Vipashyana
The Indian Root Sources
Secondary Readings Sourcebook

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Translation of Asanga's
Explanation of the Superior Sutra Explaining the Thought
(Arya-samdhinirmocana-sutra-bhashya)

FROM

TWO COMMENTARIES ON THE *SAMDHINIRMOCANA-SUTRA* BY ASANGA AND JNANAGARBHA

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CHAPTER EIGHT

In the eighth [chapter, Buddha] teaches the path of yoga by way of six aspects. He indicates these by way of delineating designations due to [teaching]:

(1) knowing;
(2) not knowing;
(3) nature;
(4) causes of practice;
(5) attainment and methods of attainment; and
(6) not degenerating.

With respect to those, the grouping of calming and insight is nature. Causes of practice are: (1) perceiving presentations of designations of doctrines; (2) not giving up aspirations; and (3) the four phenomena that are objects of attainment. Attainment [is described in the passage,] "Maitreya, designations of doctrines that I have stated...." Methods of attainment [are described in the passage] "Bhagavan, at what point do Bodhisattvas ...."

You should know that the rest are designations that are delineated. by way of [the topic of] not degenerating. With respect to that, you should know that designations that are delineated by way of [the topic of] not degenerating are of many kinds. With respect to not degenerating in terms of meditative stabilizations *(ting nge 'dzin, samadhi)* that are based on non-conceptual exalted wisdom, [Maitreya says,] "Bhagavan, [16] are the path of calming and the path of insight different or the same ...." With respect to not degenerating with respect to realizing non-conceptual exalted wisdom, [Maitreya says,] "Bhagavan, is that image that is the object of activity of meditative stabilization which is a viewing consciousness ...."1 With respect to not degenerating due to not thinking about time in meditating on the three signs, [Maitreya says,] "Bhagavan, at what point... solely cultivate insight. ...''

With respect to eliminating satisfaction with mere inferior [attainments, Maitreya says,]

"Bhagavan, how many kinds of insight are there ....'' This is due to not being satisfied with [insight] arisen from signs and so forth. With respect to eliminating degenerated faculties, [Maitreya says,] "Bhagavan, when you say, 'calming and insight that dwell on doctrines ...."' With respect to not degenerating in terms of increasing virtue, [Maitreya says,] "Bhagavan, through calming and insight observing doctrines that are unmixed ...." This is because the extent to which mind subsumes objects of observation is the extent of increase of the root virtues.

With respect to not degenerating in the sense of having antidotes to conceptuality and mental fluctuation, [Maitreya says,] "Bhagavan, at what point do calming and insight become meditative stabilizations that are conceptual and analytical ...." With respect to not degenerating and knowing causes with regard to meditation, [Maitreya says,] "Bhagavan, what is the cause of calming ... .''

With respect to eliminating boastful pride, [Maitreya says,] "Bhagavan, [when] Bodhisattvas cultivating calming and insight know doctrine and ...." This is by way of indicating the characteristics of thorough individual knowledge of doctrines and meanings [that arises] due to absence of boastful pride. This is due to [knowing]: (1) the set of all meanings; (2) the set of all meanings [known] by way of instructions; (3) the set of mental analyses; (4) extensive bases and supports; [17] and (5) all profound meanings.

The set of all phenomena that are objects of knowledge is said to [include] apprehended objects and apprehending subjects: the varieties of existents and the ways that they exist.9 Objects that are apprehended are divided into objects that are states and objects that are resources. Initial mistakenness with respect to these apprehending subjects and so forth is thorough affliction. Initial non-mistakenness is purification.

Indicating village boundaries -or one hundred of those, etc. -is the cause of expressly denoting innumerable worldly realms. The set of all meanings [known] by way of instructions [refers to] doctrinal teachings of Buddhas that are based on the two truths [ie., conventional truths and ultimate truths]. Afflictive faults are expressed in those. Qualities of purification are expressed. These qualities of affliction and purification are produced from conditions, but are not produced from God *(dbang phyug, Isvara)* and so forth. These are also included together; they are divided according to the characteristics of compounded phenomena

Similarly, one knows suffering by way of impermanence, sickness and so forth. In the Hearer Vehicle, one knows suffering and so forth. In the Great Vehicle, one knows [reality] by way of suchness and so forth. These are indicated by way of the two, grouping and dividing. Also, when answering, [Buddha] answers by way of partial answers and so forth.

With respect to the fourth [part], the set of all meanings, the basis is letters. The support is meanings. You should know that these two are the profound teaching and profound meaning. [These] are extensive due to [the extensiveness of] objects that are realms, because these are incalculable [in number.

Not degenerating due to merely attaining calming is a result of diligently seeking knowledge and insight. With respect to not degenerating in terms of through knowledge with respect to origination of the subtle, [Maitreya says,] "Bhagavan, how and through what mental contemplation cultivating calming and insight do Bodhisattvas remove what signs ...."

With respect to eliminating fear with respect to emptiness, [the sutra says,] "Bhagavan, in the Great Vehicle ...the full character of emptiness...." [18]

With respect to cultivating calming and insight -beginning with nature, causes, effects, actions, application, objects of engagement -not wasting instructions given [by Buddha is described in the passage,] "Bhagavan, how many kinds of meditative stabilization of calming and insight are included. ..."

With respect to eliminating non-serious aspiration with respect to meditation: The meanings of the four sources of subtle signs are to be known through pursuing [cultivation of] the [four] mindful establishments. The remainder are to be known through pursuing [understanding of] the sixteen emptinesses. You should connect the emptiness of the indestructible with collections of two terms. Emptiness of character [should be connected with] two signs. You should know that the remaining [emptinesses] are to be connected with each of these.

Study and Practice of Meditation

Tibetan Interpretations of the Concentrations and Formless Absorptions

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5 OBJECTS OF OBSERVATION: I

Ge-luk presentations of objects of observation are extremely complex. For the most part, they explain the categories of objects of observation set forth in Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers* and Kamalashīla's *Stages of Meditation,* which, in turn, systematize, in somewhat different ways, discussions of the topic in chapter 8 of the *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought*.[a] All these presentations include several overlapping categories, terminological divisions (*sgras brjod rigs kyi sgo nas dbye ba*) that are conceptually useful for a complete understanding of the nature and function of objects of observation but that sometimes seem to have little practical significance, especially for the beginning meditator. Moreover, although monastic textbooks discuss objects of observation in their sections on calm abiding, all the objects discussed are not objects of observation for the attainment of calm abiding. Mainly, they are presented as objects for calm abiding *and special insight* (*lhag mthong, vipaśyanā*), but a few are interpreted as objects of observation for higher levels.

It is also important to remember that the objects of observation discussed in the monastic textbooks and their Indian sources are mainly objects of observation for Buddhist meditators. Ge-luk textbooks and scholars admit that non-Buddhists can attain calm abiding and the concentrations and formless absorptions, that any virtuous (*dge ba, kuśala*) or ethically neutral object can serve as an object of observation, and that even some of the great Indian Buddhist meditators are said to have used neutral objects to achieve calm abiding; they cite and debate a well-known story about Nāgabodhi, an Indian Buddhist scholar-yogi who could not achieve calm abiding with the usual Buddhist objects of observation and was finally able to achieve it only by visualizing the horns of an ox growing from his head.[b] Nevertheless, they tend to disparage the use of neutral objects, usually typified by "a pebble or a stick."[c] Despite these difficulties, however, the Ge-luk presentations illuminate the range of possible objects of observation, the range of possibilities for directing and focusing the mind, and the range of

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[a] Gedün Lodrö, p. 78. This statement is qualified by "for the most part" because Gedün Lodrö mentions briefly (pp. 140, 144–45) objects of observation used in tantra but not in the sūtra system.

[b] *Meditative States,* p. 91; *Meditation on Emptiness,* p. 69; Jam-yang-shay-pa, *Concentrations,* 93.2.

[c] Jam-yang-shay-pa, *Concentrations,* 89.4–92.3; Tsong-kha-pa, *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* (Dharamsala: shes rig par khang, no date), 673.2–3.

possible results.

The presupposition underlying Ge-luk discussions of the topic of objects of observation is that the meditator *has* an object of observation; mere withdrawal of the mind from sense objects is not the cultivation of calm abiding. A warning against cultivating a meditative equipoise of non-discrimination occurs during discussion of the physical basis of calm abiding and of the concentrations and formless absorptions. Moreover, with regard to meditation on emptiness (*stong pa nyid, śūnyatā*), Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po and Jam-yang-shay-pa emphasize that "meditation on emptiness is not the same as withdrawing from conceptuality."[a]

General characteristics of objects of observation

The object of observation of calm abiding is said to be internal—that is, mental. Ge-luk-pa scholars refute the position that a sense object—especially the object of an eye consciousness—can serve as object of observation for calm abiding. They hold that calm abiding is achieved with the mental consciousness, not with a sense consciousness: To achieve calm abiding, it is necessary to withdraw the mind inside, and, as Gedün Lodrö explains, "it is impossible to withdraw the mind inside unless the sense consciousnesses are stopped," since "the sense consciousnesses are by their very nature distracted to external objects."[b] Gedün Lodrö qualifies this position by noting, "The only person who can remain in a state of deep meditative equipoise while sense consciousnesses operate is a Buddha."[c]

According to Gedün Lodrö, the erroneous notion that calm abiding can be achieved with the eye consciousness "arises because, when the objects of observation of calm abiding are discussed, there is reference to something that we have seen, such as a picture of a Buddha."[d] The process of learning to visualize a given object of observation involves committing to memory a visual object previously seen (for example, an image of a Buddha); the meditator alternately looks at the object and visualizes it, until he or she is able to visualize without looking.

Gedün Lodrö discusses a qualm concerning meditation on the

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[a] *Meditation on Emptiness*, p. 552; Hopkins' translation of Jam-yang-shay-pa's debate, pp. 553–58 (Jam-yang-shay-pa, *Concentrations,* 66.4–70.2, abridged in Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po, *Condensed Statement,* 551.4–552.1).

[b] Gedün Lodrö, pp.67, 68.

[c] Ibid., p. 42.

[d] Ibid., p. 68.

breath, which is an internal tangible object (*reg bya, spraṣṭavya*); the question arises, therefore, whether meditation on it uses the body consciousness (*lus kyi rnam par shes pa, kāyavijñāna*), and if so, whether there is a contradiction with the argument that calm abiding cannot be achieved with a sense consciousness. According to Gedün Lodrö, there is no contradiction because (1) the time of the settling down of the winds is not calm abiding itself, when "the sense consciousnesses will cease," but "a phase preparatory to calm abiding during which, indeed, you have to use your body consciousness to know whether you are exhaling or inhaling,"[a] and (2) in the case of meditation on the breath to pacify discursiveness, the nature of the meditation is deduced both from a long tradition of empirical observation that such meditation is "the best way to pacify all coarse minds" and from the fact that in the visualization of the descent of ambrosia, the breath is not the only object of observation; in the visualization of the descent of ambrosia, meditation on the breath is done in conjunction with a visualization in which the afflictive emotions are imagined as being expelled with the exhalation and good qualities, as entering with the inhalation; the afflictive emotions and good qualities "are imagined to be of one entity with" the meditator's breath.[b]

Another piece of evidence cited by Gedün Lodrö to show that calm abiding cannot be achieved with the body consciousness is the feature of the posture in which the tongue is set behind the teeth to prevent the flow of saliva, which the meditator would not notice in deep meditative equipoise "because the coarse sense consciousnesses such as the body consciousness cease during the higher stages of meditative stabilization."[c]

The Ge-luk emphasis on the importance of using an internal object of observation has significant psychological implications. In modern psychological experiments, an external meditation object is useful; for, if the meditators used as subjects in a clinical experiment were asked to visualize an object, the researcher could not be sure that all the meditators were visualizing the same object in the same way. Arthur J. Deikman's 1963 experiment used a blue vase as the object of observation.[d] In all his subjects, Deikman reports a decrease in distraction

[a] Ibid., p. 41.

[b] Ibid., p. 75.

[c] Ibid., p. 76.

[d] Arthur J. Deikman, "Experimental Meditation," in Charles T. Tart, ed., *Altered States of Consciousness* (New York: Wiley, 1969), p. 201.

("development of stimulus barriers"), and, in a final experiment in which the vase was absent, all expressed regret at its absence; some also stated that they were able to visualize the vase in its absence, although Deikman had not asked them to do so and did not follow up their reports by asking them to meditate on the visualized vase. One subject reported a sense of merging with the vase when she looked at it.[a]

It is clear from Deikman's experiment that focusing on sense objects can produce a measurable degree of alteration of consciousness, including increased freedom from distraction, but it probably would not produce calm abiding as understood by the Ge-luk-pas. Hopkins, paraphrasing Pa-bong-ka and Jam-yang-shay-pa, gives the general Ge-luk position that "even when non-Buddhists use a pebble or stick as the object, these are only bases of later imagination by the mental consciousness."[b]

How to choose an object of observation

To choose an object of observation, a meditator may "investigate among various objects such as a Buddha image to see what works well"—that is, the meditator may try them out—or "read texts to see what objects of observation are recommended," or "seek the advice of a virtuous spiritual friend, or guide (*dge ba'i bshes gnyen, kalyāṇamitra*)—a lama (*bla ma, guru*) who can identify a suitable object of observation"; although meditators of sharp faculties are able to choose an object of observation by studying the texts and trying out the objects of observation set forth in them, most people need to rely on a teacher.[c]

Ge-luk-pas, however, refute the position that that any object of observation that seems easy or comfortable will do. Rather, the object of observation has to be one that will pacify the mind. Therefore, an object that arouses desire or hatred is not suitable.[d] According to Gedün Lodrö, the erroneous position that any easy or comfortable object of observation is suitable stems from a misinterpretation of a line from Atisha's *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment,* which Gedün Lodrö interprets in the context of changing the object of observation as, "One

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[a] Ibid., pp. 204, 206.

[b] *Meditation on Emptiness,* p. 69, citing Pa-bong-ka, *Lectures,* 315b.4 and Jam-yang-shay-pa, *Concentrations,* 89.4–92.3. Jam-yang-shay-pa follows Tsong-kha-pa, *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* (Dharamsala: shes rig par khang, no date), 673.2–3.

[c] Gedün Lodrö, pp. 69, 71.

[d] Ibid., pp. 69–71.

should set one's virtuous mind on any *one* object."[a] It can also be understood as an exaggeration of the valid position that for an inexperienced meditator, the cultivation of calm abiding is difficult and that, therefore, the object of observation should not also be difficult.[b]

Meditators who have one of the five predominant afflictive emotions—desire, hatred, obscuration, pride, and discursiveness—must pacify the predominant afflictive emotion by using the specific object of observation that is an antidote to it; they are unable to use any other object of observation successfully until they have done so. The objects of observation that pacify the five predominant afflictive emotions are called objects of observation for purifying behavior (see below, page 92). However, someone whose afflictive emotions are of equal strength or who has few afflictive emotions may use any of the objects of observation set forth in the Ge-luk system.[c] Since the body of a Buddha is considered the best object of observation in this system, it would be seen as the most suitable object of observation for such a person. (See Chapter 6 and especially pages 130ff.)

Changing the Object of Observation

In general, once an object of observation has been chosen, it should not be changed until calm abiding has been attained; as the source for this position, Gedün Lodrö cites the line just discussed, from Atisha's *Lamp for the Path.* He cites Kamalashīla's *Stages of Meditation* to support the position that the meditator *must* change the object of observation *after* the attainment of calm abiding, to consolidate and develop the calm abiding already attained.[d]

Before the attainment of calm abiding, the major exception is a meditator who, upon first choosing an object of observation, failed to recognize a predominant afflictive emotion and chose, for instance, the body of a Buddha. Such a meditator will reach a point at which progress

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[a] Gedün Lodrö, pp. 69, 146. Atisha, *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* (*bodhipathapradīpa, byang chub lam gyi sgron ma*), stanza 40c-d (P 5343, 21.2.8: *dmigs pa gang rung cig la'ang/ yid ni dge la gzhag par bya/*). See also P5344, 337.5.8–38.1.1-2; *A Lamp for the Path and Commentary of Atīśa,* trans. and ann. by Richard Sherburne, S.J. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), pp. 9, 121.

[b] Gedün Lodrö, pp. 70–71.

[c] Gedün Lodrö, pp. 71–75; Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po, *Condensed Statement,* 558.3–5; *Meditative States,* p. 82; Jam-yang-shay-pa, *Concentrations,* 135.1–4; Tsong-kha-pa, *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* (Dharamsala: shes rig par khang, no date), 674.5–676.1, citing Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers.*

[d] Gedün Lodrö, p. 146.

becomes impossible: the predominant afflictive emotion arises in the meditator's mind whenever he or she tries to focus on the body of a Buddha. This type of impasse usually occurs at the third mental abiding—that is, at the third of the sequence of nine states of mind through which a meditator progresses in order to achieve calm abiding. At that time, the meditator must change to the object of observation that is the appropriate antidote to the predominant afflictive emotion.[a]

The classic layout

Ge-luk presentations of objects of observation classically begin with the four types of object of observation set forth in the *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought* and explained, with slight differences in interpretation, in Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers* and Kamalashīla's *Stages of Meditation*. The four are:

1 Pervasive objects of observation (*khyab pa'i dmigs pa, vyāpyālambana*)
2 Objects of observation for purifying behavior (*spyad pa rnam sbyong gi dmigs pa, caritaviśodanālambana*)
3 Objects of observation for [developing] skill (*mkhas pa'i dmigs pa, mkhas par byed pa'i dmigs pa, kauśalyālambana*)
4 Objects of observation for purifying afflictive emotions (*nyon mongs rnam sbyong gi dmigs pa, kleśaviśodanālambana*)

That these overlapping categories, though classic, are of little practical importance is suggested by Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po's omission of the complete presentation; he merely refers to "the four, pervasive objects of observation, and so forth."[b]

According to Gedün Lodrö, pervasive objects of observation get their name from their etymology, since "this type pervades all objects of observation"—that is, "all objects are included among them."[c] Objects of observation for purifying behavior "are named for their ability to pacify afflictive emotions temporarily" and are used by meditators who are dominated by one of the five predominant afflictive emotions that prevent the attainment of calm abiding.[d] Objects of observation for developing skill are objects of observation that increase a meditator's

[a] Ibid., p. 147.
[b] Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po, *Condensed Statement*, 557.5.
[c] Gedün Lodrö, pp. 78, 89.
[d] Ibid., p. 78.

skill. Gedün Lodrö explains that *mkhas pa'i dmigs pa* (literally, "objects of skill") is "an abbreviated expression meaning 'to make or bring about skill' (*mkhas par byed pa'i dmigs pa*)." Objects of observation for [developing] skill, such as the twelve-linked dependent-arising, require detailed study; by meditating on them, a meditator becomes skilled in them.[a] Objects of observation for purifying afflictive emotions cause the meditator to separate from the afflictive emotions pertaining to specific cosmological levels—"either the Desire Realm or the upper two realms, the Form and Formless Realms"—or a specific level within the Form or Formless Realms, such as the First Concentration. Unlike the objects of observation for purifying behavior, which pacify specific afflictive emotions that prevent the attainment of calm abiding, objects of observation for purifying afflictive emotions pacify equally all the afflictive emotions of a given level.[b] They are generally explained in the context of the preparations for the first concentration.

The English term "objects of observation for purifying afflictive emotions" requires some comment, since, clearly, these objects of observation do not purify afflictive emotions in the same sense in which objects of observation for purifying behavior purify behavior—that is, by getting rid of impure behaviors; in the case of objects of observation for purifying afflictive emotions, the meditator does not get rid of impure afflictive emotions and end up with pure afflictive emotions. In English, one has to say that both types of object of observation, in different ways, purify the meditator *of* certain afflictive emotions. The Tibetan and Sanskrit words translated as "purifying" (*rnam sbyong, viśodana*) have both meanings; they can take as their direct object both that which is being made pure and the impurities that are being expelled, but in English, one does not "purify" impurities to get rid of them. However, the word "purify" is being used in that sense here to keep the flavor of the Tibetan and Sanskrit terms.

Pervasive objects of observation

There are four divisions of pervasive objects of observation:

1 Analytical image (*rnam par rtog pa dang bcas pa'i gzugs brnyan, savikalpikapratibimba*)
2 Non-analytical image (*rnam par mi rtog pa'i gzugs brnyan, nirvikalpakapratibimba*)

[a] Ibid., pp. 78–79.
[b] Ibid., p. 79.

3 Observing the limits of phenomena (*dngos po'i mtha' la dmigs pa, vastvantālambana*)
4 Thorough achievement of the purpose (*dgos pa yongs su grub pa, kṛtyānuṣṭāna*)

It is generally said that the first two are posited from the point of view of the subject and the last two, from that of the object.[a] However, Gedün Lodrö gives a presentation of the third, observing the limits of phenomena, from the point of view of both object and subject.[b] (See page 90.)

The two images. The terms *rnam par rtog pa* (*savikalpaka*) and *rnam par mi rtog pa* (*nirvikalpaka*) are usually translated as "conceptual" and "non-conceptual," respectively. In this context, however, they are translated, respectively, as "analytical" and "non-analytical." There are two explanations of the meaning of "analytical" and "non-analytical," to be discussed below (see pages 88–90).

The term *gzugs brnyan* (*pratibimba*) means image or reflection, such as a reflection in a mirror. According to Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po, "'image'...refers to the dawning of the object."[c] The present Dalai Lama explains this dawning of the object as, for instance, the visualized image of the body of a Buddha that has been "found" as a result of previous study of an image seen with the eye consciousness: "This image is called a 'reflection', and is the object of observation."[d] Gedün Lodrö explains that these two types of object of observation are called images "because the varieties of objects of observation are not observed nakedly but are perceived by means of an image." He points out that this image is what Dharmakīrti's *Commentary on (Dignāga's) "Compilation of Prime Cognition"* calls a meaning-generality (*don spyi, arthasāmānya*), or generic image.[e]

Hopkins notes that, since all images are conceptual, "conceptual" and "non-conceptual" are interpreted as "analytical" and

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[a] Gedün Lodrö, p. 81. Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po, *Condensed Statement,* posits "the two images from the point of view of the observing [consciousness, observing] the limits of phenomena from the point of view of the object observed, and thorough achievement of the purpose from the point of view of the fruit" (Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po, *Condensed Statement,* 557.5–6).

[b] Gedün Lodrö, pp. 86–87.

[c] Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po, *Condensed Statement,* 557.6.

[d] *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight,* p. 185

[e] Gedün Lodrö, p. 82.

"non-analytical," respectively.[a] According to the Fifth Dalai Lama:

> It is said indeed that on the occasion of calm abiding non-conceptuality is needed and that the intellect should be stopped. These statements mean that the mind should not spread to thought other than the object of [observation], such as the body of a Buddha. If (in calm abiding) it were necessary to stop all conceptuality, then, since the contemplation of an image of a Tathāgata's body is conceptual, such contemplation would also have to cease, and in that case you would lose your object of [observation].[b]

In the *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought* and Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers,* the two images are listed in the order given here.[c] They are explained in terms of analytical and stabilizing meditation. According to Gedün Lodrö, these texts "say that because calm abiding is mainly a case of stabilizing meditation, it is non-analytical, and because special insight is mainly a case of analytical meditation, it is analytical."[d]

Kamalashīla's *Stages of Meditation,* which Gedün Lodrö appears to prefer, lists the non-analytical image first and explains the two images differently. According to Kamalashīla, meditation in the style of a non-analytical image "is so called because it does not analyze the mode of phenomena (their nature or emptiness) but, rather, is a type of calm abiding that takes as its object the varieties (that is, conventional phenomena)," whereas meditation in the style of an analytical image "involves special insight taking to mind (or analyzing) the nature of phenomena"—that is, their emptiness.[e]

Gedün Lodrö, for whom both texts are authoritative, holds that the presentations of Asaṅga and Kamalashīla are not inconsistent. He explains that for Kamalashīla, as for Asaṅga, a non-analytical image is an object of observation for calm abiding and an analytical image is an object of observation for special insight. According to Gedün Lodrö, both presentations are based on the mode of procedure of beginners and the order of achieving calm abiding and special insight, since the former is achieved before the latter. Kamalashīla's presentation accords with this

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[a] Oral communication.

[b] Fifth Dalai Lama, *Practice of Emptiness: The Perfection of Wisdom Chapter of the Fifth Dalai Lama's "Sacred Word of Mañjuśrī"* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1974), p. 18.

[c] Gedün Lodrö, pp. 81, 84–85.

[d] Ibid., p. 84.

[e] Ibid., pp. 81, 82.

mode of procedure in that almost all beginners take a conventional phenomenon as their object of observation for achieving calm abiding and then, when calm abiding has been achieved, can take emptiness as their object of observation for achieving special insight. Asaṅga's presentation also accords with this mode of procedure, since "[w]hether one is observing the mode or the varieties, as a beginner one first mainly practices stabilizing meditation and then, once calm abiding has been achieved, cultivates analytical meditation and thereby achieves special insight."[a]

Observing the limits of phenomena. As was mentioned earlier (page 88), observing the limits of phenomena is usually posited in terms of the object.[b] According to Lati Rinpoche, "'limits of phenomena' refers to the two types, the varieties (*ji snyed pa*) and the mode (*ji lta ba*)"—that is, to conventional phenomena and their emptinesses; phenomena of both types can serve as objects of observation.[c] Thus, this category, in itself, includes all objects of observation.

According to Gedün Lodrö, however, the limit of phenomena "can be posited from the viewpoint of either the object or the subject." Giving what he presents as the Prāsaṅgika position, he explains that, in terms of the object, the limit of phenomena is only the mode:

> The impermanence of sound is not a limit of phenomena. The limit of phenomena is their not existing from their own side, which is the mode of subsistence (*gnas lugs*) of all phenomena whatsoever.[d]

From the viewpoint of the subject, the limit of phenomena is observed at the time of the direct realization of emptiness—presumably, a Bodhisattva's direct realization of emptiness, since Gedün Lodrö states that "the *path* of observing the limits of phenomena is simultaneous with attainment of the first Bodhisattva ground" and, therefore, with attainment of the Mahāyāna path of seeing. Thus, an inferential cognition of emptiness does not observe the limit of phenomena.[e]

Thorough achievement of the purpose. Thorough achievement of the purpose is presented in terms of the fruit, that is to say, the result of meditation. According to Lati Rinpoche,

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[a] Ibid., p. 85.

[b] Ibid., p. 81.

[c] *Meditative States,* p. 81.

[d] Gedün Lodrö, p. 86.

[e] Ibid., p. 86.

> thorough achievement of the purpose refers not to the object of observation but to the purpose for which one is meditating; this class includes all the fruits of meditative stabilization from liberation up to the omniscience of a Buddha.[a]

Thus, it includes both the final purpose, Buddhahood, and temporary purposes beginning with liberation from cyclic existence.

Gedün Lodrö gives a somewhat different explanation, without stating his source. According to him, "thorough achievement of the purpose" refers only to the final purpose, a Buddha's Nature Body (*ngo bo nyid sku, svabhāvikakāya*). He holds that a Buddha's Nature Body *can* be taken as an object of observation by non-Buddhas for the sake of attaining calm abiding, special insight, and the Bodhisattva grounds, and that a first-ground Bodhisattva, who has directly realized emptiness and, thereby, "has generated the *path* observing the limit of phenomena in his or her own continuum...can take a Nature Body as his or her object of observation and thereby achieve Buddhahood."[b]

How these four pervade all phenomena. As was mentioned earlier (page 86), pervasive objects of observation are so called because "this type pervades" or includes "all objects of observation"[c] According to Kamalashīla's explanation of the two images, the non-analytical image "includes all varieties of conventional phenomena"; therefore, it includes, for example, the objects of observation for purifying behavior. Gedün Lodrö points out that the analytical image, as well as the last two types of pervasive object of observation, "involve emptiness," and that "emptiness is also classified as an object of observation for purifying afflictive emotions."[d]

If one follows Asaṅga's interpretation of the two images, one could probably say that both conventional phenomena and their emptinesses—that is, all phenomena—can be objects of observation of both analytical and stabilizing meditation.

If one understands the limits of phenomena as including both conventional phenomena and their emptinesses (see page 90), one would have to say that it too includes all phenomena. According to the Lo-selling scholar Kensur Yeshey Tupden, it includes the five objects of observation for purifying behavior, the five objects of observation for

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[a] *Meditative States,* p. 82.

[b] Gedün Lodrö, p. 92 (emphasis added).

[c] Ibid., p. 78.

[d] Ibid., p. 89.

developing skill, and the two objects of observation for purifying afflictive emotions.[a]

Objects of observation for purifying behavior

As was mentioned earlier (page 86), the objects of observation for purifying behavior temporarily pacify the five predominant afflictive emotions that prevent the attainment of calm abiding. The five predominant afflictive emotions are desire, hatred, obscuration, pride, and discursiveness; their antidotes are, respectively, the unpleasant, love, dependent-arising, the divisions of the constituents, and the exhalation and inhalation of the breath.[b]

In some cases, a meditator is aware of the predominant afflictive emotion outside meditation and can choose the appropriate object of observation before beginning to cultivate calm abiding.[c] In other cases, however, the meditator is unaware of the predominant afflictive emotion or, in Western terms, unconscious. An apparently loving person, for example, may try to meditate on the body of a Buddha and find him- or herself habitually dominated by the thought and image of an enemy instead; such a person has hatred as his or her predominant afflictive emotion. Gedün Lodrö explains that when the meditator withdraws the mind inside in order to cultivate calm abiding, "whatever is strongest in the mind will become manifest," whereas, outside meditation, the predominant afflictive emotion "does not become manifest because the mind is distracted."[d]

In still other cases, the predominant afflictive emotion will not become manifest at all; the meditator experiences only an inability to progress and will have to consult a teacher, who will diagnose the predominant afflictive emotion and assign the appropriate object of observation. As was noted earlier (page 86), problems related to a predominant afflictive emotion usually arise at the time of the third mental abiding; however, Gedün Lodrö notes that occasionally a meditator with an unconscious predominant afflictive emotion may even attain the

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[a] Oral commentary.

[b] Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po merely lists the five, giving no breakdown and mentioning merely "the divisions of the constituents" as the object of observation that counteracts pride, without specifying whether the six or the eighteen constituents are meant (Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po, *Condensed Statement,* 558.1).

[c] According to Lati Rinpoche, "A meditator knows whether or not a particular affliction is [pre]dominant" (*Meditative States,* p. 82).

[d] Gedün Lodrö, p. 170.

ninth mental abiding and yet be unable to develop the pliancy necessary for the attainment of calm abiding.[a]

To a Western ear, it sounds strange to describe a mental component that is often unconscious as a behavior. Yet the Sanskrit word *carita,* translated into Tibetan as *spyad pa,* includes that meaning, as well as "going, moving, course;...acting, doing, practice,...acts, deeds."[b] It comes from the root *car,* which means "to move oneself, go, walk, move, stir, roam about, wander" and refers not only to humans but also to "animals, water, ships, stars," and so forth; with regard to humans, it also means "to behave, conduct oneself, act, live."[c] The related word *caritra* includes not only the basic meanings of *carita* but also "habit,"[d] and one can, perhaps, think of a predominant afflictive emotion as a mental habit. In Pāli, *carita* occurs in various combinations, with *su-* or *dus-,* in relation to body, speech, and mind (for example, *manoduccarita*).[e] Thus, it is possible to talk about good or bad physical, verbal, or mental behavior. In the context of objects of observation for purifying behavior, what is meant, clearly, is habitual, though not necessarily conscious, mental behavior that prevents the attainment of calm abiding.

The Unpleasant

Gedün Lodrö explains in detail the two major Indian systems of meditation on the unpleasant used in the presentation of the concentrations and formless absorptions—that of Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers* and that of Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge.*

The presentation of Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers.* Asaṅga sets forth five types of meditation on the unpleasant:

1 Meditation on the feeling of suffering
2 Contemplation of what is unpleasant in relation to something else
3 Meditation on the unpleasant which consists of bad activities
4 The unpleasantness of the unsteady, or the unpleasantness of change

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[a] Ibid., p. 151.

[b] Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary,* p. 389, col. 3.

[c] Ibid., p. 389, col. 1.

[d] Ibid., p. 390, col. 1.

[e] T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary,* p. 521, col. 2. Monier-Williams also gives *sucarita* (p. 1223, col. 1) and *duscarita* (p. 487, col. 1), although not in compounds with *manas.*

5 Contemplation of ugliness[a]

The first, meditation on the feeling of suffering, involves meditation first on the pain experienced in one's own continuum and, later, on the pain experienced by others—not only humans but also hell beings and hungry ghosts.[b]

The second, contemplation of what is unpleasant in relation to something else, is a meditation on relative unpleasantness; the meditator considers that his or her own body is inferior to that of a Superior, since, unlike common beings, a Superior "no longer takes rebirth by the power of [contaminated (*zag bcas, sāsrava*)] actions and afflictive emotions but by the power of uncontaminated (*zag med, anāsrava*) actions." The meditator then goes on to consider the ways in which a Superior's body is inferior to a Buddha's.[c]

The third, meditation on the unpleasant, which consists of bad activities, involves consideration of the unpleasantness of apparently pleasant non-virtuous actions in terms of their karmic consequences.[d]

The fourth, contemplation of the unpleasantness of the unsteady, or the unpleasantness of change, is actually a meditation on coarse and subtle impermanence; the meditator considers that everyone who is born must die and "that the body is disintegrating and approaching closer to death at every moment."[e]

Of the five, the fifth, the contemplation of ugliness, is the most obvious antidote to sense-desire; it is the only type of meditation on the unpleasant mentioned by Lati Rinpoche, who explains it in graphic detail. Although he gives a clear layout of the other four types of meditation on the unpleasant, Gedün Lodrö gives few specifics of the meditation on ugliness; the only type he mentions, briefly, is meditation on the "putrefaction, rotting, gross dismemberment, and so forth" of the meditator's own body. Lati Rinpoche identifies this type as meditation on internal ugliness—that is, the thirty-six impure substances of which the body is composed "from the soles of the feet to the hair on the head, and inside the skin"—and states that this meditation can be applied either to the meditator's own body or to the body of a person

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[a] See Gedün Lodrö, pp. 93–98; *Meditation on Emptiness,* p. 70; Jam-yang-shay-pa, *Concentrations,* 114.2–5.

[b] Gedün Lodrö, pp. 93–94.

[c] Ibid., p. 95.

[d] Ibid., p. 97.

[e] *Meditative States,* pp. 98–99. Lati Rinpoche gives a detailed presentation of this meditation in the context of preparations having the aspect of the truths (pp. 135–41).

toward whom the meditator feels sexual desire.[a]

Lati Rinpoche also describes graphically the nine divisions of meditation on external ugliness. He gives "the four colors of rotting corpses" as the four objects of observation that serve as antidotes to attachment to color—that is, to the color of the desired person's complexion. The "two antidotes to attachment to shape...the shape of someone's face, for example," are meditation "on that face as though a dog or cat had chewed part of it," and, more grossly, "as though a dog or a cat had ripped off pieces, such as the ears and the nose, and scattered them about." The antidotes to attachment to touch are meditations "on the flesh as eaten by worms but with the bone and skin still intact" and "on the skeleton held together by ligaments." The antidote to attachment to copulation (*bsnyen bkur, upacāra*) is meditation on the desired person as a corpse—"a dead body that does not move."[b]

Although Lati Rinpoche does not discuss the question, Gedün Lodrö finds textual support for an explanation of sense-desire aroused by the mental qualities of the desired person, a common experience not accounted for by either Asaṅga's or Vasubandhu's presentation of meditation on the unpleasant. He describes this as "the desire for another's 'good nature'" even when the person lacks the physical qualities of color and shape generally considered attractive. Here, too, if the meditator follows Asaṅga's system, the antidote is meditation on an unmoving corpse, "since a corpse has neither good nature nor bad." Gedün Lodrö notes that in texts on monastic discipline (*'dul ba, vinaya*) this type of desire is to be understood as desire for copulation, whereas, in the First Dalai Lama's commentary on Chapter 6 of Vasubandhu's *Autocommentary on the "Treasury of Manifest Knowledge"* in the *Path of Liberation,* "it should be understood as good nature."[c]

Reasoning from within his textual tradition, Gedün Lodrö denies the possibility that desire will be replaced by hatred as a result of meditation on ugliness. He asserts that hatred will not arise because the

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[a] Gedün Lodrö, p. 95; *Meditative States,* pp. 82–83.

[b] *Meditative States,* pp. 83–84. These four are also mentioned briefly in Vasubandhu, *Autocommentary on the "Treasury of Manifest Knowledge,"* 6.9c (P5591, vol. 115, 244.4.1–5; Shastri, vol. 3, p. 865; La Vallée Poussin, 16:4, pp. 148–49; Pruden, vol. 3, p. 917).

[c] Harvey B. Aronson points out that there are two Tibetan translations of the Sanskrit word *upacāra—bsnyen bkur* ("copulation") in Vasubandhu's *Autocommentary on the "Treasury of Manifest Knowledge"* and *rnyed bkur* ("good nature") in the First Dalai Lama's *Path of Liberation.* (*Meditative States,* p. 238 n. 25, citing Harvey B. Aronson, trans. and ed., "The Buddhist Path: A Translation of the Sixth Chapter of the First Dalai Lama's *Path of Liberation*," *Tibet Journal* 5:4 [1980], pp. 35, 47.)

meditator's motivation is not that which would cause hatred: according to him, the meditator "does not cultivate a sense of a certain person as unpleasant within a sense that this person is an enemy but only with the motivation of overcoming attachment."[a]

The presentation of Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge*. The practical instruction on meditation on the skeleton set forth in Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge*[b] is a general antidote to all forms of desire; according to Gedün Lodrö, it is the best antidote.[c] This meditation investigates the nature of the body beneath its superficial attractiveness; in a comment on it, the present Dalai Lama remarked, "If I were wearing X-ray glasses, I would see a room full of skeletons as well as a skeleton that is talking from this podium."[d]

It is a three-stage meditation in which considerable dexterity is developed. The three stages are:

1 The yoga of a beginner at mental contemplation (*yid la byed pa las dang po pa'i rnal 'byor, manaskārādikarmika[yoga]*)
2 The yoga of someone who is practiced (*yongs su sbyangs pa byas pa'i rnal 'byor, kṛtaparicaya[yoga]*)
3 The yoga of one whose mental contemplation is perfected (*yid la byed pa yongs su rdzogs pa'i rnal 'byor, atikrāntamanaskāra[yoga]*)

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[a] Gedün Lodrö, p. 100, in answer to a Western student's question. This question has arisen especially among scholars of women in religion because of the misogyny evident in many monastic presentations of the meditations on ugliness. A comprehensive discussion of the treatment of this question, covering a wide range of Indian and Tibetan Buddhist schools, is beyond the scope of this book. However, Karen Christina Lang's examination of the poems of Theravāda monks and nuns, the *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā,* raises interesting possibilities; she suggests that, within "shared values," the monks and nuns express their repudiation of the profane world differently: The monks' poems are misogynistic; they use "androcentric language"—especially "the stock phrase 'Lord Death's snare'" in reference to women—that makes women "the image of the profane world—their bodies the metaphor for all sensual desire," whereas "in the nuns' verses this same phrase is used to stress that the danger of sensual pleasures and of Māra's control holds for both sexes." (Karen Christina Lang, "Lord Death's Snare: Gender-Related Imagery in the Theragāthā and the Therīgāthā," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion,* 2:2 [1986], 78.) It may be worth noting that the meditation on the skeleton set forth in Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge,* discussed below, can be applied to any desired person and probably could not be considered either sexist or homophobic.

[b] Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge,* 6.9d–11a-b and the *Autocommentary* to those verses (P5591, vol. 115, 244.4.7–244.5.7; Shastri, vol. 3, pp. 865–68; La Vallée Poussin, 16:4, pp. 150–51; Pruden, vol. 3, pp. 918–20).

[c] *Meditative States,* p. 238 n. 25, citing Aronson, "The Buddhist Path," p. 34.

[d] *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight,* p. 185.

Gedün Lodrö describes the first, the yoga of a beginner at mental contemplation, in detail; it

> consists of meditating that a piece of skin is removed from the areas between one's eyes, exposing the white bone underneath. One is to think that the piece of skin falls off as if causelessly, adventitiously, and one then directs the mind to that white bone. When the meditator is able to set the mind on that, he or she gradually enlarges the area of bone until the entire body is exposed as just bone. After this, one considers that all the lands and oceans of the world are filled with skeletons. Having succeeded in extending one's scope to include the whole world, one withdraws the observation gradually until one is again observing just one's own body. At that point, one is seeing just one's own body as a skeleton, and one remains in contemplation of this as long as possible.[a]

In the second stage, the yoga of someone who is practiced, the meditator extends the scope of the meditation and withdraws it, as before, and then "continues to withdraw the observation so that only the top half of the skull remains as skeleton"; the meditator then focuses on the top half of the skull as long as possible.[b]

The third stage, the yoga of one whose mental contemplation is perfected, begins by repeating the second. The meditator then withdraws the observation "until only a small area remains between the eyebrows." Gedün Lodrö emphasizes the importance of making this area as small as possible to increase the meditator's stability and dexterity. The meditator then focuses on this small area of bone as long as possible.[c]

Love

Gedün Lodrö explains love as the wish "that sentient beings have either temporary or final happiness"; he distinguishes it from compassion, which is the wish that they be free from suffering.[d]

According to Lati Rinpoche, one cultivates love in meditation by taking friends, persons toward whom one is neutral, and enemies, in that order, as objects of observation, and meditating on those objects of

[a] Gedün Lodrö, pp. 98–99.
[b] Ibid., p. 99.
[c] Ibid., p. 99.
[d] Ibid., p. 102.

observation according to either the method of mental engagement of belief or that of taking to mind. Mental engagement of belief involves seeing the sentient beings who are the objects of observation as having already attained happiness. In the method of taking to mind, the meditator first thinks with regard to those persons, "How nice it would be if they possessed happiness free of suffering!"; then, "May they possess happiness free of suffering!"; and finally, "I will cause them to possess happiness free of suffering!" The first type of meditation is placed in the present, whereas the second is directed toward the future.[a]

Gedün Lodrö also explains the system of Chandrakīrti's *Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) "Treatise on the Middle"* and its *Autocommentary,* explicitly Mahāyāna texts outside the usual Indian sources for the presentation of calm abiding, special insight, and the concentrations and formless absorptions. Here the meditator "observe[s] sentient beings regardless of whether they are pleasant, unpleasant[, or neutral]" and cultivates three types of love that correspond to the three types of compassion set forth by Chandrakīrti.[b]

The three types of love, in the order in which they are cultivated, are:

1 Love observing mere sentient beings (*sems can tsam la dmigs pa'i byams pa, *sattvālaṃbanā maitri*)
2 Love observing phenomena (*chos la dmigs pa'i byams pa, *dharmālaṃbanā maitri*)
3 Love observing the unapprehendable (*dmigs med la dmigs pa'i byams pa, *anālaṃbanā maitri*)

All three types of love observe sentient beings, and all three have the subjective aspect of wishing that sentient beings have happiness. Gedün Lodrö describes the first type, love observing mere sentient beings, as "our usual type of love"; the meditator does not observe the sentient beings who are the objects of observation as qualified in any way.[c]

The second type, love observing phenomena, observes sentient beings "within the thought that they are disintegrating moment by moment" and, therefore, are impermanent.[d] It also refers to love observing

[a] *Meditative States,* p. 84. Gedün Lodrö (pp. 102–103) discusses variations of the method of taking to mind, suitable for some practitioners, in which one initially takes an unpleasant or neutral person as the object of observation.

[b] Gedün Lodrö, pp. 103–104.

[c] Ibid., p. 104.

[d] Ibid., p. 103.

sentient beings "who do not substantially exist in that they are not self-sufficient"; here "observing phenomena" is a contraction of "observation of sentient beings who are designated to mere phenomena."[a]

The third type, love observing the unapprehendable, observes "sentient beings who are empty of inherent existence"; here "observing the unapprehendable" is a contraction of "observation of sentient beings qualified by an absence of true existence."[b]

In the second and third types of love, the meditator first develops the realizations that sentient beings are impermanent and do not exist from their own side, and then, within those realizations, cultivates the wish that sentient beings have happiness.[c]

It is important to understand the distinctions between the cultivation of love as an object of observation for purifying behavior in order to achieve calm abiding, and the cultivation of love in other types of meditation. Gedün Lodrö points out that when love is cultivated as an object of observation for purifying behavior, there is no certainty that love will actually be generated in the meditator's mental continuum. This is because the generation of love is not the goal of this meditation; rather, the goal is that the meditator's predominant afflictive emotion, hatred, be sufficiently pacified to allow him or her to proceed with the cultivation of calm abiding, usually by returning to the original object of observation—the body of a Buddha, for example. The pacification of hatred may occur when the meditator has achieved "the same type of wish for happiness in relation to the enemy that he or she already has in relation to friends"—that is, when some degree of even-mindedness has been achieved but before the generation of love.[d]

Thus, although Chandrakīrti's three types of love, in their original context, are all types of great love, each of which "observes *all* sentient beings,"[e] there is no guarantee that great love will be generated when this type of meditation is used in order to pacify hatred as a predominant afflictive emotion preventing the attainment of calm abiding. The

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[a] Tsong-kha-pa, "Illumination of the Thought: An Extensive Explanation of Chandrakīrti's 'Supplement to the Middle Way' " in Tsong-kha-pa, Kensur Lekden, Jeffrey Hopkins, *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1980), p. 121.

[b] Ibid., p. 122; Gedün Lodrö, p. 104.

[c] Gedün Lodrö, p. 104; Tsong-kha-pa, "Illumination of the Thought" in *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism,* p. 122. See also Guy Newland, *Compassion: A Tibetan Analysis; A Buddhist Monastic Textbook* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1984), pp. 58–61.

[d] Gedün Lodrö, pp. 106–107.

[e] Newland, *Compassion: A Tibetan Analysis,* p. 55.

relationship between the cultivation of love in this context and the great love necessary for the generation of the altruistic mind of enlightenment is indefinite. According to Gedün Lodrö,

> It is possible first to develop calm abiding and then to cultivate the seven cause-and-effect quintessential instructions [for generating the altruistic mind of enlightenment]; it is also possible first to cultivate the seven quintessential instructions and then, when one has generated an altruistic mind of enlightenment at the time of the Mahāyāna path of accumulation, to develop calm abiding.[a]

Dependent-arising

Dependent-arising is the object of observation for meditators whose predominant afflictive emotion is obscuration. Lati Rinpoche presents in this context a basic meditation on phenomena as arising from causes and conditions and "creating their own specific effect." He regards this meditation as an effective method for refuting the existence of a permanent self and, therefore, as "one of the best meditations for eventually generating special insight."[b]

Gedün Lodrö's presentation is more complicated. He distinguishes between obscuration as a predominant afflictive emotion that prevents the attainment of calm abiding and ignorance in general and, further, between two general types of ignorance: (1) that which is obscured regarding the cause and effect of actions and (2) that which is obscured regarding reality (*de kho na nyid, tathatā*). He gives as an example of someone who has the first type of ignorance "an ordinary being who, not knowing the virtues to be adopted and the non-virtues to be discarded, engages in activities such as killing and stealing"; that person's ignorance "specifically...consists of not knowing that happiness arises because of having done virtue and suffering, because of non-virtue." Therefore, the person commits non-virtuous actions. Someone who has the second type of ignorance "accumulates actions that will cause rebirth in one of the pleasant migrations in cyclic existence, perhaps thinking, 'I will take rebirth as a god.'"[c]

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[a] Gedün Lodrö, p. 106. Immeasurable (*tshad med, apramāṇa*) love is not discussed in the context of the cultivation of calm abiding because, for the generation of immeasurable love, an actual concentration is necessary (see Denma Lochö Rinpoche in Perfections Transcript, p. 84).

[b] *Meditative States,* p. 85.

[c] Gedün Lodrö, p. 73.

Gedün Lodrö identifies a person in whom obscuration is predominant as someone who has the second type of ignorance, ignorance of reality, which also has two types: it "can relate to either the temporary or the ultimate nature of phenomena." According to Gedün Lodrö, a meditator whose predominant afflictive emotion is obscuration is "obscured with regard to the temporary nature of phenomena"—in this case, the presentation of calm abiding. This person's obscuration "is simply a matter of not having studied," and, therefore, "the antidote is to study about calm abiding"—that is, to "study and contemplate books or listen to a teacher."[a]

A more advanced form of this meditation involves application of the four reasonings to what has been learned. The four reasonings are:

1 Reasoning of the performance of function (*bya ba byed pa'i rigs pa, kāryakāraṇayukti*)
2 Reasoning of nature (*chos nyid kyi rigs pa, dharmatāyukti*)
3 Reasoning of dependence (*ltos pa'i rigs pa, apekṣāyukti*)
4 Logical reasoning (*'thad sgrub kyi rigs pa, upapattisādhanayukti*; literally, "the reasoning that establishes correctness")[b]

Each of these reasonings helps to pacify obscuration. As an example of reasoning of the performance of function, Gedün Lodrö mentions examination of "the activity of the eye consciousness," which is "to see forms." Such reasoning "eliminates obscuration with respect to the three—object, agent, and action (*bya byed las gsum*)."[c]

Gedün Lodrö explains reasoning of nature as "an analysis of the nature of things"; as Denma Lochö Rinpoche points out, "'Nature' here refers to the nature of phenomena as it is known in the world."[d] As examples, Gedün Lodrö refers to common definitions, such as those of wind and fire. Such reasoning helps to dispel obscuration because, by extending it, a meditator can learn "the natures of the afflictive emotions to be abandoned and of the various good qualities to be achieved"—especially, "that adventitious things do not have the nature of good qualities and can be eliminated."[e]

Gedün Lodrö's example of reasoning of dependence is an analysis of how "the person does not exist from his or her own side" but "is

[a] Ibid., pp. 73–74, 109.
[b] Ibid., p. 110.
[c] Ibid., p. 110.
[d] Gedün Lodrö, p. 110; *Meditative States,* p. 155.
[e] Gedün Lodrö, p. 110.

designated in dependence on the aggregates." This analysis helps the meditator realize "that the person is not something able to stand by itself."[a] He mentions reasoning establishing that a pot is impermanent as an example of logical reasoning.[b]

Gedün Lodrö's explanation presents some difficulties. Although, as he remarks, there are many "people who have neither heard nor thought about the cultivation of calm abiding yet who desire to cultivate it,"[c] it is not clear how the study of scriptures and textbooks dealing with calm abiding can be interpreted as a meditation on dependent-arising. Moreover, although each of the examples of the four reasonings can be regarded as, in itself, a meditation on dependent-arising, Gedün Lodrö does not directly apply the four reasonings to what a meditator obscured concerning the presentation of calm abiding learns from study.

