Three Approaches to the Four Foundations:
An Investigation of Vipassanā Meditation, Analytical Meditation and Śamatha/Vipaśyanā Meditation on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness

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As a Master's Thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism
May 2, 2011

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> "But you might say, "This is very well, but how do I begin?" And there is a different perspective on how we begin the whole thing: right at the beginning we don't begin "properly." We begin as what we are, which is to say, maybe in a distorted way, a confused way. You have no idea of how to actually begin properly, but you begin somehow or other: one just does it. People often are bothered by this haphazard way of beginning and look for perfection of some kind. But somehow, if you look for perfection, there's no such thing at the time, on the spot. One has to start with the confusion and imperfection, which is absolutely necessary; definitely necessary."[1]
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> -- Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche

Abstract

This thesis investigates three sets of meditation practices each of which follows a distinct approach to the Buddhist teaching commonly known as "the four foundations of mindfulness." The philosophical framework, or *view*, of these meditation practices is explored, but the primary focus of the thesis is the method of *practice* of the instructions and the perceived *result* of that practice. Practice and result are investigated primarily through participant observation. The thesis accepts the author's meditation journals as a primary source.

This investigation illuminates the soteriological process or *path* of each of these sets of practices, and inquires into their consonance with each other: are these practices complementary, contradictory or unrelated? Do they represent stages of development? The thesis concludes that these sets of practices are complementary, not contradictory, and that one set of practices does not supersede another. The thesis observes that although aspects of these practices overlap one another, each of the sets of practices addresses most effectively a particular variety of mental disturbance (these three varieties of mental disturbance are commonly referred to as the three *poisons* in Buddhist literature.)

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[1] Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, *Training the Mind, Talk 4*, Transcript of Lecture Series, Rocky Dharma Center, Red Feather Lakes, CO. August 1974.

Introduction

Prelude to a Thesis

Scene 1: Embroidering on the Truth

I am a junior at Harvard, studying the Iliad and Odyssey in the original Homeric Greek. I am in love with scholarship, in love with my mentor, in love with the idea of becoming a professor. I am working on a paper that investigates the instances of boar imagery in the Odyssey. The paper relies heavily on linguistic analysis -- the style of analysis favored by my mentor and a methodology that I have embraced wholeheartedly. I am investigating the way in which certain words appear together in specific contexts within the text. I am convinced that this analysis will reveal a deep structure of the text and therefore illuminate some profound hidden truth.

As I work, I uncover patterns of associations of words. But each pattern seems to have an exception or two, and those exceptions point to other clusters of linked words. I'm excited to find these linked complexes of associations. I'm convinced that I am on the track of the deep structure of the text. The more deeply I investigate, the more complex the web of associations grows. I become giddy as the web becomes more and more elaborate and encompassing, until I have a flash of insight: "I'm making this up!"

I realize that the pattern is indeed there -- the text admits of this interpretation -- but only there because I see it. I am not uncovering the truth: I'm creating an embroidery based on the original text. I have a glimpse of my future career: I will create clever hypotheses around which I will erect ramparts of scholarship in order to defend my creations against hostile embroiderers. It seems ridiculous, insupportable. I decide right then that I will not become a professor.

Scene 2: Unhappiness is an Inside Job

I am in my early forties. I have left a career in computer consulting, and accepted a severance package. I have free time and enough money to enjoy that time. Many of my friends have expressed envy: "How lucky you are to have free time to do whatever you want." But I'm not happy, and after sufficient investigation, I realize that my dissatisfaction is not the result of any external circumstance -- I really don't have anything specific to complain about, and yet I am quite unhappy. It is clear that my pervasive dissatisfaction is not the result of my circumstances, which by almost any standard are quite fortunate. My dissatisfaction is an "inside job."

I begin studying Buddhism and realize that the above is a description of the first two noble truths.

Scene 3: Faith in Suffering

I'm participating in a retreat at the Shambhala Mountain Center. I've been studying and practicing Buddhism for about seven years. I'm still uneasy with many aspects of Buddhism, particularly with devotional practices. During the retreat, I am led, along with the other participants, on a walk to the Great Stupa of Dharmakāya – a huge memorial tower overlooking the mountain valley in which the Center is situated. We are taught a song that invokes Padmasambhava, the wonder-working patron saint of Tibet. We sing the song as we circumambulate the stupa. Eventually, we are led inside the stupa, and sit before a giant golden statue of the Buddha. As I sit and gaze on the Buddha, I am struck by a wave of revulsion similar to the one I felt in the classics library at Harvard. I ask myself, "Are you walking in circles, singing Tibetan songs and praying to a big golden statue in order to make yourself feel good? Is that what this retreat is about?"

I'm shaken by this, and feel panicked when we return to the meditation hall. I don't want to continue a retreat based on self-delusion. I decide that I need to face the question head on, and I do so by way of analytic meditation. I sit and contemplate: "What do you have confidence in here? What do you feel that you know for sure? " In the course of my meditation, it becomes clear: I don't really have confidence in the efficacy of circumambulating stupas, nor in devotional songs, nor in large gold statues, however beautiful. But I find that there is something that I do have confidence in, something that is unquestionable in my own experience: I am certain that I feel pervasive dissatisfaction, and that this dissatisfaction is the result of the way in which I engage with my personal experience. In other words, I have faith in the first two noble truths. I decide that I can continue my retreat on the basis of my understanding of suffering and the origin of suffering.

Genesis of and Motivation for This Thesis

As a student in the Master of Religious Studies program at Naropa University I have been studying and practicing in the Kagyü tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. I have been very grateful for those teachings and practices, but in the course of my studies, I have also found myself interested in exploring practices of other traditions. In particular, I was interested in the techniques of the so-called "*Hīnayāna*." The term *Hīnayāna* (small vehicle) was an historical invention of the schools that consider themselves *Mahāyāna* (great vehicle).[2] It is a somewhat derogatory term; many

[2] Andrew Skilton, *A Concise History of Buddhism* (Birmingham: Windhorse, 1994) 93, "During the centuries either side of the beginning of the common era, teachings criticizing aspects of the Buddhism of the early schools, and introducing their own new religious preoccupations, began to make an appearance…The new movement came, in the long term, to identify itself as the Mahāyāna, the 'Great Way,' by way of a conscious contrast with, and criticism of, the non-Mahāyāna schools which it dubbed the Hīnayāna, the 'Lesser or Inferior Way.'"

Mahāyāna texts speak of the lesser attainments of Hīnayāna practitioners and the greater attainments of Mahāyāna practitioners.[3]

I am something of a contrarian by nature, inclined toward debate: if someone presents a logical proposition to me, I am likely to defend the opposite side of that proposition as a matter of course. When I read texts that presented the Hīnayāna as inferior to the Mahāyāna, I naturally felt some sympathy for the Hīnayāna and wondered, "How do you know that it's inferior?"

As I write this, I am a student in the Indo-Tibetan track of Naropa University's Masters of Religious Studies program, many courses of which are based on the tradition of the Kagyü *shedra,* or monastic college. One of the traditional pedagogical devices of the shedra is a presentation of the "four schools" of Buddhism – the Vaibhāṣikas, the Sautrāntikas, the Yogācāras, and the Mādhyamikas. In this presentation, the schools of the Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas are represented as Hīnayāna and the schools of the Yogācāras and Mādhyamikas are represented as Mahāyānists. The four schools are presented as progressive stages of understanding, starting from the (error-ridden) Vaibhāṣikas and progressing to the "correct" view of the Mādhyamikas. Each school refutes the errors of the view "below" it.[4] In my studies, I noticed that the "lower schools" were not offered an opportunity to challenge the "higher schools": we never read any texts of the lower schools. Instead, we memorized a collection of truth statements attributed to those schools. These truth statements seemed at best a biased

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[3] For example, Jamgön Mipham Rinpoche, *Gateway to Knowledge, Volume III,* (Boudhanath: Rangjung Yeshe, 2002) 186 - 189.

[4] This is the approach taken by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso in *Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness*, (Australasia: Zhyisil Chokyi Ghatsal, 2001). It is also fundamental to the approach of the Nitartha Institute, which is under the guidance of the Dzogchen Pönlop Rinpoche, who is a student of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso. For examples of Nitartha's presentation of the four schools, see *The Gateway That Reveals the Philosophical Systems to Fresh* by the Dzogchen Pönlop Rinpoche and Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltsen (Canada: Nitartha Institute, 2001) and Acharya Sherab Gyaltsen's commentary on that work entitled *Hīnayāna Tenets* (Canada: Nitartha Institute, 2001)

summary of the views of that school and at worst a caricature those views. It took me a while to recognize that this presentation is meant to serve as a pedagogical device, and is not meant to be an accurate historical presentation of the schools in question.[5] Still, I felt a sympathetic outrage on the part of the refuted schools: they should have a chance to speak for themselves!

In the fall semester of 2009, I was able to practice some "Hīnayāna" techniques: I undertook a meditation practicum course in which I practiced the techniques of the four foundations of mindfulness as they are presented in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta,[6] one of the fundamental texts of the Pali canon of Theravāda Buddhism. I found these practices very effective, and when I finished my course of study, I conceived the idea of extending the project into a thesis. I thought that I would continue to study the four foundations of mindfulness by practicing meditation techniques that corresponded to each of the three major bodies of Buddhist teachings recognized by Mahāyāna Buddhism as the *three turnings of the wheel of dharma.* In this way, I would be able to experience the effects of those practices and the path that those practices manifested and would be able to compare them to one another.

My motivation in undertaking such a thesis was based on a desire to experience for myself the wisdom of the teachings of the "lower schools". It was also based on my intolerance of lies and half-truths, of biased characterizations of others, even when those

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[5] As Karl Brunnhölzl asserts in *The Center of the Sunlit Sky: Madhyamaka in the Kagyü Tradition* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 2004.), 862 n, 137: "… this set of four schools should be understood more as a pedagogical summary of the many strands and views of Buddhists schools in India. For example, what is called the Vaibhāṣika school here actually refers to at least eighteen schools that moreover never thought of themselves as belonging to a single main school. Strictly speaking, "Vaibhāṣikas" are only those among these schools who follow the *Mahāvaibhāṣā*, a huge compendium on Abhidharma that was compiled by several arhats. As for the Sūtra Followers, from all that we know, there seem to have been only a handful of them (making the notion of a distinct school questionable), and none of their original texts have survived."

[6] Ñāṇamoli, Bhikku and Bhodi, Bhikku, trans. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2005). More detailed information on the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta and its place in the Pali canon is found below.

biased characterizations are in the service of some greater learning. (I wanted to demonstrate that those know-it-all Mādhyamikas had not accurately portrayed the poor defenseless Vaibhāṣikas.)

My motivation was also based on my uncertainty about my own path. As I mentioned above, I was grateful for the teachings and practices that I received at Naropa, and yet I still felt hesitant to commit fully to the Kagyü or Shambhala lineage. I didn't feel an exclusive heart-connection with any teacher, nor did I feel drawn to the Vajrayāna practices that are central to those lineages. I felt a certain pressure from some of my fellow practitioners to enter into those practices, and I responded to that pressure with resistance.

Finally, my motivation in undertaking this project was my recognition that my underlying reason for practice remained rooted in the first two Noble Truths, not in the Bodhisattva ideal. I am still "Hīnayāna" in my motivation not "Mahāyāna" – I practice primarily in order to alleviate my own suffering, not that of others. I'm happy if my practice helps anybody else, but my basic motivation remains my own salvation. I feel a degree of embarrassment about that — it seems much more noble to be altruistically motivated than to be selfishly motivated — but, as should be clear from the scenes described in the prequel, I have a strong revulsion toward lying, especially to lying to myself. Part of my motivation was the desire to accept the real driving force behind my practice and to investigate what path might be appropriate for practitioners as cravenly self-centered as myself.

In brief, the underlying heart-question of this project was "What is my path?" I hoped that in the course of investigating differing traditional paths of practice, my own path would become clearer to me.

Methodology

This thesis primarily employs the participant/observer method. During the research phase, I engaged in three types of Buddhist meditation practices each of which follows a distinct set of teachings on the four foundations of mindfulness. Each of these practices found its basis in one or more texts. In addition to practices based on the text of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, I engaged in practices based on the text of the ninth chapter of Pawo Tsugla Trengwa Rinpoche's commentary (in Karl Brunnhölzl's translation) on Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*[7], and practices based on oral teachings on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness given by Trungpa Rinpoche in 1973 and 1974.[8]

In choosing these texts and practices, I confess that (to paraphrase Trungpa Rinpoche) I "followed the pretense of accident."[9] I had been introduced to Trungpa Rinpoche's presentation of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness at a thirty-day group retreat, or *dathün,* in July and August 2006 at the Shambhala Mountain Center. I also read Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta at that retreat and had been struck by the fact that Trungpa Rinpoche's presentation differed greatly from that of what I assumed to be the "original." During that retreat, I was given practice instructions based on Trungpa Rinpoche's teachings by Acharya Gaylon Ferguson and Acharya Arawana Hayashi, the leaders of the retreat, and by Cal Aston, my meditation instructor. I had been grateful for those instructions, and found them effective, but I had also been curious about how one would practice the "original" teachings since that time; it was natural for me to turn to those teachings as part of my contrarian investigation.

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[7] Translation of this commentary is found in Karl Brunnhölzl's *The Center of the Sunlit Sky: Madhyamaka in the Kagyü Tradition* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 2004.)
[8] Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, *The Heart of the Buddha* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1991) 21 – 58.
[9] Sharon Salzberg related an anecdote in which Trungpa Rinpoche gave her this advice when she asked

Happenstance (or auspicious coincidence) delivered a second set of instructions: the presentation of the Drupön Khenpo Lodrö Namgyal,[10] which is based on the ninth chapter of Pawo Rinpoche's commentary on Śāntideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra.[11] Jirka Hladiš, who had been my analytic meditation instructor at Naropa University for several semesters, brought this text to my attention. It was natural to return to Trungpa Rinpoche's presentation as the third set of instructions.

For ease of reference, I will refer to each meditation practice by the name that each tradition assigns itself: I will refer to the set of instructions based on the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta as *vipassanā meditation;* I will refer to the set of instructions based on the ninth chapter of Pawo Rinpoche's commentary on Śāntideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra as *analytical meditation*; and I will refer to the set of instructions based on Trungpa Rinpoche's presentation as *śamatha/vipaśyanā meditation*.

Although I might have been able to cull meditation instructions from these texts, I chose to rely on contemporary meditation instructors to guide me in practice. I followed the instructions of Gil Fronsdal[12] and Lloyd Burton[13] in my practice of

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him how she might find a meditation teacher in India. (Lecture, Naropa University, February 15, 2011)

[10] The Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang offers this biographical information on the Drupön Khenpo Lodrö Namgyal: "Drupon Khenpo Lodro Namgial completed the 9-year Acharya program at Nalanda Institute, Rumtek Monastery. He studied under the guidance of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche and Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche. After his graduation, he was appointed one of the Khenpos of Nalanda Institute where he taught for two years. Following that, he entered three-year retreat at Pullahari Monastery under Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche. When he completed the retreat, he was appointed Drupon (retreat master) of Pullahari Monastery."
(http://www.jamgonkongtrul.org/programteachers.htm) accessed 4/15/11)

[11] Drupön Khenpo Lodrö Namgyal, "Vipaśyanā Talk," Transcript of Lecture Series. Nalandabodhi sangha. Boulder, CO. June 7 – 9, 2002.

[12] The Insight Meditation Center gives this biographical information about Fronsdal: "Gil Fronsdal is the primary teacher for the Insight Meditation Center in Redwood City, California; he has been teaching since 1990. He has practiced Zen and Vipassana in the U.S. and Asia since 1975. He was a Theravada monk in Burma in 1985, and in 1989 began training with Jack Kornfield to be a Vipassana teacher. Gil teaches at Spirit Rock Meditation Center where he is part of its Teachers Council…Gil was ordained as a Soto Zen priest at the San Francisco Zen Center in 1982, and in 1995 received Dharma Transmission from Mel Weitsman, the abbot of the Berkeley Zen Center. … In 1998 he received a PhD in Religious Studies from Stanford University studying the earliest developments of the bodhisattva ideal. He is the author of The Issue at Hand, essays on mindfulness practice, and the translator of The Dhammapada, published by Shambhala Publications." (http://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/teachers/) accessed 4/15/11.

vipassanā meditation. (I followed recorded instructions from Fronsdal, and instructions given to a group class by Burton.) I followed instructions given to me personally by Lama Tenpa Gyaltsen[14] in my practice of analytical meditation. I followed the instructions given to me personally by Gaylon Ferguson[15] in my practice of śamatha/vipaśyanā meditation. I practiced each of these sets of instructions for a

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[13] The Insight Meditation Community of Colorado gives this biographical information for Lloyd Burton: "Lloyd Burton has been doing meditation practices from the Theravada Buddhist tradition since 1975, and teaching them since 1997 -- principally under the tutelage of senior guiding teachers at the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts, and the Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Woodacre, California. In 2000 he completed the first Community Dharma Leaders training program at Spirit Rock. His day job is as professor of law and public policy in the Graduate School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado; and his most recent book is Worship and Wilderness: Culture, Religion, and Law in Public Lands Management (U. of Wisc. Press, 2002).
(http://www.insightcolorado.org/teachers/index.html) accessed 4/15/11.

[14] The Rebel Buddha website offers this biographical information on Lama Tenpa: "Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltsen was born in Nepal and entered a monastery at the age of thirteen. In 1981, Lama Tenpa was enrolled in the first class of the Karma Shri Nalanda Institute at Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim, India, together with Dzogchen Pönlop Rinpoche. He completed his studies with an *Acharya* degree in 1991 and following his graduation taught Buddhist philosophy at the Karma Shri Nalanda Institute for two years. Under the guidance of Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, he then entered a 3-year retreat in Pullahari, Nepal. From 1997 to 2004, Lama Tenpa Gyaltsen was the resident teacher at HH Karmapa's center Theksum Tashi Chöling in Hamburg, Germany. Furthermore, Lama Tenpa has been one of the main teachers at Nitartha Institute since 1998. Since August 2004, Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltsen has been a professor of Buddhist studies and Tibetan language at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado and teaches regularly at various Nalandabodhi centers." (http://www.rebelbuddha.com/profiles/acharya-lama-tenpa/) accessed 4/15/11.

[15] Shambhala International gives this biographical information about Gaylon Ferguson, who serves as an Associate Professor in Naropa's Interdisciplinary Studies program: "Gaylon Ferguson grew up on a farm in strictly segregated East Texas. After moving east to graduate from the Phillips Exeter Academy, he studied philosophy and psychology at Yale University. There, Gaylon encountered D.T. Suzuki who confirmed "that it's not possible to learn Buddhist meditation entirely from a book." He dropped his studies and took up work on a radical Catholic fruit farm near Kalamazoo, Michigan.
Soon after reading Meditation in Action, Gaylon heard the Vidyadhara teach several summer seminars in Vermont. In 1973, after giving a "particularly panic-stricken and disorganized " open house talk, Gaylon joined Tail of the Tiger Buddhist Community (now Karme Choling) where he worked in the garden, set the tractor on fire, and took people into retreat. After attending the 1975 Vajradhatu Seminary, Gaylon taught briefly at The Naropa Institute, led a dathun at the now deceased Padma Jong, and finally returned to Karme Choling, first as a staff member in the practice and study department, and then as Executive Co-director. In 1979, Gaylon journeyed west again to serve as teacher-in-residence for the Berkeley Dharmadhatu and in 1983, he joined the Office of Three Yana Studies in Boulder. Last summer, he taught View and Practice of the Buddhadharma at the 1999 Vajradhatu Seminary.
Gaylon returned to Yale in 1987 to finish his undergraduate degree, this time in African Studies. In 1994, he was a Fulbright Fellow to Nigeria and completed a doctoral degree in cultural anthropology at Stanford University two years later. After several years teaching cultural anthropology at the University of Washington, Gaylon moved to Karme Choling as teacher in residence through 2005. For the Spring Semester of 2006, Acharya Ferguson was Visiting Professor in Religious Studies at Naropa University. His article, "Making Friends with Ourselves" (from the collection Dharma, Color, and Culture) was selected for inclusion in The Best Buddhist writing: 2005. Beginning in the fall of 2006, Gaylon will join the core faculty in Interdisciplinary Studies at Naropa."
(www.shambhala.org/teachers/acharya/gferguson.php) accessed 4/24/2011.

fifteen-week semester and kept journals of my experiences. These journals are a source of my research materials.

