purified phenomena is that which exists in fact. Furthermore, [suchness] has seven aspects:

1. The ‘suchness of arising’ is the beginninglessness and endlessness of compounded phenomena;
2. The ‘suchness of character’ is the selflessness of persons [173] and the selflessness of phenomena in all phenomena;
3. The ‘suchness of cognition’ [understands] that compounded phenomena are cognition-only;
4. The ‘suchness of abiding’ is what I taught as the truth of suffering;
5. The ‘suchness of wrong establishment’ is what I taught as the truth of the origin of suffering;
6. The ‘suchness of purification’ is what I taught as the truth of the cessation of suffering;
7. And the ‘suchness of right establishment’ is what I taught as the truth of the path.”

Maitreya, due to the suchness of arising, the suchness of abiding, and the suchness of wrong establishment, all sentient beings are similar and equal.

Maitreya, due to the suchness of character and the suchness of cognition, all phenomena are similar and equal.

Maitreya, due to the suchness of purification, all enlightenments—the enlightenment of Sravakas, the enlightenment of Pratyekabuddhas, and supreme perfect enlightenment—are similar and equal.

Maitreya, due to the suchness of right establishment, wisdom conjoined with shamatha and vipasyana, that observes all that one hears as integrated doctrine, is similar and equal.

Maitreya, ‘apprehending objects’ are the phenomena of the five physical sense spheres, mind, thought, consciousness, and mental factors.”

[175] "Maitreya, ‘apprehended objects’ are the six external sense spheres. Moreover, Maitreya, apprehending objects are also apprehended objects.”

“Maitreya, ‘objects that are abodes’ are the worldly realms: realms of sentient beings that appear in various places. These include a village, one hundred villages, one thousand of these, or one hundred thousand of these; a region, one hundred of these, or one hundred thousand of these; a Jambudvīpa one hundred of these, one thousand of these, or one hundred thousand of these; the four great continents, one hundred of these, one thousand of these, or one hundred thousand of these; a universe of a thousand worlds, one hundred of these, one thousand of these, or one hundred thousand of these; a medium-sized universe of a thousand worlds, one hundred of these, one thousand of these, or one hundred thousand of these; a great universe of three thousand worlds, one hundred of these, one thousand of these, one hundred thousand of these, ten million of these, one hundred times ten million of these, one thousand times ten million of these, one hundred thousand times ten million of these, an incalculable number of these, one hundred times an

incalculable number of these, one thousand times an incalculable number of these, one hundred thousand times an incalculable number of these, or a number equal to however many atomic particles there are in the dust motes in a hundred thousand times an incalculable number of the great trichiliocosmos of the immeasurable, incalculable universes of the ten directions.

[177] "Maitreya, I have taught that objects that are resources are the possessions and assets that sentient beings enjoy.

Maitreya mistaken objects are mistaken discriminations, mistaken thoughts, and mistaken views, such as [conceiving] the impermanent as being permanent with respect to those objects that are apprehenders and so forth; mistaken discriminations, mistaken thoughts, and mistaken views, such as [conceiving] suffering as bliss, the impure as pure, or the selfless as having a self."

"Maitreya, know that 'non-mistaken' objects are the opposite of those and that they are antidotes to them."

"Maitreya there are three kinds of 'afflicted objects': afflictions that are the afflictions of the three realms, afflictions of actions, and afflictions of birth."

"Maitreya, 'purified objects' are whatever phenomena are in harmony with enlightenment due to separating one from those three types of affliction."

"Maitreya, know that all objects are encompassed by these ten aspects."

"Maitreya, Bodhisattvas also comprehend objects through five aspects. What are these five aspects of objects? They are: knowable things, knowable meanings, knowledge, obtaining the fruit of knowledge, and full awareness of that."

"Maitreya, you should view knowable things as being all objects of knowledge. This includes what is known as 'the [179] aggregates,' 'internal sense spheres,' 'external sense spheres,' and the like."

"Maitreya, 'knowable meanings' are correctly known by way of their various aspects. They include the conventional and the ultimate, faults and good qualities, conditions, time, the characteristics of production, abiding, and disintegration, sickness and so forth; suffering and the source of suffering and so forth; suchness, the reality limit, the Dharmadhatu, condensed [discourses], extensive [discourses], certain prophecies, differentiation, scriptural questions and answers, pronouncements, secrets, and [scriptural] teachings. Know that things concordant with these are knowable meanings."

"Maitreya, 'knowledge' refers to phenomena that are in harmony with enlightenment, including both [the ultimate and the conventional]. These [phenomena in harmony with enlightenment] include: the mindful establishments, the correct abandonings, and so

forth."

"Maitreya, 'obtaining the fruit of knowledge' is: disciplining desire, anger, and bewilderment; entirely abandoning desire, anger, and bewilderment; attaining the fruits of virtuous application; and those common and uncommon, mundane and supramundane qualities of Sravakas and Tathagatas that I have taught and that should be actualized."

"Maitreya, 'full awareness' is knowledge liberated from those very things that have been actualized, and extensively [181] and consummately teaching other beings." Maitreya, know that all objects are encompassed by these five objects."

"Maitreya, Bodhisattvas also comprehend objects through four aspects. What are the four aspects of objects? They are appropriated objects of mind, objects of experience, objects of cognition, and objects of affliction and purification. Know, Maitreya, that all objects are also encompassed by these four aspects of objects."

"Maitreya, Bodhisattvas also comprehend objects through three aspects. What are the three aspects of objects? They are objects that are words, objects that are meanings, and objects that are realms."

"Maitreya, 'objects that are words' should be viewed as being collections of names and so forth."

"Maitreya, know that 'objects that are meanings' have ten aspects: the character of reality; the character of knowledge; the character of abandonment; the character of actualization; the character of cultivation; the character which differentiates the aspects of those very characters of reality and so forth; the character of basis and what relates to a basis; the character of phenomena that interrupt knowledge and so forth; the character of concordant phenomena; and the character of the harmfulness of ignorance and the like and the benefits of knowledge and the like."

[183] "Maitreya, 'objects that are realms' are the five realms: worldly realms, the realm of sentient beings, the realm of qualities, the realm of discipline, and the realm of methods of discipline."

"Maitreya, know that all objects are also encompassed by these three aspects."

29. "Bhagavan, what are the differences between comprehending objects through wisdom arisen from listening, comprehending objects through wisdom arisen from reflection, and, Bhagavan, comprehending objects through wisdom arisen from cultivating shamatha and vipasyana?"

The Bhagavan replied "Maitreya, through wisdom arisen from listening, Bodhisattvas abide in words; they take them literally, do not grasp their intent, and do not actualize them. They are concordant with liberation and they comprehend objects that are not liberative."

"Maitreya, through wisdom arisen from reflection, they still adhere to words, but they do not take them literally; they grasp their intent and actualize them. They are very concordant with liberation and they comprehend objects that are not liberative."

"Maitreya, through wisdom that arise from meditation, Bodhisattvas adhere to words and do not adhere to words; they take them literally and grasp their intent; they actualize [185] them through the images that are the focus of samadhi that accord with knowable things. They are completely concordant with liberation and they also comprehend objects that are liberative. Maitreya, these are the differences among them."

30. "Bhagavan, what is the knowledge of Bodhisattvas cultivating shamatha and vipasyana that comprehends doctrine and that comprehends objects? What is [their] insight?"

"Maitreya, although I teach knowledge and insight in many ways, I will explain them concisely: The wisdom of shamatha and vipasyana that observes integrated doctrines is knowledge. The wisdom of shamatha and vipasyana that observes unintegrated doctrines is insight."

31. "Bhagavan, through cultivating shamatha and vipasyana, how do Bodhisattvas remove which signs with what [kind of] mental attention?"

"Maitreya, through mental attention to suchness they remove the signs of doctrines and the signs of objects. With respect to names, by not observing the nature of names, and also by not perceiving as real the signs of their abiding, they eliminate [signs]."

"Just as it is with respect to names, so it is also with respect to all words, letters, and meanings. Maitreya, with respect to [everything] up through realms: By not observing the nature [187] of realms, and also by not perceiving as real the signs of their abiding, they eliminate [signs]."

32. "Bhagavan, are the signs of comprehending the object of suchness also eliminated?"

"Maitreya, with respect to comprehending the object of suchness, since one does not observe what is without signs, what is there to eliminate? Maitreya, comprehending the object of suchness overwhelms all signs of doctrines and objects. I do not assert that it is overwhelmed by anything."

33. "Bhagavan, the Bhagavan has said, 'One cannot examine the signs of ones own face with, for example, a pot of filthy water, a dirty mirror, or an agitated pond; one can with their opposites. Similarly, minds that do not meditate cannot know reality just as it is, whereas those that have meditated can do so.' In this context, what is mental analysis? Of what kind of suchness were you thinking?"

The Bhagavan replied "Maitreya, [in this context] there are three kinds of mental analysis:

mental analysis arisen from listening, mental analysis arisen from reflection, and mental analysis arisen from meditating. I taught this, thinking of the suchness of cognition."

34. Bhagavan, how many kinds of signs do you speak of for Bodhisattvas who comprehend doctrines and comprehend objects and are engaged in eliminating signs? By what are these signs eliminated?"

[189] "Maitreya, there are ten kinds, and they are eliminated by emptiness. What are these ten? They are:

1. The various signs of syllables and words through which the meaning of doctrine is comprehended. These are eliminated by the emptiness of all phenomena.
2. The signs that are a continuum of production, destruction, abiding, and transformation through which the meaning of the suchness of abiding is comprehended are eliminated by the emptiness of character and the emptiness of what is beginningless and endless.
3. The signs of discerning true personhood and the signs of thinking 'I am' through which one comprehends the apprehending object are eliminated by the emptiness of the internal and the emptiness of the unobservable.
4. The signs of discerning enjoyment through which one comprehends the apprehended object are eliminated by the emptiness of the external.
5. The signs of inner happiness and the signs of external allure through which one comprehends the objects that are resources, [such as] the services of men and women and possessions, are eliminated by the emptiness of the external and by the emptiness of self-nature.
6. The signs of the immeasurable through which one comprehends the objects that are abodes are eliminated by the emptiness of the great.
7. [Page 191] The internal signs of peaceful liberation dependent upon comprehending formlessness are eliminated by the emptiness of compounded phenomena.
8. The signs of the selflessness of persons, the signs of the selflessness of phenomena, the signs of cognition-only, and the signs of the ultimate through which one comprehends the object of the suchness of character are eliminated by the emptiness of what has passed beyond the extremes, by the emptiness of non-things, by the emptiness of the own being of non-things, and by the emptiness of the ultimate.
9. The signs of the uncompounded and the signs of the immutable through which one comprehends the object of pure suchness are eliminated by the emptiness of uncompounded phenomena and the emptiness of inclusiveness.
10. The signs of emptiness through which one takes to mind the very emptiness that is an antidote to these signs are eliminated by the emptiness of emptiness."

35. "Bhagavan, when [Bodhisattvas] eliminate the ten kinds of signs, what are the signs that they eliminate? From what signs of bondage are they liberated?"

"Maitreya, eliminating the sign of the image, the focus of samadhi, one is liberated from the signs that are the signs of the afflictions; these [signs] are also eliminated. Maitreya, know that the emptinesses are, in actuality, antidotes to the signs. Each [emptiness] is also an



antidote to any of the signs.”

[193] "Maitreya, for example, although the afflictions are not established, due to proximity or close proximity with conditions, from ignorance up to old age and death, in actuality, compounded phenomena are described as being established. You should also discern [these emptinesses] in just this way.”

36. "Bhagavan, what do Bodhisattvas realize in the Mahayana that merges the signs of unchanging emptiness without degenerating into arrogance about the character of emptiness?"

Then the Bhagavan replied to the Bodhisattva Maitreya, "Excellent! Maitreya, you ask the Tathagata about this issue so that Bodhisattvas will not fall away from emptiness. This is very good! Why? Maitreya, Bodhisattvas who do not fall away from emptiness also do not fall away from all of the Mahayana. Therefore, Maitreya, listen well and I will concisely explain to you the character of emptiness.”

"Maitreya, the other-dependent character and the thoroughly established character are observed in all aspects to be a character free from the imputational character which is either afflicted or purified. This [character] is 'that which has been taught in the Mahayana as the character of emptiness'.”

37. "Bhagavan, how many kinds of samadhis of shamatha and vipasyana are included [in this teaching]?"

The Bhagavan replied: "Know that all of the many kinds of samadhis of Sravakas, Bodhisattvas, and Tathagatas that I have taught are included.”

38. [195] “Bhagavan, from what causes do shamatha and vipasyana arise?"

“Maitreya, they arise from the cause of pure moral practice, and they arise from the cause of the pure view which comes from listening and reflecting.”

39. "Bhagavan, will you explain the results of these?"

"Maitreya, pure mind is the result. Pure wisdom is the result. Moreover, Maitreya, know that all mundane and supramundane virtuous qualities of Sravakas, or of Bodhisattvas, or of Tathagatas are the result of shamatha and vipasyana.”

40. "Bhagavan, what are the functions of shamatha and vipasyana?"

"Maitreya, they liberate from the two bonds, the bonds of signs and the bonds of errant tendencies.”

41. "Bhagavan, from among the five kinds of obstacles spoken of by the Bhagavan, which are

obstacles to shamatha? Which are obstacles to vipasyana? Which are obstacles to both?"

"Maitreya, know that views [that overvalue] the body and resources are obstacles to shamatha. Not obtaining the instructions of the Aryas in accordance with ones wishes is an obstacle to vipasyana. Abiding in turmoil and being satisfied [197] with inferior [attainment] are obstacles to both. Because of the first of these, one does not apply oneself; because of the second, one does not complete the training."

42. "Bhagavan, from among the five obstructions, which is an obstruction to shamatha? Which is an obstruction to vipasyana? Which is an obstruction to both of these?"

"Maitreya, excitement and contrition are obstructions to shamatha. Lethargy, sleep, and doubt are obstructions to vipasyana. Fixation on desirable experience and harmful intent are obstructions to both of these."

43. Bhagavan, when is the path of shamatha wholly purified?"

"Maitreya, at the point when lethargy and sleep are completely conquered."

44. "Bhagavan, when is the path of vipasyana wholly purified?"

"At the point when excitement and contrition are completely conquered."

45. "Bhagavan, how many types of mental distractions do Bodhisattvas engaged in shamatha and vipasyana discover?"

The Bhagavan replied "Maitreya, there are five types:

1. The distraction of mental contemplation,
2. External mental distraction,
3. Internal mental distraction,
4. The distraction of signs,
5. And the distraction of errant tendencies.

"Maitreya, if Bodhisattvas forsake the mental contemplations of the Mahayana and adopt the mental contemplations [199] of Sravakas and Pratyekabuddhas, this is a distraction of mental contemplation.

If they let their minds scatter to the five external desirable qualities, or to diversions, signs, conceptuality, afflictions, secondary afflictions, and external objects of observation, this is external mental distraction."

"If they become afflicted either by laxity due to lethargy, sleep, or relishing the taste of meditative absorption, or by any of the secondary afflictions associated with meditative absorption, this is internal mental distraction."

"If, depending on external signs, they mentally attend to signs that are the focus of internal samadhis, this is the distraction of signs.

"If, depending on internal mental engagement, they attribute the concept 'I am' to arising feelings due to collective errant tendencies, this is the distraction of errant tendencies."

46. "Bhagavan, what do shamatha and vipasyana counteract, from the first Bodhisattva stage up to the stage of the Tathagata?"

"Maitreya,

1. On the first stage, shamatha and vipasyana counteract the afflictions of bad transmigrations and the afflictions of actions and of birth.
2. On the second stage, they counteract the arising of errors that are very subtle infractions.
3. On the third stage, they counteract attachment to desirable experiences.
4. On the fourth stage, they counteract craving for [201] meditative absorption and craving for phenomena.
5. On the fifth stage, they counteract exclusively turning away from or moving toward either samsara or nirvana.
6. On the sixth stage, they counteract the arising of manifold signs.
7. On the seventh stage, they counteract the arising of subtle signs.
8. On the eighth stage, they counteract the search for signlessness and not having mastery over signs.
9. On the ninth stage they counteract not having mastery over teaching the doctrine in all its aspects.
10. On the tenth stage, they counteract not attaining perfect comprehension of the Dharmakaya.
11. Maitreya, on the stage of the Tathagata, shamatha and vipasyana counteract afflictive obstructions and obstructions to omniscience that are supremely subtle. Through fully conquering those [obstructions], [Tathagatas] obtain vision and knowledge that is unattached and unobstructed with respect to everything. They abide in the object of observation which is the accomplishment of purpose, the very pure Dharmakaya."

47. "Bhagavan, after Bodhisattvas have achieved shamatha and vipasyana, how do they completely and perfectly realize unsurpassed enlightenment?"

The Bhagavan replied: "Maitreya, Bodhisattvas, having obtained shamatha and vipasyana, begin with the seven types of suchness. With minds absorbed in doctrines in accordance with how they have been heard and contemplated, they inwardly attend to the suchness that is apprehended, well [203] considered, and well attained. Since they mentally attend to suchness in this way, the mind soon enters great equipoise with regard to any arising of even the most subtle signs. What need be said about the coarse [signs]?"

"Maitreya, the very subtle signs are these:

1. Signs of mental appropriation;

2. Signs of experience;
3. Signs of cognition;
4. Signs of affliction and purification;
5. Internal signs;
6. External signs;
7. Signs of both;
8. Signs involved in thinking, 'I must work for the sake of all sentient beings';
9. Signs of knowledge;
10. Signs of suchness, the [truth] of suffering, [the truth] of the source [of suffering], [the truth] of the cessation [of suffering], and [the truth] of the path;
11. Signs of compounded phenomena;
12. Signs of uncompounded phenomena;
13. Signs of permanence;
14. Signs of impermanence;
15. Signs that have a nature associated with suffering and change;
16. Signs having a nature that is unchangeable;
17. Signs unlike the characteristics of compounded phenomena;
18. Signs of their own characteristics;
19. Signs of universality, as in the context of knowing everything as 'everything';
20. Signs of the selflessness of persons;
21. And signs of the selflessness of phenomena.

In relationship to their arising, the mind enters into great equipoise.

Entering into [suchness] and abiding there often, they completely cleanse their minds of occasional obstacles, obstructions, and distractions, producing the seven aspects of knowledge which individually realize the seven [205] aspects of suchness that are known by oneself individually and internally. Such is the [Bodhisattva] path of seeing."

"By attaining this, Bodhisattvas enter into faultless reality. They are born into the lineage of the Tathagata. They attain the first stage and also experience the benefits of that stage. Because they have previously attained shamatha and vipasyana, they attain the [first] two types of objects of observation: conceptual images and non-conceptual images. By attaining the path of seeing in such a way, they attain the stage of observing the limits of phenomena.

Entering the path of meditation, they progress to higher stages. When they mentally attend to the three types of objects of observation, it is like removing a large nail with a small nail. In the same way that a nail draws out a nail, by eliminating internal signs they eliminate all the signs concordant with the afflictions. When they eliminate the signs, they also eliminate the errant tendencies.

By subduing signs and errant tendencies, [Bodhisattvas] gradually proceed higher and higher on the stages, purifying the mind like gold. They completely and perfectly realize unsurpassed enlightenment and obtain the object of observation which is the

accomplishment of the purpose.”

“Maitreya, when Bodhisattvas attain shamatha and vipasyana, in that way, they completely realize unsurpassed enlightenment.”

48. [207] “How should a Bodhisattva practice in order to manifestly achieve the Bodhisattvas great powers?

“Maitreya, Bodhisattvas who are skillful with respect to six topics manifestly achieve the Bodhisattvas great powers. These [powers] include skill with respect to:

1. The arising of mind,
2. The abiding of mind,
3. The emergence of mind,
4. The increasing of mind,
5. The diminishing of mind,
6. And skill in means.”

49. “At what point do [Bodhisattvas] become skillful with respect to the arising of mind? They are skillful with respect to the arising of mind as it really is when they know the sixteen aspects of the arising of mind. The sixteen aspects of the arising of mind are:

1. Cognition that is a foundation and a receptacle, that is the appropriating consciousness.”
2. “Cognition that has various objects of observation, a conceptual mental consciousness that simultaneously apprehends objects such as form and the like; that simultaneously apprehends [both] the outer and inner object; that in a moment, an instant, or in a short time is simultaneously absorbed in many samadhis; that sees many Buddha fields and many Tathagatas. [This cognition] is solely a conceptual mental consciousness.”
3. Cognition of small observable signs related to the desire realm.”
4. Cognition of vast observable signs related to the form realm.”
5. Cognition of limitless observable signs related to the spheres of limitless space and limitless consciousness.
6. [209] Cognition of subtle observable signs related to the sphere of nothingness.
7. Cognition of final observable signs related to the sphere of neither discrimination nor non-discrimination.
8. Cognition of signlessness, which observes the supramundane and cessation.”

9. That which is involved with suffering is the state of hell beings."
  10. That which is involved with diverse feelings is enacted in the desire realm."
  11. That involved with joy is the first and second concentrations.
  12. That which is involved with bliss is the third concentration."
  13. That which is involved with neither suffering nor non-suffering, neither bliss nor non-bliss is that which is involved with the fourth concentration up to the sphere of neither discrimination nor non-discrimination."
  14. That which is involved with affliction is involvement with the afflictions and the secondary afflictions."
  15. That which is involved with virtue is involvement with faith and so forth."
  16. That which is involved with the neutral is not involved with either [afflictions or virtues].
50. At what point do [Bodhisattvas] become skilled with respect to the [mind's] abiding? This occurs when they know the suchness of cognition just as it is."
  51. "At what point do [Bodhisattvas] become skilled with respect to the minds emergence?"  
"This occurs when they [211] know, just as they are, the two types of bonds, the bonds of signs and the bonds of errant tendencies. Having thoroughly come to know this, they are skilled in terms of [knowing]: 'This mind emerges from that'."
  52. "At what point do [Bodhisattvas] become skilled with respect to [the mind's] increasing?"  
"When the mind that is an antidote to signs and errant tendencies is produced and increases, they are skilled with respect to increasing, [knowing]. This is produced and increases."
  53. "At what point do [Bodhisattvas] become skilled with respect to the [mind's] diminishing?"  
"When the mind that is afflicted with signs and errant tendencies discordant with that [skill] diminishes and decreases, they are skilled with respect to diminishing, [knowing]: It diminishes and decreases."
  54. "At what point do [Bodhisattvas] become skilled in means? This occurs when they meditate on the [eight] liberations, the [eight] spheres of surpassing, and the [ten] spheres of totality. Maitreya, in this way Bodhisattvas have manifestly achieved, will manifestly achieve, and are manifestly achieving the Bodhisattvas great powers."
  55. "Bhagavan, the Bhagavan has said, 'In the sphere of nirvana without a remainder of

aggregates, all feelings completely cease.’ Bhagavan, what are those valid feelings [that cease]?”

"Maitreya, in brief, two kinds of feelings cease awareness of the errant tendencies that are abodes and awareness of objects that are the fruits of those [tendencies]."

"Awareness [213] of the errant tendencies that are abodes should be known as being of four kinds:

1. Awareness of errant tendencies of the form realm,
2. Awareness of errant tendencies of the formless realm,
3. Awareness of errant tendencies that have come to fruition,
4. And awareness of errant tendencies that have not come to fruition.

Those that have come to fruition are whatever now exists; those that have not come to fruition are whatever will serve as causes in the future."

"Know that awareness of objects is also of four kinds:

1. Awareness of abodes
2. Awareness of property
3. Awareness of resources
4. And awareness of reliances.

Moreover, [awareness of objects] occurs in the sphere of nirvana that has a remainder of the aggregates. Although [this category of awareness of objects] includes awareness of what has not come to fruition, that which is discordant with the experiences of feelings that arise from contact has not completely ceased. Thus one experiences affiliated [feelings]. With the awareness of that which has come to fruition, the two kinds of feelings completely cease: Although this includes awareness, one experiences just those feelings that arise from contact. When one passes beyond sorrow altogether in the sphere of nirvana that is without a remainder of the aggregates, even that ceases. Therefore, it is said that, 'All feelings cease in the sphere of nirvana that is without a remainder of the aggregates.'"

Having said this, the Bhagavan said to Bodhisattva Maitreya:

"Maitreya, you question the Tathagata about yoga with skill and good ascertainment beginning with the most complete [215] and pure path of yoga. This is excellent and good! I also teach this path of yoga completely and flawlessly. All those who have become perfect Buddhas in the past or will become Buddhas in the future have also taught or will teach in this way. It is fitting that sons and daughters of good lineage strive for this.

Then the Bhagavan spoke these verses:

"Whatever doctrines are designated and posited are for the great purpose of diligence in

yoga. Those who rely on these doctrines and work at this yoga will attain enlightenment.

"Those who, seeking flaws, dispute these words and study all doctrines seeking liberation are, Maitreya, as far from this yoga as the sky is distant from the earth.

"Those wise ones who benefit sentient beings do not seek rewards when striving to aid beings. Those who hope for a reward will not attain supreme joy free from materialistic concerns.

"Those who, with desire, give Dharma instructions, have renounced desire, but still cling to it. These deluded ones obtain the precious, priceless Dharma, but wander in destitution.

"Therefore, vigorously abandon disputation, worldly commotion, and conceptual elaboration. In order to liberate worldly beings, including gods, make great effort in this yoga."

56. [217] Then the Bodhisattva Maitreya asked the Bhagavan: "Bhagavan, what is the name of this form of Dharma discourse that explains your thought? How should it be apprehended?"

The Bhagavan replied: "Maitreya, this is the teaching of the definitive meaning of yoga. Apprehend it as the teaching of the definitive meaning of yoga'."

When this teaching of the definitive meaning of yoga was explained, six hundred thousand living beings generated the aspiration toward completely perfect and unsurpassed enlightenment. Three hundred thousand Sravakas purified the Dharma eye that is free from dust and stainless with respect to the Dharma. One hundred and fifty thousand Sravakas liberated their minds from contamination such that they would not take rebirth. Seventy-five thousand Bodhisattvas attained the mental contemplation of the great yoga.

This completes the eighth chapter of Maitreya.



# **THE BHAVANAKRAMAS**

## ***The Stages of Meditation by Kamalashila***

### **Part One: Translated by Martin T. Adam**

- I. Great Compassion
- II. Wisdom and Method (Prajna and upaya)
- III. Wisdom (Prajna)
  - A. Three stages of prajna
  - B. The ascertainment of the non-origination of all things by prajna
- IV. Meditative Cultivation (Bhavanamayi)
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  - B. Vipashyana
- V. The Stages of Liberation (ahimukticharya)
  - A. The ten bodhisattva grounds
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### **Part Two: Translated by Ven Geshe Lobsang Jordhen, Losang Choephel Ganchenpa, and Jeremy Russell**

- I. What Is the Mind?
- II. Training the Mind
- III. Compassion
- IV. Developing Equanimity, the Root of Loving-Kindness
- V. Identifying the Nature of Suffering
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- VIII. The Practice of Calm Abiding
- IX. Actualizing Special Insight
- X. Unifying Method and Wisdom

### **Part Three: Translated by Martin T. Adam**

- I. Shamatha-Vipasyana
- II. Refutation of the Hva Shang
- III. Conclusion

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**Part One: Translated by Martin T. Adam**

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  - B. Universality of pain
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- III. Wisdom (Prajna)
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    - 1. By agama, scriptural authority - hearing (shrutamayi prajna)
    - 2. By reasoning (yukti) - thinking or contemplating (chintamayi prajna)
      - a. Origination is not uncaused
      - b. Origination is not caused - criticism of God as creator
      - c. A non-eternal cause is also illogical
      - d. Other reasons
        - i. Criticism of the notion of matter (and atoms)
        - ii. Of immateriality (mind/vijnana)
        - iii. Of external objects as being distinct from mind
    - 3. By directly perceiving - cultivation or meditation (bhavanamayi prajna)
- IV. Meditative Cultivation (Bhavanamayi)
  - A. Samatha
    - 1. Basic instructions
    - 2. Six defects and eight counteragents
    - 3. Dhyana
  - B. Vipashyana
    - 1. The method of meditation according to the Lankavatara
    - 2. Discrimination or discerning of the dharmas
    - 3. Meditation on the ultimate
    - 4. Elimination of klesha and knowledge (jnaya) obstructions (avarana)
    - 5. Absolute and conventional - paramartha and samvriti
    - 6. Progress in meditation by union (yuganaddhamarga)
    - 7. Practical realization (pratipatti)

- V. The Stages of Liberation (ahimukticharya)
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  - A. Definitions of Calm Abiding and Special Insight
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  - D. Resting in Not Finding
  - E. The Necessity of this Meditation
  - F. Working with Obstacles to this Meditation
- X. Unifying Method and Wisdom

**Part Three: Translated by Martin T. Adam**

- I. Shamatha-Vipasyana
  - A. How to practice shamatha - vipasyana
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- II. Refutation of the Hva Shang
  - A. Thesis of the Hva Shang
  - B. General refutation
  - C. General implications of such a thesis
  - D. Refuting that one can reach nirvikalpa by means of mere non-mindfulness (asmriti) and non-mentation (amanasikara)
  - E. Necessity of discernment of reality (bhutaprathyeksha)
  - F. Confirmation by Buddha-word (vacana)
  - G. Liberation (mukti) is not caused by only the destruction of karma but by also by elimination of kleshas
- III. Conclusion

# **The Process of Meditation I**

## **By Kamalashila**

**Translated by Martin T. Adam, as contained in his dissertation  
*Meditation and the Concept of Insight in Kamalashila's Bhavanakramas***

[117] *In the Indian language, bha va na kra ma;  
In the language of Tibet, bsgom pa'i rim pa.*

Homage to Manjusri Kumarabhuta!  
The Process of Meditation is briefly set forth  
with regard to the regulation of conduct  
of a beginner in the Mahayana sutras

### **1. Great Compassion is of Primary Importance to the Bodhisattva; Universality of Pain; Necessity of Compassion.**

In brief, those wishing to quickly reach the state of omniscience should strive in three areas: compassion, the thought of Awakening and practical realization (*pratipatti*). Knowing that compassion alone is the root cause of all the qualities of the Buddha, that is cultivated at the very outset. As it is said in the *Noble Dharmasamgiti Sutra*:

Then the great being, the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara said this to the Bhagavan:

“Bhagavan, a bodhisattva should not train in too many teachings. Bhagavan, if one teaching is completely adopted, completely realized by a bodhisattva then all the qualities of the Buddha rest in the palm of their hand. Which is the one teaching? Great compassion. It is because of great compassion, Bhagavan, that all the Buddha-qualities rest in the palm of the hand for bodhisattvas. For example Bhagavan, where the Wheel-treasure of a wheel-turning king appears, all the multitudes of troops appear. In the same way Bhagavan, where the great compassion of the bodhisattva appears, all the qualities of the Buddha appear. Bhagavan, just as when the life-force is present other powers will arise, likewise Bhagavan, when great compassion is present the bodhisattva's other qualities will arise.”

And it is also said in the *Noble Akshayamatiriradesa*:

“Moreover, Venerable Saradvatiputra, the bodhisattvas' great compassion is inexhaustible. Why is that? Because of its precedence. Venerable Saradvatiputra, just as breaths are the predecessors of a person's vital force, so too for the full

accomplishment of the accumulations (sambharah, i.e. of merit and knowledge) of [118] the Mahayana the bodhisattva's great compassion is the predecessor."

And it is said in the *Noble Gayasirsa*:

"Manjushri! The practice of the bodhisattvas has what starting-point, what sphere?"  
Manjushri said, "The practice of the bodhisattvas has great compassion as its starting point, O Son of the Gods—its sphere is that of sentient beings."

Thus being moved by the great compassion that has the goal of helping others, the bodhisattvas, indifferent to themselves, one-pointedly proceed in the task of acquiring the accumulations—even though this is very difficult and takes a long time. And thus it is said in the *Noble Shraddhabaladhana*:

"Therefore, because of [great] compassion there is nothing whatsoever which imparts pleasure that one does not give up for the sake of ripening all sentient beings [nor any misery-ridden rebirth that one does not accept]."

Henceforth, having fulfilled the accumulations without delay, the one who undergoes great difficulty definitely attains omniscience. Thus compassion alone is the root of the Buddha's qualities. Having attained omniscience by fully adopting great compassion, the illustrious Buddhas remain working (*vikurvana*) for the entire world; thus the Bhagavans' great compassion is itself the reason for their not remaining in nirvana. And this increases by increasing one's attention on the object of distressed sentient beings. And it should be cultivated towards all sentient beings, since every sentient being in the three world realms is perpetually afflicted by the three kinds of suffering, each according to its circumstances.

And so, first of all, the Bhagavan described the denizens of Hell submerged in various miseries, such as continuous, protracted burning. And the ghosts also experience acute suffering, their forms emaciated by the agony of unbearably severe pains of hunger, thirst and so forth. They are thus described by the Bhagavan as not obtaining a dirty ball of snot to eat, even in the course of [119] a century. Animals also are seen experiencing diverse kinds of suffering because of mutual malice, killing and mutilation. Thus some, being tormented from all sides and completely against their will, have their bodies subjugated by piercing the nose, beating, binding and so forth. They are exhausted, their bodies worn out by carrying unbearably heavy burdens. Thus too, certain harmless ones dwelling in the wilderness, having been hunted down (*anvisya*) for some purpose somewhere, are slain. And as they perpetually remain fleeing hither and thither with minds agitated by fear, their suffering is definitely seen to be unlimited.

So too among people, hellish suffering is definitely seen. Here there is the hellish suffering of those who are robbers and such, who are done in by chopping off their limbs, impalement on spikes, hanging and so forth. And the suffering caused by hunger, thirst and so on belonging to the poverty-stricken and their ilk is just like that of the hungry ghosts. And the suffering caused by beating, confinement and so on belonging to those who are slaves and their ilk, whose

bodies are completely subjugated and who having been seized by the powerful are oppressed, is just like that of the animals. Thus their suffering, created by desire, by mutual animosity, killing and such, and by separation from the agreeable as well as union with the disagreeable, is immeasurable.

Even those who are spoken of as contented rich people somewhere, of whom the wealth does come to an end, sunk in a pit of various mistaken views they accumulate the various actions and afflictions that are the causes of the experience of suffering for hell-beings and so on. In reality they are truly miserable, existing in the cause of suffering just like trees on a precipice.

Even the gods, of the desire-realm to begin with—those of whom the hearts are ablaze with the fire of acute desire, and whose thoughts are beclouded as though their minds were convulsed—they do not attain concentration of their minds even momentarily. Deprived of the treasure which is [120] tranquility and ease—what kind of happiness is that! How are those afflicted by the fear and sorrow of perpetual transmigration, decline and so forth happy?

And those (gods) of the realm of form and the realm of the formless as well—even if they have temporarily left behind the suffering connected with pain—because they have not completely relinquished the latent tendencies (*anusaya*) of the desire-realm, the suffering connected with change definitely still exists for them, on account of the possibility of falling into hell and so forth. In fact, all those who are gods and people are afflicted by the suffering connected with mental formations, in virtue of their subservience to afflictions, actions and so forth.

## 2. How Compassion Should Be Meditated Upon

Thus having understood that the entire world is licked by the blaze of the fires of suffering, compassion towards all beings should be cultivated by considering, “Just as suffering is disagreeable to me, it is likewise disagreeable to others.” First of all (it) should be cultivated by keeping in view the aforementioned experiences of various suffering among those who occupy the position of friends. Then one who does not see difference owing to the basic equality of beings should cultivate compassion towards strangers (*vyasta*) by broadly considering, “And in beginningless samsara there is not a single being who has not been a relative of mine a hundred times.” Once an equal compassion is developed towards strangers as towards those in the position of friends then, in the same way, it also should be cultivated towards one in the position of an enemy—by bearing in mind the basic equality of beings and so on.

And once it is equally developed towards an enemy as towards a friend, then gradually (it) should be made to arise towards all the beings of the ten directions. And when compassion is [121] developed equally towards all beings as dear as afflicted children, carrying its own essence in the form of wishing to rescue (them) from suffering, then it is perfected and obtains the designation “great compassion”, just as it is described in the *Akshayamati Sutra*. And this gradual meditation of compassion is described by the Buddha in the *Abhidharma Sutra* and so on.

### 3. It Helps The Thought Of Awakening

Thus for them the thought of Awakening arises effortlessly from the power of the practice of compassion—in the form of seeking after unsurpassed, perfect Awakening through the vow to rescue all beings. Thus it is said in the *Dasadharmasūtra*:

Having seen beings unprotected, defenseless, without refuge; having produced a thought devoted to compassion, one then generates the thought of unsurpassed, perfect Awakening.

Although (here it is said that) the magnanimous bodhisattva's thought of Awakening arises because of deliberate reflection upon others and so forth, in the noble *Tathagata Jñānamudrā Samādhi* the bodhisattva's thought of Awakening that arises on its own, from an impulse of compassion, is described by the Bhagavan as being superior. This very thought of Awakening even lacking in practical realization is described by the Bhagavan as a great reward in saṃsāra. And thus it is said in the *Maitreya Vimokṣa*:

Thus, for example, O noble son, even a fragment of a diamond-jewel outshines any highly refined golden ornament. It does not lose the name diamond-jewel and it (still) dispels all poverty. Thus noble son, even a fragment of the practice of the diamond-jewel which is the production of a mind of omniscience outshines any golden ornament of the virtues of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. And it does not lose the name of the thought of Awakening and it (still) dispels the poverty of saṃsāra.

Even one who is unable to train in the perfections completely in every respect, should generate the thought of Awakening—on account of the great fruitfulness of embracing method. [122] And as is said in the *Noble Rājavalokita Sūtra*:

Because you, O great king, with many duties and much to do, are not able to train in the perfection of giving completely in every respect, and equally so in the perfection of wisdom, on account of that then, you, O great king, must constantly and continuously remember, bear in mind and cultivate—the wish, the faith, the longing, and the prayer for Awakening whether you be walking, standing, sitting, lying down, waking, eating or drinking. Having accumulated the roots of virtues of the past, future and present relating to all the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, noble śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, laypeople as well as yourself—rejoice! And having rejoiced with great rejoicing, perform the rituals of worship of all the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, pratyekabuddhas and noble śrāvakas. And having acted thus, extend it to all beings.

Then, in order to obtain omniscience for all sentient beings, and to fulfill all the teachings of the Buddha, develop unsurpassed, perfect Awakening at three times throughout the day. Thus indeed, O King, being accomplished you will govern, and you

will not neglect the king's duties." Having spoken thus, he said, "Thus indeed, O great King, having done much through the ripening of the roots of virtue on account of the genuine thought of Awakening, you have become fit for the gods. Having done much, you have become fit for men. And among all those appearing as gods and people you will be made sovereign.

#### 4. Bodhichitta: Thought of Awakening

But it is established that the thought of Awakening that has its heart in practical realization (*pratipattisaram*, T. *sgrub pa snin po byed pa*) has an extraordinarily abundant reward. Thus it is stated in the *Noble Viradattapariprccha*:

The merit from the thought of Awakening, if it took shape, having filled the sky would yet surpass it. A man who would offer to the Lords of the world, filled with jewels Buddha-fields as many as the sands of the Ganges And one who, having made pranjali, bends their thought to Awakening: It is this worship which excels, of which there is no end.

Just as it is described in the *Noble Gandavyuha*,

"The thought of Awakening is like the seed (*bijabhuta*) of all the qualities of the Buddha."

[123] And that thought of Awakening is of two sorts: the thought which is an intention and the thought which is (actually) proceeding (to act). It is described in the *Noble Gandavyuha* thus:

Difficult to find, O noble son, are those beings in the world of beings who wish for unsurpassed, perfect Awakening. In comparison, most difficult to find are those beings who have actually proceeded towards unsurpassed, perfect Awakening.

The consciousness which has the form of firstly seeking, "May I become a Buddha for the benefit of the entire world,"—that is the intending thought. From the moment beings exist in the adoption of vows and have entered (T. *zugs*; Skt. *drsyante*, "are seen") into the accumulations—that is the proceeding Thought. And vows should be taken (*grahyah*) from another, from a spiritual friend who is (already) established in vows and whose strength is known. But when there is no suitable initiator (*grahaka*), then having turned to face the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, one should produce the thought of Awakening in the same way as it was produced by Manjusuri who became King Ambara. A bodhisattva with the thought of Awakening produced thus, themselves gives gifts and so forth and undertakes the practical realization (*pratipatti*), having thought, "One who is himself untamed does not tame others."



## 5. Wisdom And Method, Prajna And Upaya, Must Be Realized Jointly

Moreover, without practical realization Awakening is not attained. Just as is said in the *Noble Gayasirsa*:

Awakening belongs to bodhisattvas who have the essence that is practical realization, not to those who do not have the essence which is practical realization.

And it is said in the *Noble Samadhiraja*:

O son, you should train thus: “Therefore, may I become one possessing the essence [124] of practice.” Why is that? Because for one with the essence of practice, unsurpassed genuine Awakening is not difficult to find.

And in sutras such as the *Akshyamati* and the *Ratnamegha* the practical realization of bodhisattva is described in detail by way of division into perfections, immeasurables, attractions and so forth.