Gedün Lodrö also mentions a simplified meditation on the twelve-linked dependent-arising as an antidote to obscuration. In this context, it is a meditation on "the coarser form of the order of the twelve-linked dependent-arising, both the forward progression and the reverse one" that makes it possible for the meditator to decide that the second through twelfth members "all derive from ignorance...in this way obscuration can be eliminated or suppressed."[d] The detailed presentation of the twelve-linked dependent-arising, however, is not one of the objects of observation for purifying behavior but an object of observation for developing skill. (See Chapter 6.)

The divisions of the constituents

There are several presentations of meditation on the divisions of the constituents. Lati Rinpoche explains a meditation on the six constituents—earth (*sa, pṛthivi*), water (*chu, āp*), fire (*me, tejas*), wind (*rlung, vāyu*), space (*nam mkha', ākāśa*), and consciousness (*rnam shes, vijñāna*). Since "persons" are designated based on a composite of these six constituents," the meditator identifies these six in his or her continuum.

> The earth constituent is identified as flesh, skin, bone that which is hard. Water is blood, lymph, and so forth. Fire refers to the heat in one's own continuum. Space refers to the empty

[a] Ibid, p. 111.
[b] Ibid, p. 111.
[c] Ibid., p. 109.
[d] Ibid., p. 111.

> places within the body. Consciousness, in this context, refers to the mind that is connected with this body.[a]

Gedün Lodrö presents a meditation on the eighteen constituents—the six external objects (*yul, viṣaya*), the six sense powers (*dbang po, indriya*), and the six sense consciousnesses:

Six Sense Powers	*Six Objects*	*Six Consciousnesses*
eye sense power	visible forms	eye consciousness
ear sense power	sounds	ear consciousness
nose sense power	odors	nose consciousness
tongue sense power	tastes	tongue consciousness
body sense power	tangible objects	body consciousness
mental sense power	other phenomena	mental consciousness

As is the case with Lati Rinpoche's presentation of six constituents, a composite of these eighteen can be considered as the basis of designation (*gdags gzhi*) of the person.

> The meditator is to contemplate four characteristics in relation to these: (1) the fact that many causes are involved in bringing them about, (2) the place in which the causes were amassed, (3) the person who amassed them, (4) the causes through which the eighteen constituents are enhanced.[b]

There are also several explanations of how meditation on the divisions of the constituents works to break down pride. According to Lati Rinpoche, meditation on the six constituents breaks down pride by fostering "a sense of unpleasantness...with regard to the body."[c] Gedün Lodrö, however, emphasizes the development of an awareness of how little one knows about the mind and body as the meditator analyzes his

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[a] *Meditative States,* p. 86.

[b] Gedün Lodrö, p. 74. Gedün Lodrö also presents a meditation on the aggregates as an antidote to pride; this meditation uses the same method as the meditations on the six and eighteen constituents—namely, the analysis of the person into smaller and smaller parts. In this case, the set of divisions in question is the aggregates. The meditation works by breaking down "the pride that thinks 'I,'" which "is based on the view that the aggregates are a partless whole" (Gedün Lodrö, p. 112). Lati Rinpoche discusses the eighteen constituents in the context of objects of observation for developing skill (*Meditative States,* p. 88).]

[c] *Meditative States,* p. 86.

or her continuum into smaller and smaller parts.[a] The Fourteenth Dalai Lama also gives this explanation.[b]

[a] Gedün Lodrö, p. 112.

[b] *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight*, p. 185.

6 OBJECTS OF OBSERVATION: II

THE EXHALATION AND INHALATION OF THE BREATH

The exhalation and inhalation of the breath is the object of observation for purifying discursiveness (*rnam rtog, vikalpa*) when it is a predominant afflictive emotion preventing the attainment of calm abiding. Technically, *rnam rtog/vikalpa* is coarse conceptuality; according to Gedün Lodrö, it "is included within mental discomfort" (*yid mi bde*, *daurmanasya*).[a] In this context, however, the word *rnam rtog/vikalpa* is translated, for practical purposes, as "discursiveness," since it refers to excessive thinking—that is, mental busyness in which, distracted by a constant stream of thought, the meditator is prevented from focusing on the object of observation.

Gedün Lodrö notes the importance of distinguishing among the various degrees of conceptuality: Although, in general, conceptuality is "abandoned by the path of seeing" with the attainment of the nonconceptual exalted wisdom (*rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes*) directly realizing emptiness, conceptuality is not completely eliminated until the attainment of Buddhahood:[b] "As one goes higher and higher on the path, the conceptuality to be abandoned becomes more and more subtle."[c] In the context of a beginner's cultivation of calm abiding, conceptuality refers merely to "those factors which hinder calm abiding."[d]

Ge-luk presentations do not explain why the exhalation and inhalation of the breath is considered the best object of observation for "purifying" discursiveness. Simply, it works; the choice seems to be an empirical one, based on a long tradition of Buddhist practice. The governing principle seems to be the one cited earlier in the context of the settling down of the winds, the breath meditation done at the beginning of the session (see pages 78ff.)—namely, that in systems asserting six consciousnesses, different conceptual consciousnesses of a similar type cannot operate simultaneously in the mental continuum of one person. Therefore, meditation on the inhalation and exhalation of the breath is able to *pacify* discursiveness, even though it is "not an actual antidote" to discursiveness[e] and, thus, cannot eradicate it. Meditation on the

[a] Gedün Lodrö, pp. 75, 76.
[b] Ibid., p. 77.
[c] Ibid., p. 77.
[d] Ibid., p. 77.
[e] Ibid., p. 75.

exhalation and inhalation of the breath pacifies discursiveness because it causes "all other minds" to "settle down into a neutral (*lung du ma bstan pa*, *avyākṛta*) state"; from that ethically neutral state, "it becomes easy [for the meditator] to develop a virtuous attitude."[a]

As a basic explanation for beginners, Lati Rinpoche gives a simplified presentation of breath meditation similar to the one Gedün Lodrö gives under the topic "the settling down of the winds"[b] (see page 78). However, Gedün Lodrö presents the settling down of the winds as a three-stage process in which the first two stages are watching and counting, whereas Lati Rinpoche distinguishes between watching and counting according to the faculties of the meditator; according to him, meditators of dull faculties have to count, whereas meditators of sharp faculties are able to watch the breath without counting.[c] Both Gedün Lodrö's and Lati Rinpoche's explanations are intended to serve not only as introductory presentations of the Ge-luk system according to their respective colleges' textbooks but also as practical instruction for beginning meditators.

In his more extensive exposition of objects of observation for purifying behavior, Gedün Lodrö follows Jam-yang-shay-pa in distinguishing between the presentations of the two main Indian sources—Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* and Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers*—in addition to the basic presentation for beginners he had already given under "the settling down of the winds."[d] He also follows Jam-yang-shay-pa in regarding both Vasubandhu's and Asaṅga's presentations as internally coherent systems,[e] each of which offers a sequential practical method to the meditator. He discusses Jam-yang-shay-pa's exposition of the presentation of the *Treasury* but not Jam-yang-shay-pa's presentation of the "system" of Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers*, which he considered too long and complicated for a semester-long lecture course; he therefore offered, as a substitute, his earlier presentation of "the settling down of the winds."[f]

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[a] Ibid., p. 40.

[b] Ibid., pp. 34–36.

[c] *Meditative States,* p. 86.

[d] Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po, in his condensation of Jam-yang-shay-pa's text, omits the presentation of both systems, as well as explanations of the remaining objects of observation.

[e] Gedün Lodrö, p. 112; Jam-yang-shay-pa, *Concentrations,* 115.3 (*nyan sa dang mdzod lugs gnyis*).

[f] Gedün Lodrö also presents an alternative explanation of the "system" of the *Treasury*, refuted by Jam-yang-shay-pa, which I will not discuss here (Gedün Lodrö, pp. 113–14).

The Presentation of Vasubandhu's Treasury of Manifest Knowledge

Vasubandhu introduces the topic of meditation on the exhalation and inhalation of the breath with the statement, "Mindfulness of exhalation and inhalation is wisdom" (*Treasury* 6.12a). The *Autocommentary* to this verse notes that mindfulness is equated with wisdom in this context just as it is in the context of the four mindful establishments (*dran pa nye bar bzhag pa, smṛtyupasthāna*)—namely, "because [wisdom] occurs by generation of the force of [mindfulness]."[a] Expounding this passage further, the First Dalai Lama notes in the *Path of Liberation,* his commentary on Vasubandhu's *Autocommentary on the "Treasury of Manifest Knowledge,"* that mindfulness actually precedes wisdom; wisdom is called mindfulness in this context "because when the strength of mindfulness has been developed, [wisdom] engages the object." In his oral commentary on the *Path of Liberation,* Lati Rinpoche adds that "since wisdom occurs due to the power of mindfulness, the effect—wisdom—is given the name of the cause—mindfulness."[b]

Although Ge-luk scholars make these observations when they direct their attention to Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* and its *Autocommentary* as a topic in its own right, they do not appear to apply this analysis to citations and discussions of the same texts in their presentations of breath meditation in the context of the cultivation of calm abiding, as part of the topic of the concentrations and formless absorptions. What they seem to overlook, especially, is the relationship between the *Treasury* and *Autocommentary* passages just cited and the *Treasury* and *Autocommentary* introduction to the presentation of the four mindful establishments (6.14a–b):

> Having attained meditative stabilization by means of those two [that is, meditation on the unpleasant and mindfulness of the exhalation and inhalation of the breath], in order to achieve special insight
>
> > One who has achieved calm abiding
> > Should cultivate mindful establishment
> > For the sake of attaining special insight.[c]

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[a] Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* and *Autocommentary on the "Treasury of Manifest Knowledge,"* 6.12a (P5591, vol. 115, 245.1.6; Shastri, part 3, p. 898; La Vallée Poussin, 16:4, p. 153; Pruden, vol. 3, p. 921).

[b] Aronson, "The Buddhist Path," p. 38.

[c] Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge*, 6.14a–b (P5591, vol. 115, 245.4.7–8; Sha-

Since Ge-luk-pa scholars typically regard calm abiding as a meditative stabilization and special insight as a wisdom consciousness,[a] juxtaposition of the two passages might have suggested that the types of breath meditation discussed in the *Treasury* (and also in Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers*) not only, in their initial stages, serve to pacify discursiveness and calm the mind but can also, in their higher developments, lead to special insight and beyond; for the first passage, with its reference to the four mindful establishments, associates mindfulness and wisdom, and the second passage states that cultivation of the four mindful establishments—preceded, in one mode of practice, by mindfulness of breathing leading to the attainment of calm abiding—leads to the attainment of special insight. But somehow, the juxtaposition was not made.

There may be two reasons for the Ge-luk failure to associate Vasubandhu's and Asaṅga's presentations of the higher stages of breath meditation with special insight. The first reason is that the main Ge-luk presentation of special insight is not drawn from the Indian source texts for the topic of the concentrations and formless absorptions; rather, it is Tsong-kha-pa's Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka presentation, based on Chandrakīrti's *Clear Words,* in the *Middling* and *Great Exposition(s) of the Stages of the Path.* The second reason is that practice traditions related to Vasubandhu's or Asaṅga's presentations of breath meditation were probably not transmitted to Tibet.

The practice tradition suggested by the *Treasury* itself—and also by Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers*—is one in which mindfulness of breathing becomes a basis for inductive reasoning on such topics as the five aggregates; as a result of such inductive reasoning, the meditator progresses through the Hearer paths of preparation, seeing, and meditation. It seems at least possible that both Vasubandhu and Asaṅga presented their respective versions of such a method, analogous to but different from modern Theravāda insight meditation, and that Ge-luk-pa scholars were unable to reconstruct it in the absence of a practice tradition because of the great difference between this type of inductive

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stri, p. 602. See also La Vallée Poussin, vol. 4, p. 158 and Pruden, vol. 3, p. 925. The Tibetan version of the *Autocommentary* is closer to Hsüan Tsang's, as given by La Vallée Poussin and Pruden, than to Shastri's.

[a] Paṇ-chen Sö-nam-drak-pa, "Concentrations," 155b.6–156a.1; Jam-yang-shay-pa (followed by Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po) gives "meditative stabilization" and "wisdom" as the key terms in the definitions of "calm abiding" and "special insight," respectively (Jam-yang-shay-pa, *Concentrations,* 110.6 and 162.3; Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po, *Condensed Statement,* 557.3 and 563.6).

meditative reasoning based on observation and the types of meditative reasoning using consequences (*thal 'gyur, prasaṅga*) or syllogisms (*sbyor ba, prayoga*) with which Ge-luk-pas were familiar.[a] Thus, although Ge-luk-pa scholars give detailed interpretations of the systems of breath meditation set forth in Vasubandhu's and Asaṅga's texts, they may not fully account for the higher stages of breath meditation set forth in those texts.

According to the *Treasury* (6.12d and its *Autocommentary*),[b] meditation on the exhalation and inhalation of the breath has six aspects, or stages:

1 counting (*grangs pa, gaṇanā*)
2 following (*rjes su 'gro ba, anugama*)
3 placement (*'jog ba, sthāna*)
4 investigation (*nye bar rtog pa, upalakṣaṇā*)[c]
5 change (*yongs su sgyur ba, vivartanā*)
6 purifying (*yongs su dag pa, pariśuddhi*)

Following the *Autocommentary* closely, Gedün Lodrö explains the first, **counting**, as "the ability to withdraw the mind inside and count the breaths from one to ten single-pointedly without confusing the order."[d]

The second, **following**, involves observation and recognition of where the breath goes in the body; the meditator examines whether the breath fills all or only part of the body. The *Autocommentary* lists some of the places in the body into which the meditator follows the breath—"the throat, the heart, the navel, the kidneys, the thigh, and so on to the two feet," and "out to a distance of a hand and a cubit."[e] Lati Rinpoche seems to explain this as a *method* of breathing—"breathing in all the way to the feet and breathing out to a distance ranging from a fathom or a hand's span, depending on the strength of

[a] See *Meditation on Emptiness,* pp. 360–61, 431–32, 443–53—and indeed, the entire work is an extended presentation of the use of reasoning in meditation.

[b] Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* and *Autocommentary*, 6.12d (P5591, vol. 115, 245.2.4–245.3.8; Shastri, part 3, pp. 899–900; La Vallée Poussin, vol. 4, pp. 154–56; Pruden, vol. 3, pp. 922–23).

[c] "Investigation" is an English translation of the Tibetan *nye bar rtog pa;* a more literal translation of the Sanskrit *upalakṣaṇā* would be "characterization."

[d] Gedün Lodrö, p. 115.

[e] Vasubandhu, *Autocommentary on the "Treasury of Manifest Knowledge,"* 6.12d (P5591, vol. 115, 245.3.1–4; Shastri, part 3, pp. 899–900; La Vallée Poussin, vol. 4, p. 154; Pruden, vol. 3, p. 922.

the individual"[a]—rather than as an aspect of *mindfulness* of breathing—that is, as part of the process of *observing* the breath. Gedün Lodrö introduces from Tibetan meditational physiology the notion of analyzing the "many coarse and subtle channels (*rtsa, nāḍi*) through which the breath passes,"[b] which is not found at this point in the *Autocommentary*.

As Gedün Lodrö notes, the third way of meditating on the breath, placement, involves examination of "how the breath brings help or harm to the body."[c] Lati Rinpoche, paraphrasing the *Autocommentary,* explains the meditator's method:

> ...one observes the breath abiding like a string for a necklace from the tip of the nose to the bottom of the feet. Then one considers whether this abiding wind is harming or helping the body, or whether it is hot or cold.[d]

Thus, Lati Rinpoche explains placement in terms of observation of the breath, although he had explained following in somewhat different terms.

Gedün Lodrö, developing his earlier reference to analysis of the channels in the body, explains placement as involving the straightening of channels which, up to that time, had been "bent or contracted." According to him,

> The beginning meditator imagines the wind moving through all the coarse and subtle channels of the body and considers if it is helping or harming. Initially this is an aspiration, but with practice unsuitable winds can be stopped and a wind developed through the force of meditation can be directed through the coarse and subtle channels down to the feet. At this time the coarse channels straighten out.[e]

Thus, Gedün Lodrö seems to understand placement as something other than observation; he interprets the *Autocommentary*'s reference to "a [straight] string in a rosary," or necklace, as referring to "a rosary grasped at two ends and pulled taut," and, therefore, as alluding to the process he describes—perhaps because of the implicit analogy between

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[a] Aronson, "The Buddhist Path," p. 39.

[b] Gedün Lodrö, p. 116.

[c] Ibid., p. 116.

[d] Aronson, "The Buddhist Path," p. 39.

[e] Ibid., p. 40; Gedün Lodrö adds that he does not think the Vaibhāṣhikas' method (as he understands it) affects the subtle channels.

the taut rosary and the straightened channels.[a]

All accounts of the fourth way of meditating on the breath, **investigation**, agree that it differs radically from the first three: whereas the first three involve counting and observation of the breath itself, the fourth involves an inductive analysis, based on observation, that leads to the experiential discovery of the five aggregates. According to the *Autocommentary,* which summarizes the meditator's process of analysis and states its conclusion, "'Not only are there just the winds (*vāyu*); there are the four great elements (*mahābhūta*), along with the [secondary] materiality (*rūpa*) resulting from the great elements [and] the minds and mental factors based on these'; thus [the meditator] investigates [and characterizes] (*upalakṣayati*) the five aggregates."[b]

Gedün Lodrö notes that the first three and the last three meditations on the breath differ in function, but it appears that neither he nor Lati Rinpoche recognizes that the fourth meditation involves experiential discovery through inductive rather than deductive analysis. Rather, Gedün Lodrö suggests that "the first three...are primarily for beginners attempting to achieve or deepen calm abiding," whereas "the last three meditations are primarily used for developing proficiency in the calm abiding one has already achieved or for attaining special insight"; his categories overlap, since he also suggests that "the second and third can also be used by those with calm abiding for cultivating special insight."[c] Summarizing and extending the brief analysis given in the *Autocommentary*, Gedün Lodrö explains that the first "three ways of meditating on the breath all involve meditation on the breath itself, which is a tangible object (*reg bya, spraṣṭavya*)," whereas the fourth involves "putting aside the examination of [breath as] wind" and investigating "what is and is not of the nature of the five aggregates in relation to wind."[d] Lati Rinpoche, who also briefly summarizes the analysis given in the *Autocommentary,* notes that "when considering the breath in the above way, one is investigating its mode of existence."[e] However, he too does not seem to consider the possibility that the meditator discovers the mode of existence of the breath through an investigation begun inductively through mindfulness.

According to the *Autocommentary,* the fifth stage of mindfulness of

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[a] Ibid., p. 40.

[b] Vasubandhu, *Autocommentary on the "Treasury of Manifest Knowledge,"* 6.12d (P5591, vol. 115, 245.3.4–8; Shastri, p. 900; La Vallée Poussin, vol. 4, p. 156; Pruden, vol. 3, p. 923).

[c] Aronson, "The Buddhist Path," p. 40.

[d] Gedün Lodrö, pp. 116.

[e] Aronson, "The Buddhist Path," p. 40.

breathing, **change**, involves "modifying the mind that has wind as its object of observation," so that the meditator "practices with respect to higher and higher virtuous roots up to the supreme [mundane] qualities" (*'jig rten pa'i chos kyi mchog, laukikāgryadharma*) of the path of preparation.[a] The *Autocommentary*'s descriptions of the fifth and sixth stages are brief and do not give specific practical instructions or describe the meditator's actual procedure in detail. Thus, the literal wording of the text, especially with regard to the fifth stage, is ambiguous. It can be read to imply that the meditator—who, up to that point, had been observing the breath and, on the basis of that observation, drawing conclusions concerning the aggregates—either changes the object of observation in some way, or attains the four levels of the path of preparation, or both.

Lati Rinpoche's interpretation includes both meanings:

> "Change" involves the transformation of the object of observation from the breath to the paths of preparation. One now observes the heat stage of the path of preparation through to the stage of highest mundane phenomena..., changing the mind into the four levels of the path of preparation.[b]

Similarly, in his interpretation of the sixth stage of mindfulness of breathing, **purification**, Lati Rinpoche states that "one transforms the mind into the paths of seeing and meditation."[c]

Gedün Lodrö, however, emphasizes the change of object of observation, both in his lectures on calm abiding and in his comments on the sixth chapter of the First Dalai Lama's *Path of Liberation.*[d] Although he explains, in the latter context, that observation of the path of preparation by someone who has attained calm abiding can lead to attainment of the heat level of the path of preparation and, subsequently, to attainment of its remaining levels—peak, forbearance, and supreme mundane qualities—he seems to imply that, if a meditator attains the path of preparation during the fifth stage of breath meditation, or the paths of seeing and meditation during the sixth, those attainments are the successful result of having taken those paths as objects of observation: "while one contemplates the paths as objects of observation, one

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[a] Vasubandhu, *Autocommentary on the "Treasury of Manifest Knowledge,"* 6.12d (P5591, vol. 115, 245.3.6–7; Shastri, p. 600; La Vallée Poussin, vol. 4, p. 156; Pruden, vol. 3, p. 923).

[b] Aronson, "The Buddhist Path," p. 40.

[c] Ibid., p. 42.

[d] Gedün Lodrö, p. 117; Aronson, "The Buddhist Path," pp. 40–41.

is also subjectively cultivating them."[a]

The two contemporary Tibetan commentators, Lati Rinpoche and Gedün Lodrö, explain the first three stages of Vasubandhu's system in practical terms, for the most part, since the first two, especially, are practices a beginning meditator might use to overcome discursiveness, and the third still involves direct observation of the breath, although it also involves drawing conclusions from that observation. However, they do not state that, in the last three, the meditator progresses through the Hearer paths of preparation, seeing, and meditation by using mindfulness of breathing and inductive reasoning based on such mindfulness, even though Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* and its *Autocommentary* explicitly lay out such a correspondence.

Moreover, neither scholar posits a relationship between the attainment of the heat stage of the path of preparation at the beginning of the fifth stage of Vasubandhu's system of breath meditation with the attainment of special insight. Although such a correlation would have been consistent with the synthetic system-building methods of Ge-luk religious scholarship, and although Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po, in his *Condensed Statement,* twice states the commonly held Ge-luk assertion that the attainment of the heat stage of the path of preparation and the attainment of special insight are simultaneous, he does so only in the context of meditation on emptiness or selflessness as such meditation was understood by Ge-luk-pas.[b] It appears that neither Ge-luk-pa textbook writers nor modern scholars such as Lati Rinpoche and Gedün Lodrö were in a position to conclude that the first moment of the fifth stage of Vasubandhu's system of breath meditation coincides with the attainment of special insight and that, therefore, the first four stages must be a method for cultivating special insight.

The Presentation of Asaṅga's Grounds of Hearers

Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers* has been, for the most part, unexplored by Western scholarship; an examination of the theories of meditation and practical instructions set forth in it would require a separate study. It

[a] Aronson, "The Buddhist Path," p. 41.

[b] Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po, *Condensed Statement,* 552.2 ("the attainment of the wisdom arisen from meditating on [emptiness], of the special insight on [emptiness], and of the heat [stage of the] Mahāyāna path of preparation are simultaneous") and 575.6 ("a state arisen from meditation which analyzes the object, selflessness; the mental contemplation [arisen from] belief; [and] the heat stage of the Hearer path of preparation...are attained simultaneously").

seems possible, however, that Asaṅga has collected in *Grounds of Hearers* versions of several meditation techniques better known to Westerners from Theravāda texts and modern systems of practice, and that Tibetan commentators, lacking such practice traditions, developed theoretical interpretations based solely on the descriptions in Asaṅga's text. Comparisons with analogous Theravāda presentations suggest that even Asaṅga's accounts of Hearer practices may not have been based entirely on practice traditions.

Although Jam-yang-shay-pa and Gedün Lodrö refer to the "system" of Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers,* it is possible that Asaṅga's descriptions of various practices of breath meditation represent neither a single system nor a progressive sequence and that the extreme complexity of Jam-yang-shay-pa's explanation of Asaṅga's presentation may stem from his trying to find internal coherence in a section of Asaṅga's text that may not have been intended to have it. Lacking a Tibetan practice tradition for most of these meditations, Jam-yang-shay-pa seems to have posited or constructed relationships among the headings and subheads of Asaṅga's lists—a hypothetical order of practice that, in some cases, does not agree with what is known about analogous meditations from Theravāda sources.

Jam-yang-shay-pa presents Asaṅga's "system" of meditation on the exhalation and inhalation of the breath under five major headings, all of which represent modes of purification:

1 thorough purification through counting
2 thorough purification through engagement in the aggregates
3 thorough purification through engagement in dependent-arising
4 thorough purification through engagement in the [four] truths
5 thorough purification through sixteen aspects[a]

According to Jam-yang-shay-pa these five modes of purification follow each other sequentially. His description of the first suggests that counting the breaths, in itself, can lead to the attainment of calm abiding, and it is clear from his descriptions and supporting citations from Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers* how the second, third, and fourth meditations develop from conclusions reached by the meditator in the preceding meditation as the result of inductive reasoning based on observation.

Thorough purification through counting. In thorough purification through counting—which, despite differences in the methods

[a] Jam-yang-shay-pa, *Concentrations,* 116.1.

presented by the two texts, corresponds to the category "counting" in the system of Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge*—the meditator observes and then counts exhalations and inhalations. The exhalation and inhalation can be counted separately, or the two can be counted as a unit. In either case, the meditator counts from one to ten and then backward from ten to one; Jam-yang-shay-pa makes the interesting practical point that the forward and backward sequence must always alternate, since "if [a meditator] counts, for instance, 'one' immediately after 'ten,' [his or her] meditative stabilization becomes disturbed."[a] Jam-yang-shay-pa cites Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers* as stating that, by merely counting in this way, a meditator can generate physical and mental pliancy and calm abiding. Thus, it appears that thorough purification through counting can, in itself, lead to the attainment of calm abiding, independently of the other four modes of thorough purification. Jam-yang-shay-pa further notes that, according to Asaṅga, meditators of dull faculties count the breath, whereas those of sharp faculties direct the mind to the breath and watch it.

Thorough purification through engagement in the aggregates. Engagement in the aggregates is done after counting. "Engagement" refers to a process of inductive reasoning, based on previous observation of the breath, in which the meditator, examining mindfulness of the exhalation and inhalation of the breath in terms of the aggregates, thinks:

> The basis of the breath, the body, is form; mindfulness—that is, the mindfulness of the going and coming of the breath—and the experience [of the going and coming of the breath] are feeling; the knowing of all those is discrimination; mindfulness of, attention to, and knowledge of [the going and coming of the breath] are compositional factors; and the mind (*sems, citta*) and intellect (*yid, manas*) at that time are consciousness (*rnam shes, vijñāna*).[b]

"Thorough purification" refers to "abiding many times in having engaged in that."[c]

Although Jam-yang-shay-pa does not use the term "analytical meditation," "engagement" in this context could be described as an analytical meditation if the meaning of "analytical meditation" were

[a] Ibid., 116.3–4.

[b] Ibid., 116.6–6.

[c] Ibid., 117.1, with citation from Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers.*

extended to include inductive reasoning based on observation in addition to the usual reasoning using syllogisms and consequences.

Thorough purification through engagement in dependent-arising. Jamyang-shay-pa explains engagement in dependent-arising as a meditation that follows engagement in the aggregates and that involves research into a series of causes; working backward, the meditator traces the cause of the exhalation and inhalation of the breath to ignorance. This meditation, however, differs from both the simplified meditations on dependent-arising suggested, under objects of observation for purifying behavior, for meditators whose predominant afflictive emotion is obscuration, on the one hand, and the detailed presentation of the twelve-linked dependent-arising included among the objects of observation for developing skill, on the other. Specifically, the meditator determines that the body and mind—that is, the physical and mental aggregates, which the meditator had analyzed in the previous stage of the meditation—are the cause of the going and coming of the breath; that the life faculty (*srog gi dbang po, jivitendriya*) is the cause of the body and mind; that former actions, or compositional factors (*sngon gyi las sam 'du byed*),[a] are the cause of the life faculty, and that ignorance is the cause of former actions, or compositional factors. The meditator then reviews the series in forward progression, beginning with ignorance, and concludes:

> By the ceasing of ignorance, compositional factors cease; by the ceasing of [compositional factors], the life faculty ceases; by the ceasing of [the life faculty], the afflicted body and mind cease; by the ceasing of [the afflicted body and mind], the exhalation and inhalation of the breath cease.[b]

Purification, again, is explained as the result of the meditator's having repeated and "abided in" the above meditation many times.[c]

Thorough purification through engagement in the [four] truths. In thorough purification through engagement in the [four] truths, the meditator comes to recognize the relationship between the dependent-arisings analyzed during the previous meditation and the four truths, beginning with **true sufferings** (*sdug bsngal bden pa, duḥkhasatya*). The meditator thinks:

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[a] Ibid., 117.4. Hopkins has remarked in conversation that "or" (*sam*) is appositive here: these are equivalent, not alternative, terms.

[b] Ibid., 117.5–6.

[c] Ibid., 117.6.

> These dependent-arisings which are the breath, and so forth, are impermanent. Since they are impermanent, they arise and disintegrate. Therefore, they have the qualities of birth, aging, sickness, and death. Since they have the qualities of these four, they are [cases of] suffering and, therefore, are selfless, without independence, and without an owner.[a]

The meditation on the second of the four truths, **true origins** (*kun 'byung bden pa, samudayasatya*), involves the thought, "All those [things] that are the sicknesses and effects of these sufferings arise from the causal condition which is cyclic existence." The meditation on **true cessations** (*'gog pa'i bden pa, nirodhasatya*), the third of the four truths, involves the thought, "The abandonment of cyclic existence, which is the causal condition of suffering, is peaceful and auspiciously high." The meditation on **true paths** (*lam gyi bden pa, mārgasatya*) involves the thought, "Having known and seen in that way, when I abide many times in that way, I will abandon craving."[b] Again, as with the previous "engagements," purification is explained as the result of the meditator's having repeated and "abided in" the above meditations many times.[c]

Jam-yang-shay-pa, citing Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers*, explains that at this point the meditator has manifestly realized (*mngon par rtogs pa*)—that is, directly realized (*mngon sum du rtogs pa*)—the four truths; such a meditator "has abandoned the afflictive emotions to be abandoned by [the path of] seeing."[d] Jam-yang-shay-pa implies here that the meditator has attained the path of seeing. However, he has not yet identified an earlier point in these thorough purifications at which the meditator attained the path of preparation, which precedes the path of seeing and which, as was mentioned above (page 113), is attained simultaneously with special insight. Thus, he has not identified the point in these thorough purifications at which the meditator attains special insight, or even acknowledged that they might be a means of attaining it. Nevertheless, since he has identified the end of thorough purification through counting as the point at which the meditator attains calm abiding, the attainment of special insight probably occurs at the end of either thorough purification through engagement in the aggregates or thorough purification through engagement in dependent-arising, both

[a] Ibid., 118.2-3.

[b] Ibid., 118.3–4.

[c] Ibid., 118.5.

[d] Ibid., 118.7–119.2.

of which are the result of reasoning, albeit inductive reasoning based on observation.

Thorough purification through sixteen aspects. Having identified the point at which the meditator attains the path of seeing, Jam-yang-shay-pa, still following Asaṅga closely, asserts that the meditator undertakes the next thorough purification listed—the thorough purification through sixteen aspects—in order to abandon "the mere afflictive emotions to be abandoned by [the path of] meditation."[a] Contrary to the expectations of readers familiar with Ge-luk presentations of the sixteen aspects, or attributes, of the four noble truths—based on Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* (7.13a) and its *Autocommentary*[b]—Jam-yang-shay-pa "unpacks," numbers, and summarizes Asaṅga's presentation of the sixteen aspects referred to in this context as follows:

> ...a yogi who has done the purification through engagement in the truths, in order to purify mainly the afflictive emotions to be purified by [the path of] meditation, views and trains thinking (1) "Exhalation, inhalation," with respect to the exhalation and inhalation of the breath while being mindful [of it], and similarly views, thinking, "Exhalation, inhalation," (2) with respect to exhalation and inhalation as long breaths, (3) with respect to exhalation and inhalation as short breaths, (4) with respect to exhalation and inhalation upon having correctly experienced the entire body, (5) with respect to exhalation and inhalation upon having thoroughly purified the workings (*'du byed*) of the body, (6) with respect to exhalation and inhalation upon having correctly experienced joy, (7) with respect to exhalation and inhalation upon having correctly experienced bliss, (8) with respect to exhalation and inhalation upon having thoroughly purified the workings of the mind, (9) with respect to exhalation and inhalation upon having correctly experienced the mind, (10) with respect to exhalation and inhalation when the mind has thorough and strong joy, (11) with

[a] Ibid., 119.2.

[b] Vasubandhu, *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* and *Autocommentary*, 7.13a (P5591, vol. 115, 262.3.7–263.2.4; Shastri, part 4, pp. 1056–62; La Vallée Poussin 16:5, pp. 30–39; Pruden, vol. 4, pp. 1110–1116). For expositions in English of Ge-luk presentations, see *Meditation on Emptiness,* pp. 285–96; Geshe Lhundup Sopa and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Cutting Through Appearances: Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1989), pp. 203–204; Lati Rinpoche in *Meditative States,* pp. 134–43.

> respect to exhalation and inhalation upon having set the mind in meditative stabilization, (12) with respect to exhalation and inhalation upon the mind's being released, (13) with respect to exhalation and inhalation upon viewing impermanence, (14) with respect to exhalation and inhalation upon viewing abandonment, (15) with respect to exhalation and inhalation upon viewing separation from desire, (16) with respect to exhalation and inhalation upon viewing cessation; [thus] there are sixteen [aspects].[a]

To support this way of identifying the sixteen, he cites in abridged form, with an ellipsis (*zhes pa nas*) indicating the middle, a passage from Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers* that begins, "What are the sixteen aspects? They are these: (1) When one inhales while being mindful, one trains thinking, 'I am inhaling while being mindful,'" and that ends, "When, viewing cessation, one exhales, one trains thinking, 'I am viewing cessation and exhaling.'"[b] In itself, the abridged citation suggests that, in Jam-yang-shay-pa's opinion, Asaṅga has identified the first item after the question as the first in the list of sixteen; Jam-yang-shay-pa's manner of citing the passage is intended to imply that the first and last items of his own list agree with Asaṅga's first and last items and that, therefore, Jam-yang-shay-pa has also interpreted the rest of the passage correctly.

Comparison with the *Ānāpānasatisutta,* however, and with Buddhaghosa's presentation of mindfulness of breathing in the *Path of Purification,* which is based on it, suggests (1) that thorough purification through sixteen aspects is a method of cultivating the four mindful establishments; (2) that Asaṅga's list, at least according to the Peking edition of *Grounds of Hearers,* agrees, for the most part, with Buddhaghosa's citation of the *Ānāpānasatisutta* and, like it, consists of seventeen items—a general description of mindfulness of breathing followed by the list of sixteen—but that Asaṅga does not explicitly identify the series as a method of cultivating the four mindful establishments; (3) that the passage from Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers* may be a citation or paraphrase of an unidentified scripture related to that cited in Buddhaghosa's *Path of Purification;* and (4) that Jam-yang-shay-pa's list differs from the Pāli presentations and Asaṅga's in slight but significant ways that prevent Jam-yang-shay-pa from recognizing the boundaries of the four mindful establishments in his own list of sixteen.

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[a] Jam-yang-shay-pa, *Concentrations,* 119.5–120.3.

[b] Ibid., 120.3–5; P5537, vol. 110, 78.5.3–79.1.7.

The table on the following page compares Jam-yang-shay-pa's presentation of thorough purification through sixteen aspects, based on his own reading of Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers,*[a] with both the Tibetan text of the source passage in the Peking edition of Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers*[b] and the *Ānāpānasatisutta* (*Majjhima Nikāya,* 118), as cited by Buddhaghosa as the basis of his presentation of mindfulness of breathing in the *Path of Purification.*[c]

[a] Ibid., 119.5–120.3.

[b] P5537, vol. 110, 78.5.3–79.1.7.

[c] *Ānāpānasati-sutta*, in *The Middle Length Sayings* (*Majjhima-Nikāya*), trans. I. B. Horner (Pali Text Society: London: Luzac, 1967), vol. 3, 125–26; Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification* (*visuddhimagga*), 8.145; Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification,* trans. Ñyāṇamoli [Berkeley and London: Shambhala, 1976], vol. 1, pp. 285–86.

Chart 1: Mindfulness of Breathing in Sixteen Aspects: Three Presentations

Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers*	JYSP's *Concentrations*	*Ānāpānasati-sutta*
0. When one inhales while being mindful...when one exhales while being mindful	1. Thinking, "Exhalation, inhalation," with respect to the exhalation and inhalation of the breath while being mindful [of it]	0. Just mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out
1. long breaths	2. with respect to...long breaths	**[Contemplation of the body]** 1. long breaths
2. short breaths	3. with respect to...short breaths	2. short breaths
3. upon having correctly experienced the entire body	4. upon...having correctly experienced the entire body	3. experiencing the entire body
4. upon having thoroughly purified the workings of the body	5. upon having thoroughly purified the workings of the body	4. calming the workings of the body
5. upon having correctly experienced joy	6. upon having correctly experienced joy	**[Contemplation of feelings]** 5. experiencing joy
6. upon having correctly experienced bliss	7. upon having correctly experienced bliss,	6. experiencing bliss
7. upon having correctly experienced the workings of the mind		7. experiencing the workings of the mind
8. upon having thoroughly purified the workings of the mind	8. upon having thoroughly purified the workings of the mind	8. calming the workings of the mind
9. upon having correctly experienced the mind	9. upon having correctly experienced the mind	**[Contemplation of the mind]** 9. experiencing the mind
10. when the mind has thorough and strong joy	10. when the mind has thorough and strong joy	10. gladdening the mind
11. upon having set the mind in meditative stabilization	11. upon having set the mind in meditative stabilization	11. stabilizing the mind
12. upon the mind's being released	12. upon the mind's being released	12. releasing the mind
13. upon viewing impermanence	13. upon viewing impermanence	**[Contemplation of mind-objects]** 13. contemplating impermanence
14. upon viewing abandonment	14. upon viewing abandonment	14. contemplating separation from desire
15. upon viewing separation from desire	15. upon viewing separation from desire	15. contemplating cessation
16. upon viewing cessation	16. upon viewing cessation	16. contemplating renunciation

Asaṅga—like Buddhaghosa's Pāli scriptural source, the *Ānāpānasatisutta*—presents a series of seventeen items: a topic head giving the general characteristics of mindfulness of the exhalation and inhalation of the breath and sixteen subheads under it that divide evenly into four, corresponding to the four mindful establishments. The *Ānāpānasatisutta* itself goes on to identify this series of sixteen as a method of cultivating the four mindful establishments.[a] Asaṅga, however, does not identify the series in this way. Moreover, Jam-yang-shay-pa interprets the topic sentence as the first of the sixteen aspects and omits the seventh of Asaṅga's and the *Ānāpānasatisutta*'s series, mindfulness of exhalation and inhalation upon having correctly experienced the workings of the mind. Since Jam-yang-shay-pa's citation gives only the beginning and end of the passage, with an ellipsis in the middle, there is no way of knowing whether he misread Asaṅga or was working from a corrupt text. It is clear from the extensive debates concerning the level of the mental contemplation of individual knowledge of the character, which revolve around the presence or absence of the negative (*ma*), that several versions of the Tibetan translation of Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers* existed in Tibet even in Tsong-kha-pa's time and that some of them were textually corrupt.[b] Moreover, Jam-yang-shay-pa's experience with lists in Indian commentaries would have led him to expect that the topic sentence "What are the sixteen aspects? They are these:" would immediately introduce a list consisting of sixteen items and not seventeen items, the first of which is a second topic sentence introducing the actual list of sixteen; if Asaṅga is citing or paraphrasing a scriptural passage similar to the one in the Pāli *Ānāpānasatisutta* instead of giving his own list, he gives no indication that he is doing so. In either case, the result of Jam-yang-shay-pa's misreading of the key passage in Asaṅga's text is that he does not recognize in it a way of cultivating the four mindful establishments and, therefore, is prevented from drawing any conclusions that might have been drawn from such a recognition.

Jam-yang-shay-pa's explanation of the passage also presents problems. According to him, Asaṅga identifies two types of meditators who

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[a] *Ānāpānasatisutta*, in *The Middle Length Sayings* (*Majjhima-Nikāya*), trans. I. B. Horner, vol. 3, p. 127.

[b] See page 206. The only extant Sanskrit manuscript, discovered in the 1930s, is also corrupt and, moreover, incomplete. (Alex Wayman, *Analysis of the Śrāvakabhūmi Manuscript,* University of California Publications in Classical Philology, vol. 17 [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961], p. 1; *Śrāvakabhūmi of Ācārya Asaṅga,* ed. by Karunesha Shukla, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, vol. 14 [Patna: K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1973], pp. xx–xxii.)

cultivate the thorough purification through sixteen aspects—(1) "meditators on...[the first three of] the sixteen mindfulnesses of exhalation and inhalation of the breath that are explicitly taught on this occasion" and (2) "meditators who have previously counted the exhalation and inhalation of the breath [before they reach the level of these sixteen practices]."[a] In brief, he identifies the first type of meditator as "necessarily a learner Superior"—that is, someone who has attained the path of seeing but has not yet attained the path of no more learning (*mi slob lam, aśaikṣamārga*), in this case, Foe Destroyerhood, since Asaṅga's text is called *Grounds of Hearers*—and the second type of meditator as "necessarily someone on the path of accumulation and below."[b]

Jam-yang-shay-pa's interpretation appears to be inconsistent with the earlier passage introducing the list of sixteen, in which Jam-yang-shay-pa had identified only the first type of meditator; he begins the earlier passage, "a yogi who has done the purification through engagement in the truths ..., in order to purify mainly the afflictive emotions to be purified by [the path of] meditation, views and trains thinking...."[c] This is the meditator identified earlier (see page 118), who had previously directly realized the four truths and attained the path of seeing and who is undertaking the thorough purification through sixteen aspects on the path of meditation in order to abandon the afflictive emotions to be abandoned on that path; having attained the path of seeing, such a meditator is a learner Superior.

Jam-yang-shay-pa's reason for distinguishing here between these two types of meditators who undertake the thorough purification through sixteen aspects is that

> (1) a meditator on [the sixteen mindfulnesses of exhalation and inhalation of the breath] that are explicitly taught on this occasion is necessarily a learner Superior and, however low he or she may be, must definitely be someone who has entered the path and (2) a meditator who has previously [counted the exhalation and inhalation of the breath] is someone who has not entered the path and, however high he or she may be, is necessarily someone on the path of accumulation and below.[d]

As Hopkins points out, the wording of Jam-yang-shay-pa's reason is

[a] Jam-yang-shay-pa, *Concentrations,* 120.5–6.

[b] Ibid., 120.6–7.

[c] Ibid., 118.7–119.2.

[d] Ibid., 120.7–7.

atypical since, once a debate text states that something is *necessarily* (*khyab pa*) the case, it is very unusual to qualify the statement in a manner suggesting that there may be exceptions. Moreover, the terms of the qualification are also odd, since, as Hopkins also points out, there is no doubt that a learner Superior "must definitely be someone who has entered the path." Hopkins suggests that Jam-yang-shay-pa is implicitly making a concession; it is as though he had said, "Even if you do not agree with me that such a meditator is necessarily a learner Superior, at least you have to admit that such a meditator has definitely entered the path." Hopkins also notes that the second part of the reason is done the same way and is also very strange, since someone on the path of accumulation *has* entered the path and cannot be "someone who has not entered the path."[a]

Paraphrasing his citation from Asaṅga, Jam-yang-shay-pa explains that the first type of meditator

> has definitely attained the four mindful establishments and, hence, is someone who has entered the path; not only that: he or she is posited as a person who, having directly realized the four truths, makes effort in order to abandon the remaining thorough enwrapments.[b]

He explains the second type of meditator with reference to the three divisions of the path of accumulation: according to him,

> before entering the path and on the lesser and middling path of accumulation, certain persons who have very great predominant discursiveness purify it in meditation by counting the breath, but since such a fault of discursiveness does not occur on the greater path of accumulation and above, there is no need for meditation on [counting the breath]. This is because in the period of the greater path of accumulation, anyone of any of the three vehicles has necessarily attained calm abiding. This is because, thereby, (a) the attainment, in dependence on calm abiding, of a state arisen from meditation by means of analytical meditation on either of the two selflessnesses, (b) the attainment of such special insight, and (c) the attainment of the path of preparation are simultaneous.[c]

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[a] Jeffrey Hopkins in conversation.

[b] Jam-yang-shay-pa, *Concentrations,* 120.7–121.1.

[c] Ibid., 121.3–5.

Here, indirectly, he finally identifies the point at which special insight is attained in this type of meditation and implicitly admits that the meditator in question will attain it. However, he does not identify the practice by which *this* meditator attains it. He names the practice his own system identifies as the means of attaining special insight and implies that, in order to have attained special insight, this meditator must have engaged in that practice, but the passage from Asaṅga suggests that a meditator who cultivates the thorough purification through sixteen aspects is not engaged in "analytical meditation on either of the two selflessnesses" as Jam-yang-shay-pa understands it but, rather, in a type of "analytical meditation" consisting of inductive reasoning based on observation.

It is possible that the awkward qualifications in Jam-yang-shay-pa's reasoning may result from some suspicion on Jam-yang-shay-pa's part that the traditions included in his own system did not fully account for the distinctions in Asaṅga's text. According to Buddhaghosa, mindfulness of breathing with sixteen aspects has two benefits: (1) it calms the mind by stopping discursiveness, and (2) it leads to realization of the four mindful establishments and to insight; he remarks also that the first three groups of four are relevant to both serenity and insight, whereas the last applies only to insight.[a] Thus, comparison with Theravāda sources suggests the possibility that Asaṅga's and Jam-yang-shay-pa's two types of meditators may correspond, respectively, to followers of the paths of serenity and bare insight in modern Theravāda practice, and that Jam-yang-shay-pa had no information concerning the type of "analytical meditation" based on observation, described in Theravāda sources, from which the latter is derived and which it isolates as a practice vehicle in its own right.

Conclusion. It is clear that, according to both Vasubandhu and Asaṅga, and according to the Ge-luk-pa textbook writers and scholars discussed here, the early stages of breath meditation can "purify" discursiveness and lead to the attainment of calm abiding. Both Vasubandhu and Asaṅga give practical instructions for this type of meditation, as do Lati Rinpoche and Gedün Lodrö. The status of the later stages of breath meditation is less clear, however. From one point of view, their inclusion among objects of observation for purifying discursiveness may be regarded as yet another instance of the Ge-luk presentation of all objects

[a] Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification* (*visuddhimagga*), 8.238–39, 237, citing the *Ānāpānasatisutta*; Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification,* trans. Ñyāṇamoli (Berkeley and London: Shambhala, 1976), vol. 1, p. 315.

of observation under the heading "calm abiding" even though—like some of the four types of object of observation in the classic layout derived from Asaṅga, Kamalashīla, and the *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought*—they may be objects of observation for the attainment of special insight or higher stages of the path (see page 81). The presentation of the later stages is complicated, however, by the virtual omission, in the Ge-luk presentations considered here, of any clear identification of the point at which special insight is attained, or even of any acknowledgment that special insight *can* be attained by this type of meditation, despite references to the path of preparation in the Indian sources. This omission may be due to several causes:

1. Limitations imposed by the transmission of the Indian source texts to Tibet without practice traditions based on those texts, and without knowledge of other Buddhist cultures in which such practices existed.
2. Non-application to the topic of the concentrations and formless absorptions of Vasubandhu's equation of mindfulness and wisdom in the *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* and its *Autocommentary*, as well as his reference to the four mindful establishments as an example—points Ge-luk writers and contemporary scholars discuss when they study the *Treasury* as a topic in its own right; given the nature of Ge-luk system-building, it seems possible that, if they had been able to apply this point to Vasubandhu's presentation of breath meditation, they might have applied it to Asaṅga's as well.
3. Non-recognition of methods of attaining special insight outside the system of Chandrakīrti and, to a lesser extent in the context of the concentrations and formless absorptions, outside those mentioned in the *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought* and Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers*—especially a method that relies on inductive reasoning based on observation.