I followed each of these semester-long practices with a meditation retreat. After practicing vipassanā meditation, I took part in a ten-day group vipassanā retreat following the recorded instructions of S. N. Goenka.[16] After practicing analytical meditation, I undertook a five-day solo practice intensive following instructions given by Lama Tenpa Gyaltsen. After practicing śamatha/vipaśyanā meditation, I took part in a thirty-day dathün following the instructions of Allyn Lyon.[17] I kept journals of my experiences during the solo intensive and the dathün, but it was not permitted to journal during the vipassanā retreat. These journals and the outline are also a source of thesis research materials and are included in Appendix II.

I undertook this experiential research within the context of my studies at Naropa University. As a student of the Indo-Tibetan track of the Master's of Religion program, I primarily followed the methodology of the Tibetan shedra as adapted for students of the West. This methodology combines study of religious texts with training in analytical meditation and debate. As part of this training, I had already engaged in four semesters

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[16] The Vipassana Meditation website offers this biographical information for S. N. Goenka: "Mr. Goenka is a householder teacher of Vipassana meditation in the tradition of the late Sayagyi U Ba Khin of Burma (Myanmar). Although Indian by descent, Mr. Goenka was born and raised in Burma. While living in Burma he had the good fortune to come into contact with U Ba Khin, and to learn the technique of Vipassana from him. After receiving training from his teacher for fourteen years, Mr. Goenka settled in India and began teaching Vipassana in 1969. In a country still sharply divided by differences of caste and religion, the courses offered by Mr. Goenka have attracted thousands of people from every part of society. In addition, many people from countries around the world have come to join courses in Vipassana meditation."(http:/www.dhamma.org/en/goenka.shtml) accessed 4/15/11)

[17] Shambhala International gives this biographical information about Allyn Lyon: "Allyn has held a number of administrative positions in the Shambhala Mandala including at The Naropa Institute, Vajradhatu, and Boulder Karma Dzong. In 1992, she traveled to Asia to direct three Naropa Nepal Programs and then to Crestone, Co to direct two three-month Maitri Space Awareness programs. In 1995, Allyn "found herself volunteering" to take on the position of Director of Rocky Mountain Shambhala Center and during that time, she managed to combine center administration with teaching trips to Europe, Mexico, the Pacific Northwest, and elsewhere. In 2000 she was appointed an Acharya and ended her tenure at Shambhala Mountain Center. Since then she has been traveling and teaching while creating a home base in Tepotzlan, Mexico, where she is the resident Acharya. Allyn is also the resident Acharya for Los Angeles, CA where she spends a couple of months each year."

of analytical meditation and four semesters of debate by the time I began my thesis research. This training was directly applicable to my practice of analytical mediation during that research, and also provided a basic style of examination – both of texts and of my own experience -- that was the foundation of my textual and experiential research.

As part of my Naropa coursework, I also received training in the anthropological methodology of participant/observer research,[18] as well as training in comparative analysis of texts.[19] These, too, form a basis of my methodology. Finally, I continued to engage in textual study and meditation practice at Naropa while I was engaged in my thesis research, and that study and practiced influenced the course of my research.

I am grateful to Judith Simmer-brown, my thesis advisor, for pointing out to me that the writing of this thesis constitutes yet another phase of research and practice. The primary methodology could again be called "participant/observer," though perhaps different from this methodology practiced in the social sciences, such as anthropology. In this thesis, these practice instructions follow the traditional Indo-Tibetan Buddhist sequence of contemplative study -- hearing, contemplating and meditating -- that forms the basis of Naropa University's model of contemplative education.[20] The paradigm of the three prajñās of hearing, contemplating and meditating is attested in Buddhist literature as early as the fifth century, in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhaṣyam*, a

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(http://www.shambhala.org/teachers/acharya/alyon.php) accessed 4/15/11.

[18] Gaylon Ferguson led the course "Methods and Issues in the Study of Religion" which I attended in the Fall Semester of 2009. In this course, I was introduced to the methodology of participant observation. Texts we read included Saba Mahmood's *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton Uiversity Press, 2004) and Karen McCarthy Brown's *Mama Lola: a Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.) In addition to our study of theory, students also conducted participant observation of two distinct religious traditions using McCutcheon's model of insider/outsider.

[19] Judith Simmer-Brown led the course "First Turning of the Wheel of Dharma" in which we used Pike's model of etic and emic perspectives in analyzing texts.

[20] See, for example, Jirka Hladiš, "Contemplative Aspect of Naropa Online Learning" Best Practices In Online Contemplative Education: A Naropa Online Faculty Panel Discussion, (Naropa University, 2005),

compendium of Buddhist scholasticism that laid the ground for in-depth study of Buddhism throughout Asia.[21]

As this paradigm is adapted to western academic contemplative education, hearing corresponds to the research phase, in which the student undertakes both outer, textual research and inner, experiential research. Contemplating corresponds to a repeated examination of those research findings; during these repeated examinations, patterns of association and meaning coalesce, and the student determines whether the findings support those associations and meanings. Meditation is the act of choosing a theme from among these various patterns of association and meaning and writing a specific document – manifesting something fresh and new as the result of hearing and contemplating.[22] The methodology that I have employed in researching and writing this thesis is consistent with methodologies practiced at Naropa University -- as I have noted above, the model of "hearing, contemplating and meditating" is fundamental to that institution. Within the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist track of the Religious Studies program, the student ideally begins by hearing -- reading texts and memorizing definitions -- in an open, receptive way. The student then contemplates this wisdom by repeated examination and questioning, through textual analysis, analytical meditation practice, and debate, in order to determine how best to integrate what he has learned with his own experience. This use of analytic intelligence in the service of understanding received wisdom is the fundamental approach to spiritual development not just in Tibetan Buddhism, but in Buddhism in general. For instance, Thanissaro Bhikkhu, an American Buddhist monk of the Thai forest *kammathana* tradition of

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[21] Vasubandhu. *Abhidharmakośabhaṣyam, Vol I*, Louis de La Vallee Poussin (trans.) Leo M. Pruden (English trans.) (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991) I.2, 56-57, 363 n. 450.
[22] For a more detailed description of this model, see Judith Simmer-Brown, "Scholarship as Path" The

Theravāda, outlines the proper relationship between analysis of the teachings and reliance on them:

> If you sincerely want to put an end to suffering — that's the condition — you should take certain things on faith, as working hypotheses, and then test them through following his path of practice.
>
> There's a hint of this need for faith even in the discourse to the Kalamas:
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> > *Don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, 'This contemplative is our teacher.' When you know for yourselves that, 'These mental qualities are skillful; these mental qualities are blameless; these mental qualities are praised by the wise; these mental qualities, when adopted & carried out, lead to welfare and to happiness' — then you should enter & remain in them.*
> > AN 3.65
>
> The first few phrases in this passage, refuting the authority of scripture and tradition, are so strikingly empirical that it's easy to miss the phrase buried further on, asserting that you have to take into account what's praised by the wise…. the Buddha's advice to the Kalamas is balanced: Just as you shouldn't give unreserved trust to outside authority, you can't give unreserved trust to your own logic and feelings if they go against the genuine wisdom of others.[23]

My basic research methodology, then, is an adaptation of a traditional Buddhist approach to investigative scholarship. I was not interested in disproving the validity of the practices I followed. Rather, I wanted to experience the effects of those practices, and I undertook my research with the assumption that the effects would be positive.

There are areas in which my methodology is more consistent with the Western academic approach than it is with the traditional Buddhist approach. For instance, in this thesis, I explore the history of my textual and oral sources, and I have made citations of those sources, which is more typical of Western scholarship than traditional

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Naropa Institute Bulletin (Fall 1979), 1, 16.

[23] Thanissaro Bhikkhu "Faith In Awakening" *Access to Insight*, http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/faithinawakening.html. Accessed 4/14/11

Buddhist scholarship.[24] More importantly, my investigation of meditation spans several lineages without asserting the superiority of one over the other. This position is also more typical of Western comparative scholarship than it is of traditional Buddhist scholasticism (where, as we have seen above, sharp distinctions may be drawn between lineages in the service of the pedagogy of polemics.) This is not to say that Buddhist scholasticism is always sectarian; for instance, there is non-sectarianism evident in the *Ri-me* ("without bias") movement in nineteenth century Tibet as well as in the approach of western scholar practitioners such as Sangharakshita.

Finally, I have chosen to include records of my own experience in the form of journals as a primary source. This is not the traditional Buddhist academic approach,[25] nor is it the general style of "objective" Western academia. However personal experience is a source for research that has become accepted in such fields as anthropology, where the subjectivity of the observer may be exposed,[26] and the very utility of objectivity brought into question.[27] The inclusion of personal experience as a source is also well represented in the writing of such western Buddhist teachers as Pema Chödron,[28] Jack Kornfield[29] and Ezra Bayda.[30]

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[24] For instance Jamgön Mipham does not provide any citations in his *Gateway to Knowledge*, which is clearly a compilation of many texts. Karl Brunnhölzl, on the other hand provides many citations in *Center of the Sunlit Sky*.

[25] For instance, Traleg Rinpoche, a Tibetan lama writes, "I have not referred to many of my own experiences in giving meditation instruction, spiritual counsel, or assistance to people over the years, nor have I included any personal stories of spiritual practice, because I do not feel these reminiscences are particularly relevant to the Buddhist teachings. This may be a reflection of the Eastern cultural baggage that I still carry around. I often feel that including too many personal stories in Dharma discourse only degrades the Dharma into a self-serving, self-indulgent exercise. As an author, I cannot improve upon the veracity and profundity of the Buddhist teachings." Traleg Rinpoche, *Mind at Ease: Self-Liberation Through Mahamudra Meditation* (Boston: Shambhala, 2003), xiii.

[26] An example of academic writing in which the subjectivity of the author is revealed is found in Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola: a Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991)

[27] The issue of the proper relationship of objectivity and involvement is explored in Russell T. McCutcheon (ed.), *The Insider/ Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion: A Reader* (London and New York: Cassell, 1999). The "cult" of scientific objectivity is critiqued by B. Alan Wallace, *The Taboo of Subjectivity: Toward a New Science of Consciousness*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000)

[28] E.g. Pema Chödron, *Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living* (Boston: Shambhala

My methodology is best understood by referring again to my motivation: I undertook this thesis project in order to experience for myself the effects of different styles of meditation practice. I undertook the project with the assumptions that those effects would be positive. My goal was not so much to demonstrate that one approach is superior to the others as to construct a working relationship between approaches. I undertook the project with the assumption that the practices would not be in conflict with one another, and that I would be able to find a synthesis between them. I did not choose to practice in order to write a thesis; I chose to write a thesis in order to create a context of discipline that would support my practice, and would also support an examination of my experience over an extended period. I undertook the project with the assumption that I would find it beneficial to contemplate these practices in relation to one another and also in relationship to my Naropa education.

Writing a thesis also represents a certain inflection point in my scholarly career. Having begun with a motivation to research, contemplate and write for my own benefit, I find myself interested in sharing my discoveries with others. Judith Simmer-Brown writes: "When one has learned the sense of what one has studied, the purpose of study becomes intimately tied with sharing what one has learned with others. Actually, at this point in study, sharing with others becomes paramount, in the form of teaching, writing articles, discussion."[31] This is consonant with the process Śāntideva describes:

> What I have to say has all been said before
> And I am destitute of learning and skill of words.
> I therefore have no thought that this might be of benefit to others;
> I wrote it only to sustain my understanding.

Publications, 1994) 101 – 102.
[29] E.g Jack Kornfield, *A Path With Heart: A Guide Through the Perils and Promises of Spiritual Life* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993) 3 – 10.
[30] E.g. Ezra Bayda, *Being Zen: Bringing Meditation to Life* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2002) 61 – 63.
[31] Judith Simmer-Brown, "Scholarship as Path" 5.

> My faith will thus be strengthened for a little while,
> That I might grow accustomed to this virtuous way.
> But others who now chance upon my words,
> May profit also, equal to myself in fortune.[32]

I can attest that the process of writing the thesis has been of great benefit to me, and I hope that the thesis that I've produced may in turn be of some benefit to those that read it.

A note on the use of Pali, Sanskrit and Tibetan: In the following sections of this thesis, I will use technical terms in Pali, Sanskrit and Tibetan as they were most commonly used within the three traditions in which I practiced. In the section on vipassanā meditation, those terms will generally be in Pali. In the sections on analytic meditation and śamatha/vipaśyanā meditation, those terms will generally be in Sanskrit or Tibetan.

A note on the use of gendered pronouns: In the interest of combatting gender bias, I have alternated the use of the masculine and feminine pronouns as they refer to a generic practitioner in the text that follows. I've used the masculine gender for pronouns in the section on the section on vipassanā meditation and the section on śamatha/vipaśyanā meditation. I've used the feminine gender for pronouns in the section on analytical meditation and in the conclusion. I've used gendered pronouns in this way purely for balance; this usage should not to be construed as a comment on the gender of practitioner for whom these sections are appropriate.

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[32] Śāntideva, *The Way of the Bodhisattva: A Translation of the Bodhicharyāvatāra,* translated by the Padmakara Translation Group (Boston: Shambhala 2003) 33 (1.2 – 3.)

Research Findings

Vipassanā Meditation

Textual Basis for the Practice of Vipassanā Meditation

The textual basis for my practice of vipassanā meditation was the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta,[33] a discourse of the Buddha contained in the Majjhima Nikāya, which I read in translation. The Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna sutta, also in translation,[34] provided an additional textual basis. The Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna sutta is found in the Dīgha Nikāya and includes, in addition to the full text of the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, a more extensive treatment of the Four Noble Truths. (I chose the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta in translation as the primary text rather than the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna sutta simply because it is the text that Gil Fronsdal explicated in the talks I used as practice instructions.) I also consulted writings by the Theravāda masters Anālayo,[35] Sayadaw U Sīlānanda,[36] Nyanaponika Thera,[37] and S. N. Goenka,[38] as well as Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh,[39] as supplementary research. As can be inferred from the large number of commentaries available, the Satipaṭṭhāna and Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna suttas are considered fundamental teachings in Theravāda Buddhism. Mahinda Deegalle, a Buddhist monk from Sri Lanka and Lecturer in the Study of Religions at Bath Spa University College, describes its importance:

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[33] Bhikku Ñāṇamoli and Bhikku, Bhodi, trans., *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2005, 145 – 155 (i.56 – i.63).
[34] Maurice Walshe trans., *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A translation of the Dīgha Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 1995) 335 – 350 (ii.290 – ii.315).
[35] Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna: The Direct Path to Realization* (Cambridge: Windhorse Publications, 2003)
[36] Sayadaw U Sīlānanda, *The Four Foundations of Mindfulness* (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2002)
[37] Nyanaponika Thera *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* (San Francisco: Weiser Books, 1965)
[38] S. N. Goenka, *The Discourse Summaries of S. N. Goenka: Talks from a ten-day course in Vipassanā Meditation* condensed by William Hart (Onalaska: Vipassanā Research Publications, 1987) and S. N. Goenka, *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta Discourses* (Seattle: Vipassanā Research Publications, 1998)
[39] Thich Nhat Hanh, *Transformation and Healing: The Sutra on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness*

> In modern Theravāda countries of South and Southeast Asia, Buddhists widely use this text for meditation. In most religious contexts, its functional role is a meditation manual for serious meditators. In addition, sometimes, it serves as a ritual text. For instance, in some parts of Sri Lanka, just before performing formal funeral rituals, Buddhists recite this text several times over-night, while the relatives are mourning over the death of a dear one. In addition, rather than giving a sermon to a person who is about to die, Buddhist monks recite the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta by the bed-side of the dying person; the intention of this recitation is to make a person's last thought wholesome.[40]

The text of the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta follows the established form of suttas. It begins with the formula "Thus have I heard" – an assertion traditionally ascribed to Ānanda, the Buddha's attendant. This assertion places the seal of validity on the text that follows: it purports to be the record of an event that was either witnessed by Ānanda himself or related to him by the Buddha. The text says that Kammāsadhamma is the location in which the discourse was given, and the assembly of monks was its audience. It then introduces the topic and question to be answered:

> Bhikkhus, this is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for the attainment of the true way, for the realization of Nibbāna – namely the four foundations of mindfulness. What are the four?[41]

The phrases "sorrow and lamentation" as well as "pain and grief" are frequently used in definitions of suffering.[42] The "true way" is a reference to the eightfold noble path. These phrases place the topic within the framework of the Four Noble Truths, realization of which is tantamount to enlightenment. The reference to "purification" refers to teachings on *kamma*, cause and effect, which are the basis for the path.

The body of the sutta begins with a definition of mindfulness:

(Berkley: Parallax Press, 1990)

[40] Mahinda Deegalle, "Soteriological Fundamentalism and Interreligious Dialogue" World Council of Churches. (http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd37-03.html) accessed 4/14/11.

[41] MN, i.55 - 56, p 145.

[42] E.g. MN i.65, p 161, MN i.185, p278, MN i.460, p563, MN iii.249, p 1098.

> Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful having put away covetousness and grief for the world.[43]

It then proceeds to detail methods of practice associated with each of the four foundations. Six of the practices are associated with mindfulness of body (*kāya)*; one of the practices is associated with feeling (*vedanā)*; one of the practices is associated with mind (*citta)*; and five of the practices are associated with mindfulness of mental objects (*dhamma).* [44]

Each practice is separated from the next by a refrain. This refrain is always the same, but for the substitution of the name of the foundation. I reproduce it below as it first appears:

> In this way he contemplates the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or be abides contemplating the body as a body internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating the body in its nature of arising, or he abides contemplating the body in its nature of abiding, or he abides contemplating the body in its nature of vanishing, or he abides contemplating the body in its nature of both arising and vanishing. Or else mindfulness that 'there is a body' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a Bikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.[45]

The body of the sutta ends with a proclamation of expected result:

> If anyone should develop these four foundations of mindfulness in such a way for seven days, one of two fruits could be expected of him: either final knowledge here and now, or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return.[46]

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[43] MN, i.56, p 145.
[44] The structure of the body of the sutta is given in more detail in Appendix I
[45] MN i.56, p 146.
[46] MN i.63 p 155.

The sutta ends, as is customary, with the appreciative response of the audience.

As can be seen from the above description, the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta is, in large part, a compendium of practice instructions. Gil Fronsdal hypothesizes that (despite the assertion "Thus have I heard…") the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta is not the record of a teaching delivered in its entirety at any one time, but rather a collection assembled from a variety of teachings.[47] This hypothesis links the composition of the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta with that impulse toward systemization of the Buddha's extensive teachings that may also have resulted in the creation of the abhidhamma literature.

Each of the practices detailed in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta highlights a different practice, and therefore, ostensibly a new object of meditation. In practice however, some traditions use a single object of meditation for all of the practices included in the sutta, or a limited subset of practices included in the sutta.[48]

The sutta describes the practice of the four foundations as *ekayāna,* a single or direct path, which leads to the cessation of suffering. It predicts that one who develops the foundations will achieve "either final knowledge here and now, or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return.[49]" Bhikkhu Bodhi explains this prediction:

> Final Knowledge, *aññā*, is the arahant's knowledge of final deliverance. Non-return (*anāgāmitā)* is, of course, the state of a non-returner, who is

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[47] In support of Fronsdal's thesis, we find sections of the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta extent in the Satipaṭṭhānasamyutta, Ānāpānasati sutta and Ānāpānasaṃyutta, Kāyagatāsati sutta, Sāmañňaphala sutta, and Poṭṭhapāda sutta. The Satipaṭṭhānasamyutta (V.141 – 192) contains many repetitions of sections found in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, particularly the formula "the bhikku dwells, contemplating the body in the body, [or feelings in feelings, mind in mind, phenomena in phenomena] clearly comprehending, mindful having removed covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world." The Ānāpānasati Sutta and Ānāpānasaṃyutta include sections on mindfulness of breathing (and assert that the mindfulness of breathing, when cultivated, fulfills the four foundations of mindfulness.) The Sāmañňaphala Sutta 65 (DN I.70 – 71) repeats the section "going back and forth, looking ahead or behind…" This section is also repeated in the Poṭṭhapāda Sutta. (DN i.183)

[48] For example, S. N. Goenka always uses bodily sensation as the object of meditation, and Thich Nhat Hanh always use the breath as the object of meditation.