Thus a bodhisattva should train in the areas of the worldly arts, etc. How much more so in the transcendent absorptions! Otherwise how would they perform every kind of benefit for beings? This itself, in brief, is the bodhisattva’s practical realization which has the form of wisdom and method—not wisdom alone, nor method alone. As in the *Noble Vimalakirtinirdesha*,

“Method without wisdom, and wisdom without method, are a shackle of bodhisattvas.”

Wisdom accompanied by method, method accompanied by wisdom are described as being liberation. And it is said in the *Noble Gayasirsa*:

These two are the two shortened paths of the bodhisattvas. Magnanimous bodhisattvas who are endowed with these two paths will quickly wake up to unsurpassed, perfect Awakening. Which two? Method and wisdom.

## 6. Wisdom and Method

In that context, having abandoned the perfection of wisdom, everything that includes the perfections beginning with giving, the attractions and so forth—the skill that allows one to attain [125] all the dharmas of worldly development: the complete purification of the fields, great enjoyment, many followers, prosperity, the ripening of beings, magical transformations and so on—is said to be method. As for wisdom, it is the cause of ascertaining the true nature of that very method. Because of it, having discriminated genuine method, one is unchanged by acting (*anusthanam*) appropriately for the benefit of oneself and others; the one who is experiencing does not get afflicted, just as with poison taken along with a mantra. Thus it is said

in the very same sutra:

Method is the knowledge of attraction, wisdom is discriminating knowledge.

And it is said in the *Noble Sraddhabaladhana*:

Which is the skillfulness in method? It is the bringing together of all dharmas correctly (T. only: *yan dag par*). Which is wisdom? It is skillfulness by way of not getting mixed up with any dharmas.

These two, method and wisdom, are definitely to be adhered to at all times, also by those who have entered the stages (of the bodhisattva)—not just wisdom alone, nor method alone. On account of which, the proper practice of the perfections of the bodhisattva in all ten stages is recited in the *Dasabhumika* and so on, as in the words, “Never is it the case that in the remaining stages, one does not properly practice.” In the eighth stage of the bodhisattva dwelling in peace, the neglect of duty (*vyutthanam*) would be opposed by the Buddhas. And that is to be understood from reading.

## 7. No Contradiction Can Be Discovered In The Scriptures

And that which is stated in the noble *Vimalakirtinirdesa* and *Gayasirsa* sutras also would contradict what was previously said, on account of what is generally stated there. And that which [126] said in the Noble *Sarvadharmasamgraha Vaipulya Sutra* would also be in contradiction. There it was said:

“Subtle indeed, oh Manjusri, is the veil of actions opposing the true Dharma. Manjusri! Whosoever generates to a positive evaluation of one teaching spoken by the Tathagata [i.e. wisdom] (and) a negative evaluation with respect to another (teaching) [i.e. method], that person rejects the true Dharma. The Tathagata is maligned by one who rejects the true *Dharma*.”

Having clearly spoken in this way, he said, “As for this, Maitreya, which is the bodhisattvas’ realization of the six perfections for the sake of Awakening those ignorant people will speak as follows. ‘A bodhisattva should train only in the perfection of wisdom, what with the remaining perfections!’ They consider the other perfections relating to method to be reprehensible. Is that what you think Ajita? Did he who was the king of Kasi possess corrupt wisdom, he by whom his own flesh was given to a hawk for the sake of a dove?”

Maitreya said, “Definitely not this, Bhagavan!”

The Bhagavan said, “Maitreya, with regard to those meritorious deeds linked to the six perfections I accumulated by traveling the bodhisattvas’ course, was any harm done by

those virtuous actions?”

Maitreya said, “Definitely not so, Bhagavan!”

The Bhagavan said, “You, Ajita, to the extent of having realized sixty aeons in the perfection of giving, have to the same degree realized sixty aeons in the perfection of wisdom. Therefore (only) those who are ignorant people say, ‘Awakening is only (reached) by a single way, that is, by the way of emptiness.’ “

And it is also said in the *Vairocanabhisambodhi Sutra*,

“This omniscient knowledge which has compassion as its root and the thought of Awakening as its cause is the end of method.”

Therefore both [i.e. method and wisdom] should be pursued by the bodhisattva at all times.

## **8. *Apratisthitanirvana*; It Can Be Explained Only If There Is Cooperation Of Wisdom And Method.**

So it is that the nonabiding *nirvana* of the Bhagavans is demonstrated For the Bhagavans’ not abiding in *nirvana* is on account of their embracing the prosperity of the fruit of great enjoyment such as a form body, a (Buddha-) field, followers and so on, (all of which) belong to method i.e. giving and so forth. And because of wisdom, there is no staying in *samsara* on account [127] of the complete abandoning of all mistakes—for *samsara* is rooted in a mistake. Moreover, by this path which consists in wisdom and method, the middle way is made to arise—on account of the abandonment of the extremes of superimposition and denial (of reality). By wisdom the extreme of superimposition is abandoned; by method the extreme of denial is abandoned. Hence it is said in the noble *Dharmasangiti Sutra*:

Such a one is an enjoyer of the perfection of the form-body, that is, the major and minor characteristics—not one who delights in the realization of the *Dharmakaya* alone.

Again it is said:

Born from wisdom and method, the arising of the Tathagatas should be understood to be dependent upon others.

Which is stated again:

Those who know the method of the teachings to possess the likeness of a raft should abandon the teachings. And even before that, what is not the teaching.

But this is said with the intention that they should be abandoned by abandoning one's mistaken attachment, but not that they should not also be resorted to in order to achieve the purpose. And so it is said, "The teaching should be adopted, not clung to." The meaning is that it should not be adopted in a misguided way. And giving and the rest, which in some places are described as worldly fruits, were previously spoken of (in that way) for the benefit of those who possess them without wisdom—who are satisfied with meritorious deeds as such—in order to inspire (them to) higher meritorious actions. Otherwise it would all contradict the *Vimalakirtinirdesa*. Therefore it is established that the two, wisdom and method, are to be pursued. In that context, when adopted along with wisdom, giving and the rest obtain the designation "perfection"—not otherwise. Hence having remained concentrating in order to completely purify giving and the rest, one should strive [128] to obtain wisdom.

### **9. *Prajna: Srutamayi, cintamayi, bhavanamayi***

There, first of all, the wisdom of hearing should be generated. For through it first of all one enters into the meaning of the scriptures. Thereafter one penetrates their provisional and definitive meanings by the wisdom of thinking. After that, having ascertained the meaning that is real [*bhutam artham*, i.e. non-origination, emptiness] by means of that (wisdom of thinking), one should cultivate it, not that which is unreal [*abhutam* i.e. *neyartha*]. Otherwise, on account of meditating upon the false and the (consequent) non-disappearance of doubt, there could be no production of perfect knowledge. And then meditation would be pointless, just like that of the non-Buddhists. And the Bhagavan stated in the *Samadhiraja*:

If one investigates *dharma*s without identity  
And if, having investigated them, one would meditate  
That is the cause of obtaining the fruit of *nirvana*  
Any other cause does not lead to peace.

Therefore when the wisdom consisting in thinking has investigated by way of both logic and scriptures" the very reality which is the natural condition of things should be cultivated. And the natural condition of things is ascertained, on the basis of scripture and reasoning, to be in the ultimate sense only non-origination.

### **10. The Non-Origination Of All Things Is Ascertained By A) *Agama* And B) *Yukti***

#### **A) *Agama*, Authority**

In this context, from the scriptures—as it is put in the noble *Dharmasamgiti*, "Non-origination is truth, other attributes are falsehood." And this non-origination is called true on the [129] basis of its being in accord with ultimate truth (*paramartha-nukulatva*), even though from the perspective of the ultimate truth there is neither origination nor non-origination since (ultimate

truth is) beyond all mundane relations. Once again, and here itself, it is said:

The worldly crowd is preoccupied with arising and cessation, Kulaputra Therefore the Tathagata, possessed of great compassion, spoke in accord with mundane relations so as to remove the occasion of fear of the world, 'It arises, it stops,'—even though there does not exist here the origination of any *dharma* whatsoever.

And it is said in the *Noble Buddhasamgiti*:

What is the fundamental inquiry? What is the foundation? It is said: Non-origination is the foundation. The inquiry with regard to it is the fundamental inquiry.

And again here itself it is said:

All *dharma*s because they have their beginning with 'a' are free from death and birth. All *dharma*s have as their beginning non-existence owing to their emptiness of inherent nature. And in the noble *Satyadvayavibhaga* (it is said that) the equality of all *dharma*s is because of their equality with regard to non-origination.

And it is said in the *Prajnaparamita*:

Material form, Subhuti, is empty of an inherent nature of material form, just as much as consciousness is empty of an inherent nature of consciousness—owing to its emptiness of any specific characteristic.

And it has also been said in the *Hastikaksya*:

There is no existent whatsoever to be found of which origination is possible,  
An ignorant person seeks origination among non-originated *dharma*s.

And it was said in the *Pitaputrasamagama*:

All these *dharma*s, all are equal because of the equality of the three [130] times. In the past time all *dharma*s were devoid of an inherent nature right up to the present time.

## **B) *Yukti*, Arguing:**

### **B) 1. Origination Is Not Uncaused**

Thus first one should investigate on the basis of scripture. Since the meaning of a text that has been made firm by reasoning cannot be assailed by others, one should investigate on the basis of reasoning also. In this context the reasoning is briefly discussed. The origination of things could be either without or with a cause. (It can) not (be) without a cause, since it is seen to

occur on specific occasions. For (if origination was) unconnected to a cause, would not things occur at all times and places in the same way as at the time of origination, on account of there being no distinction (between them)? Alternatively, because there is no difference between the time when it arises and the time when it does not arise, they could not even occur at the time of origination either! Thus it is proven that (origination) is not without a cause.

## **B) 2. Origination Is Not Caused; Criticism Of God As Creator**

Not, however, that it has a cause. That is, in so far as a being such as God (*Isvar*) is imagined by non-Buddhists as a permanent cause, things (can) not be born from Him—since they are seen to originate gradually. For the gradual origination of an effect from a complete cause is not logical, because of [its] non-relation (i.e. to other contributing causes). For a powerful, self sufficient being such as God there (can be) no connection to other (causes). This is on account of the fact that (such beings) cannot be assisted by others by reason of their permanence. And on account of the fact that a connection to one who is unassisted is not appropriate. Hence because [131] God and his ilk are devoid of all capacity, they have no nature. They are just like the son of a barren woman, since a real thing (*vastu*) is capable of causal efficacy. They have no capacity for gradual (origination) with regard to any effect anywhere in the manner thought (by non-Buddhists).

Nor also simultaneously. That is, having produced all effects suddenly, at a later time if He was truly capable of production then there would again be the entailment of the production of the (same) effects as before, in a repetition (resulting) from the nature of that capacity. Or else, if there was no such repetition, (his) impermanence would be entailed by (his) abandonment of (his) previous nature (of producing the set of effects). Therefore there is no real thing whatsoever designated “permanent.” Hence truly it was stated by the Bhagavan:

But the superimposition is false, Oh Mahamati, the superimposition due to attachment to unmade phenomena; the sky, cessation and *nirvana*.

Therefore the origination of these from the permanent is not logical.

## **B) 3. A Noneternal Cause Is Also Illogical**

Nor also from the impermanent. On account of the unreality of the past and future, to that extent birth from that is not logical since it entails a condition of causelessness. But (it can) not (be) from the present, because origination from that in the same and different times is not appropriate. That is, not at the same time—since the effect, like the nature of the cause, would (already) be accomplished by having been made to arise at the same time as it.

Nor also at a different time—since if there is origination (after) a different interval of time (between cause and effect), then there would be the (absurd) entailment of the (present) production [132] of effects from a (disconnected) past. On the other hand, if origination

occurred without an interval (between cause and effect)—if origination was completely without interval—then the momentariness of an aeon would be entailed, since all moments would merge into one moment. Just as when there is the union of ultimate particles completely, there is the entailment of a lump being only a particle. Thus (if a moment had a connection) by one side, this would necessitate its being composed of parts. Nor do they arise from themselves, since this position is already covered by the position of (origination) without a cause, and because of the contradiction of activity in oneself.

Nor also from both—since this would entail a double fault by partaking in both positions! Therefore [all] those things are from the ultimate perspective, non-originated. But because origination exists conventionally there is no contradiction with any particular scripture.

And thus the Bhagavan said:

Things are born conventionally,  
In the ultimate sense they are without a nature.  
An error with regard to things without an inherent nature  
Is accepted as a convention.

And this reasoning was intended by the Bhagavan in the *Salistamba* and elsewhere, since he (therein) denied birth from oneself, from another, from both and without a cause.

## **11. Other Reasons. Criticism Of The Notion Of Matter (And Atoms), Of Immateriality (*Vijnana*), Of External Objects As Being Distinct From Mind**

Alternatively it should be analyzed by reasoning as follows. Things are of two sorts: those with a material form and those which are immaterial.

But here, first of all, those with a material form, such as pots and so forth, do not have an [133] individual nature since a material form is divisible into atoms. (And) their multiplicity (also) is not logical, since the condition of having the nature of a collection of atoms is not proven for atoms aligned in sequence being divided into directions like “in front” and so forth. And since aside from single or multiple natures there does not exist any other nature whatsoever for a thing, from the ultimate perspective natureless indeed are these entities with material form, just like the forms perceived in a dream. And this was stated by the Bhagavan himself in the *Noble Lankavatara*:

“O Mahamati! As a cowhorn being divided into atoms does not remain, so too even the atoms—being divided they do not retain the character of atomhood.

And those which are immaterial, being analyzed in this way, are also definitely without an inherent nature. That is to say, since an object which is external such as blue does not exist, the

immaterial aggregates such as consciousness and the rest appear in the form of ‘blue’ out of their own capacity. It should be approached in this way. The Bhagavan said,

“Material form is not outside, it is one’s own mind that is seen outside.”

And thus those (immaterial things) having a singular nature are not logically possible since they appear in various aspects such as blue and so on [and] since they appear under the (two) forms of subject and object. And an individual having a multiple nature is not reasonable, since “one” and “many” are opposed. Since no individual nature (can be) established, then a multiple nature is also illogical—since something multiple has the form of a collection of individuals! But if it is accepted here that those untrue material forms and so forth appear as aspects, then consciousness also proves to be false since consciousness is no different in nature from those.

[134] For there is no other form of consciousness apart from the form it has in appearing. And material forms and so forth do not appear on their own. And since those which have been reduced to the nature of consciousness are false, it should be granted that all consciousness is false. Therefore the Bhagavan said,

“All consciousness is like an illusion.”

Therefore it is certain that all these things are ultimately false because of their voidness of singular or multiple natures. And this meaning was spoken by the Bhagavan in the *Lankavatara*:

Just as a form in a mirror, its oneness and otherness abandoned, is seen and yet is not there, so too is the reality of things.

‘Oneness and otherness abandoned’ means ‘without oneness or otherness’. And again it is said:

Discriminating with the intellect, an inherent nature is not ascertained. Thus they are shown to be inexpressible and without an inherent nature.

## **12. Bhavanamayi Prajna**

Thus having ascertained the real meaning by means of the wisdom of thinking, one should give rise to the wisdom of meditation in order to directly perceive it. In the noble *Ratnamegha* and others, it is declared, “The meaning does not become evident by merely hearing a great deal.” And experience (*anubhava*) belongs to those who practice (*pratipattr*). Indeed also without the rising of the light of a clearer knowledge, the darkness of obscurity is not properly abandoned. From doing a lot of meditation, even upon an unreal object, a clearer knowledge arises. For example (it arises) for those practitioners who have attained nonauspicious objects and so on, as well as the entire earth and so forth. What to speak of those objects which are real? In that way, because meditation has the fruit which is very clear knowledge, its fruitfulness is spoken of in the *Noble Samadhiraja*:



[135] I illuminate (and) proclaim to you:  
Just as one would reason a great deal  
So too in this way one becomes one deep in mind  
through those reasonings dependent on it.

Therefore one who wants to directly perceive (*sakṣatkartukama*) reality proceeds in meditation.

### 13. Samatha

In this regard, first of all a yogin should produce tranquillity in order to stabilize the mind. Since the mind is tremulous, like water, there is no steadiness without a calm foundation. And reality as it is cannot be known by an unconcentrated mind. For it is stated by the Bhagavan,

“One who has a concentrated mind discerns reality as it is. “

Tranquility is more quickly accomplished for [one who] is free from desires for gain and such, who is established in the correct orientation, whose discipline (*sīla*) endures pain and so forth and whose effort is begun. On account of this, giving and the others are repeatedly described in the noble *Samdhinirmocana* and the rest.

Therefore, one who in this way is established in the prerequisites (*sambhara*) of tranquility which begin with morality, having prostrated (oneself) before all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas in a place which is agreeable to the mind, confesses ones sins taking joy in its merits. Then, manifesting great compassion and sitting down on a comfortable seat with the body straight and in then lotus posture, this one who intends to rescue the entire world should bring about *śamādhi*.

In that context, initially at the outset, the thing (*vastu*, T. *dnos po*) to be analyzed is the collection of all things abbreviated in terms of kind; one should fix the mind there. But, summed up, a thing is twofold—by way of division into material and immaterial. For a beginner it is appropriate to objectify (*alambayitum*) summarily in order to avoid the fault of distraction. But [136] when one becomes one whose attention is mastered, then having analyzed in terms of the division of the elements which are the aggregates and so on, one then also relies on a (more) detailed way (*vistaraso 'py alambata eva*). Thus in the *Samdhinirmocana* the various kinds of meditation object (*alambana*) are spoken of in terms of the division of meditation objects into the eighteen kinds of emptiness for yogins and so on.

And in precisely this connection in the *Abhidharma* and elsewhere, out of the kindness to sentient beings, the Bhagavan taught the division of a thing in brief, in moderate detail, and in detail by way of the division into material, immaterial and so on.

And that thing should be counted (*ganayet*) as a collection of the elements which are the aggregates and so forth in order to avoid exaggeration and underestimation. And next, having ascertained the collection of all things, again one should continuously motivate the mind there itself.

If in so doing the mind should be distracted outward because of desire and so forth, then having recognized the distraction and having pacified it by meditating on the topics beginning with impurity, one should again repeatedly motivate the mind there itself. But the process for meditating on the topics beginning with impurity is not written of, out of concern for too much detail in this book.

But when in that context one would see the mind dissatisfied, then one should develop satisfaction there by seeing the advantages of *samadhi*. One should pacify the dissatisfaction by seeing the faults in distraction. And if from being overcome by sluggishness and sleep, the mind has sunk because of a lack of clarity in the grasping the object, then having alleviated that laxity by meditating on a perception light or from paying attention to delightful things like the qualities of the Buddha, one should again seize that very object more firmly.

[137] And if one would see the mind excited while remembering previous laughter, enjoyment and so on, then one should pacify the excitement by paying attention to sobering topics such as impermanence. Then one should again make an effort with respect to the mind's spontaneously engaging exactly that meditation object. And when, because of being cut off from laxity and excitement, one would see the mind bearing its own flavour, proceeding evenly, then by letting go of effort one becomes equanimous. For if an effort is made while the mind is proceeding evenly, then one would distract the mind.

But when the mind is proceeding just as long as one likes, spontaneously bearing in upon the object there, then tranquility should be known to be accomplished. And this is the general definition of all tranquility since tranquility has the nature of mere one-pointedness of mind. Its object, on the other hand, is definitely not fixed. And this path of tranquility has been explained by the Bhagavan in the *Noble Prajnaparamita* and so on.

## 14. Six Defects And Eight Counteragents

Which is said with nine words:

“One (acts upon) the mind there thus: *sthapayati*, *samsthapayati*, *avasthapayati*, *upasthapayati*, *damayati*, *Samayati*, *vyupaSamayati*, *ekotikaroti* and *samadadhati*.”

There *sthapayati* (means) that one binds (the mind) by means of a meditation object. *Samsthapayati* (means) that one makes (the mind) proceed continuously on the meditation object there itself: *Avasthapayati* (means) that having understood distraction one avoids it. *Upasthapayati* (means) that having avoided that distraction one again repeatedly binds

(*sthapayati*) (the mind) to [138] the meditation object there itself. *Damayati* (means) that one gives rise to satisfaction. *Samayati* (means) that, by seeing the faults of distraction one quells dissatisfaction. *Vyupasamayati* means that one quells the torpor and drowsiness that have arisen. *Ekotikaroti* means that one makes an effort with respect to spontaneously engaging the meditation object. *Samadadhati* means that one cares for, pays heed to the mind which has attained its balance. Such is the meaning. And the meaning of these words was explained by previous teachers and by Maitreya.

In brief, there are six (possible) faults for every single *samadhi*: laziness, loss of the object, laxity, excitement, lack of effort and overexertion. Eight conditions of abandonment should be cultivated as their antidotes, namely: faith, aspiration, exertion, pliancy, mindfulness, clear comprehension, willpower (*cetana*) and equanimity. Here the first four are antidotes of laziness. That is to say, it is through the faith which has the characteristic of a firm confidence in the virtues of *samadhi* that the yogin's aspiration arises there. Then, out of that aspiration effort should commence. Through the power of that effort one obtains capability (*karmanyata*) of body and mind. Then, for the one who is pliant (*prasrabdha*) in mind and in body the laziness abates. Hence (those antidotes) beginning with faith should be cultivated for the removal of laziness. Mindfulness is the antidote of "loss of the meditation object." Clear comprehension is the antidote of laxity and excitement since it is by it that laxity and excitement are properly noticed. But at the time when there is no alleviating the laxity and excitement, there is the fault of lack of effort; and as the antidote of that, willpower should be cultivated. Laxity and excitement being alleviated, when the mind is the carrier of calmness then there [can be] the fault of (over)exertion. Then its antidote, equanimity, should be cultivated. The *samadhi* which is accompanied by these eight conditions of abandonment is extremely effective. It establishes qualities such as the extraordinary powers. Thus [139] it is said in the *sutra*,

"One who is endowed with [the eight conditions of] abandonment develops a condition of extraordinary powers."

## 15. *Dhyana*, Etc

And this one-pointedness of mind receives the designation, "absorption," "formless attainment," "liberation," and so forth on account its being endowed with greater and greater capability and on account of possessing the distinct qualities of its object and so forth. That is, when it is conjoined with feelings of equanimity, and has gross thought and subtle thought, then it is called 'capable' (*anagamyā*, T. *mi lcogs pa med pa*, "not unable"). And when it is separated from the thirst for pleasure [as well as] conjoined with [gross and subtle thought,] rapture, joy, and clarity pertaining to the self (*adhyatmasamprasāda*, i.e. mindfulness and clear comprehension), then it is called the first absorption.

After this the first absorption without gross thought alone is called "intermediate absorption" (*dhyānantara*). When it is without (both) gross thought and subtle thought, as well as separated from thirst for the stage of the first absorption—(but still) conjoined with rapture, joy, and

clarity pertaining to the self—then it is called the second absorption.

But when it is separated from the thirst for the second absorption, (and) is conjoined with joy, equanimity, mindfulness and clear comprehension, then it is called the third absorption. And when it is separated from thirst for the stage of the third absorption and conjoined with the mindfulness and equanimity and without sorrow or pleasure, then it is called the fourth absorption.

Thus among the supreme domains and so forth which are the formless attainments and [140] liberations, one should engage (*yojyam*) according to the aspects and so forth of the meditation object. Having stabilized the mind upon the meditation object in this way, one should analyze by means of wisdom—since the thorough removal of the seed of delusion occurs on the basis of generating the light of knowledge. For otherwise, through *samadhi* alone there would be no removal of the afflictions—as is the case with the non-Buddhists. Just as it is said in the sutra:

And however one might cultivate this *samadhi* but that self-perception not be meditated upon. Again its *klesas* will be enraged here just as in Udraka's cultivation of *samadhi*.

#### **16. Method Of Meditation According To The *Lankavatara*; *Vicara* On The *Dharmas* (No Object, No Subject), Etc.**

In this regard, this process of cultivating wisdom is briefly taught in the *Noble Lankavatara*:

Having ascended to 'mind-only',  
one would not imagine an external object.  
Dwelling on the object which is suchness,  
one should transcend the mind-only.

Having transcended the mind-only,  
one should pass into nonappearance.  
Established in the state of nonappearance  
the yogin sees the Mahayana.

The effortless condition,  
pacified, is purified by prayers  
He sees the best knowledge,  
from which self has gone out,  
by means of nonappearance.

There this is the meaning. First of all the yogin should analyze (*vicarayet*, T. *dpyad par bya*) those *dharmas* having a material form, imagined by others as being external objects, "Are these other than consciousness, or is it this consciousness itself appearing in that manner—just as in [141] dreamstate?" In that regard (i.e. if the position held is that they have a nature) outside of

consciousness, one should break them down into atoms (*paramanuso vicarayet*, T. *rdul phra rab tu bsig ste*).

And discerning those atoms by way of parts, the yogin does not see those things. Not seeing (them), one thinks, “All this is indeed mind-only, an external object does not exist.” Therefore thus, “Having ascended to mind-only, one would not imagine an external object.” The meaning is that one would abandon conceptualizations of *dharmas* that have a material form. One should draw a conclusion from the nonapprehension (*anupalabdhi*) of those things that are in principle apprehensible.

Thus having broken down (*vibhavya*, T. *mam par bsig nas*) *dharmas* with a material form, one should break down those without material form. There, that too is the mind alone. When there is the nonexistence of an object, a subject is not logical—because of the dependence of subject upon object. Therefore one should analyze (*vicarayet*, T. *mam par dpyad pa*) thus: “The mind separated from the object and the subject is precisely the non-dual mind.” (And) with respect to the characteristic of nonduality—“Dwelling on the meditation object of suchness, one should also transcend the mind-only.” The meaning is that one should go beyond the subjective aspect; one should dwell in the knowledge of non-duality which is without the appearance of duality.

Thus, having transcended the mind-only, so too one should transcend even the knowledge that is without the appearance of duality. And when the subject and object are false on account of the unacceptability (*anupapatti*, T. *mi 'thad pa*) of the birth of phenomena from themselves (or) from another, one should analyze thus: “That being real (i.e. the knowledge that is without the [142] appearance of non-duality) is illogical, since it is not different from those.”

The meaning is that there also one should abandon attachment to the reality of this knowledge of non-duality; one should remain in the knowledge that definitely has no appearance of the knowledge of non-duality.

When this is so, one is established in the practical realization of the lack of inherent nature of all *Dharmas*. Because the one who is established there enters ultimate suchness, there is the entry into nonconceptual *samadhi*. And thus when the yogin is established in the knowledge that has no appearance of nondual knowledge, then, due to one being established in the ultimate suchness one sees the Mahayana.

## 17. Meditation on the Absolute

Only this itself is said to be the Mahayana which is the seeing of the ultimate suchness. This very seeing of the ultimate suchness, when there is the vision of genuine knowledge (*samyagjnana-valoka*, T. *yan dag pa'i ye ses kyi snan ba sar*) of one who observes all *dharmas* with the eye of Wisdom, is a non-seeing (*adarsana*, T. *mthon ba med pa*). And thus it is said in the *sutra*, “What is the seeing of the ultimate reality? It is the non-seeing of all *dharmas*.” Here

precisely this kind of “non-seeing” is intended, not the non-seeing which is from lacking a condition—as with those who are blind by birth or whose eyes are closed, or which is from lack of attention. Therefore a mistaken inclination of attachment and so on towards things (*bhava*, T. *dnos po*) occurs on the basis of non abandonment. Even if they are one who has emerged from the “unconscious state of attainment” and so forth (*asamjnisamapatty-adivhyutthita*), if possessed by the root which is attachment to existence, the yogin would yet be unliberated from the (future) arising of the group of [143] afflictions which are passions and so forth.

Passion and so forth, which has its root in attachment to existence, is described in the noble *Satyadvayanirdesa* and elsewhere. But when it is said in the *Avikalpa-pravesadharani*, “He sets aside the phenomenal signs of material forms and so forth on the basis of nonattention (*amanasikara*),” the nonattention intended, which is nonapprehension (*anupalambha*) on the basis of observing with wisdom, is not the mere absence of mental activity (*manasikara-bhavamatra*).

For beginningless attachment to material form and so forth is not removed by the mere abandonment of mental activity, as in the unconscious state of attainment etc. When there is no removal of doubt, one cannot avoid mental activity based upon attachment to previously apprehended material forms etc., just as there is no avoidance of burning when there is no avoidance of fire.

In this way, these false conceptualizations which are the material forms and so forth are not to be manually extracted from the mind like a thorn or some such thing pulled out by hand Then what, (must it not be) by the disappearance of the seed of doubt? And that seed of doubt, when there is the light of *samadhi* of the yogin who is observing with the eye of wisdom, vanishes like the cognition of a snake in a rope, on account of the non-apprehension of those previously apprehended material forms and so forth which had taken on the character of findability—not otherwise.

Thus mental activity based on phenomenal signs of material forms and so forth can be avoided on the basis of the disappearance of the seed of doubt, not otherwise. Indeed, otherwise, if there were no light of *samadhi* and also no vision with the eye of wisdom, the yogin’s doubt regarding the existence of material forms and so forth would not cease—just as for a man situated down in an overgrown well with regard to the pots existing in a house. And with the non-cessation [144] of that, the irrational attachment to false material forms and so forth would continue—just as for one who has the fault of unremoved eye disease. It could not be stopped by anyone. Therefore having taken hold of the mind with the hand of *samadhi* (the yogin) should clear away the seed of false conceptualizations of material forms, etc. in the mind there with the sword of very subtle wisdom. When this is so, false conceptualizations, just like uprooted trees, because the ground is free of (their) roots, do not grow in the mind again. On account of this alone the Bhagavan taught the path which carries the union of tranquility and insight in order to remove the obscurations, since those two are the causes of perfect non-conceptual knowledge. Thus it is said:

Having established morality, there is the gaining of concentration  
And from the gaining of concentration, there is the cultivation of wisdom.  
By means of wisdom, knowledge becomes pure  
For one whose knowledge is pure, verily there is the wealth of morality.

So it is that when the mind is fixed upon the object by means of tranquility, then the light of genuine knowledge arises for the one who analyzes with wisdom, and then the obscuration is banished just as the darkness when the light is shining. Therefore on account of the fact that these two are established as compatible qualities regarding the production of genuine knowledge, like the eye and light, there is no mutual incompatibility as there is between light and darkness. For *samadhi* does not have the nature of darkness. Then what, does it not have the character of one-pointedness of mind? From the words, “And one who is concentrated knows reality as it is,” (it can be seen that *samadhi*) is entirely consistent with wisdom, and is not opposed. Therefore for the [145] one who is concentrated, who is observing with wisdom, there would be the nonapprehension of all *dharma*s. And that is the highest nonapprehension. And in this way, that yogins’ condition characterized by stability is “effortless” because of the nonexistence of anything to be seen more than that. (The condition is) “pacified” because of the pacification of conceptual proliferation characterized by conceptions of existence and nonexistence, etc.

That is, when the yogin observing with the eye of wisdom does not apprehend any inherent nature in existents, then, for them there is no conception of existence. And also for them there is no conception of nonexistence. If ever an existent is seen, that being the case, a conception of nonexistence occurs by the denial of that. But when throughout the three times an existent is not apprehended by the yogin observing with eye of wisdom, then how can one form a conception of nonexistence through denial? Thus other conceptualizations definitely do not arise for them at that time because of the pervasion of all conceptualizations by conceptions of existence and nonexistence, and because when there is an absence of pervader there is no possibility of that which is to be pervaded. This itself is the yoga of the highest nonconceptualization.

## **18. Definite Elimination Of *Klesa*- And *Jneya-Avarana***

In this circumstance, on the basis of all the steadfast yogin’s conceptualizations coming to an end, afflictive and cognitive obscurations are completely removed. For the root cause of the afflictive obscuration is described by the Bhagavan in the *Noble Satyadvayanirdesa Sutra* and elsewhere as the mistaken transposition (*viparyasa*) of existence and so forth (*bhavadi*) onto nonoriginated, unobstructed phenomena (*anutpannaniruddhabhava*).

And on the basis of the removal of all conceptualizations of existence and so forth by this [146] practice of yoga, there is the removal of the mistaken transposition of all existence, which is of the nature of ignorance and the root of the afflictive obscurations. Thus on account of being cut off at the root the afflictive obscuration is completely removed.

Thus it is said in the *Satyadvayanirdesa*:

“How, Manjusri, are the afflictions restrained? How are the afflictions fully known?”

Manjusri said, “From the ultimate perspective, upon all of these *dharmas* which are really unborn, unoriginated and without substance there is a false inversion (*asadviparyasah*) because of conventions. On the basis of that false inversion, there is imagination and conceptualization (*samkalpavikalpa*). From that imagination and conceptualization comes unfounded mental activity (*ayonisomanasikara*). Out of unfounded mental activity there is a superimposition of self (*atmasamaropah*). From the superimposition of self, there is the emergence of views (*drstiparayutthana*). On the basis of the emergence of views, the afflictions advance.

But he, O Son of the Gods, who knows all *dharmas* to be really unborn, unoriginated and without existence—such a one is ultimately unmistaken. And one who is ultimately unmistaken is without conceptualization (*avikalpa*). And one who is without conceptualizations is in touch with the fundamental (*yonisah prayukta*). And for one who is in touch with the fundamental, the superimposition of a self does not occur. And for one to whom the superimposition of a self does not occur, there is no emergence of views. Ultimately there is not even the emergence of any view among the views of *nirvana*. Thus the afflictions of one who dwells in nonorigination should be seen to be completely restrained. This is called the restraint of the afflictions.

O Son of the Gods! When, ultimately, by means of knowledge without appearance one knows the afflictions to be really empty, really without existence, really without a phenomenal sign then, O Son of the Gods, the afflictions are fully known. As an example, O Son of the Gods, one who understands a species of snake neutralizes the poison of that snake. Just so, O Son of the Gods, for one who understands the origin of afflictions, the afflictions are completely neutralized.”

The Son of the Gods said, “What, O Manjusri, is the origin of the afflictions?”

Came the reply, “ultimately it is this imagination with respect to all *dharmas*, which are really unborn, unoriginated, and without existence, that is the origin of afflictions.”

And because all inversion is pervaded by the inversion with respect to existence, on account of the removal of all inversion when there is the removal of that (inversion with respect to existence), the cognitive obscuration is also completely removed by this, since an obscuration [147] is defined in terms of an inversion. And when there is the removal of the cognitive obscuration, then on account of this absence of obstruction the yogin’s perception (*yogipratyaksa*) shines forth with the light of knowledge, unimpeded anywhere—like a sunbeam through a sky whose covering of clouds has retreated. Thus consciousness has the appearance of light upon the nature of things (*vastusvabhava*).



But so long as an obstruction is present (*pratibandhasadbhava*), it does not illuminate even something close at hand. When obstructions are absent however, then, from gaining a quality of inconceivable power, why indeed would not every single thing be illuminated just as it is? Therefore omniscience is obtained through knowing all things just as they are in terms of their conventional and ultimate nature. Thus only this is the highest path for removing obscurations and attaining omniscience. For the two obscurations are not properly removed by that which is the path of the *śravakas*, on account of the nonremoval of inversion. And so it has been said in the *Noble Lankavatara Sutra*:

Others indeed, having seen all *dharma*s dependent on causes become possessed of such minds (as mistakenly see) *nirvana* even in what is not *nirvana*. Because they do not see the identitylessness of *dharma*s, Mahamati, for them there is no liberation. Mahamati! One who belongs to the class having the realization of a *śravaka* has the idea of a final emancipation (*nirvana*) in what is not the final emancipation (*anirvana*). In such a case, Mahamati, practice should be undertaken in order to purify false views.

And thus since there is no liberation by any other path, the Bhagavan spoke of only one vehicle. The path of the *śravakas* was only taught with the intention of getting started. So it is that by contemplating, “Indeed this is only the aggregates; there is no self”, the *śravaka* enters into the view of the selflessness of the personality. One enters into the view of the identitylessness of external objects held by the *Vijñānavādin* by contemplating, “The three worlds are mind only.” In this way, from the entrance which is the identitylessness of this nondual knowledge one comes to [148] enter into the highest suchness. But the entrance into mind-only alone is not the entrance into suchness. Just as was said before. And as was said in the *Noble Lokottaraparivarta*:

Moreover, O Son of the Jinas, one realizes the three realms as mind-only, and that mind presents itself (*avatarati*) by way of the absence of middle and extremes.

The mind is without middle or extremes on account of the nonexistence of the two ends characterized by origination and dissolution, and of the middle which has the characteristic of endurance. Therefore the entrance into nondual knowledge is definitely the entrance into suchness (*tattva*). And how is that state of yogin purified? It is said, “It is purified by prayer.” What is prayed for by the *bodhisattva* is the benefitting all beings through great compassion. Thereafter, from the practice of the virtues such as ever-increasing giving, having the power of prayer, that great compassion thus becomes purified. Because of this, even when there is knowledge of all *dharma*s lack of inherent existence, the needs of all beings are not neglected to such an extent that it is said, “As long as this world itself remains, those undefiled by its faults will remain.”

But how (is such a state) “without effort” (and) “pacified”? Here the cause is said, “He sees the best knowledge, from which self has gone out, by means of nonreflection.” On account of which, even that knowledge that has the characteristic of nonduality which is accepted as

ultimately the best by the nondualists, the yogin sees as devoid of self, without a nature—by means of knowledge which is without the appearance of nonduality. Hence it is without effort since there is nothing else to see; it is pacified because of the absence of all conceptualization.

### 19. Absolute And Conventional: *Paramartha* And *Samvrti*.

Now here, if it is asked, “Who is this yogin who sees?”, ultimately there isn’t anyone with an independent self or some such, nor either any yogin who sees. But conventionally just as [149] consciousness occurs by the mere generation of cognitions of the aspects of sense objects such as material forms, so too in the world one maintains (*vyavabriyate*): “Devadatta sees Yajnadatta through cognition,” even though there does not exist any self whomsoever, etc. So here too, that very cognition arising without the appearance of nondual knowledge is designated thus: “One sees by a knowledge without appearance.” It is not the case that because of there being a lack of inherent existence of all dharmas from the ultimate perspective, that conventionally the knowledge of the yogins or other knowledge of the layman is not sought. So it is said in the *Noble Satyadvayanirdesa Sutra*,

“Although ultimately completely nonexistent, conventionally one cultivates the path.” Otherwise, how could there be a distinction between ordinary people and sravakas, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas and so on? However, that of which a cause does not exist even conventionally also does not arise conventionally—just as a hare’s horn and so forth.

But that of which a cause exists, although ultimately false, definitely arises—just as do illusions, reflections and so forth. And even though conventionally such illusions do arise in interdependence, ultimately their reality (*vastutva*) is not feasible since it does not stand up to analysis. Hence the entire world is like an illusion.

In this regard, just as for sentient beings the illusion of birth proceeds in dependence upon the illusions which are the actions and afflictions, so too for yogins the illusion of yogic knowledge proceeds in dependence upon the illusions which are the accumulations of merit and knowledge!

Thus it has been said in the *Noble Prajanaparamita Sutra*:

Someone is an apparition of a sravaka, someone an apparition of a pratyekabuddha, someone an apparition of a bodhisattva, someone an apparition of a Tathagata.  
Someone is an apparition of actions, someone is an apparition of afflictions.  
Through this enumeration, Subhuti, all natures are known as apparitions.

But this is the distinction between yogins and common people: they are like magicians who, [150] from knowing that illusion as it really is, do not become attached to it as real. It is for that reason they are called yogins. Those who have taken a trick to be real, as have childlike,

ordinary people illusion, are called ‘childlike’ because of their attachment to what is mistaken. Hence everything is consistent.

As it is said in the *Noble Dharmasamgiti*:

Just as a certain magician tries to liberate an apparition even while there is no attachment to the apparition because of their previous knowledge, so too they who have completely mastered Awakening having known the three worlds to resemble an apparition readies for this previously known world for the sake of living beings.

## **20. Progress In Meditation, *Yuganaddhamarga***

Thus one should cultivate reality by this process. And there, as before, one should neutralize the laxity, excitement and so forth that have arisen. But when knowledge is proceeding spontaneously, without laxity or excitement, unto the object which is the lack of inherent existence of all *dharmas*, then the path which carries the union of tranquility and insight is perfected. Then as much as one can, one should meditate established in the stage of zealous conduct, with the power of zeal. Then having broken the lotus posture just as one likes, and having arisen, one should again consider: Even if all these *dharmas* are ultimately without an inherent nature, the fact remains that they are established conventionally! Thus it was said in the *Noble Ratnamegha*:

“How is a bodhisattva skillful in selflessness? Here, O Kulaputra, the bodhisattva discerns material form by means of genuine wisdom, one discerns feeling, perception, formations and consciousness. Discerning form, one does not find the production of form, nor does one find its cessation, nor does one find its origin. Thus one does not find the production of feeling, perception, formations or consciousness. Nor does one find their cessation. Nor does one find their origin. But this is so from the ultimate perspective, by the wisdom which abides in nonorigination—not from the perspective of designated nature.”

And these who have minds like children experience diverse sufferings wandering around in *samsara* because of their [151] mistaken attachment to entities that have no inherent nature.