Objects of observation for [developing] skill

The objects of observation for developing skill are: the aggregates, the constituents, the twelve spheres, the twelve-linked dependent-arising, and the appropriate and the inappropriate (*gnas dang gnas ma yin pa, sthānāsthāna*). Meditation on them involves the detailed analysis, in the meditation session, of Manifest Knowledge topics previously studied outside the context of meditation. Although Lati Rinpoche's summary of each topic ends with advice to the meditator to stabilize on what has

been understood through analysis and thereby achieve calm abiding,[a] according to Gedün Lodrö, objects of observation for developing skill are in general not used for the attainment of calm abiding but to strengthen and consolidate calm abiding already attained and enable the meditator to begin the cultivation of special insight.[b] Despite Lati Rinpoche's advice concerning the use of these objects of observation to achieve calm abiding, it is clear—from his identification of what skill in each of these objects of observation consists of—that he, like Gedün Lodrö, also regards the objects of observation for developing skill as preparatory to the cultivation of special insight, since all of them, according to his presentation, lead to realization of the non-existence of a partless, independent person and to an understanding of causality.[c]

The topics themselves are discussed at length in the Manifest Knowledge texts—Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* and its *Autocommentary* and Asaṅga's *Summary of Manifest Knowledge*—and in Ge-luk monastic textbooks based on them. Since Ge-luk presentations of these topics are discussed in detail in English in Hopkins' *Meditation on Emptiness,* I will merely sketch them briefly here, mainly from Lati Rinpoche's concise oral presentation.

The Aggregates

Lati Rinpoche explains meditation on the five aggregates in this context as recognition of these five—forms (*gzugs, rūpa*), feelings (*tshor ba, vedanā*), discriminations (*'du shes, saṃjñā*), compositional factors (*'du byed, saṃskāra*), and consciousnesses (*rnam shes, vijñāna*). Skill in the aggregates is the understanding "that there is no partless, independent person apart from these aggregates."[d]

The Constituents

According to Lati Rinpoche, meditation on the constituents in this context involves the analysis in meditation of the eighteen constituents for the sake of acquiring skill in them. The eighteen constituents are the six sense powers—the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mental sense powers—the six consciousnesses corresponding to these sense powers, and the six objects of those consciousnesses. The meditator considers

[a] *Meditative States,* pp. 87–90.

[b] Gedün Lodrö, p. 139.

[c] *Meditative States,* pp. 88–90.

[d] Ibid., p. 88.

the relationship of each of these to the other, especially their causes and conditions. Skill in the constituents is attained when the meditator understands "that there is no separate creator of these, such as a substantially existent (*rdzas su yod pa, dravyasat*) self."[a]

The Twelve Spheres

Lati Rinpoche identifies the twelve spheres as the six sense powers and the six sense objects included within the eighteen constituents; he notes that "through rearrangement of these, all phenomena can be included in the twelve [spheres]." The meditator comes to understand that the sense powers and their objects are in the relationship of user and used and that pleasant, painful, and neutral feelings are produced as a result of this use. Again, skill is attained when the meditator realizes that "there is no substantially existent person separate from these."[b]

The Twelve-Linked Dependent-Arising

According to Lati Rinpoche, skill in dependent-arising involves understanding of the causes and conditions that produce a lifetime in cyclic existence (*'khor ba, saṃsāra*); the fundamental cause is ignorance (*ma rig pa, avidyā*), which is followed by the remaining eleven links—compositional action (*'du byed kyi las, saṃskārakarma*), consciousness (*rnam shes, vijñāna*), name and form (*ming gzugs, nāmarūpa*), spheres (*skye mched, āyatana*), contact (*reg pa, sparśa*), feeling (*tshor ba, vedanā*), attachment (*sred pa, tṛṣṇa*), grasping (*len pa, upādāna*), existence (*srid pa, bhava*), birth (*skye ba, jāti*), and aging and/or death (*rga shi, jarāmaraṇa*). In his more detailed presentation, Gedün Lodrö identifies this as the forward progression and adds that the meditator can also become skilled in the reverse progression and in the various presentations of "how one person cycles in cyclic existence by way of the twelve-linked dependent-arising."[c] According to Lati Rinpoche, skill in dependent-arising occurs when the meditator realizes "that a lifetime in cyclic existence is not produced causelessly and is not produced from discordant causes, such as a permanent deity."[d]

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[a] *Meditative States*, p. 88. See also Gedün Lodrö, pp. 122–23.

[b] *Meditative States,* p. 89.

[c] Gedün Lodrö, p. 123; he sets these forth in detail. Another detailed presentation in English can be found in *Meditation on Emptiness,* pp. 275–83 and 707–11.

[d] *Meditative States,* p. 89.

The Appropriate and the Inappropriate

The appropriate and the inappropriate is a meditation on actions and their effects; the topic is seen as an aspect of dependent-arising.[a] According to Lati Rinpoche, "'The appropriate and the inappropriate' means the possible and the impossible."[b] It is appropriate—that is, possible—for birth in a happy transmigration to be caused only by a virtuous action and not by a non-virtuous action, and, similarly, for birth in a bad transmigration to be caused only by a non-virtuous action, and not by a virtuous action. Lati Rinpoche identifies skill in the appropriate and the inappropriate as the realization that "these births are not created by a permanent deity and do not result from the activity of a substantially existent person."[c]

Objects of Observation for Purifying Afflictive Emotions

Objects of observation for purifying afflictive emotions are used after the attainment of calm abiding by meditators who wish to progress mentally to the next higher level—for example, by a person of the Desire Realm who has attained calm abiding and who wishes to attain an actual meditative absorption of the first concentration, or by someone who wishes to progress from the first concentration (either as an actual absorption or as a rebirth level) to an actual absorption of the second concentration (*bsam gtan gnyis pa, dvitīyadhyāna*). As mentioned in the previous chapter, objects of observation for purifying afflictive emotions pacify equally all the afflictive emotions of a given level. Ge-luk monastic textbooks and oral presentations generally explain them in the context of the preparations for the first concentration (see Chapter 8).

Other Objects of Observation

In addition to the classification of four types of object of observation originally set forth in the *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought,* Ge-luk commentators explain two other sūtra-system objects of observation—the body of a Buddha and one's own mind. Gedün Lodrö also mentions briefly objects of observation used in tantra but not in the sūtra system; these

[a] Ibid., p. 90.
[b] Ibid., p. 92.
[c] Ibid., p. 90.

include meditations in which the meditator, generating him- or herself as a deity, visualizes him- or herself as having a divine body. Also included is the visualization of hand symbols (*phyag mtshan, mudrā*) or of subtle drops (*thig le, bindu*) at important points of the body, such as the center of the heart or at the point between the eyebrows.[a] I will not discuss tantric objects of observation here.

The body of a Buddha

Ge-luk presentations of meditation on the body of a Buddha are taken from Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers;* it is the object of observation considered best by Asaṅga and Tsong-kha-pa and by the Ge-luk textbook writers studied here. The meditation involves visualization of the Buddha Shākyamuni seated on lotus, sun, and moon cushions—and, if the meditator is able to do the full visualization, also on a lion-throne—with his hand in the earth-touching gesture. This image is visualized in the space in front of the meditator, about six feet in front of either the eyes or the navel, depending on the meditator's temperament.[b]

In oral presentations, the body of a Buddha is generally used as an example of an object of observation when no object of observation is specified; it is, so to speak, a "generic object of observation." Moreover, it is the object of observation still generally taught to beginners in practical instruction; Gedün Lodrö describes it as the best sūtra-system object of observation for a beginner.[c] In this opinion, he is following Jam-yang-shay-pa's *Great Exposition of the Concentrations and Formless Absorptions,* which states that the body of a Buddha not only performs the function of other objects of observation by enabling the meditator to achieve meditative stabilization but that each session of meditation on it also increases the meditator's collection of merit (*bsod nams kyi tshogs, puṇyasaṃbhāra*) and, thus, contributes to his or her eventual attainment of Buddhahood.[d]

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[a] Gedün Lodrö, p. 140.

[b] Gedün Lodrö, pp. 143–44; *Meditative States,* p. 57.

[c] Gedün Lodrö, p. 142.

[d] Jam-yang-shay-pa, *Concentrations,* 135.4–6 (abridged in Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po, *Condensed Statement,* 558.6). Jam-yang-shay-pa's explanation is a condensation of Tsong-kha-pa's (*Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* [Dharamsala: shes rig par khang, 1964], 679.2–680.5). See also *Meditative States,* p. 80.

One's own mind

The mind itself is the main object of observation mentioned in the *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought* and, in a citation from that text, is mentioned by Paṇ-chen Sö-nam-drak-pa.[a] Lati Rinpoche describes it as clear (*gsal ba*), a knower (*rig pa, saṃvedana*), and empty (*stong pa, śūnya*).[b] However, instead of recommending this object of observation, Ge-luk oral explanations caution against the errors likely to be incurred in its practice. Lati Rinpoche warns that it is possible to repeat the error of earlier Tibetan meditators who, in his opinion, mistook the calm abiding attained by using this object of observation for the realization of emptiness. Moreover, he states that those meditators mistook the bliss of pliancy for the innate bliss and the calm abiding attained by using this object of observation for "the primordial, innate wisdom-consciousness."[c]

He also warns against the possibility of mistaking the meditational fault of subtle laxity (*bying ba, laya*) for meditative stabilization (*ting nge 'dzin, samādhi*) and cites Sa-kya (*sa skya*) Paṇḍita as having said "that a stupid person who tries to cultivate the Great Seal (*phyag rgya chen po, mahāmudrā*) usually" makes this error and, thereby, "creates the causes for being reborn as an animal."[d] It is not clear that this argument would stand in debate, since an animal rebirth is rebirth in a bad transmigration (*ngan 'gro, durgati*), and rebirth in a bad transmigration is generally held to be caused only by a non-virtuous action, whereas subtle laxity is considered to be either virtuous or, at worst, ethically neutral, but not non-virtuous.[e] At best, Lati Rinpoche's argument seems to be based on the forgetfulness and mental dullness that are the observed consequences of subtle laxity in this lifetime, and their similarity, in Lati Rinpoche's opinion, to the stupidity that is held to be the salient characteristic of animals.[f] Lati Rinpoche seems to be arguing mainly from analogy; what he seems to be saying is that a meditator whose way of meditating leads to forgetfulness and mental dullness comes to resemble an animal mentally and, thus, is in danger of being reborn as one, but he does not establish that such a way of meditating is non-virtuous. These warnings seem to be mainly disguised sectarian polemics against the Nying-ma (*rnying ma*) Great Completeness (*rdzogs chen*) and Ka-gyu

[a] Paṇ-chen Sö-nam-drak-pa, "Concentrations," 155b.4.

[b] *Meditative States,* p. 80.

[c] Ibid., p. 81.

[d] Ibid., p. 61.

[e] Ibid., p. 59; Gedün Lodrö, p. 177;.

[f] *Meditative States,* p. 61.

(*bka' rgyud*) Great Seal meditations.

Unlike the other Ge-luk commentators considered here, the present Dalai Lama recommends the mind itself as an object of observation and gives clear directions for meditating on it:

> Another type of meditation involves looking at the mind itself. Try to leave your mind vividly in a natural state, without thinking of what happened in the past or of what you are planning for the future, without generating any conceptuality. Where does it seem that your consciousness is?...
>
> With persistent practice, consciousness may eventually be perceived or felt as an entity of mere luminosity and knowing [the classic textbook definition of a consciousness], to which anything is capable of appearing and which, when appropriate conditions arise, can be generated in the image of whatsoever object. As long as the mind does not encounter the external circumstance of conceptuality, it will abide empty without anything appearing in it, like clear water. Its very entity is that of mere experience. In realizing this nature of the mind, we have for the first time located the object of observation of this internal type of meditation. The best time for practicing this form of meditation is in the morning, in a quiet place, when the mind is very clear and alert.[a]

It is probable that his recommendation, which appears to be based on experience, stems, at least in part, from his strong efforts to overcome Tibetan sectarianism.[b]

Objects of observation considered suitable for beginners

The objects of observation generally given to beginners are the body of a Buddha and, from among the four main types of object of observation, those for purifying behavior. According to Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po and Jam-yang-shay-pa—who follows closely, but does not cite, a passage in the calm abiding section of Tsong-kha-pa's *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*—meditators who have any of the predominant afflictive emotions *must* use the corresponding object of observation for

[a] *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight,* p. 68.

[b] See his "Union of the Old and New Translation Schools," in *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight,* pp. 200–24.

purifying behavior, whereas meditators in whom the five predominant afflictive emotions are of equal strength, or who have few afflictive emotions, are not restricted but may choose any of the objects of observation set forth above.[a] Tsong-kha-pa emphasizes that "It is especially necessary for someone with excessive discursiveness definitely to meditate on the winds [that is, the breath]."[b]

It is evident from the present Dalai Lama's description of the process of meditating on the mind itself that it would be considered a difficult object of observation for most beginners, especially for those with discursiveness, since he instructs the meditator initially to "[T]ry to leave your mind vividly in a natural state...without generating any conceptuality."[c] This is only the first step. Moreover, recognition of the mind as "an entity of mere luminosity and knowing" is just the initial finding of the object of observation;[d] there remains the task of sustaining meditation on it.

Emptiness is also considered a difficult object of observation; beginners who are capable of using it are extremely rare. As Gedün Lodrö explains, in general

> it is necessary to find the object of observation and then, to stabilize on it; here it is difficult even to find the object of observation, much less stabilize on it. One must analyze in order to find it, and for a complete beginner who is analyzing without stability, even the first of the nine mental abidings (*sems gnas, cittasthiti*)[e] is impossible.[f]

Thus, according to Gedün Lodrö, who cites Kamalashīla's *Stages of Meditation,* most meditators achieve calm abiding using a conventional object of observation; they then cultivate special insight observing emptiness. He notes, further, that "when the cultivation of special insight is set forth, it is done only in the context of meditating on emptiness, not on other topics" and that "A person who achieves calm abiding using emptiness as the object of observation and then, still taking emptiness as the object of observation, achieves special insight, has the best type

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[a] Kön-chok-jik-may-wang-po, *Condensed Statement,* 558.3–6; Jam-yang-shay-pa, *Concentrations,* 135.1–4; Tsong-kha-pa, *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*, 678.4–679.2.

[b] Tsong-kha-pa, *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*, 679.1–2.

[c] *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight,* p. 68.

[d] Ibid., p. 68.

[e] The nine mental abidings are the nine mental states through which the meditator passes in order to achieve calm abiding; for a full discussion of them, see pages 155–164.

[f] Gedün Lodrö, p. 141.

of special insight."[a]

Beginners do not use the remaining objects of observation discussed here in order to achieve calm abiding. As was mentioned earlier (see page 127), objects of observation for developing skill are used after the attainment of calm abiding in order to consolidate and enhance the calm abiding already achieved. Objects of observation for purifying afflictive emotions are used during the preparations for the concentrations, when the meditator has already achieved calm abiding and is trying to attain an actual concentration; they are generally explained in the context of the preparations for the first concentration. (See the chart listing the types of object of observation and indicating those suitable for beginners, next page.)

[a] Ibid., p. 142.

Chart 2: Objects of Observation

(Objects of observation in *italics* are considered suitable for beginners.)

THE FOUR TYPES OF OBJECT OF OBSERVATION (from the *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought*, Asaṅga's *Grounds of Hearers*, and Kamalashīla's *Stages of Meditation*)

1 Pervasive objects of observation
   a. Non-analytical image
   b. Analytical image
   c. Observing the limits of phenomena
      (1) the varieties (conventional phenomena)
      (2) the mode (their emptiness)
   d. Thorough achievement of the purpose

2 *Objects of observation for purifying behavior*
   a. The unpleasant: for persons in whom desire predominates
   b. Love: for persons in whom hatred predominates
   c. Dependent-arising: for persons in whom obscuration predominates
   d. The divisions of the constituents: for persons in whom pride predominates
   e. The exhalation and inhalation of the breath: for persons in whom discursiveness predominates

3 Objects of observation for [developing] skill
   a. The aggregates
   b. The constituents
   c. The twelve sources
   d. The twelve-linked dependent-arising
   e. The appropriate and the inappropriate

4 Objects of observation for purifying afflictive emotions
   a. Those having the aspect of grossness/peacefulness
   b. Those having the aspect of the truths

OTHER OBJECTS OF OBSERVATION

A Buddha's body
One's own mind

OBJECTS OF OBSERVATION USED IN TANTRA

A divine body (visualization of oneself as having a divine body)
Subtle drops

Also by Reb Anderson

Warm Smiles from Cold Mountains: Dharma Talks on Zen Meditation (Rodmell Press, 1999)

Being Upright: Zen Meditation and the Bodhisattva Precepts (Rodmell Press, 2001)

THE THIRD TURNING *of the* WHEEL

WISDOM *of the* SAMDHINIRMOCANA SUTRA

Reb Anderson

Rodmell Press
Berkeley, California, 2012

meditation on the thoroughly established character of phenomena, or as the sutra says in the next chapter, meditation on mind-only or cognition-only.

People often confuse meditation on the other-dependent without any imputations or signs with meditation on the thoroughly established, but they are not the same. Meditation on the other-dependent without our ideas of it is like meditating on a man without a hat. You see the man, and you see all of his head, and there is no hat on it. In other words, the man is there without his hat of imputations, and you meditate on the man—on your direct experience. But meditating on the thoroughly established is like meditating on the absence of the hat. You look at the man, and you see that his hat of imputations is not there, and you meditate on that absence. A man without a hat implies the absence of the hat, but the man is not the absence of the hat. He just doesn't have a hat on. But the absence of the hat explicitly refutes the presence of the hat. It is not about the man at all. It is only about the absence of the hat.

So the man without a hat is the other-dependent without an imputation, without a self projected on it. This other-dependent co-arising that doesn't have a self implicitly refutes the self. But the explicit and direct refutation of self is the absence of self, period. The absence of the hat is the absence of self, and it is the thoroughly established. Thus, the thoroughly established is the explicit refutation of self, and the other-dependent is the implicit refutation of self. That is why meditating on the man without the hat is actually not going to purify your vision. It lacks the power to explicitly contradict the illusion of self. It is not meditating on the ultimate. But meditating on the thoroughly established has that power. It is the object of purification. It is the ultimate.

chapter seven

ANALYZING MEDITATION

ALL THE TEACHINGS we have been looking at have profound things to tell us about meditation, but this chapter of the sutra focuses on it explicitly. In the translations from the Chinese, this chapter is titled "Analysis of Centering" or "Analysis of Yoga." In the translation from the Tibetan, it is titled "The Questions of Maitreya." *Maitreya* means "love" or "loving-kindness," and Maitreya is the name of the next buddha who is to come to our world in the future.

Samatha and Vipasyana

The Tibetan translation begins with the bodhisattva Maitreya asking the buddha: "Bhagavan, abiding in what and depending on what do Bodhisattvas in the Great Vehicle cultivate samatha and vipasyana?" *Samatha* refers to tranquillity, and *vipasyana* (*vipassana*) refers to insight or wisdom. The buddha answers: "Maitreya, abiding in and depending upon an unwavering resolution to expound the doctrinal teachings and to become unsurpassably, perfectly enlightened, [Bodhisattvas cultivate samatha and vipasyana]." (149)

This translation emphasizes the idea that bodhisattvas have an unwavering resolution to expound the teachings and to attain supreme perfect awakening. A lot of people I meet who devote their lives to the practice of the buddha way, even those practicing the Mahayana, don't think they are ever going to be teaching it. But this sutra says that bodhisattvas who practice this yoga have an

unwavering resolution to expound the teachings for the welfare of all living beings. They vow to give the gift of dharma. This resolution is related to the third of the four vows that we often chant at the Zen Center: "Dharma gates are boundless, I vow to enter them." *Enter* means to go into something, but it is also often used to refer to gaining the deepest possible understanding. The meaning of the original Chinese is closer to "understand" or "master." But "enter" works too, because it means that you would understand and actually enter into and become the teachings. So according to these great vows, part of being a bodhisattva is that you actually vow to learn all the teachings and enter deeply into understanding and teaching them.

The translations of this sutra from the Chinese seem to have different answers to Maitreya's question than the Tibetan translation. Thomas Cleary's translation says: "Based on what, abiding in what, do enlightening beings practice tranquillity and observation in the great vehicle? The Buddha replied, 'You should know that the basis and abode of practice of tranquillity and observation in the great vehicle are the provisional setups of the ways of enlightening beings, and sustaining the determination for supreme perfect enlightenment.'"[1]

John Keenan's translation says, "When a Bodhisattva practices the meditation of quietude and vision, what is his support? What is his station? The Buddha answered 'Maitreya, good son, you should understand that in the great vehicle when a Bodhisattva practices the meditation of quietude and vision, his support and station is the conventional exposition of the doctrine and the commitment not to cast off full, supreme awakening.'"[2] So the bodhisattvas are supported by the teachings and supported by the commitment to attain supreme awakening. Neither of the Chinese translations says that they are supported by the commitment to both expound the teachings and attain enlightenment, as the translation from the Tibetan does.

Of course, there are many ways to teach. You can teach this sutra by giving dharma talks, and you can teach it by working in the kitchen. But the point is you understand that as you work in the kitchen you're

teaching the *Samdhinirmocana Sutra* and the *Lotus Sutra*. When you work in the fields, you're teaching the *Heart Sutra* and the Middle Length Discourses of the buddha. You understand that both what you are doing and how you are doing it expounds these teachings. If anybody asks you any questions, you can show them: hand them a shovel, give them a seven-hour dharma talk, or do a dance. You can expound it in many ways, but the point is that you are expounding it.

So there are different emphases in the Chinese and the Tibetan translations, but either way there is a challenge. In one case, these teachings are your support, and you are going to stand in them. In the other case, you are not just going to stand in them, you are going to expound them and teach them to others. In both cases, you are going to be intimate with all the teachings, and dedicate yourself to reaching unsurpassed perfect enlightenment.

I would add that this resolution also abides in and depends upon the practice of giving, ethical discipline, patience, and enthusiastic and diligent practice. This is the unwavering resolution that supports the practice of tranquillity and insight, and it is really about being kind and compassionate. Even before formally practicing tranquillity and insight, the bodhisattvas listen to and read the teachings of the buddha. And as they read and listen, they practice generosity. They also practice precepts while they listen to the teachings. They are patient while they listen, and they are diligent in listening, in patience, in precepts, and in giving. Under those circumstances, they hear well the teachings, they apprehend them well, they repeat them well, they memorize them well, they analyze them well. Then, if they practice samatha and vipasyana, they fully realize the teachings.

Next Maitreya says: "'The Bhagavan has taught that four things are objects of observation of samatha and vipasyana: conceptual images, non-conceptual images, the limits of phenomena, and accomplishment of the purpose. Bhagavan, how many of these are objects of observation of samatha?' [The Bhagavan] replied: 'One: non-conceptual images.' 'How many are objects of observation of vipasyana?'

[The Bhagavan] replied: 'Only one: conceptual images.' 'How many are objects of observation of both?' [The Bhagavan] replied: 'There are two: the limits of phenomena and accomplishment of the purpose.'" (149)

The "limits of phenomena" means all phenomena, both conventional and ultimate. It includes all compounded things, all conventional reality, and the ultimate meaning itself (that is, emptiness). This passage says that all phenomena, everything that exists, are an object of both tranquillity and insight meditation, but one observes all phenomena as nonconceptual images, and the other observes all phenomena as conceptual images. So they both observe the whole range of phenomena, but they observe them differently. The other thing that they both observe is the accomplishment of the purpose of the path. They both observe the expounding of the teaching, and they both observe supreme enlightenment.

Then Maitreya asks: "'Bhagavan, abiding in and depending upon these four objects of observation of samatha and vipasyana, how do Bodhisattvas seek samatha and become skilled in vipasyana?'" And the buddha replies, "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]." (149–51)

Then he adds, "Remaining in seclusion, having genuinely settled [their minds] inwardly, they mentally attend to those doctrines just as they have contemplated them." (151) That last sentence is actually shorthand for samatha and vipasyana. The bodhisattvas are practicing giving, precepts, patience, and diligence. Now, in seclusion, they genuinely settle their minds inwardly. In other words, they practice

samatha. They settle their minds and turn their light around and shine it back. Having given up involvement with the world and with mental activity around objects, their minds are clear and unobstructed. Then they continuously attend to this clear, ever-present mind. Of course, this mind is always clear, but now it is not distracted by the involvement with the objects that are generated together with the clear awareness. The bodhisattvas turn away from involvement with objects, that is, from being discursive with them, and they return to the awareness of the inner mind. In short, they "genuinely settle their minds inwardly." Having settled, the bodhisattavas' tranquil minds pivot and start contemplating these doctrines that they have previously learned well. This settling down is tranquillity, or samatha, and the meditation on the teaching is vipasyana.

The buddha then gives more detailed instructions about how to practice tranquillity. In the translation from Tibetan, he says: "With continuous inner attention, they mentally attend to that mind which is mentally contemplated by any mind." (151) Keenan's translation from the Chinese renders that phrase a little differently: "In the continuity of their inner minds, they focus and reflect, and repeatedly abide in this correct practice."[3] But all the translations point to the same process. So this is the basic instruction: with continuous mental attention, contemplate that mind that is contemplated by any mind.

Looking at the mind which is contemplated by any mind is giving up discursive thought. When we observe the world and give up discursive thought, we are looking at the mind which is contemplated by any mind. If you look at the floor or listen to a sound without thinking about it, you are actually looking at the mind that is observed by all minds. When you have given up any discursive activity that tells you what it is, then the floor is the mind. By doing this, you have actually turned your light around and shined it back on the mind that is observed by all minds.

In a way, we are addicted to discursive thought in the same way an alcoholic is addicted to drinking. Samatha is like looking directly

at the state of being sober, but it's hard to do. It's easier to see giving up drinking. But if you give up drinking for a long enough time, you may actually find sobriety. When you first give up drinking, you are not necessarily sober. You're not drinking, but you are thinking about it, or you're feeling there is something else you need to do to fix up the situation. But when you are actually sober, you have no interest in doing anything to meddle with what's going on. But that way of being is hard to see. It's not really graspable, but it can be realized.

What is sobriety? Where is sobriety? We could say sobriety is the absence of addiction. Discursive thought is an addiction in the sense that it is one of the ways we distract ourselves from the reality of phenomena. So in this meditation we are trying to let go of any addiction to discursive thought and become sober. Moment by moment we give up our logical approach to our experience and our endless trains of thought.

In some ways, it is easier to notice that you are addicted to alcohol, that you are caught by it, than to see the place where there is simply no impulse to drink, the place where there is just awareness. Just as an alcoholic has the impulse to drink, most people have the impulse and predisposition to make conventional designations so they can carry on discursive thought. But whether or not someone has conventional designations and discursive thought going on, there is always mind in each moment of life. Diving into the way of being that is uninterrupted by conceptual involvement is more direct than spending our time cutting off discursive thought or confessing the involvement in discursive thought and letting go of it. But snipping off all these trains of thought or stopping them before they get started may be easier at the beginning. Directly jumping into this realm of true sobriety may be a bit too much for many people.

When you settle into looking at this mind that is contemplated by any mind, there is just the mind sitting there. When you look at that, you are looking at things unhampered by conceptual interruptions or manipulation. It is quite similar to wisdom training, where we are

looking at emptiness, because that work involves seeing the absence of any conceptualization. In wisdom training, we see the innocence of the phenomenon of a self or the concept of self. And that in turn is like samatha practice, which is innocent of conceptual involvement with the world. These two gestures of the meditating mind are never really separate.

Although the practice of counting and following the breath is not specifically mentioned in this chapter of the sutra, it is entirely compatible with the sutra's tranquillity instruction to "attend to the uninterrupted mind with continuous mental attention." (157) Counting and following the breath are two of the innumerable methods for developing calm concentration by giving up discursive thought.

The second ancestor in the Soto Zen lineage in Japan, Koun Ejo, wrote a text called, "Absorption in the Treasury of Light," or as I like to say, "Absorption in the Womb of Light," in which he tells us to trust everything to inhalation and exhalation. Trust everything to breathing in and breathing out, and then leap into the womb of light and don't look back. Leaping into the womb of light is meditating on the inner stream of the meditating consciousness. It is trusting everything to the inhalation and exhalation—in other words, putting all your attention on your inhalation and exhalation without conceptual reflection. You might start by saying, "This is an inhalation" or "This is an exhalation," but really trusting everything to the inhalation and exhalation is to be with them untouched by any conception of them. In that way, you are actually starting to look at the mind—not its reflections, but the mind itself. What mind? The uninterrupted mind. The mind that is uninterrupted by all the transformations into *alaya*, *manas*, *manovijnana*, and the sense-consciousnesses.

Koun Ejo says, after you leap into the womb of light, don't look back. In other words, continuously attend to this womb of light. When you use this womb of light as an object of contemplation in tranquillity meditation, there are no conceptual images to reflect upon—nothing to tell you what it is, or where it is. You are looking

at something right in front of you, deep inside you. But you are not using any way to find it or know what it is. It is continuous mental attention to the continuity of the inner uninterrupted mind.

Koun Ejo's teacher, Dogen, says, learn the backward step that turns the light around and shines it back. That is the same instruction as the one from Koun Ejo. Turn the light around and shine it back on the mind which is contemplated by any mind. Shine the light back on the light, and contemplate that light without using any image to tell what you what the light is.

The Questions of Yangshan

In the Zen tradition, there are innumerable stories that center on working with this practice. Yangshan asked a monk, "Where were you born?" and the monk replied, "Yu province." Yangshan said, "Do you think of that place?" The monk replied, "I'm always thinking of it." Yangshan said, "That which thinks is the mind. That which is thought of is the environment. In that, there are such things as mountains, rivers, the great earth, towers and buildings, people and animals. Think back to the mind that thinks." Next he asked the monk: "Then is there something there?" The monk said, "When I reach this realm, I don't see anything at all."[4]

"Thinking of that place" refers to the way the mind works. The mind is always thinking of where it has been before. There is living experience, but living experience is not thought of. What is thought of is our past. We're always thinking of our past. When Yangshan asks, "Do you think of that place?" he is asking, " Do you have a mind that is always thinking?" This monk understands that he is always thinking of where he comes from. He knows that he deals with what's happening in terms of the past, in terms of past karma, and his answer expresses both his experience and his understanding of the teaching.

There is another meaning of "always thinking of Yu province": We always think back to the origin of our experience. We always think of where our experience is born. We are both yearning for and thinking about the place we come from, which is the basis of our thinking. We don't necessarily know we are yearning for it, but we do want to go back to it, because that place is the home of our thinking. In this sutra, the home of our thinking is called the storehouse consciousness. Our thinking of Yu province functions on two levels: on an active conscious level, we're thinking in terms of reflections of past experience, and on the most subtle and deeply subconscious level, we are supported by the results of our past action, namely the storehouse conscious, alaya.

Next, Yangshan gives a concise rendition of the psychological teachings of this sutra: "That which thinks is the mind. That which is thought of is the environment. In that, there are such things as mountains, rivers, the great earth, towers and buildings, people, and animals." The Chinese compound for "that which thinks" is composed of a character that means "to think" and a character that designates an actor or activity. The compound for "thought of" is composed of a passive-marking character, together with the character "to think." So the Chinese here expresses active thinking and passive thinking. Active thinking is mind; passive thinking is the object. The objective world is the passive side of thinking, and the active side of thinking is what Yangshan refers to as the mind.

The character for "thinking" is also the character used to translate the Sanskrit word *cetana*, which is usually rendered into English as "volition" or "intention." It is the overall tendency of the mind, which is Shakyamuni Buddha's definition of *karma*, the definition of action. The character for "environment" in the above story could also be translated as "objects." In "that which is thought of," there are mountains, rivers, the great earth, towers and buildings, people and animals—in other words, the entire universe. "That which is thought of" is really just the mind in its passive, objective aspect.

Then Yangshan gives the monk the instruction we have been looking at: "Think back to the mind that thinks." This could also be

Stages of Meditation

The Dalai Lama

root text by
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Chapter 8

The Practice of Calm Abiding

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.

After properly fulfilling the preparatory practices, you should engage in the actual meditation, which consists of calm abiding and special insight. What is this calm abiding meditation? It is that state of mind that naturally attends to the object of meditation as a result of pacifying distraction to external objects.

Besides that, it gradually eliminates the defects of the body and mind due to its being free from mental dullness and excitement. "With bliss and pliancy" refers to these physical and mental qualities that a meditator develops. In the process of meditation, mental pliancy is developed first and is followed by physical

pliancy. Interestingly, physical bliss is generated after that, followed by mental bliss. When the mind is conjoined with bliss, it is known as calm abiding meditation.

What is special insight?

> **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."**

After developing the ability to engage in calm abiding meditation, the meditator does not single-pointedly place the mind on the object, but starts examining it. The object of meditation here is primarily ultimate truth, but conventional phenomena are not excluded. The concentration that generates physical and mental bliss by the force of analyzing the object is special insight. Thereafter, a union of calm abiding and special insight is attained.

Calm abiding and special insight are not differentiated according to their objects of concentration. They can both take conventional and ultimate truth as objects. There is calm abiding meditation that focuses on the ultimate truth, and there is special insight that meditates on conventional truth. For instance, there is calm abiding meditation in which the mind is single-pointedly placed on emptiness. Special insight also meditates on conventional phenomena such as the subtle and grosser aspects of the meditative paths.

In general, the difference between these two types of meditation is that calm abiding is a concentrative meditation and special insight an analytical one. The Perfection Vehicle and the

first three classes of tantra share this notion. According to the highest tantra, special insight is a concentrative meditation. This is a unique mode of understanding within the context of which special insight operates fully as a concentrative meditation. On the other hand, the Great Seal of Mahamudra of the Kagyu tradition and the Great Accomplishment, or Dzogchen, of the Nyingma tradition deal only with analytical meditation.

> 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.'"

In calm abiding meditation, you single-pointedly focus the mind on the essential and summary points of the teaching. The Buddha's teachings, as described in these twelve categories, are

extensive and cover vast topics such as those concerning the mental and physical aggregates, elements, sources of perception, and so forth. In the context of calm abiding meditation, you are not to elaborate, but are to attend to the essential nature or the point of the teaching, whether it be emptiness or impermanence, and contemplate its nature. On the other hand, meditation on special insight is analytical. The meditator elaborates on the identity, origin, and other characteristics of the objects of meditation, such as the aggregates, elements, sources of perception, and so forth.

> "'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.'"

Through the process of meditation, the practitioner initially actualizes mental pliancy. This is preceded by a kind of heaviness of the brain that is in fact a sign of relinquishing the defects of the mind. After generating mental pliancy, physical pliancy is actualized. This is the direct opponent of the physical defects. Physical bliss is generated as a result, and from this mental bliss is generated.

> "'When the Bodhisattva has achieved physical and mental pliancy and abides only in them, he eliminates mental distraction. The phenomenon 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.'"

Generation of a positive motivation is crucial. The practitioner should recreate this positive attitude throughout the process of practice. Think, "I shall listen to this holy text by the great Kamalashila in order to attain unsurpassed Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings as vast as space." It is highly important that we realize the rarity and preciousness of the human life. It is on this basis that we can attain both temporary and ultimate goals. This life as a free and fortunate human being is a great occasion and we should take full advantage of it. The root and foundation for realizing the ultimate goal of enlightenment is generation of the altruistic thought, and this in turn derives from compassion. Other complementary practices essential in this context are the practice of generosity and other meritorious deeds, and training in concentration, which is the union of calm abiding and special insight.

Before generating compassion for other sentient beings, the practitioner must think about the sufferings of cyclic existence in general, and in particular the sufferings of the different realms within the cycle of existence. Through this process of contemplation, the practitioner comes to appreciate the unbearable nature of the miseries of the cycle of existence. This naturally leads you to find out how to abandon them. Is there an occasion when

we can be completely free of suffering? What methods need to be applied in order to relinquish suffering? When you earnestly engage in such an inquiry and examine the question well, you will realize what causes sufferings. The source of suffering is the mental defilement that arises from action and disturbing emotions. This is temporary and the mind can be completely separated from it. The practitioner comes to realize that the Noble Truth of cessation can be attained with the pacification, or elimination, of suffering and its causes. The corollary is that the individual develops renunciation, wishing for freedom from suffering and its causes. And when you wish for other sentient beings also to gain freedom from suffering and its causes, you are taking a major step toward generating compassion.

First a practitioner should train in the stages of the common path and then gradually incorporate the stages of the greater path. This is a sound and correct mode of actualizing a spiritual career.

After having performed the preparatory practices, you undertake the training in the two types of awakening mind. These two are the conventional and ultimate awakening minds. With generation of the conventional awakening mind, a practitioner engages in the deeds of a Bodhisattva, which include the six perfections. Meditation on the ultimate awakening mind is done by generating a transcendental wisdom directly realizing emptiness. Such a wisdom is a meditative stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and special insight. This means that while focussing single-pointedly you can simultaneously analyze the nature of emptiness.

First the practitioner must gather the prerequisites and other conditions conducive to meditation on 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.

In the final analysis, the Buddha's teachings are directly or indirectly related to suchness. The texts that obviously deal with impermanence, suffering, and so forth, also ultimately deal with suchness, for although they expound gross selflessness, such as the non-duality of subject and object, they lead directly to that subtle emptiness that the Buddha taught directly during the second Turning of the Wheel of Dharma.

> 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.

There are various objects of calm abiding meditation. The tantric systems are unique in employing a meditational deity or seed-syllable as the object. Here, as taught in the sutra system, the

Buddha's image is used as the object. Meditative stabilization is a practice common to Buddhists and non-Buddhists. Therefore, it is advisable for a Buddhist to take the image of a Buddha as the object of meditation. In this way he or she will reap a number of incidental benefits, such as accumulating merit and remembering the Buddha. Visualize the image of the Buddha seated on a throne of precious jewels. It should be approximately the full length of your body away from you, abiding in the space in front of you at the level of your forehead. You should imagine that the image is both dense and radiant.

The intelligent practitioner seeks concentration by first gaining a proper understanding of the view. Such a person focuses on emptiness as the object of meditation and aims to actualize calm abiding in this way. This is indeed difficult. Others use the mind itself as the object in their quest for calm abiding. The meditator in fact focuses on clarity and awareness, which is a way for the mind to focus on itself. This is not an easy task either. Initially a practitioner needs to identify clear awareness as an actual experience. The mind then focuses on that feeling with the help of mindfulness. Mind is mysterious and has myriad appearances. It cannot be identified in the way external objects can. It has no shape, form, or color. This mere clear awareness is of the nature of experience and feeling. It is something like colored water—although the water is not of the same nature as the color, so long as they are mixed the true color of the water is not obvious. Similarly, the mind does not have the nature of external objects such as physical form, and so forth. However, the mind is so habituated to following the five sensory consciousnesses that it becomes

almost indistinguishable from the physical form, shape, color, and so forth, that it experiences.

In this context, the mode of meditation is to deliberately stop all kinds of thoughts and perceptions. You start by restraining the mind from following the sensory consciousnesses. This should be followed by stopping the mind that reflects on sensory experiences and feelings of joy and misery. Focus the mind on its present and natural state without allowing it to become preoccupied with memories of the past or plans for the future. Through such a process the mind's true color, so to speak, will gradually dawn on the practitioner. When the mind is free from all kinds of thoughts and concepts, suddenly a form of vacuity will appear. If the meditator tries to gain familiarity with that vacuity, the clarity of the consciousness will naturally become more obvious.

Throughout the process of practicing calm abiding meditation, we should be fully aware of the five defects and the eight antidotes. The five defects are laziness, forgetting the object of meditation, mental dullness and excitement, not applying the antidote when afflicted by mental dullness or excitement, and unnecessary application of the antidotes. Let me identify the eight antidotes. They are faith, interest, perseverance, pliancy, mindfulness, conscientiousness, application of the antidotes when afflicted by dullness or excitement, and discarding unnecessary application of the antidotes. Faith here refers to the delight or joy in the practice of concentration that arises from appreciating its benefits. This naturally leads to interest in the practice and helps enhance perseverance. The first four antidotes—faith, interest, perseverance, and pliancy—counteract laziness, and the

fifth antidote, mindfulness, counteracts forgetting the object of meditation. Conscientiousness, the sixth antidote, is the opponent of dullness and excitement. When the mind suffers from dullness, effort should be made to awaken and uplift the mind. Excitement should be countered by calming down the agitated mind. Through prolonged practice, the meditator gains mental stability and ascends through the stages of concentration. On the eighth and ninth stages the mind is in profound concentration. At that time, application of the antidotes is only a distraction, and so should be avoided.

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

With respect to developing calm abiding meditation, the practitioner is at liberty to choose the object of meditation that he or she feels to be appropriate and comfortable. He or she should then concentrate the mind on the object, not allowing it to become distracted to external objects, nor letting it fall into the pits of dullness. He or she should aim to attain single-pointed concentration conjoined with sharp clarity.

Dullness occurs when the mind is dominated by laziness, and lacks alertness and sharpness. Even in everyday life we may describe our minds as "unclear" or "sluggish." When dullness is present, the meditator is not holding firmly onto the object, and so the meditation is not effective.

> 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.

Mental torpor and dullness occur in a mutual cause-and-effect relationship. When a meditator is beset by fogginess, the mind and body feel heavy. The practitioner loses clarity, and the mind becomes functionally ineffective and unproductive. Dullness is a form of mental depression, so to counteract it employ techniques that can help uplift the mind. Some of the more effective ways are to think about joyful objects, such as the wonderful qualities of a Buddha, or to think about the rarity of the precious human life and the opportunities it provides. You should draw inspiration from these thoughts to engage in a fruitful meditation.

In developing calm abiding, the other main obstacle to be overcome is mental excitement. This is occurs when the mind is in a state of excitement, chasing the objects of desire and recalling past experiences of joy and happiness. Grosser forms of mental excitement will cause the mind to lose the object of concentration completely: in subtler forms only a portion of the mind attends to the object. The solution to this problem is to meditate on impermanence, suffering, and so forth, which can help the mind to settle down.

> 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.

If you contemplate the faults of constant mental distraction, or any other object that would discourage your mind, you will be able to reduce mental excitement. When the mind loses the object of meditation and becomes distracted by thoughts of your past experiences, particularly in relation to objects of attachment, it is called excitement. When the mind completely loses the object of meditation and becomes distracted by actual external objects, it is gross excitement. If the mind has not lost the object of meditation, but a part of the mind dwells on an object of attachment, it is called subtle excitement. Excitement arises when the mind is too buoyant. When the mind is too buoyant and overly active, it is easily distracted. The antidote to this is to dampen down the mind's high spirits, which can be done by withdrawing the mind. To do that, meditation on objects that reduce obsession and attachment toward external and internal objects is very helpful. And in this context, meditation on impermanence, suffering, and so forth is once again very useful.

The antidote to mental dullness and excitement is introspection. The function of introspection is to observe whether or not the mind is abiding stably on the object of meditation.

The function of mindfulness is to keep the mind on the object; once this is achieved, mental introspection has to watch whether the mind remains on the object or not. The stronger your mindfulness, the stronger your mental introspection will be. For example, if you constantly remember, "It is not good to do this," "This is not helpful," and so forth, you are maintaining introspection. It is important to be mindful of the negative aspects of your daily life and you should be alert to their occurrence. Therefore, one of the unique features and functions of mental introspection is to assess the condition of your mind and body, to judge whether the mind remains stably on the object or not.

At the same time, it is important to remember that if your spirits sink too low, your mind will become dull. At the onset of mental dullness you should make efforts to lift your spirits. Whether you are low spirited or high spirited at any given time depends very much on your health, diet, the time of day, and so forth. So you are the best judge of when to reduce your mental spirits and when to heighten them.

> **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.**

Initially, the mind barely attends to the object of meditation. But with prolonged practice, by developing the antidotes to mental dullness and excitement, the grosser types of these impediments

decrease in strength and the subtle types become more obvious. If you persist in the practice and improve the force of your mindfulness and alertness, there will come a time when even the subtle types of these impediments do not obscure your meditation. Generating a strong will to engage in a proper meditation, free of all the obstacles, can have a very positive impact. Eventually you should be able to sit effortlessly for a session of an hour or so.

Realization of single-pointed concentration is not an easy task. You must have the endurance to practice for a long time. By continuous practice you can gradually eliminate the defects of the body and mind. Defects in this context refer to the states of dullness and heaviness of the body and mind that make them unresponsive or unserviceable for meditation. These defects are thoroughly eliminated as the meditator develops the nine stages of calm abiding. The practitioner eventually generates mental pliancy, which is followed by physical pliancy.

> **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.**

Calm abiding meditation is a practice common to Buddhists and non-Buddhists. So in terms of its mere identity there is nothing profound or special about it. However, when we investigate the nature of some object, whether it is conventional or ultimate, calm abiding meditation is very important. Its main objective is to develop single-pointed concentration. Although we say prayers or engage in tantric practices, we are faced with the

question of whether they are effective. The main reason is our lack of concentration. So, we should develop a mind that is able to abide single-pointedly on the object of focus. In the initial stages, even if we are unable to generate a final calmly abiding mind, it is crucial to cultivate a good deal of mental stability while practicing the six perfections, altruistic ideals, and so forth. The final goal of practicing calm abiding meditation is to actualize special insight.

Chapter 9

Actualizing Special Insight

In this text we are talking about engaging in the practice of the six perfections as cultivated by a Bodhisattva. In this context, the purpose of calm abiding meditation is to be able to cultivate a transcendental special insight. Therefore, after having cultivated calm abiding we should endeavor to cultivate special insight.

> 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, 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 search for suchness with wisdom. And I shall not remain content with calm abiding alone.**

The altruistic thought that aspires to the highest enlightenment is generated on the basis of compassion. Having strongly established such an altruistic motivation, the practitioner engages in virtuous activities such as calm abiding meditation and special insight.

Now, let us discuss meditation on special insight. In order to meditate on the special insight that realizes ultimate reality, we need to develop the wisdom that understands selflessness. Before we can do that, we must search for and identify the self that does not exist. We cannot be satisfied with merely believing in its absence. We must ascertain from the depths of our heart that there is no basis for such a self to exist. It is possible to reach this ascertainment by way of bare perception or by reasoning, just as we ascertain any other phenomenon, secular or religious. If an object is tangible, we do not have to prove its existence, because we can see and touch it. But with regard to obscure phenomena, we have to use logic and lines of reasoning to establish their existence.

Selflessness is of two types: the selflessness of persons and the selflessness of phenomena. So the self to be negated is also of two types: the self of persons and the self of phenomena. A person is defined in relation to the mental and physical aggregates. But to ordinary perception, the self, or person, appears to be the ruler over the body and mind. The person thus appears to possess a self-sufficient entity or self that does not have to rely on the mental

and physical aggregates, their continuity, or their parts and so forth. That notion of a self-sufficient person, which we ordinarily cling to very strongly, is the self of persons we are seeking to identify. It is the self to be negated. Through intellectual processes a practitioner can come to understand that such a self does not exist. At that point he or she develops the wisdom understanding the selflessness of persons.

The selflessness of phenomena refers to the perceived object's lacking true existence and the perceiving mind's lacking true existence. Perceived objects are of the nature of the perceiving mind, but normally they appear to exist externally. When we cling to that external existence, it becomes the basis for developing attachment and aversion. On the other hand, when we see the reality that perceived objects are devoid of external existence and that they are merely of the nature of the perceiving mind, then the force of desire and animosity are naturally reduced. The perceived object's lacking external existence, and the perceiver and the perceived object's lacking separate identity or substance, constitute the grosser level of the selflessness of phenomena.

The perceiving mind, too, is devoid of true existence. When we say things lack true existence, we mean that things exist under the sway of the mind to which they appear, and that objects do not have a unique or substantial existence from their own side. To our mistaken mind things appear to exist from their own side, and we cling to that appearance. But in actuality things are empty of such an existence. This is the subtle emptiness according to this school. Thus, by negating the apparent true existence of things, we develop a sense of their illusory nature. Understanding the

reality that things are like illusions counters the generation of negative emotions like attachment and aversion.

Here the author very clearly explains that all the teachings of the Buddha are ultimately intended as instructions to guide practitioners toward realizing the state of enlightenment. In pursuit of this goal, an understanding of suchness is crucial. The Buddha himself achieved enlightenment by actualizing the meaning of ultimate truth. There are countless philosophical views, but if we follow correct views, we can make progress on the spiritual path and gain insight into ultimate truth. On the other hand, following incorrect views leads to the wrong paths and unpleasant consequences. Practitioners who gain proper insight into the view of suchness can thoroughly eliminate all their wrong views from the very root.

> 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 Tathagata, 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.

Suchness refers to the selflessness of both persons and phenomena, but mainly to the selflessness of phenomena. When expounding it in detail, scholars differ in their interpretations. According to this text, the selflessness of phenomena is described as subtler than the selflessness of persons. A person is posited in

reliance upon the mental and physical aggregates. When we talk about the selflessness of a person, the person refers to a self-sufficient person existing in its own right, without relying on the aggregates. Such a person does not exist even on a conventional level, and therefore to be devoid of such an identity is what is known as the selflessness of persons.

The great Kamalashila, a renowned student of the esteemed Shantarakshita, belonged to the Yogachara Svatantrika Madhyamika school of thought. This school asserted two levels of the selflessness of phenomena—subtle and gross. The non-duality of subject and object, or perceiver and perceived, is the gross level of suchness, while seeing all phenomena as empty of true existence is the subtle level of suchness. Of all the sutras the Buddha taught, the Perfection of Wisdom sutras deal with this subject in greatest depth.