[49] MN i.63, p 155.

> reborn in a higher world where he attains final Nibbāna without ever returning to the human world.[50]

Thus, the Buddha characterizes the four foundations of mindfulness as a practice that, in itself, is sufficient to bring the practitioner either to the completion of the Path or near to that completion.

Practice Instructions for Vipassanā Meditation

For my primary practice instructions, I used a series of fourteen dharma talks given by Gil Fronsdal[51] to the California Insight Meditation Community (August 25 - December 15, 2003).[52] Fronsdal's talks concentrated on explication of the text, but they also gave what I felt were sufficient instructions for me to practice. I supplemented Fronsdal's instructions with a series of four dharma talks given by Lloyd Burton[53] to the Denver sangha of the Insight Meditation Community of Colorado (October 4 - 25, 2009.) I attended these teachings in person.

Fronsdal and Burton are both practitioners in the Insight Meditation tradition, which is in the lineage of Theravāda Buddhism via Mahasi Sayadaw of Burma; Burton acknowledges Fronsdal as one of his teachers. Fronsdal notes that the Insight Meditation tradition is ecumenical in its approach: it embraces many different techniques of cultivating mindfulness, although it finds its main root in the teachings of Mahasi Sayadaw.[54] Both Fronsdal and Burton bring additional influences to their teachings: Fronsdal is also a Soto Zen priest and a Stanford PhD; Burton has a Master's degree in counseling and guidance.

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[50] MN p 1195, n. 165.
[51] For biographical information, see note 12 above.
[52] Gil Fronsdal, Satipattana Sutta [sic] (http://www.audiodharma.org/series/1/talk/1742/) Accessed September – December 2009.
[53] For biographical information, see note 13 above.
[54] Fronsdal 8/25/03

Fronsdal asserts that the practices of the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta focus on cultivating the practitioner's awareness of those psychophysical processes and states of mind that lead toward suffering, and those that lead away from suffering.[55] In the course of the practice, one places bare attention on these processes and states of mind; one experiences them without judgment and storyline.[56] One becomes familiar with the quality of them; one learns what the mind is like when they are present and when they are not; one develops a "felt sense" of them.[57] As one engages in this process, one recognizes that certain states hinder the mind from experiencing happiness. One naturally gravitates toward states of mind free of hindrance; one begins to relinquish attachment and clinging, and begins to experience the seven factors of enlightenment more and more clearly. By completely relinquishing attachment and clinging, one achieves liberation: the cessation of suffering. This non-attachment is not a frosty detachment: as the practitioner's mind becomes less hindered by unhelpful mental states, it contacts sensory experience directly, unobscured by concept: the practitioner becomes more intimate with the world.[58] The experience of such a practitioner is not devoid of emotion, but suffused with energy, interest and joy.

The objects of meditation — which Fronsdal characterizes as "processes and states of mind" above — correspond to many of the familiar enumerations of the abhidhamma (such as the five skandhas, the six ayatanas, mind and mental factors, etc.). Here, I agree with the Judith Simmer-Brown's assertion that we should understand that the goal of the abhidhamma is not ontological, but soteriological: the

[55] Fronsdal, 11/24/03
[56] Fronsdal, 10/06/03, 10/13/03
[57] Fronsdal, 11/03/03
[58] Fronsdal, 9/15/03

abhidhamma is "the notebook of the practice tradition."[59] The abhidhammic categories and characteristics employed by the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta are not ontological assertions; they are soteriological guides -- a collection of instructions that address the wide array of styles of clinging.

Fronsdal's practice instructions closely followed the text of the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta and were inclusive in their approach: when he explicated sections of the sutta, he would often offer several alternate interpretations of the practice instructions.[60] Sometimes, he would note that in his training he had not practiced a certain technique, but would nonetheless offer that technique as a possible practice.[61] Fronsdal's instructions stressed the application of bare attention, but not all of the instructions he presented were simply observation: he also included meditations that were meant to soothe and calm the body;[62] contemplations on cause and effect;[63] and visualizations.[64]

At the end of my semester's practice, I undertook a vipassanā retreat in the tradition of S. N. Goenka at the Dhamma Dharā center in Shelburne, MA. Goenka studied under the Burmese Theravādin teacher Sayagyi U Ba Khin. The practice instructions given by Goenka were recorded on DVD and played to the participants of the retreat. (This is the standard procedure for Goenka's vipassanā retreats.)

In Goenka's view, we suffer as a result of mental reactions,[65] *saṅkhārā,* that arise on the basis of sensations (vedanā) that occur when consciousness makes contact with

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[59] Judith Simmer-Brown, lecture from course "First Turning", Naropa University, Fall 2009.
[60] For example, his treatment of the "breath body" 8/25/03.
[61] For instance, using the breath to tranquilize bodily formations, 9/1/03.
[62] See note above.
[63] Contemplation of the arising and ceasing of mental hindrances, 11/10/03.
[64] Fronsdal offers this interpretation of the practice of corpse meditation 9/29/03.
[65] Goenka defines *saṅkhārā* narrowly, as "reactions" to begin his presentation but opens it later to include both reactions and the mental states that result from those reactions. I personally find it useful to think of *saṅkhārā* as psychophysical complexes.

an object.[66] We take the sensations and their accompanying reactions as accurate feedback about the nature of the object. So, for instance, I might see a friend and think, "I like that person! And it's right to like that person, because I have a warm feeling when I see him." Or conversely, I may think, "I don't like him. I always get an unpleasant feeling when I see him!" But in reality, the feelings we experience have much more to do with our response to our own saṅkhārā than they do with our direct experience of the object.[67]

Through this process, we create more and more saṅkhārā and become imprisoned by them. Since the process by which saṅkhārā proliferate is based on sensations, we can only liberate ourselves by cultivating equanimity to all sensations.[68] When the mind truly rests in equanimity with regard to sensation, it does not create any new saṅkhārā,[69] and older saṅkhārā can emerge from the depths of the mind up onto its surface.[70] If the practitioner rests in equanimity with regard to the arising of these old saṅkhārā, they too dissipate.[71] In Goenka's view, the continued dissipation of old saṅkhārā leads to purification of the mind and is the path to liberation.[72]

Where Fronsdal's approach is inclusive, Goenka's approach is exclusive; it always takes bodily sensation, vedanā, as its object of meditation. Fronsdal offers many different practices to address many different needs; Goenka stresses consistency of practice in order to deeply affect the mind: students are cautioned against practicing other forms of meditation (not because they are "bad" but because they may interfere

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[66] S. N. Goenka, *The Discourse Summaries of S. N. Goenka*: *Talks from a ten-day course in Vipassana Meditation condensed by William Hart.* Onalaska: Vipassana Research Publications, 1987, 47.
[67] Goenka, *Discourse Summaries,* 70
[68] Goenka, *Discourse Summaries,* 41.
[69] Goenka, *Discourse Summaries*, 40.
[70] Goenka, *Discourse Summaries*, 49.
[71] Goenka, *Discourse Summaries,* 56, 69.
[72] Goenka, *Discourse Summaries*, 49.

with the process that Goenka teaches.)[73] During Goenka retreats, practitioners are prohibited from practicing any other kind of meditation technique, and any yoga or other "energy work."

My Experience Practicing Vipassanā Meditation

I was strongly impressed by the way in which these practices led me to an intimacy with my immediate experience, and also led me to a deep sense of appreciation for that experience.[74] I began to see vipassanā meditation as a technique that fostered appreciative inquiry. This lively interest seemed contrary to the "rap" that the Mahāyāna polemics assign to Hīnayāna practices. (For instance, when I told one of my housemates that I would be giving a presentation on the "first turning" teachings of the four foundations of mindfulness, she exclaimed, "Oh, that's the bummer turning!"). As I practiced vipassanā meditation, rather than becoming a "gloomy" Hīnayānist, I found myself growing more cheerful and engaged.[75]

I noticed that when I practiced with different objects of meditation, I experienced different psychophysical effects.[76] For instance, when I placed my awareness on my whole body, I noticed that my breath slowed and calmed.[77] When I scanned my body looking for qualities such as heaviness or lightness, I noticed that these qualities were more present in my experience of my body.[78] These findings lead me to assert that the choice of object of meditation is not insignificant, and supports the view that the abhidhamma is a soteriological guide: the objects that are described in the abhidhamma are not meant to be a complete description of reality, but rather aspects of experience

[73] Goenka, *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta Discourses* (Seattle: Vipassanā Research Publications, 1998) 78 – 79.
[74] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 9/23/09
[75] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 11/2/09
[76] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 9/7/09, 9/14/09, 9/21/09, 9/23/09, 10/23/09, 11/14/09

that are helpful in learning about suffering and its cessation.

As I practiced, I became much more familiar with the actual felt sense of negative emotions.[79] For instance, even though the storyline around anger may feel compelling, and the actions of anger may feel exciting, the actual psychophysical experience of anger is uncomfortable. When I became aware of this discomfort, I naturally wanted to let go of it. In other words, bare attention of the sensations associated with anger led me to a natural renunciation. It also led me to an appreciation of the instantaneous effects of cause and effect, or *kamma*. It was clear that I didn't have to wait for the ripening of kamma in some distant future to experience the unpleasant effects of anger: I could feel it immediately in my body and mind. Becoming familiar with "instant" kamma also supported my natural renunciation, because I could see that there was no way to "cheat" kamma by somehow avoiding its future effects.

The technique of bare attention demanded that I simply observe a troublesome experience without trying to "fix" it. This led me to observe that sometimes when I stopped trying to fix a mental or physical discomfort, it would resolve itself. I noticed, for instance, that when I placed bare attention on bodily aches or sensations of stuckness, they tended to dissolve.[80] Likewise, bare attention to negative and painful mental states allowed those mental states to dissolve. I took this as evidence of the efficacy of "non-doing."

In the course of my practice, I began to understand that bare attention is an expression of the non-aggression that is fundamental to *metta*, or loving-kindness. I had a strong experience of this during the Goenka retreat: I was practicing the technique of

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[77] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 9/7/09
[78] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 9/23/09
[79] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 10/19/09, 11/2/09
[80] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 10/8/09

body scan, and I noticed that there were some parts of my body on which that I couldn't feel any particular sensation. I felt some annoyance over this: after all it's *my* body, so I should be able to feel it. During one scan, I arrived at one such "blank" part, and considered skipping over that offending part and moving on to the next part in the scan. I decided instead just to leave my attention where it was and see whether I would feel anything or nothing. I thought something along the lines of, "I'll just wait here for as long as it takes." Immediately, I experienced a rush of tenderness and realized, "This is patience. This is the basis for loving-kindness."

In their presentations of vipassanā meditation Fronsdal, Burton and Goenka all assert that loving-kindness is a natural impulse of the mind that flows freely once the mind has freed itself from the bonds of negative conditioning.[81] I had that experience several times during my practice: sometimes, when negative mental states dissolved, I experienced an upwelling of the compassion and loving-kindness beneath them.[82] I particularly noticed a general friendliness toward and interest in my body that I had not cultivated in my meditation practice previous to engaging in vipassanā meditation. My body felt more mobile and comfortable, and I was able to sit still for much longer periods of time than previously.

The Hīnayāna is sometimes associated with revulsion toward the "impure" body; my practice did not lead me to that experience. Even the meditation on the contents of body (subtitled "Foulness" in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta) did not lead to disgust:

> Practicing the scan of body parts. This was more interesting and experiential than I'd feared. … This did not lead to the disgust that other commentators asserted. For instance, when I thought of snot, I also contacted sinuses and experienced a feeling of openness behind my nose.[83]

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[81] Fronsdal, 10/13/03, Goenka, *Discourse Summaries,* 83.
[82] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 10/16/09, 10/21/09
[83] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 9/17/09

As a result of using different characteristics of my mind and body as objects of meditation, I had a direct understanding of the teaching that "I" am composed of collections of physical parts and of distinct energies (in the language of Theravāda Buddhism such collections are called *khandas*.)[84] Since I arrived at the experience of these khandhas naturally and gradually, I didn't find that experience frightening or threatening. Instead, I found it rich and interesting. I found myself interested in including more and more of my experience into my meditation.[85]

The investigations into Mindfulness of Feeling also led me to a deeper understanding of the way in which I create my own suffering:

> I began to explore the "impulse" aspect of vedanā. Maybe I can tell whether a thought is pleasant or unpleasant by whether I move toward it or not. Surprise! I notice that I move *toward* unpleasant thoughts. Why? It's fear! I'm trying to ward those thoughts off. As if I cannot remove myself, so I try to remove the thought. I have the sense that this warding-off is the most unpleasant part of the experience. The experience of warding off *is suffering!* What I call anxiety is not, in fact, the emotion but rather the unpleasant experience of trying to avert a not-quite instantiated thought.[86]

I was also surprised to recognize that what I take to be intelligence is often a highly elaborated species of ignorance:

> Here's something that cracked me up: I was on a discursive jag about something beautifully philosophical, a thought-lecture on a profound topic when it suddenly occurred to me: "This is the mental state of delusion!"[87]

I often find myself giving thought lectures or engaged in imaginary arguments during meditation. The recognition that this behavior was actually a cause of suffering was quite a revelation.

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[84] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 9/1/10, 9/21/10
[85] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 10/20/09,11/30/09, 12/4/09
[86] Weiser, *Meditation Journal*, 10/8/09
[87] Weiser, *Meditation Journal*, 11/2/09

Summary of Results of Practicing Vipassanā Meditation

As a result of practicing vipassanā meditation, I found myself much more interested in and appreciative of the details of my physical and mental experience, particularly in my experience of my body. I felt much more comfortable in my body, and much more able to endure physical and mental discomfort with equanimity. I felt more cheerful, and experienced a natural renunciation of "non-virtuous" actions -- I naturally avoided actions that caused myself pain. I had an experiential understanding of the way in which I created suffering by – paradoxically – moving toward unpleasant thoughts in order to ward off anticipated pain. I developed an appreciation for the efficacy in "non-doing" as embodied in the practice of bare attention. I developed a felt sense that the teaching of the skandhas is accurate – that I was actually composed of parts, and that this is not a frightening state of affairs, but actually rather interesting.

Analytical Meditation

Textual Basis for the Practice of Analytical Meditation

The textual basis for my practice of analytical meditation was a selection from the ninth chapter of Pawo Tsugla Trengwa Rinpoche's commentary on Śāntideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra, translated by Karl Brunnhölzl.[88] I found an additional textual basis in the transcript of a talk given by the Drupön Khenpo Lodrö Namgyal[89] (a lama and retreat master of the Kagyü lineage of Tibetan Buddhism), given to the Nalandabodhi sangha in Boulder, Colorado on June 7 through June 9, 2002.[90] This talk closely followed Pawo Tsugla Trengwa Rinpoche's commentary (but never cited it, so it took me some research to locate Pawo Rinpoche's commentary as its source.) In addition, I consulted Kunzang Pelden's commentary *The Nectar of Manjushri's Speech*,[91] which parallels Pawo Rinpoche's commentary, and the Dzogchen Pönlop Rinpoche's article "The Four Foundations of Mindfulness,"[92] which integrates Pawo Rinpoche's commentary with Trungpa Rinpoche's presentation of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

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[88] Karl Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 713 – 732. The Nalandabodhi Website offers this biographical information: "Karl was originally trained, and worked, as a physician. He took Buddhist refuge vows in 1984 and, in 1990, completed a five-year training in higher Buddhist philosophy at Kamalashila Institute, Germany, receiving the traditional Kagyü title of "dharma tutor" (Tib. skyor dpon). Since 1988, he received his Buddhist and Tibetan language training mainly at Marpa Institute For Translators in Kathmandu, Nepal (director: Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoche) and also studied Tibetology, Buddhology, and Sanskrit at Hamburg University, Germany. Since 1989, Karl served as a translator, interpreter, and Buddhist teacher mainly in Europe, India, and Nepal. Since 1999, he has acted as one of the main translators and teachers at Nitartha Institute (director: Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche) in the USA, Canada, and Germany." (http://www.nalandawest.org/teachers/western-teachers/karl-brunnholzl) accessed 4/15/11.

[89] For biographical information see note 10 above.

[90] The Drupön Khenpo Lodrö Namgyal, "Vipaśyanā Talk." Transcript of Lecture Series. Nalandabodhi sangha. Boulder, CO, June 7 – 9, 2002.

[91] Kunzang Pelden, *The Nectar of Manjushri's Speech: A Detailed Commentary on Shantideva's Way of the Bodhisattva* (New Delhi: Shechen Publications, 2008).

[92] Excerpted from a teaching in Vermont, 1996, presumably at Karme Chöling. Originally published in Bodhi Magazine, Issue 3.

The Bodhicaryāvatāra is well beloved in the tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.[93] The text is in the form of a *doha*, or spontaneous song of realization, in ten chapters. The ninth chapter, which is entitled *Prajñā* (Wisdom), is a compendium of refutations of faulty views. In verses 78 – 105 of that chapter, Śāntideva refutes views concerning the nature of the objects of the four foundations of mindfulness. I took as my textual basis Pawo Rinpoche's commentary on those twenty-eight verses. (Śāntideva delivered the Bodhicāryavatāra in Sanskrit, and versions are still extant in that language. However, Pawo Rinpoche's uses as his basis for commentary a Tibetan version (byang chub sem dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa) found in the Derge edition of the Tengyur, or collection of commentaries, not the Kangyur, which is the collection of sūtras.[94])

Pawo Rinpoche (1504 -1562) was a student of the Eighth Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje. Karl Brunnhölzl notes that Pawo Rinpoche's commentary is considered a fundamental text in the scholastic tradition of the Karma Kagyü lineage:

> In the Karma Kagyü school, Pawo Rinpoche's commentary on the Entrance to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life is considered both the standard commentary on this text and — together with the Eighth Karmapa's Chariot of the Tagbo Siddhas — the standard presentation of Madhyamaka, especially in its Consequentialist approach.[95]

Brunnhölzl is a student of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso and of the Dzogchen Pönlop Rinpoche. Brunnhölzl's translation of Pawo Rinpoche's commentary represents part of Pönlop Rinpoche's effort to transplant the scholarly tradition of the Kagyü lineage into the west. The version of Pawo Rinpoche's commentary that I used is included in a massive tome by Brunnhölzl. The bulk of that tome consists of an

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[93] The Dalai Lama is reported to have said of it, "If I have any understanding of compassion and the practice of the bodhisattva path, it is entirely on the basis of this text that I possess it." Śantideva, *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, 30.

[94] Phil Stanley, personal correspondence: It appears that there is no sūtra extent in the Kangyur that corresponds to the Foundational teachings of the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta. The Akṣayamatinirdeśa sūtra refers to the four foundations, as does the large Prajñāparamitā sūtra, but in both cases the practice is tied to the view of emptiness and the bodhisattva path.

extensive commentary on the Madhyamaka school in general and in its manifestation in the Kagyü lineage in particular. My root text represented twenty-two pages out of the nearly eight hundred pages in Brunnhölzl's text; it is merely a small part of a translation and commentary (by Karl Brunnhölzl) on a chapter of a commentary (by Pawo Rinpoche) on a verses of a commentary (by Śāntideva) that refutes false views connected with teachings from a sutra. The Dharma is said to be vast and profound; the scholarly approach of Tibetan Buddhism is at times intimidatingly vast.