Having manifested great compassion, one should think as follows, “I will act in such a way that once I have obtained omniscience I would make the *Dharma* nature known to them.” Then having performed offerings and hymns of worship to all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, one should offer the prayer which is the *Noble Bhadracarya*. Then one proceeds in the acquisition of all the accumulations of merit and knowledge, starting with giving, which has the womb of emptiness and compassion. As it is put in the noble *Dharmasamgiti*:

The great compassion of the bodhisattva who sees reality as such issues forth and thinks, “For the sake of all beings I should perfect this doorway of *samadhi* which is the

vision of all *dharma*s as they really are. One who is being impelled by that great compassion having fulfilled the three teachings of exalted morality, mindfulness, and wisdom is awakened to unsurpassed, perfect Awakening.”

This alone is the bodhisattvas’ path which carries the union of wisdom and method, that even while viewing the ultimate they do not cut off the conventional. And those unmistakable ones who do not cut off the conventional, for whom great compassion comes first, enter into action for the benefit of all beings.

Now it may be the case that adherence to method is not possible while in the condition of world-transcending wisdom. Nevertheless at the time of adhering to method, because the bodhisattva, like a magician, is unmistakable due to their world-transcending knowledge, the wisdom with a background in (that world-transcending) practice is present, connected to the ultimate suchness of things as they are! Therefore there is definitely a path which carries the union of wisdom and method! And (it is stated) in the *Noble Akshayamati Nirdeśa* that the path which carries [152] the union of wisdom and method should be followed with inexhaustible concentration (*dhyānaksayata*)

And it was said in the noble Ratnamegha:

How does a bodhisattva become skillful in the Mahayana? Here the bodhisattva learns all the training, even though one does not apprehend a path in the training. And that which one learns also is not apprehended. And the one who is taught, too is not apprehended. And it is by way of that reason, that cause, that condition that one does not fall into annihilationism.

## **21. Pratipatti**

And it said in the *Noble Dharmasamgiti*:

What is the practical realization of the bodhisattvas? Whatever the bodhisattvas’ bodily action, whatever their vocal action, whatever their mental action—it proceeds for the sake of all beings because of the precedence of great compassion. The sovereignty of great compassion is produced from the intention (to act) for all sentient beings’ happiness and well-being. The one with the intention of well-being takes cognizance in this way: ‘I should realize in practice the practical realization that produces well-being—that brings happiness to all beings’. For him, the practical realization is discerning the aggregates to be like an illusion and yet it does not seek the abandonment of those aggregates. The practical realization is discerning the elements to be like a snake and yet it does not seek the abandonment of the elements. The practical realization is discerning the sense-spheres to be like an empty village and yet it does not seek the abandonment of the sense-spheres. The practical realization is discerning material form as like a ball of foam and yet it does not relinquish the creation of a Tathagata’s form-

body. The practical realization is discerning feeling as like bubbles and yet it does not fail to begin the application of the production of the bliss of attainment in the absorptions and concentrations of the Tathagatas. The practical realization is discerning perception to be like a mirage and yet there is no abstaining from the practical realization of the perception that produces the knowledge of the Tathagatas. The practical realization is discerning mental formations to be like a banana tree and yet there is no abstaining from the practical realization of the mental formations that are the qualities of the Buddha. The practical realization is discerning consciousness to be like an illusion and yet there is no abstaining from the practical realization of the production of the actions of body, speech and mind that are the forerunners of knowledge.

Thus among limitless *sutras* the practical realization which has the form of wisdom and method [153] should be followed.

## 22. The Stages: *Adhimukticarya*

Thus by this process, having constantly honored wisdom and method, twelve kinds of state arise for the bodhisattva who develops by practicing over a long period of time. Those very states are distinguished (*vyavasthapyante*) as stages in the sense that they are the bases of progressively higher virtues—from the stage of conduct of zealous conduct right up to the stage of a Buddha. In this connection, as long as one does not directly experience the suchness (*tattvam*) of the selflessness of the personality and of dharmas, (there is) only a very intense zeal. Unshakable by the likes of Mara, when one cultivates suchness with the power of zeal, then the stage of zealous conduct is distinguished on the basis of intense zeal. The bodhisattva existing in this stage, although still an ordinary person, has completely passed beyond all the calamities of a fool and is endowed with innumerable qualities like *samadhis*, spells, freedoms, superknowledges and so on.

Thus it is read in the *Noble Ratnamegha Sutra*:

All of this very (stage) four degrees of penetration are distinguished by way of the tetrad of soft, middling, strong and stronger. That is, when from meditating on the identitylessness of all *dharmas* the light of knowledge arises to the extent that it is just evident, then this is the degree of penetration called “Become warm” (*usmagata*). And that, here in the Mahayana, is called “The *Samadhi* reaching the light”. But when that very light of knowledge becomes moderately evident, then” it is the degree of penetration called “The summit” (*murddha*), which (in the Mahayana) is called “The *samadhi* of increased light”. And when an even more pronounced light of knowledge is born—one in which there is no appearance of external objects—then, because it rests on [154] conception (*vijnapti*) only, it is the degree of penetration termed “patience” (*ksanti*). And it is called “The *samadhi* which has entered one domain” because one has entered the non-apprehension of the object’s aspects. But when one would ascertain the non-dual knowledge which is devoid of the forms of the object and subject, then

this is the degree of penetration designated “The best (worldly) condition” (*agradharma*). And this is called “The *samadhi* without interval” because, in fact, immediately following it one enters into suchness. Up to this point (we have been dealing with) the stage of zealous conduct.

### 23. The Ten *Bhumis* And The *Buddhabhumi*

But the other stages are briefly distinguished on the basis of fulfilling eleven components. In that context the first stage is distinguished at the outset on the basis of fulfilling the component which is understanding suchness which is the identitylessness of the personality and of *dharmas*.

In this regard, when upon the completion of “The best (worldly) condition” a clearer knowledge arises for the first time ever—superior, transcendental, devoid of all conceptual proliferation, directly perceiving the lack of inherent existence of all *dharmas*—then, on account of the arising of the path of seeing from descending into certainty of the truth (*samyaktvanyama* i.e. the assurance of *nirvana*) the bodhisattva has entered the first stage.

Thus in this stage, the bodhisattva is delighted on account of understanding for the first time the suchness that was not understood. Hence this stage is called ‘delighted’. And here the one hundred and twelve afflictions that are fit to be abandoned by seeing are forsaken. But the remaining stages have the nature of a path of cultivation. In them the sixteen afflictions of the three [155] worlds that are fit to be abandoned by cultivation are forsaken. And in this stage the bodhisattva’s perfection of giving becomes unexcelled on account of proceeding in the interests of others just as in the interest of oneself—on the basis of a realization which has a full comprehension the *Dharma* Realm. But even that bodhisattva for whom suchness is well mastered, verily, so long as one cannot become one who dwells in clear comprehension of subtle immoral slip-ups (*skhalita*), that long (he remains in) the first stage. But when one can, then on the basis of fulfilling this component the second stage is distinguished.

Hence in this stage the perfection of morality becomes unexcelled because of their nonperformance of subtle immoral slip-ups. This stage is called “pure” on account of the departure all the filth which is moral undiscipline. One becomes one who dwells in clear comprehension of subtle immoral slip-ups. So long as one cannot attain the entire worldly *samadhi* and keep to the meaning as it was heard, until then it is merely the second stage. When one can then on the basis of fulfilling this component the third stage is distinguished.

And in this stage the perfection of patience becomes unexcelled on account of enduring every suffering in order to achieve the all worldly *samadhīs* by means of the learned *dharanis* of the bodhisattva. On account of gaining those *samadhīs* this stage is called “Light-maker” since it creates an immeasurable light of knowledge that transcends the world. But as long as one who possesses the entire worldly *samadhi* gained cannot repeatedly dwell in the qualities that aid Awakening just as they were gained, and cannot make the mind equanimous in connection to

all the attainments, that long it remains the third stage. But when one can, then on the basis of fulfilling this component the fourth stage is distinguished.

In this stage, continuously for the bodhisattva, the perfection of energy becomes unexcelled [156] on the basis of staying with the qualities that aid Awakening in order to proceed beyond the babble of body, speech and mind. And this stage is called 'Brilliant' on account of the flaring of the flame of the qualities that aid Awakening which is capable of burning up all the fuel of the afflictions. They become one who continually dwells upon the qualities that aid Awakening. Meditating on the truths, so long as they cannot turn around the mind which faces *nirvana* and does not face *samsara*, and cannot cultivate the qualities that aid Awakening collected under method, that long it remains the fourth stage. But when they can, then on the basis of fulfilling this component the fifth stage is distinguished.

Hence only in this stage because the repeated cultivation of the aids to Awakening collected under method is won with great difficulty, it is called "Very hard to win". And in this stage the perfection of concentration (*dhyana*) becomes unexcelled on the basis of doing a lot of meditation (*bhavana*) on the aspects of the noble truths. And they become one who dwells extensively on the aids to Awakening collected under method. So long as they cannot attain the signless state because of their mental continuum being filled with sorrow from its discernment of the activity of *samsara*, that long it remains the fifth stage. When they can, then on the basis of fulfilling this component the [157] sixth stage is distinguished.

And in this [stage] the bodhisattva's perfection of wisdom becomes unexcelled on the basis of dwelling in meditation upon dependent origination. Thus from the unexcelled quality of the perfection of wisdom one exists in this stage facing towards all the teachings of the Buddha. Therefore it is called "Facing towards". One is one who gains (the state of) dwelling upon the signless. So long as one cannot attain (the state of) dwelling upon the signless uninterruptedly, that long it remains the sixth stage. When one can, then on the basis of fulfilling this component the seventh stage is distinguished.

But in this stage the bodhisattva understands all signs as signless and does not oppose designation that is made in signs. Hence in this (stage) the perfection of method becomes unexcelled. And this stage is "Far going" due to its going very far because of its close contact with the effortless path. They become one who continuously dwells on the signless. Until they can attain the state of dwelling upon the signless that carries itself effortlessly, it remains the seventh stage. When one can, then on the basis of fulfilling this component the eighth stage is distinguished. And in this [stage] from effortlessly joining to the aids of virtue the perfection of the vow becomes unexcelled. And this stage is called "Immovable" on account of its quality of not wavering with effort for the signless. They become one who effortlessly dwells upon the signless.

As long as they cannot become an authority on all dharma instructions of all kinds according to divisions such as synonyms, etymologies and so forth, that long it remains the eighth stage. When they can, then on the basis of fulfilling this component the ninth stage is distinguished.

And in this [stage] on the basis of gaining distinction in the analytic sciences because of possessing excellence in the power of wisdom, the bodhisattva's perfection of power becomes unexcelled. And on account of the distinction of gaining a faultless intellect through skillfulness in dharma instructions of all kinds, the stage is called "Having praiseworthy intellect". And in this stage they become one who obtains the set of four analytic sciences. So long as one is unable to display Buddha-fields, retinues, magical projections and so forth, and cannot enjoy the complete teaching and ripen beings, that long it remains the ninth stage. When one can, then on the basis of [158] fulfilling this component the tenth stage is distinguished.

And in this [stage] the bodhisattva's perfection of knowledge becomes unexcelled owing to their possessing excellence in knowledge for the sake of ripening sentient beings through magical projections and so forth. And this is called the "Cloud of teachings" on account of the downpour of teachings on endless world-realms by the clouds of *dharma* instructions. There is also an arrangement of the stages in terms of other classifications such as the aggregates, purifications and so on—this is not written of (here) out of fear of (too much) detail in this book. Even though one has obtained supernatural powers such as magical creation, until with regard to all knowable objects, one can give rise to unattached, unimpeded knowledge of all kinds, that long it remains the tenth stage. When one can, then on the basis of fulfilling this component the Buddha Stage is distinguished.

And the excellence of this stage is explained in the *Noble Samdhinirmocana*:

There is no other circumstance higher than this Buddha stage on account of going to the highest limit of all accomplishments of every kind.

And the division containing the position of the qualities of this Buddha stage cannot be spoken in any way, not even by the Buddhas. (Now) since that (stage) is immeasurable, how then by the likes of me?!!! Just as was said in the *Noble Gandhavyuha*:

Even though examining, one would not comprehend even one part of the qualities of the self-existent. For the excellences of the Buddha are unthinkable.

But this much it is possible to say briefly here as the bodhisattva's Process of Meditation by the [159] renowned Venerable Kamalashila is concluded:

The Tathagata taught the cause of dharmas that have a causal origin, as well as their cessation. The one who speaks thus is the great renunciate.

The First Bhavanakrama is completed.



# **The Stages of Meditation II**

## **By Kamalashila**

**From *Stages of Meditation* By The Dalai Lama**

**Translated by Ven Geshe Lobsang Jordhen, Losang Choephel Ganchenpa, and  
Jeremy Russell**

*(All headings have been added for clarity)*

### **1. What Is the Mind?**

It is not possible for omniscience to be produced without causes, because if it were everything could always be omniscient. If things were produced without reliance on something else, they could exist without constraint—there would be no reason why everything could not be omniscient. Therefore, since all functional things arise only occasionally, they depend strictly on their causes. Omniscience too is rare because it does not occur at all times and in all places, and everything cannot become omniscient. Therefore, it definitely depends on causes and conditions.

### **2. Training the Mind**

Also from among these causes and conditions, you should cultivate correct and complete causes. If you put the wrong causes into practice, even if you work hard for a long time, the desired goal cannot be achieved. It will be like milking a [cow's] horn. Likewise, the result will not be produced when all the causes are not put into effect. For example, if the seed or any other cause is missing, then the result, a sprout, and so forth, will not be produced. Therefore, those who desire a particular result should cultivate its complete and unmistakable causes and conditions.

If you ask, “What are the causes and conditions of the final fruit of omniscience?” I, who am like a blind man, may not be in a position to explain [by myself], but I shall employ the Buddha’s own words just as he spoke them to his disciples after his enlightenment. He said,

“Vajrapani, Lord of Secrets, the transcendental wisdom of omniscience has its root in compassion, and arises from a cause—the altruistic thought, the awakening mind of bodhichitta, and the perfection of skillful means.”

Therefore, if you are interested in achieving omniscience, you need to practice these three: compassion, the awakening mind of bodhichitta, and skillful means.

### **3. Compassion**

Moved by compassion, Bodhisattvas take the vow to liberate all sentient beings. Then by overcoming their self-centered outlook, they engage eagerly and continuously in the very difficult practices of accumulating merit and insight.

Having entered into this practice, they will certainly complete the collection of merit and insight. Accomplishing the accumulation of merit and insight is like having omniscience itself in the palm of your hand. Therefore, since compassion is the only root of omniscience, you should become familiar with this practice from the very beginning. The Compendium of Perfect Dharma reads,

“O Buddha, a Bodhisattva should not train in many practices. If a Bodhisattva properly holds to one Dharma and learns it perfectly, he has all the Buddha’s qualities in the palm of his hand. And, if you ask what that one Dharma is, it is great compassion.”

The Buddhas have already achieved all their own goals, but remain in the cycle of existence for as long as there are sentient beings. This is because they possess great compassion. They also do not enter the immensely blissful abode of nirvana like the Hearers. Considering the interests of sentient beings first, they abandon the peaceful abode of nirvana as if it were a burning iron house. Therefore, great compassion alone is the unavoidable cause of the non-abiding nirvana of the Buddha.

#### **4. Developing Equanimity, the Root of Loving-Kindness**

The way to meditate on compassion will be taught from the outset. Begin the practice by meditating on equanimity. Try to actualize impartiality toward all sentient beings by eliminating attachment and hatred.

All sentient beings desire happiness and do not desire misery. Think deeply about how, in this beginningless cycle of existence there is not one sentient being who has not been my friend and relative hundreds of times. Therefore, since there is no ground for being attached to some and hating others, I shall develop a mind of equanimity toward all sentient beings. Begin the meditation on equanimity by thinking of a neutral person, and then consider people who are friends and foes.

After the mind has developed equanimity toward all sentient beings, meditate on loving-kindness. Moisten the mental continuum with the water of loving-kindness and prepare it as you would a piece of fertile ground. When the seed of compassion is planted in such a mind, germination will be swift, proper, and complete. Once you have irrigated the mind stream with loving kindness, meditate on compassion.

#### **5. Identifying the Nature of Suffering**

The compassionate mind has the nature of wishing all suffering beings to be free from

suffering. Meditate on compassion for all sentient beings, because the beings in the three realms of existence are intensely tortured by the three types of sufferings in various forms. The Buddha has said that heat and other types of pain constantly torture beings in the hells for a very long time. He has also said that hungry ghosts are scorched by hunger and thirst and experience immense physical suffering. We can also see animals suffering in many miserable ways: they eat each other, become angry; and are hurt and killed. We can see that human beings, too, experience various acute kinds of pain. Not able to find what they want, they are resentful and harm each other. They suffer the pain of losing the beautiful things they want and confronting the ugly things they do not want, as well as the pain of poverty.

There are those whose minds are bound by various fetters of disturbing emotions like craving desire. Others are in turmoil with different types of wrong views. These are all causes of misery; therefore they are always painful, like being on a precipice.

Gods suffer the misery of change. For example, signs of impending death and their fall to unfortunate states constantly oppress the minds of gods of the desire realm. How can they live in peace?

Pervasive misery is what arises under the power of causes characterized by actions and disturbing emotions. It has the nature and characteristics of momentary disintegration and pervades all wandering beings.

Therefore, see all wandering beings as immersed in a great fire of misery. Think that they are all like you in not desiring misery at all: “Alas! All my beloved sentient beings are in such pain. What can I do to set them free?” and make their sufferings your own. Whether you are engaged in one-pointed meditation or pursuing your ordinary activities, meditate on compassion at all times, focusing on all sentient beings and wishing that they all be free from suffering. Begin by meditating on your friends and relatives. Recognize how they experience the various sufferings that have been explained.

Then having seen all sentient beings as equal, with no difference between them, you should meditate on sentient beings to whom you are indifferent. When the compassion you feel toward them is the same as the compassion you feel toward your friends and relatives, meditate on compassion for all sentient beings throughout the ten directions of the universe.

Just as a mother responds to her small, beloved and suffering child, when you develop a spontaneous and equal sense of compassion toward all sentient beings, you have perfected the practice of compassion, and this is known as great compassion.

Meditation on loving kindness begins with friends and people you are fond of. It has the nature of wishing that they meet with happiness. Gradually extend the meditation to include strangers and even your enemies. Habituating yourself to compassion, you will gradually generate a spontaneous wish to liberate all sentient beings. Therefore, having familiarized yourself with compassion as the basis, meditate on the awakening mind of bodhichitta.

Bodhichitta is of two types: conventional and ultimate. Conventional bodhichitta is the cultivation of the initial thought that aspires to attain unsurpassable and perfectly consummated Buddhahood in order to benefit all wandering sentient beings, after having taken the vow out of compassion to release all of them from suffering. That conventional bodhichitta should be cultivated in a process similar to that described in the chapter on moral ethics in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, generating this mind by taking the Bodhisattva vow before a master who abides by the Bodhisattva precepts.

After generating the conventional awakening mind of bodhichitta, endeavor to cultivate the ultimate awakening mind of bodhichitta. The ultimate bodhichitta is transcendental and free from all elaborations. It is extremely clear, the object of the ultimate, stainless, unwavering, like a butter lamp undisturbed by the wind.

This is achieved through constant and respectful familiarity with the yoga of calm abiding meditation and special insight over a long period of time. The *Unraveling of the Thought Sutra* says,

“O Maitreya, you must know that all the virtuous Dharmas of Hearers, Bodhisattvas, or Tathagatas, whether worldly or transcendental, are the fruits of calm abiding meditation and special insight.”

Since all kinds of concentrations can be included in these two, all yogis must at all times seek calm abiding meditation and special insight. Again the *Unraveling of the Thought Sutra* says,

“The Buddha has said it must be known that the teachings of various types of concentrations sought by his Hearers, Bodhisattvas, and Tathagatas are all contained in calm abiding meditation and special insight.”

Yogis cannot eliminate mental obscurations merely by familiarizing themselves with calm abiding meditation alone. It will only suppress the disturbing emotions and delusions temporarily. Without the light of wisdom, the latent potential of the disturbing emotions cannot be thoroughly destroyed, and therefore their complete destruction will not be possible. For this reason the *Unraveling of the Thought Sutra* says,

“Concentration can suppress the disturbing emotions properly, and wisdom can thoroughly destroy their latent potential.”

The *Unraveling of the Thought Sutra* also says,

Even if you meditate with single-pointed concentration  
You will not destroy the misconception of the self  
And your disturbing emotions will disturb you again;  
This is like Udrak’s single-pointed meditation.

When the selflessness of phenomena is examined specifically,

And meditations are performed on the basis of that analysis,  
That is the cause of the resultant liberation;  
No other cause can bring peace.

Also the *Bodhisattva Section* says,

“Those who haven’t heard these various teachings of the Bodhisattva Collection and have also not heard the implemented teaching on Monastic Discipline, who think that single pointed concentration alone is enough, will fall into the pit of arrogance due to pride. As such, they cannot gain complete release from rebirth, old age, sickness, death, misery, lamentation, suffering, mental unhappiness, and disturbances. Neither do they gain complete liberation from the cycle of the six states of existence, nor from the heaps of suffering mental and physical aggregates. Keeping this in mind, the Tathagata has said that hearing the teachings will help you gain liberation from old age and death.”

For these reasons, those who wish to attain the thoroughly purified transcendent wisdom by eliminating all obscurations should meditate on wisdom while remaining in calm abiding meditation.

## 6. Wisdom

The *Heap of Jewels Sutra* says:

“Single-pointed concentration is achieved by adhering to moral ethics. With the achievement of single-pointed concentration, you meditate on wisdom. Wisdom helps you to attain a pure pristine awareness. Through pure pristine awareness your moral conduct is perfected.”

The *Meditation on Faith in the Mahayana Sutra* says:

“O child of noble family, if you do not abide by wisdom, I cannot say how you will have faith in the Mahayana of the Bodhisattvas or how you will set forth in the Mahayana.”

“O child of noble family, you should know that this is because Bodhisattvas’ faith in the Mahayana and setting forth in the Mahayana occurs as a result of contemplating the perfect Dharma and reality with a mind free of distraction.”

A yogi’s mind will be distracted to various objects if he cultivates only special insight without developing a calmly abiding mind. It will be unstable, like a butter lamp in wind. Since clarity of pristine awareness will be absent, these two [special insight and a calmly abiding mind] should be cultivated equally. Therefore, the *Sutra of the Great and Complete Transcendence of Suffering* says:

“Hearers cannot see Buddha-nature because their single-pointed absorption is stronger

and wisdom is weaker.”

“Bodhisattvas can see it, but not clearly, because their wisdom is stronger and their single-pointed concentration is weaker, whereas Tathagatas can see all, because they possess a calmly abiding mind and special insight to an equal degree.

Due to the power of calm abiding meditation, the mind will not be disturbed by the wind of conceptual thoughts, like a butter lamp undisturbed by the breeze. Special insight eliminates every stain of wrong views. Thus you will not be affected by [the views of] others. The *Moon Lamp Sutra* says:

“By the force of calm abiding meditation, the mind will become unwavering, and with special insight it will become like a mountain. Therefore, maintain a yogic practice of them both.

## **7. Common Prerequisites for Meditating on Calm Abiding and Special Insight**

Initially the yogi should seek the prerequisites that can assist him in actualizing calm abiding meditation and special insight quickly and easily.

The prerequisites necessary for the development of calm abiding meditation are: to live in a conducive environment, to limit your desires and practice contentment, not being involved in too many activities, maintaining pure moral ethics, and fully eliminating attachment and all other kinds of conceptual thoughts.

A conducive environment should be known by these five characteristics: providing easy access to food and clothes, being free of evil beings and enemies, being free from disease, containing good friends who maintain moral ethics and who share similar views, and being visited by few people in the daytime and with little noise at night.

Limiting your desires refers to not being excessively attached to many or good clothes, such as religious robes, and so forth. The practice of contentment means always being satisfied with any little thing, like inferior religious robes, and so forth. Not being involved in many activities refers to giving up ordinary activities like business, avoiding too close association with householders and monks, and totally abandoning the practice of medicine and astrology.

Even in the case of the statement that a transgression of the Hearers’ vows cannot be restored, if there *is* regret and an awareness of the intention not to repeat it, and an awareness of the lack of a true identity of the mind that performed the action, or familiarity with the lack of a true identity of all phenomena, that person’s morality can be said to be pure. This should be understood from the *Sutra on the Elimination of Ajatashatru’s Regret*. You should overcome your regret and make special effort in meditation.

Being mindful of the various defects of attachment in this life and future lives helps eliminate

misconceptions in this regard. Some common features of both beautiful and ugly things in the cycle of existence are that they are all unstable and subject to disintegration. It is beyond doubt that you will be separated from all of these things without delay. So, meditate on why you should be so excessively attached to these things and then discard all misconceptions.

What are the prerequisites of special insight? They are relying on holy persons, seriously seeking extensive instruction, and proper contemplation.

What type of holy person should you rely upon? One who has heard many [teachings], who expresses himself clearly, who is endowed with compassion, and able to withstand hardship.

What is meant by seriously seeking extensive instruction? This is to listen seriously with respect to the definitive and interpretable meaning of the twelve branches of the Buddha's teachings. The *Unraveling of the Thought Sutra* says:

“Not listening to superior beings’ teachings as you wish is an obstacle to special insight.”

The same sutra says,

“Special insight arises from its cause, correct view, which in turn arises from listening and contemplation.”

*The Questions of Narayana Sutra* says,

“Through the experience of listening [to teachings] you gain wisdom, and with wisdom disturbing emotions are thoroughly pacified.”

What is meant by proper contemplation? It is properly establishing the definitive and interpretable sutras. When Bodhisattvas are free of doubt, they can meditate single-pointedly. Otherwise, if doubt and indecision beset them, they will be like a man at a crossroads uncertain of which path to follow.

Yogis should at all times avoid fish, meat and so forth, should eat with moderation and avoid foods that are not conducive to health.

Thus Bodhisattvas who have assembled all the prerequisites for calm abiding meditation and special insight should enter into meditation.

When meditating, the yogi should first complete all the preparatory practices. He should go to the toilet and in a pleasant location free of disturbing noise he should think, “I will deliver all sentient beings to the state of enlightenment.” Then he should manifest great compassion, the thought wishing to liberate all sentient beings, and pay homage to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the ten directions by touching the five limbs of his body to the ground.

He should place an image of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, such as a painting, in front of him

or in some other place. He should make as many offerings and praises as he can. He should confess his misdeeds and rejoice in the merit of all other beings.

Then, he should sit in the full lotus posture of Vairochana, or the half lotus posture, on a comfortable cushion. The eyes should not be too widely opened or too tightly closed. Let them focus on the tip of the nose. The body should not be bent forward or backward. Keep it straight and turn the attention inwards. The shoulders should rest in their natural position and the head should not lean back, forward, or to either side. The nose should be in line with the navel. The teeth and lips should rest in their natural state with the tongue touching the upper palate. Breathe very gently and softly without causing any noise, without laboring, and without unevenness. Inhale and exhale naturally, slowly, and unnoticeably.

## **8. The Practice of Calm Abiding**

### ***Definitions of Calm Abiding and Special Insight***

Calm abiding meditation should be achieved first. Calm abiding is that mind which has overcome distraction to external objects, and which spontaneously and continuously turns toward the object of meditation with bliss and pliancy.

That which properly examines suchness from within a state of calm abiding is special insight. The *Cloud of Jewels Sutra* reads,

“Calm abiding meditation is a single pointed mind; special insight makes specific analysis of the ultimate.”

Also, from the *Unraveling of the Thought Sutra*:

“Maitreya asked, ‘O Buddha, how should [people] thoroughly search for calm abiding meditation and gain expertise in special insight?’ the Buddha answered, ‘Maitreya, I have given the following teachings to Bodhisattvas: sutras, melodious praises, prophetic teachings, verses, specific instructions, advice from specific experiences, expressions of realization, legends, birth tales, extensive teachings, established doctrine, and instructions.

‘Bodhisattvas should properly listen to these teachings, remember their contents, train in verbal recitation, and thoroughly examine them mentally. With perfect comprehension, they should go alone to remote areas and reflect on these teachings and continue to focus their minds upon them. They should focus mentally only on those topics that they have reflected about and maintain this continuously. That is called mental engagement.’

‘When the mind has been repeatedly engaged in this way and physical and mental pliancy have been achieved, that mind is called calm abiding. This is how Bodhisattvas



properly seek the calmly abiding mind.”

”When the Bodhisatta has achieved physical and mental pliancy and abides only in them, he eliminates mental distractions. The phenomena that has been contemplated as the object of inner single-pointed concentration should be analyzed and regarded as like a reflection. This reflection or image, which is the object of single-pointed concentration, should be thoroughly discerned as an object of knowledge. It should be completely investigated and thoroughly examined. Practice patience and take delight in it. With proper analysis, observe and understand it. This is what is known as special insight. Thus, Bodhisattvas are skilled in the ways of special insight.”

### ***How to Practice Calm Abiding***

The yogis who are interested in actualizing a calmly abiding mind should initially concentrate closely on the fact that the twelve sets of scriptures-the sutras, melodious praises, and so forth-can be summarized as all leading to suchness, that they will lead to suchness, and that they have led to suchness.

One way of doing this meditation is to set the mind closely on the mental and physical aggregates, as an object that includes all phenomena. Another way is to place the mind on an image of the Buddha. The *King of Meditative Stabilization Sutra* says:

With his body gold in color,  
The lord of the universe is extremely beautiful.  
The Bodhisattva who places his mind on this object  
Is referred to as one in meditative absorption.

In this way place the mind on the object of your choice and, having done so, repeatedly and continuously place the mind.

### ***Obstacles and Antidotes***

Having placed the mind in this way, examine it and check whether it is properly focused on the object. Also check for dullness and see whether the mind is being distracted to external objects.

If the mind is found to be dull due to sleepiness and mental torpor or if you fear that dullness is approaching, then the mind should attend to a supremely delightful object such as an image of the Buddha, or a notion of light. In this process, having dispelled dullness the mind should try to see the object very clearly.

You should recognize the presence of dullness when the mind cannot see the object very clearly, when you feel as if you are blind or in a dark place or that you have closed your eyes. If, while you are in meditation, your mind chases after qualities of external objects such as form, or turns its attention to other phenomena, or is distracted by desire for an object you have previously experienced, or if you suspect distraction is approaching, reflect that all composite

phenomena are impermanent. Think about suffering and so forth, topics that will temper the mind.

In this process, distraction should be eliminated and with the rope of mindfulness and alertness the elephant-like mind should be fastened to the tree of the object of meditation. When you find that the mind is free of dullness and excitement and that it naturally abides on the object, you should relax your effort and remain neutral as long as it continues thus.

You should understand that calm abiding is actualized when you enjoy physical and mental pliancy through prolonged familiarity with the meditation, and the mind gains the power to engage the object as it chooses.

## **9. Actualizing Special Insight**

### ***The Motivation***

After realizing calm abiding, meditate on special insight, thinking as follows: ‘All the teachings of the Buddha are perfect teachings, and they directly or indirectly reveal and lead to suchness with utmost clarity. If you understand suchness with utmost clarity, you will be free of all the nets of wrong views, just as darkness is dispelled when light appears. Mere calm abiding meditation cannot purify pristine awareness, nor can it eliminate the darkness of obscurations. When I meditate properly on suchness with wisdom, pristine awareness will be purified. Only with wisdom can I realize suchness. Only with wisdom can I effectively eradicate obscurations. Therefore, engaging in calm abiding meditation, I shall then search for suchness with wisdom. And I shall not remain content with calm abiding alone.’

What is suchness like? It is the nature of all phenomena that ultimately they are empty of the self of persons and the self of phenomena. This is realized through the perfection of wisdom and not otherwise. *The Unraveling of the Thought Sutra* reads,

“O Tathagatha, by which perfection do Bodhisattvas apprehend the identitylessness of phenomena?” “Avalokiteshvara, it is apprehended by the perfection of wisdom.”

Therefore, meditate on wisdom while engaging in calm abiding.

### ***The Selflessness of Persons***

Yogis should analyze in the following manner: a person is not observed as separate from the mental and physical aggregates, the elements and sense powers. Nor is a person of the nature of the aggregates and so forth, because the aggregates and so forth have the entity of being many and impermanent. Others have imputed the person as permanent and single. The person as a phenomena cannot exist except as one or many, because there is no other way of existing. Therefore, we must conclude that the assertion of the worldly “I” and “mine” is wholly mistaken.

### ***The Selflessness of Phenomena***

Meditation on the selflessness of phenomena should also be done in the following manner: phenomena, in short, are included under the five aggregates, the twelve sources of perception, and the eighteen elements. The physical aspects of the aggregates, sources of perception, and elements are, in the ultimate sense, nothing other than aspects of the mind. This is because when they are broken into subtle particles and the nature of the parts of these subtle particles is individually examined, no definite identity can be found.

### ***The Emptiness of the Mind***

In the ultimate sense, the mind too cannot be real. How can the mind that apprehends only the false nature of physical form and so forth, and appears in various aspects, be real? Just as physical forms and so forth are false, since the mind does not exist separately from physical forms and so forth, which are false, it too is false. Just as physical forms and so forth possess various aspects, and their identities are neither one nor many, similarly, since the mind is not different from them, its identity too is neither one nor many. Therefore, the mind by nature is like an illusion.

### ***The Emptiness of All Phenomena***

Analyze that, just like the mind, the nature of all phenomena, too, is like an illusion. In this way, when the identity of the mind is specifically examined by wisdom, in the ultimate sense it is perceived neither within nor without. It is also not perceived in the absence of both. Neither the mind of the past, nor that of the future, nor that of the present, is perceived. When the mind is born, it comes from nowhere, and when it ceases it goes nowhere because it is inapprehensible, undemonstrable, and non-physical.

If you ask, "What is the entity of that which is inapprehensible, undemonstrable, and non-physical?" *The Heap of Jewels* states:

"O Kashyapa, when the mind is thoroughly sought, it cannot be found. What is not found cannot be perceived. And what is not perceived is neither past nor future nor present."

Through such analysis, the beginning of the mind is ultimately not seen, the end of the mind is ultimately not seen, and the middle of the mind is ultimately not seen. All phenomena should be understood as lacking an end and a middle, just as the mind does not have an end or a middle. With the knowledge that the mind is without an end or a middle, no identity of the mind is perceived.

### ***The Emptiness of Emptiness***

What is thoroughly realized by the mind, too, is realized as being empty. By realizing that, the

very identity, which is established as the aspect of the mind, like the identity of physical form, and so forth, is also ultimately not perceived.

In this way, when the person does not ultimately see the identity of all phenomena through wisdom, he will not analyze whether physical form is permanent or impermanent, empty or not empty, contaminated or not contaminated, produced or non-produced, and existent or non-existent. Just as physical form is not examined, similarly feeling, recognition, compositional factors, and consciousness are not examined. When the object does not exist, its characteristics also cannot exist. So how can they be examined? In this way, when the person does not firmly apprehend the entity of a thing as ultimately existing, having investigated it with wisdom, the practitioner engages in non-conceptual single-pointed concentration. And thus the identitylessness of all phenomena is realized.

### ***The Necessity of this Meditation***

Those who do not meditate with wisdom by analyzing the entity of things specifically, but merely meditate on the elimination of mental activity, cannot avert conceptual thoughts and also cannot realize identitylessness because they lack the light of wisdom. If the fire of consciousness knowing phenomena as they are is produced from individual analysis of suchness, then like the fire produced by rubbing wood it will burn the wood of conceptual thought. The Buddha has spoken in this way.

*The Cloud of Jewels* also states,

“One skilled in discerning the faults engages in the yoga of meditation on emptiness in order to get rid of all conceptual elaborations. Such a person, due to his repeated meditation on emptiness, when he thoroughly searches for the object and the identity of the object, which delights the mind and distracts it, realizes them to be empty. When that very mind is also examined, it is realized to be empty. When the identity of what is realized by this mind is thoroughly sought, this too is realized as empty. Realizing in this way one enters into the yoga of signlessness.”

This shows that only those who have engaged in complete analysis can enter into the yoga of signlessness.

It has been explained very clearly that through mere elimination of mental activity, without examining the identity of things with wisdom, it is not possible to engage in non-conceptual meditation. Thus, concentration is done after the actual identity of things like physical form and so forth has been perfectly analyzed with wisdom, and not by concentrating on physical forms and so forth. Concentration is also not done by abiding between this world and the world beyond, because physical forms and so forth are not perceived. It is thus called the non-abiding concentration.

[Such a practitioner] is then called a meditator of supreme wisdom, because by specifically examining the identity of all things with wisdom he has perceived nothing. This is as stated in

*The Space Treasure Sutra and The Jewel in the Crown Sutra, and so forth.*

In this way, by entering into the suchness of the selflessness of persons and phenomena, you are free from concepts and analysis because there is nothing to be thoroughly examined and observed. You are free from expression, and with single-pointed mental engagement you automatically enter into meditation without exertion. Thus, you very clearly meditate on suchness and abide in it.

### ***Working with Obstacles to this Meditation***

While abiding in that meditation, the continuity of the mind should not be distracted. When the mind is distracted to external objects due to attachment, and so forth, such distraction should be noted. Quickly pacify the distraction by meditating on the repulsive aspect of such objects and swiftly replace the mind on suchness. If the mind appears to be disinclined to do that, reflecting on the advantages of single pointed concentration, meditate with delight. The disinclination should be pacified by also seeing the defects of distraction.

If the function of the mind becomes unclear and starts sinking, or when there is a risk of it sinking due to being overpowered by mental torpor or sleep, then as before, quickly attempt to overcome such dullness by focusing the mind on supremely delightful things. Then the object suchness should be held in very tight focus. At times when the mind is observed to be excited or tempted to become distracted by the memory of past events of laughter and play, then as in the earlier cases, pacify the distractions by reflecting on such things as impermanence, and so forth, which will help subdue the mind. Then, again endeavor to engage the mind on suchness without applying counter forces.

If and when the mind spontaneously engages in meditation on suchness, free of sinking and mental agitation, it should be left naturally and your efforts should be relaxed. If effort is applied when the mind is in meditative equipoise, it will distract the mind. But if effort is not applied when the mind becomes dull, it will become like a blind man due to extreme dullness and you will not achieve special insight. So, when the mind becomes dull, apply effort, and when in absorption, effort should be relaxed. When, by meditating on special insight, excessive wisdom is generated and calm abiding is weak, the mind will waver like a butter lamp in the wind and you will not perceive suchness very clearly. Therefore, at that time meditate on calm abiding. When calm abiding meditation becomes excessive, meditate on wisdom.

## **10. Unifying Method and Wisdom**

When both are equally engaged, keep still, effortlessly; so long as there is no physical or mental discomfort. If physical or mental discomfort arises, see the whole world like an illusion, a mirage, a dream, a reflection of the moon in water, and an apparition. And think: "These sentient beings are very troubled in the cycle of existence due to their not understanding such profound knowledge." Then, generate great compassion and the awakening mind of bodhichitta, thinking: "I shall earnestly endeavor to help them understand suchness." Take rest.

Again, in the same way, engage in a single pointed concentration on the non-appearance of all phenomena. If the mind is discouraged, then similarly take rest. This is the path of engaging in a union of calm abiding meditation and special insight. It focuses on the image conceptually and non-conceptually.

Thus, through this progress, a yogi should meditate on suchness for an hour, or half a session in the night, or one full session, or for as long as is comfortable. This is the meditative stabilization thoroughly discerning the ultimate, as taught in the *Descent into Lanka Sutra*.

Then, if you wish to arise from the concentration, while your legs are still crossed think as follows: "Although ultimately all these phenomena lack identity, conventionally they definitely exist. If this were not the case, how would the relationship between cause and effect, and so forth, prevail? The Buddha has also said,

"Things are produced conventionally, but ultimately they lack intrinsic identity. Sentient beings with a childish attitude exaggerate phenomena, thinking of them as having an intrinsic identity when they lack it. Thus attributing intrinsic existence to those things that lack it confuses their minds, and they wander in the cycle of existence for a long time. For these reasons, I shall endeavor without fail to achieve the omniscient state by accomplishing the unsurpassable accumulations of merit and insight in order to help them realize suchness."

Then slowly arise from the cross-legged position and make prostrations to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions. Make them offerings and sing their praises. And make vast prayers by reciting the *Prayer of Noble Conduct*, and so forth. Thereafter, engage in conscious efforts to actualize the accumulations of merit and insight by practicing generosity and so forth, which are endowed with the essence of emptiness and great compassion.

If you act thus, your meditative stabilization will actualize that emptiness that possesses the best of all qualities. The *Jewel in the Crown Sutra* states,

"Donning the armor of loving-kindness, while abiding in the state of great compassion, practice meditative stabilization that actualizes the emptiness possessing the best of all qualities. What is the emptiness possessing the best of all qualities? It is that which is not divorced from generosity, ethics, patience, effort, meditative stabilization, wisdom, or skillful means."

Bodhisattvas must rely on virtuous practices like generosity as means to thoroughly ripen all sentient beings and in order to perfect the place, body, and manifold retinue.