It is extremely important that the notion of "I," the selflessness of persons, and the selflessness of phenomena be scrutinized thoroughly. Each of us has an innate and spontaneous feeling of "I." This is what experiences happiness and sorrow, and also what gives rise to happiness and sorrow. Different schools of thought have posited various views since ancient times on the way in which the "I" exists. One of the ancient Indian philosophical schools viewed the self or "I" as the user, and the mental and physical aggregates as the objects to be used. Thus, the self and the aggregates are viewed as different entities.

According to other philosophers, the self is a permanent, single, and independent entity. The self is what has come from previous lives and what travels to the next when the mental and physical

aggregates disintegrate at the time of death. I have the impression that other religions like Christianity also believe in a self that is permanent, single, and independent. By implication, such a self does not depend or rely on its aggregates. None of the four schools of thought within Buddhism believe in such a self. They deny the self's having any substantial existence apart from the mental and physical aggregates.

Nevertheless, according to Buddhist philosophy, the self does exist. If we were to contend that the self does not exist at all, we would plainly contradict common perception. We should examine and analyze the way in which the self does exist. Through logical analysis we can determine that the self exists in dependence on the mental and physical aggregates. Different schools provide different levels of interpretation of the aggregates, but it is generally agreed that the perception of the self is formed by relying on the perception of the aggregates. In other words, the existence of the self can only be posited in reliance upon the aggregates.

Why make the effort to search for the self, or "I," and investigate the nature of its existence? By and large we think of people as belonging to two camps: those belonging to our own side and those belonging to the other side. We are attached to those on our side and we generate animosity toward those on the other side. Motivated by attachment and animosity, we commit various negative actions of body, speech, and mind. At the root of all these unwholesome and unhealthy thoughts and actions lies the feeling of "I," or self. The intensity and scope of our negative actions depend on how strongly we hold to the misconception

of self. It is important to realize that this clinging onto the "I" is innate, and yet when we search and try to pinpoint the "I," we cannot find a self-sufficient "I" that has control over the mental and physical aggregates.

Because of this innate misconception of the "I," we have an endless succession of desires. Some of these desires are very peculiar. An ordinary person recognizes someone else's physical beauty or intelligence, and desires to exchange them for his or her own inferior qualities. The true mode of existence of the self is that it is imputed in relation to its causes and other factors. We are not trying to negate the sense of a self, or "I," as such, but we should definitely be able to reduce the strength and intensity of our sense of a self-sufficient "self."

> 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 phenomenon 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.

There is no self or person existing in isolation from the mental and physical aggregates. This is to say that a person exists in reliance upon the aggregates. This can be well understood by observing our everyday conventions. When the body and other

aggregates are young, we say the person is young; when they age, we say the person is old. These conventional expressions concur with the actuality that the person exists in dependence on the aggregates.

> **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.**

"Phenomena" here refers to everything that is enjoyed or used by a person, such as the five mental and physical aggregates, twelve sensory sources, and eighteen elements. All these external objects, such as physical form and so forth, appear to have an identity separate from the perceiving mind. But in reality this is not the case. If they possessed an identity separate from the perceiving mind, then the two, the phenomenon and the perceiving mind, should by definition be wholly unrelated entities. This would also contradict the notion that things are posited by the perceiving mind. The object perceived does not have an identity separate from the mind that perceives it. If things like physical form were to have external existence, we should be able to find it even after we had removed the form's component parts piece-by-piece. Since this is not the case, we can conclude that things are devoid

of external existence. This also implies that the perceived object and the perceiving mind do not exist as separate entities. Therefore, proponents of this school of thought say that there is no external existence apart from being of the same nature as the mind.

Ordinary people have misconceived physical form over beginningless time, therefore forms and so forth appear to be separate and external to the mind, just like the physical forms that appear in dreams. In the ultimate sense, physical form and so forth are nothing other than aspects of the mind.

Thus, suchness, or emptiness, refers to a lack of substantial separation between the subjective mind and the object perceived by that mind. This is because when physical things are broken into small particles and the identity of those particles is sought, no definite identity, or self, can be pinpointed. This view of the Chittamatra, or Mind Only School, is very similar to the contention of the Yogachara Svatantrika Madhyamika, with some subtle differences, but this view is not acceptable to the later Madhyamika schools. So, the next lines explain the exclusive philosophical viewpoint of the Madhyamika.

> 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.

Even among Buddhist schools of thought, the interpretation of the meaning of emptiness differs. The interpretation of the Chittamatra School is not acceptable to those who propound the Madhyamika philosophy; likewise, the proponents of the Chittamatra School too have their own logic to refute the Madhyamika viewpoint. We need to develop a broad perspective enabling us to see the wholeness of the Buddhist philosophy rather than its fragments. The views presented by the lower schools should directly or indirectly aid the practitioner in realizing the views of the higher schools. The above passage deals with the selflessness of phenomena as it is presented exclusively by the Madhyamika School. According to this school, every phenomenon is a mere label imputed by the mind. It is not only external existence, but the mind that perceives the various categories of false phenomena that is devoid of true existence. In this way the Madhyamikas assert that all phenomena, external or internal, lack true existence, or do not exist ultimately. When things appear to the mind, they appear to exist truly, but in reality they lack such an identity. There is a discrepancy between the way things appear and the way they exist. Such a discrepancy is unacceptable as the ultimate nature of a phenomenon. Therefore, all phenomena are devoid of true existence.

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. 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?**

The above passage deals with ultimate reality; its meaning is that in the ultimate sense the object of imputation is not findable. In this context we find in the *Heart Sutra* phrases like: "There is no physical form, no sound, no smell, no taste, and no object of touch." The mind, too, is not findable in the ultimate sense. Since in the ultimate sense such things are non-existent, there is no point examining whether they are permanent or impermanent. Ultimately all phenomena, including the aggregates and so forth, are devoid of true existence. Within the notion of ultimate reality, things are devoid of true existence. In the same way, suchness, which is an attribute of phenomena, is also devoid of true existence. This is important. Even when we understand that phenomena like physical form and so forth are devoid of true existence, there is a danger of thinking that ultimate reality may have true existence.

> **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 above passage conveys what it means to realize selflessness. The wisdom realizing selflessness must ascertain selflessness; it is not simply a matter of no longer having any misconceptions

about the self. For example, the mind conceives of things like physical form in various ways. There is a mind that conceives of physical form as having true existence, another that conceives of it as having the attributes of true existence, yet another that conceives of it with attributes lacking true existence, and again one that conceives of it without assigning it any attributes of true existence or non-true existence. So, the analyzing wisdom must discern the self to be refuted. After refuting that self, its opposite, selflessness, will be actualized.

> 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.

In order to understand the true nature of things, it is vital that a practitioner use intelligence and wisdom in the process of examination. As the author clearly states, the mere elimination of mental activity does not constitute meditation on suchness. When mentally inactive, an individual may not be misconceiving the self, but he or she also lacks any sense of discerning selflessness; this sheds no light, and so the individual is not free from the fabrications of misconceptions. Therefore, we need to generate sparks of wisdom that enable us to fathom selflessness.

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 form 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.

When it is investigated, the perceiving mind is understood to be empty and the objects of the mind are also empty of true

existence. A practitioner with such knowledge engages in what is known as the signless yoga. In the ultimate sense, all imputed phenomena, including objects of perception such as physical form, and the perceiving mind are all empty of self-identity. It is important to note that in order to enter into non-conceptual absorption it is crucial to engage in thorough analysis first. When the objects of imputation are sought by discerning wisdom, nothing is findable. The true meaning of understanding selflessness needs to be appreciated in perspective. Mere lack of mental activity does not constitute understanding selflessness. Mere absence of a misconception of self does not imply a knowledge of selflessness. Selflessness is understood by the wisdom that finds that both the perceiving mind and the perceived objects lack any self-identity in the ultimate sense. This knowledge dawns on the practitioner after thorough and discerning scrutiny and analysis.

> 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. 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 distraction 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.

These lines explain the method of meditation on special insight with respect to ultimate reality. The mind that single-pointedly concentrates on suchness sees nothing but vacuity after rejecting the object of to be refuted. Nothing appears to that mind except vacuity. The mind that is absorbed in selflessness discards the basis of all misconceptions. It is therefore referred to as one that is free of concepts and analysis, a single-pointed mind beyond expression. When the mind single-pointedly meditates on suchness, it is described as "absorbed in suchness" and "entering suchness." When clarity is gained through prolonged practice, the meditation should be continued without distraction. Seeing selflessness but once is not enough, you should make effort to

maintain the momentum of understanding. The meditation on special insight is developed by force of analytical wisdom, and by the power of such analysis mental and physical ecstasy will be generated.

As discussed before in the context of calm abiding meditation, the practitioner should be aware of the interfering forces such as mental excitement and dullness. In the process of analytical meditation, when you lose the clarity of the object, the mind is distracted to other objects. When the sharpness or intensity wanes, dullness has arisen. When these impediments obstruct your meditation, you should apply the necessary antidotes. In this respect Kamalashila clearly states that when the mind is distracted by external objects as a result of desire, you should meditate on repulsive aspects of the object and on impermanence. When the practitioner's mind, under the sway of mental torpor and sleep, lacks clarity, he or she should meditate on supremely delightful objects such as an image of the Buddha. By applying such antidotes, interfering forces will be pacified and your meditation enhanced.

> 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.**

Here the author has explained in clear and lucid terms that when the practitioner can single-pointedly place the mind on suchness, free of mental dullness and excitement, he or she should continue the meditation. After analysis by the wisdom understanding suchness, if you can maintain the placement of the mind on suchness, the meditation should be allowed to follow its natural course. When meditation is free of mental agitation and dullness, application of the antidotes will only be counterproductive.

Until you achieve special insight into suchness, it is vital to maintain a balance between the analytical and concentrative meditations. Through analytical meditation, you will gain an understanding of selflessness. The strength of this knowledge should be complemented by single-pointed concentration. Overanalysis harms concentration, and excessive concentration detracts from analytical wisdom. So practice a harmonious blend of the two types of meditation. Gradually you will attain the union of special insight and calm abiding meditation.

Chapter 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.

Here the text explains how to achieve special insight after having achieved calm abiding. From that point on you can engage

in the practice of the union of special insight and calm abiding meditation. In other words, you engage in the practice of both single-pointed meditation and analytical meditation. While practicing these meditations, it is wise not to be overenthusiastic. You should take care of your physical and mental health. The meditation session should not be too long. Before sitting down to meditate you should gather whatever you need to protect your body from extremes of heat and cold. When you become tired from long meditation sessions, you should take a rest from single-pointed meditation and think of all phenomena as like illusions or mirages and so forth. You can also think about compassion for all beings confused in the cycle of existence. With such wholesome thoughts, motivate yourself to help sentient beings to realize the nature of reality.

Again take rest and then resume the practice of concentration on the non-appearance of all phenomena, which refers to meditation on selflessness. This is because when you meditate single-pointedly on selflessness, conventional phenomena cease to appear to your mind. If your mind becomes weary as a result of such meditation, you should again take rest. Then once more continue your meditation on the union of special insight and calm abiding, which is also known as focusing on the reflection both 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.

After you have arisen from meditative absorption, make proper dedication prayers. The practitioner should place equal emphasis on generosity and other practices during the post-meditation period. During that time, dependent origination and emptiness

must be understood as interchangeable. Emptiness in this context means that things lack their own intrinsic self-identity; it does not mean non-existence. Therefore it does not cause a fall into the extreme of nihilism. One who properly fathoms the Middle Way view of Madhyamika philosophy naturally eliminates both the extremes. The implication is that when you understand the philosophy of emptiness, there is no contradiction in presenting the law of cause and effect on the conventional level. On the contrary, you gain greater certainty of the workings of the law of cause and effect when your knowledge of emptiness becomes more profound. Emptiness does not mean nothingness; it means that things are empty of intrinsic existence. So, during the post-meditation period, the practitioner should accumulate merit, which will complement the practice of insight during the meditation.

> 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.

Supreme emptiness refers to the wisdom that directly realizes emptiness and is supported by the practice of the method aspects.

Note that practice of generosity and the other perfections is essential. This is because the fully enlightened state of Buddhahood is produced by the realization of favorable causes and conditions. There is no causeless production and nothing is produced by contrary causes. A Bodhisattva has many wonderful advantages to help enhance the welfare of sentient beings; every virtue performed by such a noble being is very powerful and effective. Therefore, Bodhisattvas earnestly engage in the practice of the method aspects of the path, including the six perfections, in order to swiftly actualize the state of Buddhahood.

> 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.
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> The *Extensive Collection of All Qualities Sutra* also says,
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> > "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."

This clearly expresses the importance of developing a combination of both method and wisdom. After developing a comprehensive understanding of emptiness, you should meditate in order to gain deep insight into it. Equal emphasis should be placed on putting the method aspect, which includes the six perfections, into practice. A Bodhisattva's final objective is to attain the highest enlightenment, transcending both the travails of the cycle of existence and the complacent peace of nirvana. To this end, their practice must involve a union of method and wisdom.

> 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.

Bodhisattvas are skillful and endowed with wisdom. Because of such special qualities there are activities that, when committed by Hearers and Solitary Realizers, could be considered unwholesome, but when performed by Bodhisattvas could greatly help them to enhance the welfare of other beings. In order to benefit other sentient beings, they do not have to strictly adhere to the rules governing the actions of body and speech.

> 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.

Bodhisattvas are endowed with great wisdom. So their disturbing emotions become ineffective and do not become causes to propel them into undesirable realms. Since these noble beings strive to develop skillful means and wisdom equally, they are neither overwhelmed by the cycle of existence nor do they fall into the complacent state of nirvana. They are constantly aware of the well being of sentient beings and at the same time aim to achieve the highest enlightenment.

> 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.

The wisdom that is direct insight into emptiness is completely free of duality, and the mind is fully absorbed in emptiness like water being poured into water. Obviously, it is not possible to pursue the practice of skillful means during such a period. Nevertheless, the importance of practicing the wisdom aspect and the method aspect in unison should be understood from the right perspective. During the sessions before and after meditation, an individual can practice compassion, altruism, generosity, and so forth, thus enhancing the power of wisdom.

> 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.

For instance, a magician has created a projection of someone in prison. He then attempts to free the person from imprisonment. Since he knows that what he has projected is only an illusion, he has no feeling of attachment or otherwise. In a similar fashion, Buddhas see all sentient beings in the three worlds as like illusions. They do not cling to things as having intrinsic existence and they possess the wisdom realizing that things are empty like an illusion. At the same time, they engage in fulfilling the well being of all sentient beings.

> 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.

When you engage in the practice of the teachings, try to gain some intellectual understanding of the view of emptiness. As we discussed earlier, things are devoid of true existence—they do not have a unique existence from their own side. When we recite prayers or make prostrations, we must develop some feeling for the illusory nature of things. Dedications too should be made within the framework of the philosophy of selflessness. Understanding and remembering the meaning of emptiness is equally relevant within tantric practices. Practice of all kinds of virtuous activities in relation to the knowledge of emptiness greatly helps us ascend the spiritual path. At the same time, disturbing emotions and all other defects are reduced and gradually eliminated, while compassion, altruism, skillful means, and other virtues gain strength.

> 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 mindstreams 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 mindstream 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 Tathagatas; 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.

When we see someone in misery, we feel compassion. We must realize that it is very important to cherish such an attitude and strengthen it with the help of other skillful means. We also have our human intelligence, which gives us the ability to discern what is right and what is wrong. This too should be improved and directed toward discerning the ultimate reality. In achieving these purposes, it is essential to perform meritorious deeds and acts of purification. Fundamentally it is vital to cultivate the faculty of discerning wisdom. With such wisdom examine the ultimate reality over and over again and develop an intellectual appreciation of the meaning of suchness. This in turn will help generate a profound feeling for its reality. This analytical approach should be augmented by meditative concentration. The practice of compassion and the knowledge of emptiness will lead the individual to realize that the impurities of the mind can be removed and the state of omniscience can be achieved.

After prolonged practice of the teachings, with compassion as the foundation complemented by wisdom, an individual will strongly wish to attain the state of Buddhahood. When such a wish for the welfare of all sentient beings is in earnest and comes from the bottom of his or her heart, he or she will become a Bodhisattva and will attain the Mahayana path of accumulation. Of the three levels of this path [small, middling, and great], the small level is attained. This is called the earth-like awakening mind. The awakening mind is of twenty-one types. The practitioner improves the awakening mind as a result of compassion and also strengthens his or her knowledge of emptiness. Calm abiding meditation is practiced in relation to emptiness and when

the wisdom deriving from that meditation is generated, the individual attains the path of preparation.

The meditation should be continued, with the awareness that full coordination between the method and wisdom aspects is crucial. Through these practices, the meditator becomes fully absorbed in suchness, like water being poured into water, free of every stain of duality. At the first moment when the practitioner gains direct insight into emptiness, he or she attains the path of seeing. Since these realizations are gained in conjunction with the awakening mind, it is obvious we are talking about the Mahayana path. Of the ten Bodhisattva levels, the meditator attains the first, known as the joyful. This path has two segments—uninterrupted and liberated. During the former path, the obstruction with respect to this realization is counteracted, and having overcome that obstacle, the path of liberation is attained.

With sustained meditation, the practitioner eliminates the obstructions and attains the path of meditation. During the last moment of the concentration known as the vajra-like path of meditation, the subtlest obscurities are eliminated from their very root. Thus, the individual generates the omniscient transcendent wisdom and transforms into a Buddha.

> 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 higher

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 mindstream 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."

To summarize the teachings of this precious text, we realize that first the two truths must be established, because they are the basis. In the course of practice, the two types of accumulations and the method and wisdom aspects of the path should be implemented

in perfect harmony. Two types of Buddha-bodies are achieved as the result. When an individual attains the omniscient state of Buddhahood, all disturbing emotions and obscurations are eliminated once and for all. The person thus awakens to full knowledge. From there onwards, such an awakened being has unlimited potential in helping sentient beings to achieve freedom and liberation.

> 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.

We have now finished the teaching of this beautiful text by the great Kamalashila. The author and his master Shantarakshita had a special karmic relationship with the people of the Land of

Snow, and their kindness was beyond estimation. I am happy that I have been able to give this explanatory transmission of the Second Part of Kamalashila's *Stages of Meditation.* I urge all of you listening to or reading this to study the text. To further enhance and extend your understanding of the Middle Way, you should also study the excellent texts on Madhyamika by Buddhapalita and Chandrakirti, who propounded the ultimate viewpoint of the Madhyamika School of thought.

"Some Notes on Kamalaśīla's Understanding of Insight
Considered as the Discernment of Reality (bhūta-pratyavek• ā)"
by Martin T. Adam
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Some Notes on Kamalaśīla's Understanding of Insight Considered as the Discernment of Reality (bhūta-pratyavekṣā).

Author

ABSTRACT: The present article aims to explain Kamalaśīla's understanding of the nature of insight, specifically considering it as the 'discernment of reality' (*bhūta-pratyavekṣā*) -- a technical term identified with insight (*vipaśyanā*) in the author's well known *Bhāvanākramaḥ* texts. I approach my analysis of *bhūta-pratyavekṣā* from three different angles. I begin by providing a rationale for its translation. This is followed by an account of Kamalaśīla's reading of key passages in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* describing the process to which the term refers. Here the aim is to illustrate Kamalaśīla's understanding of *bhūta-pratyavekṣā* as it is actually experienced in meditation. The final section examines *bhūta-pratyavekṣā* in relation to other important technical terminology employed in the course of making arguments against his historical rival in debate, the Ch'an monk Mo ho yen. By providing these three different perspectives on the same process it is my hope that both scholars and practitioners will be able to more fully comprehend and benefit from the instructions provided by the ancient master Kamalaśīla.

1. Translating bhūta-pratyavekṣā

In a recent article (Author) I attempted to show how Kamalaśīla (740-795 CE), in his three *Bhāvanākrama*s, subscribed to a conception of 'insight' (*vipaśyanā*) that is at once experiential and conceptual in nature. Incorporating the Buddhist paradigm of three levels of understanding into my account (*śrutamayī-, cintamayī-,* and *bhāvanāmayī-prajñā*), I argued that insight should be identified with the wisdom that consists in meditation (*bhāvanāmayī-prajñā*). Thus insight is to be understood as experience (*anubhāva*) undergone in meditation (*bhāvanā, samādhi*). I also noted how Kamalaśīla explicitly identifies insight with the technical term *bhūta-pratyavekṣā.*[1] This Sanskrit compound might be rendered in a number of ways, the variations depending on one's lexical choices for the two individual components, as well as the relationship understood to obtain between them. For example, all of the following are possible: true examination, correct analysis, exact investigation, investigation of the real, discernment of reality, analysis of reality, and so on. In this paper I employ the translation 'discernment of reality'. In this section I will try to show that this translation best captures the meanings of the individual components of the compound. In addition, in taking a genitive relationship to obtain between the compound's two members, it also closely conforms to Kamalaśīla's own explanations.

Most scholars who have worked on the *Bhāvanākrama*s have opted for translations that take *bhūta-pratyavekṣā* as a *karma-dhāraya* compound. The first member, *bhūta*, is understood as an adjective qualifying the second, *pratyavekṣā.* For example, David S. Ruegg's usual translation is 'correct analysis' (1989, 110), although in

some instances he opts for 'exact analysis' or 'exact analytic investigation' (96, 64). Olson and Ichishima render the compound 'true examination' (1979, 27-29).

Such translations might be seen as having the merit of indicating that the cognition involved in *pratyavekṣā* is of a special sort. *i.e.* it is not merely a case of ordinary *pratyavekṣā,* but more particularly one that is true or correct. Just as *vipaśyanā* is a special kind of seeing, indicated by the prefix *vi-* (See Author, XX), so too, it might be thought, *bhūtapratyavekṣā* is special kind of cognition, one that is epistemically faithful to the object cognized.

Yet it is also the case that *bhūta* may be translated substantively as 'what is,' 'the real,' 'reality,' and so on. [2] The word holds a spectrum of meanings, shading from the clearly epistemic (e.g. correct, exact, true) to the clearly ontic (e.g. what has become, element, reality). Here, grammatically, the adjectival and substantive correspond to the epistemic and the ontic senses respectively. In translating the compound, if one wished to emphasize the veracity of the cognition involved in *pratyavekṣā* one would tend to choose from among the former set of possibilities. If, on the other hand, one wished to emphasize the actuality of the object cognized one would want to opt for one of the latter; this is the course I have chosen in taking the compound to be a *ṣāṣṭhī-tatpuruṣa.*[3]

Grammatically *bhūta* is the past passive participle of the verbal root √*bhū.* Taken substantivally, it can refer to anything that is the result of a natural process of becoming (*bhāva*). In most instances the word would not in itself be understood as referring to something that results from a process of *deliberate* cultivation (*bhāvanā*); in that case we would expect to find the causal sense reflected in a strengthened base:

'*bhāvita*' as opposed to *bhūta*. Thus initially, in the context of meditation, it seems most appropriate to take the word as referring either to the elements of conventional reality (*dharma*s), which arise on their own – or else to some aspect of these elements that is real irrespective of one's realization of it. In Mādhyamika hermeneutics the term *bhūta* is associated with the meaning that is *ultimately* real, i.e. the 'object' indicated in *nītārtha* teachings (See Thurman 1978, 32-34, Author, XX). Indeed Kamalaśīla takes the term this way himself, explicitly identifying it with the selflessness of persons and *dharma*s.

> And discerning reality is said to be insight. But reality *(bhūta,* T. *yang dag pa*) is the selflessness of persons and *dharma*s (*pudgaladharmanairātmya*, T. *gang zag dang / chos la bdag med pa*). Here, the selflessness of the person is the aggregates' lack of self and belonging to a self. The selflessness of *dharma*s is precisely their being like an illusion.[4]

Thus from this passage it would appear that Kamalaśīla himself adhered to a non-adjectival understanding of *bhūta*; it is here clearly identified with the abstract noun, *nairātmya* or selflessness.

As for the compound's second member, *pratyavekṣā*, it too has a wide spectrum of possible meanings -- ranging from perceptual cognition at the one end to intellectual cognition at the other: 'perception,' 'observation,' 'examination,' 'discernment,' 'analysis,' and 'investigation.'' The word 'discernment' seems to occupy somewhat of a middle position, carrying perceptual as well as intellectual connotations.[5] In the

present context this is highly desirable. The Sanskrit word is derived from the verbal root *√īkṣ,* which means to see, behold, perceive, view, observe, look or gaze at. It is combined with the *upasārga* prefixes '*prati-*'(toward, back to) and '*ava-*' (down). In philosophical contexts the latter often suggests a sense of depth or penetration. The total sense of *pratyavekṣā*, then, is both 'looking deeply into' and 'reflecting back upon'. With *bhūta* understood as its object, the entire compound can be seen to convey the sense of 'Reflecting upon (and) looking deeply into reality.'

2. The Discernment of Reality according to the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra

But in what, exactly, does this process actually consist? What is it like? What does Kamalaśīla really understand by the discernment of reality? I have suggested elsewhere that the process possesses two aspects, observation and analysis, both of which are conceptual and both of which occur when the practitioner is in a condition of *samādhi*. (Author)

Here I will attempt to flesh out our account of the discernment of reality in experiential terms. I will try to provide a phenomenologically 'thick' description of the two-fold process of insight meditation according to the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra,* as related by Kamalaśīla in all three *Bhāvanākrama*s. I will not attempt to provide a philosophical explanation for the contents of the realizations undergone; rather I will try to illustrate what kind of a process we are talking about, what the process actually 'feels like' for the person who undertakes it. Most of the details in this connection are found in first Bhk, where the process is referred to as the 'cultivation of wisdom' (*prajñābhāvanā*). This

account is recapitulated, but with fewer details, in the third Bhk; here the discussion takes place in the context of spelling out the meaning of *bhūtapratyavekṣā*, which is further identified with insight. A few additional details are provided in the middle text.[6]

The overall picture painted by Kamalaśīla is that of a kind of serial alternation between observation and analysis that takes place entirely within the sphere of meditative concentration.[7] What we find described is a series of experiential judgements about (or, better, 'directed at') a sequence of progressively more refined realities, or *dharma*s, perceived in meditation. Each judgement is, in effect, an act of abandonment or 'letting go' of the *dharma*s under consideration. These judgements are interspliced with moments in which there is only a non-inferential direct experiencing of the *dharma*s, upon which the analysis is then based. Thus both observation and analysis are involved. But note that the alternation is not between a nonconceptual *samādhi* and an ordinary inferential process; it is, rather, between a conceptual *samādhi* that 'views' recognized meditation objects and a special kind of meditative process that analyses those objects *experientially*. The alternation is thus between meditative observation and meditative analysis. Both components, taken together, appear to be what is meant by *bhūtapratyavekṣā*. The entire process is conceptual (*savikalpa*) in the sense that concepts are present throughout.[8] Initially, the practitioner stabilizes the mind on the five aggregates; thereafter one analyses *dharma*s with material form:

> First of all the yogin should analyse (*vicārayet,* T. *dpyad par bya*) those *dharma*s 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 dream-state'? In that regard (if the position is held is that they have a nature) outside of consciousness, he should break (them) down into atoms (*paramāṇuśo vicārayet,* T. *rdul phra rab tu bshig ste)*. And while discerning the atoms in terms of parts (*bhāgaśaḥ pratyavekṣamāṇaḥ,* T. *cha shas so sor brtags pa*), the yogin does not see (*na samanupaśyati,* T. *mi mthong*) those objects. And because he does not see (them), he understands, 'All this is indeed mind-only, an external object does not exist'. And thus, 'Having attained mind-only (*cittamātraṃ samāruhya;* T. *sems tsam la ni rab brten nas*), one could not imagine an external object'. The meaning is that he would abandon conceptualizations of *dharma*s with material form. On the basis of (this) nonapprehension he should analyse those things that are in principle apprehensible (*teṣam upalabdhilakṣaṇaprāptānāṃ,* T. *dmigs su rung ba'i mtshan nyid du gyur pa de dag*). Thus having broken down (*vibhāvya,* T. *rnam par bshig nas*) *dharma*s with material form, he should break down those without material form.[9]

It is very apparent that in this passage the analyses of experienced *dharma*s are considered parts of a process of meditation (*bhāvanākrama*) -- the inferences comprising the analyses are not simply instances of intellectual understanding or *cintāmayī prajñā*. They compose a system of progressively more subtle insights into the nature of reality. While they clearly possess the character of wisdom (*prajñā*), because they are undertaken in a condition of *samādhi* they are properly considered instances of *bhāvanāmayī prajñā.* They are distinct from cases of ordinary intellectual inference insofar as they are directly ‘based upon’ objects being concurrently experienced in

meditation. The meditator remains one-pointedly focused upon these mental images, holding them in view while simultaneously 'analysing' them. In brief: one looks, recognizes the object, and continues to analyse it while holding one's gaze. Recognizing its unreality, one abandons it. The process might be thought of as analogous to research undertaken with a microscope: one focuses, recognizes the object one wishes to observe, and makes one's observations. After drawing one's conclusions about the object, one lets go of it. One then looks again with a new, revised object in mind -- one's new observations being based upon the conclusions reached thus far.[10] The conclusion drawn in each instance is that the observed object is not real. One moves on to the next purported 'reality' at a level that is one step more subtle and profound than the preceding. But here, recalling the Buddhist context, it is important to recognize that there is an affective aspect to this process that is missing in the scientific analogy; for in recognizing the unreality of an object the meditator is also recognizing that it is not worthy of attachment, that such attachment would only lead to *duḥkha*. One knows and sees that the object is not to be held onto, and so one lets go of it. Thus the process of is one of ever-deepening non-attachment.

In the above passage the meditator begins by examining *dharma*s with material form in terms of their constituent atoms. Upon breaking these atoms down further into their constituent parts he realizes that no separate external reality remains. Articulating this, he concludes that all so-called material *dharma*s do not exist; they are, in fact, mental in nature. The fact that the analysis described here is not a case of ordinary reasoning is reflected in the language employed: the objects of analysis (*dharma*s with material form) are 'broken down' or dissolved (*vibhāvya,* T. *rnam par bshig*

bya) before the mind's eye, as it were.[11] In general, each object of the increasingly subtle analysis might be thought of as constituting the experiential subject term of a subsequent analytic judgment directed 'at' or 'towards' it. The inferences based upon these meditation objects can thus be considered instances of a special kind of perceptual or quasi-perceptual judgment, which results in ever-increasing nonattachment on the part of the meditator.[12]

While it seems clear that Kamalaśīla regarded this mental process as perceptual or quasi-perceptual in nature, such a notion might not be intuitively obvious to a modern western interpreter. The inclination might be to think of the whole procedure as basically one of ordinary rational thought (*cintāmayī prajñā*). One would then want to translate *bhūtapratyavekṣā* accordingly as 'correct analysis'. But it should now be clear that taking this phrase to refer to a purely rational process would be to significantly impoverish Kamalaśīla's account. Such an interpretation would miss both the affective and the perceptual dimensions of the process.

That such an understanding does not accurately reflect Kamalaśīla's own views can be seen clearly in the passages that follow. Therein a meditative analysis is performed on mental *dharma*s. A conclusion is reached that the subject side of the subject-object dichotomy is just as illusory as the object-side, upon which it depends. Mind is recognized as nondual. This 'conclusion' is clearly regarded by Kamalaśīla as an experience. It is a realization, one that forms the basis for the next 'inference,' (or better, perhaps, 'movement') -- the recognition that goes beyond the dualistic knowledge of a nondual mind to enter into a knowledge that is without any appearance of duality whatsoever. Ultimately, Kamalaśīla states, one should not even be attached

to this nondual knowledge of nonduality, since it is too has arisen in dependence upon subject and object -- which have already been established as unreal.[13] Abiding in such a state, one has come to experience the emptiness of all *dharma*s, up to and including even the knowledge of nonduality.

> The meaning is that there too one should abandon attachment to the substantiality of this knowledge of nonduality; one should remain in the knowledge that definitely has no appearance of the knowledge of nonduality. When this is so, one abides in the practical realization of the lack of inherent existence of all *dharma*s. Because the one who abides there enters ultimate truth, there is the entry into nonconceptual *samādhi*. And thus, when the yogin abides in the knowledge that has no appearance of nondual knowledge, then, due to his state of abiding in the ultimate truth he sees the Mahāyāna.[14]

Thus according to Kamalaśīla it is through this conceptual process of meditative insight that one experiences the lack of independent existence of persons and *dharma*s. One then enters into a direct nonconceptual realization of the ultimate truth, a realization here identified with the very Mahāyāna itself.

3. The Discernment of Reality in Arguments against Mo ho yen

Here one must recall that the very purpose of the *Bhāvanākrama*s is to introduce the proper way of practice to those who are entering into the Mahāyāna (Author, XX).

In the context of what may have been a very intense polemical atmosphere surrounding the debates at bSam yas, it would appear that Kamalaśīla was charging his opponent with failing to understand even the most basic aspects of Buddhist theory and practice. Fundamental to Mo ho yen's alleged lack of comprehension was his failure to recognize the necessity of *bhūtapratyavekṣā* for the accomplishment of Buddhahood. Kamalaśīla argues that while Awakening is a nonconceptual state, it is also a state of *knowledge* and as such must be brought about through a process of *understanding*. As we have seen, this process is conceptual. It is a mistake to think that Awakening can arise simply on the basis of nonconceptual concentration. Kamalaśīla employs a number of arguments in this connection. By examining these passages we can glean a few more details as to his conception of insight *qua bhūtapratyavekṣā*. The first point he makes in this connection is as follows:

> By rejecting the discernment of reality in this way, one would have rejected the very foremost limb of Awakening -- that which is called 'the discrimination of *dharmas* (*dharmapravicaya* T. *chos shin tu rnam par 'byed pa*).[15]

Here the idea of 'the discrimination of dharmas' is introduced in order to explain the necessity of the discernment of reality as a component of proper practice. The term *dharmapravicaya* is found in the classical Buddhist list of 'the limbs of Awakening' (*bodhyaṅgam* T. *byang chub kyi yan lag*), the factors that need to be developed before Awakening can arise.[16] It refers to the investigation of mental and

physical *dharma*s presented to the mind through mindfulness (*smṛti*, T. *dran pa*). While Kamalaśīla's particular understanding of the exact relationship obtaining between *dharmapravicaya* and *bhūtapratyavekṣā* is not spelled out in detail, the following passage provides some indication of their close connection in Kamalaśīla's mind.

Mo ho yen's position is characterized as the view that one can enter into nonconceptuality without first discerning reality conceptually -- simply by not engaging in mental activities that posit or make reference to *dharma*s -- more specifically, the two critical dimensions of meditation known as mindfulness and attention (*manasikāra*, T. *yid la byed pa*):

> And without the discernment of reality how could the mind of a yogin, who is habitually attached to entities such as material form since beginningless time, enter into nonconceptuality? If it is said that one enters (nonconceptuality) without mindfulness and without attention toward all *dharma*s, this is not reasonable. For without the discernment of reality it is impossible to undertake either nonmindfulness or nonattention toward all *dharma*s, which are (in any case) being experienced. And if one would (attempt to) bring about nonmindfulness and nonattention toward those (*dharma*s) by meditating along the following lines: 'These which are called *dharma*s are not to be noticed nor paid attention to by me', then all the more would they have been noticed and paid attention to by him! Furthermore, 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 because nonconceptuality would have to occur on its basis. This would entail the entrance into nonconceptuality of someone who has fainted, since mindfulness and attention do not exist for him. Certainly, there is no alternate method lacking in the discernment of reality by means of which one might undertake nonmindfulness and nonattention.[17]

Kamalaśīla here attempts to refute the notion that one may enter nonconceptual *samādhi* directly through a simple lack of mindfulness and attention towards *dharma*s. According to Kamalaśīla this is not the kind of 'nonmindfuless' (*asmṛti*) and 'nonattention' (*amanasikāra*) towards *dharma*s intended in the Buddha's teachings. Kamalaśīla does not, however, explicitly spell out the meanings of these two technical terms. As negatively prefixed terms, they derive their senses from what they negate. We must therefore gather their meanings from their positive counterparts and from their actual employment. Kamalaśīla argues that it is impossible to undertake nonmindfulness and nonattention towards *dharma*s without the discernment of reality and without being mindful of and paying attention to them. This clearly suggests that these negatively prefixed technical are not to be regarded as indicating the simple absence of that which they negate. Nonmindfulness and nonattention are related in some special way to mindfulness and attention.[18] But to what do these positive terms refer?

Classically, in the context of Buddhist meditation, *smṛti* is a term closely connected to the four foundations of mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthāna*s, P. *satipaṭṭhāna*s).

Mindfulness practices involve cultivating awareness of the body, feelings, mind and mental contents (*dharma*s). Mindfulness is also the first limb of Awakening (*bodhyaṅga*), upon which the discrimination of *dharma*s is based. There is no explicit discussion of this relationship in exactly these terms in the *Bhāvanākrama*s. However, given the strong association of mindfulness and attention it seems likely that Kamalaśīla understood *manasikāra* and *dharmapravicaya* as referring to the same process, one that occurs on the basis of *smṛti*.

The term *manasikāra* is somewhat ambiguous. Among the translations it has received we find 'mentation' (Ruegg 1989, 94 *et passim*), 'mental activity' (and mentation, Higgins 2008) and 'conscious mental acts' (Gomez 1987, 108). Gomez (1983: 405) has also translated *manasikāra* as 'the act of bringing to mind (attention)' and this is how I have understood the term in its most general and ordinary sense: it refers to a conscious and deliberate act of paying attention to something.[19] As well, it can indicate mental activity based upon such attention.[20] But in the context of our concern, the discernment of reality, *manasikāra* appears to have a very specific reference**.** This is indicated by Kamalaśīla's qualification of it as 'wise' or 'properly grounded' (*yoniśo*). Here I will argue that the qualified term refers to a special kind of attention, identical to the meditative analysis or practice-based perceptual judgement discussed by Kamalaśīla in the context of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*.

It has not, to my knowledge, been pointed out that Kamalaśīla may have viewed *manasikāra* as paralleling another well-known Buddhist meditation term, one that is considerably less prominent in the *Bhāvanākrama*s: *saṃprajanya* (T. *shes bzhin*) or 'clear comprehension.' This technical term refers to the comparatively passive activity of

continuously noticing or being aware of whatever one is doing, rather than the deliberate undertaking of any particular kind of conceptual activity beyond this.[21] The possibility of a parallel employment of terms is suggested by the fact that *saṃprajanya* and *smṛti* are strongly associated in the Buddhist tradition, forming a natural dyad in the context of instructions for meditation. In the passages of the *Bhāvanākrama*s that we have been dealing with, however, it is *manasikāra* that is paired with *smṛti*. The only points at which *saṃprajanya* is discussed by Kamalaśīla are in contexts where *śamatha* meditation is being discussed.[22] Aside from these references in which *smṛti* and *saṃprajanya* appear together, all other references to *smṛti* specifically associate it with *manasikāra.*[23] In these instances the context of discussion has shifted from *śamatha* to *vipaśyanā*. All references to the pair of *smṛti* and *manasikāra* occur in contexts wherein the topic of discussion is insight. This suggests a possible parallel employment of the two terms. Both terms occur in dyads alongside *smṛti*, but *manasikāra* appears to possess a more active sense of deliberate conceptual activity than *samprajanya*. While both have *smṛti* as a basis, *samprajanya* may be specifically associated with *śamatha,* and *manasikāra* with *vipaśyanā.*

In any case, *manasikāra* appears to be the special factor in virtue of which meditation can become *insight* meditation. It is said to be on account of this specific factor, properly grounded in wisdom, that it becomes possible for nonconceptual knowledge to arise.

> Even if this (discernment of reality) has a conceptual nature,
> nevertheless on account of the fact it also possesses the nature of wise

> attention (*yoniśomanasikāra;* T. *tshul bzhin du yid la byed pa*), it follows that a nonconceptual knowledge of reality arises from it. And thus one who aims for such knowledge must rely upon it.[24]

These considerations suggest that *bhūtapratyavekṣā* can be identified with the twofold process of *smṛti* and *manasikāra*. Further, in this context *manasikāra* has to be understood as *yoniśomanasikāra* or *dharmapravicaya*.[25]

The entire procedure is one of being mindful of (or observing) *dharma*s (*smṛti*) while attending to (or analysing) them in a way that is wise (*yoniśomanasikāra*). This amounts to analysing *dharma*s in a way that leads to an experience of their most important soteriological aspect: their lack of self or emptiness.[26] Such meditative attention is wise because it sees things as they really are.[27]

These terms indicate aspects of a conceptual process that ultimately gives rise to a nonconceptual knowledge of emptiness. Although positive in the sense of being noetic, this nonconceptual realization is not the same as the positive conceptual process that precedes and gives rise to it.[28] By pointing back toward their roots, the negative designations 'nonmindfulness' and 'nonattention' indicate the transcendent nondual character of a *samādhi* that is also *jñāna*. While positive, because this realization is nonconceptual (*nirvikalpajñāna*), it defies adequate description.

Thus, in stages, the process of insight meditation eventually *issues* in a nonconceptual realization or gnosis, and it is this realization that eliminates

fundamental ignorance. This ineffable nonconceptual state marks the definitive turning point for the bodhisattva, the beginning of the path of seeing. Quoting from the *Kāśyapaparivarta* of the *Ratnakuṭa*, this final result of insight meditation is vividly described in the second *Bhāvanākramaḥ:*

> One who only cultivates the mere rejection of mental activity, but who does not meditate having analysed (*so sor brtags*) the nature of entities with wisdom, will never eliminate concepts and will not come to realize the absence of inherent existence -- on account of the absence of the light of wisdom. Thus it was stated by the Illustrious One: 'When the fire of knowing reality as it is arises from the very discernment of reality (*yang dag par so sor rtog pa nyid*), it incinerates the wood of concepts *(rtog pa'i shing*), just as the fire of fire-sticks rubbed together [consumes the sticks themselves]'.[29]

The *nonconceptual* nature of this realization is clear. The following passage indicates that it is also *nonperceptual*.[30] At this stage all forms of dualistic awareness have been transcended. Again, this paradoxical realization is identified with the Mahāyāna itself.

> It is exactly this seeing of ultimate truth that is called the Mahāyāna.
> And the seeing of ultimate truth is precisely a non-seeing [of anything, T. *ci yang*], which occurs when there is the dawning of genuine knowledge
> for one who is examining all *dharma*s with the eye of wisdom. And thus it

is said in the *sūtra*, 'What is the seeing of the ultimate truth? It is the nonseeing of all *dharma*s'.[31]

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bhk	*Bhāvanākramaḥ*
CIHTS	Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (Namdol, 1997)
M	*Majjhima Nikāya* (Engilsh translation, Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, 1995)
ms.	manuscript
P.	*Pāli*
Skt.	*Sanskrit*
T.	*Tibetan*

Editions of the Tibetan Tanjur: C – Cone; D – Derge; N – Narthang; P – Peking

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[1] Bhk 3 3.1-4: *tatra śamathaś cittaikāgratā / vipaśyanā bhūtapratyavekṣeti saṃkṣepād āryaratnameghādau bhagavatā śamathavipaśyanayor lakṣaṇam uktam* / D 56b3-4: *de la mdor na zhi gnas ni sems rtse gcig pa nyid do / lhag mthong ni yang dag pa la rtog pa'o / zhes bcom ldan 'das kyis 'phags pa dkon mchog sprin la sogs pa las zhi gnas dang lhag mthong gi mthsan nyid bka' stsal to* / Thus in the noble *Ratnamegha* and elsewhere the Bhagavān concisely stated the definition of tranquillity and insight, 'Tranquillity is one-pointedness of mind, insight is the discernment of reality'. Unless mentioned otherwise, references are to Tucci (1986) for Bhk 1, D for Bhk 2, and Tucci (1971) for Bhk 3.

[2] It will be noticed that in the above passage of the *Ratnamegha,* quoted in Bhk 3 (D56b3-4, note 1 above), *bhūtapratyavekṣā* is rendered *yang dag pa la rtog pa.* Interestingly, when the same passage is quoted in Bhk 2, *bhūtapratyavekṣā* is rendered with the expected *yang dag par so sor rtog pa* (D 47a2). More interesting yet, the version of the *Ratnamegha* found in the P edition has *yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin du chos la so sor rtog pa* (Goshima 29-30). This is consistent with my argument that a) the first member of the compound should be taken as a noun (here, *chos*) and b) Kamalaśīla understood *bhūtapratyavekṣā* as *dharmapravicaya*, on which see section 3 below.

[3] On at least one occasion Ruegg (1989, 64) does, in fact, give us *yang dag pa'i so sor rtog pa* rather than *yang dag par so sor rtog pa* for *bhūtapratyavekṣā*, but as far as I can tell this construction does not appear to be attested anywhere in the Tibetan translations of the

*Bhāvanākrama*s. While the use of the Tibetan *yang dag par so sor rtog pa* as a rendering ot *bhūtapratyavekṣā*, understood as a Sanskrit *ṣāṣṭhī-tatpuruṣa* compound is possible, it seems somewhat less natural than a reading in which *yang dag par* is taken adverbially, i.e. as indicating the manner in which *so sor rtog pa* occurs --namely, 'correctly.' Nevertheless the *la don* connecting the two members of the compound can also be taken as indicating that the first component is the object of the second, which can be read as a verbal noun. In any case, in English the genitive construction is a very natural way of expressing the relationship obtaining between an act of cognition and its object. In view of the ways in which *yang dag par so sor rtog pa* can be analysed according to Tibetan grammar, it is difficult to now say how the contemporary translators into Tibetan understood the Sanskrit term *bhūtapratyavekṣā*. But in a straightforward Sanskrit reading the compound may be taken as either a *karma-dhāraya* or a *ṣāṣṭhī-tatpuruṣa.* The latter rather than the former seems to me to take better account of Kamalaśīla's own explanations. But it would be unwise to be categorical about this.

[4] Bhk 3 5.17-19: *bhūtapratyavekṣaṇå ca vipaśyanocyate / bhūtaṃ punaḥ pudgaladharmanairātmyaṃ / tatra pudgalanairātmyaṃ yā skandhānām ātmātmīyarahitatā / dharmanairātmyaṃ yā teṣām eva māyopamatā /* D 57b4-5: *yang dag par so sor rtog pa ni lhag mthong zhes bya'o / yang dag pa ni gang zag dang / chos la bdag med pa'o / de la gang zag la bdag med pa gang phung po rnams bdag dang bdag gi med pa nyid do / chos la bdag med pa ni gan de dag sgyu ma lta bu nyid do /*

[5] In his discussion of the *Lam rim chen mo*, B. Alan Wallace also translates *so sor rtog pa* (*pratyavekṣaṇā*) as discernment (304) and *yang dag pa* (*bhūta*) as 'reality' (308).

[6] The relevant sections are Bhk 1: 210.3-211.20, Bhk 2 (D48b2-D49a4), Bhk 3: 6.11-9.1

[7] I take the expression 'serial alternation' to describe this method from Ruegg (1989, 111-112) and Williams (1989, 70-72).

[8] That this entire process involves the employment of concepts has already been argued for at length. (Author). Here I would only add that this is reflected in the Tibetan translation. The Sanskrit *bhūtapratyavekṣā* is always translated with *rtog pa* as opposed to *rtogs pa,* as in *yang dag so sor rtog pa* (or *yang dag rtog pa* at Bhk 2 D 47a2, repeated at Bhk 3 D 56b3-4) -- but not *yang dag so sor rtogs pa*. The latter is unattested in these texts.

[9] Bhk 1 210.16-211.4: *prathamaṃ yogī ye rūpiṇo dharmā bāhyārthatayā paraiḥ parikalpitās teṣu tāvad vicārayet / kim ete vijñānād anye, āhosvid vijñānam evaitat tathā pratibhāsate, yathā svapnāvasthāyām iti / tatra vijñānād bahiḥ paramāṇuśo vicārayet / paramāṇūmś ca bhāgaśaḥ pratyavekṣamāṇo yogī tān arthān na samanupaśyati / tasyāsamanupaśyata evaṃ bhavati / cittamātram evaitat sarvaṃ na punar bāhyo 'rtho vidyate / tad evam / "cittamātraṃ samāruhya bāhyam arthaṃ na kalpayet " rūpidharmavikalpān tyajed ityarthaḥ / teṣām upa[labdhi]lakṣaṇaprāptānāṃ vicārayed anupalabdheḥ / evaṃ rupiṇo dharmān vibhāvyārūpiṇo vibhāvayet* / D 33a4-33b1: *thog mar rnal 'byor pas chos gzugs can gang dag gzugs la sogs pa phyi rol gyi don du gzhan dag gis brtags pa de dag la ci 'di dag rnam par shes pa*

las gzhan zhig yin nam / 'on te rnam par shes pa de nyid de ltar snang ste / rmi lam gnas skabs ji lta ba bzhin nam zhes dpyad par bya'o / de la rnam par shes pa las phyi rol pa rdul phra rab tu bshig ste / rdul phra rab rnams kyang cha shas kyis so sor brtags na rnal 'byor pas don de dag mi mthong ngo / des de dag ma mthong bas 'di snyam du 'di dag thams cad ni sems tsam ste phyi rol gyi don med do snyam du sems so / 'di ltar / sems tsam la ni rab brten nas / phyi rol don la mi brtag go / zhes de skad 'byung ba ni chos gzugs can la rnam par rtog pa spong ba'o zhes bya ba'i tha tshig go / dmigs su rung ba'i mtshan nyid du gyur pa de dag rnam par dpyad na mi dmigs pa'i phyir ro / de ltar chos gzugs can rnams rnam par bshig nas gzugs can ma yin pa rnam par bshig par bya ste /

[10] Or to use Kamalaśīla's own example, it might be likened to the process of looking at one's face in a mirror. See Author, note 31. Had microscopes or telescopes been known to Kamalaśīla, he might have preferred such metaphors as they suggest the possibility of a progressive deepening of one's observations.