Pawo Rinpoche's commentary on the ninth chapter of the Bodhicaryāvatāra is divided into two sections: one entitled "the general topic", and one entitled "the meaning of the text". The section entitled "the general topic" concentrates on refutations of the faulty views of pure, pleasant, permanent and Self. Each of these faulty views is associated with one of the foundations of mindfulness:

> The way to meditate is to meditate that the body is impure,
> That feelings are suffering, that mind is impermanent,
> And that all phenomena are identityless[96]

In this section, Pawo Rinpoche does not refer to Śāntideva's text, but uses Asaṅga's Abhidharma Samuccaya as his textual basis.[97] He follows Asaṅga in distinguishing the path of the lesser vehicle (Hīnayāna) from the path of the greater vehicle (Mahāyāna):

> The applications of mindfulness of the inferior vehicle are as follows: With a mind that strives for peace for one's own sake, one meditates by focusing on just the five aggregates that are seized by oneself and on just those other being who dwell in places that are suitable to appear [to oneself] These [objects] are then apprehended as impure and so on.

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[95] Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 613
[96] Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 713
[97] In Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 713, Pawo Rinpoche cites "The higher abhidharma" as his source. Karl Brunnhölzl elucidates this, "'Higher abhidharma' refers to Asaṇga's *Compendium of Abhidharma* (P 5550, fols. ii4b.3 - 4). In the great vehicle [Mahāyāna], the presentations in Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Abhidharma* are considered "the lower abhidharma." Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 951, n. 1681.

> The applications of mindfulness of the great vehicle are as follows: Through being embraced by the mind of enlightenment, one meditates by focusing on the entire spectrum of the aggregates and so on in the three times that pervade space. This [leads to] the reversal of apprehending them as pure, pleasant, permanent, and an identity. At the same time one [mentally] engages in emptiness, that is that they are not observable as impure and such either.[98]

The second section of Pawo Rinpoche's commentary, entitled "the meaning of the text," is a close interpretation of Śāntideva's text. In this section Pawo Rinpoche explicates logic that demonstrates that none of the objects of the four foundations are truly existent. The reasonings concerning mindfulness of the body demonstrate that the body does not exist in the individual parts,[99] nor is it something outside of those parts that possesses them.[100] The reasonings concerning mindfulness of feeling demonstrate that feelings are not established because they are impermanent and replaced by other feelings;[101] that causality between a truly independent object and sense faculty is not possible, and that therefore the resultant feeling is not truly existent;[102] that objects do not have inherent characteristics that could cause feelings;[103] and that a temporal sequence in which a later instance of mind is caused by an earlier instance of object is not possible.[104] The reasonings concerning mindfulness of mind demonstrate that mind is not findable, and therefore that it is not truly existent;[105] and (as above) that a

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[98] Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 717. Note that the Mahāyāna approach is also concordant with the text of the Akṣayamatinirdeśa sūtra, (Braarvig, 480-509)
[99] Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 718 – 719, commentary on Śāntideva, *Bodhicharyāvatāra* ch. 9 v. 78 – 79.
[100] Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 719 – 721, commentary on Śāntideva, *Bodhicharyāvatāra* ch. 9 v. 80 – 86.
[101] Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 722 – 724, commentary on Śāntideva, *Bodhicharyāvatāra* ch. 9 v. 88 – 91.
[102] Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 724 – 726, commentary on Śāntideva, *Bodhicharyāvatāra* ch. 9 v. 93 – 98.
[103] Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 726 – 727, commentary on Śāntideva, *Bodhicharyāvatāra* ch. 9 v. 99ab.
[104] Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 727, commentary on Śāntideva, *Bodhicharyāvatāra* ch. 9 v. 99cd – 101.
[105] Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 729 – 730, commentary on Śāntideva, *Bodhicharyāvatāra* ch. 9 v. 102 - 103.

temporal sequence of a later instance of mind caused by an earlier instance of object is not possible.[106] Mindfulness of phenomena is dismissed in a few lines: "Once you have ended your clinging to body, feeling, and mind in this way, there is no other phenomenon than these left."[107]

The expected path is not specifically delineated in this section of Pawo Rinpoche's commentary, but I would argue that we can assume that it accepts the model of the path that is adumbrated in Kamalaśila's *Bhāvanākrama*: that śamatha is necessary for stability of mind, but it is insight (specifically insight into emptiness) resulting from vipaśyanā that ultimately liberates the practitioner. Śāntideva himself supports such an interpretation: "Penetrative insight joined with calm abiding / Utterly eradicates afflicted states."[108]

Penetrative insight may begin by positing a right view that negates a wrong one, but when all wrong views have been negated, the need for any view at all falls away by itself:

> By training in this aptitude for emptiness,
> The habit to perceive substantiality will fade.
> By training in the view that all lacks entity,
> This view itself will also disappear.[109]
>
> When real and nonreal both
> Are absent from before the mind,
> Nothing else remains for mind to do
> But rest in perfect peace from concepts free[110]

The fruition of this practice is the ability to rest non-conceptually in a mind that does not cling to anything.

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[106] Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 730 - 731, commentary on Śāntideva, *Bodhicharyāvatāra* ch. 9 v. 104 – 105ab.
[107] Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 732, commentary on Śāntideva, *Bodhicharyāvatāra* ch. 9 v. 105cd.
[108] Śāntideva, 110 (8.4)
[109] Śāntideva, 141 (9.32)
[110] Śāntideva 9.34 p142

Practice Instructions for the Analytical Meditation Approach

I received practice instructions in one-on-one sessions with Lama Tenpa Gyaltsen.[111] Lama Tenpa is a Vajrayāna practitioner and senior teacher, or *ācārya,* in the Karma Kagyü lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. He studied with Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso at the Kagyü shedra (monastic college) at the Karma Shri Nalanda Institute at Rumtek monastery; the Drupön Khenpo Lodrö Namgyal and the Dzogchen Pönlop Rinpoche were both fellow students. Pawo Rinpoche's commentary on the Bodhicarāvatāra was among the texts Lama Tenpa studied in shedra while earning his ācārya degree.

In Lama Tenpa's view, the goal of analytical meditation is to wake up from confusion. But in order to wake up, the practitioner must be able to know in what way she is not awake. She must understand the nature of her own confusion:

> We need to recognize our confusion, the ways that we are mistaken. We might begin our meditation with a good motivation saying, "I'm going to rise from my confusion. I'm going to get rid of my confusion." However, if we have not recognized what our confusion is, these motivations and aspirations won't be of much benefit. In contrast, if we become familiar with and recognize what our confusion is, it will be easy to become liberated from it.[112]

This confusion is the result of thoughts, but they are thoughts that have taken on weight and seeming solidity:

> Confusion is simply a thought. But it doesn't remain merely a thought. When confusion solidifies, it becomes a view.[113]

Through analytical meditation, the practitioner examines these solidified thoughts in order to come to the realization that they are not actually solid at all, and that they are

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[111] For biographical information see note 14 above.
[112] Lama Tenpa Gyaltsen, *Analytical Meditation* (Canada: Nitartha Institute, 2002) 9.
[113] Gyaltsen, *Analytical Meditation, 11.*

not the reliable guides she took them to be. In the technical language of analytical meditation, these thoughts are the *object of negation* of the analysis. Analytical meditation is always targeted toward a specific object of negation: the practitioner performs analysis not to determine the nature of reality, but to let go of a particular incorrect thought.

In the process of analytical meditation, thoughts seem to proliferate: "When practicing this type of meditation, one does have the feeling that thoughts are increasing. This is how it apparently is; thoughts do increase, apparently."[114] But these thoughts are lighter, less monolithic than the solidified confusion mentioned above, and therefore they are easier to see through. Eventually the practitioner no longer believes the solidified thought, and can relinquish it. This process of relinquishing confusion in the form of solidified thoughts is understood to be the path to liberation. Eventually the practitioner may arrive at a state where she no longer clings to any thought or view.

In our first session, Lama Tenpa stressed that analytical meditation should either arrive at a conclusion or lead to a clear question. In his view, it was more profitable to learn to cultivate open questions rather than attempt to come to conclusions.

Lama Tenpa began his instructions to me with the traditional contemplations "the body is impure" and " all feelings are suffering." He often gave me both meditation and post-meditation practices. For instance, I was instructed to examine the relationship of feelings to suffering as a formal meditation, and also to look at pleasant experiences as suffering in post-meditation.[115]I assumed that in the course of the semester we would follow the sequence of analyses found in Pawo Rinpoche's commentary. But as we progressed, Lama Tenpa presented me with analyses that

[114] Lama Tenpa Gyaltsen, "Analytic Meditation," Bodhi: Journey to Awakening (http://www.bodhionline.org/ViewArticle.asp?id=155) accessed 4/19/11.

diverged quite a bit from those found in Pawo Rinpoche's commentary. He added the following practices and analyses:

- Experience feelings without associating them with "Me"[116]
- Analyze "permanent" and "self." What is your view of permanence? What is your view of a Self? Does this view cause you any suffering?[117]
- Can you imagine something that your mind can't think of that might not be impermanent?[118]
- Does a Generally Characterized Phenomenon have any inherent characteristics?[119] (This analysis refers to the pramāṇa teachings of Dignaga and Dharmakirti, which I had previously studied with Lama Tenpa.)
- What is the source of your most disturbing emotion (*klesha*)?[120]
- How does "best" exist? (This question is a response to my discovery that my greatest klesha involves a fear of not experiencing "the best" experience.) Is "best" separate from the experiencer?[121]
- What exactly is the Self of Phenomena (the object of negation of the second turning)?[122]

I found these instructions very helpful and illuminating (particularly the exploration of the nature of concept). But I also became somewhat concerned because we seemed to be departing from the text, and the text was, after all, part of my thesis research. It seemed to me that Lama Tenpa was giving to me were related to those found in *Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness*, by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso, Lama Tenpa's teacher. At one point I asked Lama Tenpa whether we were following Pawo Rinpoche's commentary or that of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso. He replied (I paraphrase) "I'm keeping both of those texts in mind, and I'm helping you clarify those

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[115] Weiser, *Meditation Journal,* week of 9/23/10
[116] Weiser, *Meditation Journal,* 9/29/10
[117] Weiser, *Meditation Journal,* 10/6/10
[118] Weiser, *Meditation Journal,* 10/15/10
[119] Weiser, *Meditation Journal,* 10/20/10
[120] Weiser, *Meditation Journal,* 10/27/10
[121] Weiser, *Meditation Journal,* 11/3/10

things that you personally need to clarify." This was the hallmark of Lama Tenpa's work with me: he insisted that rather than go through some standard procedure, I should find the appropriate *object of negation* for myself. He told me that it was possible that "textbook" meditations might not always be appropriate to my particular case.[123] This assertion raises the issue of the proper relationship of text and oral instruction. Lama Tenpa asserted that while the root text is always honored as the most important, generally it was acknowledged that oral instruction was the most helpful. (My experience studying within the Tibetan tradition has generally confirmed this. The bulk of the study tends to be on commentary, not on original texts. For instance, in my work with Lama Tenpa, I received oral instruction on a commentary on a doha referring to a sutra, where the sutra was ostensibly considered primary, since it contained the words of the Buddha, but the words of the sutra were completely obscured by the levels of commentary above.)

In the traditional language of Buddhism, one could say that the practitioner applies the *antidote* of analytic meditation to the object of meditation. Lama Tenpa stressed that an antidote need not express the truth: truth is, in any case, beyond expression.[124] The antidote merely helps dissolve the unhelpful concept. Clinging to the antidote as truth is another problem (and will require another antidote).

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[122] Weiser, *Meditation Journal*, 11/10/10
[123] In *Confession of a Buddhist Atheist*, (New York: Random House, 2010), p 45, Stephen Batchelor mentions his disenchantment at debates and logical analyses that seemed only to confirm foregone orthodox conclusions. This was not my experience with Lama Tenpa --he insisted that I come to my own conclusions. (Of course, he would debate me on those with which he disagreed.)
[124] Weiser, *Meditation Journal*, 9/17/10

My Experience Practicing Analytical Meditation

As mentioned above, Lama Tenpa has remarked that practitioners often notice that they seem to have more thoughts, not fewer, when they practice analytical meditation. My experience bore this out: as I practiced analytical meditation, I certainly seemed to have more thoughts. My meditation journals entries are lengthy, articulate and philosophical. But my experience in analytic meditation was not just heady and theoretical: I often experienced strong emotional reactions to the analyses I worked with. These emotional reactions were useful: like the ping of sonar reflected off an object obscured by murky waters, they revealed hidden excrescences of clinging. Through the process of analysis, though, I was able to more easily apprehend the concepts that provoked those emotional reactions, and to begin the work of relinquishing those concepts.

I found the practice of the use of "antidotes" one of the most revelatory and also most challenging aspects of the practice in which Lama Tenpa guided me. Some of these antidotes seemed to me to be false, or at least one-sided, statements. For instance, Lama Tenpa asked me to undertake the traditional practice of seeing attractive women as ugly.[125] I bridled at this: I felt that the "ugliness" that I was asked to see wasn't a valid representation of my experience; at best it's just one aspect of the truth. I preferred to make the ugliness antidote a complement to my worldview rather than a negation of it:

> I'm working with Lama Tenpa's instructions to use impurity as an antidote to physical desire…I get hung up on the idea that impurity, in the sense of ugliness, is not really the relative truth. It's a one-sided version of the truth, a caricature. One way of thinking about it did make sense, though: that impurity/ugliness could be seen as part of the total picture of the body. Yes, it's alluring and pleasant, but it's also true that it's repulsive and unpleasant. It's changeable, and so is the mind that views

[125] Weiser, *Meditation Journal*, 9/15/10

> it. So in terms of the relative truth, I might be able to accept the ugliness practice as a method of creating a complete picture of the body in question.[126]

Lama Tenpa forcefully rejected my attempt to repurpose the antidote practice into a practice of seeing "all aspects" of a situation:

> Met with Lama Tenpa this morning. He asserted that the goal of the ugliness practice was to reduce the klesha of desire, and refuted my assertion that the ugliness practice should help define the nature of relative truth. In short, he said, these practices can never give a "complete" picture of relative truth. That is impossible. Instead, they provide an antidote to some klesha or delusion. They point out how things are <u>not.</u>
>
> Lama Tenpa maintains, therefore, that I'm clinging to view. He says that "impermanent" although a "truth" in the first turning, is not a truth in the second turning. And "emptiness," the big truth of the second turning is not the truth in the third turning. Views are never the truth – the truth can't be described. The point of the ugliness practice, then, is not to establish a more complete picture of the individual (as attractive a view as that may be) but to reduce the klesha of desire. Only once the kleshas are "balanced" can one worry about the nature of reality.
>
> I understand that not only do I suffer from the klesha of desire but, as I saw in dathün, I also suffer from the klesha of view. This practice is challenging because it asks me to give up view in favor of practice. Lama Tenpa asserted that Buddhism is not philosophy but Path.[127]

The antidote practice is efficacious because it highlights those things to which I *want* to cling. For instance, when I practiced the ugliness antidote, I discovered that I didn't want to see a former lover as ugly. I preferred to remember her as beautiful.[128] And I realized that my "reasonable" strategy of seeing the antidote as simply one aspect of a complex truth was really a dodge to give myself a way to keep clinging. ("Yes, there are parts of my lover that I might see as ugly, but there are also parts that I

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[126] Weiser, *Meditation Journal*, 9/15/10
[127] Weiser, *Meditation Journal*, 9/17/10
[128] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 9/20/09

perceive as beautiful. I'll accept the ugly if I can cling to the beautiful.")

These practices revealed how I participate in the perpetuation of that suffering: I actually cling to the sources of suffering, and don't want to let them go. I particularly noticed that I tend to cling to explanations of the way things work (which was referred to as *view* above.) I associate "correct" view with a deep sense of groundedness and contentment, which I crave. When I considered that clinging to view was actually a form of suffering, I was deeply shocked.[129]

I also identified a source of suffering that I had not previously recognized: the recognition that all things are constantly changing, which leads to an anxiety that I would not be able to get things lined up right:

> Because things have characteristics and because they are changing all the time, I have this anxiety that I won't somehow catch them at the right season – either they've changed or I've changed. Not ready, not ripe, too soon, too late. I think that this could be a part of either the suffering of change or of all pervasive suffering: the intuition that since things are always shifting and therefore the relationships between them are always shifting: it's almost impossible to get things lined up so that they are at an optimal (let alone good) relationship. (This is definitely heading in the direction of emptiness and interdependence.)[130]

In working with suffering directly, I sometimes experienced natural renunciation, and the relief of suffering.[131] But sometimes, I also felt a groundlessness and despair.[132]

Lama Tenpa's approach differed from that of Pawo Rinpoche in the extensive exploration of concept. As mentioned above, Lama Tenpa added several analyses to my practice that I did not find in Pawo Rinpoche's text. Among these were analyses that used the language of the valid cognition or *pramana* teachings of Dignaga and

[129] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 9/26/10, 9/27/10
[130] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 10/13/10
[131] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 9/23/10

Dharmakīrti to investigate the nature of concept itself. (This line of analysis is explored in the Nitartha Institute, where Lama Tenpa also teaches.) I found this exploration quite valuable in understanding my own preoccupation with view.

In vipassanā meditation, I rarely investigated the qualities of the imputation "Self", but in practicing analytical meditation, I did so quite frequently. I determined that I believed that the Self was the one who chooses; the guilty one; the one to whom credit or blame is due; the one who controls; the perceiver; the one who experiences; the one who suffers; the one who can perceive stability and who therefore must be stable; the one who is overvalued or undervalued.[133]

As noted above, when I practiced vipassanā meditation, I noticed that the choice of object of meditation was significant: the psychophysical processes and mental states indicated by the Abhidhamma are effective soteriological guides because they direct the practitioner's attention to processes that lead toward or away from suffering. In the practices given to me by Lama Tenpa, I noticed that in addition to processes and mental states, using concept as object of meditation also produces very significant psychophysical effects.[134]

It often seems to me as if concept is the villain in popular Western Buddhist literature. Understanding that concept can be used beneficially is helpful: it allows me to engage my own thinking process less aggressively ("All concepts must be destroyed!") and instead to make choices about how I engage those concepts ("In what way is this concept helpful?") It is also helpful because in my practice of Alexander Technique, and to a lesser extent t'ai chi, I frequently use concept to help myself and my students find an easier relationship between our minds and bodies.

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[132] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 9/26/10, 9/28/10
[133] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 10/6/10, 10/7/10, 10/13/10

Finally, in my work with Lama Tenpa, I came to the conclusion that concepts are not the beginning of a causal chain, but rather the end of one[135]. This is counterintuitive: I usually feel that a concept causes my mind to do something (For instance if I can use concepts to rouse compassion or anger). But through my analyses I realized that a concept couldn't actually cause my mind to do anything. Rather it must be the other way around: actions of my mind cause the concept to appear.[136] In other words, I'm not doing anything *because* of a concept, but I am doing something that *causes* a concept to appear. In traditional language, all concepts are *empty* — they only exist for as long as the mind that perceives them is undertaking the actions that cause them to appear. But as we can all attest, concepts appear quite vividly and seem to have a great deal of force and weight. I felt that this understanding of concepts really illuminated my understanding of the doctrine of *śūnyatā*, or emptiness.

This understanding of emptiness is applicable not only to concepts, but to all compounded phenomena (as the Bodhicaryāvatāra asserts). Just as a concept appears only because my mind undertakes certain actions, just so any physical object -- a tree, for instance -- appears only because certain parts come together and undertake certain functions.[137] When I was able to hold this view, I found that my experience of my environment become mirage-like.[138] Sometimes I also experienced the situation as quite humorous[139].

Although our work depended on analysis, Lama Tenpa also instructed me to open myself to the possibility that there were things beyond where analysis could go. He gave me an instruction that took me a while to understand: "Can you imagine

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[134] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 10/25/10
[135] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 10/26/10
[136] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 10/26/10
[137] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 12/15/10, 12/16/10, 12/17/10

something that your mind can't think of and that might not be impermanent?" [140] When I finally grasped what he was asking me to contemplate, I felt that he was pointing me toward teachings on Buddhanature. I found myself interested in this possibility. I imagined that I might be able to contact that state beyond impermanence, to include it in my mind. (And I recognized that if I could include that state, I would no longer experience "my" mind.) I was surprised to notice that this contemplation roused feelings of compassion.[141]

[138] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 12/16/10, 12/17/10
[139] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 12/15/20
[140] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 10/15/10
[141] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 10/18/10, 10/19/20

Summary of my Experience Practicing the Analytical Meditation Approach

As a result of practicing the analytic meditation approach, I experienced a greater interest in and understanding of the effect of concepts. I realized that concepts were both the main hindrance and the main vehicle for progress on the Path. I became convinced that simple concepts arise naturally and spontaneously and could be employed usefully; that concept is not in itself problematic -- rather the problem lies in clinging to concepts, and particularly clinging to the belief that certain concepts are "true." I realized that even the most useful concept could not be true in itself, and began to see that any view, even the most helpful view, could not possibly be true. I began to understand the nature of my own habitual clinging to view, and I opened up to the use of "untrue" views as antidotes. Since one of my prime areas of clinging is view, this understanding had quite an impact on me.