If it were not so, what would be the causes of these fields, the field of Buddhas and so forth, that the Buddha spoke about? The omniscient wisdom possessing the best of all qualities can be accomplished through generosity and other skillful means. Therefore, the Buddha has said that omniscient wisdom is perfected by skillful means. Therefore, Bodhisattvas should also cultivate generosity and other skillful means and not only emptiness. The *Extensive Collection of*

*All Qualities Sutra* also says.

“O Maitreya, Bodhisattvas thoroughly accomplish the six perfections in order to attain the final fruit of Buddhahood. But to this the foolish respond: ‘Bodhisattvas should train only in the perfection of wisdom-what is the need for the rest of the perfections?’ They repudiate the other perfections. Maitreya, what do you think of this? When the king of Kashi offered his flesh to the hawk for the sake of a pigeon was it a corruption of wisdom?”

Maitreya replied, “This is not so.”

The Buddha said, “Maitreya, Bodhisattvas accumulated roots of merit through their deeds in conjunction with the six perfections. Are these roots of merit harmful?”

Maitreya replied. “O Buddha, this is not so.”

The Buddha further spoke, “Maitreya, you have also correctly practiced the perfection of generosity for sixty aeons, the perfection of ethics for sixty aeons, the perfection of patience for sixty aeons, the perfection of enthusiastic perseverance for sixty aeons, the perfection of meditative stabilization for sixty aeons, and the perfection of wisdom for sixty aeons. To this the foolish respond: ‘There is only one way to attain Buddhahood, and that is the way of emptiness.’ Their practice is completely mistaken.”

A Bodhisattva possessing wisdom but not skillful means would be like the Hearers, who are unable to engage in the deeds of Buddhas. But they can do so when supported by skillful means. As the *Heap of Jewels* says,

“Kashyapa, it is like this. For instance, kings who are supported by ministers can accomplish all their purposes. Similarly, [when] the wisdom of a Bodhisattva is thoroughly supported by skillful means, such a Bodhisattva also performs all the activities of a Buddha.”

The philosophical view of the path of Bodhisattvas is different from the philosophical paths of the non-Buddhists and Hearers. For example, since the philosophical view of the path of non-Buddhists perversely observes a [truly existent] self, and so forth, such a path is completely and always divorced from wisdom. Therefore, they cannot attain liberation. The Hearers are separated from great compassion and devoid of skillful means. Therefore, they single mindedly endeavor to achieve nirvana.

In their path, Bodhisattvas enshrine wisdom and skillful means, so they endeavor to achieve the non-abiding nirvana. The Bodhisattva path consists of wisdom and skillful means and, therefore, [they] attain the non-abiding nirvana. Because of the power of wisdom, [they] do not fall into the cycle of existence; due to the power of skillful means, [they] do not fall to nirvana.

*The Hill of Gaya Head Sutra* says,

“The Bodhisattva path, in short, is twofold. The two are skillful means and wisdom.”

The *First among the Supreme and Glorious* also says,

“The perfection of wisdom is the mother and expertise in skillful means is the father.”

The *Teaching of Vimalakirti* also says,

“What is bondage for Bodhisattvas and what is liberation? Upholding a life in the cycle of existence devoid of skillful means is bondage for Bodhisattvas. [But] to lead a life in the cycle of existence with skillful means is liberation. Upholding a life in the cycle of existence devoid of wisdom is bondage for Bodhisattvas. [But] to lead a life in the cycle of existence with wisdom is liberation. Wisdom not conjoined with skillful means is bondage, [but] wisdom conjoined with skillful means is liberation. The skillful means not conjoined with wisdom is bondage, [but] skillful means conjoined with wisdom is liberation.”

If a Bodhisattva cultivates mere wisdom, [he] falls to the nirvana desired by Hearers. Thus, it is like bondage. And [he] cannot achieve non-abiding nirvana. So wisdom separated from skillful means is bondage for Bodhisattvas. Therefore, just as a person chilled by the wind seeks the comfort of fire, so a Bodhisattva cultivates the wisdom of emptiness along with skillful means to eliminate the wind of wrong view. [But he does not [endeavor] to actualize it as the Hearers do. The *Ten Qualities Sutra* says,

“O son of good family, it is like this. For instance, a person who is thoroughly devoted to fire, who respects it and regards it as guru, will not think: ‘Because I respect, honor, and venerate fire, I should hold it in both hands.’ This is because he realizes that to do so would give him physical pain and cause mental discomfort. Similarly, a Bodhisattva also is aware of nirvana. but also does not try to actualize it. This is because he realizes that by doing so he would be turning away from enlightenment.”

If he relies merely on skillful means, the Bodhisattva will not transcend the ordinary level and thus there will only be bondage. Therefore, [he] cultivates skillful means along with wisdom. By the power of wisdom, Bodhisattvas can transform even the disturbing emotions into nectar, like poison under a tantric spell. There is no need to express [the goodness] of generosity, and so forth, which leads to naturally elevated states of existence.

The *Heap of Jewels* states,

“Kashyapa, it is like this. Due to the power of Tantra and medicine, a poison may not cause death. Similarly, since the disturbing emotions of Bodhisattvas are under the power of wisdom, they cannot cause them downfalls. Therefore, due to the power of skillful means Bodhisattvas do not abandon the cycle of existence; they do not fall to nirvana. Due to the power of wisdom, [they] eliminate all objects [misconceived as truly



existent] and therefore [they] do not fall into the cycle of existence. Thus, they attain the non-abiding nirvana of Buddhahood alone.”

The *Space Treasure Sutra* also says.

“Because of the knowledge of wisdom, Bodhisattvas eliminate all disturbing emotions, and due to their knowledge of skillful means they do not abandon sentient beings.”

The *Unraveling of the Thought Sutra* also says,

“I have not taught that someone who is not concerned for the welfare of sentient beings and who is not inclined to realize the nature of all composite phenomena will achieve unsurpassable and perfectly accomplished Buddhahood.”

Therefore, those interested in Buddhahood must cultivate both wisdom and skillful means. While you are meditating on transcendental wisdom or while you are in a deep meditative absorption, you cannot engage in skillful means such as practicing generosity. But skillful means can be cultivated along with wisdom during the preparatory and post-meditative periods. That is the way to engage in wisdom and skillful means simultaneously.

Moreover, this is the path of Bodhisattvas in which they engage in an integrated practice of wisdom and skillful means. This is cultivating the transcendental path that is thoroughly imbued with great compassion focusing on all sentient beings. And while practicing skillful means, after arising from meditative absorption, you practice generosity and other skillful means without misconception, like a magician. The *Teaching of Akshayamati Sutra* says,

“What are a Bodhisattva’s skillful means and what wisdom is actualized? The Bodhisattva’s skillful means are thinking and placing the mind closely on sentient beings with great compassion while in meditative absorption. And engaging in meditative equipoise with peace and extreme peace is wisdom.”

There are many more such references. The *Chapter on Controlling Evil Forces* also says:

“Furthermore, the perfect activities of Bodhisattvas refer to conscious efforts by the mind of wisdom and the collection of all meritorious Dharma by the mind of skillful means. The mind of wisdom also leads to selflessness, the non-existence of [inherently existent] sentient beings, and of life, sustenance, and the person. And the mind of skillful means leads to thoroughly ripening all sentient beings.”

The *Extensive Collection of All Qualities Sutra* also states:

Just as a magician endeavors to let his creation go,  
Since he already knows the [nature of his] creation,  
He has no attachment to it.  
Similarly, the three worlds are like an illusion,

Which the wise Buddha knew about  
Long before he knew the sentient beings in these worlds  
And had undertaken efforts to help them.

It is because of the Bodhisattva's practice of wisdom and skillful means that it is said: "In their activities they remain in the cycle of existence, but in their thoughts they abide in nirvana."

In this way, become familiar with generosity and other skillful means that are dedicated to unsurpassable and perfectly accomplished enlightenment, having the essence of emptiness and great compassion. In order to generate the ultimate awakening mind of bodhichitta, as was done earlier, practice calm abiding meditation and special insight as much as you can in regular sessions. As it was taught in the *Pure Field of Engagement Sutra*, always familiarize yourself with skillful means by closely placing mindfulness on the good qualities of Bodhisattvas who work for the welfare of sentient beings at all times.

Those who become familiar with compassion, skillful means, and the awakening mind of bodhichitta in this way will undoubtedly excel in this life. Buddhas and Bodhisattvas will always be seen in dreams, and other pleasant dreams will also occur, and appreciative gods will protect you. There will be immense accumulation of merit and insight at every moment. Disturbing emotions and other bad states of existence will be purified. You will enjoy much happiness and mental peace at all times and a great many beings will cherish you. Physically, too, you will be free of disease. You will attain supreme mental facility, and thus you will achieve special qualities like clairvoyance.

Then you will travel by miraculous power to innumerable worlds, make offerings to the Buddhas and listen to teachings from them. At the time of death, too, you will undoubtedly see Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. In future lives you will be reborn in special families and places, where you will not be separated from Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Thus, you will effortlessly accomplish all accumulations of merit and insight. You will have great wealth, a large following, and many attendants. Possessing a sharp intelligence, you will be able to ripen the mind streams of many beings. In all lives such a person will be able to recall past lives. Try to understand such immeasurable advantages that are also described in other sutras.

In this way, if you meditate on compassion, skillful means, and the awakening mind of bodhichitta for a long time with great admiration, the mind stream will gradually become thoroughly purified and ripened. Then, like producing fire by rubbing together pieces of wood, you will accomplish your meditation on the perfect reality. You will thus achieve an extremely clear knowledge of the sphere of phenomena free from conceptual elaborations, the transcendental wisdom free of the impeding nets of conceptual thought. This wisdom of ultimate bodhichitta is stainless like an unwavering butter lamp undisturbed by the wind. Thus, such a mind in the entity of ultimate bodhichitta is included within the path of seeing, which apprehends the selfless nature of all phenomena.

Through this achievement you enter into the path focusing on the reality of things and you are then born in the family of Tathagata; you enter the stainless state of a Bodhisattva, turn away

from all wandering births, abide in the suchness of Bodhisattvas, and attain the first Bodhisattva level. You can find more details of these advantages in other texts such as the *Ten Spiritual Levels*. This is how meditative stabilization focusing on suchness is taught in the *Descent into Lanka Sutra*. This is how Bodhisattvas enter into the non-conceptual meditation free from elaborations.

In this way, a person who has entered the first level, later, in the path of meditation, familiarizes himself with the two wisdoms of the transcendental state and the subsequent wisdom and skillful means. In this way he gradually purifies the subtlest accumulation of obscurations that are the object of purification of the path of meditation. And in order to achieve highest qualities he thoroughly purifies the lower spiritual levels. All purposes and objectives are completely fulfilled by entering the transcendental wisdom of the Tathagatas and by entering the ocean of omniscience. In this way, by gradual practice, the mind stream is thoroughly purified. The *Descent into Lanka* explains this. The *Unraveling of the Thought* too reads,

“In order to achieve those higher levels, the mind should be purified just as you refine gold, until you realize the unsurpassable and perfectly consummated Buddhahood.”

Entering the ocean of omniscience, you possess impeccable jewel-like qualities to sustain sentient beings, and these fulfill your previous positive prayers. The individual then becomes the embodiment of compassion, possessing various skillful means that function spontaneously and work in various emanations in the interest of all wandering beings. In addition, all marvelous attributes are perfected. With total elimination of all defilements and their latent potential, all Buddhas abide to help every sentient being. Through such realization, generate faith in the Buddhas, the source of all wonderful knowledge and qualities. Everyone should endeavor to actualize these qualities. The Buddha thus said,

“The omniscient transcendental wisdom is produced with compassion as its root, the awakening mind of bodhichitta as its cause, and is perfected by skillful means.”

The wise distance themselves from jealousy and other stains;  
Their thirst for knowledge is unquenchable like an ocean.  
They retain only what is proper through discrimination,  
Just like swans extracting milk from water.  
Thus, scholars should distance themselves from divisive attitudes and bigotry.  
Even from a child good words are received.  
Whatever merit I derive from the exposition of this Middle Path,  
I dedicate for all beings to actualize the Middle Path.

*The Second Part of the Stages of Meditation by Acharya Kamalashila is here completed.  
Translated and edited in Tibetan by the Indian abbot Prajna Verma and the monk Yeshe De.*

# The Process of Meditation III

## By Kamalashila

Translated by Martin T. Adam, as contained in his dissertation  
*Meditation and the Concept of Insight in Kamalashila's Bhavanakramas*

*Homage to Tara!*

The Process of Meditation is related in brief  
For those who have entered the way of the Mahāyāna *sutras*.

### 1. *Shamatha and Vipashyana*

[230] There (in those *sutras*), even if the *samadhi* of bodhisattvas was taught by the Bhagavan to be limitless (in variety), by way of the (four) Immeasurables and all the rest, nevertheless all *samadhis* are subsumed under tranquility and insight. Therefore, precisely that path which carries the union of tranquility and insight is related. And the Bhagavan has said:

Having cultivated tranquility and insight, a living being is liberated from the bondages of signs (*nimitta*, T. *mtshan ma*) and negative dispositions (*daushthula*, T. *gnas nen len*).

Therefore one who aims to abandon all obscurations should practice tranquility and insight. By the power of tranquility the mind becomes steady on its object, like a lamp in a place without wind. By insight, the light of perfect gnosis emerges from accurately realizing the suchness of *dharma*s (*yathavad dharmatattvavagamat*). And on that basis all obscuration is removed, just as the night by the dawning of the sun. Precisely because of this the Bhagavan taught four realities as meditation objects for yogins:

- a) a mental image without conceptualization
- b) a mental image accompanied by conceptualization
- c) the limit of things (*vastuparyantata* i.e. *shunyata*) and
- d) the [231] perfection of purpose.

a) In this context, when by means of tranquility one has committed oneself to a mental image of all *dharma*s or to a form like that of the Buddha, that which is depended upon is called a mental image without conceptualization. It is called without conceptualization here because of an absence of concepts determining the actual state of (that) reality (*bhutarthanirupana-vikalpabhava*). And it is called a mental image because it is depended upon, having committed oneself to an image of *dharma*s as they have been learned and understood.

b) When, by means of insight, the yogin analyzes (*vicarayati*) that very mental image in order to understand reality (*tattvadhigamartha*), then it is called a mental image accompanied by conceptualization on account of the presence (*samudbhava*, *T. yod pa*) there of a concept determining reality (*tattvanurapaavikalpa*), which is the characteristic of insight.

c) And in determining the nature of that very mental image on the basis of accurately understanding the nature of all *dharmas*, the yogin is as if ascertaining blemishes upon one's own face by discerning its reflection in a mirror. When one penetrates the suchness (*tathata*) that marks the limit of things then, on account of understanding the final nature of objects, this is called the meditation object of the limit of things in the first stage (of the bodhisattva).

d) After that, by the path of cultivation in the remaining stages, gradually there is a reorientation of the basis (of the mind) on account of the arising of moments of greater and greater (mental) purity—just as when one employs an elixir of medicinal herbs. This being so, when there is the accomplishment of what must be done, which is defined by the removal of obscurations, then that very knowledge in the Buddha-stage is called the object for the perfection of purpose.

[232] That being so, what is shown by this? The realization of the limit of all things occurs through practicing tranquility and insight. And by that, the perfection of purpose defined by the removal of obscurations is attained. And that itself is Buddhahood. Therefore tranquility and insight must be practiced by one who aims for the realization of Buddhahood. Conversely, for one who does not practice those two there is neither the realization of the limit of reality nor the perfection of purpose. Thus in the noble *Ratnamegha* and elsewhere the Bhagavan concisely stated the definition of tranquility and insight:

Tranquility is one-pointedness of mind,  
insight is the discernment of reality (*bhutapratyaveksha*, *yan dag pa la rtog pa*).

## **2. How to Practice Shamatha and Vipashyana**

There, the yogin established in the prerequisites (*sambhara*) for tranquility and insight such as moral purification, having generated great compassion toward all beings, should practice in studying, thinking and meditation by way of the thought of Awakening that has been produced. In this context, at the time of meditation, having first of all finished with all one's obligations and having emptied one's bladder and bowels, in a pleasant spot free from barbs of sound and such, the yogin who intends to rescue all living beings resolves, "May I bring all sentient beings into the heart of Awakening." Having actualized great compassion one makes prostrations to all the Buddhas [233] and bodhisattvas residing in the ten directions, whether by placing pictures of their bodies in front of one's self or elsewhere,

properly praising and making offerings to them as is one's liking. Having confessed one's faults, one rejoices in the merit of the entire world.

Then on a very soft and comfortable seat, in the manner of the venerable Vairocana's Lotus posture, or alternatively in the 'Half-lotus' posture, with eyes neither too open nor closed directed at the tip of the nose, and with one's body neither too bent nor rigid but simply straight, one should remain one whose awareness is inclined inward. Then one should square one's shoulders. The head should be kept neither raised nor lowered, nor moving to one side (or another), thereby keeping the nose properly centered. One's teeth and lips should be left natural, while one's tongue is placed at the upper base of the teeth. One's respirations should not be accompanied by sound, neither hurried nor heavy, but rather just as they should enter and depart without being discerned, very slowly and without effort, that's the way it should be done.

There first of all the yogin, having placed one's mind on the form of the Tathagata as seen or studied, should generate tranquility. And that form of the Tathagata is yellow like refined gold, adorned with the marks and secondary marks, surrounded by a circle of attendants. One who continuously pays attention to helping sentient beings through a variety of methods takes on the desire for the (Tathagata's) virtues and neutralizes laxity, excitement and so forth. One should concentrate to such an extent as to see one so clearly that it is as if one were sitting directly before one.

And then insight should occur on the basis of observing the coming and going of the [234] reflection of the Tathagata's form. And after that one should think along the following lines, "Just as this reflection of the Tathagata's form does not come from anywhere, will not go anywhere, and also remains empty of an independent nature, free of a self and of belonging to a self, so too all *dharma*s are empty of an independent nature, free from coming and going, like reflections, without a nature of existence and so on." Having thought thus, the one cultivating suchness with a mind whose thought has stopped and which has the singular flavour of silence should abide as long as one likes. And this *samadhi* is taught as the *Pratyutpannabuddha-sammukhavasthitasamadhi*. Instruction on its advantages can be known in detail in that very sutra. According to this, all *dharma*s are collected together by way of kind. Having bound the mind on that point, one should then generate tranquility by ceasing laxity, excitement and so forth.

And, in brief, *dharma*s are grouped together by dividing them into those with material form and those with an immaterial form. There, those with material form are collected under the aggregate of material form. Those with an immaterial form have the nature of the aggregates of sensation and so forth. Now with regard to this, it is due to the attachment of clinging to existence and so forth that innocent people roam around *samsara* with inverted minds. In order to reverse their error, and having manifested great compassion towards them, the yogin who has generated tranquility cultivates insight so as to realize thusness. And the discernment of reality is said to be insight.

But what is real is the selflessness of persons and *dharmas*. Here, the selflessness of the person is the aggregates' lack of self or belonging to a self. The selflessness of *dharmas* is precisely their being like an illusion. Here the yogin should examine as follows, "First of all, apart from [235] material form and the rest there is no person; this on account of its nonappearance. It is only among material form and the other (aggregates) that there is an "I". And thus it is a production by conditions. Moreover, there is no person who possesses the nature of the aggregates of material form and the rest. This is because those (aggregates), material form and so on, have a nature of being impermanent and multiple while a person is imagined by it [sic] proponents as permanent and unitary. Nor also is the reality of a person whom one cannot describe as existing that (way) or the other (way) reasonable, since real things have no other kind of existence." Therefore that which the world calls: "I and mine" is clearly shown to be nothing more than a misguided delusion.

Next, in order to realize the identitylessness of *dharmas*, those *dharmas* with material form should also be analyzed, "Are these established as existing ultimately, independent from the mind? Or could it be that the mind itself appears, manifesting as material form and the rest, just like appearances in a dream-state?" These one observes as atoms, but when discerning the atoms in terms of (their own) parts, one does not find (them). And thus not apprehending (them), one dismisses (conceptualizations regarding their existence or nonexistence. And one understands that the three worlds are mind alone, nothing more. Thus it is said in the *Lankavatara sutra*:

One analyzes a substance into atoms and indeed should not conceive material form. It is because of a false view that one does not clarify the state of mind only.

One thinks, "Because of the force of beginningless attachment to false forms and the like, for the naive the mind itself takes on an appearance of a material form as if it exists separated externally, just like those forms and so on being apprehended in the dreams. Therefore the triple world is just mind-alone." Having ascertained all designation to be just mind in this way, and [236] having discerned there, one also discerns the nature of mind since, "The nature of all *dharmas* is discerned." Thus one investigates. Ultimately the mind too is nonarisen, like an illusion. When the mind itself appears in diverse aspects because of grasping the aspects of false-natured material form and the rest, then the same goes for it as for material form and the rest. Because it is not independent of these, where could there be any reality? Just as material form and the rest have a nature of being neither one nor many on account of their diverse aspects, so too the mind also has a nature of being neither one nor many since it is not independent from those. Nor also does the mind, in being generated, come from anywhere; nor when ceasing, does it go anywhere. Nor also is its generation ultimately from itself, another or both reasonable. Therefore the mind is just like an illusion. Just as the mind, so too all *dharmas*, like an illusion, are ultimately unarisen.

The yogin who is examining does not even apprehend a nature of the mind by which one discerns! Thus in this way wherever the yogin's mind extends to a meditation object, when upon examining its nature it is not found, then having analyzed every single thing (and) having understood them to be without a pith—like the trunk of a plantain tree—one turns

one's mind away from that (analysis). Then, when all conceptualization of existence and so forth has ceased, the signless yoga free of all conceptual proliferation is obtained. Thus it is stated in the *Noble Ratnamegha*.

One who is skillful regarding faults in this way practices in the cultivation of emptiness in order to eliminate all conceptual proliferation. One who is experienced in cultivating emptiness, in searching for an independent nature realizes as empty whatever places the mind flows toward, those places that the mind enjoys. The mind too, upon being examined, is realized to be empty. [237] Even the mind which examines when an independent nature is being sought, is realized to be empty. One who closely examines in this way enters into a unified state in a condition of signlessness. Thus for this reason it is pointed out, "For one who does not look closely, there is no entrance into the signless." (And) when, upon closely examining the nature of *dharmas*, one does not find (anything), one conceives neither "It exists" nor "It does not exist." With regard to that which is imagined "It does not exist," this is on account of the fact that it does not appear in his mind at all times. For if at some time an existent was seen, then one could conjecture "It does not exist" by denying it. But if, in surveying the three times with wisdom, the yogin does not apprehend an existent, then by denying what could one conjecture "It does not exist"? So too, other concepts do not exist for one at that time, since all concepts are included under the conceptions of existence and nonexistence. Thus because of the nonexistence of the pervader, the pervaded also does not exist. When it is so, one has entered a nonconceptual state that is free from conceptual proliferation (*nishprapancanirvikalpata*) and there is no reliance upon material form and the rest. And on the basis of not apprehending an independent nature in anything because of discriminating with wisdom, one becomes a concentrator of the highest wisdom (*prajñottaradhyayin*). One has entered the Suchness (*tattvam*) consisting in the identitylessness of the person and of *dharmas*. And because there does not exist anything further to be examined, the yogin effortlessly abides, ever more clearly penetrating that very Suchness with a mind whose thoughts have ceased and which carries its own distinct flavour, the singular taste of nonconceptuality.

### ***3. Distractions to be Avoided: How to be Counteracted***

[238] And abiding in that state, one should not disperse one's mental cohesion. When it happens that one would see the mind distracted outward, then after calming the disturbance by discerning its nature, one should once again repeatedly motivate the mind there itself. But if one would see that the mind is dissatisfied there, then one should develop satisfaction there by seeing the virtues of *samādhi*. And one should pacify one's dissatisfaction by seeing the faults in distraction. And if, on account of being overcome by torpor and drowsiness, one should see the mind sunk because of its condition of wandering, or if there is a suspicion of such laxity, then having paid attention to something delightful like the form of a Buddha or to a perception of light, one should alleviate that laxity. On that



basis one should seize that very reality (*tattva*) more firmly. But when the yogin cannot determine that reality more clearly—like one who is blind from birth, one who has entered darkness, or one whose eyes are closed—then one's mind should be recognized as sunken and devoid of insight.

Further, if one should see the mind excited by a desire for previously experienced objects, or suspect such excitement, then one should calm the excitement by paying attention to sobering topics such as impermanence. On that basis one should once again make an effort to enter an effortless state of mind with respect to the reality right there. And if the mind should come to possess an unstable turn, like a bewildered person or a monkey, it should be recognized as excited and devoid of tranquility. And when, because of being cut off from laxity and excitement, a very [239] clear mind is generated upon reality right there, balanced, and bearing its own distinct flavour, then by letting go of effort it should become equanimous. And then the path that carries the union of tranquility and insight should be known as established.

But if one should cultivate insight and one's wisdom would become too acute, then on account of the fact that one's tranquility is too weak, there would not be a very clear vision of reality because of the mind's wavering—like a butter-lamp in a breezy spot. On this basis, at that time tranquility should be cultivated. (Conversely,) if tranquility becomes too excessive there would not be a very clear vision of reality—just as for someone overcome by drowsiness. Therefore, at that time, wisdom should be cultivated. But when the two are proceeding in balance like a pair of oxen working in union, then one may abide effortlessly, as long as there is no pain in the body or mind.

In brief, there are six (possible) faults for every single *samadhi*: laziness, loss of the object, laxity, excitement, lack of effort and overexertion. Eight conditions of abandonment should be cultivated as their antidotes, namely: faith, aspiration, exertion, pliancy, mindfulness, clear comprehension, willpower and equanimity. Here the first four are antidotes of laziness. That is to say, it is through faith characterized by a firm confidence in the virtues of *samadhi* that the yogin's aspiration arises. Thereafter, from that aspiration his effort begins. Then through force of effort one produces physical and mental capability. Then, for one who is pliant in mind and in body the [240] laziness abates. Thus the (antidotes) beginning with faith proceed with respect to the abandonment of laziness. It is for that reason that they are to be cultivated. Mindfulness is the antidote of 'loss of the meditation object.' Clear comprehension is the antidote of laxity and excitement, since having been noticed by it, they are abandoned. But at the time of alleviating laxity and excitement, the fault of lack of effort (could occur). And then as the antidote of that, willpower should be cultivated. When laxity and excitement are alleviated, if the mind becomes a bearer of calmness then the fault of overexertion [could occur]. Then its antidote, equanimity, should be cultivated.

And if an effort is made when the mind proceeding in balance, then it gets distracted. On the other hand, if an effort is not made when the mind is lax, then because of a lack of insight it could become sunken like that of a blind man. Therefore one should conquer a lax mind (and) calm an excited (one. When the mind has) once again attained its balance, one

should be equanimous. Then the yogin should remain spontaneously cultivating Suchness as long as one wishes. And should physical or mental pain occur, then repeatedly intuiting the whole world, one should realize it as a reflection, like the moon in the water, that is, like an illusion. And thus it is said in the *Avikalpapravesha*:

By means of world-transcending knowledge (*jnana*) one sees all *dharmas* just as the vault of the sky. By the subsequently attained [knowledge] one sees them as like an illusion, a mirage, a dream, the moon in the water.

[241] Thus having realized that the world is like an illusion, and having manifested great compassion towards sentient beings, one should consider along the following lines, “Those with the intellects of children, not understanding such profundity of teaching, accumulate various actions and afflictions, mistakenly superimposing existence and so forth upon *dharmas* that have been at peace from the very outset. Because of that they wander around in *samsara*. I will act unto them in such a way as to awaken them to such profundity of teachings.” Then, having taken rest, one should once again enter into the *samadhi* which is without the manifestation of any *dharma*, exactly in this way. If the mind becomes weary, then after taking rest, once again one should enter exactly in this way. Thus by this process one should abide for as long a time as one can, whether an hour or a watch.

#### **4. How to get up from Samadhi**

Then when one wishes to rise from *samadhi*, without breaking one’s Lotus position one should consider as follows. Even if all of these so-called *dharmas* are ultimately nonarisen, because (they are) subject to the totality of various fixed causes and conditions—like an illusion they nevertheless proceed, variegated and to be enjoyed without thought. Therefore there is no implication of a view of annihilationism nor even of a conclusion involving denial. And because being considered by wisdom they are not apprehended, there is no implication of eternalism on that account or even of a conclusion involving superimposition.

Now as for those who perform various actions out of self-obsession, whose intellects are inverted because lacking the eye of wisdom—they wander around in *samsara*. But those who have decisively turned away from *samsara*, who tame the self but do not fulfill the perfections beginning with giving because lacking the condition of great compassion—those beings fall into the [242] Awakening of *shravakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* because lacking in method.

But having realized the nonsubstantiality of the world, those whose intellects are uninverted—like that of a magician—resort to the vast accumulation of merit and knowledge with the determination to rescue the entire world by force of great compassion. Having attained the transcendent (*asamsaram*) condition of a Tathagata they remain, giving rise to benefits and happiness in every way for the entire world. And because their

afflictions are removed by the force of wisdom, they do not fall into *samsara*. On the other hand, out of consideration for all beings they do not fall into *nirvana* because of the power of their simultaneously acquired, vast immeasurable accumulation (*sambhara*) of merit. And they become the life-support for all sentient beings. Therefore I who wish to achieve a nonabiding *nirvana*, aiming to generate welfare and happiness for all beings, should endeavor in the acquisition of the vast accumulation of merit and knowledge. Thus it is said in the *Noble Tathagataguhyasutra*:

The accumulation of knowledge is brought together in order to remove all afflictions. The accumulation of merit is brought together in order to sustain all beings. On account of that then, O Bhagavan, the great being the bodhisattva should always endeavor in the accumulation of knowledge and the accumulation of merit.

And it is said in the *Noble Tathagatotpattisambhavasutra*:

But indeed, this arising of the Tathagatas is not from only one cause. Why is that? O son of the conquerors! The Tathagatas realize (*samudagacchanti*) through the ten hundred thousand immeasurable causes that have been realized. By what ten? To wit: by the cause(s) of fully comprehending dissatisfaction through the limitless accumulations of merit and knowledge.

And it's said in the *Noble Vimalakirtinirdesha*:

The bodies of the Tathagata come forth from a hundred merits, come forth from all [243] the wholesome *dharmas*, come forth from limitless wholesome roots of action!

Having acted in this way, one gently breaks the Lotus posture. Then having bowed down to all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas situated in the ten directions one performs hymns of praise and makes offerings to them. And then one should make a vow such as that of the noble Bhadracarya. After that one should endeavor to establish all the accumulations of merit starting with giving, which are brought to fruition in the unsurpassed Awakening that has the womb of emptiness and compassion.

## **5. Thesis of the Hva Shan**

But some consider, "Because they are subject to positive and negative actions generated by the conceptual mind sentient beings spin around in cyclical existence experiencing the fruits of their actions, such as heaven. But those who do not think anything, nor perform any action whatsoever, they are fully liberated from cyclical existence. Therefore nothing should be thought. Nor should the skillful conduct of giving and the rest be undertaken. The wholesome conduct of giving and the rest is taught only with foolish people in mind."

## **6. Refutation**

### **a) General Implications of such a Thesis.**

By such a one the entire Mahāyāna would be abandoned! And since all the vehicles are at root Mahāyāna, by abandoning it every vehicle would be abandoned. That is to say, those who say that nothing should be thought would have abandoned the wisdom marked by the discernment of [244] reality. For perfect knowledge has as its root the discernment of reality. By abandoning it, the world-transcending wisdom would also be abandoned. (And) by abandoning that, omniscience would also be abandoned!

And one who says, “Nor also should the conduct of giving and the rest be undertaken,” has very clearly abandoned method which begins with giving, and to exactly this extent the Mahāyāna—which, in brief, is precisely wisdom and method. Just as its said in the *Noble Gayashirsha*:

These two, in brief, constitute the path of the bodhisattvas.  
What two? Wisdom and method.

And it is said in the *Noble Tathagataguhya Sutra*,

“And this wisdom and method sums up the set of all of the bodhisattvas’ perfections.”

Hence one abandoning the Mahāyāna would have created a great karmic obscuration. Therefore it is this one who does not respect the wise (*anupasitavidvajjana*) nor support the teachings of the Tathagatas, who has brought ruin to both ones self and others, is corrupted in both reasoning and scripture. And therefore an intelligent person who cares for ones self stays clear from ones words mixed with poison, just as (one stays clear from) poisoned food.

So it is that this one who abandons the discernment of reality would have abandoned the very foremost limb of Awakening, called “The discrimination of *dharmas*.” And without the discernment of reality how could the mind of the yogin who is attached to beginninglessly [245] ingrained existents such as material form, enter into nonconceptuality?

### **b) Inconsistency of the objection that one can reach Nirvikalpa By means of Mere Asmtri and Amanasikara.**

If it is said that one enters (nonconceptuality) through nonmindfulness and nonattention toward all *dharmas*, that is not reasonable. For without the discernment of reality it is impossible to undertake either nonmindfulness or nonattention toward all *dharmas* even though they are being experienced. And if one would (attempt to) cultivate nonmindfulness

and nonattention toward those (*dharmas*) cultivating thus, “These which are called *dharmas* are not to be noticed nor paid attention to by me,” then still more would they have been noticed and paid attention to by them!

Thus if the mere nonexistence of mindfulness and attention constituted the nonmindfulness and nonattention intended, then in what manner does the nonexistence of those two come about? This itself should be considered [*i.e.* how could nonexistence be an effect?] Moreover, nonexistence as a cause is not logical since nonconceptuality must occur on its basis. This would entail the entrance into nonconceptuality of someone who has fainted, since mindfulness and attention do not exist for them. And there is no method without the discernment of reality by means of which one might undertake nonmindfulness and nonattention. And also, when nonmindfulness and nonattention occur, without the discernment of reality how could *dharmas*’ lack of independent existence come to be realized? For without discerning them thus, “*Dharmas* stand empty of independent existence,” there could be no penetration of their emptiness. Without the penetration of emptiness [246] nor also would the abandonment of obscurations be possible. [But if you deny the necessity of such abandonment] everyone everywhere would [already] be liberated!

And if the yogin’s mindfulness and attention towards *dharmas* can’t proceed because of being bereft of mindfulness or in a state of stupefaction, then how could this completely stupefied one be a yogin? And in that circumstance, by practicing nonmindfulness and nonattention without the discernment of reality, ignorance itself would become one’s habit! Precisely on account of that, the light of knowledge would recede. But if this [yogin] is not bereft of mindfulness, nor stupefied, then how in that circumstance could one undertake nonmindfulness and nonattention without the discernment of reality? For it is not logical to assert that it is precisely in being mindful that one is not mindful, and that precisely in seeing one does not see. And how could such qualities of the Buddha as recollection of previous lives arise from a practice of nonmindfulness and nonattention? This would be inconsistent. There would not be a warm sensation of contact for someone who holds to a cold opposed to warmth.

And for the yogin who has attained *samadhi*, if there is mental consciousness, then by necessity one must be focused on something. For an ordinary person, knowledge would not all of a sudden lack an object. But even supposing there were no (object)—then how could *dharmas*’ lack of independent existence be realized? And by what antidote could the afflictive obscurations be abandoned? Moreover, for an ordinary person who has not attained the fourth *dhyana* the cessation of thoughts is impossible.

### ***c) Necessity of Bhutapratyaveksha***

Therefore, that which is described in the highest teachings as nonmindfulness and [247] nonattention is to be seen as preceded by the discernment of reality. On account of which,

nonmindfulness and nonattention are to be undertaken by way of the discernment of reality, not otherwise. Which is to say that when a yogin observing with perfect wisdom does not see even a single *dharma* in the three times as ultimately originated, then how in that context could one be mindful and pay attention? For how could that which is ultimately not experienced in the three times be noticed or attended to? Thus this one would have entered into the nonconceptual knowledge in which all conceptual proliferation has been calmed. And on the basis of that entrance one penetrates emptiness. And on the basis of that penetration there is the abandonment of the net of all false views. And one who is possessed of method, on the basis of adhering to wisdom, is perfectly skilled in conventional and ultimate reality.

Thus it is on the basis of obtaining unobscured knowledge that one understands every single teaching of the Buddha. Hence without the discernment of reality there is no arising of perfect knowledge, nor also the abandonment of the afflictive obscurations.

#### ***d) Confirmation by Buddhavacana***

Thus it is said in the *Manjushrikurvita Sutra*:

How, O daughter, is the bodhisattva one who has won the war? O Manjushri! one is one who having examined and examined (*viciya viciya*, T. *mam par brtag pa*), does not find any *dharma*.

Therefore having vanquished the enemies who are the afflictions with the arrow of wisdom, with [248] one's eye of knowledge open and released, the yogin stands without fear—not like an eye-shutting coward!

It is also said in the noble *Samadhiraja*:

If one investigates *dharma*s without identity  
And if, having investigated them, one would cultivate  
That is the cause of obtaining the fruit of *nirvana*  
Any other cause does not lead to peace.

And in *Sutrasamuccaya* it is said:

By one's self one who follows the practice of insight abides; one does not force others to strive in insight. Such is the work of Mara.

And in the *Noble Ratnamegha*, *Samdhinirmocana* and so on, insight has the nature of the discernment of reality. And in the *Noble Ratnmegha* it is penetrating the lack of independent existence on the basis of observing with insight that is said to be the entrance into the signless.

And in the *Noble Lankavatara* it is said:

Because, O Mahamati, the specific and general characteristics of the entities being considered by the intellect are not ascertained, all *dharmas* are said to be devoid of an independent nature.

One would be in opposition to the various kinds of discernment taught by the Bhagavan throughout the *sutra*, if the discernment of reality were not to be undertaken. Thus while it is reasonable to say, "We of little wisdom and little energy are unable to seek wide instruction," it is [249] not reasonable to abandon it, since wide instruction of many kinds is praised by the Bhagavan.

And again this is said in the *Brahmapariprccha*:

As for those who are adrift (*viprayukta*, T. *sems par zugs pa*) among inconceivable *dharmas*, they are without foundation (*ayonishah*, T. *tshul bzin ma yin pa*).

And also in that context, there are those like the shravakas who having imagined the origination of these ultimately nonarisen *dharmas*, give preeminence to a notion consisting in impermanence, suffering and so forth. They are without justification (*ayonishah*, T. *tshul bzin ma yin pa*), producing (such) an idea through the extremes of superimposition and denial. What is said here is to rule out those (extremes); it does *not* rule out the discernment of reality, since that is assented to in every *sutra*. And so; right there in the *Brahmapariprccha* it is said:

Cittashura the bodhisattva said, "One who considers all *dharmas* and in that situation remains unhindered (and) unharmed is said, on that account, to be a bodhisattva."

There itself it is said:

How are they endowed with energy? When examining the mind of omniscience they do not apprehend.

Again in that very place it is said:

And they will come to be endowed with understanding through the condition of properly discerning *dharmas*.

Again right there it is said:

They discriminate (*pravicinvarianti*, T. *mam par 'byed pa*) all *dharmas* just as an illusion or mirage.

[250] Therefore, in whatever situation conceptual proliferation concerning such inconceivables is studied, the knowledge of reality is only through mere hearing and thought. Those who think in that way, because hindered by pride, teach that *dharma*s are to be known each individually (*pratyatma*). But it should be realized that while an unfounded mind is denied, this does not constitute a denial of the discernment of reality. Otherwise it would be thoroughly opposed to reason and scripture. Just as already stated. And whatever is known through the wisdom of hearing and thinking is itself to be realized through the wisdom of meditation, nothing else. For example, it is like a horse running along a previously indicated running track. Therefore the discernment of reality is to be undertaken.

Even if this discernment of reality has a conceptual nature, nevertheless on account of the fact it has a nature of proper attention, a nonconceptual knowledge of reality arises from it. And therefore those who aim for such knowledge should practice that (i.e. the conceptual discernment of reality). And when the nonconceptual fire of knowing reality arises, then just as two sticks are incinerated by the fire born from their rubbing, it too (i.e. the conceptual discernment of reality) subsequently gets burnt up by that (nonconceptual knowledge of reality) itself. Thus it is said in the *Noble Ratnakuta*.

***e) Mukti is not Caused only by Destruction of Karma  
But by Elimination of Kleshas***

[251] Now as for what is also said—that not a single action, skillful or otherwise, should be performed—those who speak thus would here be accepting the doctrine of the Ajivakas, that is, liberation on the basis of *karma*'s destruction. But in the Bhagavan's teachings liberation is not sought on the basis of the destruction of *karma*, but rather on the basis of destruction of the afflictions. This is because *karma* accumulated from time without beginning never ceases, and therefore cannot be destroyed. When experiencing its results in states of misfortune and so forth, even more *karma* is generated. And it is impossible for *karma* to cease in states wherein the afflictions have not been debilitated, since they are its cause! Just as there is no ceasing of a light when there is no ceasing of its flame.