[11] In this connection we may notice that the verb employed for this experiential analysis of *dharma*s is rendered in Tibetan as *rnam par bshig* 'to destroy, dismantle, break, break down.' On these occasions the Sanskrit is either *vibhāvya,* or *vicārayet.*

[12] Because the Buddhist tradition regards the mind as a sixth sense organ it seems appropriate to refer to these as perceptual or quasi-perceptual judgements, difficult though such a notion may be.

[13] This is a synopsis of Bhk 1 211.4-14, D 33b1-33b4.

[14] Bhk 1 211.14-20: *tatrāpy advayajñāne vastutvābhiniveśaṃ tyajet, advayajñānanirābhāsa eva jñāne tiṣṭhed ity arthaḥ / evaṃ sati sarvadharmaniḥsvabhāvatāpratipattau sthito bhavati / tatra sthitasya paramatattvapravesāt, nirvikalpasamādhipraveśaḥ / tathā cādvayajñānanirābhāse jñāne yadā sthito yogī tadā paramatattve sthitatvāt, mahāyānaṃ sa paśyati /* D33b3-5 (CIHTS Bhk 1 T: 49): *gnyis med pa'i shes pa de la yang dngos por mngon par zhen pa dor bar bya ste /gnyis med pa'i shes pa snang ba med pa'i shes pa kho na la gnas par bya zhes bya ba'i tha tshig go / de ltar na chos thams cad la ngo bo nyid med par rtogs pa la gnas pa yin no / de la gnas pas yang dag pa nyid kyi chos* (ms. *mchog*) *la zhugs pas rnam par mi rtog pa'i ting nge 'dzin la zhugs pa yin no / de ltar rnal 'byor pa gang gi tshe gnyis med pa'i shes pa snang ba med pa'i shes pa la gnas par gyur pa de'i tshe mthong ba'i lam la gnas pas theg pa chen po mthong ngo /*

[15] Bhk 3 15.5-7: *tathā hy anena bhūtapratyavekṣāṃ pratikṣipatā dharmapravicayākhyaṃ pradhānam eva bodhyaṅgaṃ pratikṣiptaṃ syāt /* D 62a1: *de ltar des yang dag par so sor rtog pa spangs na chos shin tu rnam par 'byed pa zhes bya ba yang dag byang chub kyi yan lag dam pa kho na yang spangs bar 'gyur ro /*

[16] Gethin (1992, 147-154) has made a number of relevant observations about the corresponding Pāli term, *dhammavicaya*. The verbal root √*ci* in *vicaya* has two possible

senses: 1. to gather, accumulate 2. to observe, note. The first meaning is especially indicated when the root is prefixed with '*vi-.*' The resulting sense is thus 'to take apart'. This meshes nicely with our discussion of Kamalaśīla's conception of analytic meditation as the 'breaking down' of *dharma*s (*vi + bhāvya, vi + cārayet).* The second meaning, 'to observe' corresponds well to that of the verbal root √*ikṣ* in *pratyavekṣā,* noted above, as well as to that of the root √*dṛś* in.*vipaśyanå* (the Pāli root, in *vipassanā*, is √*pas*. See Adam, 2006: 78).

According to Gethin *dhammavicaya* may be taken to mean either the discrimination of *dhammas* or the discernment of *dhamma*. Understanding *dhamma* in the plural, the term refers to the various mental factors known and cultivated through meditation. Understanding it in the singular, the term seems to refer to the 'order of law of the universe' or, possibly, 'the Buddha's teaching.' The central feature of *dhammavicaya* is the 'discernment of the subtle operation of the view of individuality with regard to the five aggregates' (153-154).

[17] Bhk 3 15.7-16.3: *vinā ca bhūtapratyavekṣayā, yoginaḥ katham anādikālābhyastarūpādibhāvābhiniveśasya cittaṃ nirvikalpatāṃ praviśet? sarvadharmeṣv asmṛtyamanasikāreṇa praviśatīti cet / tad ayuktam / na hi vīna bhūtapratyavekṣayānubhūyamāneṣv api sarvadharmeṣv asmṛtir amanasikāro vā śakyate kartum / yadi ca nāmāmī dharmā mayā 'smartavyā nāpi manasikartavyā ity evaṃ bhāvayānn asmṛtimanasikārau teṣu bhāvayet, tadā sutarām eva tena te smṛtā manasikṛtāś ca syuḥ / atha smṛtimanasikārābhāvamātram asmṛtyamanasikārāv abhipretau, tadā tayor abhāvaḥ kena prakāreṇa bhavatīti etad eva vicāryate / na cābhāvaḥ kāranaṃ yuktaṃ yena tato nirvikalpatā bhavet / saṃmūrchitasyāpi smṛtimanasikārābhāvān nirvikalpatāpraveśaprasaṅgaḥ / na ca bhūtapratyavekṣaṃ vinānya upāyo 'sti yena prakāreṇāsmṛtyamanasikārau kuryāt //* D 62a1-6 *yan dag par so sor rtog pa med par rnal 'byor pas thabs gang gis thog ma med pa'i dus nas gzugs la sogs pa'i dngos po la mngon par zhen cing goms pa'i sems rnam par mi rtog pa nyid la rnam par gzhag par bya /gal te chos thams cad la dran pa med pa dang / yid la byed pa med pas 'jug go zhe na / de yang rigs pa ma yin te / yang dag pa so sor rtog pa med par ni nyams su myong ba'i chos thams chad mi dran par bya ba dang / yid la mi bya ba byed mi nus so / gal te bdag gis chos 'di dag dran par mi bya'o / / yid la mi bya'o snyom du de ltar bsgom zhing de dag la dran pa med pa dang / yid la byed pa med pa bsgom pa ni de'i tshe des de dag shin tu dran pa dang / shin tu yid la byas par 'gyur ro / / ci ste dran pa dang / yid la byed pa med pa tsam la dran pa med pa dang / yid la byed pa med pa skad du bya na / de'i tshe de gnyis rnam pa gang gis med par 'gyur ba de nyid dpyad dgos te / med pa ni rgyur rung bar yang mi 'gyur te / gang gis mtshan ma med pa dang / yid la byed pa med pa las rnam par mi rtog pa nyid du 'gyur / de tsam gyi phyir rnam par mi rtog par 'gyur du zin na ni brgyal ba yang dran pa dang / yid la byed pa med pas rnam par mi rtog pa nyid du 'jug par 'gyur ro / yang dag par so sor rtog pa med par rnam pa gzhan gyis dran pa med cing yid la byed pa med par bya ba'i thabs gzhan med do /*

[18] With regard to *amanasikāra* Kamalaśīla states this in the first *Bhāvanākramaḥ*:

> But when it is said in the *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇi,* 'Based on nonattention, one relinquishes phenomenal signs beginning with material form,' the nonattention intended, which is the nonapprehension of one who is discriminating with wisdom, is not a mere absence of attention

(*manasikārābhāvamātra*). For beginningless attachment to material form and the rest is not removed merely on the basis of a complete relinquishing of attention, as [occurs] in the unconscious state of attainment, etc. / Bhk 1 212.10-16: *yat punar uktam avikalpapraveśadhāraṇyām "amanasikārato rūpādinimittam varjayati" iti / tatrāpi prajñayā nirūpayato yo 'nu[p]alambhaḥ sa tatrāmanasikāro 'bhipreto na manasikārābhāvamātram / na hy asaṃjñisamāpattyādir iva anādikāliko rūpādyabhiniveśo manasikāraparivarjanamātrāt prahīyate*. D 34b2-4: *rnam par mi rtog pa la 'jug pa'i gzungs las yid la mi byed pas gzugs la sogs pa'i mtshan ma spong ngo zhes gsungs pa gang yin pa de yang shes rab kyis brtags na mi dmigs pa gang yin pa de / der yid la mi byed par dgongs kyis / yid la byed pa med pa tsam ni ma yin te / 'du shes med pa'i snyoms par 'jug pa la sogs pa ltar thog ma med pa'i dus gnas gzugs la sogs pa la mngon par zhen pa'i yid la byed pa spangs pa tsam gyis spong ba ni ma yin no /*

On this passage, and more generally on *amanasikāra* in the Indo-Tibetan tradition, see Higgins.

[19] Prof. K. N. Mishra of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies has pointed out that this sense is immediately apparent to speakers of modern Indic languages such as Hindi (personal exchange). Similar expressions are found in English. Compare: 'Don't mind,' 'Mind your step,' 'I wouldn't pay it any mind,' etc.

[20] This two-fold sense is apparent in Higgins' discussion (2008) of the variant term *manaskāra* as it appears in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*:

> As the natural culmination of the third omni-present mental factor 'intentionality' (*cetanā*) which describes the general object-directedness of mind, *manaskāra* has the function of 'bringing to mind' or 'setting one's mind upon' (focusing on) a particular object *and* remaining involved (conceptually and affectively) with it. (Emphasis added).

[21] It is beyond the scope of this paper to enter into a detailed discussion of the meaning of this term, which does not play a particularly prominent role in the *Bhāvanākrama*s.

[22] In all three *Bhāvanākrama*s the two are mentioned together in the course of discussing antidotes to distractions that may come up in the process of practicing *śamatha*. (Bhk 1 208 3-5, Bhk 1 208.14-16, Bhk 2 D 48a2-a4, Bhk 3 10.8-13, Bhk 3 10.19-21).

[23] Beginning at Bhk 3 15.12 and continuing to 17.11, D62a2-64b1.

[24] Bhk 3 20.6-8: *yadi nāmāsau vikalpasvabhāvā tathāpi yoniśomanasikārasvabhāvatvāt, tato bhūtanirvikalpajñānodaya iti kṛtvā tajjñānārthinā sā sevanīyā* / D 64a3-4: *de rnam par rtog pa'i ngo bo nyid yin du zin kyang tshul bzhin du yid la byed pa'i ngo bo nyid yin pa'i phyir de las rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes 'byung bar 'gyur pas na ye shes de 'dod pas de la brten par bya'o /*

[25] But see Ruegg (64), where the author speaks of '...the fundamental factors of exact analytic investigation (*bhūtapratyavekṣa = yang dag pa'i so sor rtog pa*) and *its culmination in*

the analysis of the factors of existence (*dharmapravicaya = chos shin tu rnam par 'byed pa)*' (Emphasis added). This would imply that the discernment of reality *precedes* the discrimination of *dharma*s.

[26] In the *Itivuttika* (no.16) wise attention is given the following description:

> This was said by the Lord... 'Bhikkhus, in regard to internal factors, I do not perceive another single factor so helpful as wise attention to a bhikkhu who is a learner, who has not attained perfection but lives aspiring for the supreme security from bondage. Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who wisely attends abandons what is unwholesome and develops what is wholesome.
> For a bhikkhu who is a learner
> There is no other thing so helpful
> For reaching the highest goal
> As the factor wise attention.
> Wisely striving a bhikkhu may attain
> The destruction of all suffering.'

The translator adds that *yoniso manasikāra* is explained in the commentaries as attending to things and situations as impermanent, unsatisfactory, without self, and foul (rather than their opposites) and avoiding fruitless speculation. Supreme security from bondage is release from the four bonds of sensual desire, desire for being, views and ignorance. (Ireland: 11-12, 93-94). Thus wise attention is an essential condition for the attainment of *nibbāna*. See note 29 below. For a fuller description of *yoniso manasikāra* in the Pāli tradition see *M 2.*

[27] Other possible translations for *yoniśas* include 'appropriate,' 'fundamental,' 'careful,' and 'systematic.' The term is an interesting one, with mystical connotations. The term '*yoni*' refers to the female organs of generation, which in the Mahāyāna context are associated with emptiness and wisdom. The suffix '*śas*' indicates being 'in the manner of.' I have chosen to translate the expression as 'wise'. In this specific Buddhist context the word implies that the mental activity it qualifies is founded on a correct experiential understanding of the way things actually are (*i.e.* empty). This is *bhāvanāmayī prajñā*. In addition, because it conforms to the conclusions already reached through scripture and reason, *yoniśas manasikāra* may also be seen as properly grounded in *śrutamayī* and *cintåmayī prajñā.* Finally, although this may not have been intended, such attention might be considered wise in the sense of being properly grounded in morality, which is to say, based in method. Kamalaśīla is adamant that the pursuit of wisdom without method is not a proper practice for bodhisattvas. More generally, as indicated in the preceding note, such attention can be characterized as wise in the sense that it is focused on wholesome or skillful (*kusala*) *dharma*s and not those that are unwholesome or unskillful (*akusala*).

[28] Such a conception of the necessity of *manasikāra* is not without precedent. See *Mahāvedalla Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya 43, sections 26f.* Two conditions are given for the *attainment* of 'signless deliverance of mind,' (*animittā ceto-vimutti*) which is identifiable as the attainment of fruition, namely, 'nonattention to all signs' (*amanasikāra*) and

'attention to the signless element' (*nibbāna*). *M 43.27:* 'Friend, there are two conditions for the attainment of the signless deliverance of the mind: nonattention to all signs and attention to the signless element.' Two further conditions are listed for the *emergence from* the signless deliverance of mind. These are 'attention to all signs' (*manasikāra*) and nonattention to the signless element. *M 43.29*: 'Friend, there are two conditions for emergence from the signless deliverance of mind: attention to all signs and nonattention to the signless element.' This inversion implies that *manasikāra* also precedes the establishment of *amanasikāra*. Note also the displacement of *nibbāna* by *śūnyatā* in the role of 'the signless element' in our present context.

[29] Bhk 2 D 49b5-b6: *gang shes rab kyis dngos po'i ngo bo nyid so sor brtags nas mi bsgom gyi / yid la byed pa yongs su spong ba tsam 'ba' zhig sgom par byed pa de'i rnam par rtog pa nam yang mi ldog cing ngo bo nyid med pa nyid rtogs* (NP: *rtog*) *par yang mi 'gyur te / shes rab kyi snang ba med pa'i phyir ro // 'di ltar "yang dag par so sor rtog pa nyid las yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin du shes pa'i me byung na gtsubs shing gtsubs pa'i me bzhin du rtog pa'i shing sreg go" zhes bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal to //* Cf. Bhk 3 30.8-11, D 64a4-5.

[30] Compare Gunaratana (1985: 144-145) on Buddhaghosa's understanding of *paññā* as:

> a mode of knowing (*jānana*) distinct from and superior to the modes of perceiving (*sañjānana*) and cognizing (*vijānana*). What distinguishes wisdom from these forms of cognition is its ability to comprehend the characteristics of impermanence, suffering and selflessness and to bring about the manifestation of the supramundane path.

[31] Bhk 1: 211.20-212.3: *etad eva tan mahāyānam ucyate yat paramatattvadarśanam / etad eva tat paramatattvadarśanaṃ yat sarvadharmān prajñācakṣuṣā nirūpayataḥ samyagjñānāvaloke saty adarśanam / tathā coktam sūtre ¨katamaṃ paramārthadarśanam / sarvadharmāṇām adarśanam / iti /* D 33b5-7: *de kho na dam pa mthong ba gang yin pa de nyid theg pa chen po zhes bya'o / / de kho na dam pa mthong ba de ni chos thams cad shes rab kyi mig gis brtags te yang dag pa'i ye shes kyi snang ba shar na ci yang mthong ba med pa gang yin pa'o / de skad mdo las kyang gsungs te / don dam pa mthong ba gan zhe na / chos thams cad mthong ba med pa gang yin pa'o zhes 'byung ngo /*

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Two Concepts of Meditation and Three Kinds of Wisdom in Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākramas*: A Problem of Translation

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ABSTRACT: A close reading of the three *Bhāvanākramaḥ* texts, written by Kamalaśīla (740–795 CE), reveals that their author was aware of two competing concepts of meditation prevalent in Tibet at the time of their composition. The two concepts of meditation, associated with the Sanskrit words *bhāvanā* and *dhyāna*, can be related respectively to the Indian and Chinese sides of the well-known debates at bSam yas. The account of the Mahāyāna path outlined in these texts implies an acceptance of the precedence of *bhāvanā* over *dhyāna*. In this paper I argue that Kamalaśīla advocated *bhāvanā* – a conception of meditation which encompasses non-conceptual *dhyāna*, but which also includes a discernment of reality (*bhūta-pratyavekṣā*) that is conceptual in nature. Such conceptual discernment should not be understood simply as a process of ordinary rational understanding (*cintāmayī prajñā*) but rather as constituting a special kind of meditative wisdom (*bhāvanāmayī prajñā*). A failure to recognize the subtle differences between Kamalaśīla's employment of the terms *dhyāna* and *bhāvanā*, along with his advocacy of the latter, could easily lead to mistranslation and, with this, a basic misunderstanding of his position. In particular, it could lead to a conception of insight (*vipaśyanā*) that is overly intellectual in nature. Given the historically important role that these texts played in the formation of Tibetan Buddhism, the implications of such a misconception could be far-reaching. This paper attempts to clarify the key meditation terminology found in the *Bhāvanākramas* as well as demonstrate the rationale for using 'meditation' as the default translation for *bhāvanā*.

DIFFERENT CONCEPTS OF MEDITATION

The following pages contain an analysis of a constellation of meditation-related terms found in three polemical treatises, identically entitled *Bhāvanākramaḥ* (*The Process of Meditation*). It is not clear why their author, Kamalaśīla, wrote three texts with the same title.[1] There is considerable overlap among the three, and not

1. The three texts were likely composed in Tibet between 792 and 794 CE, although see Taniguchi (1992) for an argument that the first *Bhāvanākramaḥ* was composed somewhat earlier in India.

infrequently repetition. That being said, the three treatises cover an extraordinary range of subjects, all united around the central purpose of providing guidance to new practitioners of the teachings of the Mahāyāna *Sūtras*.[2]

Historically, the *Bhāvanākramas*' account of meditation has been enormously influential. Paul Williams has referred to the texts as 'the principal systematic Indian sources for the integration of emptiness teachings into Madhyamaka meditation practice' (Williams, 1989: 72). Elsewhere they have been described as 'the origin of Tibetan tradition of how to meditate' (Taniguchi, 1992: 303). This paper argues that there are, in fact, two competing concepts of meditation present in the texts. These two concepts are identifiable with two specific Sanskrit words, both of which have been commonly translated into English as 'meditation' – *bhāvanā* and *dhyāna*. Because Kamalaśīla does not employ these terms as synonyms, a problem arises for the modern day translator: which word, if either, should be privileged in translation as 'meditation'? While neither can carry the same range of meanings as the English word (on which, see below), in this paper it is argued that Kamalaśīla regarded *bhāvanā* as normative for the practice of beginners in the way of the Mahāyāna *Sutras*. As such, 'meditation' should be its default translation. For these texts, it is potentially misleading to translate *dhyāna* as meditation. The issue is more than academic. Depending on the choice made, Kamalaśīla's account of the Mahāyāna Buddhist path to Awakening will be radically altered. To that extent, our understanding of both the doctrinal and practical foundations of Tibetan Buddhism will be affected.

According to Edward Conze, 'The first explains the doctrine of the Mahāyāna, the second how it can be meditated upon, and the third what is the result of meditation' (1975: 177). Conze is here following a description contained in a Tibetan record cited in Tucci (1958: 40–41). The account has it that the Tibetan king, Khri Srong lde btsan, requested these explanations following Kamalaśīla's pivotal victory in debate over a Chinese rival of the Ch'an tradition (discussed below). The 'doctrine' of Bhk 1 is described as that of the three kinds of wisdom (*śrutamayī, cintāmayī*, and *bhāvanāmayī prajñā*). The way of meditation of Bhk 2 is explained in light of the realization that there is only one vehicle; it is the result of this meditation that Bhk 3 is said to explain. But such categorical statements are best made with caution; all three texts contain discussions of doctrine, meditation, and its result.

2. Perhaps it is as much due to the excellence of scholarship already devoted to their study as it is to the breadth of their concern that the *Bhāvanākramas* tend to be among the most widely quoted of Indian Buddhist texts. Tucci has provided critical editions of the Sanskrit and Tibetan of the Bhk 1 (1958) and the Sanskrit of the Bhk 3 (1971). Of the three texts, the original Sanskrit of the Bhk 2 is lost. As well, the first folio of the Sanskrit of Bhk 1 is missing, as are the edges of many of the pages of the manuscript of Bhk 3 from which Tucci worked. All three texts are, however, fully preserved in the Tibetan Tanjur. A critical edition of the Tibetan text of Bhk 2 based on the Narthang (N), Peking (P), Derge (D), and Cone (C) editions has been prepared by K. Goshima (1983). The Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies has published an edition of the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts, which occasionally serves to clarify Tucci (Namdol, 1997). This contains a Hindi translation and Sanskrit reconstructions of Bhk 2 and the first folio of Bhk 1. I have worked mainly from the editions of Tucci, Goshima, and the Derge Tanjur dBu ma KI (22a-41b, 42a-55b, and 56a-68b respectively for the three texts). Unless otherwise noted, references are to Tucci for the Sanskrit texts and to D for the Tibetan.

The three texts contain numerous instructions for the beginner in Mahāyāna meditation. Equally, the *Bhāvanākramas* constitute a kind of apology or justification for a particular approach to the Buddhist path. The Tibetan tradition regards them as containing a summary of arguments employed in the refutation of a Chinese Ch'an position being advocated at the time of the first great transmission of Buddhism to Tibet. The debate has been characterized in terms of gradualism vs. subitism (Gomez, 1987). The gradualist view, associated with the Indian side led by Kamalaśīla, held that Awakening can only be attained after a long process of training in which one deliberately cultivates certain causes and conditions conducive to its occurrence. These causes and conditions are both moral and cognitive – one must cultivate specific moral virtues as well as a specific conceptual knowledge of the nature of reality. Such cultivation (*bhāvanā*) is a gradual process – it takes time and has definite steps. The subitist position, represented by a Ch'an monk (*Hvashang*) named Mo ho yen (Sanskrit: Mahāyāna), held that Awakening occurs suddenly, all at once. Awakening was understood as a state requiring only the practice of a non-conceptual concentration or absorption (*dhyāna*), wherein one's mind is cleared from all obscuring mental activity. Attempts to cultivate specific moral virtues and views of reality were understood as counterproductive on the grounds that they accumulate karma and prolong one's sojourn through cyclical existence.[3]

The contrary view, argued by Kamalaśīla, held that a particular kind of cognitive process – a 'correct analysis' or 'discernment of reality' (*bhūta-pratyavekṣā*) – is essential to the achievement of Awakening. Because Awakening involves a kind of knowledge (i.e. non-conceptual knowledge, *nirvikalpa jñāna*), and not merely concentration, it is essential to first become established not only in concentration but also in a correct conceptual knowledge, which can then function to give rise to the sought after noetic state. The principle at work here is that like arises from like: one kind of knowledge arises on the basis of another. Kamalaśīla seems to have understood his opponent as arguing on the basis of the same causal principle, but focusing on the other aspect of Awakening – its non-conceptuality. Thus,

3. Bhk 3 13.15–14.1: *yas tu manyate / cittavikalpa samutthāpitaśubhāśubha-karmavaśena sattvāḥ svargādi karmaphalam anubhavantaḥ saṃsāre saṃsaranti / ye punar na kiṃcic cintayanti nāpi kiṃcit karma kurvanti te parimucyante saṃsārāt / tasmān na kiṃcic cintayitavyam / nāpi dānādikuśalacaryā kartavyā / kevalaṃ murkhajanam adhikṛtya dānādikuśalacaryā nirdesteti* /; D 61b1: *gang zhig sems kyi rnam par rtog pas bskyed pa'i dge ba dang mi dge ba'i las kyi dbang gis sems can rnams mtho ri la sogs pa'i 'bras bu myong zhing 'khor ba na 'khor ro / gang dag ci yang mi sems ci yang mi byed pa de dag ni 'khor ba las yongs su thar bar 'gyur ro / de lta bas na ci yang mi bsam mo / sbyin pa la sogs pa dge ba spyad par yang mi bya'o / sbyin pa la sogs pa spyod pa ni skye bo blun po'i dbang du mdzad nas bstan pa kho na yin no snyom du sems shing de skad kyang smra ba des ni theg pa chen po mtha dag spangs pa yin no/:* '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 skillful conduct of giving and the rest is taught only with foolish people in mind"'.

as a non-conceptual state of knowledge, Awakening might be thought of as only arising on the basis of non-conceptual concentration. According to Kamalaśīla, this is a misunderstanding; non-conceptual concentration, because it lacks a cognitive dimension, can not on its own result in a state of knowledge. At the same time, however, Kamalaśīla did recognize the concentrative nature of the resulting state of nonconceptual knowledge; he therefore accepted the necessity of initially combining the one-pointed quality of concentration with the noetic quality of conceptual knowledge. The resulting state could thus be both concentrated and noetic.[4]

To understand Kamalaśīla's views in more detail, I will attempt to demonstrate how he understood the logical relations obtaining between *bhāvanā* and *dhyāna*, as well as their relationships to other key terms denoting meditative states and processes. I will then attempt to demonstrate how it is that Kamalaśīla accepted as normative the concept of *bhāvanā*. But before entering into these topics it would perhaps be germane to say a few words about how I understand the English word 'meditation'.

In normal English usage, and in its most general conception, when one talks of 'meditation', in most cases one is referring to a deliberately undertaken introspective process which is aimed at reaching a qualitatively different state of mind – usually a spiritual state of some description (e.g. communion with God) or a heightened state of awareness. The process itself is marked by concentration – either upon some aspect of the goal sought or upon the activity itself. Such concentration usually follows a *technique*, which can be described and practised. Although introspective, this may involve a physical aspect. Practices of meditation vary widely, including everything from visualization, repetition of verbal phrases or prayers, to the walking of labyrinths. These diverse procedures share the features of voluntariness, introspection and concentration, and are all undertaken with the aim of bringing about an altered state of consciousness or a change in spiritual condition.

It is important to note, however, that in the western intellectual tradition there exists a second and related use of the word 'meditation' in which many of these features are not found. In this case the word meditation is employed to refer to processes of ordinary rational thought that are seriously undertaken and concerned with topics judged to be important or profound. 'Meditation' in this sense is a kind of intellectual contemplation or rumination, involving neither a special technique of concentration nor the idea of achieving of an altered state of consciousness. This employment of the word is perhaps most famously exemplified

4. Thus the two opponents both asserted that an initial practice of concentration was necessary, but they disagreed as to its nature. Just as from Kamalaśīla's perspective, Mo ho yen's difficulty was to explain the noetic aspect of Awakening on the basis of a non-cognitive practice; from Mo ho yen's perspective, Kamalaśīla's difficulty would be to explain Awakening's nonconceptuality arising on the basis of a conceptual process. In addition, as noted, Mo ho yen held that such conceptual activities were karmatic and thus counterproductive with respect to liberation.

in the title of René Descartes' *Meditationes de Prima Philosophia* (1641). Clearly, in western culture there is a long-standing and distinct association between 'meditation' and ordinary discursive thought.

With these considerations in mind, we may now return our attention to the idea of meditation as found in the *Bhāvanākramaḥ* texts. It may be remarked in passing that, in their own way, these three works of Kamalaśīla have shown themselves to be as seminal to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition as the reflections of the great French philosopher have proven to western philosophy. And the questions they raise appear equally profound. The issue we are concerned with here, namely the relations obtaining among diverse concepts of meditation, is an extraordinarily complex one. An initial listing of some of the main terms for meditation occurring within the *Bhāvanākramas* includes the following (I provide some of the more common English translations):

1. *dhyāna* – absorption, trance, concentration, *meditation*
2. *samādhi* – concentration, state of concentration, *meditation*
3. *bhāvanā* – cultivation, development, realization, actualization, *meditation*
4. *śamatha* - *tranquillity meditation*, serenity, calm, calm abiding
5. *vipaśyanā* - *insight meditation*, insight, wisdom

It can be seen that there are, in fact, at least three Sanskrit terms commonly translated by the English word 'meditation', plus two that are considered *kinds* of meditation. In order to understand Kamalaśīla's particular views, I will first of all briefly review and comment upon each of these.

Dhyāna – probably the term most commonly associated with the word 'meditation', this word is derived from the Sanskrit verbal root √*dhyai* (to think of, meditate upon) plus the primary affix (*kṛt-pratyaya*) '*lyuṭ*', which forms abstract, instrumental or verbal nouns. In Chinese, as is well known, the transliterated term *Ch'an* (Japanese: *Zen*) came to refer to a number of schools emphasizing the meditation aspect of Buddhist practice. In the original Indian context, however, the word specifically referred to a set of four successive meditative absorptions (Pāli: *jhāna*) wherein one's mental contents are attenuated to a state of one-pointedness and equanimity free from all disturbing emotions and mental activity.[5] Although much has been written about the *dhyānas*, for our purposes three points should be noted.

First, it is important to recognize that after the first *dhyāna*, all thought is said to have been eliminated. Both *vitarka* (relatively gross thought, as mental application) and *vicāra* (subtle thought, or examination) are absent from the second through to the fourth *dhyānas*. While some thought is present in the first *dhyāna*, this state is not defined as one in which a deliberate conceptual analysis of reality takes place.

5. The *dhyānas* are said to be optionally followed by another sequence of four 'formless attainments' *(ārūpya samāpatti)* occurring on the basis of the fourth *dhyāna*. See Griffiths (1986), Crangle (1994: 201–7), and Gethin (1998: 184–6) for treatments of these attainments.

The second point is that Kamalaśīla subdivides the first absorption into two.[6] The first division contains both *vitarka* and *vicāra*, the second contains *vicāra* but not *vitarka*. This second division he calls 'intermediate absorption' (*dhyānāntara*).[7] We shall see that Kamalaśīla may actually have accepted the possibility of a deliberate conceptual analysis of reality occurring in the first *dhyāna*; if so, it might well have been the case that he particularly associated this possibility with the intermediate *dhyānā*. We shall return to this topic at the end of this paper. In any case, for now, it seems clear that he regarded his opponent as adhering to a general notion of *dhyāna* that excludes deliberate activities of conceptual analysis.

The third point to note is that the *dhyāna*s are all said to share the quality of *ekagratā* or one-pointedness of mind. This quality is also said to characterize our next term, *samādhi*, as well as *śamatha*.

Samādhi - this term is often given as a gloss for *dhyāna*, but its scope is generally understood to be wider than that of the four *dhyāna*s. While it encompasses these, it also refers to other states of mental one-pointedness. For example, it includes the preliminary state of 'the capable' (*anāgamya* – equivalent to 'access'

6. Bhk 1 209.2–11: *eṣā ca cittaikāgratā uttarottarakarmaṇyatāsaṃprayogād ālambanādiguṇaviśeṣayogā c ca dhyānārūpya[samāpatti]vimokṣādivyapadeśaṃ labhate / tathā hi yadopekṣāvedanāsaṃprayuktā savitarkasavicārā sā bhavati / tadānāgamyam ucyate / yadā ca kāmatṛṣṇayā [pāpadharmaiḥ] viviktā bhavati [vitarkavicāra]prītisukhādhyātmasaṃprasādaiḥ saṃprayuktā bhavati / tadā prathamam dhyānam ucyate / ata eva prathamaṃ dhyānaṃ vitarkamātrarahitaṃ dhyānāntaram ucyate / yadā vitarkavicārarahitā prathamadhyānabhūmitṛṣṇayā viviktā ca bhavati / prītisukhādhyātmasaṃprasāda iḥ saṃprayuktā bhavati / tadā dvitīyaṃ dhyānam ucyate /*; D 32b 2–5: *sems rtse gcig pa de phyi phyir las su rung ba nyid dang ldan zhing dmigs pa la sogs pa'i yon tan gyi khyad par thob pas bsam gtan dang / gzugs med pa'i snyoms par 'jug pa dang / rnam par thar pa la sogs pa'i ming thob po / 'di ltar gang gi tshe btang snyoms kyi tshor ba dang ldan zhing rtog pa dang bcas pa dang / dpyod pa dang bcas par gyur pa de'i tshe mi lcogs pa med pa zhes bya ste / [bsam gtan dang po'i sbyor ba'i sems so] / gang gi tshe 'dod pa'i sred pa dang / sdig pa'i chos rnams dang bral zhing rtog pa dang / dpyod pa dang / dga' ba dang / bde ba dang ldan par gyur pa de'i tshe bsam gtan dang po zhes bya'o / bsam gtan dang po de nyid las rtog pa tsam med pa de ni bsam gtan khyad par can zhes bya'o / gang gi tshe rtog pa dang dpyod pa dang bral te bsam gtan dang po'i sa'i sred pa dang bral bar gyur nas dga' ba dang bde ba dang / nang yongs su dang ba dag dang ldan par gyur pa de'i tshe bsam gtan gnyis pa zhes bya'o/*: '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" (*anāgamya*, 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,] joy, happiness, and internal clarity (*ādhyātmasaṃprasād*, 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" (*dhyānāntara*). 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 joy, happiness, and clarity pertaining to the self – then it is called the second absorption'.

7. In including an intermediate stage between the first and second *dhyāna*s, one in which *vitarka* is absent while *vicāra* remains, the account of the *dhyāna*s found in the *Bhāvanākrama*s appears to be following that of Vasubandu. See *Abhk* viii 22d, 23d-e. Like Kamalaśīla, Vasubandhu divides the first *dhyāna* into two. However, according to Vasubandhu, the first *dhyāna* may contain either *vitarka* or *vicāra*, but not both in the same moment.

(*upacāra*) concentration in Theravāda Buddhism), a degree of mental focus that allows one to enter into the *dhyāna*s proper, or else to turn one's attention to insight (*vipaśyanā*) practices. The word *samādhi* is thus arguably the broadest Indian term used in reference to states of meditation. In the context of spiritual practice, it is understood to exclude non-virtuous states of concentration, such as those an assassin and so forth. It usually denotes concentration as a mental *state* of nondistraction. As well, the word is sometimes used to refer to the *processes* that give rise to such mental states.[8] Derived from the verbal root √*dhā* (to put, place, set, join, unite) in combination with the prefixes '*sam*' (together) and '*ā*' (around) and the masculine suffix '*ki*', the sense of *samādhi* is one of 'placing (that which is) around together', or simply, 'unification'.

Bhāvanā - derived from the causative form of the verbal root √*bhū*, (√*bhū* + *ṇic* + either *lyu* or *lyuṭ*), the word *bhāvanā* literally means 'causing to be', 'making become', or 'giving rise to'. Hence among its most common translations we find 'cultivation', 'development', 'realization', and even 'actualization'. These translations are etymologically more precise than 'meditation'; in addition, the first two have the extra implication of a gradual progression toward a state that is sought.

Unlike the term *samādhi*, one does not properly speak of 'attaining' a *state* of *bhāvanā*; on the contrary, this word exclusively refers to *processes* through which one brings particular states into being. It should be noted, however, that translations such as 'cultivation' and 'development', while capturing this primary signification, do not necessarily imply *samādhi*. Outside of the context of spiritual practice, the word *bhāvanā* obviously can have a wider, non-technical sense that includes deliberately giving rise to things not necessarily characterized by concentration, nor indeed consistent with virtue. For example, the activities of watering a garden, cooking a meal, and plotting an act of revenge can all be considered as instances of *bhāvanā* in a broader sense of 'cultivation'. In the context of spiritual practice, however, this word refers to virtuous efforts, those that further the cause of liberation by generating positive states (*dharma*s) characterized by concentration (*samādhi*).[9]

8. See e.g. *Visuddhimagga* III 2-3, where the idea of a process is captured in its gloss: *samadhāna*. (Note again the *kṛt-pratyaya* '*lyuṭ*' in a word indicating a process). The two uses of the word can be seen clearly in connection with the classical eightfold path, where *samādhi* not only appears as one of the eight aspects of the path, namely, right concentration (*samyak samādhi*), but also as the label for the set of three aspects that together constitute the meditation component of the path: right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. The term is thus used to designate the meditation (*samādhi*) component of the three reliances of morality, meditation, and wisdom (*śīla*, *samādhi*, and *prajnā*), into which the eightfold path may be subdivided. On such use of the term *samādhi* to designate a list of items (though not necessarily items related to meditation) see Skilton (2002).

9. According to Vasubandhu, *bhāvanā* is divisible into four types corresponding to a classical fourfold division of right effort - efforts for the arising of non-arisen pure *dharma*s, for the growth of already arisen pure *dharma*s, for the non-arising of non-arisen impure *dharma*s and for the destruction of already arisen impure *dharma*s. *Abhk* 1081.1-5, 22-31. For a detailed treatment of the classical *Nikāya* account see Gethin (1992: 69-80). In terms of this term's relation to

Śamatha: in the Buddhist tradition *bhāvanā* is generally understood to be divisible into the two subcategories of tranquillity (*śamatha*) and insight (*vipaśyanā*). Kamalaśīla accepts this division.[10] The term *śamatha* (Pāli *samatha*) is derived from the verbal root √*śam* (to be quiet, to cease, to rest).[11] The principal significations of *śamatha* are those of calmness and the capacity to remain continuously focused on one object of meditation. Thus the cultivation of tranquillity brings about states of concentration and calm, such as the *dhyānas*. With respect to Awakening, the function of *śamatha* is to stabilize the mind, thereby making *vipaśyanā* possible.

Vipaśyanā: this term is the Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit word corresponding to the Pāli *vipassanā*. It is derived from the verbal root √*pas* 'to see', plus the prefix *vi* which can have the senses of 'apart, asunder' and 'different, distinct'. The resulting sense is one of 'seeing into' or 'discerning'. Hence 'insight' is the usual translation for this term. In general, *vipaśyanā* is understood to refer to observational and analytic processes that lead to a knowledge of reality.

In the *Bhāvanākramas*, *vipaśyanā* is specifically identified with a technical term, namely, 'the discernment of reality' (*bhūta-pratyavekṣā*). As Kamalaśīla quotes from the *Sūtras*, 'Tranquillity is one-pointedness of mind; insight is the discernment of reality'.[12]

The function of *vipaśyanā* is to perceive the elements of reality (*dharmas*) as they truly are. If the effect of *śamatha* is to enable *vipāśyanā*, it is *vipaśyanā* that allows for non-conceptual knowledge to occur. And on this basis Awakening is gradually achieved.

> By the power of tranquillity the mind becomes steady on its object, like a lamp [burning] in a place without wind. By insight, the light of correct

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samādhi, one might note that the process of making such efforts would involve concentrating (*samādhāna*) on the desired state. In addition, when specific states of concentration (such as those of *dhyāna*) are aimed at, this might be thought of as a case of the first right effort, that which is aimed at the arising of non-arisen pure *dharmas*. This, however, was apparently a point of controversy between different Buddhist schools. The Vaibāśikas apparently considered *samādhi* a separate mental *dharma* while the Sautrāntikas thought it simply referred to a concentrated mind (*Abhk* 1126.6-1127.3).

10. Bhk 2 D46b1-2: *rnal 'byor pas ni sgom pa'i dus thams cad du nya dang sha la sogs pa spang zhing mi mthun pa ma yin pa dang / zas tshod zin par bza' bar bya'o // de ltar byang chub sems dpa' zhi gnasdang lhag mthong gi tshogs mtha' dag bsags pa des bsgom pa la 'jug par bya'o //*: 'The yogin, forsaking meat and fish at all times of meditation (*sgom pa, bhāvanā*), should eat only the proper amount of food and that which is not incompatible (with the scriptures). In this manner, *bodhisattvas* who have accumulated all the conditions of tranquillity and insight (*zhi gnas dang lhag mthong gi tshogs, śamatha-vipaśyanā-saṃbhāra)* should enter into meditation'.
11. Plus the *kṛt-pratyaya* '*athac*'. See Pāṇini 3.3.92. Thanks to Sanjay Kumar Shastri of McGill University for clarifying the derivations of *samādhi* and *śamatha*.
12. Bhk 3 3.1-4: *tatra śamathaś cittaikāgratā / vipaśyanā bhūtapratyavekṣeti saṃkṣepād āryaratnameghādau bhagavatā śamathavipaśyanayor lakṣanam uktam /*; D 56b3-4: *de la mdor na zhi gnas ni sems rtse gcig pa nyid do / lhag mthong ni yang dag pa la rtog pa'o / zhes bcom ldan 'das kyis 'phags padkon mchog sprin la sogs pa las zhi gnas dang lhag mthong gi mthsan nyid bka' stsal to /*: 'Thus in the noble *Ratnamegha* and elsewhere the Bhagavān concisely stated the definition of tranquillity and insight, "Tranquillity is one-pointedness of mind, insight is the discernment of reality"'. Also quoted at Bhk 2 D 47a2.

> knowledge emerges on the basis of accurately realizing the true nature of *dharmas*. And on that basis all obscuration is removed, just as the night by the dawning of the sun.[13]

The difference between tranquillity and insight can also be understood in terms of the application of concepts to the object of the meditation. Adhering to the *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra*, Kamalaśīla asserts that *śamatha* is nonconceptual *(nirvikalpa)* and that *vipaśyanā* is conceptual *(savikalpa)*.

> [T]he *Bhagavān* taught four realities as meditation objects for yogis: a) a reflection without conceptualization b) a reflection accompanied by conceptualization c) the limit of things and d) the perfection of purpose. In this context, when by means of tranquillity one has committed oneself to a reflection of all *dharmas* or to a form like that of the Buddha, that which is depended upon is called a reflection without conceptualization *(nirvikalpa-pratibimbakam)*. It is called without conceptualization here because of an absence of concepts determining the real object-meaning *(bhūtārtha)*. And it is called a reflection because it is depended upon, having committed oneself to a reflection of *dharmas* as they have been learned and understood. When, by means of insight, the yogin analyses *(vicārayati)* that very reflection in order to realize reality, then it is called a reflection accompanied by conceptualization *(savikalpa-pratibimbakam)* on account of the presence there of a concept determining reality (*tattva*), which is the characteristic of insight.[14]

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13. Bhk 3 1.10–14: *śamathabalena svālambane cittam aprakampyaṃ bhavati nivātasthitapradīpavat / vipaśyanayā yathāvad dharmatattvāvagamāt samyagjñānālokaḥ samutpadyate / tataḥ sakalam āvaraṇaṃ prahīyate / andhakāravad ālokodayāt* / D 56a2-3: *zhi gnas kyi stobs kyis ni mar me rlung med pa na gnas pa bzhin du dmigs pa las sems mi gyo bar 'gyur ro / lhag mthong gis mun par nyi ma shar ba bzhin du chos kyi de kho na ji lta ba bzhin du rab tu rtogs pas yang dag pa'i shes rab kyi snang ba 'byung ste / sgrib pa mtha dag spong bar 'gyur ro /*.

14. Bhk 3 1.14–2.5: */ ata eva bhagavatā catvāry ālambanavastūni yogināṃ nirdiṣṭāni / nirvikalpapratibimbakam / savikalpapratibimbakam / vastuparyantatā / kāryapariniṣpattiś ca / tatra śamathena yat sarvadharmapratibimbakaṃ buddhādirūpaṃ cādhimucyālambyate tan nirvikalpapratibimbakam ucyate / tatra bhūtārthanirūpaṇāvikalpābhāvān nirvikalpakam ucyate / yathāśrutodgṛhītānāñ ca dharmāṇāṃ pratibimbakamadhimucyālambyata iti kṛtvā pratibimbakam ucyate / tad eva pratibimbakaṃ yadā vipaśyanayā vicārayati yogī tattvādhigamārthaṃ tadā savikalpapratibimbakam ucyate / tattvanirūpaṇāvikalpasya vipaśyanālakṣaṇasya tatra samudbhavāt /*; D 56a3-7: *de lta bas na bcom ldan 'das kyis rnal 'byor pa rnams kyi dmigs pa'i dngos po bzhi bstan te / rnam par mi rtog pa'i gzugs brnyan dang / rnam par rtog pa dang bcas pa'i gzugs brnyan dang / dngos po'i mtha dang / dgos pa yongs su grub pa'o / de la zhi gnas kyis na chos thams cad kyi gzugs brnyan gang yin pa dang / sangs rgyas kyi gzugs la sogs pa la mos nas dmigs pa ste / de ni rnam par mi rtog pa'i gzugs brnyan zhes bya'o / de la yang dag pa'i don la rnam par rtog pa med pas na de rnam par mi rtog pa zhes bya'o / ji ltar thos pa dang ji ltar zin pa'i chos rnams kyi gzugs brnyan zhes bya'o / rnal 'byor pas de kho na'i don rtogs par bya ba'i phyir gang gi tshe lhag mthong gis gzugs brnyan de nyid la spyod pa de'i tshe lhag mthong gi mtshan nyid de kho na la rtogs pa'i rnam par rtog pa de na yod pas na rnam par rtog pa dang bcas pa'i gzugs brnyan zhes bya'o /*.

Thus, according to Kamalaśīla, in *vipaśyanā* concepts (*vikalpa*) are deliberately applied when one analyses (*vicārayati*) the meditation object. Kamalaśīla's use of the verbal form, *vicārayati,* can be taken to indicate the fact that he considered a kind of subtle thought (*vicāra*) to be present in *vipaśyanā*. If this is so, it raises the question as to Kamalaśīla's views regarding the compatibility of *vipaśyanā* and *dhyāna*.

Before addressing this question directly, it would be prudent to investigate Kamalaśīla's understanding of the logical relations obtaining among the other key meditation terms. An important passage that captures these relations can be found at the opening of the third *Bhāvanākramaḥ:*

> Homage to Tārā! The *Bhāvanākramaḥ* is related in brief for those who are beginners in the way of the Mahāyāna *Sūtras*. In that context, even if the *samādhi* of *bodhisattvas* was taught by the *Bhagavan* to be limitless, by way of the (four) immeasurables and all the rest, nevertheless all *samādhis* are subsumed under tranquillity and insight. Therefore, precisely that path which carries the union of tranquillity and insight is related.[15]

There are many points made in this brief passage. First, the universe of discourse is defined: as we have noted, the text is specifically addressing the spiritual practice of beginners who wish to become proficient in the way set out in the Mahāyāna *Sūtras*. Secondly, for our purposes, we must notice that every *samādhi* or state of concentration is here said to be included under the rubric of tranquillity and insight. It is notable that the division of tranquillity and insight is made among *samādhis* or states of concentration, and not within *bhāvanā* as such. Given the fact that *bhāvanā* is also divisible into tranquillity and insight, this consideration suggests a conception of *samādhi* as coextensive with *bhāvanā* within the intended universe of discourse for these texts. Assuming for the moment that this is so, we can imagine Kamalaśīla's working understanding of the relationship between the terms as follows. Like the concepts of lake and lakeshore, or parent and child, the concepts of *samādhi* and *bhāvanā* would be mutually implicative, although not identical in meaning. The difference in their usages would rest in the fact that *bhāvanā* is a term for meditative *processes* while *samādhi* is a term principally used to indicate meditative *states*, as well as processes.[16] If this is so, then Kamalaśīla's working understanding of the relationship between

15. Bhk 3 1.2–6: *namastārāyai / mahāyānasūtrāntanayapravṛttānāṃ saṃkṣepato bhāvanākramaḥ kathyate / tatra yady api bodhisattvānām aparimito 'pramāṇādibhedena bhagavatā samādhir upadiṣṭaḥ, tathāpi śamathavipaśyanābhyāṃ sarve samādhayo vyāptā iti / sa eva śamathavipaśyanā-yuganaddhavāhī mārgas tāvat kathyate* / D 56b6–57a2: *'jam dpal gzhon nur gyur pa la phyag 'tshal lo / theg pa chen po mdo sde'i tshul la zhugs pa rnams kyi phyir bsgom pa'i rim pa mdor brjod par bya'o / de la bcom ldan 'das kyi byang chub sems dpa' rnams kyi ting nge 'dzin tha dad pa tshad med dpag tu med pa la sogs pa bstan du zin kyang / zhi gnas dang lhag mthong gnyis kyis ting nge 'dzin thams cad la khyab pas na zhi gnas dang lhag mthong zun du 'brel pa 'jug pa'i lam de nyid brjod par bya'o /.*

16. That *bhāvanā* is the principal term for meditative processes is reflected in the fact that it is typically a conjugation of the verbal root √*bhū* (*e.g. bhāvayet*, one should meditate on, one should

samādhi and *bhāvanā* is as follows: any instance of *bhāvanā* implies *samādhi* and any instance of *samādhi* implies *bhāvanā* (*Bh* if and only if *S*). In effect, what this means is that we cannot conceive one without also implying the other. (It does not mean that every proposition that is true of the one is true of the other).

Given this understanding, we may now return to the question of Kamalaśīla's understanding of the relationship between *dhyāna and vipaśyanā*. We can approach this topic initially by asking how our author may have regarded the relationship between *dhyāna* and *bhāvanā*. While Kamalaśīla nowhere comments directly on this issue, given the analysis just made, *samādhi* can be seen as a kind of 'bridge term' linking his conceptions of *dhyāna* and *bhāvanā*. By recalling the relationship between *samādhi* and *dhyāna*, discussed earlier, a logical structure begins to emerge. The four *dhyānas*, it will be remembered, are all specific forms of meditative concentration (*samādhi*). Thus any instance of *dhyāna* is also an instance of *samādhi* (If *Dh* then *S*). The reverse, however, is not the case; we have seen that *samādhi* is the wider term, encompassing some forms of concentration not included in the four *dhyānas*. From this it follows that while *dhyāna* implies *bhāvanā* (If *Dh* then *Bh*), the reverse (If B h then Dh) is not the case. There are some instances of *bhāvanā* where *dhyāna* is not involved.