My appreciation of the use of concepts led me to a greater appreciation for textual study, and in particular for the style of contemplative analysis that I undertook during retreat; it also led to a greater appreciation for gratitude for my course of study at Naropa. I saw how textual analysis could be of enormous help in combating pernicious concepts. I also saw how an emphasis on conceptual exploration could lead to an excited, ungrounded style of vipaśyanā (such as I described in the first "scene" of the prequel to this thesis.) This led me to an appreciation of the teaching that vipaśyanā must be grounded in śamatha.

Through my exploration of the nature and use of concept, I achieved a greater understanding of the teachings on emptiness, particularly the way in which objects are neither existent nor non–existent, but nevertheless appear clearly and can be used functionally.

Śamatha/Vipaśyanā Meditation

Textual Basis of Śamatha/Vipaśyanā Meditation

The textual basis for my practice of śamatha/vipaśyanā meditation is the chapter "The Four Foundations of Mindfulness" in the book *Heart of the Buddha*, by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. This chapter is based on the lecture series entitled "Techniques of Mindfulness" given by Trungpa Rinpoche at Karme Chöling in August 1974 and edited by Judith Lief for publication first in *Garuda* magazine (issue IV) and later in *Heart of the Buddha*. I also referred to transcripts of the Vajradhatu Seminary led by Trungpa Rinpoche in Jackson Hole, Wyoming during the months of September through November, 1973, as well as audio files of the lecture series entitled "Training the Mind" given by Trungpa Rinpoche at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center in August 1974, and audio files of the lecture series entitled "Techniques of Mindfulness" mentioned above.[142] I consulted Gaylon Ferguson's *Natural Wakefulness*[143] as additional research. (In this text, Ferguson integrates Trungpa Rinpoche's teachings with those of his dharma heir, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, as well as with the presentation of the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta.)

Although Trungpa Rinpoche prefaced his article in *Garuda* IV with an abridged version of the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, his presentation of the four foundations differs significantly from the one found in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta. Trungpa Rinpoche acknowledges this:

> The following exposition of mind and the foundations of mindfulness, taken from my talks, does not correspond specifically to the letter of the Buddha's discourse. Rather, it is taken from the treasury of the living oral

[142] Transcriptions of those audio files are included as Appendix II
[143] Gaylon Ferguson, *Natural Wakefulness: Discovering the Wisdom We Were Born With* (Boston: Shambhala, 2009)

> teaching, which seeks to make the Buddha's instruction palpable to the contemporary practitioner in whatever age. This particular teaching seeks to open the way of mindfulness by showing the essence of each of the four foundations, the inner key to its practice.[144]

By asserting that this teaching is "taken from the treasury of the living oral tradition," and shows "the essence of each of the four foundations, the inner key to its practice", Trungpa Rinpoche connects his presentation of the four foundations with *upadeśa,* pith instructions, rather than the collections of sūtra (*Kangyur*) or shastra (*Tengyur*).[145]

Trungpa Rinpoche does not identify a specific source for his teaching. This is not uncommon among Buddhist teachers — often teachings are given without any text being cited as a basis for those teachings.[146] It is possible that Trungpa Rinpoche received this teaching in its current form from one of his teachers. It is also possible that he received this teachings in a different way: within the Shambhala lineage, Trungpa Rinpoche is understood to be a *tertön*, a discoverer of *terma,* hidden dharma teachings.[147] Given that Trungpa Rinpoche refrains from citing any underlying sutra or commentary, it is not unreasonable to hypothesize that his teachings on the four foundations teaching

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[144] Trungpa, Garuda IV, 16

[145] In the *Illuminator Dictionary*, Tony Duff notes that the Tibetan tradition recognizes different types of oral instruction: "There are several types of instruction mentioned in Buddhist literature: there is the general level of instruction which is the meaning contained in the words of the texts of the tradition; this is called the *gzhung*. On a more personal and direct level there is oral instruction, which has been passed down from teacher to student from the time of the Buddha; these are called the *gdams ngag*. On the most profound level there is *man ngag* -- *upadesha* -- which are oral instructions provided by one's guru that are the core instructions that come out of his and his guru's personal experience and which convey the teaching concisely and with the full weight / blessings of personal experience. … Upadesha are increasingly important as one progresses to the higher paths of Buddhism and they are crucial to the vajrayana path because they are the special way of passing on the profound instructions needed for students' realization."

[146] For instance, as mentioned above, the Drupön Khenpo Lodrö Namgyal never mentioned that his presentation was a summary of Pawo Rinpoche's commentary.

[147] Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche and Carolyn Rose Gimian, *The Mishap Lineage: Transforming Confusion Into Wisdom.* Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2009 109 n. 2. Fabrice Midal, *Chögyam Trungpa: His Life and Vision* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2004) 219 – 220.

might be terma.[148]

My research has uncovered only three instances in which Trungpa Rinpoche gave formal teachings on the four foundations of mindfulness: at the Hīnayāna/Mahāyāna Seminary given at Jackson Hole in 1973; at the seminar entitled "Training the Mind" given in Rocky Mountain Dharma Center in August, 1974; and the seminar entitled "Techniques of Mindfulness" given at The Tail of the Tiger in August, 1974. I have found only one instance of Trungpa Rinpoche's successor, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, teaching on the four foundations of mindfulness – that is in the 1999 Seminary.[149] In this case, the Sakyong's teaching did not refer to Trungpa Rinpoche's presentation of the four foundations, but was consistent with the Mahāyāna portion of Pawo Rinpoche's commentary. However, Trungpa Rinpoche's presentation of the four foundations of mindfulness is still taught regularly by senior teachers, or *acharyas*,[150] and other teachers within the Shambhala Lineage.[151]

In *Garuda IV*, Trungpa Rinpoche supplies a preface that makes an association between each of the four foundations in his presentation and the four foundations found in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta. It also provides an overview of the progression of the

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[148] Gaylon Ferguson has mentioned to me in conversation that he finds these teachings to be "virtually terma". (Private correspondence 7/12/10)

[149] The Sakyong, Jamgön Mipham Rinpoche, *1999 Seminary Transcripts: Teaching From the Sutra Tradition – Book Two*, (Halifax: Vajradhatu Publications, 2000) 177 – 180.

[150] The title *acharya* is a variant spelling of the Sanskrit title *ācārya*, which is used in the Kagyü lineage to indicate a monk who has completed his shedra training. The Shambhala International website explains its use in the context of Shambhala Buddhism: "Acharya is a Sanskrit word that means "teacher." It refers to individuals that Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche has empowered to represent him and the Kagyu, Nyingma, and Shambhala lineages he holds. Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche chose these individuals because of their knowledge, wisdom, and commitment to the confluence of teachings found in Shambhala.
Acharyas travel to Shambhala Meditation Centers to lead dharma programs and perform Refuge and Bodhisattva Vow ceremonies for those who would like to commit themselves to the Buddhist path.
(http://www.shambhala.org/teachers/index.php?show=acharya) accessed 4/25/11.

[151] Robert Walker, the discussion leader for the "Training the Mind" seminar audio files on the Chronicles website makes this comment: "Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche's emphasis, however, has not been on teaching these particular oral instructions we're working with here, leaving that to others in the Shambhala organization for the most part, so far. I feel like, within Shambhala, studying and practicing the instructions we're working with here are the job of senior students like myself."
(http://www.chronicleproject.com/CTRlibrary/training_the_mind.html, accessed 4/6/11)

teachings:

> Thus the mindfulness of the body of the *Sutta* is seen through the understanding of the psychosomatic body and the sense of being. The *Sutta's* mindfulness of feeling develops the intimacy of mindfulness of life. The core of the mindfulness of mind is expounded as the effort which prepares the ground for a flash of abstract mind. The mindfulness of mental objects becomes the mindfulness of the projection of the world in terms of the total simplicity of single acts of mind.[152]

Trungpa Rinpoche introduces the breath as the object of meditation in his explication of the first foundation, Mindfulness of Body:

> The basic technique that goes with sitting meditation is working with the breath. You identify with the breath, particularly with the out-breath. The in-breath is just a gap, a space. During the in-breath you just wait. So you breathe out and then you dissolve and then there is a gap. Breathe out . . . dissolve . . . gap. An openness, an expansion, can take place constantly that way.[153]

The basic meditation technique, includes a gap or space in which the object of meditation is released:

> Well, you have a mindfulness of breathing going out, and then you cut that; then you have another mindfulness of breathing going out, and then you cut that. In other words, you go out with the transport and then suddenly you have no transport.[154]

This allows for, even encourages, awareness of things other than the object of meditation. As the four foundations progress, more and more is included in this awareness. I suggest that this process of inclusion is bringing into consciousness various aspects of mind.

The first aspect of mind to be included along with the breath is the practitioner's relationship and confusion about the body. "The process of meditation has to take into account that the mind continually shapes itself into body*like* attitudes."[155] The meditator

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[152] Garuda IV p 16
[153] Trungpa, *Heart of the Buddha,* 30.
[154] Trungpa, *1973 Seminary Transcripts*, (Halifax: Vajradhatu Publications, 1974) 8.
[155] Trungpa, *Heart of the Buddha,* 30.

will realize that what he normally thinks of as "body" is in reality a complex of projections about the body:

> According to tradition the body we think we have is known as the psychosomatic body. It is largely based on projections and concepts of body. This psychosomatic body contrasts with the enlightened person's sense of body, which might be called *body-body*. This sense of body is free from conceptualization.[156]

This psychosomatic body is not rejected; instead, it is accepted as the basis of practice. The breath is still the object of meditation, but the meditator is instructed to open the awareness to include bodily sensations:

> There are all kinds of sensations that you experience along with the breath: pains, aches, itches, pleasurable feelings, and so on. You experience all those things along with the breath. Breath is the theme, and other things go along with it…You relate to those sensations as they come up, without imagining that you are experiencing your body.[157]

As the meditator becomes familiar with this psychosomatic body, he experiences a sense of being and groundedness. The mind responds to the attitude of the body: "the psychosomatic body is sitting, so your thoughts have a flat bottom"[158]

In the practice of Mindfulness of Life, Trungpa Rinpoche identifies the fundamental activity of that mind, the "survival instinct"[159]. The survival instinct incessantly categorizes objects as attractive, threatening, or neutral. As we have seen in the presentation of Goenka above, this activity could be understood to be the basis of the three "poisons": passion, aggression, and ignorance. But Trungpa Rinpoche's approach does not try to uproot this process. Instead, the meditator is instructed to harness that activity:

> For the practical purposes of the second foundation, instead of regarding this survival mentality as something negative as is done in the abstract

[156] Trungpa, *Heart of the Buddha,* 28.
[157] Trungpa, *Heart of the Buddha,* 51-52.
[158] Trungpa, *Heart of the Buddha,* 31.
[159] Trungpa, *Heart of the Buddha,* 32-33.

> philosophical overview of Buddhism, this particular practice switches the logic around. In the second foundation, the survival struggle is regarded as a steppingstone in the practice of meditation. Whenever you have a sense of the survival instinct functioning, that can be transmuted into a sense of being, a sense of already having survived.[160]

Trungpa Rinpoche introduces the meditative technique of touch-and-go: "You focus on the object of awareness, but then, in the same moment, you disown that awareness and go on."[161]As a result of accepting and harnessing the survival instinct, all the facets of one's life can be integrated with meditation: one does not need to retreat into a yogic cave (nor should one pretend that one has so retreated):

> You are here; you are living; let it be that way -- that is mindfulness. Your heart pulsates and you breathe. All kinds of things are happening in you at once. Let mindfulness work with that, let that be mindfulness, let every beat of your heart, every breath, be mindfulness itself. You do not have to breathe specially; your breath is an expression of mindfulness. If you approach meditation in this way, it becomes very personal and very direct.[162]

In his treatment of mindfulness of effort, Trungpa Rinpoche directs the meditator to include in his mediation an awareness of the way the mind moves. Trungpa Rinpoche characterizes this movement, as sudden, non-conceptual and effortless "…the abstract effort we are talking about flashes in a fraction of a second, without any name or any idea with it."[163] The meditator realizes abruptly that his mind has moved from one object to another:

> Abruptly, immediately, without a name, without the application of any kind of concept, we have a quick glimpse of changing the tone. That is the core of the mindfulness of effort practice.[164]

The easiest way of the meditator to notice this effort is to be aware of the moment when he realizes that he's lost the object of meditation (which continues to be the breath

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[160] Trungpa, *Heart of the Buddha,* 33.
[161] Trungpa, *Heart of the Buddha,* 33.
[162] Trungpa, *Heart of the Buddha,* 35.
[163] Trungpa, *Heart of the Buddha,* 39.

throughout the four foundations.) I suggest that this is a reason that Trungpa Rinpoche advocated the technique of dissolving out with the exhalation and letting go of the breath on the inhalation: this technique provides enough structure for the meditator to be aware of breath as the object of meditation, and enough openness so that it is very likely that the meditator will lose that object of meditation. Once the meditator loses the object, he has the opportunity to witness the effect of spontaneous effort of the mind when he realizes that he has returned to the object.

There is no work involved in this spontaneous effort, but there is work involved in maintaining the discipline of the practice that makes the spontaneous effort evident: "We work hard at not being diverted into entertainment."[165]

In the last foundation, Mindfulness of Mind, Trungpa Rinpoche instructs the meditator to include all aspects of experience into his awareness:

> Mindfulness of mind means being with one's mind. When you sit and meditate, you are there: you are being with your body, with your sense of life or survival, with your sense of effort, and at the same time, you are being with your mind. You are being there.[166]

Mindfulness of Mind is a fruition in which the process of including more and more into the awareness leads to a panoramic experience:

> Whenever we talk in ordinary terms of concentration, we're talking in terms of paying attention to one thing at a time. But in this case of mindfulness of mind level, the awareness or concentration could develop panoramically. It's like shining a beam that becomes expanded as it is reflected off an object. There is the touch of the highlights of the emotions, touch of the highlights of the breath both being seen simultaneously. It becomes very much a mind activity at that point -- that it is why it is called the foundation of mindfulness of mind. The cognitive mind is actually functioning in its utter precision. You may hear sounds, you might see vision, sight of all kinds, you might have thought patterns of all kinds, but all of those are somewhat related. Therefore, there is a binding factor, which is the mind, and therefore whenever there is mind, there is

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[164] Trungpa, *Heart of the Buddha,* 38 - 39.
[165] Trungpa, *Heart of the Buddha,* 41.
[166] Trungpa, *Heart of the Buddha,* 43.

> the possibility of being aware of what's happening, rather than reducing your focus of concentration to one particular level alone.[167]

"Including everything" can also be read as "not being separate from anything." Non-separation brings us to non-dualism. In its fruition, mindfulness of mind dispenses with the dualism of *noticing* the experience and embraces the non-dualism of *being* the experience.

> It is necessary to take that logic all the way and realize that even to apply bare attention to what we are doing is impossible. If we try, we have two personalities: one personality is the bare attention; the other personality is doing things. Real bare attention is being there all at once. We do not apply bare attention *to* what we are doing; we are not mindful *of* what we are doing. That is impossible. Mindfulness is the act as well as the experience, happening at the same time.[168]

The result of this practice of comprehensive inclusion of seemingly diverse elements is that there is nothing that is not included. When everything is included, there is no longer anything separate: dualistic thinking collapses and the practitioner arrives at a complete simplicity from which nothing is excluded:

> The practice of mindfulness of mind is to be there with that one-shot perception, constantly. You get a complete picture from which nothing is missing...[169]

I maintain that the fruition of Trungpa Rinpoche's approach to the four foundations of mindfulness is the experience of a mind that rests in the non-dual, spontaneous activity of awareness. This is the union of śamatha and vipaśyanā.

In the preface to his article in *Garuda IV*, Trungpa Rinpoche places the practice of the four foundations of mindfulness within the convention of a three yana path — Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna:

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[167] Trungpa, *Training the Mind*, *Talk 5, August 23, 1974*
[168] Trungpa, 46.
[169] Trungpa, *Heart of the Buddha*, 44.

> The four dharmas of Gampopa express the *triyana* or triple-vehicle nature of the Buddhist path, on which with the practice of mindfulness, we are only at the beginning. Mindfulness is the level of the Hīnayāna…"[170]

At first glance, then, it would seem that Trungpa Rinpoche characterizes the practice of the four foundations of mindfulness as a practice appropriate for the beginning of the path; we might assume that these practices would be superceded by "higher" Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna practices as the practitioner progressed on the path. However, at the very beginning of the 1973 seminary, (during which he taught publicly for the first time his version of the four foundations of mindfulness) Trungpa Rinpoche asserted that it is not the specific practice, but the quality of involvement and inclusiveness that determines realization:

> In the Buddhist tradition, meditation practice is generally total involvement: body, speech and mind are completely, totally involved. That is the śamatha practice. And the vipaśyanā practice is total involvement of body, speech and mind, plus you are totally involved in awareness of the environment around you. You are involved so much that there is no individual entity left to watch itself any more, which is the shunyata level.[171]

This progression mirrors the progression of the four foundations of mindfulness. Therefore, as above, I propose that we can reread Trungpa Rinpoche's definition of mindfulness of mind — "mindfulness of the projection of the world in terms of the total simplicity of single acts of mind"[172] as "mind resting in the spontaneous play of unadorned non-duality." This is tantamount to the realization of the Mahāyāna -- a high realization, indeed. I suggest that it is consistent with nature of mind teachings that "preliminary" instructions are not separate from the highest teachings.

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[170] Trungpa, *Garuda*, 15
[171] Trungpa, *1973 Seminary Transcript*, 1.
[172] Trungpa, *Garuda*, 16

Practice Instructions for Śamatha/Vipaśyanā Meditation

Gaylon Ferguson[173] was my meditation instructor during my semester-long practice and Allyn Lyon[174] was my meditation instructor during dathün. Both Ferguson and Lyon studied with Trungpa Rinpoche directly and both are *acharyas*, senior teachers, within the Shambhala lineage. Ferguson's meditation instructions corresponded to the text of Trungpa Rinpoche's presentation on the four foundations of mindfulness as well as those found in Trungpa Rinpoche's *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*[175]. In the book *Natural Wakefulness*, Ferguson integrates Trungpa Rinpoche's teaching and the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta presentation of the four foundations. However, he did not stress this connection in his instructions with me; instead, he made a connection between Trungpa Rinpoche's four foundations and the Kagyü teachings on Mahāmudrā and Maha Ati.

The treatment of the breath as object of meditation given in Trungpa Rinpoche's presentation on the four foundations of mindfulness correspond closely to the treatment of the breath as object of meditation in the introductory levels of Shambhala Training. The structure of the Shambhala Training levels might seem to imply that there is an introductory style of meditation in which one uses the breath as an object of meditation, and a more advanced style of meditation in which one rests without an object of meditation. In his instructions to me, Ferguson advised me not to make this inference, asserting that if I developed a sense that resting with an object was a problem, I might develop a tendency to turn away from the world in favor of some formless meditative state. This would be contrary to the spirit of śamatha/vipaśyanā meditation, since Ferguson asserts that the result of the practice of the four foundations

[173] For biographical information, see note 15 above.
[174] For biographical information, see note 17 above.

is integration with society, not separation from it.[176] (Trungpa Rinpoche also cautions the practitioner against making a separation between meditation and the world in his treatment of Mindfulness of Life.)[177]

In his instructions, Ferguson rejected the notion that the practices of the four foundations of mindfulness necessarily lead toward a specific level of realization. Instead, he asserted that these practices were a set of tools, and that the result of the practice depended on the way in which they were used: in his view it was possible, through the practice of Trungpa Rinpoche's four foundations, to arrive at realizations normally associated with "higher" practices. (This is consistent with the quote from Trungpa Rinpoche above.)