And the destruction of afflictions of one who rejects insight is not possible, as was explained earlier. Thus when it is considered that insight must be practiced to in order to destroy the afflictions, then since it is only on the basis of the afflictions' destruction that liberation is established attempting to destroy *karma* is pointless. It is reasonable to say that one should avoid unwholesome *karma*, but why (should) the wholesome be barred? If one says that it is prohibited on the grounds of being the engine of *samsara*, that is not reasonable. It is the unwholesome alone, emerging from mistaken ideas like that of an external (world), a self and so on, which is the engine of *samsara*—not the ripening of unsurpassed Awakening that emerges from great compassion!



Thus in the *Dashabhumaka* it is taught that these paths of the ten wholesome actions are the carriers of shravakas, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas and Buddhahood, through excellent activity [252] such as ripening and so forth. And in the *Noble Ratnakuta* it is described thus:

Like the mass of water of all the great rivers that have entered into the great ocean, the bodhisattvas' root of merit accumulated from separate sources, and transformed into omniscience, becomes one flavour in omniscience.

And wherever in the *sutra* the Bhagavan has described the Buddhas' and bodhisattvas' attainment of a form-body, field-purification, resplendence, retinue, abundance and so on as being the result of accumulating merit by giving and so forth—that also would be contradicted.

And in denying meritorious conduct the *pratimoksha* vows etc., would also be opposed. Thus it would imply that a shaved head and face, wearing red (robes) and so on are truly pointless. If one were to turn away from the performance of meritorious deeds, then one would also be accepting a retreat from *samsara* and turning away from helping sentient beings. And thus the Awakening of such a one would become remote.

Thus it is said in the *Noble Samdhinirmocana*:

I do not ascribe unsurpassed, perfect Awakening to one who turns away from one-pointed efforts within *samsara*, who turns away from one-pointed aiding of sentient beings.

And in the noble *Upalipariprccha* and others, turning away from *samsara* is described as the most serious breach of the bodhisattvas' morality. And in the noble *Vimalakirtinirdesha* it is said:

Journeying through *samsara* with a basis of method is the liberation of bodhisattvas. Wisdom without method is bondage. Method without wisdom is bondage. Method with wisdom is liberation. Wisdom with method is liberation.

And in the noble *Gaganaganja* it is said, "For bodhisattvas, weariness with *samsara* is Mara's doing." And in the *Sutrasamuccaya* [253]:

He discerns the unconditioned and is wearied by wholesome conditions—this is Mara's work.

One knows the path to Awakening but does not seek the path of the perfections—such is Mara's work.

But when it is said, "Attachment to the mind of giving right up to attachment to the mind of wisdom is Mara's work," there is no prohibition of practicing giving and the other

perfections there. What is denied is the inverted attachment to giving and the rest of one who is attached to the thoughts of “I” and “mine,” who is attached to the dualistic mind, and who is an apprehender. For those who have set themselves up with [such] an inverted attachment, giving and the rest are impure, and therefore it is said that they are the Mara’s work. Otherwise even [the perfection of] absorption (*dhyana*) would not be need to be practiced. And how then could there be liberation? Therefore, in order to make the point that the giving and other perfections of an apprehender are not pure because of recognizing a variety of entities, in the noble *Gaganaganja* too the giving and so forth of one who recognizes a variety of entities is called “Mara’s work.”

And this is also said in the *Punyaskandhaparinamana*:

By not knowing the equality of giving, morality, patience, energy, concentration and wisdom all is made apprehensible (*upalambhayati*). Because of this, morality is protected by one who is attached to pure morality who possesses a thoroughly investigated giving. Patience is cultivated by one recognizing self and other and so on. In this way I have set it forth.

But there, the giving and so forth that have been set up on the basis of the inverted attachment of an apprehender who perceives a variety are impure. Just this much is pointed out. Yet this is not a prohibition of the practice of giving and the rest in all senses. Otherwise all giving and so on would be ruled out without qualification. Not merely that which has fallen away from nonapprehension.

[254] And this is also said in the *Brahmapariprccha*:

Whatever courses of conduct there may be, they are all imaginary.  
And the nonimaginary is Awakening.

Also there it is said that the conduct which rests on the basis of concepts such as origination is, by its very nature, imaginary. And the prediction (of Awakening) is for the established bodhisattva who spontaneously abides in the signless realm, not for any other. Precisely this much is pointed out. But even though the ultimately nonarisen nature of all giving and so on is asserted, it is not declared that practice should not to be undertaken. On the contrary, with respect to the glorious Dipankara Buddhas revered by the Bhagavan, those of whom for an aeon even the Bhagavan’s speech could not utter the names—why did the Bhagavan not reject such conduct in his situation as a bodhisattva? Dipankara too at that time definitely did not prohibit the Bhagavan’s conduct. But when it was seen to be established in the eighth stage of abiding in pacified signlessness, then the prophecy (of future Buddhahood) was made by the Illustrious One (Dipankara). His course of conduct was not prohibited there! In the *Dashabhumika*:

And the bodhisattvas’ highest aim of abiding in the signless in the eighth stage was not prohibited by the Buddhas—for this itself is their *parinirvana*.

Therefore, if a course of conduct was not to be undertaken in any fashion whatsoever this would contradict everything that has been previously stated.

And this is also what is stated in the *Brahmapariprccha*:

One gives a gift, but this is free from desire for the fruit; one guards morality, but not through reification and so on.

By pursuing four divine qualities bodhisattvas become nonreverters with respect to (attaining) the qualities of a Buddha. What (is meant in saying) by the four? By embracing measureless *samsara*! Everything beginning with honouring and revering the measureless Buddhas would be [255] contradicted. Moreover it is illogical to say that (such) conduct should be undertaken only by those of dull faculties, but not by those with sharp faculties. For from beginning the first stage all the way up to the bodhisattvas' finishing the tenth stage, the course of conduct which is giving and the rest arises. For it is declared, "One does not neglect proper conduct in the remaining (stages)." Indeed it is not logical (to suggest that) those of weak faculties have entered into the stages (of the bodhisattva).

And in the *Noble Upalipariprccha* it is recounted:

Precisely by establishing patience towards the dharma of nonorigination, one should undertake abandonment, great abandonment and transcendent abandonment.

And in the *Sutrasamucayya* it is described:

On the basis of practically realizing the six perfections and so on, the bodhisattva comes into the mode of the Tathagatas' miraculous powers.

And aside from the condition of the Tathagatas' miraculous powers, a quicker way does not exist. Moreover, other than the six perfections and ten stages there is no other path for bodhisattvas that would be a quicker vehicle.

And it is stated in the *sutra* that purification of the mental stream only occurs gradually, like the purification of gold. When the bodhisattva is established in suchness, then one has entered the first stage. Then, only gradually, having purified (each of) the preceding stages, one enters the stage of the Tathagata. Hence, aside from the perfections and the stages, there is definitely no other approach to the door of the palace of Buddhahood. Nor is such taught by the Bhagavan anywhere else in the *sutras* and so on. With regard to *dhyana* itself, because it is included in the six [256] perfections: on the basis of its practice all the perfections are (necessarily to be) practiced. Thus if one said that each one of (the perfections of) giving and the rest did not have to be practiced that would be illogical.

Thus also with regard to a cow-dung *mandala* to the Buddha, on the basis of its inclusion in the six perfections, the *mandala* itself would have to be made, not (merely) on the basis of *dhyana* etc. As well, the fulfillment of the six perfections would then follow from the

improper practice of the signless by a shravaka who has attained the *samadhi* of cessation. And thus no distinction between the bodhisattvas and shravakas would be taught. But because the six perfections are supposed to be fulfilled by the bodhisattva in every single state, for all the perfections the Bhagavan pointed out the inner nature of each perfection individually—for the sake of instruction. But it was not taught that a single perfection should be practiced on its own!

And thus it is said in the *Sarvadharmavaipulya*:

“But as for this, Maitreya, which is the bodhisattvas’ realization of the six perfections for the sake of Awakening, those ignorant people will speak as follows: ‘A bodhisattva should train only in the perfection of wisdom, what with the remaining perfections!’ They consider the other perfections (relating to method) to be reprehensible. Is that what you think Ajita? Did one who was the king of Kashi possessed of corrupt wisdom, one by whom his own flesh was given to a hawk for the sake of a dove?” Maitreya said, “Definitely not so, Bhagavan!” The Bhagavan said, “Maitreya, with regard to those meritorious deeds linked to the six perfections which I accumulated by travelling the bodhisattvas’ course, was any harm done by those virtuous actions?” Maitreya said, “Definitely not so, Bhagavan!” The Bhagavan said, “You, Ajita, to the extent of having realized sixty aeons in the perfection of giving, have thus to the same degree realized sixty aeons in the perfection of wisdom. Therefore (only) those who are ignorant people will say, ‘Awakening is only reached by a single way, that is, by the way of emptiness.’”

Thus they are not completely purified in conduct. Those who practice only emptiness on its own [257] fall into *nirvana*, like the *shravakas*.

## **7. Conclusion**

Therefore wisdom is to be practiced accompanied by method. Precisely on this account it was set down in the *Sutrasamuccaya* by Master Nagarjuna.

A bodhisattva who is without skillfulness in method should not persevere with regard to the profound *Dharma* nature.

Here the original teaching of the noble *Vimalakirtinirdesha* and the rest is conveyed by the Noble Nagarjuna. And for a wise person it is not appropriate to grasp the words of the foolish person who has abandoned the approach of logic and scripture and completely deserted the words of the Bhagavan.

In the *Noble Ratnakuta* it is said:

One who is endowed with all the wholesome states of giving and the rest should practice the highest kind of emptiness.

But not on its own! As well in the noble *Ratnakuta* it is said:

Therefore, Kashyapa, just as it is with the support of a minister that kings perform all their duties, exactly so the bodhisattva's wisdom performs all the activities of a Buddha with the support of skillfulness in method. Therefore for one who practices emptiness on its own, let there be no entrance into *nirvana*.

And it was taught by the Bhagavan in the *Tathagataguhyasutra*,

One should not perform a practice of mind-only, in which one remains single pointedly without an object. Skillfulness in method is also to be practiced.

In order to illustrate this it was said:

For example, O Son of Good Family, fire blazes on the basis of a material cause. [258] When there's no cause it is calmed. Thus the mind blazes when there's an object. When there's no object it is calmed. There the bodhisattva who is possessed of skillfulness in method knows the peace which is the completely purified object of the perfection of wisdom, but one does not calm the object of the roots of virtue. And one does not promote the object of the afflictions, and as well one makes a place for the object of the perfections. And while the object of emptiness is discerned, the object is seen in terms of great compassion for all beings. So it is, O son of noble family, that the bodhisattva who is possessed of skillfulness in method, who has completely purified his perfection of wisdom, completely attains mastery over the object.

Having spoken thus, he says again:

For a bodhisattva there is no object whatsoever that is not transformed for the sake of accomplishing the knowledge of an omniscient one. When all of such a bodhisattva's objects are brought to fruition in Awakening, this bodhisattva who is skilled in method sees all *dharma*s as conducive to Awakening. Just as, O Noble son, it is not the case that in the vast three thousand thousand-world-realms something which is not for sentient beings' sensual enjoyment would not occur, so too, Noble son, it is never the case that a bodhisattva who has skill in method does not see an object as being useful for Awakening.

In this way, in unending *sutras*, the bodhisattvas' practice of wisdom and method is taught.

In this regard if indeed one is unable, on one's own, to initiate the effort required for the accumulation of merit starting with giving, so too it is not reasonable to give such instructions to others. This would be to do injury to both oneself and others. Therefore the

manner in which a bodhisattva necessarily must undertake the discernment of reality and acquire the entire accumulation of merit starting with giving is indicated by both reasoning and scripture. Therefore a wise person removes the speech of those proud ones of small learning as if it were poison. Then by following the nectar-like speech of various others like the Noble Nagarjuna, one [259] arouses great compassion towards all beings. Then, like a magician, this unerring one should practice, striving in all the wholesome conduct of giving and the rest that are brought to fruition in unsurpassed full Awakening and in rescuing of the entire world. As it is said in the *Noble Dharmasamgiti*:

Just as a magician who has tried to liberate some apparition all the while without attachment to the apparition because of his previous knowledge, so too they who have mastered full Awakening having known the three worlds to resemble an apparition ready themselves for this previously known world for the sake of living beings.

Thus in this way, from the practice of constantly honoring wisdom and method, gradually there is a ripening of one's continuum by the arising of more and more moments of greater and greater purity. On account of which, when one approaches the most extreme limit of cultivating the real meaning, transcendent knowledge arises—like a butter-lamp unwavering out of the wind, stainless, comprehending the sphere of the *Dharma*, extremely clear, and free from the net of all concepts.

And then one has reached the object which is the limit of things. And one has entered the path of seeing. And one has attained the first stage. After that, purifying the higher stages gradually, like gold, all the remaining obscurations pass away. And having attained unobstructed, irremovable knowledge, one attains the stage of a Buddha which is the source of all virtue. And one attains the object which is the perfection of purpose.

Therefore one whose goal it is to reach Buddhahood should, to that extent, endeavor along the middle path.

[260] Having illuminated the auspicious matchless path  
May the merit I have attained by that  
Cause everyone to attain the middle path.  
May the stains of jealousy and the like be sent afar.  
Never sated with virtues, like the ocean and its waters,  
Having discriminated, (the wise) understand what has been well explained.  
Like swans (discerning) milk in water, they are thoroughly delighted.  
Thus the wise, banishing the mind which is mixed up with factionalism,  
should accept anything which has been well explained, even from a child.

*The Process of Meditation, written by Master Kamalashila is completed.*

# **The Stages of Meditation of Shamatha and Vipashyana**

## **The Root Text**

### ***Chapter Eight from The Treasury Of Knowledge***

**By Jamgon Kongtrul**

*Translated by Kiki Ekselius and Chryssoula Zerbini*

*Under the guidance of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche*

## **The Necessity Of Practicing Samadhi**

### **1. Identifying the Samadhi to be Practiced**

One should gain certainty in both shamatha and vipashyana, which comprise the ocean of samadhis of both the greater and lesser vehicles.

### **2. The Detailed Explanation**

#### **a. The Essential Nature of Shamatha and Vipashyana**

The essential nature of these is: one-pointedness and individual analysis which fully discriminates phenomena.

#### **b. Etymology**

Having calmed distraction, one completely abides, and the superior nature is seen with the eyes of wisdom.

### **3. The Necessity of Both**

Just as in the example of the bright oil lamp not blown by the wind, one realizes the true nature by bringing both together.

### **4. The Progressive Order**

The progression is from the support to that which is supported.

## **SHAMATHA**

### **1. The Prerequisites for Shamatha**

*To rely on the conditions for shamatha is to reject everything unfavorable, to stay in a favorable area, to have few desires, to be content, to adopt pure ethics, and to give up distraction and discursive thoughts.*

## **2. The Progressive Classification**

*When classified, it comprises the mind of the desire realm, the concentrations, the formless absorptions and the absorption of cessation.*

## **3. The Way to Meditate: Posture**

*During meditation one should be seated comfortably in the eightfold posture.*

## **4. The Methods for Setting the Mind - The Objects of Observation**

*There are generally four types of objects of observation, in accordance with the individual:*

- *pervasive objects*
- *objects for purifying deeds*
- *objects that render skillful*
- *objects for purifying afflictions.*

## **5. The Progression of the Actual Meditation**

### **a. Setting the mind with a concrete support**

*The particular method for setting the mind is to focus on an impure and a pure support.*

### **b. Setting the mind without concrete support**

*“Without concrete supports” refers to setting the mind on individual parts; on the complete form; outwardly; and inwardly on the body and on that which depends on the body.*

### **c. Setting the Mind in the Essential Nature**

*Strive to remain absorbed in the essential nature, waves of thought having dissolved into the ocean of the all-basis.*

## **6. Identifying the Experiences Arising From Meditation**

### **a. Brief Explanation**

*There are two ways of identifying the experiences arising from these.*



## **b. Detailed Explanation: The Tradition of the Great Treatises**

### **The Eight Antidotes to the Five Faults**

*According to the treatises, there are five faults: three types of laziness, forgetting the instructions, laxity and agitation (each with two aspects), non-application, and over-application.*

*The eight antidotes to these are: aspiration, exertion, faith and suppleness which counteract the first; the samadhi of not forgetting with three particularities; examination; application; and equanimity when resting in a balanced state.*

### **The Six Powers, the Four Mental Engagements and the Nine Mental Abidings**

*The nine mental abidings such as setting the mind on the object etc, arise through the six powers of listening, reflecting, mindfulness, introspection, joyous effort and familiarity.*

*To these mental abidings correspond four mental engagements: forcible, interrupted, uninterrupted and spontaneous.*

## **c. Detailed Explanation: The Tradition of Oral Instructions**

*In the oral tradition, the five experiences of agitation, attainment, familiarity, stability and perfection are illustrated by examples.*

## **7. The Measure of Accomplishment of Shamatha and its Benefits**

### **a. 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.*

### **b. 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.*

## **VIPASHYANA**

### **1. The Prerequisites for Vipashyana**

*The prerequisites for vipashyana are to rely on a wise person and to seek the view by listening extensively and reflecting accordingly.*

## **2. The Particular Types of Vipashyana**

*The types are:*

- *The non-buddhists' contemplation of the peaceful and coarse levels;*
- *The shravakas' and pratyekabuddhas' contemplation of the four noble truths and their attributes;*
- *And the paramitayana's contemplation of emptiness, which in the mantrayana is taught to be endowed with bliss.*

*The common preparatory stages are similar to those of the mundane path; however, those who have entered the mantrayana and the others do not strive for them.*

## **3. The Classifications of Vipashyana**

### **a. Various Classifications**

*The classification is into*

- *The "four types of vipashyana investigating the essence ": discriminating, fully discriminating, examining, and analyzing;*
- *The "three gateways": designations, thorough investigation, and individual analysis;*
- *And the "six investigations": meaning, thing, character, direction, time and reasoning, the latter being of four kinds: the reasoning of dependence, of function, of logical proof, and of nature.*

*Through these six, discrimination is applied to each and every phenomenon from form up to omniscience.*

### **b. Summary of the Six Investigations as Three**

*The six investigations should be known as three: the meaning, the mode of being and the varieties.*

### **c. Twofold Condensation**

*Vipashyana can also be condensed into preparatory or "analytic" and actual or "non-fluctuating."*

## **4. The Way to Meditate**

*The way to meditate is to analyze selflessness by means of superior knowledge, and then to rest in a state free from mental fabrications. Non-analytical images are the basis for analysis; having identified the particular object, one cuts through misconceptions regarding its qualities.*

## **5. The Actual Meditation on Vipashyana**

- *The nature of the percept is understood to be empty like space;*
- *The perceiver is examined as to origin, abiding, shape, etc.;*
- *Discriminating knowledge itself, like a fire produced by rubbing wood, vanishes in the expanse of "not finding";*
- *Thus one rests free of grasping.*

## **6. The Measure of Accomplishment - Suppleness**

*When suppleness is obtained, vipashyana is said to be accomplished.*

# **UNION OF SHAMATHA AND VIPASHYANA**

## **1. The Training in Shamatha and Vipashyana Conjoined**

*Though Madhyamikas differ with respect to the method of development, they agree on what is to be developed, namely shamatha, vipashyana and the two together; these three are to be practiced in succession and the main point is non-distraction.*

## **2. The Union of Shamatha and Vipashyana**

*When practicing meditation with designations, the full discrimination of phenomena focuses on the images arising out of shamatha; this is union. When non-conceptual vipashyana is attained, they have become one essence; thus they are unified.*

## **3. The Fruition**

*This is the genuine samadhi, by the perfection of which non-abiding nirvana, freedom from the bondage of existence and peace, is attained.*

## **4. Brief Listing of the Categories**

### **a. 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.*

#### **b. 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.*

#### **5. The Accomplishment of Shamatha and Vipashyana by means of analytical and stabilizing meditation**

*Shamatha and vipashyana can be equally accomplished by either analytical or stabilizing meditation.*

#### **6. Supplementary explanation of the three stages of concentration**

- *First by child-like concentration, one perceives signs such as smoke, etc.;*
- *By the discrimination of phenomena, the sameness of pairs of opposites is realized and supreme concentration is accomplished;*
- *By focusing on suchness, all phenomena are seen to be emptiness, which in turn is realized to be peace by nature.*

#### **7. Conclusion**

*This completes the first part being the explanation of the stages of meditation of shamatha and vipashyana, the basis of all samadhis.*

# THE PRACTICE OF TRANQUILLITY AND INSIGHT

*A Guide to Tibetan Buddhist Meditation*

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*A commentary on the eighth chapter  
of the TREASURY OF KNOWLEDGE  
by Jamgön Kongtrül*

KHENCHEN THRANGU

*Translated by*  
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## IDENTIFYING EXPERIENCES IN SAMATHA MEDITATION

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**I**N the *Treasury of Knowledge* the practice of meditation is described in terms of the textual tradition and also in terms of the oral instructions of the great meditators. The texts are important because they describe and explain the meaning of the teachings of the Buddha, and the instructions are important because they come from the actual experience of meditating. First, let us begin with the textual tradition that describes meditation in terms of the five things that can cause meditation to go wrong and the eight ways to eliminate these faults.

### *The Five Faults*

When meditating, one has to recognize which experiences come out of meditation and which faults have to be eliminated. There are five faults that have to be eliminated through eight kinds of actions or antidotes. These five faults or defects prevent the development of meditation and are described by Asanga in the teachings of Maitreya in the *Differentiation of the Middle Way*, from the *Extremes*. This text says that if the mind can rest on an object, then the mind becomes workable and very stable so we can do whatever we wish with the mind. In

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contrast, our normal mind is like riding a wild horse; when we are on a wild horse we cannot stay in one spot and we cannot go where we want to go. But if the mind becomes tame and workable, we can do whatever we want. We can use our mind to increase our wisdom and understanding, or if we need miraculous powers and clairvoyance, we can develop these. The way to obtain a workable mind is through eliminating the five faults to meditation.

The first fault is *laziness*. Laziness prevents the application of meditation because one doesn't even begin after receiving instructions in meditation. There are actually three kinds of laziness. First is lethargy, in which one isn't interested in doing anything except sleeping. Second is attachment to worldly activity resulting in no desire for dharma practice or meditation. Instead one devotes oneself to worldly activities such as hunting animals, lying and deceiving others, and so on. These are activities one enjoys, one is used to, or thinks about a lot. In one sense one has diligence, but it is an obstacle to practicing the dharma. This is also called attachment to negative activity. The third is despondency and self-accusation, which result in thinking, "Others can meditate, but I can't; others will understand the dharma, but I won't." The fact is that all beings are able to meditate and work on the path, but if they underestimate their capabilities, this is also called self-repudiation.

The second fault is *forgetting the instructions*, which is a lack of mindfulness on how to meditate properly. While meditating, one should be very clear about what one is doing, what faults must be eliminated, and what

remedies must be applied. So one needs to remember the instructions for meditation.

The third fault is the *obstacle of stupor and agitation*. These are classified as a single fault. In stupor the mind is cloudy and dull. In its obvious form there is a loss of clarity of mind. In its subtle form there is some clarity, but it is very weak. There are also two kinds of agitation. There is an obvious kind in which one keeps thinking about what one has done or what fun one has had, so one is unable to rest the mind upon anything. In its subtle form one has apparent stability of mind, but there are still subtle thoughts that keep coming up. So there are two kinds of stupor and two kinds of agitation that cause an obstacle during meditation by causing the mind to lose its clarity and stability.

The fourth fault is *underapplication*, which occurs when dullness or agitation appear in one's meditation and one recognizes these thoughts, but doesn't apply a remedy. If one does not apply the remedy, meditation will not develop.

The fifth fault is *overapplication*. For example, dullness or agitation may appear in one's meditation, the remedy is applied, and the dullness or agitation is eliminated. Yet one continues to apply the remedy even though it is no longer useful. This is the fault of overapplication. The remedies should be used only when agitation and dullness appear; when they are eliminated, one should just rest in equanimity.

Although dullness and agitation have their individual characteristics, their effects as an obstacle to meditation are the same so they can be counted as just one fault. This system yields five faults, whereas if one counts

these as separate, one gets six faults, which is the system used in the *Stages of Meditation* by Kamalaśīla.

### *The Eight Antidotes*

To develop one's meditation, one has to eliminate the five faults. First one must be able to recognize what these faults are, then one needs to apply the remedies that eliminate them. These remedies are called the eight remedies that eliminate the five faults.

As described before, there are eight consciousnesses and these eight are called the principal mind. Within these consciousnesses occur transformations or changes. These changes are called mental events that can be sometimes good and sometimes bad. These mental events can also be described in terms of the five aggregates. There are the aggregates of form, sensation, identification, mental events, and consciousness. These describe the changes that occur within the principal mind. In the analysis of the aggregate of mental events, there are fifty-one different kinds of mental events such as laziness, forgetting instructions, and so on. These five faults are mental events, and the eight antidotes are also among this list of fifty-one mental events.

The first fault mentioned was laziness, a particularly powerful obstacle to meditation. There are four mental events that remedy this laziness. The first of these remedies is having aspiration or interest in meditation, meaning that one likes to meditate and is happy meditating. One could say that one is attached to meditation, but this attachment is positive, so we use the word *aspiration* because the attachment is to something that is negative and harmful. In Tibetan there are two words

### *Identifying Experiences in Samatha*

for "attachment"—*chagpa*, which is negative attachment usually translated as "attachment," and *mōpa*, which is positive attachment usually translated as "aspiration." If someone likes stealing, then they are attached to stealing and this is *chagpa*—negative attachment. If someone wants to help someone else or wants to practice the dharma and they are attached to that, then this is *mōpa* because it is beneficial to oneself and others. The meaning of these words appears to be the same in that one is thinking, "I have to do this" but with *mōpa* one wants to help and with *chagpa* one wants to harm. The word *chagpa* also has the meaning of "being stuck" so that one stays where one is and can't go any higher. So this word means a block to one's development. If this attachment were something positive like meditation, then it would bring a positive result. If one likes meditating, then one will meditate, which will naturally eliminate the laziness as an obstacle. Sometimes, however, attachment is not positive and will not bring any benefit. For example, I received a letter from South Africa in which the person said that she liked her cat very much and then she lost her cat. It was a very beautiful cat, but the person was always thinking about the cat and couldn't forget it. This is an example of attachment that is not beneficial. What one needs is attachment to something that is beneficial, which we can call "aspiration."

The second remedy is zeal. If one has interest and motivation to practice, then one doesn't have to force oneself to practice meditation; there will be a natural zeal to practice.

The third remedy for laziness is faith. Although this is similar to the first remedy, aspiration means that one

has something to aspire to, while faith means a belief in something very valuable.

The fourth remedy is literally called “well trained” and is also translated as “flexible” or “supple.” This means that one’s mind is ready at any moment to meditate. One doesn’t have to think, “Oh, now I’m going to have to meditate—how difficult, what a strain meditation is.” Without this suppleness of the “well-trained” mind and body, one does not have true *samatha*, but just a one-pointed state of mind. We can force our mind to be one-pointed with effort, but when we have the suppleness of meditation, the mind naturally rests one-pointedly without effort. This remedy and the previous three will eliminate the defect of laziness.

The fifth remedy is mindfulness, which remedies forgetting the instructions of meditation. One has a meditative state in which one doesn’t forget the instructions. Mindfulness has three characteristics. First, one has a sharpness and clearness of mind in which the instructions are not forgotten. Second, although the mind is very sharp and focused, there are not many thoughts arising because meditation is nonconceptual, so there are not many thoughts arising and the mind is naturally focused one-pointedly on an object. Third, because one has trust and faith and has the suppleness or flexibility of having become well trained, meditation becomes pleasant with a sense of comfort and pleasure. These three qualities in one’s meditation cause the meditation instructions not to be forgotten.

The third fault is stupor or agitation. First, one must recognize that agitation or stupor is appearing while meditating. When one finds either of these present, then one should apply a remedy to it. There are three meth-

ods to eliminate stupor or agitation. First, when one experiences stupor, one can visualize in one’s heart a four-petaled white lotus with a white sphere in its center. Then imagine this going up to the crown of the head to the level of the hair and then to a distance of four finger-widths above the head. When there is agitation or too many thoughts, visualize an upside-down four-petaled black lotus in the heart with a little black sphere in its center. Imagine it going down to the level of one’s seat and four finger-widths below that into the ground. A second remedy for stupor is to keep one’s eyes wide open and look upward and tense one’s body. For removing agitation one looks downward with eyes half closed, and relaxes the body. The third remedy for dullness is to be in a bright place. One opens all the windows and makes the room bright and cool and also wears light clothing. For agitation the room should be warm and darkened and one should wear thick clothing.

The fourth fault is inactivity in which one experiences dullness or agitation in one’s meditation but does nothing about it. When this happens, one will fall under its power and obviously not be able to work toward enlightenment. When one recognizes that there is dullness or agitation during meditation, one should remember and apply the remedies with diligence. So performing the proper remedy will eliminate the defect of inactivity.

The fifth fault is the defect of overactivity, which means that when one is meditating with none of the five faults, one shouldn’t do anything but rest in that meditative state. Doing this will eliminate the defect of overactivity.



In summary, there are eight mental remedies that can eliminate the five faults.

### *The Six Powers, Nine Levels, and Four Engagements*

In the *Treasury of Knowledge* two different kinds of teachings are given from two different traditions. The first is the śamatha instruction in the textual tradition, which comes from the great scholars and siddhas of the past who composed texts on the instructions for meditation in words that are easy to understand. The second kind is the śamatha instructions from the practice tradition, which comes from siddhas describing the experience that comes from meditation and how one eliminates the faults and develops the good qualities of meditation. What follows is meditation from the textual tradition.

There are six powers that eliminate defects in śamatha meditation and bring about mental stability. The six powers bring about nine levels of mental stability. These nine levels of mental stability are created by six powers and four kinds of mental engagements.

The first of the six powers is the strength of the *power of listening*, or hearing, or receiving the teachings. This develops the first stage of mental stability or śamatha, which is called the settling or resting of the mind. Normally one's mind is distracted by thoughts, so one has to settle the mind a little in order not to be too distracted by external things. This is done through the power of listening. One hears the teachings of the Buddha, the teachings in the commentaries, and the explanations given by the scholars and siddhas. Through these one understands what meditation is like.

### *Identifying Experiences in Śamatha*

Hearing these, one is able to understand settling the mind and learns how to meditate. Marpa said that hearing and contemplating the teachings is like a torch that illuminates the darkness because if one has this source of light, one can see where one is going, what is there, and what might be dangerous and harmful. In Tibet, there is also a saying, "If one does not have a lamp and walks in the dark, then one's head might connect with a pillar." In the same way hearing and contemplating the teachings is like a lamp—it dispels the darkness and one sees what it is one must do and how one has to do it.

The second power is the *power of contemplation* or reflection, which means that one goes through the reason and the logic of the teachings to complete the continuity of teachings. With this power one develops the second stage of mental stability, which is called continued settlement. In the first stage one can rest the mind briefly, say for five minutes, and in the second stage one can do it longer, say for ten minutes.<sup>7</sup> These first two stages of listening to the teachings and continually contemplating them are the first two powers and accomplish the first mental engagement, which is called disciplined or controlled engagement. This first engagement involves the powers of hearing the teachings and contemplating them. In this first mental engagement the mind is controlled and focused with discipline.

The third power is the *power of mindfulness*. This is similar to the remedy for not forgetting one's meditation instructions discussed above. This power of mindfulness develops the third level of mental stability called the reestablished settlement. This means that when one is meditating, thoughts will arise and one becomes

aware that one has become distracted by them. One returns to the state of meditation, so one reapplies oneself to it, reestablishing this settling in meditation. When there is a distraction that takes one away from resting in meditation, one is able to return to one's state of meditation repeatedly. This is reapplying a state of settling the mind. This power comes from the power of mindfulness because one becomes aware of the mind being distracted by some thought. With mindfulness one thinks, "I'm not going to be fully under the influence of this distracting thought" and mentally returns to what one is doing. This power of mindfulness also develops the fourth stage of mental stability, called intensified settlement, in which the mind that has been broadly focused is now focused very narrowly. The mind, for example, is narrowly focused on an object. The purpose of this kind of meditation is to focus the mind on something very subtle.

What can we do to prevent this continuous arising of thoughts? The text says that the mind is very vast and thoughts continuously arise and go everywhere. The mind has to be drawn inward and made more narrow, more constricted. So this is the state called the concentrated or intensified settlement, which is the fourth stage of śamatha meditation. The power necessary for this is the third power of mindfulness and memory. We need to remember teachings given by the Buddha, the commentaries, and the actual meditation instructions. We also need to be mindful of distractions so that when we become distracted we know this state allows us not to become attached or involved with that thought, so we can leave it and return to resting in meditation. Sometimes when we are meditating and a thought arises, we

think, "This is an important thought. This one I really have to think about!" Since we spend such a short time in meditation, we should tell ourselves that we can think about the thought all the rest of the day when the meditation session is over.

Sāntideva gives an example of why it is necessary to have mindfulness. He says that thoughts and kleśas are like robbers or thieves because a thief will look at the person to see whether that person is strong or powerful. If he thinks he is not strong, he will rob him. If a thief believes someone is strong and has weapons and lots of reinforcement, the thief will not steal from him. In the same way, if a meditator has mindfulness and awareness, then he won't lose his meditation or practice of good actions. But, if someone does not have mindfulness and awareness, then thoughts and kleśas will arrive and steal away the meditation and destroy the practice of good actions. The remedy that prevents the attack of mind poisons and thoughts is having mindfulness and awareness.

The mind is like a door. Whatever comes in, whether it be a thief or a great deal of wealth, must come through that door. Similarly, if any negative or positive qualities come in, they come in through the mind. Likewise, if one goes into a bank, for example, there is normally a guard at the door with a gun to prevent thieves from entering. In the same way, the mind is like a door and one needs mindfulness as a guard present all the time. Just as a guard is not enough, one needs the weapon of awareness. If mindfulness and awareness are there all the time, then the thoughts and kleśas won't be able to come in and steal what is positive. To carry the example further, Indian banks put a guard with a gun to guard

the door. But since they are afraid that there is nothing to keep the guard from robbing the bank, their solution is to chain the guard to a pillar outside. So Indian banks have a guard with a rifle chained to a pillar to stop thieves from coming in and the guard from robbing the bank. In the same way, to protect one's meditation one needs to have mindfulness guarding the door of the mind and in order to prevent the mindfulness from losing control, one chains it there with awareness.

The fourth power is the *power of awareness*, which means one knows exactly what is occurring and what one is doing. Normally, one isn't aware of what is happening, but this power of awareness develops two levels of mental stability, namely, the fifth level called taming and the sixth level called pacification. Normally, our mind cannot be motivated to meditate and so it is very difficult to meditate. With the power of taming, however, we become aware of the qualities and benefits of meditating: that it benefits ourselves and others; that this meditation can help us develop clairvoyance and miraculous powers and increase our understanding and wisdom. Being aware of all the qualities that result from meditation will cause us to be attracted to meditation and encourage us to meditate so our mind becomes tamed. Thus this power of awareness that develops the level of taming leads to the sixth level of mental stability called pacification. After śamatha meditation what is important in the postmeditation state is mindfulness and awareness. With mindfulness we don't forget the condition of our mind and with awareness we are very clear about what is happening all the time. To those who want to control their mind, Śāntideva said, "I ask with hands clasped together to make mindfulness and

awareness very important." During meditation sessions, mindfulness and awareness are also important, and after meditation sessions one should maintain mindfulness and awareness as much as possible.

In Tibetan *drenpa* means "mindfulness," and *sheshin* means "awareness." *Drenpa* also means "mindfulness and memory." It means that one is mindful of what one is doing and remembers what one has to do whether one is meditating, whether one has lost the power of concentration, and so on. Mindfulness is like a causal condition and awareness is like the result. If one has very concentrated mindfulness, one immediately notices a thought arising and this becomes awareness, which becomes sheshin, and one knows what is occurring. Normally, one does not know what is in one's mind or what one is thinking, so there is no awareness. But if one has mindfulness, then it is said to the extent that mindfulness brings mental stability, one has awareness. So when one has mindfulness, it is through one's awareness of what is happening.

At this level of pacification we become aware of the negative qualities of distraction. Śāntideva explains this by saying that when the mind is distracted, it is between the fangs of the wild animal of the kleśas, and from mental distractions come all the difficulties and mental hardships of this and future lives. Being in a state of distraction will increase the negative qualities of the mind more and more. However, being aware of the negative qualities motivates us to meditate.

The fifth power is the *power of diligence*. This power creates the seventh level of mental stability, which is complete pacification. In the previous level of pacification one contemplates the qualities of meditation and

the faults of distraction and eliminates these. Sometimes, however, with very strong obstacles such as unhappiness, regret, or aggression, just thinking of the good qualities of meditation will not eliminate them right away. Instead, one needs the power of diligence so that one can eliminate all strong obstacles such as attachment, aggression, and ignorance and can create the seventh level of meditative stability of complete pacification.

The power of diligence also creates the eighth level of mental stability, which is called one-pointedness because all powerful distractions of mind have been eliminated and the mind can rest one-pointedly. At the level of one-pointedness one can meditate without much effort, and this power of diligence is used to maintain this one-pointed state.

The first mental engagement is called the tightly controlled engagement and is associated with the first two levels of mental stability. The second mental engagement, called interrupted engagement, is associated with the third through seventh levels of stability. Interrupted engagement means that one rests the mind in a state of stability; then it is interrupted by some defect and one then applies the remedy. One continues this repeatedly so that one's stability is continually interrupted. At the level of the eighth mental stability of one-pointedness one develops the third mental engagement called the uninterrupted mental engagement. At this point the mind focuses on one point and remains there without interruption.

The sixth power is the *power of familiarization*. At this level the mind is naturally settled without the need for effort or discipline. The fourth mental engagement as-

sociated with this power is the naturally present mental engagement. The ninth level of mental stability is called resting in equanimity. So at the ninth level of mental stability with the sixth power and the fourth mental engagement, the mind just rests in equanimity, relaxed without effort. This is the final stage of mental stability.

The five defects and eight remedies are taught in the *Differentiation of the Middle Way from the Extremes*, which is by Asaṅga and is one of the five works of Maitreya. The Buddha's teachings are divided into the sūtras, the vinaya, and the abhidharma. The *Differentiation of the Middle Way from the Extremes* is a commentary on the abhidharma. The nine levels of mental stability are taught in Maitreya's *Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras* by Asaṅga. This text explains and clarifies the teachings of the sūtras. The six powers and four mental engagements are found in one of the five treatises of Asaṅga called the *Levels of the Śrāvakas*.

To summarize, when we meditate, faults arise that prevent us from developing our meditation (see table 1).

When the bodhisattvas meditated, they saw the faults that arose and then identified them and were able to find remedies that could eliminate these faults. But if we don't recognize these faults when meditating, we will not progress toward Buddhahood. Through the teachings we can identify these defects and know how to apply the correct remedy. This particular teaching is one that should be experienced directly, not just studied intellectually. As the five defects arise in our meditation, we should apply the eight remedies and use the six powers and the four mental engagements in our meditation. Also, through our meditation we should be able to identify which level of mental stability we have

reached. Therefore, these meditation instructions are very important and we need to understand them thoroughly.

The Tradition of Oral Instruction

The instruction of śamatha has been passed on orally from one individual to another. One first receives instruction on śamatha much like the instruction in this book. This first stage is called the *experience of instability*. When one begins to meditate, one first experiences the mind as very unstable with many, many thoughts arising. There are good thoughts and bad thoughts and this is likened to a waterfall rushing off a cliff. When the water hits the bottom, it splashes up with a great deal of agitation and makes many waves. In meditation it seems one has never had so many thoughts and one thinks, “I am getting worse because of my meditation.” But, in fact, one is not developing more thoughts; rather, before one had begun to meditate, one didn’t think about how many thoughts one had. One didn’t analyze them and so one wasn’t aware of the number of thoughts. Actually, meditation is the beginning of dealing with one’s mind because one becomes aware of one’s thoughts.

When we begin to meditate continually, we begin to have a second experience called the *experience of attainment*. With this experience we begin to feel that we have accomplished good meditation. This experience is likened to a mountain stream or a river in a gully. The river is still rough with many waves, but it isn’t as powerful and fierce as a waterfall.

The next level of meditation becomes easier and is

TABLE ONE  
Summary of the Powers, Levels,  
and Engagements

POWER	LEVELS OF STABILITY	ENGAGEMENT
1. Hearing the teachings	1. Resting the mind	1. Tightly focused or controlled engagement
2. Contemplating the teachings	2. Resting in the mind longer	
3. Memory or mindfulness	3. Continuously resettling the mind	2. Interrupted mental engagement
	4. Intensely settled mind	
4. Awareness	5. Taming the mind	3. Uninterrupted mental engagement
	6. Pacification of the mind	
5. Diligence	7. Complete pacification of the mind	4. Naturally settled engagement
	8. One-pointed mind	
6. Familiarization	9. Resting in equanimity	

likened to a slow-flowing river. The meditation is easier but not to the extent that it is a continuous state of meditative stability with no thoughts arising. But it is not as rough and unconnected as the second stage of attainment. So now there is a kind of smoothness and gentleness because the power of thoughts has decreased. This third level is called the *experience of familiarization*.