With these considerations in mind, we can view our question concerning the interrelationship of meditation terms in the *Bhāvanākramas* as a kind of dilemma of translation. If, on the one hand, we translate *dhyāna* as meditation, then this would open the door to the logical possibility that some forms of *bhāvanā* would not be properly conceived of as meditation for these texts. This would be consistent with a view of *bhāvanā* as 'cultivation' in the wider, non-technical sense mentioned above. Some instances of *bhāvanā* would not have been considered by Kamalaśīla as involving that concentration or one-pointedness of mind which, in the Buddhist tradition, is the hallmark of meditative states of consciousness. In particular, this way of understanding the texts opens up the possibility that the *vipaśyanā* component of *bhāvanā* might have been conceived as a kind of complimentary intellectual process of logical reasoning (*yukti*) that is not fundamentally meditative in nature. *Vipaśyanā* might not have been understood as a form of meditative concentration in the technical sense of one pointedness of mind. According to this way of thinking, the term 'meditation' would be restricted to states of *samādhi* (including the *dhyānas*) in which there is no deliberate discursive activity.[17]

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cultivate) that is employed when the actual procedure for meditating is being described. There are no instances of a conjugation of *sam* + *ā* + √*dhā* in these texts. In the Tibetan, as well, it is the verb *sgom pa* (equivalent to *bhāvanā*) that is employed in these contexts.

17. This way of reading the *Bhāvanākramas* would emphasize the continuity of Kamalaśīla's thought with that of the Buddhist epistemological tradition going back to Dignāga. Hayes (1988: 168) and Prévèreau (1994: 33) have both suggested that *cintāmayī prajñā* is identified as a kind of *vipaśyanā* meditation by Dignāga (c. 480–540). According to Prévèreau, 'Yaśomitra suggests that *vipaśyanā* is synonymous with *prajñā* (AKIV:14) so that there is not only the insight brought

This understanding, however, raises a problem. If *vipaśyanā*, as a process of conceptual analysis, is not understood as meditative in nature, this would appear to be at odds with Kamalaśīla's acceptance of the subdivision of *samādhi* into non-conceptual *śamatha* and conceptual *vipaśyanā*. We would be forced to conclude that Kamalaśīla's account is inconsistent.

If, on the other hand, *bhāvanā* is translated as 'meditation', then the process of *vipaśyanā* will necessarily be understood as meditative in nature. However, the nature of *vipaśyanā* as a mental process that is at once concentrative and analytic will be problematic. How can the mind remain focused on one point and engage in conceptual analysis at the same time? On this understanding, Kamalaśīla's account would appear to be unintelligible.

So how do we decide? In order to address this issue, I will discuss Kamalaśīla's ideas in light of a fundamental conceptual paradigm upon which the *Bhāvanākrama*s are based. I will then argue that if we wish to take this deep structure of Indian thought seriously, the best term to translate as 'meditation' is *bhāvanā*. On this account, Kamalaśīla's conception of *vipaśyanā* would be one of a meditative process, rather than one of ordinary logical reasoning.

THREE KINDS OF WISDOM

The arguments found in the *Bhāvanākrama*s rest upon a deep cultural presupposition that there exist three basic kinds of wisdom or learning (*prajñā*) – those associated with study, thinking, and meditation (*śrutamayī prajnā, cintāmayī prajñā*, and *bhāvanāmayī prajñā*). This paradigm constitutes one of India's oldest and most fundamental ways of conceiving the process of spiritual practice.[18] It is already mentioned in the Pāli Canon and later in Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* and Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*.[19] Although conceptions of its scope and place on

about by mental discipline (*bhāvanā*) to which today's meditators tend to limit themselves, but also that brought about by critical reasoning (*cintā*)'. Prévèreau asserts that Dignāga introduced a new way of doing *vipaśyanā* consisting in critical reasoning. It could well be that a tendency to identify insight with profound (but nevertheless non-meditative) thinking originated with Dignāga. Even so, the influences upon Kamalaśīla were many and he may well have held to a conception of meditation based more upon the descriptions given in various *sūtra*s, particularly those of the Yogācāra school. This is the light in which I have interpreted his views.

18. For recent treatments, see Balagangadhara (2005: 1005–7) and especially, for Vasubandhu and Kamalaśīla, Nichols (2005).

19. See *Dīgha Nikāya* III 219; *Vism* XIV, 14: 438. Interestingly, what appears to be a parallel version of the same schema is to be found in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, where the terminology differs but the general threefold structure is clearly identifiable B.U. II 4.5: *ātmā va are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ / maitreyi ātmano vāre darśanena śravaṇena matyā vijñānenedaṃ sarvaṃ viditam //*: 'You see, Maitreyī – it is one's self (*ātman*) which one should see and hear, and on which one should reflect and concentrate. For by seeing and hearing one's self, and by reflecting and concentrating on one's self, one gains the knowledge of this whole world' (trans. in Olivelle, 1996: 28–9). See also B.U. IV 5.6 (69–70). I am grateful to Christine Fillion for giving me these references. See Fillion (2004).

the Buddhist path vary, among western students of Buddhism this prototype has today become so generally accepted as to border on the platitudinous rather than the profound. Its significance, however, may not have always been fully appreciated. When examined, this apparently simple schema yields some rather curious and intriguing implications. Here we shall begin our examination with one of its early formulations – the account found in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*:

> (The wisdom) arisen from study (*śrutamayī*) is a certitude born from the authority of a qualified person (*āpta-vacana-prāmāṇyajāta*); the wisdom arisen from thinking (*cintāmayī*) is born from the profound reflection of reasoning (*yukti-nidhyānajā*); the wisdom arisen from *bhāvanā* (*bhāvanāmayī*) ... is born from concentration (*samādhijā*).[20]

The account given by Vasubandhu regards the three kinds of wisdom as progressive – the wisdom arisen from thinking basing itself on the wisdom arisen from study, and the wisdom arisen from *bhāvanā* basing itself on that arisen from thinking.[21]

Kamalaśīla describes the wisdom of thinking as a process in which one disentangles two kinds of scriptural statement, the *nītārtha* and the *neyārtha*. This important hermeneutical distinction is a tool developed by Buddhists in order to classify scriptural statements as respectively definitive or provisional in

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20. Abhk 892.3–4: *āptavacanaprāmāṇyajātaniścayā śrutamayī, yuktinidhyānajā cintāmayī, samādhijā bhāvanāmayīti ...* .

21. Abhk 861.4–6: *śrutvā cintayati / aviparītam cintayitvā bhāvanāyāṃ prayujyate / samādhau tasya śrutamayīṃ prajñāṃ niśritya cintāmayī jāyate / cintāmayīṃ niśritya bhāvanāmayī jāyate* /: 'Having studied, he thinks. Having thought correctly, he engages in *bhāvanā*. Having relied on the wisdom arisen from study of one in *samādhi*, (the wisdom) arisen from thinking is born. Having relied on (the wisdom) arisen from thinking, (the wisdom) arisen from *bhāvanā* is born'.

It is important to notice that Vasubandhu interprets the affix (*taddhita-pratyaya*) *-mayaṭ* in a very specific way, namely, as indicating a cause *(hetu)* and thus having a sense of 'arisen from' or 'transformation of'. The idea of 'cause' appears to be intended here in the sense of a *preceding*, effective cause. Abhk 892.4–5: *tadyathā – annamayāḥ prāṇāḥ, tṛṇamayyo gāva iti* / : 'Vital breaths are the result of food, cows are the result of grass'. However, it is also normal to understand the suffix more in the sense of a *present*, material cause meaning 'made of', 'consisting of', or even 'having the nature *(svabhāva)* of'. See Pāṇini 4.3.82 ff.

The ambiguity here may be understood to imply another important ambiguity: that between 'state' and 'process'. If we accept the understanding of *-mayaṭ* as indicating a preceding effective cause, then the wisdoms associated with study, thinking and *bhāvanā* are more readily conceived 'statically' as results, which is to say as *states* of knowledge that have arisen. On the other hand, if we take the affix to indicate a cause in the sense of a present material cause ('consisting in', 'having the nature of') then the three kinds of wisdom may also be interpreted in a more 'dynamic' sense, as processes. The affix *-mayaṭ* is ambiguous and lends itself to being interpreted in either one of the two senses noted, depending on context. Another way of making the same point would be to say that it can function analogously to either a *pañcāmītatpuruṣa* (ablative determinative) or a *karmadhārya* compound. On the latter interpretation, wisdom would be identified with the very processes of studying, thinking and *bhāvanā*, not with the results of these processes. It appears to me that Kamalaśīla's understanding shifts between these two conceptions. I therefore translate *-mayaṭ* in an open ended manner, analogous in meaning to a *ṣāṣṭhī tatpuruṣa* – i.e. the wisdom *of* thinking.

meaning. For the Madhyamaka tradition, the distinction is cashed out in terms of their reference: definitive statements are those that pertain to ultimate truth (i.e. variously *anutpāda, śūnyatā, parama-tattva, tathatā, pudgala-dharma-nairātmya*, etc.), provisional statements refer to the conventional (Thurman, 1978: 26, 32–4). According to Kamalaśīla's account, it is the task of the wisdom of thinking to identify which statements refer to the real object or meaning (*bhūtam arthaṃ*) and which do not. The task of the wisdom of *bhāvanā* is to *realize* the meaning or object that is real.

> There, first of all, the wisdom of study should be generated. For through it one initially 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 *(bhūta, i.e. nītārtha)* by means of that (wisdom of thinking), one should realize (*bhāvayet)* it, not that which is unreal *(abhūta i.e. neyārtha).*[22]

Thus Kamalaśīla's discussion of the wisdom of *bhāvanā* details the process for experientially realizing the conclusions regarding ultimate reality that have already been reached through the wisdom of thinking. It is intriguing to observe that the same verbal root √*bhū* lies at the basis of both *bhāvanā* and the word we have here translated as 'real', *bhūta*.

We should also notice another important conceptual link made by Kamalaśīla himself in this context: that between *bhāvanā* and another term derived from √*bhū*, namely, *anubhāva*, 'experience' (literally, 'following the real'). In the first *Bhāvanākramaḥ*, Kamalaśīla commences his discussion of *bhāvanāmayīprajñā* with the statement, 'Experience *(anubhāva)* belongs to those who practice'.[23] This kind of experiential wisdom can be seen to depend on and encompass the other two kinds of wisdom. One 'realizes' or 'meditates on' the conclusions already reached by thinking. What it means to realize or meditate in this way is a rather subtle question. While it definitely includes a conceptual dimension, it also appears to be different from a simple case of thinking deeply about some profound topic. The wisdom of *bhāvanā* is conceived as having a 'direct' character, it is 'experiential' – this is what distinguishes it from the mere wisdom of thinking (*cintāmayī*

22. Bhk 1 198.10–13: *tatra prathamaṃ tāvat śrutamayī prajñotpādanīyā / tayā hi tāvad āgamārtham avadhārayati / tataś cintāmayyā prajñayā nītaneyārthaṃ nirvedhayati / tatas tayā niścitya bhūtam arthaṃ bhāvayen nābhūtam /*. Also see Bhk 2 D 46a7–b1: *tshul bzhin bsam pa gang zhe na / gang nges pa'i don gyi mdo sde dang drang ba'i don gyi mdo sde la sogs pa legs par gtan la 'bebs pa ste / de ltar byang chub sems dpa' the tshom med na bsgom pa la gcig tu nges par 'gyur ro // de lta ma yin na the tshom gyis 'phyang mo nyug pa'i theg pa la 'dug pa ni lam kha brag gi mdor phyin pa'i mi ltar gang du yang gcig tu nges par mi 'gyur ro //*: 'And who is correct in thought? He is one who is settled with regard to the system of the *Sūtras* of definitive and provisional meaning. If a *bodhisattva* is without doubt in this regard, he will be certain in meditation. If it was not like this, if one was on an uncertain course due to doubt, then he couldn't become certain of anything at all – just like a man who has arrived at the juncture of a forked road'.

23. Bhk 1 204.14–15: *anubhāvaś ca pratipattīṇāṃ.* D 30b 3: *sgrub pa po rnams la yang nyams yod de /*.

prajñā). It is an experiential process of discerning reality, one that occurs in a concentrated state (*samādhi*).

In the Buddhist context, direct experience possesses an epistemologically privileged position; it is considered indubitable in a way that conclusions reached through reasoning alone are not. Here the two forms of wisdom may be contrasted as 'thinking through' what one has studied (*cintāmayī prajñā*) versus actually 'going through' or concentratedly 'experiencing' the reality of what one has already thought through (*bhāvanāmayī prajñā*). In the third *Bhāvanākramaḥ*, Kamalaśīla makes this point using an analogy:

> And whatever is known through the wisdom of study and thinking is itself to be realized through the wisdom of *bhāvanā* (*bhāvanāmayyā prajñayā bhāvanīyaṃ*), nothing else. (For example), it is like a horse running along a previously indicated running track. Therefore the discernment of reality (*bhūta-pratyavekṣā*) is to be undertaken.[24]

Thus Kamalaśīla maintains that *bhāvanāmayī prajñā* is required for Awakening and that this form of wisdom constitutes a more direct realization than *cintāmayī prajñā*. From this he concludes that the 'discernment of reality' (*bhūta-pratyavekṣā*) should be undertaken. It will be recalled that this 'discernment of reality' is explicitly identified by Kamalaśīla with insight (*vipāśyanā*). Thus it seems that *bhāvanāmayī prajñā*, conceived as a process for realizing the true nature of reality, can here be especially identified with one branch of the well-known two-branch schema of *bhāvanā*: *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*.

As the most profound of the three kinds of wisdom, *bhāvanāmayī prajñā* is identifiable with insight *par excellence*. Given this fact it would seem reasonable to translate *bhāvanā* as 'meditation' in the context of these texts. The problem with translating *dhyāna* as 'meditation' is that Kamalaśīla's opponent is portrayed as adhering to a conception of *dhyāna* that does not include processes of *bhūta-pratyavekṣā*. While Kamalaśīla himself may have accepted the idea that *vipaśyanā* can occur in the first *dhyāna*, his opponent is portrayed as definitely not accepting any such conjunction.

How then are we to understand the relation between the two concepts of meditation for these texts? The answer is that *bhāvanā* is best conceived as the broader term: *bhāvanā* includes *dhyāna* –a term which is principally associated with non-conceptual meditation – but it is not exhausted by it. If this is so, then *dhyāna* would perhaps be translated as 'absorption', or as some other term suggestive of its status as a subspecies of meditation. After all, one would not normally wish to translate '*pomme*' as 'fruit'!

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24. Bhk 3 20.3–6: *kiṃ ca yad eva śrūtacintāmayyāprajñayā viditaṃ tad eva bhāvanāmayyā prajñayā bhāvanīyaṃ nānyat / saṃdiṣṭa[dhāvana]-bhūmyaśvadhāvanavat / tasmāt bhūtapratyavekṣā kartavyā* / D 64a2–3: *yang thos pa dang bsam pa las byung ba'i shes rab kyis rtogs pa gang yin pa de nyid bsgom pa las byung ba'i shes rab kyi bsgom par bya'i / gzhan du ni ma yin te rta dkyu sa kyi sa bstan nas rgyug pa bzhin no / de lta bas na yang dag par so sor brtag par bya'o /*. On the analogy of the running horse, see Abhk 328: 10–13.

We can see that the question of the best Sanskrit equivalent for 'meditation' in the *Bhāvanākramas* is not unrelated to the debate between Kamalaśīla and Mo ho yen. It is perhaps not without reason that these three texts were so repetitively entitled 'The Process of *Bhāvanā*'. *Bhāvanā* is a term for processes that include the development of wisdom through concentrated conceptual activity. In the *Bhāvanākramas*, Kamalaśīla portrays his opponent as adhering to a conception of *dhyāna* that excludes deliberate conceptual activity. Kamalaśīla's charge against his Ch'an rival consisted precisely in the claim that he failed to understand the necessity of conceptual activity in the achievement of Awakening. As an advocate of *dhyāna*, Mo ho yen was viewed as interpreting Awakening as an accomplishment achieved simply by ceasing all mental activity.[25] But according to Kamalaśīla, it is only through the particular conceptual activity that is the discernment of reality *(bhūta-pratyavekṣā, vipaśyanā, prajñā-bhāvanā)* that nonconceptual knowledge or gnosis *(nirvikalpa-jñāna)* can arise.[26]

While Kamalaśīla's criticisms of Mo ho yen are centred upon the idea of knowledge (*jñāna*), Mo ho yen's critique of Kamalaśīla can be viewed as focusing on the idea of action (*karma*). It is the deliberate, volitional nature of the conceptual activities enjoined by Kamalaśīla that he objects to. Volitional activity is precisely that which binds sentient beings to the wheel of rebirth. As such, it is counterproductive. This would seem to be the crux of the disagreement. For Kamalaśīla, some actions are necessary to the achievement of Awakening.

If, then, *bhāvanā* is to be considered the broader term for meditation in these texts, and if *vipaśyanā* is a kind of *bhāvanā* that is necessary for Awakening, we

25. This doctrine is ascribed to the Ājīvakas. Bhk 3 20.14–16: *yac cāpy ucyate / na kiṃcit kuśalādikarma kartavyam iti / tatraivaivaṃvadatā karmakṣayān muktir ity ājivakavādābhyupagamo bhavet /*; D 64b1 4: *yang dag ba la sogs pa'i las ci yang mi bya'o zhes zer ba de ni de skad smra bas las zas nas grol bar 'gyur ro zhes mu stegs can kun tu tshol ba'i smra ba khas blang par 'gyur ro /*: '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 Ājīvakas, that is, liberation on the basis of karma's destruction'.

26. When the practitioner reaches the point of comprehending emptiness nonconceptually, this constitutes 'the limit of things' mentioned above (Bhk 3 2.8–10; D 56a7–b1) and the arising of the first stage and transcendent path of the *bodhisattva*. On this basis, gradually but inevitably the *bodhisattva*'s purpose is perfected and the omniscience of Buddhahood is achieved. Quoting from the *Ratnakuṭa*, the ultimate justification for the practice of insight is dramatically explained. Bhk 2 D 49b5–b6: *gang shes rab kyis dngos po'i ngo bo nyid so sor brtags nas mi bsgom gyi / yid la byed pa yongs su spong ba tsam 'ba' zhig sgom par byed pa de'i rnam par rtog pa nam yang mi ldog* (NP *rtog*) *cing ngo bo nyid med pa nyid* (NP omit *nyid*) *rtogs* (Goshima follows NP: *rtog*) *par yang mi 'gyur te / shes rab kyi snang ba med pa'i phyir ro // 'di ltar "yang dag par so sor rtog pa nyid las yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin du shes pa'i me byung na gtsubs shing gtsubs pa'i me bzhin du rtog pa'i shing sreg go" zhes bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal to //*: 'Someone who only cultivates the mere abandonment of mental activity, but who does not meditate having analysed the nature of entities with wisdom, will never get rid of concepts and will not come to realize the absence of inherent nature – on account of the absence of the light of wisdom. So it is said by the Illustrious One, "When the fire of knowing reality as such arises from the very discernment of reality, it incinerates the wood of concepts, just as the fire of firesticks rubbed together [consumes the sticks themselves]"'. See also Bhk 3 30.8–11.

may well ask what precisely its undertaking was thought to involve. Here I can only give a brief indication of Kamalaśīla's conception, in relation to other meditation terminology already discussed.

First of all, the process is described as being undertaken while actually abiding in a state of *śamatha*. '[H]aving renounced all obscurations, one who wants pure knowledge to arise must cultivate wisdom while abiding in tranquillity'.[27]

Similar considerations apply to *samādhi*. Quoting from the *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra:*

> ... [H]aving abandoned mental distractions, he inwardly discerns those very same previously considered *dharma*s as reflections in the sphere of concentration (T. *ting nge 'dzin*, Skt. *samādhi*). In this manner, discriminating the meaning of what is to be known in those reflections in the sphere of concentration, thoroughly discriminating, completely considering, completely investigating, forbearing, accepting, classifying, looking and knowing – *That* is called insight. So it is that the bodhisattva is skilled in insight.[28]

Thus while Kamalaśīla's views regarding the compatibility of *vipaśyanā* with both *samādhi* and *śamatha* are clear, the question still remains as to whether he regarded its conjunction with *dhyāna* as possible. In the *Bhāvanākrama*s the two terms are never mentioned in the same breath. In spite of this fact, my suggestion is that Kamalaśīla did regard them as compatible and that, given the presence of thought (*vitarka-vicāra*) within the first *dhyāna*, it is precisely this meditative state that theoretically allows the two to come together. Indeed, among the *dhyāna*s, this conjunction would have been considered possible *only* in the first *dhyāna* - since thought is absent from the second to the fourth *dhyāna*s. In particular, it may well have been the higher, intermediate division of the first absorption (*dhyānāntara*) that Kamalaśīla associated with the possibility of the practice of insight meditation. It will be recalled that it is in this division that gross thought (*vitarka*) is absent while subtle thought *(vicāra)* remains. If we associate the activity of subtle thought with the verbal form *vicārayati,* employed by Kamalaśīla in

27. Bhk 2 D 44b7–45a1: *de lta bas na sgrib pa 'mtha dag spangs nas yongs su dag pa'i ye shes 'byung bar 'dod pas zhi gnas la gnas shing shes rab bsgom par bya'o* //. While basic, such a notion has been taken by some scholars as suggesting a conceptual tension in Buddhist meditation theory. How can conceptual analysis occur in a state of one-pointed meditation? According to Griffiths, it led to various attempts to regard insight as occurring in 'liminal states' between the *dhyāna*s. This difficulty may well provide some explanation for the postulation of an intermediate *dhyāna.* (1983: 245–51, 285–7; also see Vetter, 1988: xxv–xxvii).

28. Bhk 2 D 47a7–47b2: *sems kyi rnam par g.yeng ba spangs nas ji ltar bsams pa'i chos de dag nyid nang du ting nge 'dzin gyi spyod yul gzugs brnyan du so sor rtog par byed / mos par byed do // de ltar ting nge 'dzin gyi spyod yul gzugs brnyan de dag la shes bya'i don de rnam par 'byed pa dang / rab tu rnam par 'byed pa dang / yongs su rtog pa dang / yongs su dpyod pa dang / bzod pa dang / 'dod pa dang / bye brag 'byed pa dang / lta ba dang / rtog pa gang yin pa de ni lhag mthong zhes bya ste / de ltar na byang chub sems dpa' lhag mthong la mkhas pa yin no" zhes gsungs so* //. (See Powers, 1995: 150–52, 341–2).

describing the practice of insight according to the *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra*, the connection would be made.[29]

The other possibility, as discussed, is that insight be understood in terms of

29. Indeed this would seem to be confirmed by Kamalaśīla's employment of the same verb in describing the experiential process of conceptual analysis outlined in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. In editing the Sanskrit text of Bhk 1, Tucci created a separate section for this description, No. 16, which he entitled 'Method of meditation according to the *Laṅkāvatāra*; vicāra on the dharmas (no object, no subject), etc'. This section occurs immediately following Kamalaśīla's discussion of *dhyāna*; both are set in the overall context of *bhāvanāmayī prajñā*. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to deal extensively with Kamalaśīla's account of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, a brief excerpt should suffice to demonstrate the experiential quality of the language he employs. After having stabilized the mind on the five aggregates as a meditation object (Bhk 1 206.7–15), the analytic process is described as commencing with an analysis of *dharmas* with material form: Bhk 1 210.16–211.4: *prathamaṃ yogī ye rūpiṇo dharmā bāhyārthatayā paraiḥ parikalpitās teṣu tāvad vicārayet / kim ete vijñānād anye, āhosvid vijñānam evaitat tathā pratibhāsate, yathā svapnāvasthāyām iti / tatra vijñānād bahiḥ paramāṇuśo vicārayet / paramāṇūṃś ca bhāgaśaḥ pratyavekṣamāṇo yogītān arthān na samanupaśyati / tasyāsamanupaśyata evaṃ bhavati / cittamātram evaitat sarvaṃ na punar bāhyo 'rtho vidyate / tad evam / "cittamātraṃ samāruhya bāhyam arthaṃ na kalpayet" rūpidharmavikalpān tyajed ityarthaḥ / teṣām upa[labdhi]lakṣaṇaprāptānāṃ vicārayed anupalabdheḥ / evaṃ rupiṇo dharmān vibhāvyārūpiṇo vibhāvayet /*; D 33a4–34b1: *thog mar rnal 'byor pas chos gzugs can gang dag gzugs la sogs pa phyi rol gyi don du gzhan dag gis brtags pa de dag la ci 'di dag rnam par shes pa las gzhan zhig yin nam / 'on te rnam par shes pa de nyid de ltar snang ste / rmi lam gnas skabs ji lta ba bzhin nam zhes dpyad par bya'o / de la rnam par shes pa las phyi rol pa rdul phra rab tu bshig ste / rdul phra rab rnams kyang cha shas kyis so sor brtags na rnal 'byor pas don de dag mi mthong ngo / des de dag ma mthong bas 'di snyam du 'di dag thams cad ni sems tsam ste phyi rol gyi don med do snyam du sems so / 'di ltar / sems tsam la ni rab brten nas / phyi rol don la mi brtag go / zhes de skad 'byung ba ni chos gzugs can la rnam par rtog pa spong ba'o zhes bya ba'i tha tshig go / dmigs su rung ba'i mtshan nyid du gyur pa de dag rnam par dpyad na mi dmigs pa'i phyir ro / de ltar chos gzugs can rnams rnam par bshig nas gzugs can ma yin pa rnam par bshig par bya ste /*: 'First of all the yogin should analyse (*vicārayet, 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 dreamstate?" In that regard [i.e. if the position held is that they have a nature] outside of consciousness, he should break them down into atoms (*paramāṇuśo vicārayet, T. rdul phra rab tu bshig ste).* And discerning (*pratyavekṣamāṇaḥ, T. so sor brtags pa)* those atoms by way of parts, the yogin does not see *(na samanupaśyati, T. mi mthong)* those things. Not seeing (them), he 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 he would abandon conceptualizations of *dharmas* that have a material form. He should draw a conclusion *(vicārayet, T. rnam par dpyad)* from the non-apprehension of those things that are in principle apprehensible. Thus having broken down *(vibhāvya, T. rnam par bshig nas) dharmas* with a material form, he should break down *(vibhāvya, T. rnam par bshig bya)* those without material form'.

It is apparent that here the conceptual analysis or 'breaking down' of experienced realities is considered part of the process of insight. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to consider the inferences comprising this analysis as instances of *cintāmayī prajñā*. Because they are undertaken while in the sphere of *samādhi*, they are properly considered as meditative in nature; they form part of what is meant by *bhāvanāmayī prajñā*. They appear to be distinct from cases of ordinary inference insofar as they seem to be conceived as directly 'based upon' objects and objective states of affairs being concurrently experienced in meditation. This appears to be so in the sense that the meditator is thought of as being able to remain one-pointedly focused upon such objects, holding them in view while 'analysing' them.

non-experiential processes of ordinary reasoning (*cintāmayī prajñā*); this opens the door to two possible ways of translating. The first would take *dhyāna* as the default term for meditation, exclusively referring to states in which there is no deliberate discursive activity. *Vipaśyanā* would be understood as a complimentary intellectual process that is not meditative in nature. But the problem with this suggestion is that it does not recognize Kamalaśīla's acceptance of *vipaśyanā* as a subdivision of *samādhi*, as discussed above. A second, more sophisticated possibility would treat both nonconceptual *dhyāna* and rational *vipaśyanā* as kinds of meditation – albeit forms which are distinct and mutually exclusive in their natures. As rational insight, *vipaśyanā* would count as a kind of meditation much in the same way as do Descartes' reflections for the western intellectual tradition. On this account, the process of meditation would have to consist of a serial alternation, back and forth, between the modes of ordinary rational thought and wholly non-conceptual concentration.[30] While coherent, the problem with this account is that it fails to take seriously the Indian division of wisdom into three kinds and the clear connection between *vipaśyanā* and *bhāvanāmayī prajñā*. Furthermore, and perhaps more tellingly, it does not accurately reflect Kamalaśīla's own descriptions of the process of insight. A careful reading of the texts shows that Kamalaśīla's understanding of the discernment of reality is not that of a kind of ordinary reasoning, but that of a special kind of conceptual analysis that occurs *while actually abiding in* a state of meditative concentration (*samādhi*).

While it is true that Kamalaśīla nowhere explicitly states that this includes the first *dhyāna*, there is no reason in principle to exclude this possibility, given the presence of thought therein. In fact, given Kamalaśīla's descriptions of the analytic process, the upper 'intermediate' division of the first *dhyāna* seems the most likely candidate for the sphere of concentration in which this special kind of conceptual analysis is practised. As described in the *Bhāvanākrama*s, the discernment of reality involves cultivating an accurate perception of the true nature of the constituents of conventional reality. In other words, it involves the 'discrimination of *dharma*s' (*dharma-pravicaya*). This discrimination involves mindfulness practices (*smṛtyupasthāna*) and specific acts of what might be called 'perceptual judgement' as to the ultimate emptiness of *dharma*s. At one point Kamalaśīla describes this experiential process of examining the nature of *dharma*s as being so vivid that it is like looking at the blemishes on one's face through its reflection in a mirror.[31] It

30. On the conception of the process of meditation as a kind of serial alternation, see Williams (1989: 72–4) and Ruegg (1989: 111–12).

31. Bhk 3 2.5–8: *tasyaiva ca pratibimbasya svabhāvaṃ nirūpayan yogī, darpaṇāntargatasvamukhaṃ pratibimbapratyavekṣaṇena svamukhagatavairūpyāṇāṃ viniścayavat, sarvadharmāṇāṃ yathāvat svabhāvāgamāt* /; D 56a7–8: *rnal 'byor pa gzugs brnyan de nyid kyi ngo bo nyid la rtog pas chos thams cad kyi ngo bo nyid ji lta ba bzhin du khong du chud de / bdag gis bzhin gyi gzugs me long gi nang du byung ba la brtags na bdag gi bzhin la mi sdug pa la sogs pa mngon pa bzhin no* /: 'And in determining the nature of that very reflection on the basis of understanding the nature of all *dharma*s as they are, the yogin is as if ascertaining blemishes upon his own face by discerning its reflection in a mirror'.

seems clear that Kamalaśīla is not describing a case of ordinary logical reasoning, but rather a subtle form of *meditative* analysis. It is an intentionally undertaken practice that occurs in a heightened state of one-pointed consciousness, a practice that is at once conceptual analysis and meditation.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abhk	*Abhidharmakośa & bhāṣya of Ācarya Vasubandhu with Sphutārthā commentary of Ācarya Yaśomitra*, Swami Dwārikādās Śāstrī (ed.) (Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati, 1987).
B. U.	*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*
Bhk	*Bhāvanākramaḥ*
Pāṇini	*Aṣṭadhyāyī of Pāṇini*, Roman transliteration and English trans. Sumitra M. Katre (1987) (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1989).
Skt.	Sanskrit
Vism	*Visuddhimagga*
T.	Tibetan

Editions of the Tibetan Tanjur: C – Cone; D – Derge; N – Narthang; P - Peking

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Buddha-nature, Mind and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective

On the Transmission and Reception of Buddhism in India and Tibet

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levels (*traidhātukāvacarāḥ sarvakleśāḥ*) by means of the transmundane Path (*lokottaramārga*). In his case only two (rather than the usual four sequential) Fruits are achieved, namely those of the Stream-winner and the Arhat. The person in question is then stated mainly to reach full liberating knowledge (*ājñā*, of the Arhat) in the present existence (*dṛṣṭa-dharma*) or at the time of his death.[392]

It thus emerges clearly that the *sakṛnnairyāṇika* type of Srotaāpanna can achieve his goal rapidly, without acquiring successively all four Fruits of the *āryamārga*.

4. The Conjunction of Quieting and Insight and of Means and Discriminative Knowledge

One of the most important points repeatedly made by Kamalaśīla in his *Bhāvanākrama*s is that Quieting (*śamatha*) and Insight (*vipaśyanā*) should be conjoined (*yuganaddha*), that they must operate so to speak in conjunction like a pair of oxen teamed together (*yuganaddhavāhibalīvardadvayavat*). The perfect Path is accordingly described as operating as a syzygy of Quieting and Insight (*śamathavipaśyanāyuganaddhavāhī mārgo niṣpannaḥ*).[393]

Quieting, defined as one-pointedness of mind (*cittaikāgratā*),[394] involves observing the nine 'positions' or 'stations' of mind (*cittasthiti*) which are known from a number of sources such as the *Śrāvakabhūmi* and the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*.[395] As for *vipaśyanā*, it is defined as exact analytical investigation [of the real] (*bhūtapratyavekṣā*, *Bhāvanākrama*, III pp. 3, 5). This *bhūtapratyavekṣā* consists in the analysis of the factors of existence (*dharmapravicaya*), which is otherwise known as discriminative knowledge (*prajñā*) (III pp. 14–15). The *bhūta* is here explained as the non-

[392] When this is not so, the reason is one's resolve (*praṇidhānavaśena*); in that case, being born in the Kāmadhātu because of this resolve, one becomes a *pratyekajina* at a time when there is no *buddha*.

[393] Kamalaśīla, *Bhāvanākrama* III (ed. G. Tucci), pp. 1, 9–10. Compare the discussion in G. Bugault, *La notion de 'Prajñā' ou de sapience selon les perspectives du 'Mahāyāna'*[2] (Paris, 1982), pp. 56 ff., 75 ff.

[394] *Bhāvanākrama* III, p. 3.

[395] *Śrāvakabhūmi* (ed. Shukla), pp. 363–5; Asaṅga, *Abhidharmasamuccya*, p. 75; cf. *Peṭakopadesa*, p. 122, for an expanded list.

substantiality or essencelessness of both an individual self and the factors of existence (*pudgaladharmanairātmya*, III, p. 5).

The process of analytical investigation is no doubt associated with recollective attention (*smṛti*) and mentation (*manasikāra*) (cf. III, p. 16); but when brought to its highest point, *bhūtapratyavekṣā* is the necessary condition for the absence of both recollection (*asmṛti*) and mentation (*amanasikāra*) in the sense of non-constructive Gnosis (*nirvikalpaṃ jñānam*) and the ceasing of all mental and verbal proliferation (*prapañcopaśama*).[396]

If *śamatha* is in excess, the mind of the meditator will be blunted and dull and *prajñā* will then have to be especially cultivated. But if *prajñā* is in excess, his mind will be agitated and *śamatha* will then have to be cultivated in particular. When *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* are on the contrary in balance, the mind is in equilibrium (*samapravṛtta*). And in view of the absence then of both dullness (*laya*) and agitation (*auddhatya*) *citta* proceeds naturally of itself (*svarasavāhin*). It is then also stated to be in its natural state.[397]

It cannot therefore be maintained that the Perfections (*pāramitā*) are all comprised in *dhyāna*, and that by cultivating the latter all of them are cultivated (III, p. 25). All the Bodhisattva's virtues inclusive of *dhyāna* are in fact to be controlled by *prajñā*, and it is because of this *prajñā* that these qualities become true *pāramitās*. To proceed in accordance with this principle is referred to by Kamalaśīla as being *prajñottaradhyāyin*.[398] Such *dhyāna* in which *prajñā* is supreme is opposed to the 'Dhyāna' which is said to subsume all *pāramitās* in itself (III, pp. 25–26) – in other words, apparently, the 'Dhyāna' of Kamalaśīla's opponent Mo-ho-yen. And the exclusive observance of non-recollection (*asmṛti*) and non-mentation (*amanasikāra*) – i.e. the method advocated by Mo-ho-yen – would merely lead to a state like that of the cataleptic cessation of thinking (*cittanirodha*) by the worldling (*pṛthagjana*) on the level of the fourth Dhyāna (III, pp. 16–17) – i.e. the attainment of unconsciousness (*asaṃjñisamāpatti*) which is, how-

[396] *Bhāvanākrama* III, pp. 15–17; cf. pp. 94–95.

[397] *Bhāvanākrama* III, p. 9–10. Here Skt. *praśaṭhavāhin* is translated by Tib. *rnal du 'jug pa*.

[398] Tib. *śes rab mchog gi bsam gtan (pa)*. See *Bhāvanākrama* II (ed. K. Goshima), p. 47; III, p. 8; above, p. 95.

ever, not to be practised by the Buddhist Ārya.[399]

Kamalaśīla has supported his teaching concerning the co-ordination of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* by quoting a large number of Mahāyānasūtras. Among them is the *Saṃdhinirmocana*, Chapter viii of which is devoted to a detailed discussion of the subject. It was this Sūtra that the Hva šaṅ Mahāyāna cast aside according to a Tibetan tradition recorded in the *sBa bžed*.[400]

Beside this syzygy of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* (or *dhyāna* and *prajñā*), and in a position of no less importance, Kamalaśīla has placed the conjunction of Emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and Means (*upāya*) and of discriminative knowledge (*prajñā*) and practice (*caryā*) through means. Practice (*caryā*) is stated to consist in generosity (*dāna*) and the other virtues, as does salvific means (*upāya*).[401]

Now, when *śūnyatā* is thus correctly and indissolubly bonded with *upāya*, it is known to Kamalaśīla as Emptiness endowed with all excellent modes (*sarvākāravaropeta-śūnyatā*). This notion is contrasted with an isolated emptiness, that is, an 'emptiness-method' (*śūnyatānaya*) that makes of *śūnyatā* something that is a self-sufficient and independent principle (*ekanaya*).[402] Because of such a method of isolation, however, practice (*caryā*) would no longer be purified; and those who thus cultivate *śūnyatā* in isolation 'fall' in Nirvāṇa, like an Auditor (*kevalaṃ śūnyatām eva sevamānāḥ śrāvakavan nirvāṇe patanti*).[403] When the need for conjoining *prajñā* and *dhyāna* is not appreciated and *dhyāna* is overemphasized, the meditator's practice would, moreover, be like that of a Śrāvaka who attains the concentration of cessation (*nirodhasamādhi*)[404]

The correct method for a practiser involves then a gradual (*krameṇa*) procedure of purification (*viśuddhi*, III, p. 2), one in which the mind-continuum (*cittasaṃtati*) is purified in a way compared with the purification of gold by a metal-worker (III,

[399] See below, p. 202–03. Compare *sBa bžed*, G, p. 69; S, p. 58–59; Ñaṅ Ñi ma 'od zer, *Chos 'byuṅ Me tog sñiṅ po*, f. 431a–b; dPa' bo gTsug lag phreṅ ba, *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, f. 117a.

[400] See above, pp. 114–15.

[401] *Bhāvanākrama* III, pp. 14, 27–29.

[402] *Bhāvanākrama* I (ed. G. Tucci), p. 196; II, pp. 59–61; III, pp. 27–28.

[403] *Bhāvanākrama* III, p. 27.

[404] *Bhāvanākrama* III, p. 26.

p. 25). In this way one enters the *buddha*-stage (*tathāgatabhūmi*) after having progressively cleansed the preceding stages (*pūrvabhūmi*) (III, p. 25), each of which is purified (*pariśuddh-*) in a way similar to gold (III, p. 30). It has been noted above that the idea of the gradualness of the process of spiritual development is well attested in texts from the old canon, where it is sometimes compared with the metalworker's treatment of his material.[405]

The idea of the yoking together of Quiet (*samatha*) and Insight (*vipassanā*) is also well attested in texts of the old canon,[406] and in Pali treatises such as Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* (xxiii. 43).

Thus, in its description of the practiser who perfects the eightfold path, the constituents of Awakening, etc., the Majjhimanikāya (III 289) states that for him *samatha* and *vipassanā* are yoked (*yuganaddhā*).[406a] And in his comment on this passage in the *Papañcasūdanī* Buddhaghosa has defined this pair as yoked in a single-moment syzygy (*ekakkhaṇikayuganaddhā*), for concentration (*samāpatti*) and insight belong on the *ariyamagga* to one single moment (*ekakkhaṇikā*). This case he contrasts with the one where the two belong to different moments (*nānākkhaṇikā*).[406b] In the same commentary Buddhaghosa has also spoken of the serial (*paṭipātiyā*) attainment of the three marks (viz. *dukkha*, *anicca* and *anattā*) and production of *vipassanā* whereby the practiser attains the path of Stream-winning; at this moment, he then adds, the practiser penetrates the four *sacca*s by a single penetration (*ekapaṭivedha*) and comprehends by a single comprehension (*ekābhisamaya*).[406c]

[405] See above, pp. 175–6, 180.

[406] See for example Dīghanikāya III 213 and 273; Majjhimanikāya I 494 and 289. For Aṅguttaranikāya II 156–7, see below, pp. 187–8.

[406a] So read, instead of 'yuganandhā' in the Pali Text Society edition.

[406b] *Papañcasūdanī* V 104: *'yuganaddhā' ti ekakkhaṇikayuganaddhā. ete hi aññasmiṃ khaṇe samāpatti aññasmiṃ vipassanā ti evaṃ nānākkhaṇikā pi honti, ariyamagge pana ekakkhaṇikā.* For *nānākkhaṇa* and *nānārammaṇa* opposed to *ekakkhaṇa* and *ekārammaṇa*, see also Buddhaghosa's commentary on the Saṃyuttanikāya (*Sāratthappakāsinī* I 158), and Dhammapāla's on the *Itivuttaka* (*Paramatthadīpanī* [II], I 132). The *Paramatthadīpanī II* also deals with *samatha* and *vipassanā* as *yuganaddhā* (II 29).

[406c] *Papañcasūdanī* I 73: *evaṃ tīṇi lakkhaṇāni āropetvā paṭipātiyā vipassanaṃ pavattento sotāpattimaggaṃ pāpunāti. tasmiṃ khaṇe cattāri saccāni ekapaṭivedhen' eva paṭivijjhati, ekābhisamayena abhisameti.* For *ekābhisamaya* see also pp. 176–7.

The Peṭakopadesa has defined (p. 122) *samatha* in terms of *samādhi*, non-distraction and non-dispersal of thought, as well as of calming and one-pointedness of *citta*. And *vipassanā* has been defined there as analysis bearing on the *dhamma*s, analytical reflection (*vīmaṃsā*), weighing, *ñāṇa*, *vijjā* and *paññā* as well as various forms of illumination (*obhāsa*, *āloka*, *ābhā*, *pabhā*). This text then goes on to remark (pp. 123–4) that by developing *samatha* one comprehends the material (*rūpa*), thereby eliminating desire (*taṇhā*) and so realizing *cetovimutti* by detachment from passions (*rāgavirāga*). And by developing *vipassanā* one comprehends the 'mental' (*nāma*), thereby eliminating nescience (*avijjā*) and so realizing *paññāvimutti* by detachment from *avijjā*. Correlations on the one hand between Quieting, cultivation of *citta*, elimination of the passions, *rāgavirāga* and *cetovimutti*, and on the other between Insight, cultivation of *paññā*, elimination of *avijjā* and *paññāvimutti* are also to be found in the Aṅguttaranikāya (I 61), where both *samatha* and *vipassanā* are described as pertaining to knowledge (*vijjābhāgiya*). In the *Visuddhimagga*, *nāma* is associated with the person whose Vehicle is Quieting (*samathayānika*, xviii. 3–4); and *rūpa* is linked with the person whose Vehicle is pure Insight (*suddhavipassanāyānika*), this correlation being however possible also for the *samathayānika* (xviii. 5). It is further stated in the *Peṭakopadesa* (pp. 134–5) that *samatha* and *vipassanā* together constitute the fourth *ariyasacca*, the Path. And the *Nettippakaraṇa* (pp. 110–11) has specified that *samatha* consists in both the *sīlakkhandha* and the *samādhikkhandha* of the Eightfold Path, whilst *vipassanā* is made up of its *paññākkhandha*.

It is also explained in the *Peṭakopadesa* (pp. 133–5) that the intuition (*abhisamaya*) of the four *ariyasacca*s takes place in a single time (*ekakāla*), a single moment (*ekakkhaṇa*) and a single thought (*ekacitta*). In a single time, moment and thought, too, the syzygy of *samatha* and *vipassanā* accomplishes four functions, namely comprehension of Ill (by *pariññābhisamaya*), comprehension of its origin (by *pahānābhisamaya*), comprehension of its stoppage (by *sacchikiriyābhisamaya*), and comprehension of the Path (by *bhāvanābhisamaya*). This is followed by the stage of vision (*dassanabhūmi*) where the Stream-winner (*srotāpanna*) does not fall back (*avinipātadhamma*) and is fixed (*niyata*, in Rightness).

In the *Peṭakopadesa* (p. 249) it is moreover explained that

vipassanā preceded by *samatha* is for one who understands through a mere mention (*ugghaṭitaññu*) – i.e. for the person receiving the 'soft' (*mudukā*) teaching and training in higher discriminative knowledge (*adhipaññāsikkhā*); that *samatha* preceded by *vipassanā* is for one to be trained gradually (*neyya*) – i.e. for the person receiving the 'sharp' (*tikkhā*) teaching and higher training pertaining to *citta* (*adhicittasikkhā*); and that the conjunction of *samatha* and *vipassanā* is for one who understands through expatiation (*vipañcitaññu*) – i.e. for the person receiving a teaching that is both 'sharp' and 'soft' (*tikkhamudukā*) and training in higher ethics (*adhisīlasikkhā*).

The correlations thus made of *samatha* with *rūpa* and the *adhipaññāsikkhā* and of *vipassanā* with *nāma* and the *adhicittasikkhā* are noteworthy.

The *Nettippakaraṇa* confirms (p. 125) the correlation of *samatha* with the *ugghaṭitaññu* and of *vipassanā* with the *neyya* type of person. And it specifies (p. 100–01) that *samatha* was taught by Bhagavat to the person of sharp faculties (*tikkhindriya*, who receives the *adhipaññāsikkhā*), *vipassanā* to the person of dull faculties (*mudindriya*, who receives the *adhisīlasikkhā*), and both *samatha* and *vipassanā* to the person whose faculties are middling (*majjhindriya*, who receives the *adhicittasikkhā*). The three teachings in question are perhaps to be understood here as serving as antidotes for the use of the three types of person mentioned. However this may be, the question arises as to how these correlations might relate to Mo-ho-yen's view that his teaching of understanding Mind, with its quietistic and non-analytical tendency, is especially suited to advanced disciples whose faculties are sharp.

In its typology of persons (*puggala*) the *Puggalapaññatti* has proposed a fourfold categorization according to which some persons achieve *cetosamatha* without achieving *adhipaññādhamma-vipassanā*, some do the reverse, some achieve both together, and others achieve neither.[407]

An interesting classification in the present context is the one found in the *Yuganaddhasutta* of the Aṅguttaranikāya.[408] There Ānanda says that whenever a monk or nun declares having

[407] *Puggalapaññatti* iv, pp. 61–62. [408] Aṅguttaranikāya II 156–7.

achieved Arhathood, he or she is endowed with one of four Paths (*magga*), namely the Path cultivating *vipassanā* preceded (*pubbaṅgama*) by *samatha*, the Path cultivating *samatha* preceded by *vipassanā*, the Path cultivating *samatha* and *vipassanā* yoked together (*yuganaddha*), and the Path where the monk's 'mental' is seized by agitation with respect to the *dhammas*.[409] In his translation of the *Visuddhimagga* Ñaṇamoli has translated: 'A bhikkhu's mind is seized by agitation about highest states';[410] but in his translation of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* the same writer has rendered this by 'A bhikkhu's mind is agitated by overestimation of ideas [manifested in contemplation]'.[411] While the first three *maggas* are obviously based on the principle that Quieting and Insight are cultivated either successively or together, the last *magga* poses a problem. Yet, with regard to this fourth Path too, the text continues by saying that there exists a time when (the meditator's) mind internally comes to rest, settles, becomes one-pointed and is concentrated.[412] For him the Path is then produced. And (just as with the first three Paths) for the person who observes, cultivates and practices this fourth Path, the fetters (*saṃyojana*) are thrown off and the traces (*anusaya*) cease.

These four Paths are reproduced and explained in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (II 92–103), and then commented on in the *Saddhammappakāsinī* (pp. 585, 589 f.) and Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* (xx. 105–12). According to the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (II 101–03), in the description of the fourth Path the word *dhamma* refers to an illumination that arises when one reflects on things as impermanent (*aniccato manasikaroto obhāso uppajjati*), Ill (*dukkhato*) and not-self (*anattato*). And in each case agitation (*uddhacca*) – that is, distraction (*vikkhepa*) – results from adverting to this illumination. Hence, a 'mental' that is thus seized, or 'seduced', by agitation does not correctly know what is presented (*upaṭṭhāna*) as impermanent, Ill and not-self. This 'illumination' is counted as

[409] The PTS ed. reads *dhammuddhaccaviggahītamanā*, and the Nālandā ed. reads *dhammuddhaccaviggahitaṃ mānasam*.

[410] Ñaṇamoli, *The path of purification* (Colombo, 1964), p. 739 n. 33.

[411] Ñaṇamoli, *The path of discrimination* (London, 1982), pp. 287, 294.