As mentioned above, Ferguson urged me to make a scholarly investigation into the links between Trungpa Rinpoche's teaching and related teachings on Mahāmudrā and Maha Ati. But in my practice of meditation, he urged me to not to pursue any specific fruition. Rather, he urged me to relax and not strive so hard; to allow myself to be "dumber"; to allow for boredom and to cease trying to make any particular discoveries. In *Natural Wakefulness*, Ferguson characterizes this relaxed, "not too tight" approach to meditation as demonstrating faith in the fundamentally awakened nature of mind.[178] Ferguson's meditation instructions to me as well as his scholarly approach support an interpretation of Trungpa Rinpoche's four foundations as concordant with Mahāmudrā "nature of mind" practices[179].

Ferguson's approach is consistent with the approach Allyn Lyon took in her

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[175] Chögyam Trungpa, *Shambhala: The Scared Path of the Warrior* (Boston: Shambhala, 1984) 37 – 40.
[176] Ferguson, *Natural Wakefulness,* 21.
[177] In Talk 3 of the *Training the Mind* lecture series, Trungpa Rinpoche asserts that by cutting oneself off from "low" or mundane experiences and preferring "higher" meditative experience "one is cutting off one's tie with basic sanity, and one is developing a dreamworld of insanity."
[178] This is a central thesis of Ferguson, *Natural Wakefulness*. See for example, 19 – 24.
[179] Ferguson, *Natural Wakefulness* xiii "Tightening and loosening are said to be skills used by even

meditation instructions to me during the Summer 2010 dathün. In her talks at retreat, Lyon made a link between the teachings of the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta and Trungpa Rinpoche's presentation. Her presentation of Mindfulness of Body stressed awareness of physical sensations -- for instance, she instructed me to drop my awareness into my torso.[180] Like Goenka, Lyon presented Mindfulness of Body as a purification practice: she said that traumas get buried in the body; that meditation allows them to emerge again; and that non-doing (equanimity) allows them to unwind.[181] She presented Mindfulness of Feeling as the "pleasure/pain meter" (I like it/I don't like it/I don't care),[182] which corresponds to the extremely simple nature of vedanā presented in the Abidhamma.

In her instructions to me, Lyon referred to the text of Trungpa Rinpoche's presentation, but did not hold rigidly to it. In the course of the retreat, the meditation instructions she gave to me shifted from stressing the śamatha aspect of the practice to stressing the vipaśyanā aspect of the practice,[183] and she asked me to contemplate what she called the Mahāmudrā questions: where do thoughts arise, where do they dwell, where do they go?[184] Lyon encouraged me to become lighter and lighter with the technique; like Ferguson she encouraged me to have faith in my awakened nature.

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advanced meditators practicing *Mahamudra* meditation."
[180] Weiser, *Meditation Journal*, 8/2/10.
[181] Weiser, *Meditation Journal*, 8/15/10.
[182] Weiser, *Meditation Journal*, 8/4/10
[183] Weiser, *Meditation Journal*, 8/12/10.
[184] Weiser, *Meditation Journal*, 8/6/10. Trungpa Rinpoche poses these questions in *1973 Seminary Transcripts*, p. 35. The Ninth Karmapa, Wangchug Dorje, also poses these questions in *The Mahāmudrā Eliminating the Darkness,* Commentary given orally by Beru Khyentze Rinpoche, trans. Alexander Berzin (Dharmsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1978) 70, 73.

My Experience Practicing Śamatha/Vipaśyanā Meditation

As mentioned above, the basic meditation technique that Trungpa Rinpoche gives involves following the exhalation as it dissolves into space, then letting it go. He mentions that in the Kagyü tradition, this style of breathing technique is called *ying rik sewa,* "mixing the mind with space" and *lung sem sewa* "mixing the mind with the breath space."[185] I found that as I practiced this technique, I experienced an interest in and appreciation for the space that surrounded me. I was particularly aware of space in my experience of sound: it seemed as if each sound was occurring within a great quietness; as if there were of lots of space around each sound.[186] Sometimes this spaciousness seemed to permeate my sense of self: I felt quite exploded, and experienced a sense of disaggregation[187]. At other times, I seemed to experience space between my awareness and my sense of self: I felt distanced from my self, and experienced a sense of ironic detachment, an experience of my own persona as if it were a mask hanging in space.[188] The effects of dissolution extended into the process of meditation itself: often after a meditation session, I would be unclear how to characterize what had happened in that session. At one point in my daily practice I simply gave up on journaling altogether.[189]

Working with dissolution made me aware of the issue of renunciation, or rather non-renunciation: I noticed that there were beliefs and behaviors that I didn't want to allow to dissolve. I noticed that I did not want to dissolve "the Watcher" (whom I took to be myself)[190]; I noticed that I actually grasped onto unpleasant thoughts (I wouldn't

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[185] Trungpa Rinpoche, *1973 Seminary Transcripts*, 37.
[186] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* Late April, 8/5/10, 8/6/10, 8/12/10, 8/17/10
[187] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 2/9/10, Late April, 8/17/10, 8/22/10
[188] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 2/1/10, 2/19/10, 8/7/10
[189] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 8/3/10, 8/6/10, 8/16/10
[190] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 8/6/10

let go of them, I speculated, because they helped me create a stable sense of meaning;)[191] I noticed that I clung to certain personae that I felt were "me."[192] I noticed that I often engaged in imaginary conversations with others in which I justified my imaginary actions, or found myself giving Dharma talks to an imaginary audience.[193] I began to understand that this desire to explain things – this preoccupation with meaning – while it appeared to be insightful, was actually a species of ignorance.

In the course of contemplating my experiences for this thesis, I have come to the conclusion that my understanding of Trungpa Rinpoche's meditation instructions has been flawed. I previously believed that the point of the technique was to develop stability of mindfulness; ideally the mind would always stay with the breath. As a result of my contemplation, I have come to the conclusion that the meditation instructions set up a situation in which it is inevitable that the meditator will lose the object of meditation. The benefit of this is that it gives the meditator a chance to experience the "panic" of suddenly realizing that he has lost the object. This panic or jerk or amazement[194] accompanies the practitioner into to a new state, and allows the practitioner to notice that his mind has moved effortlessly (and to be confronted by the fact that he does not own or control that mind).

In the course of my practice I became quite interested in trying to see this process in action. I tried frequently to "freeze" the experience of "jerk" and go back to the moment when my mind had moved from one object to the other — to try to recreate or re-induce that experience — but of course it was always too late. I could never catch myself in mid-shift. Eventually, I realized that my "Self" could never see that

[191] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 8/4/10
[192] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 8/9/10, 8/25/10
[193] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 8/3/10, 8/5/10
[194] Trungpa, *Heart of the Buddha*, 39.

spontaneous effort of mind that "changes the tone"— that in fact the "Self" was not the *initiator* of freezing, but actually a *result* of freezing.[195]

Having contemplated this experience in the course of writing this thesis, I propose that this style of meditation can yield great insight into the teachings on the five wisdom energies and mandala principle that Trungpa Rinpoche gave at around the same time.[196] When the practitioner notices the change in tone that is the hallmark of mindfulness of effort, he will most likely respond with a habitual style of panic. This habitual style of panic can be understood as a manifestation of one or more of the wisdom energies. As the practitioner learns to understand and work with these styles of panic, he can navigate more easefully the many transitions he undergoes. (Including, I would suggest, the transition that will happen at death: this style of meditation can be seen as a kind of bardo practice.)

I was struck by my ability to make rapid transitions during dathün. For instance, about midway through the retreat, one of my fellow practitioners had a health emergency and needed to go to the emergency room. I volunteered to drive him there. I remember remarking on the discontinuity between my retreat experience and my experience in the hospital – a few hours before, I had been sitting on a cushion in a meditation tent watching my thoughts, now I was in a plastic chair in an ER watching reruns of *The Andy Griffith Show* – and how easily I had adjusted to the new environment.

Another way of looking at "dissolving into space" is "radiating out." The teachings of Shambhala often refer to "transmission", and I began to open my mind to the possibility that might actually be able to observe this phenomenon. Sometimes

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[195] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 8/17/10.
[196] Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, *Orderly Chaos: The Mandala Principle* (Boston, Shambhala Publications,

during meditation, I felt a pleasant sense of radiating.[197] During retreat, I was the head of food service and often practiced standing still and radiating calm so that my service team could do its job easily. There were times (especially during meditation interviews) when I had the sense that Lyon was glowing and radiating.[198]

Radiating can also be understood as "connecting." Connecting with others and with the environment is encouraged in the teachings of Shamabhala. I began to view the śamatha/vipaśyanā practice as one of dissolving the conceptual boundaries that create separation — radiating and connecting as a practice of non-separation. (Lyon agreed with me on this interpretation.[199]) During the retreat, I worked with the teaching of "obstacles and antidotes" – states of mind (such as excitation or lethargy) that are hindrances to meditation, and the antidotes to those states. I began to view obstacles as the result of a mind that is contracted and over-focused. Antidotes don't cancel out this mental state; rather they include more into it and balance it out. I realized that I could include irritation and discomfort into my meditation in order to add more wakefulness (I saw this as concordant with Trungpa Rinpoche's mindfulness of life), and I could include torpor and heaviness of body to add more weightiness or ground. (I saw this as concordant with Trungpa Rinpoche's mindfulness of body.)[200] I speculated that there are no truly negative states of mind; just states in which the mind becomes over focused, and loses touch with some of its natural expanse. I became quite interested in the possibility of including all possible bandwidths of consciousness into my experience.[201]

As I perceived the practice as learning to drop habits of mind that created

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1991). This book is based on teachings given in Karme Chöling in 1972 and 1974.
[197] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 8/4/10
[198] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 8/6/10
[199] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 8/6/10

separation, I became more and more interested in doing less and less. (Both Ferguson and Lyon, as mentioned above, approved of this general trend) I saw the practice as allowing all things to be as they are. I became interested in the idea of self-liberation of mental states: mental states arise all by themselves and also dissolve all by themselves as long as I don't keep them stirred up.[202]

Leaving things as they are, radiating out, connecting with others and being willing to accept and include whatever one meets could all be understood as aspects of loving kindness, or *maitri*. As the retreat progressed, I found myself experiencing feelings of compassion spontaneously, and I developed an interest in doing more loving-kindness practices.[203] One incident in particular struck me: One of the my fellow practitioners told me he was having a difficult time, that he felt his faith in Shambhala was shaken and that he feared that perhaps he needed to find a different path. He was clearly in pain, and I felt very tenderhearted towards him. I brought that feeling of tenderheartedness to the final meditation session of the day. At that time, I was working with the meditation instruction of dissolving out into space. I had found previously that when I allowed feelings of self-pity and discourses on view to dissolve into space, they tended to disappear (like writing on water). However, when I allowed the feeling of compassion to dissolve into space, it didn't get smaller; it grew.[204] I took this as confirmation of the Mahāyāna assertion that compassion can be developed limitlessly because it is the nature of mind.

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[200] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 8/11/10
[201] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 3/8/10, 8/11/10, 8/15/10, 8/16/10, 8/17/10, 8/20/10, 8/24/10, 8/25/10
[202] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 1/21/10, 1/22/10, 2/18/10, 8/2/10.
[203] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 8/2/10, 8/11/10.
[204] Weiser, *Meditation Journal* 8/11/10.

Summary of my Experience Practicing the Śamatha/Vipaśyanā Approach

As a result of practicing the śamatha/vipashayanā approach, I developed the aspiration to connect with and integrate all parts of my experience. I became quite interested in the specificity of each moment of experience and interested in the way in which I experienced a given moment of mind as quite distinct -- even discontinuous -- from the next. I became interested in how appearances coalesce into *maṇḍalas* – coherent and meaningful arrangements -- and how, upon perceiving such an arrangement, I habitually attempt to solidify it into some sort of stable ground. I particularly noticed that I attempt to solidify by elaborating a view or explanation of the mandala. I developed the aspiration to refrain from such explanations and instead rest in the groundlessness of constant new arisings. I became more confident in allowing openness to permeate my interactions with my environment and with others, and in allowing things to "self-liberate." I became more open to the experience and use of non-ordinary reality.

Conclusion

In the course of contemplating my research, I realized that my findings did not give sufficient basis for asserting the correlation of the three sets of meditation practices I undertook to the three turnings of the wheel of Dharma. I still believe that such a correlation (vipassanā meditation as first turning, analytical meditation approach as second turning, and śamatha/vipaśyanā approach as third turning) is a useful model, but a thesis on such a correlation would demand an investigation into the nature of the three turnings themselves, and such investigation was beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore this conclusion will not address the three turnings, but focus instead on the view, practice, and perceived results of my practice of each of the three sets of instructions. Below, I will briefly summarize my findings for each of the three meditative approaches that I practiced, drawn from reflections on this thesis and on my meditation journals:

Vipassanā meditation focuses on examining certain *characteristics* of mental states and psychophysical processes. These characteristics correspond to categories of the Abhidhamma teachings. Practicing vipassanā meditation results in natural renunciation of actions of body, speech and mind that result in painful mental states, and cultivation of actions of body, speech and mind that result in mental states conducive to happiness. Analytical meditation focuses on the *content* of conceptual mind. It examines concepts, particularly those that have solidified into views. It targets these solidified concepts by way of logical reasoning that corresponds to the analyses found in the Madhyamaka teachings. Practicing analytical meditation leads to an understanding that such solidified views are not reliable, and therefore to the renunciation of such views. Śamatha/vipaśyanā meditation focuses on the *process* of mind, particularly the process whereby the meditator creates rigid distinction between

herself and that which she perceives as the Other. It encourages the meditator to include into her awareness that which cannot be characterized (space/gap) as well as to notice the effortless movement of mind that is beyond her control. It shares this interest in "unconditioned phenomena" with the teachings on Buddhanature. Śamatha/vipaśyanā meditation leads to a renunciation of the habit of making separations between self and environment and self and other.

At the risk of oversimplification, I note that each of the three approaches primarily addresses one of three fundamental types of mental disturbance – greed, hate and ignorance – that are traditionally known as the "*three poison*s."[205]

Vipassanā meditation addresses the poison of desire. It helps clarify the way in which we cling to actions of body speech and mind that we think will relieve our discomfort and give us pleasure. As a result of the practices of vipassanā meditation, we develop a felt sense of the suffering that this clinging causes, and therefore develop natural renunciation.

Analytical meditation addresses the poison of ignorance. It helps clarify the way in which we create views in the attempt to establish a stable and reliable description of reality. We cling to these views as trustworthy guides that will enable us to successfully manipulate our community and environment. As a result of the practices of the analytic meditation approach we understand the baselessness of such descriptions of reality. We develop flexibility of view, and understand the nature and use of concept. We understand that views and concepts have no inherent value and might best be understood as antidotes.

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[205] This convention is well attested in Tibetan literature. See for instance, the Dalai Lama, *The Meaning of Life: Buddhist Perspectives on Cause and Effect*, (trans. Jeffrey Hopkins) (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2000) 4. However, I was surprised to discover that while the trio of greed, hatred and ignorance is commonly cited in the Pali canon, it is not typically referred to as the "three poisons."

Śamatha/vipaśyanā meditation addresses the poison of aggression. It helps clarify the way in which we create separation between parts of our experience, and attempt to cling to one part of our experience and banish another. As a result of the practices of śamatha/vipaśyanā meditation we are better able to integrate all parts of our experience, even those parts that cannot be characterized as "our" experience. We are able to see that the goal of the path is not separate from where we are right now: wisdom is present in neurosis; mental confusion, *samsāra,* and liberation from that confusion, *nirvāna,* are inseparable.

Above, I have emphasized the distinctiveness of the three styles of meditation practice. But my experience was that there was a great deal of overlap between them. For one thing, since all three approaches are Buddhist, they all led me into an exploration of habitual patterns of mind by which I create my own suffering. I personally felt that I arrived at valuable insight on this topic as a result of practicing each of the three approaches: I found my that my disturbing emotions, or *kleśās,* were quite well-illuminated, particularly the kleśā associated with the need to understand things conceptually (the kleśā of view) my kleśā associated with feeling a sense of poverty or lack (the kleśā of greed.) All three approaches emphasize inquiry (Pali vipassanā, Skt vipaśyanā) over resting meditation (Pali samatha, Skt śamatha). I was surprised to find that all three treat emotions as unreliable indicators of whether an action is beneficial or not. (Emotions are seen as the result of previous karma. Equanimity in the face of emotions is the recommended approach. I had a slogan for myself that addressed this topic: "That alarming feeling is nothing to be alarmed about."[206]) All three of the approaches supported the practice of non-doing, which could

[206] For instance, this quote from *Meditation Journal* 11/14/09: "A thought may "feel" as if it is intimating some sort of danger but that may not be valid. For instance, I might think about B & K and begin to

also be seen as acceptance or non-aggression. All three of the approaches resulted in spontaneous feelings of compassion. (I noticed that this experience of spontaneous compassion was particularly evident when I practicing Mindfulness of Mind.)

I found myself grateful for all three set of practices I'd undertaken, and when I finished each semester-long practice and retreat, I felt that I could quite profitably practice that approach for an extended period. None of the three sets of practices seemed as if it were in error; none seemed likely to lead me toward greater suffering; none seemed to be in conflict with the others. I found myself quite in agreement with the advice of the ninth Karmapa, Wangchug Dorje:

> You must cut off completely all sectarian, biased feelings since (all the schools and tenets and lineages) are established by imputation and mental labeling and are conventionalities (for leading disciples to Enlightenment.) You must develop the certainty that they are all non-contradictory and from each you can come to the natural, especially distinguished, primordial nature of reality, the abiding state of all things.[207]

At the end of my research, I was quite convinced that all of these practices are quite complementary.

Back to the Heart of the Matter

Let's return to the heart-question behind this endeavor, "What is my path?" Meditation practices such as those that I undertook might be understood as means to an end. Each practice may be undertaken in support of a path that takes a certain coherent approach in order to reach its goal. If all three approaches are distinct, do they support distinct paths? How should I choose between the three practices and the paths that they imply? What is *my* path after all?

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clench. The feeling of the clench makes me think that there is a real danger and so I go further into the clench, which gives further reinforcement to the hypothesis ("Something unpleasant is arriving!") But the emotional precursor may not be accurate, just self-fulfilling."

[207] Wangchug Dorje, the Ninth Karmapa. *The Mahāmudrā Eliminating the Darkness of Ignorance*. Commentary given orally by Beru Khyentze Rinpoche. Translated by Alexander Berzin. (Dharmsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. 1978) 35.

The question proceeds from a number of false premises. First, it implies that I must choose one approach to the exclusion of the others. But I argue that since each approach specializes in addressing a poison, and since all three poisons are to be neutralized on the Buddhist path, it follows that I could profitably integrate all three approaches.

The question "What is my path?" also implies that there is such a thing as a path that exists separate from someone who walks it – that I might choose a path off-the-rack. But my practice of analytical meditation has educated me to the falsity of that view. There is no truly existent path waiting for me someplace "out there." There is just my continual response to the question "what now?" and the resultant process of unfolding (or involuting).

The question "what is my path" also betrays the fear attendant upon the assumption that there are better and worse paths (that might be supported by "higher" and "lower" views). It implies that each of these paths is circumscribed and exclusive, as if heading to a well-defined, narrow gate. But my understanding of Buddhist teachings in general is that the goal of the path is the experience of vastness of mind, the realization of the mind's fundamental nature. If this is so, how can it be that a single well-delineated path leads there? I suggest that the path appears narrow because it is just our size, and we misperceive ourselves as limited. The path is specific because our confusion is so highly elaborated.

If path is best understood as antidote, then the question "what is my path?" can be reframed as the question "what is the right antidote for me?" And that question must be answered day-by-day, minute-by-minute. I agree with Karl Brunnhölzl when he writes:

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> Given that all Buddhist teachings are meant as a help for beings in their individual situations in life, the question is not what is absolutely right or politically correct, but what makes sense and is beneficial for a certain time and place in life. Needless to say, that can be the exact opposite of what is good for somebody else.[208]

Since I cannot obtain an off-the-rack path, and since my path must be a continual response to my own particular unfolding, how can I know how to take the next step? Here, each of the three meditation approaches has given me helpful counsel.