The fourth level is known as the *experience of stability* because there is a continuous state of stability without a flow of disturbing thoughts. At this stage one has reached the degree of stability in which one has control over one's mind. This is compared to an ocean that is calm and without waves.

The fifth level is called the *experience of complete stability* and is the final stage in which one is not disturbed by any kind of experience. The experiences that arise in this fifth level are bliss, clarity, and the absence of thoughts. For example, while meditating one might experience a great sensation of bliss and later this bliss disappears. Or one day suddenly a great clarity arises in one's meditation and one might think, "What is this clarity I'm experiencing?" Or one might experience a state devoid of conceptual thoughts. These are the three kinds of experiences that can arise in *śamatha* meditation. At this level whatever arises does not affect one's mental stability and one is unaffected by conditions such as those that create craving or anger or even love and compassion. As a result one develops great clarity and brightness of mind that is devoid of dullness or stupidity. The example for this experience is a candle flame burning in still air; it is very bright and gives good light, but if it is in moving air, it just gives intermittent light. Once the mind is stable and becomes unaffected

by thoughts, then one is able to have a clear understanding of things. There are two aspects of this perfect understanding: the aspect of clarity and the aspect of purity. Clarity is when everything is seen with sharp vision, everything is understood very clearly, vividly, and in detail. The aspect of purity is when the mind is not stained by uncertainty and there is no fluctuation in this clarity. It is completely pure and unpolluted understanding.

Normally, when we develop some mental stability and have a good meditative experience, we think, "This is wonderful, I must be becoming a *siddha*." When we have a bad meditative experience, on the other hand, we think, "This is terrible, I'm obviously doing everything wrong." But whatever experience occurs—good or bad—we should just continue meditating. If a good experience arises, we should not feel we are better than everyone else and feel proud; we should just continue meditating. If a bad experience arises, we should not become depressed because that will just cause us to fall into a lower existence; we should just proceed with our meditation and maintain the practice continually. When Gampopa had the experience of having the Hevajra maṇḍala appear before him or saw the whole Chakrasaṃvara maṇḍala or met his yidam deity in his meditation, he would go to his teacher Milarepa and ask him what it meant. Milarepa would always say it was nothing at all and that there was nothing good or bad in it and that he should go back and carry on meditating. Sometimes Gampopa would have very bad experiences while meditating. One time the whole world began to spin until he threw up; another time everything went completely dark so that Gampopa had to feel his way

# THE PRACTICE OF TRANQUILLITY AND INSIGHT

*A Guide to Tibetan Buddhist Meditation*

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*A commentary on the eighth chapter  
of the TREASURY OF KNOWLEDGE  
by Jamgön Kongtrül*

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## THE UNION OF ŚAMATHA AND VIPAŚYANĀ

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ONE can't achieve enlightenment with just śamatha meditation. One also can't achieve enlightenment with just vipaśyanā meditation. No one achieves wisdom of Buddhahood with just vipaśyanā meditation. What is necessary is to study vipaśyanā by itself, then study vipaśyanā by itself, and then practice the union of śamatha and vipaśyanā to reach final enlightenment. The original text divides this chapter into three parts: the practice of the union of śamatha and vipaśyanā, the timing of this union, and the different kinds of śamatha and vipaśyanā.

### *The Practice of This Union*

The union of the stability of mind (*śamatha*) and of insight (*vipaśyanā*) occurs when the mind is at rest and still, not in the ordinary way, but at rest in the wisdom of the *dharmadhātu*. In the sūtra tradition there are four different sets of instructions on how to do this, each of which is given by a different Indian master. The instructions vary, but they agree that one should practice the union of śamatha and vipaśyanā. These four masters are Bhāvaviveka, Śāntideva, Kamalaśīla, and Chandrakīrti, who were all Madhyamaka masters concerned with a

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thorough understanding of emptiness. There are two major schools in the Madhyamaka: the Svātantrikas and the Prāsaṅgikas. To simplify, the Svātantrika school says that on the level of ultimate truth nothing has any true existence, whereas on the relative level things exist. So the Svātantrika school is concerned with concepts of existence and nonexistence. The Prāsaṅgika school, however, believes that things have no actual nature and phenomena are just appearances, that apart from these appearances they don't have any true nature. All things are just appearances. So the Prāsaṅgikas are not so concerned with concepts of existence and nonexistence.

First, Bhāvaviveka of the Prāsaṅgika school uses the method for developing union of śamatha and vipaśyanā, which is that one first meditates on unpleasantness and love, etc. This is described in the section on the remedy for attachment where, for example, one meditates on love to overcome clinging to anger. A person thus develops śamatha meditation. Then one analyzes phenomena. In the analysis of external phenomena one develops an understanding of the inseparability of appearance and emptiness. In the analysis of internal phenomena one gains understanding of the inseparability of emptiness and awareness of the perceiver.

Second, Śāntideva in *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* says that to develop śamatha one needs to develop *bodhicitta*. There is relative and absolute *bodhicitta* and in this practice one develops śamatha through relative *bodhicitta* by wishing that all beings achieve happiness and be free from suffering. But beings do not know what causes suffering and so they remain in suffering. Therefore, one must develop the motivation to help all beings become free from suffering. However,

since one doesn't have this ability, one practices dharma because the dharma will teach one how to do this. One thinks that one is going to accomplish the goal of helping all beings attain the state of Buddhahood. This is the development of relative *bodhicitta* with śamatha. After achieving the completely trained state of this śamatha, one moves on to vipāśyanā. Through the development of vipāśyanā comes the realization of emptiness. This is the same as Bhāvaviveka's analysis of outer phenomena and inner phenomena to develop the understanding of the inseparability of emptiness and appearance; and the inseparability of emptiness and awareness respectively.

The third system, that of Kamalaśīla, is widely practiced and can be found in the second volume of the *Stages of Meditation*. One develops śamatha through resting the mind on an external object such as a statue of the Buddha, then on an internal object such as the breath and so on. This practice makes the mind still and calm. Having developed śamatha this way, one then develops vipāśyanā by analyzing and examining that mind resting in śamatha. One begins to realize that there is no mind that can be identified and develops an understanding of the inseparability of awareness and emptiness. One recognizes that when the mind is examined, there is nothing there that can be identified. One develops vipāśyanā meditation through the analysis of the six root mind poisons, as has been described in the tradition of Atīśa in the śamatha section.

Chandrakīrti, a very great Madhyamaka master, composed the text *Entering the Middle Way*, which presents many kinds of reasoning and logical analyses of emptiness. Not only did he give reasons, but to elimi-



nate his pupils' clinging to phenomena he did a practical demonstration. At the entrance of most temples there is a painting of the Wheel of Existence.<sup>11</sup> In the past arhats would go and visit the six realms, and when they returned, they would describe to others what it was like so that ordinary people could listen to these teachings and have these realms described to them. So the Buddha said that at the entrance to the temples there should be a painting of the beings of the six realms for ordinary people to see. Anyway, in the painting of the six realms there are depicted some cows in the section of the animal realm. One day Chandrakīrti came up to the painting and began milking one of the cows in the painting. He was able to get enough milk for everyone to drink. He did this to demonstrate that whether it was a painting of a cow or an actual cow, neither has any true reality. So Chandrakīrti was not only a great scholar, but also had great realization.

Chandrakīrti's method is different from the others. In this method one listens to the teachings and then contemplates them so that one gains understanding of the true nature of things. By listening to and contemplating the teachings, one develops the prajñā or understanding of the true nature of all phenomena, which develops the view that comes from the analysis of the suchness of things. One first develops this perfect understanding of the true nature of phenomena, and having gained this, one develops śamatha and vipaśyanā meditation. Thus they are practiced on the basis of the view, the actual understanding of the nature of mind.

In these four systems there are slightly different instructions on how to develop śamatha and vipaśyanā, but these are slight variations. They agree that we first

need to stabilize the mind, then we will be able to develop the insight of vipaśyanā and that these two practices are not separate, but are a union. They agree that the practice of śamatha is a causal condition resulting in vipaśyanā, and that we practice the union of these two together. This means the mind must be one-pointed and not distracted by other thoughts. This also means that we use the mind as the object of our meditation and do not think about something else. This one-pointedness comes when we are resting in meditation, not while we are analyzing phenomena.

There is a lama named Mendong Lama Sherab who is from Lachi, a place where Milarepa meditated. This is a very isolated place near the border of Nepal and Tibet. When the Chinese invaded, the border was closed and there was no passage through there, and so it became a very isolated place to which no one ever came. There was a cave there in which Lama Sherab meditated for three years. When I was talking with Lama Sherab about his experiences, I said, "You must have had a lot of realizations and experiences there because there was nothing there to distract you." Lama Sherab replied, "If you sit alone in a cave, your mind still becomes distracted." If you don't control your mind, your mind will become distracted. It is important when meditating to have control over the mind so that it won't become distracted. Therefore, the meditation has to be under firm control to protect it from arising thoughts.

The text describes all the various kinds of śamatha and vipaśyanā because it is a "*Treasury*" of *Knowledge* presenting all knowledge. The above practices are those that are taught in the sūtra tradition. What is practiced in the vajrayāna tradition is the system of Kamalaśīla

using an external, then internal object, etc. So *śamatha* is generally developed by doing the practice of watching one's breath.

*Vipaśyanā* is normally practiced using the different analyses of external objects and emptiness, internal emptiness and awareness, using the many different methods that have been described. But the way followed in the vajrayāna tradition is the internal inseparability of emptiness and awareness. When meditation is stable, the mind rests in its natural stability. Sometimes thoughts arise and the mind is then in movement. One looks to see what is the nature of the movement of the mind. This is not using analytical reasoning and logic, but having a direct experience of the nature of mind at rest and in movement. This is the usual method followed for the development of *vipaśyanā*.

One doesn't have to logically analyze the mind to find out that it has no existence. One can just look at the mind and see that it is not there. At the same time there is this process of knowing or awareness. The word for "mind" in Tibetan is *sem* or *shepa*, which means "that which knows."<sup>12</sup> So there is this knowing, but if one tries to find out what it is that is knowing, one can't find anything. The activity of knowing is unceasing but one can't find anything that knows so one can say that this is selflessness. When there is no mind, there is selflessness and there is emptiness so one can call this the inseparability of clarity and emptiness. This selflessness, or egolessness, is something that we haven't really thought of throughout beginningless time that we have been in *saṃsāra* because our attention has been turned outward. But turning inward, one sees this selflessness and the inseparability of clarity and emptiness. This

emptiness, however, is not emptiness meaning nothing whatsoever because there is the interdependence of phenomena, the awareness of what we experience, the forms we see, the sounds we hear, and so on.

If our mind is not under control, then all the obscurations can arise in the mind. So all these things appear and their experience is something like watching a movie. There is nothing actually there in the theater, yet all these pictures, sounds, and emotions appear in our mind. So we have appearances arising in mind, but when we investigate more closely, we see that it has no true existence, but is just the interdependence of phenomena (such as the movie projector, the film, the screen, the speakers, etc.).

The third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje, described the nature of *śamatha* and *vipāśyanā* in the vajrayāna tradition. In *śamatha* there are obvious and subtle waves of thoughts that become naturally pacified. He said that these obvious and subtle thoughts become stilled; they are like the sea. There are sometimes large and sometimes small waves on the sea. When these waves cease, then the sea is completely still without movement. In the same way, one has sometimes subtle and sometimes obvious thoughts. If these become completely pacified, the mind becomes totally still, calm, and unmoving like a calm sea. Even when the sea is completely still, there can be some pollution, so one needs to have very pure and clear water running into the sea for it to be completely pure. Likewise, even though the mind has been stilled, there can still be the defect of dullness of the mind. So correct *śamatha* occurs when the defect of dullness is removed so that there is a state of calm and stability and also a state of clarity.

Rangjung Dorje also describes vipaśyanā as looking again and again at something that cannot be seen. So the nature of mind cannot be examined or analyzed. He says that one looks at the nature of mind again and again and nothing with true existence can be found. By looking at this and seeing the true nature of the mind, one becomes free of doubt and uncertainty of what the mind is like. Instead one develops a certainty through seeing the nature of the mind, and this is vipaśyanā meditation.

To develop śamatha and vipaśyanā you have to have diligence and apply yourself to meditation without going from one method to another. But diligence alone is not enough without having the actual practice and essential instructions such as in guru yoga. In this practice you supplicate the guru and in this way you develop devotion to the guru. Following this supplication and development of faith and devotion to the guru, light beams of white, red, and blue come from the guru (who is visualized in front of you) and merge into yourself; thus you receive the blessing from the guru. When that occurs, a transformation in meditation can occur. If you hadn't been able to develop the insight of vipaśyanā meditation, then suddenly through guru yoga you can develop this meditation. If you have had the experience of śamatha and vipaśyanā, guru yoga can help increase the intensity of this experience. The purifications of your bad karma and the accumulation of merit will also increase your śamatha and vipaśyanā. The elimination of your bad karma and obscurations will also remove obstacles to your śamatha and vipaśyanā. Therefore, you do the practice of Vajrasattva for the purification of your bad karma and obscurations and do the practice of

### *The Union of Śamatha & Vipāśyanā*

maṇḍala offering to help your experience and realization. The four preliminary practices are very important and the purpose of doing these practices is to increase your śamatha and vipāśyanā. You need diligence to practice meditation, but diligence by itself is not enough, so you get help from the practice of the preliminaries. The first preliminary, prostrations, is taking refuge in the three jewels (of Buddha, dharma, and saṅgha) and the development of bodhichitta, which causes you to enter on the genuine path, and the other three preliminaries increase the development of śamatha and vipāśyanā. The primary cause for the development of śamatha and vipāśyanā is your own diligence and the necessary conditions are the preliminary practices. Having both of these enables you to develop the union of śamatha and vipāśyanā.

### *The Time of the Union*

The text says that there are two kinds of union: śamatha and vipāśyanā with a reference point and śamatha and vipāśyanā without a reference point. Śamatha with a reference point means that one's mind is focused on something like a statue of the Buddha or the breath. Vipāśyanā with a reference point means that one analytically examines and differentiates between phenomena. When that vipāśyanā's realization arises together with nonconceptual śamatha, there is the union of the two. Though there is śamatha and vipāśyanā that depends on a reference point, the main kind of śamatha and vipāśyanā is nonconceptual śamatha and vipāśyanā that is without a reference point. This kind of śamatha meditation is described by Rangjung Dorje when he talks of

the large and subtle waves becoming stilled. This is the state where one rests in the nature of the mind without any concepts. It is the state of stability. The vipaśyanā is seeing that the mind does not have any reality or true existence. The presence of this state of peace and the realization of the nature of the mind is the union of śamatha and vipaśyanā. Śamatha is an aid to the vipaśyanā and the vipaśyanā is an aid to the śamatha. So it is called the union of śamatha and vipaśyanā.

Nonconceptual śamatha meditation is the mind just resting in its natural state. Nonconceptual vipaśyanā is understanding the inseparability of the appearances and emptiness of external phenomena and understanding the inseparability of the awareness and emptiness of the internal perceiver. Both are necessary in order to have the nonconceptual śamatha and vipaśyanā united as a single identity. So one can practice śamatha alone or one can practice vipaśyanā alone but when they are practiced together they should be practiced in union. The union means that śamatha and vipaśyanā are not coexisting with each other, but instead it is impossible to differentiate between them. So if there's nonconceptual śamatha, then there will be nonconceptual vipaśyanā, or if there is nonconceptual vipaśyanā, then there will be nonconceptual śamatha.

The union of śamatha and vipaśyanā is explained clearly by Kamalaśīla in the first volume of the *Stages of Meditation*. He says that when practicing meditation one sees the absence of the essence of phenomena. Being a Mādhyamaka explanation, the statement means that one sees the emptiness of phenomena, which means seeing the true nature of phenomena exactly as it is. This is described by the Buddha as being beyond words and

thoughts. Beyond words means that the state completely transcends the ability to be described by words. Being beyond thoughts means one cannot analyze it conceptually by thinking that it exists, or doesn't exist, or whatever. One also cannot say that phenomena are nonexistent because there is the awareness of mind. This direct insight into the clarity and the absence of any true essence is vipaśyanā—true insight.

What then is the śamatha aspect? This is the absence of dullness or agitation in meditation. There is also the absence of the three obstacles of aggression and doubt and regret, which can hinder the development of a stable meditative state. If one has regret, one thinks, "Oh, I wish such and such a thing had happened" or "This thing didn't turn out right," which disrupts meditation. If one has doubt, one thinks, "Is this true or isn't it?" and this uncertainty disrupts meditation. If one has aggression, one feels anger toward someone and this will disrupt meditation. So in meditation one is free from dullness and agitation and the three obstacles of regret, doubt, and aggression; so there is no deliberate activity. "No deliberate activity" means that one rests in the natural state of concentration due to familiarization. With this familiarization one doesn't need to make a deliberate effort to stay in meditation. The text says that when one is able to see the actual nature of meditation and phenomena and be free from the defects of agitation and dullness, etc., and when one can rest effortlessly in meditation free from any deliberate action, then one has achieved the union of śamatha and vipaśyanā.

The way of practicing the union of śamatha and vipaśyanā meditation was described by Milarepa in his

that reflects the thought, “I must not wander nor forget again.” In this state it is very important that you sustain the recognition of stillness and thought movement as before.

From the beginning, apprehensive of becoming distracted, be very concerned and careful, thinking, “I must not wander even for a single moment.” Later, when you have become distracted, you must not be carried away by it but restore your determination and maintain the flow of mindfulness. Understand that the stability of the prevalence of undistracted mindfulness is the root practice and the principal part of the meditation.

In the state of mindfulness, your mind should look at both its going and staying. Other than that there is nothing else to cultivate. It suffices if awareness recognizes the nature of everything that arises. Apart from this you do not need to search somewhere else for more quality or clarity. If you wonder, “Other than preserving the recognition of my mind nature, is there anything else outside that happens or is to be seen?” it would be as if you were abandoning the door of what is and wandering instead in the alleys of what is not, or walking toward the west while turning your back to your actual destination, the east. All your meditation will be pointless; all your hardships will be fruitless. Therefore you should not proceed in that way. Instead sustain awareness, which is what you have. Don’t put aside what you have and look elsewhere for what you don’t have. Just watch the identity of awareness, no matter what it thinks or where it goes. Don’t give importance to whether the awareness is clear or not. Avoid stopping thought movement and pursuing stillness. Whatever stillness there is and no matter what arises, just sustain their natural flow at their own pace, without tainting it with alterations. Without allowing yourself to forget undistracted mindfulness even for a moment, persevere in maintaining its prevalence.

## SUSTAINING NONMODIFYING KNOWING ON THE OBJECTS OF PERCEPTION

You should not just sustain the identity of meditative composure in which the recognition of the nature of stillness and movement is preserved, but you should maintain it while also integrating it with the

# THE ROYAL SEAL OF MAHAMUDRA

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*Volume One: A Guidebook for the  
Realization of Coemergence*

The Third Khamtrul Rinpoche,  
Ngawang Kunga Tenzin

Translated by Gerardo Abboud

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from this, it is difficult for beginners to identify stillness, movement, whatever arises, or any thoughts they might have during formal meditation in the way others can. So even if this identification doesn't happen, at all times and in every situation, simply stick to not forgetting the flow of undistracted mindfulness of your mind in a natural way. At first, be concerned about becoming distracted. Later, keep alive the presence of mindfulness again and again. Finally, on recognizing that you have forgotten and on restoring the flow of undistracted mindfulness, it is necessary not to succumb to laziness, indolence, diversions, and so forth. Since this is a very important point be sure to proceed in this way.

This has been an explanation of the ways of resting the mind and sustaining the practice. What now follows is a brief explanation of how to structure your present meditation session.

## HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR MEDITATION SESSION

Before starting the session and at all times, as a method for your mind to follow the Dharma and ensure the conditions to arouse diligence for practice, reflect on points such as the following: the difficulty of obtaining the opportunities provided by a human existence, impermanence and the certainty of death, lack of knowledge about when you will die, and the usefulness of the sacred Dharma after death, for, unlike mere momentary goals of this life, it is extremely important for all your lives.

As to the main part of the session, carry out the extraordinary preliminaries. In terms of refuge and bodhichitta, offer prostrations. Cleanse the obscurations of your body, voice, and mind. Accumulate the collections by offering mandalas. Through guru yoga, supplicate your guru and receive his or her blessing. Carry out all these stages of practice as precisely as you can.

Then, outwardly, observe the key points of the physical posture, the seven points of Vairochana. Inwardly, observe the key points of voice by keeping silent. Secretly, observe the key points of mind. If your mind, the ground, is distracted and forgets, this causes you to wander in samsara. If you purify yourself, recognize your original face, and remain in your natural state, then you awaken to buddhahood. The root of

all of samsara and nirvana is your mind. This mind never leaves you. In all your past and future lives, that which forms positive or negative karma, and experiences all the happiness or sorrow resulting from it, is also your own mind. Confirm that the root of samsara and nirvana is precisely your own mind, the foundation and creator of all. Your own mind being the root of samsara and nirvana, it follows that it is indeed very important to tame it. Be convinced and trust that the root of all paths, the heart of all meditations, the crucial point of all Dharma paths, the very root of all, is precisely this mindful knowing nurtured by yourself that keeps your mind present and undeluded.

In the state of undistracted mindfulness there may be stillness or thought movement, depending upon whether the mind stays still or wanders about. In either case, having this trust and conviction, do not make alterations; preserve the natural flow of not forgetting the identity of staying, going, or whatever the mind does or thinks. Stillness and thought movement are like water and its waves; it cannot be said that while the water is good its waves are bad or that they are different from each other. Waves rise from the water itself, and also disappear into the water. Likewise, the nature of your mind is such that stillness is its essence and the myriad thought movements are its natural radiance. “Good” stillness does not come from elsewhere nor does “bad” thought movement arise from anywhere else. The mind of stillness and the mind of movement do not exist separately. No matter how diverse thoughts may be, they all arise from the natural brilliance of the mind’s basic nature. Like waves dissolving in water, thoughts disappear by themselves within the nature of mind; they do not exist apart from it. Hoping there will be stillness, you pursue it; thinking that if only there weren’t thoughts, you try to stop them. Do not indulge in any such corrections, pursuing something and stopping something else. When still, note that there is stillness and do not forget its identity. Also when thinking all kinds of thoughts—one thought, two thoughts, a good thought, a bad thought—recognize the identity of that movement and sustain it without forgetting. When you forget and are distracted, restore your determination and maintain its continuity. If you become conscious of an outer object, such as a form seen by the eyes, remain

on that perception without distraction. When the ears hear a sound, maintain undistracted mindfulness on that aural perception. In a similar fashion, whether it is forms, sounds, smells, tastes, or textures, in each case rest on it without forgetting. If thoughts of good or bad, like or dislike toward these arise, do not slip into this delusion, but look at whatever occurs with undistracted mindfulness.

Thus through meditative composure, one-pointedly keeping the key points of body, voice, and mind, remain undistracted. Then, at the end of the session, dedicate the merit. In particular, when you are not resting composed in formal meditation, while moving, sitting, eating, drinking, working, at leisure, occupied, lying, standing, conversing, reciting prayers, and so forth, in all your daily activities always proceed as follows. First, apprehensive that your mind may be distracted, be careful and concerned, and through mindful knowing and not forgetting, establish the foundation. Second, when you forget, revive your mindfulness through determination. Finally, even if you forget, pick up from there, and again and again restore mindfulness. Never separate the practice of mindful knowing and carefulness from the main body of the meditation. Capture that point of nonseparation as much as you can. If you always nurture mindful knowing and carefulness they will steadily improve. Without falling prey to the negative karma of laziness, indolence, distraction, or lassitude, you must extend the presence of the essence of meditative composure, the ultimate achievement of your lifetimes, continually striving to be as diligent as possible.

Virupa said:

The ultimate natural state is dispassionate,  
There is nothing to cleanse in the absolute.  
Don't reject, pursue, grasp, act, or block.

The sublime supreme conduct is to be at ease in your own true nature.

Maitripa said:

Don't fabricate the true nature, rest in the natural state.

This is what is called "loosely sustaining the complete knowledge of the nature."

Summing up, don't search for so-called meditation anywhere else; instead, look at your mind. That the mind is simply undeluded is sufficient. Apart from this, do not apply the many patches of making a lot of corrections and manipulating the meditation. Merely by being undeluded, the mind is open and free. If it's still, simply don't forget its essence and rest serene. Even when all kinds of thoughts arise, without losing the sharpness of your mindfulness yet always keeping it present, identify everything that arises and loosely relax within that recognition. If again you forget the determination to be mindful and become distracted, once more identify that distraction through mindfulness and stabilize a vivid undistracted mindfulness. Never lose the sharpness of your mindfulness. If you often forget and regularly wander in confusion, this is a sign that your exertion in being mindful is feeble. So if you are always losing sight of being careful, mindful, attentive, and apprehensive of forgetting, over and over again foster the mindfulness that prevents forgetfulness from proliferating.

Generally, it is said "rest without modifying, sustain without wandering." This is the crucial, quintessential point. What is a modified mind? The mind is modified when we have many thoughts of the three times, such as "I have done that before; I am doing this now; I now think that it is like this." Also, in terms of the meditation, to think along

the lines of “I must tighten up; I must loosen up.” Or else, in terms of blocking and pursuing, to think, “Will I have some stillness? If only there wasn’t any thought movement.” Also to have thoughts of hope and fear, such as hoping for meditation to happen or fearing it will not. When you think like that, you are modifying or fabricating the mind. Nonmodification is to rest comfortably and at ease in the true nature of your mind without thinking in any of the above ways at all, remaining in the continuity of the unfabricated natural flow, free of a lot of stirring thoughts.

What is distraction? The mind may be resting unmodified in the natural flow as described, yet you don’t keep to its true identity without wandering. Although the mind is still, you are not aware of its condition, whether it’s this or that. When it moves and thoughts proliferate, you also lack recognition of the identity of the movement and what you are thinking; in short you have no idea what is happening. You don’t know how it is still or in which way it moves, and so the confusion of ignorance proliferates. This then is what is called “distraction.” “Nondistraction” is when, as previously described, the mind is resting naturally and without modification in its basic nature, and it simply does not forget itself, keeping to a mindfulness that just does not wander. Then, “to sustain” means that no matter in what state the mind is, whether still or moving, you keep recognizing the identity of all these mental occurrences through the determination of mindfulness. If you wander, forget, and fall into delusion, rely on mindfulness again and again. This is how it should be understood.

Let us see the meaning of the triad stillness, movement, and awareness (*gnas’gyurigsum*). It is necessary to recognize your mind when it stays or leaves. These two, staying and leaving, are respectively called “stillness” and “movement.” The mind that stays without leaving is stillness; while the mind that leaves without staying is movement. That which sustains the recognition of these two, stillness and movement, is awareness. This is how you should understand the way of designating and determining this triad known as stillness, movement, and awareness.

The stages of meditation with support like the pebble and so forth are skillful means to gradually lead ordinary people. Since in the main

body of the practice this triad itself is what sustains your mind—from unsupported meditation until its true nature is revealed—it is an excellent practice, so you should arouse strong diligence without slipping into laziness and sloth.



Many cling to experiences devoid of realization.  
Most meditators remain at this level.

There are many references of this sort, like the case of Takpo Rinpoche, who had no thought movement for about thirteen days. When he related this to Jetsun Milarepa, the latter replied, “That too is meditation, but since it is suppressive concentration, enlightenment is not attained. No butter results from churning sand.”

#### STRAYING INTO BLANK SHAMATHA

There are people who have little learning and have attended on a guru for a short time, who may have something analogous to meditation at the beginning. However, they do not know how to maintain it, and due to the lack of continuity or weakness of this state the conviction of vipashyana slips away and the mindful knowing of samadhi slackens. Some related experiences, not of the meditative sort, arise and the person regards them as meditation and becomes conceited. He then strays into some sort of blank meditation which, when maintained, eventually leads to an increase of dullness and torpor. First, the objects of sight, fine and gross, become blurred and somewhat hazy. Then they become increasingly blurred until finally the sight consciousness fades away and the vision of forms ceases. Similarly, audible sounds and the other objects of the senses eventually become blurred and hazy, and finally cease. At the end, after the six consciousnesses that engage with the six sense objects have ceased, the person becomes imperceptive and unconscious, as if fainting. For example, when ice forms on a lake, the transparency and clarity of the water, as well as any particular thing inside the water become blurred. This is similar to proudly regarding consciousness that has turned into nonthought as meditation—it is merely the straying into blank shamatha.

It may also happen that there is slightly more lucidity than that and one has mindfulness for just fleeting moments, and visual, auditory, and the other types of phenomena are not blocked. However, once these are indistinct and have become somewhat hazy, knowing becomes unclear,

and a kind of dullness, daze, or numbness sets in. These are referred to as belonging to the category of the affliction of stupidity and its set of secondary afflictions. Furthermore, it may also be that one does not notice or perceive in any way whatsoever such things as whether phenomena of the six groups are distinct or not; without any mental activity at all, it is as if one were unconscious. This way of abiding is like the ones described before and it belongs to the blank type; therefore, it is not fit to be called meditation, as since these are intense forms of stupidity, they are explained as being a collection of causes for animal existence. Therefore, as said in the *Jewel Garland*:

The fools usually become animals.

Takpo Rinpoche says:

Without realization, blank mind is the demon of meditation.

While confidence has not risen from your depth,

Don't proclaim, “This is a good experience.”

Also in various differentiation teachings of the Nyingma tradition, it is said:

Resting the mind in the concentration of blank emptiness is  
mental darkness;

Through this it is impossible to actualize the realization.

It is not a meditative experience in accordance with the scriptures.

One calls the experience of oblivion that arose “realization”

And performs unconventional wrong acts.

There are many foolish meditations

That are attached to counterfeit concentrations such as this.

To bring about nonconceptuality by rejecting thoughts

Is like wanting to make butter by churning water.

In addition, two states of mind slightly different from these may occur. There may be mental lucidity or vivid clarity, but if the sharp

clarity of knowing and the desired mindfulness are missing, it neither swerves toward a one-pointed virtuous mind nor turns into nonvirtue; therefore this is labeled “oblivious mind.” Similarly, in the absence of clear mindful knowing, one may simply abide without blocking or pursuing different kinds of phenomena. However, this is oblivious mind because it is classified as belonging to the karmic formation of apathy. As to the karma of oblivion, although it is possible for it to later change into another karma because of conditions, it is said that it does not have a single definite fruition. Some say that it has the same meaning as the nontransferring karma,<sup>70</sup> but that is not quite right because there are immense differences between these two. That being so, if things go well, these two states of mind may possibly advance toward being the cause of serenity of nonperception, which contains afflictions. Nevertheless, since these do not even evolve flawlessly toward the four concentrations or the samadhis of formlessness, in our case they are never suitable as objects of accomplishment. As stated in *The Way of the Bodhisattva*:

Lacking realization of emptiness,

A mind that is blocked will later rise again.

That is the serenity of nonperception.

It is said that this is the cause of rebirth in the form of those known as “unperceptive gods” in whom perception and its related functions have stopped.

#### STRAYING INTO THE FOUR CONCENTRATIONS

When one has become extremely proficient in the samadhi of shamatha, body and mind have become pliable and the equanimous mind has conceptions and discernment; in it, without apprehensions, an expansive joy arises. Once familiar with this state, free of passionate craving, negative actions, and so forth, if you meditate with conceptual discernment and attachment, and feel joy and pleasure, this constitutes the so-called samadhi of the first concentration, which causes rebirth as a god of that level. Then, if you meditate having shed the desire for

Many know how to meditate, but few know how to destroy it.

Also Lord Barawa stated:

Meditators are fooled by their meditation.

Even if you have destroyed your meditation, in the stage of simplicity you may put into practice the enhancement instructions. Since the hopes for having realization reside in the blessings, at all times and in every situation you must diligently supplicate your authentic root guru with continual genuine devotion. Persevering in this way, the realization of the natural state of your mind, the view of dharmakaya, will come about. It is as Lord Gyalwang [Kunga Paljor] stated:

Liberation by exerting oneself in meditation is doubtful.

Liberation through devotion is beyond doubt.

The difference resides in whether this key point is present or not.

#### PREVENTING THE STRAYINGS OF BLANK SHAMATHA AND THE REST

If one remains in the state of stupefied shamatha that lacks the aspect of clarity and the experiences of bliss, clarity, or nonthought, and dies, it is said that one will be reborn as an animal. As Lord Sakya Pandita said:

The mahamudra meditation practiced by fools

Usually becomes the cause for animal rebirth.

What he said is true. Therefore, in that case, destroying the meditation as was explained is very important, and at that point one must maintain the practice right on the perceived outer objects. Then there are two faults that are important to eliminate. Once thoughts have become a subtle undercurrent, to become blank without presence is the fault of weak mindful knowing. Or else you may have a very strong desire but, not knowing how to relax it, mindful knowing is damaged;

this is the fault of mental agitation. Although the important ways to correct these have already been explained, we will discuss them once again. Briefly, at the time of dullness, arousing mindful knowing and the sharpness of mental clarity, bring forth wakefulness. For agitation, relax whatever desire is tightening the mind onto the object. When tightness and looseness have become balanced, occurring as wished, don't investigate anymore. Barely not losing the continuity of that itself, capture its naturalness and extend the flow. Nagarjuna says in his *Union of the Four Periods*:

For dullness and heaviness, invigorate.

For extended agitation, rest naturally.

In this connection, regarding mindful knowing, mindfulness prevents the mind from wandering from the object; and knowing makes it recognize agitation or dullness and whether it has wandered or not. In other words, after strongly arousing the determination that decides, "I shall not wander from the object even for an instant," extend the continuity of mindfulness on the object, and constantly keep this concern in your mind by dint of the mindfulness that prevents the object from being forgotten. In this state, knowing recognizes if there is distraction or not, or if there are faults of dullness and agitation. Apart from this, don't analyze too much; simply be vigilant, watching closely.

In the sutra section, mindfulness and knowing are separated and there are many explanations in this regard. However, many of the pith instructions of the practice lineage condense them into mindful presence or simply mindfulness. If you wonder how this is you should know that there is nothing wrong with that. As said in *The Way of the Bodhisattva*:

When mindfulness remains with the purpose  
Of guarding the doorway of the mind,  
Then knowing comes about.

The mindfulness and knowing explained in this quotation are distinguished from each other in terms of subtle and gross or fine and

coarse because within a mindfulness strong in clarity, knowing is included. Thus, in the commentary to the *Center and Boundary* as well we find:

If mindfulness is fully present, it will possess knowing.

At this point it may happen that scholars think as follows. When the mind is held one-pointedly on the object through mindful knowing, if a subtle thought were produced discerning whether it remains on the object or not, or whether there is dullness or agitation, then there wouldn't be nonthought. On the other hand, if it were not produced, the knowing that notices that there is dullness, agitation, etc. would not occur. So what should we do? Unskillful people, regarding a subtle thought such as this one as a fault, in the absence of the sharp brightness of knowing, sustain a lucidity of the mind consisting of whatever sense of clarity there may have been before. However this kind of subtle thought is not a thought as such, it is knowing or cognizance similar to vipashyana and therefore it ought to be produced. As said in the intermediate *Stages of Meditation*:

Thus, after placing the mind on the chosen object, you should subsequently place it right there all the time. Once it settles completely, you should mentally cultivate the following questions by examining and thinking, "Is the mind properly fixed on the object? Or is there dullness? Or is it completely fascinated by outer objects and thus distracted?"

The way to produce this type of thought is not by first abandoning the stream of undistracted mindfulness, but rather by simply being watchful while the continuity of samadhi is not lost. Further, if this thought is repeatedly aroused with too much strength, it will lead to the fault of mindfulness slipping away; and that thought would then become a fault. Each instant simply watches over the next one, while the confidence of the preceding one is just strong enough to not disappear. In short, these ways of balancing tightness and looseness and sustaining

the practice are excellent key points among the many ways of maintaining concentration. By sustaining in this way, the meaning of shamatha concurrent with vipashyana will unmistakably be realized. According to Lord Yangonpa, the distinction between these is as follows:

There is the danger of confusing dullness with shamatha. Shamatha, or calm abiding,<sup>72</sup> is when once the movement of subtle and coarse thoughts has grown *calm*, the mind *abides* in a continuity. Dullness is failing to recognize and being in a dark area with no idea of what is happening. The nature of vipashyana, insight, is to nakedly see one's original face of emptiness. The analytical cognizance is such that based on verbal conventions a mental image arises in the field of the conceptual mind.

Thus, in the samadhi of shamatha, there are two aspects: stillness—the mind calmly resting one-pointedly without thoughts—and the undiminishing sharpness of mindfulness and knowing, including confidence. These two must be present no matter what.

#### PREVENTING THE STRAYING OF THE FOUR CONCENTRATIONS

However good the samadhis resulting from the complete training and pliability of body and mind may be, you should neither become attached to them nor feel pleased. If you meditate for a long time, conceited as if they were realization and attached to them, you would be judging them for their external appearance; since they do not transcend samsara, this would be a great straying in meditation. It is pointless to cling to believing that the mere highs and lows of inner experiences, the outer functions of the elements, or the change and reversion of the present glow of visionary experiences are important. The essence of mind, the basic nature, has never existed as something that is good or bad or that changes—it is unidentifiable. This being so, know that these experiences are the natural radiance of your mind essence and do not

## 13: THE FRUITION OF VIPASHYANA

6. Evaluating whether vipashyana has arisen or not
7. Equivalence with other systems of vipashyana meditation
8. How to meditate with shamatha and vipashyana united
9. The fruition of vipashyana

#### EVALUATING WHETHER VIPASHYANA HAS ARISEN OR NOT

Every time one practices vipashyana as described above, one investigates with discerning prajña. At that time, it happens to some people in whom shamatha stillness is very intense that, due to this stillness, they do not ascertain the point being examined, no matter how hard they try. Just as they start to analyze, the samadhi of shamatha arises and they are convinced that all the points of the investigation are resolved right then; thus their vision of the essence becomes deluded. Others have a very strong experience of nothingness, and due to this the lack of essential nature of all phenomena appears as that experience of nothingness; taking that as the essence they too are deluded. For a while they should apply methods for removing that shamatha experience and their clinging to it. Then, once the fog of experience is cleared from their cognizance, they should again practice vipashyana, whereby they will succeed.

It also happens that some unintelligent people with great obscurations do not see the essence no matter how much they investigate. For

some time they should exert themselves in purification and generation of merit practices. Once they have developed the sharp clarity of shamatha, at some point they should practice vipashyana. Some other people are very intelligent, so when they have a good understanding of an idea, they proudly regard that as having had the experience. Though they may be very eloquent, most scholars have no experience. As the saying goes, “You believe the person who gives explanations about herbs and roots but does not identify the medicine.” Some others may not know how to put it into words, but when the opportunity arises for the experience, they gain conviction on the basis of the essence. Therefore, it is extremely important to distinguish between all these. No matter how good a meditation may be, if vipashyana has not dawned, it is simply one of the worldly non-Buddhist or common Buddhist meditations. It does not even qualify as a meditation of the hinayana, so how could it possibly qualify as a meditation of mahayana, madhyamaka or especially mahamudra? For this reason it is important to earnestly practice vipashyana.

Now, to what degree must vipashyana have arisen to be considered true vipashyana? The unmistakable vipashyana that has directly realized the truth of dharmata comes only at the time of the greater level of the yoga of simplicity. In our case, however, we are only concerned with the vipashyana that arises in the beginner’s mind. For instance, the first moon of the month does not have the same function as the full moon, yet it is still conventionally considered to be the moon. Therefore here we are concerned with the vipashyana that includes one’s mind and the thoughts and phenomena arising from its radiance, as discussed earlier. All phenomena of subject and object are unoriginated, nonabiding, and unceasing. To know this crucial point and to have the experience and conviction born from deep within that they are devoid of true essence or nature is what, at this point, should be defined as vipashyana. It may happen that, for some time, vipashyana does not arise to such a degree. However, as followers of the practice lineage, we acknowledge the following beginner’s vipashyana. The essence of one’s mind is an unidentifiable void; it is the primordial cognizance that has not been fabricated. In the mind that is aware of itself and lucid by itself, these

two, void and cognizance, are inseparable. To gain the experience that the mind has ascertained that it is so is a beginner’s vipashyana. By sustaining just that much at the beginning, we are confident that unmistakable vipashyana will gradually arise.

Why do we believe that this will happen? The evident concept-free wisdom of mind essence does not fall into any extreme whatsoever, whether of existence or nonexistence, being or nonbeing, eternalism or nihilism. It is experienced and known as inseparable from lucidity, emptiness, and awareness. Nonetheless, it cannot be illustrated and there is no way to express it verbally. It is self-existent and self-arising, and the vivid wakefulness in exactly this state is given the name “vipashyana,” or “higher insight.” From the state of ordinary being onward, it is never separate from oneself even for an instant, but as long as it is not embraced by the pith instructions and blessings, it is not recognized. At the time of resting in shamatha meditation, that which rests or watches whether there is stillness or not, and so forth, is precisely this vipashyana, except for the fact that it somehow does not see itself. In fact, the discursive thoughts at the time of ordinary being, which proliferate as a concrete chain, are none other than vipashyana itself manifesting as discursive thoughts. The experiences of shamatha are also none other than the vipashyana cognizance arising as bliss, clarity, nonthought, and all the rest. Nevertheless, to maintain stillness alone without knowing the original face of bare nonconceptual mind does not become a cause for enlightenment. So from seeing the original face onward, there is nothing whatsoever that does not become vipashyana or mahamudra, whether it is stillness, movement, or anything else. As Lorepa said:

No matter what arises in the field of the six senses,

If the mind does not grasp at it,

It spontaneously appears and is self-liberated.