[412] Aṅguttaranikāya II 157: *taṃ cittaṃ ajjhattam eva santiṭṭhati sannisīdati ekodi hoti samādhiyati*. Compare for example *Mahāsuññatasutta* and *Cūḷasuññatasutta* (Majjhimanikāya III, pp. 105 ff., 111 f.).

one of the ten 'Sub-Afflictions of Vipassanā' that are said to affect an inexperienced meditator. Buddhaghosa has explained this *obhāsa* as *vipassanobhāsa* 'illumination from Insight'.[413]

Although the full implications of this fourth Path are perhaps not altogether clear, the obstacle formed by agitation with respect to the *dhamma*s (*dhammuddhacca*) may be relatable to the case where, in meditation, discriminative knowledge (*prajñā*) becomes excessive and overwhelms *śamatha*. This situation – which could affect the person described as *dhammayoga* in the Aṅguttaranikāya (III 355), as opposed to the *jhāyi(n)*, and also the *sukkhavipassaka* or 'dry inspector'[414] – has of course been fully and explicitly recognized by Kamalaśīla, for example in his *Bhāvanākrama* III (pp. 9–10). Nevertheless, Mo-ho-yen's depreciation of analytical investigation may be a later example of the attitude just mentioned of meditators who were especially on their guard against the mental agitation that can arise in a person given to analysis of the *dharma*s. Although this danger has been noted in the Pali texts just cited, there is in them no rejection or condemnation of analysis and inspection in favour of *dhyāna* and Quieting alone.[415]

This yoking together of Quieting and Insight is known equally from Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* (viii. 1d; cf. v. 59). And in the four *(maula)dhyāna*s the Path (*pratipad*) is described as being easy (*sukhā*) owing to the effortless procedure (*ayatnavāhitvāt*) that is due to equilibrium of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*; but it is

[413] *Visuddhimagga* xx. 107.

It is possible that it is such a light-experience that was criticized by the Hva šaṅ Mahāyāna, quoted in the *bSam gtan mig sgron*, as being characteristic of the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha, and as being linked with a condition of notionlessness (*asaṃjñā*) that a practiser should *not* fall into through his practice of non-objectification (f. 83a: *mi dmigs bžin du snaṅ žiṅ/ gsal bar šes pas ñan thos daṅ/ raṅ saṅs rgyas ži ba phyogs par mi lhuṅ/ ci yaṅ šes pa mi dmigs pas 'du šes med par mi ltuṅ/ mi g-yo žiṅ yoṅs su gsal lo sñam pa'i rtog pa med pas rtag par mi 'gyur/*).

[414] See *Visuddhimagga* xxxiii. 18.

On the *sukkhavipassaka* (and *suddhavipassanāyānika*), see *Visuddhimagga* viii. 237 and xviii. 5; *Saddhammappakāsinī*, pp. 563, 584. Cf. Nyanatiloka-Nyanaponika, *Buddhist dictionary*[4] (Colombo, 1980), p. 215; and S. Z. Aung, *Compendium of philosophy* (London, 1910), pp. 55, 75. On *vipassanā* as 'rough' or 'brittle' (*lūkhabhūta*), in contradistinction to *samatha* as 'soft' or 'malleable' (*siniddhabhūta*), see *Saddhammappakāsinī*, p. 281.

[415] On *samatha* and *vipassanā* in Pali sources, see L. Cousins in *Buddhist studies in honour of H. Saddhatissa* (Nuregoda, 1984), pp. 56–68.

difficult (*duḥkhā*) on the threshold-stage (*anāgamya*) preliminary to the first *dhyāna*, on the interval-stages (*dhyānāntara*) between *dhyāna*s, and, very significantly, in the (three) *ārūpya*s also (vi. 66).[416] In the *anāgamya* and the *dhyānāntara*s, procedure requires effort because *śamatha* is deficient there; conversely, in the *ārūpya*s the need for effort is due to deficiency in *vipaśyanā* (vi. 66).[417]

A related theory is found in the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya* (p. 84) in connexion with the *viśuddhinairyāṇika mārga*, where a link is established between a deficiency in either *śamatha* or *vipaśyanā* and the difficulty of the Path based on either the *anāgamya* or the *ārūpya*s. On the contrary, the Path based on *dhyāna* is easy owing to the fact that there *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* proceed in a syzygy (*yuganaddhavāhitvāt*).

The yoking of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* is similarly known from a number of further Mahāyānist treatises such as the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (xiv. 8–10) and its *Bhāṣya* (iv. 19, xi. 8–12 and 67, xviii. 49 and 66), the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (xiii, p. 207), and Prajñākaramati's *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* (viii. 4).

The conjunction of Emptiness and Means is furthermore known under the name of *sarvākāravaropetā śūnyatā* to Śāntideva, who has quoted the *Ratnacūḍāsūtra* on the subject in his *Śikṣāsamuccaya* (xv, pp. 272–3). This Sūtra – which is quoted in this connexion also by Kamalaśīla (*Bhāvanākrama* II, p. 59, and III, p. 27) – emphasizes that *dhyāna* is to be accompanied by all modes – such as generosity and the other virtues and salvific means – and is realized through the mode of Emptiness (*sarvākāravaropetaṃ śūnyatākārābhinirhṛtaṃ dhyānaṃ dhyāyati*, p. 272.11).[418] In the Sūtra the *sarvākaravaropetā śūnyatā* is described as lacking neither in generosity (*dāna*) nor salvific means (*upāya*), etc.

This Emptiness endowed with all excellent modes is thus the opposite of the isolated emptiness-principle mentioned above (p. 184).

[416] See also the *Abhidharmadīpa* (ed. P. S. Jaini, Patna, 1959) vi. 4, n. 440.

[417] Or *vidarśanā: Abhidharmadīpa* vi. 4, no. 440, with the *Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti*.

For one whose faculties are sharp (*tīkṣṇendriya*), furthermore, super-knowledge (*abhijñā*) too is rapid (*kṣiprā*) since there is no procedure with effort (*ayatnavāhitvāt*). But when a person's faculties are weak (*mṛdvindriya*) super-knowledge is slow (*dhandhā*). See *Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti* on *Abhidharmadīpa* vi. 4, no. 440.

[418] For the parallel notion of *sarvākāradhyāna*, see *Bodhisattvabhūmi* i. 13, p. 209.

The theoretical contrast and the tension in practice between a scholar-philosopher who concerns himself with the analysis of the factors of existence – the *dhammayoga* – and the pure concentrated meditator – the *jhāyi(n)* – is one that has been made clear in a Sūtra of the Aṅguttaranikāya (III 355–6). It is parallel to, and at least in certain cases closely linked with, the distinctions made in the Buddhist tradition between a person concerned principally with philosophical and religious learning and teaching (Pāli *pariyatti*; cf. Tib. *bšad pa*) and a person who devotes himself above all else to spiritual practice and realization (Pāli *paṭipatti* and *paṭivedha*; cf. Tib. *sgrub pa*, etc.), between the teacher (*dhammakathika*) and the ascetic (*paṃsukūlika*, *tapassi(n)*), or even between the cenobitic monk dwelling in or near a village (*gāmavāsi(n)*; compare the *vargacārin*), and ministering also to the religious needs of laymen, and the reclusive and perhaps idiorhythmic forest-dwelling anchorite (*āraññaka*; cf. the type of the *khaḍgaviṣāṇakalpa*). (In one place, furthermore, the Aṭṭhakathā on the Aṅguttaranikāya has recorded a difference between Paṃsukūlikas and Dhammakathikas, in which the latter prevailed.[419])

Such contrasts reflect the antithesis, well known in Indian thought, between analytical thinking (*pratisaṃkhyāna*, *sāṃkhya*) and spiritual exercise (*yoga*, *bhāvanā*). It is related to the pair of spiritual types – identified by La Vallée Poussin after the Saṃyuttanikāya (II 115–18) – of on the one side the monk Musīla (Musila, Mūsila) who silently assented to being regarded as an Arhat all of whose impurities are exhaused (*khīṇāsava*) after he had declared that he 'knew' and 'saw' that the cessation of existence (*bhavanirodha*) and Nirvāṇa are equivalent, and on the other side the monk Nārada who, even though he knew this equivalence, still did not agree to being regarded as an Arhat because he did not reside in actual and immediate 'bodily contact' (*kāyena phusitvā vihar-*) with the highest state of spiritual realization.[420] The distinction between knowing *about* the highest and

[419] Cf. W. Geiger, *Culture of Ceylon in Mediaeval times* (Wiesbaden, 1960), pp. 201–03; W. Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon* (Colombo, 1956), pp. 158–61.

[420] L. de La Vallee Poussin, *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 5 (1937), pp. 189–222.

For the sense of 'in the body' (*kāyena*), see *Cūḷasuññatasutta*, Majjhimanikāya III 107–08 on the *animitto cetosamādhi*. Cf. L. Schmithausen in K. Bruhn and A. Wezler (eds.), *Studien*

directly realizing it is compared in this Sūtra with the difference between a traveller in a wasteland who, when seeing a well, identifies what is in it as 'water' (that is, a concept or word) and a traveller who drinks the water.

A comparable tension and contrast (but not necessarily contradiction) between meditative enstasis and intellectual analysis is to be found in the discussion reported in the Aṅguttaranikāya between Mahākoṭṭhita/Mahākoṭṭhika, who held that the *kāyasākṣin* is best because of the predominance in him of the faculty of concentration (*samādhi*), and Sāriputta, who held that the *dṛṣṭiprāpta* is best because of the predominance in him of the faculty of discriminative knowledge (*prajñā*).[421]

5. Absence of Notion (*saṃjñā*) and Non-mentation (*amanasikāra*)

Another fundamental teaching ascribed by Kamalaśīla to an unnamed opponent in the passage of the third *Bhāvanākrama* quoted above,[422] namely that nothing at all should be thought on and that there should be neither recollective attention (*smṛti*) nor mentation (*manasikāra*) – a teaching attributed to Mo-ho-yen/Mahāyāna in the Chinese and Tibetan documents from Dunhuang and in the later Tibetan historical and doxographical tradition –, cannot fail to evoke types of meditation in the form of the Samāpattis and Vimokṣas that are well known from the Buddhist tradition. Some aspects of this topic have already been touched on above in connexion with the method of leaping with respect especially to the *naivasaṃjñānāsaṃjñāyatana* and the *saṃjñāved[ay]itanirodha*, the last two of nine sequential stages in meditation.[423]

zum Jainismus und Buddhismus, pp. 214, 223, 236; above, p. 168 f.; below, pp. 194, 198.

For the notion of 'contact' in connexion with religious 'wellness' (sometimes free of *vedanā* or *citta*), and the spiritual achievement of salvation (e.g. in *cetosamādhi* or *amata* 'immortality') in the context of the expression *phāsuvihāra* (= Skt. *sparśavihāra*), etc., see C. Caillat, *Journal asiatique*, 1960, pp. 41–55, and 1961, pp. 497–502 (cf. R. L. Turner, *Collected papers* (London, 1975), p. 430 ff.).

In the Majjhimanikāya I 480 we find a juxtaposition of direct realization of supreme reality by the 'body' and the penetrative seeing of it by discriminative knowledge (*kāyena c'eva paramaṃ saccaṃ saccikaroti paññāyā ca naṃ ativijjha passati*).

421 Aṅguttaranikāya I, pp. 118–20. See also above, p. 169.

422 *Bhāvanākrama* III, p. 14–15 (above, p. 93).

423 The factors *saṃjñā*, *smṛti* and *manas(i)kāra* are classified as mental (*caitta* or *cetasika*),

Sources of Tibetan Buddhist Meditation

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Recently Zen and Tibetan Tantric meditation has gained popularity among younger generations throughout the world. Zen has become widely known to the West through the works of the late Dr. Daisetzu Teitaro Suzuki and other Buddhist ministers while Tibetan Buddhist meditation has become more well known through the efforts of various educated Lamas during the past ten years. For example, there are many young students practicing Soto Zen at the Zen Center in San Francisco and at Tassajara. Rinzai Zen is established at Mt. Baldy on the outskirts of Los Angeles and in Honolulu. Large numbers of students studying Tibetan Buddhism participate in summer sessions at the Naropa Institute in Colorado and at the Nying-ma Institute in Berkeley, California. The Japanese word *zen* is now an international term which is derived from *dhyāna* (meditation) in Sanskrit. It goes without saying that religious practice is the most important part of any religion. Without practice, religion has no meaning.

Buddhism has emphasized meditation in terms of calmness *(śamatha)* and discernment *(vipaśyanā)* throughout the traditions of Theravāda, Vajrayāna, and Mahāyāna. Here I would like to focus on this calming of the mind and discerning the real following the direction of the "Process of Meditative Actualization" (*Bhāvanākrama* I, II, III) by Kamalaśīla (?–c. 778 A.D.). I feel this text greatly influenced the formation of later Tibetan meditation as we can observe by the many times it is quoted in *A Torch for Realizing Enlightenment (Bodhipatha Pradīpa)* by Atīśa (982–1045 A.D.) and the *Gradual Way to Perfection (Lam rim c'en mo)* by Tsoṅ kha pa (1357–1419 A.D.), founder of the Dge legs pas tradition of the present Dalai Lama. Recently Prof. Alex Wayman of Columbia University translated the *śamatha vipaśyanā* section from the *Lam rim c'en mo* of Tsoṅ kha pa and published it through Columbia University Press under the title of *Calming the Mind and Discerning the Real* in 1978.[1] The *Bhāvanākrama* is quoted more than thirty-five times in the "Calming the Mind" section and fourteen times in the "Discerning the Real" section of the text. This immediately shows us something of the importance of the *Bhāvanākrama* as an influential text in the Tibetan meditation tradition.

SANSKRIT TEXT OF THE *BHĀVANĀKRAMA*[2]

Prof. E. E. Obermiller (1901–1935) was the first scholar to analyze this text. He presented a theory justifying the *History of Buddhism (chos-ḥbyung)* by Bu-ston[3] (1290–1364 A.D.) as an accurate Tibetan historical document in "A Sanskrit Manuscript from Tibet: Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākrama*" [*Journal of the Greater India Society*, Vol. II, No. 1 (1935)]. The Russian translation of his academic research and the Nepalese manuscript he used were published in Moscow in 1963. This text, the third *Bhāvanākrama* (a Nepalese Ms.), and later the romanized Sanskrit text were published in Italy by Prof. G. Tucci in *Minor Buddhist Texts, Part III: Third Bhāvanākrama* in 1971. The first *Bhāvanākrama*'s romanized Sanskrit text had already been published by Prof. G. Tucci in 1958 in the same series of *Minor Buddhist Texts, Part II* of Serie Oriental Roma. Unfortunately, the Sanskrit text of the second *Bhāvanākrama* is still missing; however, we can follow the text in the Tibetan[4] and Chinese[5] translations.

RELIGIOUS DEBATE BETWEEN KAMALAŚĪLA AND HVA ŚAṄ

The Tibetan historian Bu-ston cites the description of the Dharma debate between Kamalaśīla representing the "gradual path" from India and the Mahāyāna "sudden path" of Hva śaṅ from China exactly as it appears in the third *Bhāvanākrama* as Prof. Obermiller pointed out. The debate was a very important event in determining which course later Tibetan Buddhism would follow; the Indian gradual path or the Chinese sudden path of meditation. The date of the debate varies among scholars; Prof. Paul Demiéville estimated it to be sometime around 792–794 A.D.[6] while Prof. S. Yoshimura, using Chinese documents, estimates 768–770 A.D.[7] In any event, the debate is considered to have taken place at Sam-yas monastery during the reign of King K'ri sron lde bstan (c. 718–780 A.D.).

The third *Bhāvanākrama* describes the debate as follows:

> (Thesis of Hva śaṅ.) Beings wander in *saṃsāra*, experiencing heaven and other destinies as the fruit of action, owing to good and bad acts brought about by discriminations of the mind. Those, on the other hand, who do not think anything nor perform any action are freed from *saṃsāra*. Therefore nothing should be thought, nor should giving and the other wholesome practices be performed. It is only with reference to stupid people that giving and the other wholesome practices are taught.[8]
>
> (Refutation by Kamalaśīla.) The entire Great Vehicle is repudiated by one who thinks thus. And because the Great Vehicle is the root of all the vehicles, by repudiating it, every one of the vehicles would be repudiated. For that reason, by saying nothing should be thought, insight, which is char-

acterized by true examination, would be repudiated, because true examination is the root of right knowing. Owing to the latter's repudiation, transcendental insight would also be repudiated. Because of its repudiation, the knowledge of all modes would be repudiated. And by saying that giving and other practices are not to be performed indicates quite evidently that expedient means, that is, giving and the rest is repudiated. To such an extent then is the Great Vehicle repudiated—insight and means are both rejected. As the *Gayaśīrṣa* says, "There are two abbreviated paths of the bodhisattvas. What two? Insight *(prajñā)* and means *(upāya)*." And the *Tathāgataguhya-sūtra* says, "And this insight and means lead to the gathering of all perfections of bodhisattvas."[9]

Bu-ston concludes the debate in the following way:

Thus and more spoke he (Kamalaśīla) in detail and the Ton-mun-pa, the sudden path advocates, were incapable of giving an answer. They gave the wreath of flowers to the teacher Kamalaśīla, and declared themselves vanquished. Thereafter the King (K'ri sron lde bstan) gave the following order: Henceforth, as concerns the theory, one must adopt the system of Nāgārjuna. With regard to the practice, one must become trained in the ten kinds of virtuous conduct and in the ten transcendental virtues. As to the Ton-mun views, the propagation of these is not to be permitted! Accordingly Hva śaṅ was sent back to China and his books were collected and kept concealed in a storehouse.[10]

THEORETICAL BASIS OF KAMAŚĪLA AND HVA ŚAṄ

According to Bu-ston's history of Buddhism, Hva śaṅ was defeated. However, according to the Chinese manuscript *Tun-wu ta-ch'eng cheng-li chüeh,* F 129a,[11] published by Prof. Paul Demiéville, the winner was Hva śaṅ, not Kamalaśīla.

January 14, 770 A.D. By the order of the King, monks and laymen should follow the meditation of Mahāyāna (Hva śaṅ), investigating *sūtras* without mistakes from now on.

(Prof. Shuki Yoshimura's estimate of the debate as occuring between 768 and 770 A.D. is based on this manuscript.)

According to Prof. G. Tucci's research, Hva śaṅ's teachings were inherited in the Great Perfection *(rdsog c'en),* one of the earlier tradition of Nying-ma, in a manner of preserving some ideas of the Ch'an school. " . . . Hva śaṅ is also said to be the seventh in the sevenfold lineage of masters of *dhyāna* beginning with Bodhidharmatāla. . . . This also implies that after the split, which oc-

cured at the death of Hui-nêng in 713 A.D., Hva śaṅ was considered by his followers as the authentic perpetuator of the teaching of Bodhidharma."[12]

Tucci continues:

> Since *rdsogs c'en* laid great stress on Haṭhayoga, and their doctrine emphasized the existence of pure mind, luminous and unshakable; except it, nothing exists, since it is the only reality; its recognition leads to release; no effort or practice is needed . . . *rdsog c'en* is called an extratemporal *(da lta)*, immaculate intelligence *(rig pa)*, luminous, void, naked *(rjen pa)*; very dharma, samsaric or transcendental, has in it its pleroma *(rdsogs)*; *rdsogs c'en* is also called *c'enpo*, "great," because there is no other way to salvation except it. . . .
>
> Through a synthetical intelligence of nonduality which transcends any idea concerning something either to be taken or to be abandoned, one masters all dharmas, whether samsaric or transcendental in voidness, but devoid of any notion of voidness itself; thus and so the direct experience of the absolute, as knowledge transcending *saṃsāra* or nirvāna is realized . . .[13]

Hva śaṅ's position was nonthinking and nonperforming, maintaining a synthetical intelligence of nonduality. The perfection of insight alone provides perfect liberation. Therefore, the first five perfections of "giving on up to meditation" have no virtue according to him. However, Kamalaśīla emphasized a balanced practice including both insight *(prajñā)* and means *(upāya)*, that is, the first five perfections. For instance, Kamalaśīla quotes the *Sarvadharmavaipulya*[14] from the *Śikṣa-samuccaya* by Śāntideva as follows:

> "Those servants of delusion, Maitreya, will say of the bodhisattva's attainment of the six perfections for the sake of full enlightenment [that] a bodhisattva should be trained only in the perfection of insight. What use are the other perfections? . . . Now what do you think, Ajita? Was that king of Kāśi foolish, who for the sake of the dove gave his own flesh to the hawk?" Maitreya said, "No, indeed, Bhagavān." Bhagavān said, "Was something wrongly done, Maitreya, by means of those wholesome roots, associated with the six perfections, which I accumulated when I was following the career of the bodhisattva?" Maitreya said, "No, indeed, Bhagavān." Bhagavān said, "Now you, Ajita, attained to the perfection of giving (over a period of) 60 kalpas . . . attained to the perfection of insight (over a period of) 60 kalpas. While those servants of delusion will say, 'Enlightenment (comes about) through only one method, namely the method of emptiness, they are not purified in their career.' "

Kamalaśīla concludes that by merely practicing emptiness they fall into nirvāṇa like the śrāvakas.

Thus Kamalaśīla followed Śāntideva (650–700 A.D.) who emphasized repeated practice of the six perfections. Kamalaśīla established the third way of Mādhyamika called Yogacāra-Mādhyamika based on the idea of *cittamātra-niḥsvabhāva* (nonsubstantial awareness), which united the highest ideals of both Mādhyamika and Yogacāra in contrast to the two lineages of Bhāvaviveka and Candrakīrti.[15] He was also in the line of Śantarakṣita, the first abbot of Sam-yas monastery (founded in 775 A.D. by the King K'ri sron lde bstan), and wrote commentaries on Śantarakṣita's *Mādhyamakālamkāravrtti,* the *Tattva-saṅgraha* and others.

MEDITATIONS OF A BODHISATTVA AS MENTIONED IN THE *BHĀVANĀKRAMA*

Kamalaśīla clarified the terms concerning meditation established by Buddhavacana by quoting various *sūtras.* He followed a system similar to the one found in the *Sūtra-samuccaya* by Nāgārjuna[16] and the *Śikṣa-samuccaya* by Śāntideva. The *Vairocanābhisambodhi,* the influential Esoteric text, is quoted in the *Bhāvanākrama* I, II, III. The most important three phrases of the text are stated as "compassion is the root of omniscience, the thought of enlightenment is its cause, and means are its fulfillment."[17]

Compassion (mahākaruṇā)

The fundamental root of Mahāyāna Buddhism is compassion. Compassion should be practiced first of all because it precedes all else, just as man's breath *(āśvāsa)* precedes his ability to live. Great compassion is the beginning of a bodhisattva's practice and it abides among living beings. For example, compassion should be practiced by seeing suffering friends *(mitrapakṣesu)* as if their sufferings are one's own. Great compassion will be accomplished when "friendly compassion" unpremeditatedly works for suffering beings to dispel their pain. The Buddhas attain omniscience by embracing compassion and they rejoice in the welfare of the world. Because of their compassion, Buddhas don't abide in nirvāṇa.

Thought of enlightenment (bodhicitta)

The thought of enlightenment *(bodhicitta)* is the seed of all the qualities of the Buddha Dharma. There are two kinds of *bodhicitta;* the intention *(praṇidhicitta)* and the setting forth *(prasthānacitta).* The *Áryagaṇḍavyūya-sūtra* states that it is quite difficult to find those intending to achieve supreme and perfect enlightenment *(anuttarāyāṃ samyaksaṃbodhi)* and it is even harder to find those actually setting forth to find supreme and perfect enlightenment. Therefore,

the intention is the initial yearning for Buddhahood. The setting forth is the actual making of a vow to become a buddha and the actual accumulation of the stocks of merit and insight. Thus the bodhisattva who has awakened this thought of enlightenment should practice the perfections of giving and all the rest.

Means (upāya)

Means here reveals the practice of the bodhisattva in terms of the ten perfections, the four immeasurable contemplations, and the four means of attraction, and so on. Section five[18] of the first *Bhāvanākrama* notes that insight *(prajñā)* and means *(upāya)* must be realized jointly. The *Āryagayāśīrṣa-sūtra* says, in brief, that the religious practice of a bodhisattva consists of insight and means. Insight with means and means with insight are a bodhisattva's liberation. Further, in section six,[19] "Insight and Means," the definition of means is stated thusly:

> Means, as practiced by a bodhisattva, are all the perfections except insight; that is, giving, virtue, forebearance, energy, and meditation. They include all means of conversion and attraction to the Law, even to the creation of magical bodies to train the beings who surround him in the purity and pleasure of his own magical heaven.[20]

Means is knowing how to attract *(saṃgrahajñāna)* and insight is knowing how to analyze *(paricchedajñāna)*. The *Āryaśraddhābaladhāna* says,[21] "What is skill in means? It is a bodhisattva's universal attraction. What is wisdom? It is a bodhisattva's universal accuracy." Thus the bodhisattva always cultivates both wisdom and means. He accomplishes the middle way, attaining the unfixed nirvāṇa of the Buddha. He does not abide in nirvāṇa, for he has gained the fruit of his means, nor does he abide in the world, for his wisdom has cast aside all error and error is the root of the world.

The growth of insight is obtained in terms of learning *(śrutamayī)*, reflection *(cintamayī)*, and meditation *(bhāvanāmayī)*.[22] For instance, in the first section, "Learning," Kamalaśīla quotes the *Āryabuddhasaṃgīti*, which states that all the dharmas are the gate for the letter "A" *(akāramukha)*[23] which is beyond birth and death. They are also the gate for nonsubstantiality which is their own nature. In the *Cintamayī* the author notes that from the absolute point of view the only reality is the nonproduction of things while from the standpoint of conventional truth there is production.[24] In the *Bhāvanāmayī* section, practitioners must strive for direct experience. Unless the light of insight clearly arises, it is impossible for the darkness of impediments to be properly expelled. However, even in unreality, by the frequency of meditation, a sufficiently clear insight arises; all the more in reality.[25]

CALMNESS AND DISCERNMENT *(ŚAMATHA* AND *VIPAŚYANĀ)*

In order to realize true reality, the practitioner strives for all *samādhis,* concentration practices. All *samādhis* are included in calmness and discernment according to the *Saṁdhinirmocana* quoted in the third *Bhāvanākrama.*[26] When a practitioner actualizes discernment and calmness he is freed from the bonds of signs *(nimittabandhanā)* and the bonds of evil states *(dauṣṭhulabandhanā).* So one who seeks to get rid of all obstructions should devote himself to calmness and discernment. By the power of calmness, thought becomes unshakable in relation to its own object, like a lamp in a windless place. By discernment the light of right knowledge arises due to understanding the reality of dharmas as they are. All obstruction is thereby gotten rid of as is darkness owing to the appearance of light.[27]

Calmness (śamatha)

Bhagavān explained the character of calmness and discernment in the *Ratnamegha:* "Calmness is one-pointedness of thought: discernment is true examination."[28] Calmness has the nature of one-pointedness of thought as its nature and it has the following characteristics:[29] (1) fixed *(sthpāyat),* (2) founded *(saṃsthāpayat),* (3) fast *(avathāpayati),* (4) firm *(upasthāpayati),* (5) trained *(damayati),* (6) calmed *(śamayat),* (7) quiet *(vyupaśamayati),* (8) unified *(ekotikaroti),* and (9) concentrated *(samādadhāti).* "Fixed" means that mind is bound to the meditative object. "Founded" means that it continues to hold to the meditative object. "Fast" means that it casts aside any distraction which occurs. "Firm" means that it fixes itself upon the meditative object once again, when the distraction has been cast aside. "Trained" means that the mind delights in meditation. "Calmed" means that it calms discontent by considering the evils of distraction. "Quiet" means that it calms any drowsiness and torpor which occur. "Unified" means that it flows evenly and naturally upon the meditative object. "Concentrated" means that it flows smoothly and spontaneously upon it.

Any *samādhi* has six faults:[30] laziness, loss of object, depression, excitement, lack of effort and effort. Against them eight eliminating formative attitudes should be actualized: (1) faith, (2) desire, (3) exertion, (4) serenity, (5) mindfulness, (6) full awareness, (7) motivation, and (8) equanimity. The first four of these are the contraries of laziness. Mindfulness is the contrary of loss of object. Full awareness is the contrary of depression and excitement because by being disregarded they are avoided. But at the moment of allaying depression and excitement there may be the fault of lack of effort; hence, as its contrary, motivation should be actualized. Depression and excitement being laid to rest, that is, when mind becomes quiescent, there may be the fault of effort. Its contrary, equanimity, should be actualized.

Discernment (vipaśyanā)

Having stabilized his mind toward its object, he should examine it by insight because the false seed will be dispelled by the rising of the light of insight. Samādhirāja says, "He who cultivates *samādhi,* yet does not examine his concept of self will again be shaken by defilement." Again we find in the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra,*[31] "He ascends to mind alone and does not think that external objects really exist. But with reality beyond him, he transcends mind alone; he transcends nonappearance and he abides in no-appearance, seeing the Mahāyāna. In this effortless state, tranquil, made pure by his vows, where nothing appears, he sees non-self, the highest knowledge."

Tsoṅ kha pa quotes the second *Bhāvanākrama's* "Discerning the Real" *(vipaśyanā)* section as follows:[32]

> Then he should think, "Having accomplished calming, I shall contemplate by discerning." All the pronouncements of the Lord are well stated, and either directly or gradually clarify reality to incline one toward reality. When the light cognizing reality arises, he becomes free from the net of views in the manner of dispelling darkness. By calming alone, knowledge does not become pure, nor does one dispel the darkness of obscuration. When one well contemplates reality with insight, knowledge becomes pure and one comprehends reality. One insight rightly eliminates the obscuration. Hence, he thinks, "Now that I am stationed in calming, I shall search reality with insight. 'I shall not rest content with calming alone." What is that reality? In the absolute sense, all entities, whether personality *(pudgala)* or natures *(dharma)* are the voidness of self.[33]

Right after the quotation in the second *Bhāvanākrama,* Tsoṅ kha pa continues:

> Among the six perfections, it is *prajñāpāramitā* which comprehends reality, while *dhyāna* and the others have no capacity to comprehend. Many persons have made the mistake of thinking they have *prajñāpāramitā* when they have only *dhyāna,* so it is necessary to generate *prajñā* as the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra* states: "Lord, by which perfection is the lack of self-existence of the dharmas seized?" "Avalokiteśvara, it is seized by *prajñāpāramitā.*"

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the process of meditative actualization balances the practice of insight *(prajñā)* and means *(upāya)* as a guide to perfect liberation *(mokṣa).* This is the traditional thought of the bodhisattva's path *(mārga)* in India. Basing his teachings on this concept of the bodhisattva's path, Kamalaśīla emphasized the process of meditative acutalization in terms of calmness *(śamatha)* and

discernment *(vipaśyanā)*. Calmness stands for means and discernment for insight. A balanced practice of both calmness and discernment brings forth perfect liberation. Because of the compassion of the bodhisattva, he neither abides in perfect tranquility (nirvāṇa) nor does he abide in the world.

Thus Kamalaśīla concludes the third *Bhāvanākrama* as follows:[34]

> Just as kings supported by their ministers perform all of their duties, just so does the bodhisattva's insight, supported by skill in means *(upāyakauśalya)*, perform all the duties of a Buddha. For just this reason let there be no entrance into nirvāṇa. One should not cultivate emptiness alone. Nor should one cultivate the exclusively object-free mind alone. One should also cultivate skill in means, just as fire blazes because of its fuel and without fuel quiets down. Thus the bodhisattva examines emptiness and he views great compassion toward all beings.

NOTES

1. Alex Wayman, trans., *Calming the Mind and Discerning the Real: Buddhist Meditation and the Middle View,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).

2. (a) Giuseppe Tucci, *A Sanskrit Romanized Text of Bhāvanākrama I,* Minor Buddhist Texts Part II (Rome: 1958).

(b) Giuseppe Tucci, *A Sanskrit Romanized Text of Bhāvanākrama II,* Minor Buddhist Texts Part III (Rome: 1971).

(c) E. E. Obermiller, *Kamalaśīla's Bhāvanākrama,* Pamjatniki Literatury Narodov Vostoka, "Teksty, Malaja Serja" XVI (Moscow: Akademia Nauk CCCR Institut Narodov Azii, 1963).

(d) Jose van den Breck, *La Progession dan la Meditation* [Fr. trans. of *Bhāvanākrama I*] (Bruxelles: 1977).

(e) Stephen Beyer, *Meditation—4. The Meditations of a Bodhisattva,* [English trans. of *Bhāvanākrama I*], pp. 99–115.

(f) Robert F. Olson and Masao Ichishima, "Bhāvanākrama III," [English trans.], *Annual of the Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism,* no. 1 (Tokyo: Taisho University, 1979), pp. 18–53.

3. E. E. Obermiller, *History of Buddhism (chos-hbyung) In India and Tibet by Bu-ston* (Heidelberg, 1932. Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation reprint, 1963), pp. 192–196.

4. *"sgom paḥi rim pa,"* (No. 5311, Bhk. II), (Peking Photo Edition).

5. *Taishō Tripiṭaka,* Vol. 32, No. 1664. Hereafter cited as T.

6. Paul Demiéville, *Le Councile de Lhasa,* Bibliotheque de l'Institute des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, Vol. VII (Paris: 1952), pp. 177.

7. Shuki Yoshimura, *Indo Daijō-Bukkyō shisō kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1973), p. 43.

8. Olson and Ichishima, "Bhāvanākrama III," p. 36.

9. Ibid., p. 37.

10. Obermiller, *History,* pp. 195–196.

11. Demiéville, Planch III.

12. Giuseppe Tucci, *Bhāvanākrama I,* p. 64.

13. Ibid., pp. 60–61.

14. Olson and Ichishima, "Bhāvanākrama III," p. 48. *Sarvadharmavaipulya,* quoted from Cecil Bendall, *Śikṣa-samuccaya* [by Śāntideva] (St. Petersbury, 1902), p. 97 and its English translation, p. 99. However, the Chinese *Bhāvanākrama* reads "āryagayāśīrṣa" instead of "sarvadharmavaipulya." (T32: 565a).

15. Jitsudo Nagasawa, "Kamalaśīla's Theory of the Yogacāra," *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* X, No. 1 (Jan., 1962), p. 336.

16. Quoted by Olson and Ichishima, "Bhāvanākrama III," p. 24.

17. Tucci, *Bhāvanākrama I,* p. 196: "*Vairocanābhisaṃbodhau coktam tad etat sarvajñānaṃ karuṇāmūlaṃ bodhicittahetukam upāyaparyavasānam iti.*"
18. Ibid., pp. 193–194.
19. Ibid., pp. 194–195.
20. Ibid., p. 124.
21. Ibid., p. 195.
22. Ibid., p. 198.
23. Ibid., p. 199.
24. Ibid., p. 202: "*Bhāvā jāyaute saṃvṛtyā paramārthe svabhāvakāṇ/ niḥsvabhāveṣu bhrāntiḥ sā saṃvṛtir matā//*
25. Ibid., p. 204: "*Bhāvanāmayī prajñā.*"
26. Tucci, *Bhavanākrama II,* p. 1; Olson and Ichishima, "Bhāvanākrama III," p. 25.
27. Tucci, *Bhāvanākrama I,* p. 199; Tucci, *Bhāvanākrama II,* pp. 1–2; Olson and Ichishima, "Bhāvanākrama III," p. 26.
28. Tucci, *Bhāvanākrama I,* p. 199; Tucci, *Bhāvanākrama II,* p. 3; Olson and Ichishima, "Bhāvanākrama III," p. 27.
29. Tucci, *Bhāvanākrama I,* p. 207–208.
30. Tucci, *Bhāvanākrama I,* p. 208; Tucci, *Bhāvanākrama II,* p. 10; Olson and Ichishima, "Bhāvanākrama III," p. 33.
31. Tucci, *Bhāvanākrama I,* p. 216. *Gātha* nos. 256–258 in Bunyu Nanjo, ed., *Laṅkāvatara Sūtra* (Kyoto: Otani University, 1956), p. 298.

Joseph F. Roccasalvo **The debate at bSam yas: A study in religious contrast and correspondence**

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

In the book, *Kumbum Dschamba Ling*, a volume of Tibetan art dedicated to "the cloister of one hundred thousand pictures of Maitreya," Wilhelm Filchner describes the expulsion of the Chinese Buddhists from Tibet, as it remains a living tradition in the memory of the people in mythological form. This event is enacted in the Tscham mystery-dances, which are performed yearly in the village monasteries, especially at Kumbum. He writes:

> The theatrical element in the Tscham dances, which are brought to production in Kumbum, is presented and portrayed through Hwaschang and the four Atsaras. Hwaschang is surrounded ... by a group of similarly clothed children in similar masks. They portray his students, or, according to the other version, his children also, or indeed, boys who make fun of the odd old man.[1]

In his study of Buddhist mythology in Tibet and Mongolia, Albert Grünwedel further adds that the figure of Hva śaṅ appears in an exaggerated and grotesque form as the representative of the ousted *ston min pa*, or, party of the sudden path. He is held up to ridicule by the children of the village and is known among them as the monk with the oversized stomach. In colloquial English we might say that Hva śaṅ is scornfully called "the pot-bellied Buddha" (*der Dickbauch-Buddha*).[2]

The expulsion of the Chinese Buddhists, symbolically represented by the Tscham dances, determined that Tibet should not adopt the Ch'an version of Buddhism but Indian Mahāyāna. This event has received conspicuously little attention in the text-books, and when it has, it is usually to the detriment of the Chinese contingent, whose doctrine of subitism has been grossly misunderstood to this day. One striking example of such misunderstanding in past history was the debate held at bSam yas under the rule of K'ri sroṅ lde btsan—the so-called Council of Lhasa.[3] There in the late eighth century (792–794), the Chinese Mahāyāna Hva saṅ, a follower of the Dhyāna school, was sternly opposed by a group of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhists under the leadership of Kamalaśīla. According to the various Tibetan sources, especially Bu-ston's *History of Buddhism* (*Chos-ḥbyung*), the Indian hostility is presented as a reaction against the growing influence of the Chinese masters who had won the majority of Tibetan Buddhists to their cause: "The number of pupils of the Chinese Hva-çaṅ Mahāyāna increased,"[4] Bu-ston tells us; he then proceeds to discuss the consequences of the effectively propagated teachings of the Chinese in whom "the Tibetans, for the greater part, found pleasure" (192). Giuseppe Tucci remarks in this regard that "we do not know if the Indian party really lost a great number of its adherents; the sources agree in

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telling us that they were the minority and that only some of the leading monks remained faithful to the teaching of the Bodhisattva [Śāntirakṣita]."[5] In any event, it is clear that the preaching of Hva śaṅ Mahāyāna had steadily gained ground to such an extent that the king was compelled to intervene by staging a debate between the conflicting parties.

Paul Demiéville, in his book *Le Concile de Lhasa*, which Tucci rightly calls "one of the most learned contributions to the history of cultural relations between China and Tibet as yet undertaken,"[6] has suggested in his "Historical Commentary" that more than theological doctrines were at play in the Indian-Chinese debate at bSam yas. He writes:

That a sinophobic party had existed at the court of Tibet, and that it had backed the Buddhists of India, less suspicious of political compromises, nothing [is] more likely, especially since the rapport between China and Tibet was particularly strained at the end of the eighth century. Across all her history, since her origins up to our present day, Tibet has been tossed between China and India; its politics have always tended to safeguard national independence by playing these powers, one against the other ... and in favoring that which the circumstances of the moment made appear the less dangerous.[7]

And "the circumstances of the moment" pointed to the fact that the Dhyāna school headed by Hva śaṅ had gained enthusiastic acceptance among the Tibetan population, thereby threatening to assume proportions which were able to stir up latently hostile attitudes toward China. In whatever way we understand the political sentiments involved, the debate at bSam yas must be regarded as a historical event of the greatest importance, what Paul Demiéville has aptly called "a major turn in the religious history of Tibet" (183). Fortunately, (thanks (1) to the Chinese dossier of Hva śaṅ Mahāyāna which was recovered in the grotto of Tuen-huang, (2) the Sanskrit text of the third *Bhāvanākrama*, (3) the longer Tibetan version of the latter, and (4) Bu-ston's *History of Buddhism*, Part II), we are in a position today to make some judgments regarding what occurred during this disputation. But regarding who actually won the debate there is no complete agreement between the Chinese records and the Tibetan tradition. According to the Chinese dossier translated by Demiéville, the Tibetan king decided in favor of Hva saṅ by passing an edict in 794 confirming the doctrine of dhyāna as taught by the Chinese party (42). The Tibetan sources, however, speak of the firm support given by K'ri sroṅ lde btsan to Kamalaśīla and his point of view. Bu-ston writes in his *History*:

Thereafter the king gave the following order:—Henceforth, as concerns the theory, one must adopt the system of Nāgārjuna. With regards to the practice—one must become trained in the 10 kinds of virtuous conduct and in the 10 Transcendental Virtues. As to the Tön-mün views, the propagation of these is not to be permitted!—Accordingly the Hva-çaṅ was sent back to China, and his books were collected and kept concealed in a storehouse. (195–196)

Tucci rightly points out in *Minor Buddhist Texts* that, in an edict intended for laymen, it is rather odd that Nāgārjuna is mentioned, for his name signified little to the Tibetan people at large. He concludes that it is most probable

> The king did not at all intervene in an energetic way in the debate: he attended it, followed the course of the discussion but did not evidently have the doctrinal preparation to be judge: most probably he established at the conclusion of the debate that the doctrine to be followed was the Mādhyamika.... And this did not say very much, because neither scholar could deny resting on that system for a starting-point.[8]

No less a Tibetan scholar than David Snellgrove affirms the generally held opinion that Kamalaśīla "came out the winner from the confrontation"[9] and later composed three works (the *Bhāvanākrama*) which expound the gradualist point of view which he had defended at the council. Even if we suppose that Kamalaśīla was proclaimed the victor, this does not imply that there occurred an immediate persecution of the Ch'an party. The court and the ministers might have counselled that the doctrines of the Indian Mahāyāna be followed, but we have no reason to believe that steps were taken to impose the Indian theory on the people by force of edict. As Tucci further suggests,

> The impression which one gathers is that after the death of K'ri sroṅ lde btsan there was a strong revival of Indian Buddhism, caused not only by the direct instigation of the court, anxious to prevent any further Chinese influence, but also by the growing prestige of the Indians and the coming of Indian ācāryas in greater numbers than before.[10]

Despite the ambiguity of the debate's outcome, it is historically indisputable that Tibetan Buddhism sat at the feet of Indian Mahāyāna for its religious tutelage.

While one cannot help but be fascinated by a religious debate which seems to have turned into a melodrama—with members of the two opposite parties having recourse to violence, suicide, and murder—the doctrinal issues themselves raised at the "council" are more than sufficient to focus the attention of the student of both Buddhism and comparative religion. The question of sudden and gradual enlightenment, the value and disvalue of moral self-cultivation at certain stages, and the problem of language being employed from two distinct standpoints, all are issues structurally analogous to certain historical thought-trends within the Christian context of mysticism and doctrinal orthodoxy, faith, and works, as well as theological precision and religious hyperbole. Within the Tibetan context, however, such difficulties become compounded to an even greater degree because of the linguistic disparity between the opposing parties, as Demiéville points out in his "Introduction":

> They [the Chinese party] certainly did not know Sanskrit, any more than their Indian adversaries were familar with Chinese. The controversy must have developed around written fragments in Sanskrit and Chinese, with Tibetan

serving as common language for the two groups in the oral debate ... whatever language had been used, some thought in Sanskrit, others in Chinese (20–21).

Given such wide linguistic requirements together with nationalistic prejudices, it is not difficult to see how each side failed to comprehend fully its opponent's point of view.

In this brief study, my interest will not focus on the historical details of the controversy. These have been exhaustively examined by the two great Buddhologists, Paul Demiéville and Giuseppe Tucci, whose respective studies are models of clarity and erudition. Rather, I should like to confine my attention to the two standpoints represented by Kamalaśīla and Hva śaṅ, especially since they have been made available to us in various edited and translated documents. Such interest in the debate at bSam yas poses a number of striking questions for the comparative religionist who is concerned about the encounter of differing religious or philosophical perspectives. The further importance of this inquiry also becomes apparent when we examine the writings of historians of this period. In his book, *The Religions of Tibet*, Helmut Hoffmann characterizes the standpoints of our two religious protagonists in the following way:

The most important matters of doctrine in which Hva-shang differed from his Indian rival were (1) the attainment of Buddhaship does not take place slowly as the result of a protracted and onerous moral struggle for understanding, but suddenly and intuitively—an idea which is characteristic of the Chinese Ch'an and of the Japanese Zen sect which derives from it; (2) meritorious actions whether of word or deed, and, indeed, any spiritual striving, is evil; on the contrary one must relieve one's mind of all deliberate thought and abandon oneself to complete inactivity.[11]

Judging from Hoffmann's unnuanced characterization of Hva śaṅ's position vis à vis Kamalaśīla, one has further evidence of the kind of misunderstanding this debate may generate, even in the mind of a modern scholar.

In this article I will restrict myself, first, to an examination of the third *Bhāvanākrama* as given in the French translation by Étienne Lamotte of the later Tibetan version, with an occasional reference to the recent Italian translation by Corrado Pensa (of the original Sanskrit version edited by Tucci). Bu-ston's *History of Buddhism* will act as an important apologetic commentary on the Indian source-material. I will then turn my attention to the Chinese dossier of Hva śaṅ as given in translation by Demiéville. The overall effort will be to ascertain the religious contrasts and correspondences between our two interlocutors, Kamalaśīla and Hva śaṅ Mahāyāna, concerning their views of gradual and sudden enlightenment. Of no less significance will be the endeavor of discovering how much mutual understanding and misunderstanding took place, and whether there is any suggestion that they embraced (however haltingly!) each other's frame of reference.

THE THIRD BHĀVANĀKRAMA OF KAMALASĪLA

Several months before his death in 1935, the Russian scholar E. Obermiller pointed out a new document concerning the Sino-Tibetan controversy at bSam yas. He had found a Sanskrit manuscript whose text was printed on Tibetan paper at the library of the Asiatic Museum in Leningrad. It had been brought into Russia by the celebrated Siberian lama, Dorjeev, leader of the Russian Buddhists at that time. The text is attributed to Kamalaśīla and represents his side of the debate at bSam yas. As an appendix to the book by Paul Demiéville, Étienne Lamotte translated this important treatise from its Tibetan version (336–353), with the crucial Sanskrit passages underlined. On the basis of the photographic copy which Giuseppe Tucci obtained from Leningrad and his own manuscript text, the Sanskrit version has recently been produced,[12] and it has been translated into Italian by Corrado Pensa.[13] Both the Sanskrit and the Tibetan versions of the third *Bhāvanākrama* are organized into three sections: first, there is the careful exposition of the nature of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* with a discussion of the objects of these two mental operations prescribed for the yogi aspirant; second, there is a detailed presentation of "spiritual exercises" to be practiced by the yogin in conjunction with *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*; and third, the controversy with Ho-chang (Hva śaṅ) is mentioned with a refutation of his quietism by establishing that it is contrary to the Great Vehicle, that it neglects essential means for attaining enlightenment, and that it is incapable of grasping *śūnyatā*.

In the opening section Kamalaśīla follows the Indian tradition by stressing the dual mental operations of *śamatha* (stillness of mind) and *vipaśyanā* (intensive meditation with a view to correct analysis). These two activities of the mind are important, he tells us, because they unite all the forms of concentration which, when practiced assiduously, free one from bondage by destroying the obstacles (336–1337). Edward Conze describes the function of *śamatha* in the context of yogic meditation in the following way:

> ... after some degree of contentment with the conditions of a solitary, beggarly, and homeless life has been achieved, the mind is at last capable of doing its proper yogic work. This consists in systematically withdrawing attention from the objects of the senses. And what could be the aim and outcome of this act of sustained introversion.... All the adepts of Yoga, whatever their theological or philosophical differences, agree that these practices result in a state of inward tranquility (*śamatha*).[14]

Hence, the point of *śamatha* or mental stillness is to set the stage for the next operation, *vipaśyanā*, wherein the object of meditation is focused efficaciously. Étienne Lamotte describes this level of concentration as a piercing view of insight,[15] which has as its effect a profound penetration into 'things'. In other words, *vipaśyanā* is that mental operation within which *prajñā* occurs, resulting in an act of insight that sees *dharmas* as they are in themselves, that is, as

transitory and deprived of substantial reality.[16] Kamalaśīla depends on imagery to describe this level of mental achievement.

By the force of *śamatha*, thought (*citta*), like a lamp placed in shelter from the wind, does not swerve from its object (*ālambanān na vicalati*); by *vipaśyanā*, the brilliance of true wisdom (*bhūtaprajñāloka*) is born after the manner of a sunrise (*sūryodaya*), by virtue of reflective examination conforming to the reality of things (*yathādharmattvam*), and all the obstacles (*āvaraṇa*) are destroyed" (337).[17]

What Kamalaśīla seems to be saying is that such intensively analytical meditation involved in the operation of *vipaśyanā* leads to a judgmental act of extraordinary lucidity (*prajñā*) wherein one sees the dharmas as they truly are, desires are eliminated *ipso facto*, attachments to the obstacles (sensuality, rebirth, vain speculation, and ignorance) are neutralized, and one is freed for the state of enlightenment.

In the second part of the first section, Kamalaśīla proceeds to a discussion of the four levels of attainment in *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*: (1) reflections free of concepts; (2) reflections accompanied by conceptual thought; (3) knowledge of the proper nature of realities in which "the Yogin attains (*upagacchati*) all the dharmas according to their nature (*yathābhāvam*)" (337), and (4) the final transformation of the Yogi who "by means of the way of meditation (*bhāvanā-mārga*) revolutionizes his personality gradually (*krameṇāsrayaṁ parāvartayati*) by the production of successive moments of purification (*supraviśuddhi-kṣaṇotpādāt*)" (338). Kamalaśīla's terse conclusion to this portion of his treatise is as follows: "Consequently, he who desires to obtain the state of Buddha must practice *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*; those who do not practice them do not grasp the final goal and do not succeed in the undertaking" (338). It is important to note here how, from the outset, Kamalaśīla insists in true Indian fashion on discovering the way in which the mind is structured to ascend in stages to the ultimate level, and to recognize how this goal is gradually appropriated by means of a process. Our Indian protagonist emphasizes a step-by-step effort to enlightenment and thereby stresses the importance of concomitant psychic development through meditational practices. In this way, the outflow of mental defilements is gradually purified and 'the final goal' is achieved. Kamalaśīla exhibits what might be called a picture-preference for viewing enlightenment from the standpoint of *process* rather than from the standpoint of the *goal*.