The vipassanā approach counsels that my path must correspond to my own direct experience. My path cannot be separate from the stuff of my life; the path can only be beneath my feet. Therefore I must cultivate a direct, honest, non-judgmental relationship with my everyday experience. An understanding of this ground will inform my response; this response is the next step on the path. I am constantly changing, and therefore, the antidote that is appropriate for me will change, too. My particular path will unfold as a collection of responses to my unique needs.

Analytic meditation reminds me that my opinions and doubts about what my path is supposed to be hamper me from progressing naturally along my path. It counsels that I can learn to see through these opinions: I can use concepts to fight concepts. It reminds me that my path cannot be characterized: each instant is a completely unique event. Therefore, my path has a mirage-like quality. It can be experienced and can be used, but I would be best served not to cling to any beliefs about its nature.

Śamatha/vipaśyanā meditation counsels that although my current experience is the ground of my path, I would benefit by aspiring to include that which is beyond my current experience. An overly rigid understanding of what "my experience" is excludes the possibility that I might experience something beyond my boundaries: the

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[208] Karl Brunnhölzl, *Straight from the Heart: Buddhist Pith Instructions*, (Ithaca, Snow Lion, 2007) xii.

immanence of enlightened mind. Path therefore should also include the possibility of touching that which cannot be characterized as "my experience." Moreover, śamatha/vipaśyanā meditation points out that the next step in my path might appear fortuitously, seemingly discontinuous from all the steps before it. I am encouraged to have some trust in auspicious coincidence and the wisdom that recognizes it.

Coming Clean

I have spent a good deal of time writing this thesis in the study room at the Alan Ginsberg Library at Naropa University. A scholar practitioner who has more of a purist approach to Buddhist teachings than do I is also a habitué of that room, and we have discussed my thesis from time to time. I hope that these discussions have been helpful to him; I know that they have been helpful to me. When I summarized my conclusion for him he challenged me to "come clean," saying that I was hiding my biases behind a mask of non-preference. What, he asked, was *really* my preference. Which style of meditation did I think was the best?

I contemplated this for a while, and concluded that what I'm presenting is not simply a mask: I truly prefer a catholic approach, not a narrow approach, to meditation practice. I really do use all of three styles of meditation in my own personal practice. An example may help illustrate this. In the past, I suffered from what I called the "pre-dawn self-loathing session." I frequently awoke before dawn in a panic, convinced that I had made dreadful mistakes in my life, had squandered the great bulk of my time, and was surely headed for a wretched old age. Worse, I was visited by the image of some other person (the choice of person varied day to day) who had not made such mistakes; a person who was happy and content in their own life, and would live out their days in contentment and ease. I writhed in an agony of jealousy and self-recrimination,

sweating and tossing in bed.

My first step in learning to lessen the suffering I experienced in these sessions this corresponds to śamatha/vipaśyanā meditation -- I noticed the *process* in which I was engaged. Over time, I realized that I was not being visited by the Truth; I was actually just telling myself a rather painful story. When I was confident in that conclusion, I began examining the *content* of my thoughts. Were these thoughts actually true? Were they helpful? This step corresponds to analytical meditation. Over the course of months and years, I was able to see that in those pre-dawn sessions, I was choosing to think unhelpful and largely untrue thoughts. I realized that I could actually choose not to think those thoughts and instead choose to put my thoughts elsewhere. This discovery was a tremendous relief.

These days, I am rarely plagued by a full-blown pre-dawn self-loathing session. Instead, I notice the impulse to begin such a session. When I notice that impulse building, I address it in one of several ways depending on how I want to engage with the situation. Sometimes, I decide that I don't want to engage with it at all, and simply redirect my thoughts and go back to sleep. Sometimes, I use the technique of vipassanā meditation: I place awareness on sensations in my body and notice how my body responds to the thoughts that are arising in my mind. Sometimes, I use the technique of direct antidotes that I learned in analytical meditation: since I am clinging to the view of wretchedness, I apply the antidote of enthusiasm, and place my mind on activities that I am looking forward to in the coming day. Sometimes I use a direct physical antidote that I have found to be remarkably effective: I smile. And sometimes, when I feel that I have sufficient mental resources, I use the technique of śamatha/vipaśyanā meditation: I try to discern that feeling of panic that underlies the self-loathing session, and see if I can rest my mind right in that feeling. I will confess that in my current view, the

technique of resting right in that panic seems the technique most likely to lead to liberation not only from the pre-dawn sessions, but also from the habit of creating solidified confusion in general.

In her article "Without Bias—The Dalai Lama in Dialogue," Judith Simmer-Brown lists four characteristics of the nonsectarian Ri-me movement that flowered in nineteenth century Tibet:

> 1. The Ri-me advocated that all traditions of meditation practice are to be appreciated, valued and preserved, regardless of the lineages or schools from which they have come.
> 2. Ri-me's abiding interest was in meditation and contemplative practice as the ground of spiritual life.
> 3. Meditation is not to be regarded with naive passivity; rather, intelligent investigation and inquiry are crucial supports to a mature meditation practice.
> 4. The Ri-me movement was not merely an academic or elite spiritual movement, it also had a strongly popular side.[209]

I find myself very much in sympathy with these four characteristics. I hope that my thesis project is in accord with the Ri-me movement in its appreciation for and embrace of meditation practices from diverse lineages, its emphasis on contemplative practice as a primary research source, and its inquiry into the utility and compatibility of these practices. In my future teaching of this material, I aspire to the fourth principle: an open style of presentation that is accessible to an audience beyond the academic or spiritual elite.

Reflecting on the Antidote

> "Bhikkhus, you may well take as a support that view that would not arouse sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair in one who clings to it. But do you see any such support of views, Bhikkhus?" – "No, venerable sir." – "Good, Bhikkhus. I too do not see any support of views that would not arouse sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair in one who takes it as a support."[210]

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[209] Judith Simmer-Brown, "Without Bias—The Dalai Lama in Dialogue" *Criteria of Discernment in Interreligious Dialogue*, Catherine Cornille (ed) (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2009) 213.
[210] MN i.138, p 231.

In my description of the practice of analytic meditation above, I asserted that analyses are targeted: they don't describe the truth, but instead provide an antidote for confusion that has solidified into a view. This thesis presents an extended analysis. Does it also act as an antidote? The thesis presents the view that the three distinct sets of practices in which I engaged are complementary, and that none is superior or inferior to the others. If views are meant to support soteriology, how does this thesis help me progress along my own particular path? I write the following with the recognition that my "answers" to these questions are really a set of aspirations.

This thesis provides an antidote to the view that some paths are special; that one path is the "best" one and others are inferior (and my corresponding fear that I'm not on that "best" path). It provides an antidote to a view that some that some paths are truly higher or lower than others. These views lead me toward doubt and jealousy and prevent me from accepting my own particular path.

This thesis provides an antidote to my desire to search for a single, stable truth. It provides an antidote to my fear of lies and my fear of being fooled. It encourages me to look at the usefulness of truth statements rather than their validity. It encourages me to rest in the groundlessness that corresponds to my actual experience, rather than laboring to construct some explanation that does not.

This thesis provides an antidote to my discomfort with lineage (particularly with the lineage of Shambhala.) Rather than worrying about the legitimacy of lineage, I can ask, "What is the usefulness of accepting the view of lineage?" This encourages me toward curiosity and inquiry rather than toward the solidification of view into "right" and "wrong."

This thesis provides an antidote to my doubt in the validity of my own path.

That doubt prevents me from putting forth the effort necessary to progress. This thesis provides an antidote to my tendency to disparage others' paths. Such disparagement is the result of jealousy, and the solidification of the view of "better" and "worse" paths. Such disparagement also encourages a subtle doubt of my own path.

This thesis provides an antidote to the fear that I may not find my path. That path can be nowhere else but under my feet. I am sure that I can find my feet. This gives me the confidence necessary to take the next step, and the path is, after all, nothing more than a series of next steps.

APPENDIX I – STRUCTURE OF THE SATIPAṬṬHĀNA SUTTA

1. Mindfulness of Body

1.1. Breathing
- 1.1.1. Length of Breath
- 1.1.2. Experiencing the whole body (of breath, or breath in whole body)
- 1.1.3. Tranquilizing bodily formations

1.2. Four Postures
- 1.2.1. Walking
- 1.2.2. Standing
- 1.2.3. Sitting
- 1.2.4. Lying Down

1.3. Full Awareness
- 1.3.1. Looking ahead and looking away
- 1.3.2. Flexing and extending limbs
- 1.3.3. Wearing robes, carrying robes and bowl
- 1.3.4. Eating and drinking
- 1.3.5. Defecating and urinating
- 1.3.6. Walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking and keeping silent

1.4. The Body Parts
- 1.4.1. Head-hairs
- 1.4.2. Body-hairs
- 1.4.3. Nails
- 1.4.4. Teeth
- 1.4.5. Skin
- 1.4.6. Flesh
- 1.4.7. Sinews
- 1.4.8. Bones
- 1.4.9. Bone-marrow
- 1.4.10. Kidneys
- 1.4.11. Heart
- 1.4.12. Liver
- 1.4.13. Diaphragm
- 1.4.14. Spleen
- 1.4.15. Lungs
- 1.4.16. Intestines
- 1.4.17. Mesentery
- 1.4.18. Contents of stomach
- 1.4.19. Feces
- 1.4.20. Bile
- 1.4.21. Phlegm
- 1.4.22. Pus
- 1.4.23. Blood
- 1.4.24. Sweat
- 1.4.25. Fat
- 1.4.26. Tears
- 1.4.27. Grease
- 1.4.28. Spittle
- 1.4.29. Snot
- 1.4.30. Oil of the joints
- 1.4.31. Urine

1.5. Four Elements
- 1.5.1. Fire
- 1.5.2. Earth
- 1.5.3. Air
- 1.5.4. Water

1.6. Charnel Ground contemplations
- 1.6.1. Bloated, livid, oozing corpse
- 1.6.2. Corpse being devoured by scavengers
- 1.6.3. Skelton with flesh and blood
- 1.6.4. Skeleton smeared with blood
- 1.6.5. Skeleton without flesh and blood
- 1.6.6. Disconnected skeleton
- 1.6.7. Bleached white skeleton
- 1.6.8. Bones heaped up
- 1.6.9. Rotted and crumbling bones

2. Mindfulness of Feelings

2.1. Pleasant feeling
- 2.1.1. Worldly pleasant feeling
- 2.1.2. Unworldly pleasant feeling

2.2. Painful feeling
- 2.2.1. Worldly painful feeling
- 2.2.2. Unworldly painful feeling

2.3. Neither-Painful-nor-Pleasant feeling
- 2.3.1. Worldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling
- 2.3.2. Unworldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling

3. Mindfulness of Mind

3.1. Mind affected by lust
3.2. Mind unaffected by lust
3.3. Mind affected by hate
3.4. Mind unaffected by hate
3.5. Mind affected by delusion
3.6. Mind unaffected by delusion
3.7. Contracted mind
3.8. Distracted mind
3.9. Exalted mind
3.10. Unexalted mind
3.11. Surpassed mind
3.12. Unsurpassed mind
3.13. Concentrated mind
3.14. Unconcentrated mind
3.15. Liberated mind
3.16. Unliberated mind

4. Mindfulness of Mental Objects

4.1. Five Hindrances
- 4.1.1. Sensual Desire
- 4.1.2. Ill-will
- 4.1.3. Sloth and Torpor
- 4.1.4. Restlessness and Remorse
- 4.1.5. Doubt

4.2. Five Skandhas
- 4.2.1. Material form
- 4.2.2. Feeling
- 4.2.3. Perception
- 4.2.4. Formations
- 4.2.5. Consciousness

4.3. Six Bases
- 4.3.1. Eye and forms
- 4.3.2. Ear and sounds
- 4.3.3. Nose and odors
- 4.3.4. Tongue and flavors
- 4.3.5. Body and tangibles
- 4.3.6. Mind and mind-objects

4.4. Seven Factors of Enlightenment
- 4.4.1. Mindfulness
- 4.4.2. Investigation-of-states
- 4.4.3. Energy
- 4.4.4. Rapture
- 4.4.5. Tranquility
- 4.4.6. Concentration
- 4.4.7. Equanimity

4.5. Four Noble Truths
- 4.5.1. Suffering
- 4.5.2. Origin of suffering
- 4.5.3. Cessation of suffering
- 4.5.4. The way leading to cessation

APPENDIX II – TRANSCRIPTS OF SEVEN TALKS BY TRUNGPA RINPOCHE

The following are transcripts of seven talks given by Trungpa Rinpoche. These talks are not available in print form, but are available on the website "Chronicles of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche": (http://www.chronicleproject.com/CTRlibrary) I have transcribed all six talks that comprised the "Training the Mind" Seminar given at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center in August, 1974. I have also transcribed talk four of the "Techniques of Mindfulness" seminar given at Tail of the Tiger in August 1974. (The other talks in this seminar are available in edited form as the presentation on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness in *The Heart of the Buddha*. However, the editor of this book, Judy Lief, chose to substitute the talk on Mindfulness of Effort from the 1973 Hīnayāna/Mahāyāna seminary in place of the one given at Tail of the Tiger in August 1974.)

Training the Mind Seminar, Rocky Mountain Dharma Center, August 1974.
Transcription by Tom Weiser, July, 2010, from audio files on the website "Chronicles of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche"
(http://www.chronicleproject.com/CTRlibrary/training_the_mind.html accessed July 2010)

Talk 1
August 18, 1974

CTR: As I remember correctly, the theme of this seminar is training the mind. Is that the case? Yes?

[Audience: Yes.]

CTR: Good. In that case, we should try to find out what we're going to do; what we're going to study. It seems that the situation that we have here, and the collection of such people like yourselves, is as I see it, the cream of the milk. People who have managed to stand beyond the energies of Naropa -- still, you survived and you wanted to come out here; people who are interested thoroughly and completely and wanted to make the journey out here to study. This gathering is rather smaller in scale than the usual seminars that take place. Still I feel that this is a rather important group and therefore during this seminar, I would like to work with you in terms of trying to understand the basic meaning of training the mind. It is very important for us, not only because it will do good for you, but it is important for all of us, myself and you, that we are hearing something together. That is the basic important point, rather than me purely talking to you, and you taking notes down in your notebook, or whatever. Maybe you could write down that, if you like.

The important point here is that we wanted to talk about mind. Trying to find out what is meditation; who is meditating; what happens when you begin to meditate. I don't think that we have to go through too many details of the advertisement level – how it is great if you meditate. But we could get into the nitty-gritty of the basics at this point by

looking into what we mean by mind. Since this approach is training the mind, we have to understand what do we mean by mind. And there is linguistic, experiential and also phenomenological jargon that exists whenever anybody talks about mind or consciousness -- so many definitions have been made completely or half-heartedly.

So we have somewhat of a problem here. We have to understand what we're doing, and we have to be quite clear about who we are at this point. That seems to be the basic point. We could start on that as the seed question: who are we? Well, I am so-and-so by name. I was born and brought up in Texas, Arizona, New England, Alaska. But that isn't quite the point of who you are, what you are. That's kind of passport language, that you present when filling in forms in order to get out of a country -- you write certain definitions of who you are and what you are. Or if you try to obtain a visa for another country, you do that. But we're not concerned with that -- we're planning to settle down in this country and experience the raw ruggedness of America and practice meditation. So our particular aim is not so much to gallivant around the world, but it is more of settling down at this point.

So let us look again once more: who are we and what are we? Well, quite possibly you will say, "This thing happens in me which feels I am myself. And I feel myself very powerfully, very strongly, because there is no other choice. I feel that I am what I am. And beyond even my name, I feel my *thingness* inside me. I feel *me."* Obviously, those statements that you might present are connected with emotionalism of some kind. You feel lonely; therefore you want to say, "I am what I am." Or you feel extremely angry, so therefore you have to assert yourself being *me:* "I'm angry and I have a right to fight or to say my stuff -- my things, my line -- to the object of my anger." And if I feel lustful, my lover, my object of passion also has to be acknowledged. I feel a certain way, therefore that particular person has to surrender to me, and we have to work things together. The main point is that I am what I am; that I have to acknowledge myself before we do anything. I somehow have a strong message of some kind or another that I'm going to tell you. Quite possibly, we try to be generous after that flashing thought, and we say, quite possibly, "Maybe you have something to say about me, and please come and say it." We try to be more ingratiating. But that was an afterthought in some sense. Nevertheless, even when you said to me what you think of me and think of yourself, I still wanted to have another talk with you. Let us get together again, or let us talk on the spot by saying that this is what's happening. This is a very strong energy situation that's happening. I feel very powerful about this particular situation. And how about some kind of trade, some kind of deal in which you'll make me happy and I'll make you happy. Or I'll make you feel Richard, and you make me feel Richard. We'll have a duel. We'll fight to the death. Whatever.

So what is this? What is this particular point? This thing that is highly-strung like a wild horse or a paranoid dog. This, which is in us, is very tough and so seductive, sometimes extremely good, sometimes extremely wicked. This thing that we're talking about is mind, obviously. We're not particularly talking about our body or our situation, but our mind. The definition of mind from this point of view is "that which experiences the sense of separateness." You are going to conduct your business with somebody, either passion or aggression or whatever. You are dealing with something; you're trying to manage something or other. As long as that attitude of *thisness* is involved, obviously *otherness* is involved automatically. It is impossible to exist without

that or without this. That couldn't survive or this couldn't survive. There's a basic notion that you want to hang onto something or other. That's called a mind.

The Sanskrit word that's often used is *citta* which literally means "heart" – that's the direct translation – but if you could look into the implication behind the whole thing, we are not talking purely in terms of a heart alone, but we are talking in terms of that which feels need for something, to reinforce one's existence; eagerly looking for an enemy, and eagerly looking for a lover of different degrees. That's what it boils down to. The enemy notion is not necessarily that the enemy is such a person that you extremely hate, and that you feel terribly sick of that particular person. And the lover question is not that you absolutely love that person, particularly. There are all kinds of large areas of love and hate. Sometimes they're mixed together at the borderlines, and sometimes there's more emphasis on the need for reinforcement of your strength – that you're a powerful person and that you could strike at somebody, and that person would acknowledges you, and gives into you. Or that person could be seduced into your territory, and begin to give into you, and would like to open to you in the realm of passion or lust.

The question of mind. The word "mind" seems to be somewhat isolated from what it should mean. We have a grammatical problem there. If you use the word mind as a noun, which is an isolated term, at the same time it is active, so it should be used as a verb. And the closest verb that we can find is "minding", which is a continual thing: you are minding. Your mind is minding -- constantly looking for a reference point, looking for a connection of some kind. Fundamentally we feel that we don't exist. Fundamentally we feel are inadequate. There's a basic panic involved, which is that we don't feel so good to be ourselves. Obviously you can say, "I'm having a fantastic life. I've been to the Naropa Institute, I've been up on the land, and I had a fantastic time. It was great! I feel like a new person!" Sure, but why do we have to keep thinking about those things again and again. Why? If it's there already, if it's real enough there's no reason that one has to say those things and reflect again and again about reassurance. That is precisely the point: there' s some kind of a hole somewhere that we actually know intuitively, and we feel that something is fundamentally leaking. But we don't really want to acknowledge it as such. And that has been the problem all along. So according to the Buddhist way of looking at the whole thing, actually you don't exist. Such a problem is the mark or sign that you are just about to realize that you don't exist, that you have no substance anymore. We keep trying to survive ourselves in those areas.

In terms of the practice of meditation or meditational disciplines that might be involved, the important thing is to realize at the beginning who we are and what we are. That our basic setup doesn't hold truth. There are lots of areas where weakness takes place constantly, namely trying to survive and struggle. We pray to God to help us to strengthen ourselves: "Please let me exist. If I don't exist, tell me that I do exist. I pray to you so that you can tell me that I exist. Grant your blessing, or send your Holy Spirit on me so that I can confirm to myself that I do exist. And I'm a true believer of blah blah."