Have you realized this distinction, all you meditators?

In the sutra system, it is taught that first the pliancy of shamatha is accomplished. Based on that, the power from practicing vipashyana brings about a pliancy that is considered to be the actual vipashyana,

and any vipashyana after that will be similar. In our case it is not that definite; it depends strictly on the nature of the experience and realization.

#### EQUIVALENCE WITH OTHER SYSTEMS OF VIPASHYANA MEDITATION

In the *Sutra That Unravels the Intent* and other sutras, the four vipashyanas of distinguishing phenomena and the rest are explained. Here are the equivalences with our system.

To focus on what arises from the expression or radiance of the mind, the thoughts and perceptions that include all phenomena of subject and object, is the vipashyana that distinguishes phenomena. This is because after focusing on the diversity of phenomena—all knowable objects—they are completely distinguished from each other. To focus on the absence of true nature in each of the aspects of subject and object is the vipashyana that utterly distinguishes, because the distinction is carried out by focusing on the “as it is” aspect of knowable objects. To discern these two with fixation on inherent attributes is the vipashyana that completely discerns, because the coarse meanings of “as it is” and “as many as there are” are discerned with fixation on inherent attributes. The subtle investigation deriving from these two is the vipashyana that completely investigates, because even the subtlest aspects of “as it is” and “as many as there are” are perfectly investigated. In the *Shravaka Levels* it is said:

In this regard, how is the distinction carried out? Full differentiation should be accomplished through the object of completely trained scrutiny, the object of mastery, the object of completely trained afflictions, and as many objects as there are available.

Also, as found in the *Sutra That Unravels the Intent*:

If we compare the explanations of the three vipashyanas derived from attributes, in our case the diverse objects of

observation of vipashyana are in the conceptual style; so this is equivalent to the vipashyana derived from attributes. This is because the object of observation of vipashyana is only a conceptualized image, a mental engagement. The way to bring about the realization that these have no true nature is the vipashyana derived from a thorough search. This is because it is a mental engagement that knows the object of examination that was not realized before. The way to become familiar with the attained freedom related with all phenomena having no true nature is the vipashyana derived from discernment. This is because, once the natural condition of all phenomena is realized through discerning prajña, this vipashyana brings about familiarization with the natural condition so that one comes into contact with the perfect bliss of liberation.

The same sutra also states:

What is meant by “derived from attributes?” It is the vipashyana that mentally engages solely on a conceptual image in the field of experience of samadhi. What is the vipashyana derived from a thorough search? It is that particular vipashyana that mentally engages in order to have the excellent realization of those phenomena that have not been extremely well realized through prajña in the previous vipashyana. What is the vipashyana derived from discernment? It is that particular vipashyana that mentally engages in order to achieve freedom derived from the phenomena that have been extremely well realized through prajña, and to properly come into contact with bliss.

Apart from the classification of vipashyana thus described simply being mentioned in sutras and commentaries, the manners of establishing certainty in each have not been explained in the texts on the stages of meditation. The key points of all these forms of vipashyana are condensed in the manner of establishing certainty based upon the twofold selflessness, which is very renowned in the sutra system both in

India and Tibet. Comparing these with ours the manner of establishing certainty about the essence of mind is equivalent to the approach found in the sutras that establishes the selflessness of the individual self. In the sutra section the approach is through reasoning, and the individual is held to be the continuity of the aggregates. This apprehends itself as permanent and singular, after which it clings to and fixates upon itself as “I” or self. This is the self of the individual. To know that it has no true nature is called “the selflessness of the individual.” Likewise, in our case that which holds itself as permanent and singular and fixates as “I” or self is one’s own mind itself. This is confirmed not only by establishing that it has no true nature, but also by one’s own mind becoming the object of meditation.

Similarly to establish certainty about thoughts and phenomena is equivalent to the sutra method of establishing the lack of identity, or selflessness, of phenomena. In the sutra system, the individual self designates the aggregates, elements, etc., as phenomena. Clinging to and fixating upon them as things endowed with inherent defining attributes is the identity, or self, of phenomena. To know them as having no true nature is the selflessness of phenomena. Likewise, here we not only establish that the mental events and external forms, sounds, etc., designated by the mind and appearing as things endowed with inherent attributes have no true nature, but we also take them as the object of our meditation.

However, the order in which the subject and object are ascertained is different. In the sutra systems it is taught that without first resolving the object grasped upon, the subject—the fixated mind—cannot be resolved. Dharmakirti stated:

Without refuting the object [“mine”],  
That [“I”] cannot be eliminated.

Aryadeva said:

If the object is seen as lacking inherent identity,  
The seed of existence is obliterated.

In our case, we believe that proceeding in that way leads to a lot of difficulty in resolving the fixating mind. Therefore we first resolve the fixating mind, whereby the object of grasping becomes resolved by being self-liberated. By cutting a tree from the root, its branches, leaves, and petals all dry up. Tilopa applied this analogy in his teaching and the same has been taught in all the instructions of essential truth.

## HOW TO MEDITATE WITH SHAMATHA AND VIPASHYANA UNITED

Shamatha is responsible for ensuring that the mind does not waver from the object. After the realization of suchness, perverted views can no longer shake the mind and it remains like a mountain, which is the work of vipashyana. Therefore both shamatha and vipashyana are needed. As said in the *Moon Torch Sutra*:

By the strength of shamatha, distraction ceases.  
Through vipashyana, it becomes like a mountain.

For beginners the meditation with these two in union has been explained as follows. If due to excessive analytical meditation and vipashyana distraction develops, one should practice shamatha. And when through excessive shamatha and meditative resting there is dullness, vipashyana should be practiced. When practicing shamatha and vipashyana together, one should practice truly uncontrived equanimity. In the first *Stages of Meditation* we find:

If dullness of mind is not removed then there is no vipashyana because of extreme dullness and the mind becoming as if blind. Therefore, if the mind is dull, this must be removed. If by practicing vipashyana *prajña* becomes excessive, then the mind moves too much, like a butter lamp placed in the wind. Therefore the vision of suchness will not be very clear. Hence, at that time shamatha should be practiced.

**Talk Four: Vipashyana**  
**The Path of Meditation Seminar**  
**Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche**  
**Naropa Institute, Boulder, Colorado**  
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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 vipashyana, 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 heavily-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 is a lot of deceptions taking place in such kind of naïveté experience, that things hadn't happened in 100% level. Things be happening in 50 – 50% level, which is not so good. If we are going to trod on the path and going to practice meditation properly and thoroughly and fully as the Buddha had experience, 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 sign-posts 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 Tibetan term, there is two words. 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 second look at same analogies of driving motor car on highway, that 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 begin 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 begin to come. 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 begin to take place.

And one of the interesting point 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 seem 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. 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, having, 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 seem to be the basic point, that students should start with vipashyana experience. Before you start 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 is 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 vapassana, 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 Boshisattva.

**Trenpa, Sheshin and Aloneness**  
**From 1974 Hinayana-Mahayana Seminary Transcripts**  
**Talk Four: Loneliness**  
**Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche**

The discipline that we discussed yesterday under various headings needs further study. The basic issue is one's mind being in the right place. When we talk about "right" place, we are not talking about anything connected with morality, but its *own* place, the place where it is now, this very moment. And that is, in fact, the essence of the hinayana discipline.

Mind being in the right place has two categories: one-pointedness and being discriminating minded in the dharma. One-pointedness is the notion of awareness, 24 hour awareness. We are not only talking in terms of the awareness that takes place while you sit or while you practice, but we are talking in terms of the awareness which happens constantly all the time, which we have discussed many times before.

And discriminating awareness of dharma is the kind of intelligence that enables you to relate with the activities of life. It is the sense of intelligence that goes on in your life. Discriminating awareness doesn't have to be of dharma in the religious sense. It can be discriminating in the sense of just being aware of what's happening, so that there are no blind spots. That seems to be one of the basic points, and from that stems *trenpa*, or recollection and *sheshin* or knowing.

*Trenpa* literally means recollection, but it also means wakefulness in some sense, that you are there and you are not particularly overwhelmed by anything, emotional or otherwise. The second one is *sheshin*. *She* means "knowing" and *shin* means "as it is." So *sheshin* is some sense of knowledge that makes one at home in the world, rather than regarding the world as a strange place and not knowing how to handle the world. So the big point is that a sense of knowing, or a sense of seeing always happens. If you are willing to acknowledge its existence, then there is the potentiality of being wakeful, being open, being precisely there, constantly. What we are discussing here is not so much being a sharp person, a smart person, or a very careful person particularly, but rather being a person who can actually *be*, who very simply could *be* by himself.

When a human being begins to realize that there are no other resources than himself or herself, he has to handle his life properly. His wife, or her husband does not provide final protection, comfort or refuge anymore at all—you are stuck with yourself. Generally in society we try to avoid that.

But in this case unless you have the notion of aloneness, you cannot develop *trenpa* and *sheshin*. So it is absolutely utterly important to feel lonely, to the extreme, if you like. It is necessary to feel lonely. You are conceived alone; you come out of your mother's womb alone; your umbilical cord is cut; you alone suck your mother's nipple; you alone drink out of your mother's bottle-you are the only person that exists in the world. Somebody helps, obviously. Somebody makes you grow up, of course, and sends you to public school amongst hundreds of kids. You go to teachers and you go to instructors. And if anything goes wrong with your economy you can get food stamps or public help of some kind. But these things are not real emotional help, they are just temporary. Fundamentally, emotionally, you have no help, absolutely no help, absolutely nothing at all. You are alone, absolutely alone. We are born that way, and we die that way. We come in alone and we go out alone. We are nothing but ourselves.

The sense of aloneness brings the notion of concentratedness; and the sense of aloneness also brings the notion of the discriminating mind of dharma, because you have no reference point anymore. You are alone by yourself; you are just by yourself, alone. That seems to be the basic point. And the sense of aloneness brings *trenpa* and *sheshin* at the same time.

**Mindfulness and Awareness: Pakyo and Trenshe**  
**1980 Hinayana-Mahayana Seminary Transcripts**  
**Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche**

**Pakyo:** The result of shamatha practice is the development of mindfulness. We have a Tibetan term for that: *pakyo* (bag.yod), which literally means "paying heed," "being heedful." *Pak* means "residue," or "something that happened," or "something left over." *Yo* means "having or possessing" that kind of *pak*. The literal meaning of *pak* refers to deposits of little, dry funguses, which usually sit on rocks. Sometimes they are orange in color, and sometimes they are jade green in color. They are beautifully arranged, and they are not hampered or bothered by the four seasons. They are always there. They usually grow slightly bigger during the summer, or maybe during a long autumn, or a long springtime; they grow when there is enough moisture. In the heat of summer, they do not grow any further. They're actually some kind of rock mushroom, and we used to use them to color our tormas for vajrayana practices. Depending on what color we wanted, we would choose the red ones or the yellow ones.

So *pak* is a residue of something. The point is that mindfulness is not that you have to be aware of possible dangers, or anything like that. We have talked about that many times already. Mindfulness does not mean that you should watch out for something, in case



something might go wrong. Mindfulness means being there on the spot, along with your residue. So if anybody attracts your attention [Vajracarya snaps his fingers] by saying, "Look out!" or "Look at this! you do not necessarily have to be cautious; you could just look and raise your eyebrows and say, "What's going on?" You are mildly attentive, mildly inquisitive.

Sometimes pakyo is described as the gaze of an elephant. An elephant is not usually easy to startle. If you made a loud noise, if you threw a firecracker in front of an elephant, he would just look around. He has that "So what?" kind of approach. [Laughter.] A firecracker in front of an elephant; he doesn't get excited. So pak is tentative, but at the same time it is highly keen. You look, and then you say, "What's going on here?" You can't be startled; you don't panic; you just have a residue of awareness. That is pak. Pak is sometimes also referred to as decorum. Since you have already developed a sense of perspective and a sense of sophistication or subtlety, you are aware in a situation, and you do not panic on the spot. You have a definite sense of mindfulness. So the notion of pak is a very positive idea.

**Trenshe:** Out of that kind of inquisitiveness and well-disciplined existence, awareness develops, *trenshe* (dren.shes). *Tren* means "recollection." It is the same as *smriti* in Sanskrit. *She* means "knowing." So *trenshe* means "knowing-recollection." It is connected with your previous training; therefore it has *tren* in it, recollection. It is connected with the past, but not quite in terms of memory alone. You remember that, if you step in a puddle with your shoes on, it is likely that the water will run into your shoes, and your socks and shoes will get wet and dirty. That is not something you have been told about in intellectual circles; it is something you have done before. Therefore you know what's going to happen if you do it again. So trenshe is that kind of recollection which connects the past and the present together. The traditional analogy is that of a warning, but I would like to correct that analogy. Trenshe does not mean that you are warned of something bad; even stepping in a puddle could be regarded as a bad idea. But in this case, recollection just means realizing that you should be on the dot, not because of any warning or any problems. What we are talking about tonight is the product of shamatha practice, which brings vipashyana possibilities. Once you begin to develop some kind of awareness of the totality around you, then you are aware of your posture, your head and shoulders, and of whether you are wearing your glasses or not, whether you are wearing a watch or not, a coat or not, stockings or no stockings-you are aware of anything that goes on. There is a general sense of being aware. Trenshe is not simply the vipashyana type of concentrated awareness on the dot of the breath alone: there is a general sense of awareness, so that you are aware that you are wearing a bright red coat. As you sit in your bright red coat, you are aware of redness and

brightness around you, and of whether your coat is made of wool or cotton. You are generally aware of all possibilities.

That intrinsic kind of awareness is something general that we always generate; it is our antennae. We project our awareness, and we know what we have. "I have a beard." "I have earrings on." "I have a safety pin on my trousers to hold them up." "I have a rip in my coat." "My zafu is hard." "My name is ..." We know anything of that nature, beyond the in- and outbreath.

There is a general awareness of how you know what you know. Sometimes you don't know what you have, and your neighbors might say, "Hey, look at that!" and you are shocked. That is not what we are talking about here. We are talking about what you know and what you think you have. Sometimes you might feel as though you have something funny on your back, and that turns out to be true. That general sense of *trenshe* comes from extending your awareness. *Trenshe* is also the very early stage of the development of superconsciousness. For example, your father is in danger, and you get a sudden flash; you think that he is in trouble-or anything of that nature. You should be very careful about such things; you don't want to capitalize on those possibilities. Still, *trenshe* is the actual seed of that kind of superconsciousness, which is called clairvoyance in the western world. But it is dangerous to talk about clairvoyance. You might experience double clairvoyance: you might have an image of your father falling down the drain and, at the same time, realize that he is perfectly well and happy in Miami Beach. Things could be otherwise than you think, and therefore you shouldn't try to capitalize on your flashes.

Nonetheless, if that kind of awareness takes place on the spot in our existence, then we know that we have what we have. We have a sense of situations happening around us, which allows us to be very sensitive and very precise. That is *trenshe*, the awareness which develops out of vipashyana practice.

# **Mahamudra Eliminating the Darkness of Ignorance**

***By Wangchuk Dorje***

***Translated by Alexander Berzin***

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# **Mental Quiescence Meditation**

## **Point One: The Essential Postures of Body and Mind**

The actual body of the practice is divided into two: mental quiescence meditation (samatha, zhi-na) and penetrative insight meditation (vipasyana, lhag-t'ong). The first is as follows.

In general there are many methods for developing single-minded concentration (samadhi, ting-nge-dzin), but if you know one essential method, then hindrances and interferences will not come about and you will develop effortlessly the experiences and insights into primordial, pristine awareness, free from any faults with respect to mental quiescence and penetrative insight.

The teachings of the meditative posture of Vairocana are a method for developing single-minded concentration for the development and completing stages of anuttarayoga tantra, and an effortless non-conceptual experience of bliss and clarity. Therefore beginners should rely on this essential point about the bodily posture.

For this, in order to control the downward-going energy, your legs should be either in the vajra-position or in the cross-legged posture of ordinary beings. In order to place the energy-winds of the solid element of the body into the central energy-channel, straighten your spine like the end of a spear. In order to induce the energy-winds of the liquid element into the central channel, place your hands in the equipoise meditation posture and hold them beneath your navel, and also raise both your shoulders back and even. To induce the energy-winds of the heat element into the central channel, keep your neck slightly bent like a hook. To induce the energy-wind of the gaseous element into the central channel, have your eyes neither wide-open nor shut tight, but gazing at a point straight ahead from the tip of your nose. Your tongue and lips should be in their normal, relaxed condition or you may have your tongue touch your upper palate.

Mental quiescence or calm abiding is a blissful state of single-minded concentration free of thought and devoid of the five obstacles of mental dullness, agitation, foggy-mindedness, sleepiness and staleness. It can be achieved by many methods: focusing on an object, or none, or even on a conceptual thought such as a visualisation of the Four Noble Truths, in which case free of thought means free of extraneous thought. It is not at all blank-minded and is essential for all practices, especially those of the highest classification of tantra, anuttarayoga.

According to the tantra teachings, the mind and the energy-winds upon which it rides are inseparable. If the energy-winds (prana, lung) are properly channeled, the mind will be focused; but when they run wild then thoughts do likewise. These winds run through energy-channels (nadi, tsa), the main ones being the central, right and left ones parallel to and slightly in front of the spine. Normally the winds pass only through the right and left ones, and in this way act as the vehicle for deluded thoughts. Such delusions are stopped, however, when the energy-winds carrying them are no longer available, having been channelised and centralised into the central

energy-channel. Therefore if your rough body is straight and in the correct posture, your energy-channels will also be in a proper position. Then the energy-winds can flow freely through them and, when properly channeled, your mind will be fully focused. For this reason the bodily posture of Vairocana is essential.

The vajra-position is with both legs crossed, the feet resting on the opposite calves or thighs. The equipoise meditation posture of the hands is with them in your lap, palms facing upwards, left hand beneath the right with thumbs upright and touching. It is helpful to have a cushion beneath your backside.

With your body in this essential posture, the many advantages of a non-conceptual state and so forth will come about once you have naturally cleansed yourself of your tendency to follow trains of thought. But even if you merely hold your body in this essential posture your body and mind will become blissful and tranquil. Therefore holding yourself neither too tightly nor too tensely, first expel a little air and then maintain your breathing in an unforced manner.

When expelling air, feel that you are exhaling faults and distractions. Practise first some breath awareness and when you are calm, there is no need to focus on your breath any longer.

Refresh your memory a little about the preliminaries and then do not give any heed to (thoughts of) your past activities or think about what you will do in the future or what you are doing here. Place your mind, without (consciously) adopting or abandoning, in a fluid, natural state of being here and now, in which you are not manufacturing your ordinary, usual types of cognitions about the present moment. By doing this, your mind becomes pliable and you can develop single-minded concentration. Because these essential postures of the body and mind are the foundation stone for meditation, you should exert an effort in them.

**That is the first point (for mental quiescence meditation).**

## **Point Two: Focusing on a Visual Object**

If you are unable to settle your mind in this state, you should focus by looking at an external object such as either a stick, a pebble, a Buddha statue, a flame of a butter lamp, the sky and so forth, whatever suits you. Do not think about such things as the colour or shape of the object which is the basis of your meditation. Rather place your attention single-mindedly without any wandering on merely the object itself and abandon having your mind being either too tight or too sloppy. Cut off completely any extraneous train of thought.

If your mind is too tense, you will experience anxiety and frustration, if too loose mental dullness, foggy-mindedness and sleepiness. Like the strings of a lute, your mind should be tuned just right without any distortion.

The process of settling the mind on a visual object is like trying to see a stone on the bottom of a glass of muddy, turbulent water. Without worrying about the colour or shape of the stone, you will see it clearly when the mud subsides. Likewise when your thoughts subside you will be

left with a clear view of your object. Therefore look at objects as a small child would without any mental chatter or commentary.

If you can focus without any conceptual thoughts or ideas, this is good. But should they arise, do not follow them out. Just let them pass and they will disappear. If you allow a thought to grow into a train of thought, it will be an obstacle to your meditation. You must realise that thoughts are the play of the mind, like ripples on water and light on leaves. They naturally dissolve.

You can also focus in front of you on either a written or visualised white syllable OM, red AH, and blue HUM, which are the nature of the body, speech and mind of all the Buddhas, or on white, red, and blue dots, whichever suits you. In short, you should aim and fix your mind single-pointedly to whatever type of visual form suits it and gives it pleasure to hold. If you try to settle your mind on something that it finds uncomfortable to fix on or which your intellect cannot grasp, then when you try to make it go (to this object), it will ignore it. Having no interest (in this object), it will fix on something extraneous.

You should cut off completely all signs of thoughts such as thinking "I am meditating" or "I am not meditating" or expectations to settle your mind or worries that you will be unable to settle it. Meditate having your mindfulness keep a check not to let your mind fix for even an instant on something extraneous which it should not be meditating on at all. Do this well and let your meditation sessions be short and frequent. This is important for training your mind to settle single-pointedly with continuing clarity, lucidity and eagerness, so that it will not repeatedly lose the continuity of this state because of becoming tired.

At first it is important to have short, but frequent meditation sessions. If you find the meditation blissful and soothing, you may pursue it for a longer period of time. However, if you begin to become depressed or bored while meditating, perhaps your sessions are too long. If you are tired, meditation becomes an unpleasant ordeal and you will not wish to continue. Therefore gauge yourself accordingly and take a break while you are still fresh and wish to continue. That way you will be happy to resume meditation. Suppose you have to walk twenty miles. If you go slowly and take frequent rests, you will not exhaust yourself and will reach your goal. The same is true for meditation.

If it is comfortable for your mind to take any one of these visual objects as its basis or focus for meditation, you should choose that one. If you wish to take each of these objects in turn, progressively, this is permitted. But, if you have taken one and find that sufficient, do not feel you have to go on to take them all as if going through an alphabet primer.

In short, **having your mind hold whichever visual form suits it is the second point** (for mental quiescence meditation).

### **Point Three: Other Sensory Objects**

Once you have held such a (visual) object, then in progressive order you should take (as your object for concentration) a sound which is the object of your ear's consciousness, a smell which is the object of your nose's, a taste which is the object of your tongue's, a tactile sensation which is the object of your body's and so forth. For this, as far as sounds, smells and so forth go, you should direct your mind at merely an outstanding sound or a strong odour and hold it with the hook of your mindfulness not letting (your mind) wander astray. Except for letting your mind settle to its own level, you should not make any judgments whatsoever about the quality, quantity and so forth (of your object).

Thus whatever situation you happen to be in, use it to help develop mental quiescence. If where you are meditating is noisy or someone is playing the radio, focus on the pure audial sensation of it without judgments, reactions or identifying the sound. For touch, you can focus on the feel of your clothing next to your skin. It is not necessary to eat something during meditation to focus on tastes. You can do this while taking your meals. Simply remain detached and follow the instructions as before.

When your mind has been holding whatever it has, you should break your session while you still have full clarity and then take a rest. This way you will not become bored. In-between sessions do not let the rope of your mindfulness break. As for how to look, you should be directed on what is in front of your nose. As for your body and speech, whether you are walking or sitting, talking or speaking, do these neither too strongly nor too much. As for your mind, try to cut the stream of your conceptual thoughts and mental chatter. By stages like this you will build up the habit of single-mindedness.

### **That is the third point (for mental quiescence meditation).**

Therefore, if you lessen your activities, your mind will naturally quieten down. If you are constantly busy it is more difficult to focus the mind since you will be worrying about many things at once and become easily scattered or mentally exhausted.

### **Point Four: Eliminating Mental Dullness and Agitation**

Furthermore, to eliminate such faults as mental dullness and agitation, you should visualise at the middle of your brow a dot the size of a pea, white, shining, lustrous, spherical and extremely clear, and direct your mind towards it. Sometimes you should direct your mind towards a black, lustrous, spherical dot the size of a pea at the point in front of you where your folded legs touch your seat. For mental dullness you should direct your attention to the white one and your way of looking should be as if into space. Your body should be in a breezy place and you should splash your face with running water. Wear thin clothes and follow light diet. Do not sit near fire nor in the sun. If you have mental agitation and your mind proceeds in many (directions), the visualisation and way of looking should be directed to the black dot. As for your activities, keep warm, do exercise and eat heavy, nutritious food.

Mental dullness and agitation are the greatest obstacles to mental quiescence. With dullness, your mind either has no clarity or, if it does, you are in a daze. To perk yourself up, visualise a

white dot at your brow and thus bend your mind upwards. The effectiveness of the white colour for eliminating dullness can be illustrated by putting a white cloth in front of your eyes. The white colour being the image on your mind awakens you a little and your mind naturally becomes brighter. Furthermore, if you stay in the sun or in a warm, stuffy place you will inevitably become drowsy and dull. Therefore stay where it is cool and breezy and you will be fresher. Also diet is extremely important. Light food makes the mind similarly light.

With agitation, on the other hand, you are over-excited and your mind cannot stay where you wish to place it. Even if it maintains a hold on an object, part of it starts to wander astray. Visualising a black dot by your seat bends the mind downwards and the sombre colour naturally makes your mind more subdued. If you are very fidgety, physical exercise will tire you and cause your mind to wander less. Much agitation is due to the energy-winds being too light and active. Therefore a heavy, fatty diet will weigh down these winds and make you less flighty.

Thus for a properly balanced meditation it is important to look after your body. Your mind rides on the energy-winds through the energy-channels of your subtle body. For these to flow properly depends on the condition of your rough physical body. Therefore a sound body and mind are interdependent.

If you have neither mental dullness nor agitation, direct your eyes and mind to either a small blue dot or an actual (small blue) object (on the ground) at the distance in front of you at the end of your shadow (or about an arrow's length away). With respect to these, first you should think, "The dot and so forth I am supposed to meditate on is like this," and then you should simply project your mind out to it. If after this (the visualised object) is clear, this is best. But even if it is not clear, you should merely think that there is an object like this and then make that the focus of your attention. Then without making any analysis or minute enquiry about it, let your mind reach its level and naturally settle on it without any wandering.

The blue of a clear, dustless autumn sky is a neutral colour that neither uplifts nor subdues the mind. It is beneficial to have both mental placement and clarity with respect to this dot, but if you have only placement this is enough. With sufficient concentration, clarity will come automatically.

While you still have full clarity, break your session and then continue meditating later. In other words, have short and frequent sessions.

**Holding your mind (like this) is the fourth point (for mental quiescence meditation).**

### **Point Five: Focusing on No Object**

As for directing your mind on no basis or object, you should stare blankly into space straight in front of you with opened eyes and not direct your mind at any object whatsoever.

Space, like the nature of the mind, is a permanent, unconditioned phenomenon not dependent on causes or circumstances. Therefore staring into space before you is a method of approach



for meditation on the mind itself.

Meditation on no object should not be confused with blank-mindedness in which you are completely dull as if in a stupor or a faint. It is extremely alert, mindful and clear, but as in the Clear Light death meditations, without any object or thoughts.

Without letting your mind think about anything, do not allow even the slightest mental wandering. Do not direct your mind to (thoughts of) what qualities this state has or does not have, or the past or the future. Post your mindfulness as a spy to check with great diligence that you do not wander astray, and then relax. In other words place yourself in a tranquil, uncontrived state of being here and now.

Do not wander for even an instant. Be as (attentive as) when threading a needle. Do not let your mind be turbulent, rather have it be like an ocean without any waves. Do not self-consciously try to accomplish anything, rather fix your mind like an eagle soaring. Be completely free from all expectations and worries.

When you have no mental wandering, thoughts will not come. But when mental wandering occurs, then because your thoughts will come one after the other, try to recognise them for what they are as soon as they arise. In other words, stare right at them and then fix your mind as before. No matter what thoughts arise in this way, just recognise them for what they are. Place your attention right on them without thinking anything like "I must block them" or "I have succeeded (in blocking them)," or feeling happy or unhappy. Just look at them with the eye of discriminating awareness. Take the thought itself as the basis or object for your mind to hold and then fix upon it. Train your mind not to fall into either too tense or too loose a state.

**That is the fifth point (for mental quiescence meditation).**

## **The Nature of Thoughts**

When you begin to meditate, it may seem that your thoughts are increasing. This is not so, for you are merely becoming more aware of the amount of mental traffic that passes through your mind.

The mind and its thoughts are neither the same nor different. If they were one, there would be no way to quiet or eliminate thoughts. If they were different and separable, you could have thoughts without a mind. Thoughts are temporary play of the mind. The mind is clear and pure without any specific qualities, like a mirror. Thoughts are like the images on that mirror; they cannot be separated from it, nor are they the same as it.

Thoughts are the result of confusion about the true nature of reality, and there are many different kinds. Coarse or rough thoughts are easy to identify. For instance, if you are meditating on a cup, and the thought arises that you want a drink of tea and then you call someone to fetch it for you, this is a coarse thought. A fine or subtle thought would be thinking. "This is a cup" or "It is made of white porcelain," or identifying the sound of a radio while trying

to focus on the cup. But whatever type of thought arises, identify it for what it is. Recognise that it is merely a thought, the play of the mind like an image on a mirror, and without grasping at it let it pass. Have your thoughts continually dissolve like a parade of characters marching across a stage without any ever standing still.

If you think that a little thought does not matter, this is a poor attitude. Forest fires grow from a small flame. Likewise from the small thought "This is a tea cup," if you dwell on it you will soon be in the kitchen brewing tea having completely discarded your meditation. Just look at the thought, without following it out, and it will naturally dissolve. There is nothing else it can do.

### **Point Six: Focusing on the Breath and the Three Stages of Settling the Mind**

As a method to hold the mind, you can direct it on the breath as its basis or object. Hold your breath with vase-breathing practice and fix your mind single-pointedly on it without any mental wandering. If you cannot hold your breath in the vase-breath manner, you should take as your object such things as the counting of your breath. Count your inhaling, exhaling and holding of your breath. Count at first up to twenty-one rounds and then gradually extend it to a hundred. Direct your mind to your nostrils and hold your attention on counting your breaths without letting your mind wander elsewhere.

But if you can hold your breath while (your body is) filled (with air) and then release it (with the vase-breathing technique), you should first expel all the air (from your lungs) three times and then breath in as much air as you can. Force it down beneath the navel and when you can no longer hold it, release it and exhale. Do this again and again and do not let your mind wander to anything other than this.

Focusing on the breath is another effective way to settle the mind. As mentioned above, the mind rides on the energy-winds or breath. Therefore if there is much turbulent breathing, there are many disturbing thoughts. If your breathing is relaxed, quiet or held, so will be your mind.

There are several types of breathing. Even or normal breathing is the type you have when neither sick nor excited. Intermediate is when you inhale and slightly hold your breath. Vase-like breathing is when you inhale, contract your sphincter and hold your upper and lower breaths together.

Vase-breathing is a very advanced and potentially dangerous practice. Your Guru will normally teach it to you only after you have completed the extraordinary preliminaries of 100,000 prostrations and so forth. If you tamper incorrectly with your breathing, you can throw your energy systems into imbalance, causing much nervousness, frustration of energy and wild thought-patterns.

If mental dullness or agitation occur, exert effort in the methods to eliminate them in stages. If you cannot settle your mind on any of these types of objects enumerated, then take any other kind of object for meditation that suits you. Personality types are not all the same. Some people hear the teachings just two or three times and then are able to develop a settling of their mind.

Some are unable to develop this even though they meditate a great deal. But if you nourish it and do not give up out of slothfulness, it is impossible for you not to develop it. But it is necessary to have an experienced Guru to dispel your problems, induce your success and so forth.

Nourishing (your meditation) in this way, (you pass through) three stages of settling your mind. The first is like a steep mountain waterfall. Your thoughts are coarse and many. On the second, your coarse thoughts set (like the sun). Although occasionally some thoughts will suddenly occur, you recognise them for what they are and as soon as you do so, they subside by themselves. The steam of your meditation flows on gently and steadily like a mighty river. Finally all your thoughts, both coarse and subtle, set (like the sun) and you settle in equipoise into a non-conceptual state.

This third stage is also referred to as the river having merged into the ocean or the child reuniting with his mother after a long separation. Your thoughts are the river or child and the mind the ocean or mother. All turbulence and uneasiness have been settled, all murkiness stilled and you are in a perfect, pristine state.

Because it is possible to have such a settling of the mind into a non-conceptual state of bliss and clarity in which your mind is in equipoise, alert, vivid, pristine and pure, you should enhance your enthusiastic perseverance until you attain such a settling. Even after you have reached such a state, you must practise so that its continuity will not be broken.

**That is the sixth point (for mental quiescence meditation).**

### **Eliminating Mental Tightness and Looseness**

If you have not reached this third stage of settling the mind, you must further enhance your enthusiastic perseverance. This you should do through the three techniques of tightening (your mental grip), relaxing it and meditating while being turned away (from both these necessities).

For tightening (your mental grip if it is too loose), you should sit in the essential bodily position, look in the proper way and take control of your cognitions. In other words, tighten up your meditation with discipline. Do not let your mind wander for even an instant. Be as if walking across a single-planked bridge. Draw your mind tight and perk it up so that it is vibrant (like a bell) but without thinking, "This is the object I should be meditating on." Do not let your mind wander for even a moment and make your meditation sessions short and frequent.

For relaxing (your mental grip if it is too tight), do exercises and then (sit) looking in the proper way.

If you are tense, nervous and over-agitated, prostration and circumambulation of religious sites are recommended. This is a beneficial way to harness and use your excess energy. Afterwards when you are physically tired and sit back down in meditation, your mind as well as your body will relax and you will have less mental disturbance.

Do not direct your mind at any object, rather let your mind relax itself and loosen down to its natural state, uncontrived, unself-conscious, not anxiously caring. Just place it on whatever comes up. Let it become tranquil and relaxed. It will reach its own level in equipoise. Do not try to accomplish anything or exert yourself. Relax like a baby with a full stomach or a pile of straw when the rope tying it has been cut. Then fix your mind and have your mindfulness be in the ever-present moment so that you do not wander at all from this state.

Except for this, there is nothing to meditate upon. Just place your mind in its natural state and if your meditation sessions are short, lengthen them slightly. Settle in a resplendent state of mind, and if it dissolves take a rest. But even inbetween meditation sessions, have your mindfulness keep a careful check.

When meditating while turned away (from the necessity either to tighten or relax your mental grip), there will be times when you have no mental wandering and then thoughts will not come. But when your mind wanders or many thoughts arise due to some fleeting circumstances, if you try to get rid of them, you will not be able. Just look right at them kindly and think. "Wherever you are going, just go!" and thus you will intrude (and sever) the train of their going. Then one more will arise, a second will arise — recognise them for what they are. Do not even try to get rid of or abandon them, and do not follow them out. Do not be happy if your mind is settled or unhappy if it is running. Do not worry about your meditation not happening or have expectations and hopes that it will be good. Without any expectations or worries, have your mind take hold of the thought itself as its basis (for attention).

You will never be able to reach a non-conceptual state by blocking conceptual thoughts. Take these very thoughts themselves as your object and focus right on them. Conceptual thoughts dissolve by themselves. When they clear away, a non-conceptual state will dawn. Therefore practise like that.

That is the seventh point (for mental quiescence meditation).

### **The Actual State of Mental Quiescence and the Three Boons**

Next is the way to develop the (actual) state of mental quiescence and being made to recognise (its nature). According to its definition, mental quiescence is a state in which your mind is quietened of all mental wandering, be it thoughts or grasping at defining characteristics. It is a placement of the mind in single-pointed concentration on the non-conceptual nature of things and is free of mental dullness, agitation and foggy-mindedness. Previously this had been attained with effort, but now it does not rely on any effort. It comes about easily and is blissful, expansively roomy and flexibly fluid. Even when you arise from meditation, your mind does not alter at all. No matter where it goes, it comes back and rests in this very state.

Just as a pigeon released from a boat in mid-ocean can do nothing but return to its ship, your mind, no matter how much activity it has, can only return to its settled state once you have achieved mental quiescence.

When you are walking, sitting, or whatever, your cognitions are at a leisurely pace, your mind is stable, relaxed, at ease, alert, clearly reflecting whatever appears, not garishly sparkling, but more toned down. Because your cognitions are not sticky with respect to their objects, they do not grasp at all their details and thus your mind does not indulge itself in mental wandering.

At all times your mind should be stable like Mount Meru and clear like a mirror able to reflect anything. You should not be excited or inquisitively looking everywhere. If you focus too minutely on details, your mind will spin and become overwhelmed with thoughts. Be subdued and just let all thoughts and appearances pass through your mind without grasping onto them. If you are walking down a busy street and even should a dancing girl happen to be performing on the side of the road, just let her image pass through your awareness without letting your attention become glued to her. To be able always to maintain your mental composure is a sign of mental quiescence.

There are three equal boons you receive (in this state) — bliss, clarity and (bare) non-conceptuality. Depending on which is in a greater proportion, many things can occur such as the boon of heightened vision, the boon of heightened hearing, extra-sensory perception and even extra-physical powers. There are the ten signs (of single-minded concentration) and so forth. Any of these may happen when your mental quiescence is faultless, and such things will develop on your mind-stream like this. These are the foundation that will give rise to all benefits such as those deriving from penetrative insight.

So at this point, whether you have physical sickness, mental suffering, good or bad dreams, extra-sensory or extra-physical experiences, boons such as bliss, clarity or bare non-conceptuality — no matter what happens, good or bad — do not be attached or compulsively attracted. For sure they have no essence at all, so do not indulge yourself with any thoughts of happiness or depression about them. If you are obsessed with these boons, they will only serve as a root for samsara, making you circle into one of the Three Realms. They cannot liberate you from cyclic existence. Even non-Buddhists have such accomplishments (as these boons), but they are of no benefit to them.

Extra-sensory and extra-physical experiences are a side product of single-minded concentration and mental quiescence. Even non-Buddhists attain them through various meditational techniques. In themselves, they are of no consequence unless used as a means for benefiting others.

The boon experiences of bliss, clarity and bare non-conceptuality are the field from which the crop of penetrative insight into their Voidness arises. To be obsessed with any of them, not realising their Voidness, leads to a rebirth in Samsara as a god. Being born as a god in the Desire Realm comes from attachment to the boon of bliss, in the Form Realm from clarity and in the Formless from compulsive desire for bareness.

In short, if you are obsessed with and attached to whatever experiences and insights you have, you will destroy them. Be detached from them and remain steadily in a non-compulsive state of

being unattracted. With enthusiastic perseverance, pull yourself out of restrictive laziness. If you meditate while increasing your tolerance for hardships, you will reap benefits beyond all imagination.

Be like Je-tzun Mi-la ra-pa who meditated in high mountain caves for twelve years eating only nettles. Do not give up if your food runs out or your bed is too hard. Like lifting yourself out of a box, uplift yourself from making excuses for not practising. With perseverance you will reach Enlightenment.

Therefore you must study about this (with a teacher). As both the Guru and disciple must not make any mistakes about the actual boons, comprehension (of the instructions), meditational insights and the way to develop (mental quiescence), make sure to recognise and know them with certainty.

The main thing is not to have any compulsive attraction to sensory objects and to have uncontrived admiration and loving respect for your Guru. Cultivate an Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta with respect to the six types of beings. Have your mindfulness keep a close check so that you have no mental wandering. Make short-term plans as if you had no time and execute them straight up and down like bellows. Accomplish what you begin. Do not let yourself come under the sway of polite affectations or the eight worldly feelings.

The root of all attainments is your Guru-devotion and unwavering faith in his instructions. This, combined with the highest motivation of Bodhicitta, will propel you on to become a Buddha.

As death can come at any moment, do not make long-term fanciful plans such as "Next year I shall build a house and then take a wife. This room will be the nursery. I'll have three children and the furniture will be walnut..." and so forth. Live in the present moment with the goal of Enlightenment. Whatever you set out to do, such as a seven-day retreat, carry it through to completion. If you give up in the middle, this sets up a very self-defeating pattern.

Do not let yourself come under the influence of polite affectations such as flattering others for favours or trying to save face. Be like Je-tzun Mi-la ra-pa who had no servants or masters to worry about. Cast off your bondage to the eight worldly feelings of being pleased when receiving gifts, love, attention and so forth, displeased when not, elated when everything is going well, depressed when it is not, delighted when hearing pleasant things, annoyed when not, being happy when praised and upset when abused.

All this is very important. If you practise faultlessly like this, you will develop experiences and insight without any effort. Therefore exert yourself to act in this way.

That is the eighth point (for mental quiescence meditation).

## **Penetrative Insight Meditation**

### **Looking at the Settled Mind**

The second main topic is penetrative insight meditation (vipasyana). You should sit in the essential bodily posture as before. At this point the way of looking is extremely important. Your eyes should not be blinking, wavering to and fro or changing focus, but should be staring intensely with sharp focus directly ahead (slightly upwards) at the empty space before you.