In the second part of the dossier Kamalaśīla provides a practical guide for the yogin by detailing the order of spiritual exercises to be followed for the attainment of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*. He suggests that the aspirant fix his thought on the various corporeal forms of the Tathāgata, and then, by examining their coming and going, realize that "they are empty of own-being (*svabhāva-śūnya*) and deprived of Me and Mine (*ātmātmīyarahita*)" (339). It is *vipaśyanā* which achieves this correct analysis by recognizing that phenomena

which succeed one another serially last but a moment and are bound to disappear, because as such they are deprived of all autonomy, neither constituting an Ego nor depending on one. It is also *vipaśyanā* which dispells the error due to ignorance which considers realities as 'Me' or 'Mine', thus detaching us from these fugitive entities. Kamalaśīla's description of practices is exhaustively detailed, including a section on distraction and agitation during meditation with corresponding mental forms of recreation to refresh the yogin. One is reminded here of the Roman Catholic *Doctor Mysticus*, John of the Cross whose analysis of the various stages of prayer and spiritual purification in *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* are as subtle as Kamalaśīla's and, not infrequently, as laborious.

The third and last section of the Indian dossier deals with the controversy with Ho-chang (Hva saṅ); as Demiéville points out, "the *Bhāvanākrama*, in Indian fashion, does not make any mention either of China or of historically determined adversaries" (18). Kamalásīla gives a resume of the false, quietistic doctrine of "certain teachers":

> By the force of good and bad acts coming from mental concepts (*citta-vikalpa-samutthāpita-śubhāśubha-karma-vaśena*), beings wander in transmigration, enjoying heaven (*svarga*), etc., as the fruit of their acts; but those who do not think of anything and who do nothing are freed from transmigration (*saṁsārāt parimucyante*). Consequently (to attain Nirvāṇa) it is not necessary to think about anything, there is no further necessity to engage in good practices (*kuśala-caryā*), as giving (*dāna*), etc.; the practice of giving, etc., has been prescribed solely through involvement with stupid people (*kevalaṁ mūrkha-janam adhikṛtya dānādi-kuśala-caryā nirdiṣṭā*) (348).

He then proceeds to refute Hva śaṅ's alleged position by showing that it is contrary to the spirit of the Great Vehicle of Mahāyāna. First he tells us that "to say that (to attain Nirvāṇa) it is not necessary to think of anything, is to reject wisdom which has as its hallmark correct analysis" (348). Kamalaśīla's continued insistence that correct analysis (which he has earlier equated with *vipaśyanā* [340]) is the root of supramundane wisdom (*prajñā*) is a valid recapitulation of the Indian tradition of meditation; but such an assertion is true from the standpoint of one who stresses the step-by-step process to enlightenment, and this is not Hva śaṅ's position at all. Kamalaśīla's debating tactics are clear: he sets up what he claims to be Hva śaṅ's denial of a constant in the Indian meditational tradition, and then proceeds to deny that denial by a clever marshalling of texts by way of refutation. His conclusion, then, is that one "who rejects correct analysis (*bhūtapratyavekṣā*) also rejects the principal instrument of illumination which is called the discernment of the dharmas (*dharmapravicayākhyāṁ pradhānam eva bodhyaṅgam*)" (349).

The second part of his refutation has to do with Hva śaṅ's supposed rejection of pious practices within the context of the *bodhisattva* ideal. He tells us that "to say as follows that it is not necessary to practice goodness, giving, etc., that is also to destroy the Mahāyāna by casting off giving, etc., which are

salvific means (*upāya*). It is said in the Ārya Gayāśīrṣa: 'In summary, the way of the Bodhisattva involves two things ... salvific means and wisdom'" (349). Once again, Kamalaśīla attempts to refute Hva śaṅ's so-called libertine view of the Indian tradition with regard to works by denying Hva śaṅ's denial of a constant in the Great Vehicle; once again, one must remark (by anticipation) that such a gross oversimplification does not truly represent Hva śaṅ's position at all. In fact, as a careful examination of the Chinese dossier will show, our Chinese protagonist explicitly recognizes the importance of good works as well as the need for mind-cultivation, even in a gradualist's sense, but all from the standpoint of the process, not from that of the absolute goal.

Such misunderstanding of Hva śaṅ continues in Bu-ston's *History of Buddhism* in an even more exaggerated fashion. We are told that the followers of Hva śaṅ "favored nihilistic views and did not exert themselves in the practice of virtue, saying:—By acting according to the Doctrine, by virtuous acts of body and speech, one cannot become a buddha. One attains the state of the latter by abiding in perfect inactivity" (192). According to Bu-ston, Hva śaṅ makes a vain effort to marshall evidence for his unorthodox views by turning to the *Śatasāhasrikā* and other sūtras to demonstrate that "action according to the Doctrine was unnecessary, and that it was sufficient to abide in a state of deep sleep" (192). However, when he sees that the *Saṁdhinirmocana Sūtra* contradicts his conduct and views, we are told by Bu-ston that Hva śaṅ "cast it away with a kick" (192). The overall impression that the Tibetan commentator wishes to leave his reader is patently clear: Hva śaṅ is not only the purveyor of false doctrine, he is also malicious. This becomes clearer in Bu-ston's account of how the Chinese representatives reacted after the king gave the order that the Indian school of Buddhism was to be followed: "(the Chinese party) were enraged, armed themselves with sharp knives and threatened to kill all the Tsen-min-pa (the adherents of the Bodhisattva)" (192). As the final proof of Hva śaṅ's viciousness, and with details that appear to come straight from the Tibetan tabloids of the day, Bu-ston tells us that "four Chinese butchers, sent by Hva-çaṅ, killed the teacher Kamalaçīla by squeezing his kydneys" (196). According to A. K. Warder in his book, *Indian Buddhism*, Kamalaśīla "was murdered, apparently, by followers of the ancient Tibetan religion."[18] Whatever may be the historical truth, it is clear that by the time Bu-ston writes his *History of Buddhism*, Hva śaṅ's antinomian character has become proverbial. This supposed *extra legem* attitude of Hva śaṅ is demonstrated in the only speech which Bu-ston permits him in the account of the debate at bSam yas:

If one commits virtuous or sinful deeds, one comes to blissful or to evil births (respectively). In such a way the deliverance from Saṁsāra is impossible, and there will always be impediments to the attainment of Buddhahood. (The virtuous and the sinful deeds) are just like white and black clouds which alike

obscure the sky. But he who has no thoughts and inclinations at all, can be fully delivered from Phenomenal Life. The absence of any thought, search, or investigation brings about the non-perception of the reality of separate entities. In such a manner one can obtain (Buddhahood) at once, like (a Bodhisattva) who has attained the 10th Stage (193).

Bu-ston's presentation of Hva śaṅ's alleged position regarding works is surprisingly close to Helmut Hoffmann's evaluation which has been previously cited, though the Tibetan commentator's prejudice leads him to caricature rather than oversimplification. Yet through the caricatured position one can gain some insight into why such misunderstanding occurs. Bu-ston, like most commentators who are unsympathetic to Ch'an Buddhism, fails to understand the experiential direction of Ch'an language. In their efforts to calm the mind so that the reality of the Buddha-nature can be apprehended, the Ch'an masters insist that intellectual analysis can only scratch the surface but cannot get at this most fundamental reality. Furthermore, in any conscious thought or deed there is the ego at work, making for the distinction between subject and object. Such conscious polarities beget *karman*, which ties one down to the recurrent cycle of birth and death, while deeds breed attachment to external goals including enlightenment. Hence, when Hva śaṅ speaks disparagingly of "virtuous and sinful deeds" and urges that one have "no thoughts and inclinations at all," he is exhorting such practices from the point of view of the goal, which sees Ultimate Reality as inconceivable in thought and inexpressible in word and deed.

According to Bu-ston's account, Kamalaśīla argues that Hva śaṅ's literal renunciation of all spiritual activity is precisely calculated to render impossible the attainment of *prajñā*:

Thou sayest thus that one ought not to think about anything whatever. But this means the negation (or rejection) of the Highest Analytic Wisdom [*vipaśyanā*] likewise. Now as the latter represents the foundation of the Divine Wisdom [*prajñā*] of a Saint, the rejection of it necessarily leads to the negation of this sublime Transcendental Wisdom (193).

Kamalaśīla has argued incisively and within the Indian meditational school of step-by-step process toward the goal, but he has missed the point Hva śaṅ has been trying to make. Kamalaśīla's disciple, Jñānendra, is no less obtuse to the Chinese party's point of view. He goes still further in misunderstanding and suggests that Hva śaṅ's approach is tantamount to the passivity of slumber: "If we admit your point of view, it follows that ... mental training is not required, and the knowledge of the worldly matters is unnecessary. But, in such a case, how can the knowledge of everything cognizable be attained? If you do nothing and only sleep, you will not even take food and thus die of hunger!" (195). According to Bu-ston, the Chinese party (*Tön-mün-pa*) were unable to answer and declared themselves the losers by presenting the wreath

of flowers to Kamalaśīla; the king then ordered that henceforth no one should regard the teachings of Hva śaṅ Mahāyāna, and the writings of the vanquished party were collected and put under lock and key.

Despite Bu-ston's rather biased and exaggerated presentation of what went on at the debate at bSam yas, is there any indication from the third *Bhāvanākrama* that Kamalaśīla might have grasped, however briefly, Hva śaṅ's point of view? There are certain remarks he makes at the end of the Sanskrit dossier which would suggest an affirmative answer. After addressing himself to the question, how it would be possible to know the absence of the own-nature of dharmas as well as the memory of one's former existences, he answers that "without correct analysis (*bhūtapratyavekṣā*), to practice the absence of memory and the absence of reflection (*asmṛty-amanasikāra-bhāvanā*), is to practice foolishness" (351). Though Kamalaśīla has maintained this critique from the point of view of the process, for a moment he qualifies his accustomed position by admitting that "*from the absolute point of view* (*paramārthataḥ*), one may speak of the absence of memory (*asmṛti*) and the absence of reflection (*amanasikāra*)" [emphasis mine] (352). But he continues to maintain that this necessarily must be preceded by correct analysis. Actually, this latter position is not that different from the position which Hva śaṅ himself articulates toward the end of the Chinese dossier, though our Chinese representative will also insist that from the Ultimate point of view there are so such dualities as process and goal, striving and achievement, purification and attainment, and that finally, the time element is completely transcended in the totality of the enlightenment experience.

That neither Kamalaśīla nor Bu-ston caught the full flavor or subtlety of this standpoint was of decisive significance for the history of Tibet. To what extent the Indian side of the debate is to be judged as deliberately culpable in its rejection of Hva śaṅ's arguments, the reader can better ascertain from the Chinese dossier itself.

THE CHINESE DOSSIER AND HVA ŚAṄ'S DEFENSE

What was the doctrinal position which Hva śaṅ defended in the Chinese dossier, and which eluded his Indian opponents? We have seen in Kamalaśīla's third *Bhāvanākrama* that the Chinese master is accused of the repudication of those meditational constants (*śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*) which are the *sine qua non* for the attainment of wisdom leading to enlightenment. He is also accused of rejecting the practice of virtuous means (*upāya*) which are required for the path of the *bodhisattva*. Bu-ston charges him with indifference to human actions to the point of antinomianism, further suggesting that such laxity accounts for his vicious activity after his complete defeat in the debate. A careful and unbiased reading of the Chinese dossier reveals another image of Hva śaṅ, one which contradicts the caricatures and oversimplifications of hostile commentators and historians. What the Ch'an master affirms, even if

somewhat diffusely, is that from the Ultimate level of truth, enlightenment does not take place in a step-by-step process but is given totally, in that sense, 'suddenly'. Such *bodhi* is beyond discursive reasoning, states of quietude, correct analysis, or the polarities of evil and virtuous actions, for these have all been experienced and are now transcended in the firm realization of the final goal. In fact, such notions and activity are therapeutically valuable only during the initial phases of the yogin's spiritual process toward enlightenment. However, from the standpoint of the Absolute, nothing can be said about it, nor can anything be done about it. As Edward Conze rightly points out in characterizing the Ch'an school, "Any exertion put forward in favour of the Unconditioned, results only in useless toil. Any idea we form of the Absolute is ipso facto false.... This 'Absolute', which forms the object of a provisional and ultimately untrue thought, is then, in religious practice seen side by side with the conditional world."[19]

Given this picture-preference for viewing things from the ultimate level of truth, it is no wonder that Ch'an Buddhism is reluctant to speculate metaphysically and is averse to theory and intent on the abolition of reasoning. Direct insight is valued more highly than the intricate network of subtle thought constructed, for example, by Kamalaśīla. Hva śaṅ is no exception to this Ch'an thought-trend. In the Chinese dossier, he constantly inveighs against the snare of notions, invoking the scriptural authority of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* to evidence his position: "It is said in the *Laṅkā-sūtra*: 'In my teaching there is the elimination of differentiated knowledge of what is knowable, which is called *nirvāṇa*'. It is not said that the path of *nirvāṇa* is the Triple vehicle" (66). To the objection of the Indian opponents that one obtains peaceful contemplation only after being exercised in examination which is a "gradual practice" and that "the gradual door [is] what the Buddhas teach" (73–74), Hva śaṅ replies incisively:

> The notion of 'gradual' and 'sudden' of which you also speak are only notions of beings' spirit, false notions of things seen. That is why the *sūtra* says: "It is necessary to abstain, Mahāmati, from views of gradual and sudden, in what concerns the particularities of combinations of causal activities." If one abstains from every notion and false notion, 'gradual' and 'sudden' are not to be found ... one thing alone is of import, to suppress false notions (75).

Hva śaṅ's repeated citation of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* is consonant with this Mahāyāna text's affinity with the Ch'an tradition. In *A History of Zen Buddhism*, Heinrich Dumoulin, S. J., suggests that

> The conspicuously irrational character of this sutra demonstrates its close relationship to Zen. Possibly the obscure allusions and the odd replies may have a function similar to that of the *Kōan* in Zen, namely, *to unmask the inadequacy of reason* (emphasis mine).[20]

It is in his efforts to 'unmask' the insufficiency of reason that Hva śaṅ resorts to the use of paradoxical language which comes remarkably close to the

pithiness of a *kōan*: "to see that notions are not notions at all is to see the Tathāgata. To understand that thought well is of such merit that all the merits which are acquired in practicing goodness during numberless periods are not worth the merit of that unique thought" (76–77). The defect of notions, of discursive thought in general, is that they have the power to "obstruct original omniscience" (77), and that is why Hva śaṅ insists that if one is to return one's vision to the source of the spirit, one "is not to reflect even on non-reflection" (78). What the Chinese master has in mind here is Ch'an's intuitive method of spiritual training aimed at the disclosure of the original reality and Buddha-nature within the innermost recesses of the individual. This reality is as Kenneth Ch'en points out, "the fundamental unity which pervades all the differences and particulars of the world. This reality is called the mind, or the Buddha-nature that is present in all sentient beings."[21] Hva śaṅ, along with the Ch'an masters, insists that this apprehension does not mean the acquisition of something new; rather, it means only the realization of something that is always present. The problem is that the aspirant to *bodhi* is not aware of this because of his ignorance and folly, especially demonstrated in the ratiocinative process of conceptualization. In fact, Hva śaṅ stresses that all the *buddhas* who were disengaged from every thought of what is graspable and ungraspable were "without thought and without reflection, as a clear mirror" (83).

It is important to note here that Hva śaṅ is not denying the need for these mental practices at a certain stage in the process. In fact, he explicitly recognizes the 'gradual' point of view (even if grudgingly), as represented by Kamalaśīla and the Indian meditational school. But he consistently claims priority for viewing things from the standpoint of ultimate truth:

> From the point of view of the essence of things, they escape the word. For whoever is grounded in the essence of things, the necessity and the non-necessity, being and non-being, identity and difference—all that is ungraspable.... It is spoken of in the *sūtras* ... of the necessity (of practicing the perfections) for beings of obtuse faculties; for those whose faculties are sharp, the discussion of necessity or non-necessity is not discussed. All the same, *medication is necessary for the ill person, the boat is necessary for one who wishes to cross a river*; but for the healthy man, it is not a question of saying if medicine is necessary or not; for one who has crossed the river, the boat is no longer necessary (86–87).

Still later, quoting the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* again, Hva śaṅ asserts that the six *pāramitā* "are accomplished automatically as soon as one is capable of being without reflection, without examination" (88). In a footnote to this passage, Paul Demiéville remarks that "one will notice here the explicit acknowledgement of the value of works" (88), on the condition that the spiritual aspirant does not engage in them solely out of interest in the rewards such practices bring. What is of supreme importance here is the purport of Hva śaṅ's assertions which have so frequently been misunderstood. He did not intend to say that no preparation was necessary nor that enlightenment was won

suddenly or automatically; as if these latter two adverbs were commensurate with the expression, "easily and in a very short time." More significantly, throughout the Chinese dossier Hva śaṅ has laid stress on the common Buddhist truth that *bodhi* occurs in a timeless moment, that it transcends time and, in that sense, our own doing (whether of thought or action) which takes place in time. In other words, it just happens, without the mediation of any finite influence or condition. It is, as Edward Conze describes it, a totally "free event."[22] It is not the gradual accumulation of meditational merit or virtuous practices which causes enlightenment, but an unpredictable act of recognition. All this teaching is, in its essence, irreproachably orthodox.[23]

In commenting on the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* in his book, *On Indian Mahayana Buddhism*, D. T. Suzuki makes some remarks which are applicable also to Hva śaṅ's thought-trend. Suzuki writes:

Saṁbodhi or enlightenment looks more toward the cognitive aspect of the revulsion (*parāvṛitti*) one experiences. This is all well as far as it goes, which is indeed the basis of all Buddhism, be it Hinayana or Mahayana. The *Laṅkāvatāra*, however, has come to see that the whole of the Buddhist life is not in merely seeing into the truth, but in living it, experiencing it, so that there will be no dualism in one's life of seeing and living: seeing must be living, and living seeing, with no hiatus between them, except in language.[24]

Hence, when Hva śaṅ suggests that "what is called the perfection of wisdom ... is that which does not admit either of notion or appropriation, abandonment or attachment" (90), in the spirit of the *Laṅkāvatāra* he is moving beyond 'the dualism' of existence in seeing and living. Or again, when, in almost *kōan* fashion, he urges that "to practice all the practices is not to practice them at all" (67), he is by no means preaching a slovenly antinomianism. Rather, the direction of this paradoxical language is more concerned with a standpoint taken from the ultimate level of truth. As Dumoulin has succinctly pointed out with regard to the Ch'an school:

The stages and gradations refer to the way and not to the goal of enlightenment, to the process and not to the liberating insight itself. It is important to note that, conceptually, instantaneous enlightenment applies first of all to the goal. The attainment of the goal happens suddenly, in the instant of arrival *after the ardors of the way* (emphasis mine).[25]

In Hva śaṅ's language, "once one has grasped the principle (of which one can say only) *thusness*, and which admits neither of reflection nor examination, by that [thusness] one possesses all the dharmas and one is able to practice well the thirty-seven rubrics" (153). He then adds: "As long as one has not grasped this principle, it is necessary to practice the six pāramitās and the thirty-seven auxiliary dharmas of *bodhi*" (153).

The point being made here, though often subject to misunderstanding, is that, from the subjective (or processive) point of view (where the goal has not been reached), there is not only the possibility of gradations of spiritual

comprehension, but also their necessity; however, in terms of the attainment of the ultimate, viewed from the objective of the goal, gradual stages of reflection and examination are impossible since they have been experienced and transcended; such that good practices are the 'overspill' of that state of attainment. According to Suzuki:

The process needed by the Buddha for the notion of cleansing is sometimes gradual and sometimes abrupt. But the notion of up-turning (*parāvritti*) leads us to imagine the process to be abrupt rather than gradual, while in our actual experience of life, what the psychologist calls conversion takes place in either way, gradual or abrupt.... Psychologically this is a phenomenon suddenly happening in the consciousness.[26]

Suzuki is suggesting here that in gradual purification, the initiate experiences enlightenment suddenly in his consciousness, where the inner change produced is a new insight or vision which breaks in abruptly on the inner eye. Such vision of the 'Absolute' is by its very nature simple, undivided, and empty, and can only be comprehended *in toto*. Hence for Hva śaṅ and other Ch'an masters, given this indivisible and absolute standpoint, gradual enlightenment is a metaphysical impossibility.

Toward the end of the Chinese dossier, there are further explicit references concerning the need for practices from the gradual point of view. At the same time such acknowledgment is qualified by the repeated insistence on the priority of the absolute standpoint. Hva śaṅ tells us that "He who has penetrated the nature of *thusness* is established in *dhyāna*! But whoever has not yet penetrated (*thusness*) must roll out the sacred tests, join the palms, give himself up to cultic salutations, and *cultivate the goal*" (159) (emphasis mine). Here we see Hva śaṅ's expressed recognition of the necessity of practices for beginners. In fact, he has incorporated such advice in his counsel to disciples who come to him for instruction. In his third and last memorial to the king of Tibet, he writes:

Never have I, Mahāyāna, been lacking, when one of the disciples whom I am teaching comes to interrogate me concerning my views and interpretations. *Never do I fail to teach him the field of merits* which is giving (*dāna*), and to get him to take a vow to abandon ... his body, his head, his eyes, and every necessity except the eighteen things the Great Vehicle permits (162) (emphasis mine).

If that were not enough, he completes his defense with two remarks which admit his recognition of the gradualist view of moral development as well as the 'subitist' standpoint which transcends word and deed:

When one explains to another the sense of *Nirvāṇa*, (it is necessary to place oneself at a point of view) which transcends the domain of every word and ratiocination ... (but) as long as one is incapable of being established in *dhyāna* then one has recourse to the perfection of morality, to the four immeasurable qualities [of *maitri*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, *upekṣā*] and to the rest (164).

Such is Hva śaṅ's apology in the Chinese dossier. In this document we have not confronted a man of libertine inclinations who is capable of deceit and murder, as Bu-ston would have us believe; nor are we faced with a teacher whose lazy reasoning and heterodox views lead to the rejection of the Great Vehicle, together with *prajñā* and *upāya*. On the contrary, we have encountered a man of deep interiority, whose 'passion' for the truth and whose respect for transcendence have led him to ever more subtle levels of expression and paradox, but who knows down deep (like Gotama before him) that the real truth "is only transmitted and conferred by silence" (156). The unprepossessing manner with which he answers his interrogators, the simplicity and directness with which he presents his own defense, cannot but impress the unprejudiced reader who has tried to uncover the facts in the debate at bSam yas. Despite the intrigue and petty misunderstanding, the so-called Council of Lhasa continues to act as cautionary history for those of us who are concerned about the meeting of different (and difficult) religious points of view; it will also continue to interest those students of Buddhism who look forward to a religious enlightenment (gradual *and* sudden) which may emerge out of the cumulative traditions of mankind.

NOTES

1. Wilhelm Filchner, *Kumbum Dschamba Ling: Das Kloster der Hunderttausend Bilder Maitreyas* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1933), p. 311. The English translation is my own. The German reads: "Das theatralische Element in den in Kumbum zur Vorführung gebrachten Tscham-Tänzen wird durch Hwaschang und die vier Atsaras dargestellt und versinnbildlicht. Hwaschang ist hier ... von einer Schar gleichgekleideter Knaben in gleichen Masken umgehen. Sie stellen seine Schüler, nach anderer Version aber auch seine Kinder dar, oder gar Buben, die sich über den drolligen Alten lustig machen."

2. Albert Grünwedel, *Mythologie des Buddhismus in Tibet und der Mongolei* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1900), p. 169.

3. Confer Giuseppe Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts: Part II* (Rome: Serie Orientale Roma, 1958), pp. 32-33. Tucci gives impressive evidence for calling this debate the Council of bSam yas instead of Lhasa.

4. Bu-ston, *History of Buddhism* (*Chos-ḥbyung*) *II*, trans. E. Obermiller (Heidelberg: O. Harrassowitz, 1932), p. 191. Hereafter page references to Bu-ston's *History* will be in parentheses within the text.

5. Tucci, p. 9.

6. Ibid., p. 5.

7. *Le Concile de Lhasa: Une Controverse sur le Quiétisme entre Boudhistes de l'Inde et de la Chine au VIII^e Siècle de l'Ère Chrétienne* (Paris: Bibliothèque de l'Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1952). All English translations from the French are my own. Hereafter page references to Demiéville's work will be in parentheses within the text. The quotation cited is on p. 182.

8. Tucci, p. 52.

9. *Cristiani e Buddhisti: Orientamenti per Il Dialogo fra Cristiani e Buddhisti*, I (Rome: Secretariat for Non-Christians, 1970), p. 103. The Italian translation of Snellgrove's comment reads: "Kamalaśīla uscí vincitore dal confronto .... " I have rendered it back into English.

10. Tucci, p. 50

11. Helmut Hoffmann, *The Religions of Tibet* (New York: MacMillan, 1961), p. 76.

12. Giuseppe Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts: Part III* (Rome: Serie Orientale Roma, 1971).

13. Corrado Pensa, "Il terzo Bhāvanākrama di Kamalaśīla," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, vol. 39, no. III (Rome, 1964): 211-242.

14. Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India: Three Phases of Buddhist Philosophy* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1970), p. 18. In the *Mahā-Vaccha-gottasuttaṁ*, Buddha recommends these two forms of mental development to Vacchagotta who has passed beyond beginner's lore and wishes further instruction. The Pāli text reads: *Tena hi tvaṁ Vaccha dve dhamme uttariṁ bhavehi, samathañn ca vipassanañ ca. Ime kho te Vaccha dve dhammā uttariṁ bhavitā, samatho ca vipassanā ca, anekadhātupativedhāya saṁvattissanti.*

15. Étienne Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien* (Louvain: Institut Orientaliste, 1967), p. 48.

16. Ibid.

17. Confer Corrado Pensa, p. 2. An English rendering of his Italian translation from the Sanskrit is as follows: "In virtue of *śamatha* thought rests immobile on its own proper support, as light in a place without wind; while through the operation of *vipaśyanā*, there is added a proper understanding of what really are the *dharmas*; an understanding by the power of which the daylight of true knowledge rises up. It is in this way, then, that darkness vanishes with the appearance of light, and thus every kind of obstruction diminishes."

18. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), p. 477.

19. Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), p. 112.

20. Heinrich Dumoulin, S. J., *A History of Zen Buddhism* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1963), p. 46.

21. Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 357.

22. Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), p. 204.

23. Confer Rune E. A. Johansson, *The Psychology of Nirvana* (New York: Doubleday Anchor-Books, 1969), p. 100. Johansson quotes from the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* IV, 448, where the Buddha tells Ānanda: "And as long as I did not attain to and emerge from these nine successive states, both forwards and backwards, I did not completely, as one wholly awakened, realize the full perfect awakening." Johansson makes the further comment: "This text shows that all the levels of *samādhi* were considered as an instrument, a means to an end. None of the levels was *nibbāna*, and he [Buddha] had to emerge from them all, but all could be used as a platform for the final realization."

24. D. T. Suzuki, *On Indian Mahayana Buddhism* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968), p. 128.

25. Dumoulin, p. 64.

26. D. T. Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (London: G. Routledge, 1930), p. 207.

ESSENTIAL PRACTICE

Lectures on Kamalashīla's

Stages of Meditation in the Middle Way School

by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche

Translated by

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CHAPTER FIVE

Insight

In order to listen to the dharma, please rouse thoroughly pure motivation, the mind turned toward supreme awakening, and listen.

The *Stages of Meditation in the Middle Way School* composed by the master Kamalashīla has three parts: (1) the need to cultivate compassion, (2) the need to cultivate the mind of awakening, and (3) practice of the excellent dharma as the essence. The third of those, practice of the excellent dharma as the essence, teaches that we must practice both method and knowledge. Knowledge has three components: the knowledge that arises in dependence upon hearing, contemplation, and meditation. The knowledge that arises in dependence upon meditation also has two aspects: calm abiding and insight. Today, we will consider the way to cultivate the meditative stabilization of insight. This involves the ways in which to meditate upon (1) the teaching that external things are not established, (2) the teaching that even the mere internal mind is not established, and (3) the realization of those as emptiness.

What was taught previously? It was taught that we must meditate upon the meaning of emptiness. Why must we meditate upon emptiness? We must definitely and without fail meditate upon emptiness. At the root, we meditate upon emptiness in order to abandon perverse, bad predispositions, the bad predispositions for afflictions. Generally speaking, there are many types of meditation. In some meditations, such as the meditative absorption in which there is no discrimination, a meditation that is cultivated by non-Buddhists, the mind stops. When the mind stops in that way, afflictions do not arise for as long as we remain in meditative equipoise. Afflictions do not arise and bad thoughts do not arise. However, except for thought and affliction stopping for the duration of this meditative stabilization, the seeds of affliction have not been destroyed. In dependence upon the seeds of affliction not having been destroyed, when the meditator rises from such meditative

stabilization, afflictions arise once again. What is the reason for their arising again? They arise in dependence upon the root of affliction not having been abandoned. Therefore, we must abandon the root of affliction.

What is the root of affliction? Our afflictions—desire, hatred, bewilderment, pride, envy, and so on—serve as the causes for the arising of various types of suffering and as conditions that prevent liberation from cyclic existence. Even if we identify them and think, "I will annihilate this affliction, desire," we are not able to annihilate them. What must we do? If we conceive all things to exist truly, then, in dependence upon that, desire, hatred, and other afflictions will arise. What will prevent them from arising? If we know that all things lack inherent existence and are emptiness, we will know that the objects of desire, hatred, and so on do not exist. Through investigating and analyzing all things, we realize them to be emptiness. In dependence upon realizing things to be emptiness, all afflictions together with their seeds will be stopped from the root. In dependence upon that reason, when afflictions are abandoned in this way, they do not arise again. That is to say, when afflictions are abandoned by way of our having meditated upon emptiness, they have been abandoned from the root. Because their root has been cut, they do not arise again in any way.

In order to realize emptiness, we must stop believing in visible forms and so on. To stop that, we need to know with certainty that forms are emptiness; that is to say, we need to know for sure that these things lack inherent establishment. Ascertaining that requires us to overcome our doubts; we will have to go beyond just wondering whether or not things are established. If we do not go further than wondering and doubting, we will not come to certain knowledge of emptiness. For that reason, we will have to abandon our doubts. How shall we do that? We cannot extract doubt in the way that we remove a thorn from our hand. To abandon doubt, we will need meditative stabilization and knowledge. First, we will need the meditative stabilization of calm abiding so that our minds abide in a stable manner. After our minds have come to abide in a stable manner, knowledge must correctly investigate and analyze the object that calm abiding observes. If meditative stabilization and knowledge are present, we can leave doubt behind, and certainty can be born.

Here, mistaking a rope for a snake is given as an example. When I mistake a rope for a snake, I become afraid, thinking, "A snake has come into my house, and now I'm in danger." Mistaking a rope for a snake exemplifies well the misleading appearances of cyclic existence. It accords well with the misleading appearances of cyclic existence. The misleading appearances of

cyclic existence are, in fact, not established. Similarly, the snake is not established in the rope. Nevertheless, when we fear the rope that we have mistaken for a snake, we cannot stop being afraid no matter what we do, even if we have a rifle or a knife in our hand. Those methods cannot abolish our fear, but neither do we need them. Why not? For instance, if we shine a light on that rope, illuminate it, and investigate it well, we will know, "This is not a snake. It is a rope." Certain knowledge will arise. When I have seen the rope directly, then, even if someone else says to me, "It is a snake," and goes on to tell me a story—"There is a snake. Really, there is. Yesterday the snake came in through there."—I will not become confused. I will have confidence that the supposed snake is really a rope, that there is nothing to fear, and that there is no danger. Similarly, all phenomena are emptiness. Having investigated and analyzed with correct reasoning, I can know them to be emptiness. In dependence upon my knowing that, my afflictions are abandoned. Even if a bad advisor tells me that all phenomena are not emptiness and gives me a slew of reasons why they are not emptiness, that will not change my mind at all because I will have given rise to conviction from the depths. For that reason, I will have no doubt whatsoever and afflictions will not arise.

With regard to such certainty, if meditative stabilization and knowledge do not combine together, doubt and affliction cannot be annihilated. For example, in darkness, I will not know where my stuff is. Similarly, without meditative stabilization and knowledge, we cannot know emptiness. Therefore, we need meditative stabilization and knowledge. This treatise illustrates the need for meditative stabilization and knowledge with an example. In this example, our bad thoughts are compared to an illness. What must we do in order to abandon these bad thoughts, which are like illnesses? With the hand of meditative stabilization, we take hold of knowledge, which resembles a weapon, such as a knife, and grip it firmly. The knife-like weapon of knowledge performs careful surgery upon our minds and removes the internal illness. We must without fail dispel this illness, and we need both the hand of meditative stabilization and the weapon of knowledge if we are to accomplish that. In the absence of the meditative stabilization and knowledge, the illness within our minds cannot be removed.

Therefore, the afflictive obstructions must be abandoned. The abandonment of the afflictive obstructions is not a negligible suppression; abandoning them entails cutting them from the root. To cut them from the root, we will need both calm abiding and insight. When we have both calm abiding and the knowledge of insight, then those afflictions cannot remain at all. For example,

when the sun shines, darkness cannot remain. Similarly, when we see reality's mode of abiding clearly, ignorance and the afflictions will naturally vanish. That vanishing will not be a negligible vanishing. Rather, ignorance and afflictions will be uprooted, never to arise again. Their destruction will be complete.

When we see such an emptiness, there is nothing to be seen that will surpass this and there is no road more distinguished. There is nothing other than this that we must view and there is nothing more distinguished than this that we must know. We must realize things to be empty in this way. When we realize things to be empty in this way, generally speaking, we realize all things to lack establishment, to lack existence, and to be emptiness. Having realized things to be emptiness, do we conceive that emptiness to be nonexistence? No, conceiving nonexistence does not occur either. After the conception of things as existing has been abandoned, the conception of their nonexistence will naturally be pacified. What is the reason for that? If even one thing were to exist, its nonexistence, which depends upon its existence, would be possible. Because not even one thing has ever been found to be established at all, the nonexistence of things is naturally not established. In this sense, when a yogin views with the eye of knowledge, all things in the three times—past, future, and present—are not observed. Since things are not present to begin with, an absence of things that trounces them is not present either. Therefore, elaborations are pacified, afflictions are abandoned, and a peace that is both flawless and fully endowed comes to pass.

When the sphere of reality that is free from elaborations is realized, two types of obstructions are abandoned. What are those two obstructions? Afflictive obstructions and obstructions to omniscience. What are the afflictive obstructions? Generally, the term "affliction" means extremely painful and extremely difficult. What is the cause of such pain and difficulty? Afflictions such as desire, hatred, bewilderment, and pride. Realization of emptiness abandons them. There is also a second obstruction that is not an affliction. What is that? It is called the obstruction to omniscience. The mere presence of afflictions produces various types of suffering, but the mere presence of obstructions to omniscience in us does not produce suffering. Still, the obstructions to omniscience do gradually serve as the causes for the arising of afflictions. What are obstructions to omniscience? Confusion. Even though all things lack inherent establishment and are emptiness, we conceive of them as not emptiness. For instance, we think that mountains, enclosures, and houses really do exist. We think also that our bodies and so forth really do exist. Such conceptions will serve as the causes of afflictions arising in the

future, and they are called obstructions to omniscience. These two obstructions serve as the roots of all the suffering of cyclic existence. How can we abandon those two? In dependence upon thoroughly pure calm abiding and thoroughly pure insight, thoroughly pure knowledge arises and abandons the two obstructions from the root.

Our tradition speaks of two approaches to meditation: the analytical meditation of the scholar and the placement meditation of the simple person. Which of those two does Kamalashīla teach here? The analytical meditation of the scholar. The analytical meditation of the scholar initially emphasizes knowledge. First, we must generate knowledge correctly. In dependence upon what will knowledge be generated? It will be generated in dependence upon investigation and analysis. In dependence upon the distinctive certainty that arises in us through investigation and analysis, knowledge arises. We meditate with certainty as our basis, and we come to accurate and authentic knowledge. That is the analytical meditation of the scholar.

The analytical meditation of the scholar is extremely stable and also correct. However, if we consider the length of the journey, it is the longer way. In our actual application of the tradition of meditation, which is that of the Vajrayāna, we practice the placement meditation of the simple person. Meditation in the style of a simple person means placement meditation that is free from elaboration. Looking at the entity of the mind, and resting evenly, we meditate. This can be an exceptionally short and good path, one that is convenient and free from hardship. On the other hand, if this has not been introduced well, our meditation will be a fool's meditation. Without that good introduction, no matter how hard we work, maybe not much comes of it. Maybe the fruit eludes us. Therefore, in our Vajrayāna tradition, we practice both. We connect one to the other, and that leads to something good.

The Buddhist teachings that flourished in Tibet are called the Vajra Vehicle of Secret Mantra, but those are not the only teachings that we have and use. How so? When we study, we study the topics treated in the sūtras. For instance, we study the Middle Way, the Higher Knowledge, Valid Cognition, and so forth. We inquire from the point of view of dependently related conventionalities and also from the point of view of the ultimate. What is emptiness? What is knowledge? When we meditate, what should appear for analytical meditation? What is the reason for cultivating calm abiding? What is the reason for cultivating insight? What are the diverse types of afflictions that are to be abandoned? What obstructs omniscience? How do we rely upon antidotes as methods for abandoning the afflictive obstructions? In what way

do those antidotes and the afflictions oppose one another? How, in dependence upon that opposition, do the antidotes destroy the afflictions? How do antidotes suppress the afflictions? How do antidotes sever afflictions from the root? Study causes us to understand these points clearly and with certainty.

In dependence upon ascertaining those meanings, there is no danger of taking a mistaken path and no danger of not realizing the path. We ascertain the entire path clearly. Afterwards, if we then also practice the analytical meditation of a scholar, the path will be long: investigate, analyze, then, based upon that, meditate. If we practice in that way, realization can only arise slowly. In dependence upon that reason, when we actually meditate, we practice the placement meditation of a simple person. When we practice such placement meditation, the path will be shorter and also stable. Everything will go as it should. In dependence upon that, this path is called "the path that is the union of Sūtra and Mantra."

When we meditate, it is not absolutely necessary for us to meditate in the way that Kamalashīla has explained in his *Stages of Meditation.* However, we must without fail know the stages of meditation that Kamalashīla has taught. If we know these stages of meditation, our path will not be obstructed and we will not take a mistaken path, because these instructions are correct. Therefore, we must without fail study these stages of meditation, know them, and ascertain them.

If you have any questions or doubts, please ask questions.

Q: I have heard some instructions on the Middle Way School and emptiness, and intellectually I understand that everything is interdependent and empty, but that is not really my experience. To think, in our daily lives, that everything is empty, would be an overlay imposed upon our sense perceptions and our experience. How can we apply this knowledge? Should we try to remember that things are empty when, for instance, we find ourselves becoming angry?
A: Even if we have understood emptiness by way of the words, primarily we need definite knowledge of the meaning. Were the Buddha himself to come here, stand before us, and say, "All things are truly established," we would think, "In the end, they are not truly established." We need that degree of certainty. When we have become that sure, will everything suddenly vanish into emptiness, as if we were drunk on beer? Will hatred and bewilderment disappear immediately? No, that cannot happen. Why not? In previous lifetimes we have become accustomed to bad predispositions. That condition has led to the afflictions, suffering, and obstacles of the present lifetime. However, if

we generate outstanding certainty in the Middle Way, then we will understand clearly when we are meditating well and when we are not. We will not have to ask others; we will know this ourselves: "Now my meditation is going well. This is it. There is no mistake here." If we meditate well, then afflictions will gradually decrease and work will be free from hardship. This will happen gradually, not all at once.

Q: Please explain the two obstructions once again.
A: Generally, the Tibetan word *drip pa,* here translated as "obstruction," is to be understood as indicating blockage and inability to see. What is obstructed? Seeing reality's mode of abiding is obstructed. Achieving the rank of a buddha is obstructed. Cut short, stopped.

When obstructions are categorized, two are posited, and there is purpose in that. Those that prevent liberation are the afflictive obstructions. Those that prevent omniscience are the obstructions to omniscience. The afflictive obstructions prevent liberation in that that they prevent liberation from cyclic existence. What is said about this inability to achieve liberation from cyclic existence? The afflictions of desire, hatred, and bewilderment resemble roots, and the conception of a self of persons is *their* root. Twenty proximate afflictions are enumerated as branches. The presence of these root and proximate afflictions is called the afflictive obstructions. Those afflictions accumulate actions. In dependence upon the accumulation of actions, we are born in cyclic existence. Therefore, they are called afflictive obstructions.

Obstructions to omniscience do not endanger us greatly in the way that afflictions such as desire and hatred do. Conceiving that all things do exist, conceiving that they do not exist, conceiving that external objects do exist, conceiving that internal mind does exist, and so forth—these are called obstructions to omniscience. Adhering strongly to these appearances is called an obstruction to omniscience. When we adhere strongly to appearances, then we think, "It must be this way," or "Yes, I think it is like that," or "If it is not like that, then it is no good at all." Why are these called obstructions to omniscience? They obstruct seeing reality's mode of abiding. They block the accomplishment of the two aspects of a buddha's omniscience, the knowledge of the modes and the knowledge of the varieties. In dependence upon that reason, they are called obstructions to omniscience.

In dependence upon what, mainly, are those two obstructions abandoned? In dependence upon realizing the selflessness of persons, the afflictive obstructions are abandoned. In dependence upon seeing all other phenomena

as selfless, the obstructions to omniscience are abandoned. In dependence upon seeing all phenomena as emptiness, both obstructions are abandoned.

Q: I have heard that there are different kinds of emptinesses. How can we make categories in nonexistence?
A: It is not emptiness itself that is being divided into categories. Categories are set forth not from the side of the quality itself; they are set forth from the side of phenomena that possess that quality. Some people think, "External things are emptiness, but I doubt that internal things are emptiness." Some people think, "Internal things are emptiness, but I doubt that external things are emptiness." Therefore, the sūtras and treatises speak of the emptiness of the external, the emptiness of the internal, and the emptiness of the external and the internal. Others think, "These things are emptiness, but east, south, west, and north are not emptiness." Therefore, the sūtras and treatises speak of the emptiness of the great. Again, some think, "These things are emptiness, but emptiness itself is not emptiness." For them, the sūtras and treatises speak of the emptiness of emptiness. And so on. For the sake of cutting through the doubts of individuals, the emptiness of each of these appearances is taught, individually, separately, and specifically. In dependence upon that reason, the sūtras and treatises speak of the sixteen emptinesses, the eighteen emptinesses, and the twenty emptinesses.

For instance, previously someone said, "There is no sense in the lists given in the *Heart Sūtra.* What need is there to say, 'There is no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue'? Why not just say, 'There is no head'? That would be easier." It is not like that. For the sake of cutting through the individual doubts that we may have, all of the particulars are stated specifically. Therefore, the sixteen emptinesses and so forth are stated.

Q: When you spoke about placement meditation, you mentioned the importance of being introduced correctly to this type of meditation. Please explain more about that.
A: Here we speak of being guided by the experience of someone who possesses realization. When practicing the analytical meditation of a scholar, we investigate and analyze external things. When practicing the placement meditation of a simple person, we set external things aside temporarily. They are emptiness, of course, but for the time being we set them aside. When we have not investigated and analyzed the internal mind—when we have not looked at it—it seems solid and powerful, extraordinarily imposing, and out

of control. However, suppose that we were actually to look correctly and decisively. My mind seems hard and powerful but when I look for it, I cannot find it anywhere. It is not outside the body. It is not inside the body. It is not somewhere in between. I ask, "Where is my mind?," and I look everywhere for it, but no matter where I look, I cannot find it and I cannot see it, not at all. Why not? Because I've closed my eyes and do not see what is in fact present? No. Mind is not present. That is to say, empty of inherent existence, mind's entity is neither to be seen nor to be found. For instance, when I become filled with hatred, really strong and violent hatred, and look for that hatred—how did it arise and where?—that hatred cannot be found. I think that I know where and how this hatred rises up, but it is not to be seen. That apparently palpable and immediate hatred is not to be found demonstrates directly that hatred is actually emptiness. We do not need to rely upon reasoned investigation and analysis. Meditation that rests evenly upon that meaning is called the placement meditation of a simple person.

Q: If self is empty, who or what renounces ignorance and attains awakening?
A: When we mistake a rope for a snake, there is no snake in the rope. In the absence of a snake, why does fear arise? Why do we mistake the rope for a snake? How do we initially mistake the rope for the snake? For what reason do we mistakenly impose the presence of a snake upon its absence? How do we realize that there is no snake there? Initially, we mistake the rope for a snake and later we do not mistake the rope for a snake, but the entity of the rope has not changed in the interim. When we mistake it for a snake, it is a rope. Later, when we realize that it is a rope, it is still a rope, just as it was previously.

Similarly, we have made a mistake. It is not that an existent self must achieve buddhahood. Rather, we must separate from the mistake that we have made. Suffering arises in dependence upon that mistake.

Q: Who separates from that mistake?
A: First come appearances as five aggregates. Those five aggregates are mistakenly taken to be one thing, in dependence upon which continuity arises. The continuity is not understood to be emptiness, in dependence upon which all the misleading appearances of cyclic existence arise. When these five aggregates, naturally dawning, are realized to be empty of inherent existence, the mistake is turned back and the continuity of the five aggregates is severed.

The essence of the Sugata is present in mind. The Buddha spoke of this

with an example. Suppose gold were buried under earth and many filthy things were poured onto it. Then the gold remained covered by this filth for thousands or even tens of millions of years. Many people need this gold but they do not know that gold is present there. The gold cannot say, "I am here." If a clairvoyant god were to come there, then he or she would say, "There is gold underneath this earth. Don't you need gold? If you dig here, gold will come forth from underneath." Then, the people dig and bring forth gold.

Similarly, there is ignorance in our minds. Not seeing the ignorance that is present in our minds, we fool ourselves and cause ourselves a lot of trouble. However, the Buddha comes here and says, "You are causing yourselves a lot of trouble. The roots of all the trouble that you are causing yourselves are in your minds." Having been introduced to the source of our troubles, we understand that flaws are present in our minds. Recognizing that, if we eradicate those flaws, we will enjoy ease and comfort, we understand also that, if we practice meditation, we will achieve happiness.

Q: If we have compassion for others, we want to free them from pain, but the truth often hurts. What shall we do?
A: Generally speaking, compassion is a method for separating sentient beings from suffering. Nevertheless, compassion needs to be guided by knowledge. Not much benefit will come from dumb compassion. There will not be much benefit for us, and there will not be much benefit for others. Therefore, knowledge is necessary. Knowledge looks for a way in which we can actually be of help. Will there be much benefit or only a little? We need to apply compassion intelligently.

For instance, there is a story of a king who was guarded by a brave monkey. One night, a thief came into the king's palace and arrived at the king's residence. The king was sleeping, and while he slept, a bug bit him on the head. Seeing the bug biting the king, the monkey raised his sword and whacked the bug. Of course, when he hit the bug with his sword, he also hit the king in the head. Meanwhile, the thief, busy stealing the king's goods, watched the monkey smack the bug and the king. Horrified, he shouted, "Ha! He's killing the king!"

If you have knowledge, you will be able to help even your enemies. If you do not have knowledge, you will treat even your friends as if they were enemies and will not be able to help them, like the monkey who killed the bug but hit the king in the head with his sword. Therefore, if you have no knowledge, compassion will be of little benefit to anyone.

CHAPTER SIX

Certainty

I WOULD LIKE TO SAY a few words about rousing the mind of awakening, the mind that is directed toward supreme awakening. This is the Tibetan way of practicing the excellent dharma. What is the reason for this tradition? Generally, in the Buddhist way, if we repair our motivation at the start, our conduct can become pure and correct. If we do not repair our motivation at the start, our conduct cannot become pure and correct. For that reason, we need pure motivation. What pure motivation do we need? Generally, we should undertake activity that benefits ourselves and others rather than activity that harms ourselves and others. If we cherish others more than ourselves, that will serve as a cause of what benefits both others and ourselves. Therefore, let us exert ourselves at activity that benefits others. Moreover, let us distinguish between temporary and final benefit. If you have the aspiration and intention to achieve supreme awakening, from which final benefit arises vastly, such that you think, "I will place all sentient beings in the rank of a completely pure and masterful buddha, who has destroyed the two obstructions, who possesses all good qualities, and who has passed beyond the two extremes," that will serve as thoroughly pure motivation. That motivation, the aspiration and intention to achieve supreme awakening, is extremely important at all times and in all activities, whether we are working, practicing, or studying. In particular, if we have thoroughly pure motivation when we are listening to dharma, then listening to dharma and, subsequently, bringing dharma into experience will become the real thing. Please listen with the aspiration and intention to achieve supreme awakening.

From among the three principal divisions of Kamalashīla's *Stages of Meditation in the Middle Way School*—compassion, the mind of awakening, and bringing the instructions into experience through practice—we are