In mental quiescence your mind has become like a clear mirror. With penetrative insight you examine the nature of this mirror and the images in it. The way of looking is slightly different for these two. In mental quiescence your eyes should be looking straightforward, relaxed and in focus. For penetrative insight look more intensely and slightly upwards. This uplifts and sharpens the mind. The difference is like between your arm when it is at ease and when flexed.

Place your mind in a faultlessly settled state of equipoise in which it is natural, at its own level, uncontrived, unself-conscious, not anxiously caring and then make it slightly more intense so that it is clear and vivid, and have your mindfulness keep an ever-present check so that you have no mental wandering.

Now look scrupulously at the nature of your mind when it is in full, perfect mental quiescence. By nature does it have a colour, a form, a shape? Does it have an arising, a ceasing, an enduring, or not? Is it outside, inside, or where is it settled? Aside from this settled state, is there another consciousness separate from it? Is it nothing whatsoever, a blank emptiness that cannot be identified (as this or that)? Or, in this settled state, is there consciousness which although it cannot be identified (as this or that) is still a vividness, a pristine purity, a resplendence but which just cannot be put into words (like a mute person's tasting of sugar)? The nature of this settled mind, is it a total blackness, or is it a clear, vivid brightness?

All the crucial (attainments) are in terms of what it means by the true abiding nature of the reality of this (mind).

If you realise the true nature of your mind, your Buddha-nature, you have Enlightenment. If confused about it and shrouded in the darkness of ignorance, you have samsara and bring yourself suffering.

Therefore (when your Guru questions you about your meditation) if you spout forth intellectual ideas about it, or parrot descriptions you have heard, or use high-falutin Dharma jargon (you do not understand), or, because your mind is gripped by the eight worldly feelings (and you want to impress him), you say you have had fantastic flashes and insights when you have not — if you respond like this, it is like pulling the wool over your own eyes. You are only deceiving yourself. And if you are ordained, then you have broken your vow not to lie to your Guru with polite affectations. Therefore practise conscientiously. Do not patch up (some experience) out

of your imagination, but be completely honest and (speak from) the experiences and insights that develop within yourself from the force of your own meditation.

Do not worry if what you experience sounds a bit silly. If after looking you find that your mind is white, report this to your Guru. He will say, for instance, to check if it is ever yellow. If you come back and say, "It is yellow," he will then say, "No, actually it is neither." Through such honest exchange and interplay, your Guru will be able to lead you to recognise the nature of your mind. When you look at or examine your mind with incessant questions as above you may not recognise its nature even if you see it. Therefore you must rely on your Guru and be totally honest with him, otherwise he cannot help you. What is at stake is your liberation from suffering, Enlightenment and ability to help others.

As this is imperative, tighten your awareness and look (at your mind). Then take a rest and afterwards have another look. As it is necessary to look at the nature of the mind when it is settled, the way you should set it throughout all of this is to place it in a clear, lucid, shining state like the sun free of all clouds.

Tightening your awareness at this point and making an effort to look at its nature is the first way for you to be made to recognise (the nature of your mind). As this is so, the Guru must question and train his disciples in accordance with their mental temperaments and capacities. In order to tame some, it may be necessary to push and question them repeatedly in order to see if they have an intellectual understanding, a flash experience, an insight or a solid experience, and to make them recognise these without mixing in affected Dharma jargon. The disciple likewise must exert himself in this.

**That is the first point** (for penetrative insight meditation): looking at the nature of the (settled) mind.

### **Looking at the Moving or Thinking Mind**

Next, to cut from its root the foundation (of ignorance) you must examine thoroughly the moving mind or train of thought, and be made to recognise it for what it is. Adopt the bodily posture, way of looking and acting as before. Place yourself in a state in which you have bliss, clarity and bare non-conceptuality — all three, and then relax in this pristine purity and let a fleeting thought arise all of a sudden from this (state) or purposely emanate a thought of whatever seems suitable.

Look at the nature of the cognition that has been emanated. Look at it at the time it is emanated. Having looked at the enduring of what has been emanated, does it have a colour, or a shape? Is there a place it arose from, a place it endured in, a place it ceased into? What about it? Is (this thought) located outside, or inside the body? If it is inside, is it in the centre of the heart, for instance, (in the brain) and so forth? Inside, outside, wherever it is, just how does it endure and how is it emanated? Investigate this.

This mind, is (its nature) a conditioned phenomenon (arising from causes), or is it



unconditioned? Does it have an arising, a cessation, a colour, or a shape? If it does, then what kind does it have, or is it the case that you think it does not (have any arising and so forth)? If you say that it cannot be thought of as being like this, well then, is there still some conscious aspect of it which nevertheless has no arising or cessation and so forth? When you look at a thought, is it that all thoughts are a voidness, free from all mental fabrications (of extreme modes of existence), with no arising or cessation? After you have looked at a thought, is it that it disappears completely, leaving no trace? All thoughts that occur, is it that they pop up but cannot be identified (as being like this or like that)? Take a look. If you say that they pop up but cannot be identified (as being like this or like that), then at that very moment (when a thought pops up), is there or is there not (another) thought to the effect that there is no identifiable component here?

There is no end to the amount of questions to which you can subject a thought such as "I saw my friend yesterday." Where is this thought? Where did it come from? What is it made of? Is this thought the same shape as your friend and is the image of your friend the same as your friend himself? When this thought passes, does it leave no trace like a cloud disappearing from the sky, or does it leave a footprint like a child walking on the beach? If you say this thought has no qualities and cannot be found, then what about the thought that thinks that? If a mute person cannot put his thoughts into words, does this mean he has no thoughts?

By interrogating thought like this you can "question it to death." If you are plagued by thieves and you catch one and publicly flog him, and then do the same for several more, the thieves will get the idea not to come any more and you will be free of them. The same thing will happen with your thoughts. Persistent questioning takes the life out of them and they will not bother to come so often. And when they do, they will be weaker in force and not so bold. In this way you will come to see the nature of your mind and thoughts.

After a thought has arisen or you have made one come, take a look at it without blocking or grasping on to it. Whether it has a happy (feeling) tone to it or an unhappy one, look at the individual natures of happy and unhappy (feeling tones). No matter how many thoughts you have, look at them. When a delusion has arisen strongly, such as one of the five poisons (of desire, anger, closed-mindedness, pride or jealousy), or you make one arise, take a look at it too. Making sure to cut out any exaggerated ideas you might superimpose from within, look at the (deluded) thought itself (such as anger), the object of that thought (an image of an enemy) and the immediately preceding thought and check to see, for instance, if there is any difference as far as the mind (or consciousness aspect of them) is concerned.

When you see that the nature of thought is a bright, clear awareness, then look to see whether there is any difference between the bright, clear awareness you saw previously with respect to the settled mind and the bright, clear awareness you see now with respect to a thought. If you cannot decide, then draw the thought back and place yourself into a state of clear awareness.

This is a figure of speech. Thoughts are not like a jack-in-the-box which you can stuff back into your mind. What is meant is to cease interrogating the thought and let it dissolve.

When (another) thought all of a sudden comes up when you are not looking, then look at its very nature to see how it in no way adulterates that of your original, normal consciousness.

When a wave rises and falls, has the ocean basically changed? Does a cloud affect the sky?

As this is what you must see, look very well.

In short, when the Guru and disciple working together have reached this conclusion based on how thoughts arise (in the disciple) and how he understands them, then the root has been cut of the foundation (of his ignorance) and the true meaning has been reached.

**That is the second point** (for penetrative insight meditation): making an effort in the methods to look at (the nature of the moving mind) so as to see and be made to recognise it for what it is.

### **Looking at the Mind Reflecting Appearances and at the Mind in Relation to the Body**

Next, in order to be made to recognise the inseparability of the mind and appearances, you should look (at the mind) when it is reflecting an appearance (in a moment of bare perception). With your way of looking and bodily posture as before, focus your eyes and attention single-pointedly on a specific object, such as a vase, your image in a mirror, Mount Meru or any suitable visual form in the space (before you). Look at it scrupulously. Relax your awareness of it slightly, and then look at it again.

Likewise, look at the nature of a sound that is the object of your ears' (consciousness) and see if there is any difference (in nature) between a pleasant and an unpleasant, or a loud and a soft one. Look at the sound of your own voice and that of someone else, and so forth. Likewise look at a fragrant smell that appears as an object to your nose's (consciousness) and at a foul one, at both a delicious and an unpalatable taste on your tongue, at both a pleasant and an unpleasant, a hot and a cold and at an intensely painful physical sensation on your body — look at whatever comes up. At such a time, is the appearance something that passes away by ceasing to exist? When reflecting an appearance, are the mind and the appearance two separate things? Does the appearance come into the mind (from outside) or is it that when the mind reflects something it goes out and catches hold of an appearance thinking "I am going to reflect it"? Actually, the mind and appearances (on it) are inseparable (like a "magic mirror" and the images on it). There is just the resplendence of an appearance and Voidness, with no (truly existent) object.

Take a look at the consciousness that is doing the looking and at its five types of sense objects, each in turn (first sights, then sounds, smells, tastes and tactile sensations). Look to see if there is any difference between these two (namely, consciousness and the appearance of its sense objects), and then look for what is the difference between an appearance that is the object (of a consciousness) and the consciousness that has it as its object. When you have looked at an object, is it the case that the object is something out there, solid and real?

When you close your eyes, does it disappear? When you put your hand in front of your eyes, where is the clarity of the appearance?

If you say it is not, then it seems as though there is no difference at all between an object (on the one side) and the mind (on the other) that can look starkly at (this object) without any obstruction but which (on its own part) is at ease, does not hold (anything as its object) and in which nothing (appears) clearly. If you say it is impossible to think that there is no difference between these (two), but rather it is the case that the object is something out there, solid and real, then what about the very thought that thinks that? (Is its object something out there?) Take a look at this.

Likewise, look to see whether the body and the mind are the same or different. If they are the same (or one thing), then the body which is something that arises and ceases and the mind which is something permanent (by nature) with no arising or cessation would have to be the same.

Although your cognitions, like your body, change from moment to moment and are thus impermanent, the nature of the mind as a clear, void, blissful awareness is something that does not change and is permanent in the sense that it does not depend on causes or circumstances. The nature of your mind does not arise out of nothing when you are born or wake up, nor does it cease when you die or fall asleep. The awareness is by nature the same regardless of what it is aware of.

And if they are different, then you should be able to identify two separate things, the body and the mind (totally apart from each other). But the mind is not something that you can pinpoint here (or there). It is not (only) at the top of your body or at the bottom, it completely pervades it. The fact that you can experience feelings (all over), what is that due to?

The body and mind are like something that supports and the thing that is supported (like a cup and the tea in it). But, if you say that the body is outside and the mind inside, (as two separate things) like a man and his clothing, then when it comes to experiencing feeling, if you think that it is the body alone that has feelings, then a corpse would also have to have feelings. If you say that the mind (alone) has the feelings, then the two (body and mind) would have to be different (and unrelated).

Now the mind is something that cannot be killed or in any way affected. If when your body is pricked by a thorn your mind feels it, then how is this different from the example when you burn the clothes worn by someone you burn the person who is wearing them too?

When you prick the body, do you prick the mind also? After looking at this thoroughly, you must reach a firm decision.

Namely, you must decide that the body and mind are neither the same, nor different. Conventionally they are like something that supports and the thing supported, but ultimately they are not two inherently existing objects sharing such a relation.

In connection with this you must also realise that whatever feelings arise are like waves and (your mind is like) water. Because when you place your mind on this realization you cut through from this state to the true meaning of the actual nature of reality, you must look (at your mind) like this.

**That is the third point (for penetrative insight meditation).**

### **Looking at the Settled and Moving Minds Together**

Once more settle your mind into a state of pure clarity and Voidness and look at its nature. Then make a thought arise and look at its nature. Look to see if the natures of these two — the settled mind and the moving mind — are the same or different. After looking, if you see that they are different, then how are they different? Do the settled and moving minds alternately come up like when you have strung thread around two poles and twirl it together (to make a string)? Is the settled mind like a field and the moving mind that arises like the crops growing in it? Or are the two of them the same like a snake or rope and its coils (in that you cannot have a coil separate from the rope)? If so, then when the mind is settled without any thought arising, is it also moving, and when it is moving, is it also settled? There is a big difference between the moving mind which can think up anything and fantasise in endless variety and the settled mind which stays without moving. But if you think that the two are different in nature, then is the difference in terms of colour, shape and so forth? Is it in terms of arising, endurance and cessation, or of past, present and future, or of permanence and impermanence? Look to see how they are different.

When you know through meditation what thoughts truly are, then (you realise that) the nature of both the settled and moving minds is nothing but the same. The way they arise is by alternating, and when it is settled there is nothing that is moving and when it is moving there is nothing that is settled. Like water and waves, it is the mind alone that functions and acts. That is all there is to it. When you understand that both the settled and moving minds are nothing more than a brilliant, clear Voidness, then you have a little understanding.

It is like a mirror, which has the same void clarity whether or not it is reflecting an object.

Now, when you draw a thought in (for interrogation) and then place yourself in meditation, is it that (the thought) has gone into a clear Voidness, or has it disappeared and afterwards in its place is a clear Voidness?

In other words, is it like the darkness of night dissolving into the clarity of daylight? Or is it like the darkness disappearing and being replaced by daylight?

Or is it that the vivid thought itself is a clear Voidness? If you think that it is like either of the former two, you still must make very strong requests to your Guru (for his inspiration) and then look once more with effort and try to see with certainty how things really are.

The ways of looking at the nature (of the mind) can be approached in three styles. These ways of looking have been at the settled mind, the moving or thinking mind, the mind reflecting an appearance, the mind in relation to the body and both the settled and moving minds together.

Those who skip ahead develop penetrative insight first and then mental quiescence, or sometimes they develop both together at the same time when previously they had neither. Those for whom it happens at once develop both mental quiescence and penetrative insight at the same time by merely being taught their descriptions. This is due to the power of their previous training.

This refers to instincts from former lifetimes as is the case with Incarnate Lamas (Tulkus).

Those who progress gradually develop these in stages. Here (the explanation has been given) in accordance with this latter type of person's approach and it must be taught after assessing the way in which the disciple has his experiences.

When looking, you must place yourself in a state of clarity without any grasping, like a small child looking (at the paintings of deities) in a temple. Exert yourself with great enthusiasm to look in this way and abandon laziness. Turn away from your compulsive obsessions and have no requirements (which you feel must be met before you can practise). Have a renounced mind and faith, admiration and loving respect for your Guru. Make your mindfulness firm so that your mind does not wander and practise in an uncontrived state without being fettered by expectations or worries. Be interested only in your future lives without letting yourself go after ever-changing worldly concerns. If you make an effort to look at the mind (with an Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta), then it is impossible for you not to develop quickly and with certainty the pristine awareness of penetrative insight. Therefore decide about the settled and moving minds.

**That is the fourth point** (for penetrative insight meditation).

### **Recognising the Nature of the Settled Mind**

If you have cultivated looking at the nature (of the mind) like this in accordance with the oral teachings concerning the mind, there is practically no need for (your Guru) to make you recognise (its nature). It will reveal itself to you from within. Some people, however, do not recognise it even if this has happened. Others will have only a dry intellectual understanding of it from reading or hearing teachings and, although they have developed no experience or insight despite their desire to do so, will say they have and describe them in unerring Dharma jargon. The Guru must be able to differentiate these (types of people) and the disciple on his part must practise taking all this to heart.

After you have examined or looked at the nature of the mind and reached a decision about it, you must experience it in meditation and recognise the experience in terms of what you have previously ascertained. Therefore the Guru is essential, for through his interplay and questioning he leads you to the correct decision about the nature of your mind and confirms for you when you have had a true meditational experience or insight into it. This is what it means for a Guru to make you recognise your mind or, literally, to introduce you to it.

**The first way to make beginners recognise the nature (of the mind) when they are looking at it (is as follows).**

Look at the nature of the settled mind in the way as was done before. The nature of the settled mind is a clear, vivid brilliance, not a total nothingness. In this settled state there is clear, open, resplendent, gently flowing consciousness which cannot be identified (as this or that). You cannot say that it is like this, that it has a colour, a shape and so forth. It cannot be put into words or expressed as being like this or that. Although it cannot be identified (as this or that), nevertheless pristine, pure, brilliant resplendent, vivid (moments of) consciousness which make things clear with no obstruction happen to you (all the time). This consciousness is not something that previously you did not see, but now you do; or previously you did not experience, but now you do; or previously you did not know about, but now you do.

It has always been the case, for the nature of the mind is permanent.

But you must know from the depths of your heart that it cannot be pinpointed or said to be like this or that.

If you have only a (dry, smug) intellectual understanding that it is a clear resplendent unidentifiable state of clarity and Voidness, you will be unable to make any progress. Therefore this will not do. But if this (realisation) has dawned from within (from your own meditational practice), then you have really had penetrative insight into the (nature of) the settled mind. Therefore except for conscientiously (meditating) starkly on the nature (of the mind), there is no way to see it.

If (the Guru) introduces you to it prematurely, you will be left with only a dry intellectual understanding and will become jaded. Then no matter what other things he may try to explain to you, they will only cause harm. Therefore (the Guru) must not try to make you recognise (the nature of your mind before you are ready to see it).

If the Guru tries to make you recognise the nature of your mind before you have had any meditative experience, you will have only an intellectual understanding. Because of your smugness and self-satisfaction, you will become jaded, lacking all appreciation for the profundity of the teachings. Closed-mindedly you will feel you understand everything already and therefore will disparage all your Guru's further efforts to teach you. Like a stone in water, you will not absorb anything he says and thus you will make no progress. Therefore it is better

for the Guru to be reserved about teaching the nature of the mind, lest he do so prematurely and jade the disciple.

If you have not cut the stream of your thoughts, you will not see the nature (of your settled mind). If you do not see this nature, you cannot be made to recognise it for what it is. And if you have not recognised it, then your meditation will not become an actual path (to Enlightenment).

When you have excellent experiences and boons (in meditation), look at them. Even when things are going poorly, try repeatedly to intensify the clarity.

In other words, when you are in pain, do not indulge yourself but rather look at the nature of the mind experiencing this pain and try to intensify and focus on its clarity. This is similar to the technique used to eliminate mental wandering in tantric visualisation meditations, namely intensify the clarity of the visualisation and extraneous mental activity disappears.

To teach the methods for cultivating such type of practice is called a (meaningful) oral explanation. When you know how to meditate, it is called a finished oral explanation. Then if you cultivate this state without any mental wandering, there will be no trouble in developing experiences and insights. Therefore, in order to reach certainty about the nature (of the mind) after you have seen it and to have all your doubts cut, it is necessary (for a Guru) to introduce you to it (in other words, cause you to recognise it).

In general, there are two things (needed) in meditation, mental quiescence and penetrative insight. Of these, (mental quiescence) is when your mind has been placed in its relaxed, natural state and you have a settling of the mind into its natural, clear, resplendent state after all thoughts have been quieted in their place (having looked at them the moment they arose). Your conventional mind does not indulge in any mental wandering concerning the life or worldly things. It is blissful and tranquil, with all delusions quieted into a fine sleep. Settled single-pointedly on the nature of virtue, your mind stays wherever you place it for as long as you want. It is under your control. You do not feel even the passing of your breath in and out. If your (meditation) is like this, then it is a distinguished state of mental quiescence.

The flash experiences and boons of bliss, clarity and bare non-conceptuality (you receive in this state) are very important. They do not fulfill the requirement to count as insights, (for that you need penetrative insight), but you cannot do without them. If you cultivate them without any compulsive attachment, and remain in this state (of mental quiescence) without letting yourself lapse into any mental dullness, agitation, or unspecified state of indifference, you will come to know and experience what kind of object your mind is—although you cannot say that the nature of the mind is like this or that, or has this colour or that shape, for it is beyond all words, thoughts and description. It cannot be put into words, like the sexual bliss of a young adult. A unity of clarity and Voidness, it is free from all extremes of mentally fabricated (modes of existence) and cannot be identified (as this or that). It is unadulterated by any conceptual thoughts of the Dharma. It is unsullied by any conceptual worldly thoughts. It cannot be pinned down (with the conceptual thought that) this is a non-conceptual state or one of mental

quiescence.

Such a consciousness which is in its own state, at its own level, in its own place is called the root of all good qualities, the normal mind, or simply the mind. If you are unconscious of it, then you have ignorance or unawareness and the cyclic existence of samsara. But if you are conscious of it, this is called awareness, pristine awareness, Nirvana, the pristine awareness of simultaneity, the primordial state, the Clear Light, or penetrative insight. Therefore now you should divide clearly this headwater of either samsara or Nirvana.

If you recognise the mind, it is Nirvana; but if you do not, then it brings you samsara. Thus the nature of samsara and Nirvana is the same. Their difference is in terms of your awareness of their nature.

When your Guru introduces you to the nature (of your mind), you will recognise it like meeting (an old friend) you knew long ago. Such a recognition is called recognising the mind. (The nature of the mind) is not something produced by the great discriminating intelligence of a disciple or the skillful oral teaching of a Guru.

It has been there all the time and is something you come to recognise only through meditational practice.

From time immemorial (your mind) has been like this, but because it has been obscured by delusions and thoughts you did not recognise it. But now that the stream of your thoughts has been cut and you have been introduced to it, you know it.

The mind is a pristine clarity that cannot be identified (as this or that). Although it has no inherently existent nature as such, yet it allows for clear appearances. The defining characteristic of the mind is that by nature it is clear, void awareness. It is pristine and alert with no discontinuity. That is the nature (of the mind). When you have a stark recognition of this, cultivate it at all times without any wavering. The benefits from this are beyond all imagination.

Therefore to develop penetrative insight into (the nature of) the settled mind and to recognise it, there is this first actual introduction (by your Guru to your mind). Take it to heart, put it into practice and cultivate it continually. This is extremely important.

**That is the fifth point** (for penetrative insight meditation): recognising in this way (the nature of the settled mind) and cultivating it.

### **Recognising the Nature of the Moving or Thinking Mind**

**The second way of looking (namely at the nature of the moving or thinking mind) cuts the root of the foundation (of ignorance).**



There are two points (in connection with this): (1) being introduced to the non-conceptual mind and (2) being introduced to the moving mind or thoughts, (this latter one) referring to being introduced to the moving mind when a thought has already arisen or you make one arise.

The first is as follows. You have looked at the pristine, clear, resplendent, non-conceptual settled mind which is an awareness free of mental dullness and agitation. You know that (its nature) has not arisen or cessation, yet you do not (conceptually) think, "It has no arisen or cessation, no colour, shape and so forth." To do that is penetrative insight into the non-conceptual mind.

To conceptualise about the lack of qualities of the non-conceptual state of mind is to go to an extreme of making non-existence into a "thing."

As for the second, if you say that all thoughts (by nature) are a total Voidness with no arisen or cessation, you are taking Voidness too literally (and going to the extreme of nihilism). What they are is a vividness that leaves no trace and (the nature of) which has no arisen, cessation or enduring and cannot be identified as having this colour, that shape and so forth. If (you realise) this much you have developed a little (understanding). Furthermore, you must recognise that they cannot be identified as this or that and do so without conceptually thinking, "They cannot be identified as this or that." And without any grasping or contradiction (in your mind between thoughts being both vivid and void, you must recognise) that thoughts both arise and subside at exactly the same time (like a drawing on water). In addition you must gain the insight that there is not the slightest difference (in nature) between thoughts and the object of thought, between the mind when it is settled and when it is moving, between past (and present) mind, between past (and present) thoughts and so forth. (They are all by nature) clear, brilliant awareness.

When you draw a thought in (for interrogation) or when a thought disappears, it is not that it has gone into a clear Voidness (or one has been left in its place). Rather, the thought that arises all of a sudden is itself a clear Voidness. When you realise or gain this insight, then you have recognised (the nature of thought).

There is not even the slightest difference between the non-conceptual state and that of true insight into the fact that moving thoughts, the settled mind and the nature of thoughts themselves are all three clear, void and brilliant. To hold the two (as being different) is an interpolation of the mind that does not recognise them.

Previously when you did not recognise (the nature of) thoughts, you were unable to take them into your meditation. This was ignorance (or unawareness). But now that you recognise them, you can meditate on thoughts themselves and thus they become awareness or pristine awareness. Now you can make thoughts the root of meditation. Previously the thoughts themselves were obscuring themselves, and so you could not see them.

They were so thick, they obscured their own nature. But now they are transparent; you can see right through them.

This present meditation on conceptual thoughts is known to be more especially distinguished than the meditation on the non-conceptual state. Therefore whatever thoughts arise, you should take them as what to recognise. When thoughts do not arise, then stay in this state of them not arising. There is no need to emanate (or produce) them. When they do arise, then stay in this state of them arising. There is no need to collect them back. Therefore, without giving any heed to expectations or worries, bring your thoughts themselves into the nature of your meditation.

Thoughts are nothing more than the mind. This mind, which naturally subsides, is the Dharmakaya, by nature a clear, void brilliance, devoid of anything to be subsided or anything to do the subsiding. When you gain this insight, then you have had penetrative insight (into the nature of) thought. You have recognised the Dharmakaya, which is a unity of clarity and Voidness.

Thus you must realise that thoughts, being a clear Voidness, arise and subside at exactly the same time, like a handprint on water. They have no endurance and there is no interval between their arising and subsiding. Nor is there space between them as if they were "things" that could be separated by space. This is what the term "naturally subsides" means, which when translated literally is "self-liberation."

In short, you should recognise whatever (thoughts) arise, place your mind single-pointedly and uncontrivedly right on their very nature, without any mental wandering, and cultivate this state. This is the second actual introduction (by your Guru to the nature of your mind). Having recognised it, however, is not enough. You must cultivate the continuity (of this awareness).

**That is the sixth point** (for penetrative insight meditation).

### **Recognising the Nature of the Mind Reflecting Appearances and of the Mind in Relation to the Body**

**The Third introduction is being made to recognise (the nature) of the mind reflecting an appearance and this is in terms of the inseparability of the mind and appearances.**

When you look at any of the five types of external sense objects (sights, sounds, smells, tastes or tactile sensations), the object which is obvious with no obstruction but about which you cannot think that it is some object out there, solid and real, and the vivid mind that is looking at it without actually clutching something — these two are neither the same, nor different. However you should not (conceptually) think that they are neither (the same, nor different).

To do so would imply that being neither was some sort of inherent nature truly existent in them.

Likewise, the body and the mind are neither the same nor different. They are inseparable, unity of clarity and Voidness, of appearance and Voidness, like the (reflection of the) moon in water.

If the reflection or appearance of the moon in a puddle and the water were the same, then when you put your hand over it, the appearance should still be there. If they were different, you should be able to lift the appearance off the puddle like a piece of paper.

Furthermore, whatever feelings you have, such as hot or cold, are also appearances. Because you do not recognise them as (a unity of) appearance and voidness, your mind mentally labels them (as truly existent) and thus you have the infinite variety of grasping. But aside from this, on the ultimate level, whatever physical or mental feelings you have are devoid of being an (inherently existing) basis for labelling. You must gain this insight.

In a dream, you have a body and you see many appearances, and they all seem real and truly existent. But when you awake, you see that they were all of your mind and appearing to your mind, and that they had no true basis for their existence or for you to have labelled them "my body" and so forth. The same is true of death with reference to your life's experiences and when you awake from ignorance and see what you deceptively considered concrete and real is actually void of existing as such.

Appearances all come from the mind. If you think there are ghosts or demons, you will see them. If you do not believe in them, you will not. Once Je-tzun Mi-la ra-pa was meditating in a cave and, noticing a hole in the wall, he wondered if it might contain a ghost. As soon as this thought arose, a horrible ogress riding on a musk deer appeared and asked him, "Why did you call me? Your grasping ego sent for me. Quiet your mind and then I can leave." Likewise, it is because you have been fooled into thinking that appearances exist as real, solid objects "out there" that you believe them to exist that way. This is nothing more than superstition.

All appearances are reflections of the mind, void of true, inherent existence as something solid "out there" existing from its own side. For instance, great Lamas will come to Bodh Gaya and see it as a paradise and all the people there as deities. To a beggar, it will appear as a hell. And for each of them, this is reality. Consider a glass of liquid. A hell-creature sees it as molten copper, a hungry ghost as pus and blood, a fish as a home, a human as water and a god as nectar. Each of these is merely an appearance to and of the mind. However things appear to you, that is your mind. But appearances are all deceptive, because they appear to be real and "out there," when in fact they are not.

Consider the same person wearing the same set of thick clothes in summer and in winter. At one time he labels them heavy, at another thin and light. What is the basis for his labelling them as such? There cannot be an inherently existing basis for this in the clothing; it is all appearance. The same is true with feelings.

Snuff and chili pepper are either delicious or terrible depending on what you are accustomed to, in other words, how they appear to you.

Whatever appearance comes up (before you, such as your finger), look at it (in an intensely staring) manner and focus your mind (on it single-pointedly for several minutes). Then relax your stare a little. At first all the details are sharply there. But then after a while, the (image)

goes away in its very place because either you became nauseated and did not want to look at it any more, or your eyes went numb or started to tear. But then when you look at it a little (once more), a vivid appearance that cannot be grasped comes (again). It has come back in its very place.

At this point (you should realise) that your own (mind) and the appearances to and of it are inseparable. They are (a unity of) appearance and Voidness, resplendent without any object (inherently existing on its own side). Because there is this reflexive appearance of the actual abiding nature of reality, also known as the defining characteristic of the mind, there are no two separate, different things — external appearances and the internal mind. The mind's own lustre arises with no obstruction; that is all.

Appearances as objects to be grasped and consciousnesses to grasp them are both the arising of deception. At such a time, these (appearances) cannot be singled out to the side; they appear because they are the self-deception of the mind. Therefore the mind is the appearances. Aside from this, there is no such thing as an appearance that can be established even to the slightest degree as existing inherently as a separate object.

A scarecrow seen at a distance appears to be a man. What is this appearance, except for your mind?

Previously, because this was obscured by ignorance or the mind's grasping (for true existence) you could not see it. But now that the stream of your grasping conceptual mind has been cut, you can recognise the (reflecting mind's) own nature and that there are no (truly existent) objects. Without grasping at appearances (to be truly existent) you see that appearances are resplendent and void and are not (inherently existing) objects. They are known as the light-rays of the Dharmakaya, appearances arising simultaneously (with Voidness, like a sprout and its shadow).

Thus when your friend appears before you, just see his appearance and remain in the here and now. Do not think, "Oh, what a good friend he is," or "What a horrible friend, he didn't write." Do not cling to an idea of this person as an unchanging concept, inherently existent, solid and real. Remain open, fresh and spontaneous, without expectations, worries or preconceptions, and realise the inseparability of appearance and Voidness. Remain with the void appearance of the person and not your fixed ideas.

Now cultivate (this awareness) without any fabrication. Give free rein to your six conglomerates and cultivate practising in terms of whatever appears to the mind.

The six conglomerates are the consciousness, cognitive power, and objects of your faculties of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking. Realising that a consciousness, cognitive power, and object are all three interdependent, void of existing inherently alone, and all necessary for a cognition, just relax and be aware of whatever comes up.

With your mind comfortable and at ease in this state, place it uncontrivedly on the actual nature of reality. Do not try to achieve bliss, clarity, voidness or excellence. Do not dwell on the past. Do not think of the future. Have no thoughts of the present. Do not meditate by intellectualising. Letting your mind be at its own level, fluidly flowing in the here and now, without any effort or anxious cares, place yourself in the natural state of the mind itself. Place yourself in a state of the inseparability of appearance and Voidness, the inseparability of the sounding (of sounds) and Voidness, the inseparability of bliss and Voidness, the inseparability of awareness and Voidness, the inseparability of clarity and Voidness. When you understand with bare perception the inseparability of appearance and Voidness like this, namely how appearances are not blocked but likewise cannot be grasped, then you have had penetrative insight into (the mind reflecting) appearances. You have recognised the Dharmakaya which is a unity of Voidness and appearance. If you cultivate the continuity of this state, you will develop stable, sublime experiences and insights.

Being made to recognise the nature of the mind reflecting appearances is the third introduction.

**That is the seventh point** (for penetrative insight meditation): cultivating your practice in this way.

### **Recognising the Nature of the Settled and Moving Minds Together**

Next is the introduction made after having looked to see if the settled and moving minds are the same or different. When you analysed whether the settled and moving minds were the same or different, you understood from (the nature of) the two how to make thoughts into your meditation, for the settled and moving minds are nothing but the same. The way they arise is that they alternate. When the mind is settled it is not moving, and when it is moving it is not settled. But the agent for both is the mind alone and the nature of both is a clear, void brilliance. It is nothing more than that.

Furthermore, it is not that after you draw a thought in (for interrogation) then you see a clear, void brilliance. Nor is it that when a memory or thought disappears, it goes into a clear Voidness or one is left in its place. Rather, the thoughts that arise in the moment all of a sudden are themselves a clear, void brilliance. When you have gained this insight or understanding, you know the abiding nature of the mind.

The settled and moving states can be referred to as fingers dividing from the same hand. They are both of the same nature as the hand, but if it is one finger it is not the other. When the mind is settled it is a clear resplendence in a non-conceptual state. When it is moving with thoughts, the nature of these thoughts themselves is a clear, void brilliance. It is nothing more than that.

When you have the insight that all appearances of objects are simply affectations of the mind like waves on water and cannot be ultimately established as having any true, independent existence, this is (known as) the recognition of appearances as the mind. When you analyse the

nature of this mind to see if it has a going, a staying, or a coming, and have the insight that it cannot be established as having any of these, for the mind, like a dream-elephant or horse, ultimately has no true existence, this is the recognition of the mind as Voidness.

(Furthermore) when you have the insight that various (appearances) spontaneously arise from this state of pure clarity and Voidness, without any obstruction like (the reflections of) the moon in water, this is the recognition of Voidness as spontaneous (arisa). And concerning this spontaneously arisen clear, void awareness which is free of all mental fabrications (of extreme modes of existence), which is not something that comes about by change, which does not waver from (or in any way block) the Great Bliss and which has just spontaneously arisen — when you are convinced that it arises and subsides at exactly the same moment like the knotting and uncoiling of a snake, this is the recognition of spontaneous (arisa) as automatically subsiding of itself.

The mind you are to be made to recognise is normal consciousness which can think up anything and everything, is all-aware and all-flexible. It itself is known as the unity of clarity and Voidness, the Great Bliss, the Voidness possessing that which is perpetually supreme, or Mahamudra, the Great Seal of Voidness. When you recognise it, this is known as the insight of Mahamudra. Therefore place your mind in its own state of vivid awareness without anything to meditate on and without letting it wander for even an instant. Relax and be at ease without any expectations or worries, hopes that your meditation will be good or fears that it will be bad. By cultivating the natural state of your normal consciousness, you will behold in the very instant of here and now the Mahamudra Great Seal of Voidness, the unity of bliss and Voidness and (you will see it) like the clear expanse of cloudless space.

Now that mental quiescence has been joined with penetrative insight, sublime experiences and insights will happen. This fulfils the requirement of actually having entered the path of Liberation. Voidness is the way the mind is, clarity is its defining characteristic and the unity of these is the mind's nature. (There are many names for) this clear, vivid brilliance with a nature of bliss, clarity and bare (non-conceptuality), which is free of all extremes of mentally fabricated (modes of existence) such as good or bad, arising, ceasing or enduring, existing or not existing, permanent or impermanent and which is beyond all words and thoughts, which cannot be identified (as this or that) and yet can be experienced. It is known as the very essence of great pristine awareness, the reality of the great natural occurrence, the abiding nature of the way in which all knowables exist, pure awareness, the very nature of things, the equal factor (of samsara and Nirvana), the Great Bliss, the Buddha-nature, the perfection of wisdom, omniscience, the Voidness possessing that which is perpetually supreme.

Because everything can be understood by the mind, it is (called) mind-only. Because it is free of all extremes or middle, it is Madhyamaka, the Great Central position. Because it is difficult for everyone to comprehend, it is the hidden, or secret tantra. Because it destroys all deceptions, it is the Vajrayana Diamond-hard Vehicle. Because it beholds the essence of Buddhahood, it is called the Dharmakaya.

In short, what you must recognise is that which is free from all mental fabrications that would

grasp at a duality (of truly existent consciousness and objects), in other words the pristine awareness of non-duality, the equal factor (of samsara and Nirvana), the Great Bliss free from mental fabrications, the Mahamudra Great Seal of Voidness. Furthermore, you should float above (the ocean of samsara) on your fervent regard and loving respect (for your Guru) which you take as what is most vital. Then circle continually in making requests (to him for inspiration) without ever feeling you have done enough. And then alight upon an obvious placing of his inspiration and blessings on you.

When you recognise that there is this stark brilliance as part of yourself, unobstructed, unhidden, free from being unobvious, you have arrived at the Mahamudra that is the basis. To look at the nature (of the mind) is the Mahamudra that is the path. To realise (this nature) with full conviction is the Mahamudra that is the result. Therefore joyfully cultivate yourself in this way.

Now the attainment of a (fully endowed) human body has become meaningful. You have actually entered the path of Liberation and made samsara have an end. Therefore meditate well and with joy, and cultivate this for a long time. That is extremely important. Having looked at the settled and moving minds and been introduced (to their actual natures), you have recognised that appearances are the mind, the mind is Voidness, Voidness is spontaneous (arisa) and spontaneous (arisa) automatically subsides of itself. This is Mahamudra, pointing a finger at the Dharmakaya. Cultivate its practice continually. Follow it through to the end. Without leaving it as only a (dry) intellectual understanding, be certain to place it on your mind-stream.

**That is the eighth point** (for penetrative insight meditation).

## Summary

This has been the actual body of the text, the introduction to mental quiescence and penetrative insight. First you should focus on looking (at the nature of mind) and then gradually you will be made to recognise it in accordance with how (your experiences) develop and your understanding of them. It will all be correlated. In other (texts), there may be introductions in accordance with each way in which (experiences) may arise and be understood, and that is all right. But here I have correlated (the introduction) in accordance with the (four) ways of looking and not relied on just amassing many words. These introductions, which accord with true insights and reach to the true meaning, must be correlated and applied by each person individually to his own account and progressive insights. What I have written is in accordance with the general way in which (experiences) develop and achievements are made.

If from the beginning you were to be introduced to the nature (of the mind before you were ready), the introduction might have jaded you. If someone familiar with the Dharma becomes jaded, it is questionable whether (experiences and insights) will develop on his mind-stream. Therefore I have organised the way the introduction should be made like this in order to eliminate that (danger). This concludes the actual body of the practice.

## **Madhyamaka Pith Instructions – Madhyamakopadesha - By Atisha**

**From *Straight from the Heart: Buddhist Pith Instructions***

**Translated and Introduced By Karl Brunnholzl**

The Mahayana's pith instructions on the center are as follows. On the level of the seeming, in terms of the perspective of those who only see what is right in front of them, all presentations of cause and effect and so on[explain] all phenomena to be real in just the way they appear. However, ultimately, or actually, when just this seeming [reality] as it appears is scrutinized and done away with through the great [Madhyamaka] reasonings, there is nothing that can be grasped, not even something as tiny as a fragment of the tip of a hair that is split a hundred times. This is what you should internalize with certainty.

Sit on a comfortable seat in the cross-legged position. As a start, [let us say that] entities are of two kinds: what possesses form and what is without form.

1. What possesses form is a collection of infinitesimal particles. When these are analyzed and broken up in terms of their directional parts, not even their minutest [part] remains and they are utterly without appearance.
2. What is without form is the mind. As for that, the past mind has [already] ceased and perished. The future mind has not [yet] arisen or originated. As for the present mind, it is very difficult to examine: it has no color and is without any shape. Since it is just like space, it is not established. In other words, it is free from unity and multiplicity, unarisen, natural luminosity. When analyzed and scrutinized with the weapons of reasoning, such as [those just mentioned], you realize that it is not established.
3. At the point when those two [what possesses form and what is without form] definitely do not exist and are not established as [having] any nature whatsoever, the very knowledge that discriminates them is not established either. For example, if you rub two sticks [against each other], fire comes forth. Through this condition, the two sticks are burned and become nonexistent. Thereafter, the fire that has burned them also subsides by itself. Likewise, once all specific characteristics and general characteristics are established as nonexistent [through discriminating prajna], this prajna itself is without appearance and luminous, not being established as any nature whatsoever. Thus, all flaws, such as dullness and agitation, are eliminated.
4. In this interval [of meditative concentration], consciousness is without any thought, does not apprehend anything, and has left behind all mindfulness and mental engagement. For as long as the enemies or robbers of characteristics and thoughts do not arise, consciousness should rest in such a [state].

When wishing to rise [from the meditation], slowly open the cross-legged position and stand up. Then, with an illusionlike [frame of] mind, perform as many positive actions with body, speech, and mind as possible. By practicing with devotion, for a long time, and uninterruptedly, those with the proper fortune will see reality in this very lifetime. All phenomena are revealed as effortlessly and spontaneously present of their own accord, just as the middle of space. Through [the wisdom] that is attained subsequent to the [meditative equipoise described], all phenomena are known as illusions and the like. From the time of having manifested the vajralike meditative concentration onwards, these [bodhisattvas] do not even have a [phase of] subsequent attainment, but rest in meditative equipoise at all times.