The question here is not particularly of religion: we're talking purely in terms of some kind of wholesomeness that we can experience within ourselves. Obviously, there is

some kind of goal. You might criticize by saying, "Isn't this duality? Isn't this split?" Sure it's split and duality, but still, there's no other language left for us. We've got to talk in some kind of primitive language. And that's what we're doing in the (?) practice of meditation is part of that, is to try to speak basic primitive logic, to try to think in such a way. So that eventually we begin to find ourselves humorous, that what we're doing is constantly non-existent – trying to build a sandcastle.

From that point of view, the word "mind" is very important to look into -- the panic that we involve ourselves in constantly; that we try to reassure constantly; that we try to make ourselves feel better, feel improved, uplifted, and meditate when we feel good. And all the rest of it are the problems that exist. And such problems could take the form of spirituality by thinking "I have that sense of *search* as we call it (which is a euphemism for panic.) I feel I'm searching for something; I feel I have a purpose in life, a spiritual endeavor." This is regarded as spiritual materialism at this point. Your search is built on deception. Once you begin to search you begin to find that you can exist: you don't have to give up everything after all. You get something out of it; you sneak out the backdoor slowly in spirituality; you regain your individuality and can be on the top of the world again. You can become a demonic dictator in the name of spirituality, discipline. That can become an enormous problem.

So we have to look very closely, very precisely at this point into what is actually mind's function. All kinds of holes after holes are involved. And at some point even acknowledging those holes can become a patchwork. You think you have exposed yourself, become completely purified and clean, a reasonable person. You've cleared out all the deceptions and you have seen the holes in your logic. But then at the same time you begin to build patches because of that. It's an endless game that goes on, which seems to be absolutely hopeless. There's no way out, and there's no way in. The only thing that one can do is that one can at least attempt to do something about it – acknowledging what's happening; exposing oneself. That seems to be the basic point. That's what's known as the working ground in traditional language. It is also known as the motive. Once you begin to embark on the spiritual path one has to have a clear motivation for what you are doing, what kind of style you are going to conduct yourself, how you are going to work with yourself: motivation. And the motivation is to expose oneself completely, without the pretence of trying to create another patchwork. That seems to be the basic foundation work, which seems to be important for us to review and examine again. A lot of people might have heard such a concept already and might be familiar with it, but still it is much safer, purer, in a sense, to go over it again and think about it and make it into a definite source of study

If you'd like to take part in a discussion period, you're welcome to ask.

Q: Rinpoche, the description you just gave of mind sounds a lot like ego, and I was wondering what the distinction is here, or if it's relevant.

CTR: When we use the term ego, this morning we're talking about the exclusive ego, which is self-indulgence, the style of looking for security, survival of it's own existence. And then there could be the traditional western term "ego". The whole thing jumbles together by saying that the ego is also intelligent at the same time. But we're talking about ego from this point of view: the stupid part of ego; the confused, aggressive part

of ego that is completely blinded. I think when we talk about mind, we're not purely talking about that kind of negative ego, but just awareness that exists within your being that's capable of relating with a reference point. Very simply without any other trips involved, passion or aggression; just coherent experience. The basic notion that Guenther talks about is *noetic mind*, that certain mind has the capability of experiencing reference point without any big deal. It's just kind of a mechanical thing -- it's almost like having an antenna. The basic mechanism – you can't even call it a mechanism, that's diluting the whole thing -- a basic intelligence that exists constantly, all the time. And then we begin to color it by saying "That is the case" and "This is the case, I would like to change myself in this way, that way" and so forth. It begins to become a problem. You begin to change your mind after a second flash. You begin to make it into something else rather than what you have seen.

It's like a young lady buying a hat. You like it because you saw it in the window of a shop. You thought it was fantastic "I have to buy it!" Once you go into the shop, you ask the shop assistant to show you that hat. Once you hold it, and look at it you don't feel so good. You think that something is trying to con you. You begin to change your mind, and that has become some kind of problem in that way.

Q: When you speak of mind in that way -- of the pure relating without aggression and passion -- does that correspond to the first skandha of form -- the direct experience of otherness -- before the feeling of good, bad, and indifferent of the second skandha?

CTR: I think so, yeah. You're working with a no-man's land. There is a sense of area that is not particularly occupied by either this or that. There's a sense of openness.

Q: I wanted to ask you something else. You said the motive, the working basis, was to expose oneself without pretence. Does that mean a notion of stepping out, not in the sense of indulgence, but a fearlessness? Not being afraid to show what you are that might come after the initial feeling of self-degradation that you often get into when you start a spiritual trip.

CTR: I think very much so. Usually, somehow, on the way we've been trained to think in a certain way that the first thought that we come across is somehow suspicious, and we have to provide it with a second, reasoning thought. Which makes the second thought better that reviews the first thought. Then we feel much safer, more legitimate. We go out of the way, asking our parents, our teachers, "I have this thought but I can't tell whether it's good or not. Can you tell me?" There are layers and layers of security mechanisms that have been set up. We've been told to act that way, there are educational things -- the very idea of the professionalist is that kind of thing. If we feel sick, there's a professional called a doctor; if we feel freaked out, there's a professional called a psychiatrist; if we feel that our house is leaking or something's wrong with the plumbing system, we go to the professional called the plumber or builder. There are so many professionals that we have to deal with -- that's a rejection of the "first thought is best thought" area. That's a problem, particularly in the spiritual area: there is some kind of intuitive notion that could actually be picked up, but we don't do that. That has become a problem.

You might say" What is the proof? Are we okay if we did that? Can you guarantee that

if we went along with 'first thought is best thought' exposing something that is terribly wrong? Then what happens?" That is precisely a second thought.

Q: I just don't understand how you can do this first thought business. First thought makes a distinction relative to second thought. If you say, "First thought is best thought" it's setting up a relativity. There's first, second, third thought. When could you ever get first thought again? The whole thing really bugs me. We talked about this before at the Dathün, "first thought is best thought" and I felt really limited by it. First is relative to second. Why not just "Thought is best thought?" Thought, thought, thought, thought. I mean, I don't always feel like that. I'm conscious of first thought and then "Ehh, well, maybe…"

CTR: That sounds like second thought.

Q: Yeah, that *is* second thought, and that bugs me, too. The whole thing bugs me.

CTR: I think the point is that if you begin to find out that first thought is best thought and you don't have any room to improvise further. Even that second "first thought" is a made up one, or the third "first thought." You think you keep on having first thoughts.

Q: Is that deceiving yourself to think you keep having first thoughts?

CTR: Yeah.

Q: It seems really unfriendly to yourself to say that there's a second thought. Why can't I accept the second thought as being a first thought?

CTR: Well, you can't.

It's obvious that you have a second thought that you regard as a first thought, and then a third thought and a fourth thought and maybe a hundredth or a millionth one. There's no end, let alone a beginning. It's like when somebody says, "Jump when I count down. One, two three, jump." But you regard the jump as being "four". You count "One, two, three, four, five, jump." You missed the jump.

CTR: Jonathan?

Q: I haven't heard you use the term "first thought" before. Is what you're saying the first thought in relation to a gap? That previous to the thought where there wasn't any thought? In other words, what you're talking about with first and second thought is that there's no gap between the first and second thought. Is that right?

CTR: That sounds rather complicated. The first thought we're talking about is just a first thought. There is openness, then there is thought.

Q: But what about the second thought?

CTR: Second thought is a reviewing process, usually. You can't have two first thoughts simultaneously; that's impossible. You have one first thought at a time; then second

thought is reviewing the first thought; and then the third one is further analyzing the first thought. By the time we get to the fourth or fifth level, you are completely not in contact with the first thought at all. You have completely distorted the whole thing. The first thought we are talking about is that there is a gap; there is a flash; experience. You might find yourself being an extremely fucked-up person, and insane. That might be the first glimpse you have of yourself. The first thought is not necessarily a pleasant one, a good one or a high spiritual thought. It could just be a true realization of one's neurosis, of one's confused mind. There's a gap and then first thought.

Q: One of the problems with "first thought", it seems to me, is that once you have the insight into egolessness -- that you're continually having the project of constructing who you are -- that brings with it a certain suspicion of thoughts as just further projections, further "searches."

CTR: Well the first thought here is that you are trying to ask a question about first thought with your second thought. That provides a lot of problems in terms of communicating the actual thing to you. At the same time, the first thought is not particularly regarded as egoless and enlightened thought necessarily. First thought could be a true thought of what is in you: your raw and rugged fucked-up-ness, confusedness, as well as, maybe, something greater, relatively speaking, something enlightened and insightful. First thought could be all of those things. It could be absolutely shocking; it could be absolutely complimenting. You can't ask a question about your first thought. Once you ask a question about it, it's the voice of the second thought.

The gentleman in the glasses. Oh, you both have glasses. The closer.

Q: Does this constitute mindlessness, to have one first thought constantly?

CTR: This is not regarded as a process of practice, particularly. This is regarded as a process of guidance, in the sense that you have a first thought, a flash or spark of what you are about, who you are, what you are. You rediscover your mind. What your mind might be; what it is. This is not regarded as a continual practice, but a starting point.

Q: I see that I'm continually sneaking in the back door whenever possible, finagling myself. It seems that you're talking about some way that we can be open to recognizing this flash, this spark. Picking up on some magnetism that exists there, and doesn't exist with all this other stuff that immediately follows.

CTR: Well, what we are talking about at this point is that we are not purely looking for mystical experience with "first thought is best thought." It's a very ordinary and sensible way of looking at ourselves to find out what is our mind. Do we have a mind at all, or not? If you have a mind, that is your mind. That happens very simply, very directly. We are not talking about the higher ideals that have been discussed in the scriptures as such, particularly. In order to find out the training the mind process, we need a basic ground, foundation to realize who we are, what we are. The only way to find out is to just look at it. There you are. You probably hate it, and probably you love it. So what? That's it; that's you. Good old you. That seems to be the basic point of

what we are talking about.

"First thought and second thought" is problematic language, making the whole thing sound too esoteric or something. We're not talking in those terms. In connection with training the mind, we are talking about just *that*, which is you. Look at you. Find out you. Just look. That doesn't probably bring any further spiritual ecstasy or extra depression particularly, because you know yourself already anyway. It is necessary to have that kind of attitude of who you are, what you are.

You might ask the question "Is this good" if you find out who you are, or "is this bad?" No comment. We haven't even gotten to that level yet, by saying what is good or what is bad. That comes later, in fact. But before we find out whether we are good or bad, we have to find out who we are. That is the beginning point that we have to really look into, that situation. And in many cases we may be deceived by being told of trying to be good before we know who we are. We are condemned before we know who we are. "You are terrible: try to reform yourself." That is always the problem that undermines our intelligence and sharpness, insightfulness. We are being led into a crippled situation by a certain condemnation: that you don't know how to carry yourself beautifully. "It's bad. Try to be good and carry yourself beautifully." And trying to be intelligent and dispel your ignorance. But the problem we have here is that we have no idea who we are, actually, who are doing those things.

So before we get any of those affectations, so to speak, we have to know who we are and what we are, which is just "first thought is best thought." "Best" in this case is a tricky word. It does not mean to say that the first thought is a good thought, or bad thought, but the best you could ever find, without any reference point. Therefore, the word "best" in this case is used neutrally. Like "that was great", "great" in the sense of maybe "appallingly bad" or "tremendously, excitingly good." We are talking in terms of energy in terms of "best" here. You have the best flash of your first thought as much as you have, rather than that you are a good person or bad person. That seems to be the basic point of "first thought is best thought" as just a flash.

Q: I don't seem to understand how I could ever answer the question "who am I?" because I'm not a static entity. You would almost have to ask me, give me a certain situation, or in relationship to what people. It seems to me that I'd be many different people, depending on the situation. So how could I ever have a first thought about myself unless you also define the situation or the people?

CTR: Well, that seems to be the basic point. That very situation is part of your life. You can't say that that situation was purely rehearsal. That very situation is your situation. It belongs to your world. And that's it. It doesn't matter if the situation is amiable, or the situation is wretched. It doesn't really matter: that situation is yours, your situation. From this point of view, the whole attitude is trying to utilize every situation that you have ever experienced in your entire life -- usable, workable, productive -- rather than looking for a certain particular situation and rejecting a lot of the others, which is a waste of time. That very situation that you have experienced is your situation. It belongs to you. It's yours whether it's good or bad. It's still a "first thought is best thought" situation.

Q: While I have the mike, might I ask you: did I understand you to say in the beginning that there are people who have a sense of panic about whether they exist?

CTR: That's right.

Q: I consider myself a fairly introspective person, but my panic has been the very opposite. It seems to me that the basic anxiety of most people is the moment of non-existence, because every one who exists also realizes he is threatened with non-existence. So why is that not the basic panic?

CTR: Well, we're saying the same thing. If they feel that they don't exist, that is non-existence. Which means that you panic on your non-existence.

Q: Does that mean that the basic human condition is that everything that exists also realizes that they are threatened with non-existence? It's inescapable.

CTR: That is one of the dharmas that the Buddha taught: egolessness -- that you don't exist. And it's regarded as wisdom.

Q: I seem not to be able to separate what I feel from what I think. I'm just wondering, when you're talking about "your first thought is your best thought" or "your mind thinking" is my mind separate from what I'm feeling? Like, is there a split?

CTR: It doesn't matter. Once we turn the whole thing solid (?) it's going to be very complicated. We'll probably have to employ a hundred philosophers with a thousand laboratories to look into the whole thing. That's too costly, a waste of a lot of people's time. I think you are here, that's what you are. Whether you are not here or whether you are here is the question.

Q: It seems that you constantly refer to the process of meditation as a gradual process, which seems to be a warning that there's no quick awakenings. But it also seems that that provides a lot of security, the feeling of process. Can you suggest a way to deal with that problem?

CTR: I think that process is very painful, particularly that we've been trained to drive an automatic shift rather than manual. You have all kind of tricks that you don't have to wait too long before you get what you want. I think those kind of tricks have been expanded into spiritual trips as well. For a while, all kinds of spiritual freaks and psychologists and so-called American mystical people have been looking around the world for who has the quickest rapid-path message. And that has always been the problem. The question here is that the gradual path might present you as some kind of security; a promise of some kind -- you're doing a really solid job, like you're being a really good citizen. But at the same time you find that it's not painless; a lot of [ordeals?] takes place, a lot of problems take place constantly. You think "maybe this is it!" and then you find out it wasn't. There are all kinds of processes that are being pushed in your oven; it takes place all the time. So I think as long as we're stuck with the gradual path, even the security [arise so far?] and there's no problem with that.

Q: It seems that the first thought leads very smoothly into the second thought, and I

wondered if there's a definite end to it, where it goes back into spaciousness?

CTR: Well, second thought is usually very juicy.

Q: Sometimes, it's at the second thought that you realize "Oh, I'm in the second thought, now I could go back to the space." But I wonder if there's a place before you get to that juicy second thought.

CTR: I don't think so. You see, you can't create an artificial first thought by providing a third thought. One has to let it go completely. One has to disown completely. Then a true first thought could begin again. One can't strategize.

Q: So you have to let yourself go into the second thought?

CTR: That is to be the basic message. The leap, or opening, or go.

Q: Rinpoche, on the idea of the first, second, third thought, whatever, where does the watcher take perspective?

CTR: Second thought.

The gentleman at the wall (if we could call it a wall)

Q: Using the space you develop in meditation, I seem to become aware of my body functioning logically in response to its subsistence autonomic nervous system, and so on. It does a very good job of it, even to the extent of working with moral judgments, good behavior. It knows from its memory bank that this is a good behavior, this is a bad behavior. It does it automatically. What I wonder is where the resolve of a bodhisattva or a Buddha comes? Which part of the mind is that mind where that decision is made to devote your life to saving every sentient being? How does that relate to the *anatta* concept?

CTR: I think the question of being a Buddha or bodhisattva begins right at the beginning. There is a very interesting threshold that not knowing who you are and what you are, and somehow there is knowing who you are and what you are at the same time. That level that when you have no idea of who you are and what you are, then you panic. And the panic creates a space, an openness. Then you have some kind of understanding that you are not who you are, what you are. That level, the interjection of whatever you'd like to call it – that thing – happens. I think it happens at the beginning, and then as you proceed on the path with your second thoughts and your struggles and artificiality goes on. And at some point there is another gap. You begin to find that you can also relate with the world as you relate with yourself at the same time, as if in the same way. It falls into two parts: at the beginning, the panic and then insightfulness and then there's the regular dualistic things that happen on one's path, and then there's also gap afterwards.

Q: In Buddhist thought, is there a realm whence the…

CTR: Is there what?

Q: Is there a realm or is there an area where these magnificent thoughts arise – the thoughts of the Buddha, the resolve to save the world – takes birth. It seems to be so outside what's going on in the world as such.

CTR: I think the world itself brings that way. If you're actually in communication with the world properly that experience happens, otherwise you can't have any openness, except at the level of one's dream, one's imagination. The more that you are wakeful, insightful, the more that you are involved with the world completely, that you are painfully involved, very personally involved with the world.

Q: I wonder whether the first thought is actually a thought when it first happens. Or is it only a first thought in relation to a second thought? I mean is it like instinct when it is first given birth to?

CTR: I think it's much simpler to call it a thought. We can have all kind of analytic and all kind of scientific answers: maybe the first thought is not fully thought. The first thought is maybe just a shadow that comes ahead of the whole thing. But I think that's too complicated in terms of professional experiential person is concerned. That's why it's down as thought. It's still a ripple in the pond, which could be said to be a wave at the same time.

Q: I mean it seems like, at least in some of my experiences, connected to actions in the body.

CTR: Yeah. Gesundheit.

Q: I'm saying it in the sense that it doesn't seem to be purely in the head.

CTR: That's true.

Q: During the tantra course, you referred to an idea of having to think twice. I'm wondering what the difference is between thinking twice and having a second thought.

CTR: I think they're saying the same thing. Second thought in this case is not necessarily that you believe that you have the first thought so everything's okay. But thinking twice in this case is almost, you could say, is the twenty-fifth thought. There are so many exchanges taking place already when you're at the level of the twenty-fifth thought, then you've thought twice. See what I mean? You thought twice, because you've already allowed space.

Q: Is that different than the second thought being a doubt about the first thought?

CTR: Yeah, the second thought is the conceptual level, purely. But if you're in the hundredth or two hundred-fiftieth, the repetition is such that we could safely say that your fiftieth thought again becomes your first thought because you've gone so far, repeating yourself so much that it doesn't make sense anymore -- the whole thing is diluted

Q: Then is it possible to think twice without having a second thought?

CTR: No. Sneaky, eh?

Well maybe we should close our happening here tonight. There's a discussion that happens tomorrow. Maybe you could sharpen your…whatever.

Talk 2
August 19, 1974

CTR: We discussed yesterday developing basic mind to relate with oneself and one's world. The next question is a sense of appreciation. According to the text, appreciation is expressed in the form of joy. You engage yourself in a certain particular project, which is very definite, very concrete and personal. That particular notion of appreciation obviously comes from the realization of oneself in the metaphor "First thought is best thought" which we discussed yesterday – knowing who you are and what you are. The question of appreciation here is not necessarily – or not at all, in fact – some kind of comic relief, that you feel better because you've gone through the worst. For that matter, this notion of appreciation is not so much trying to jazz up something; that you feel low-down and you feel not in a good state of mind, not in a good spirit, so you'd like to build up as much as you can. That also entails the question of telling yourself that this is a very sensible thing to do – practicing meditation is a very sensible thing to do, therefore you should suppress all the other conflicting questions. So the basic question here, is not so much trying to build oneself up to any particular situation but just simply appreciating it.

And the next question is appreciating what? What is there to appreciate? Appreciation at this point is somewhat acknowledging oneself as a person who is committed to the sitting practice of meditation and a basic awareness that continues for the rest of your life. And also appreciation is a sense of being, in some sense; that you have taken a certain attitude to commit yourself to this particular sitting practice; that you are here. Physically you are sitting on your meditation cushion, a sense of being; a certain sense of existence. When you talk about a sense of existence, we are talking in terms of a very simple situation, that you exist at that very moment, at that very level: that you are sitting down on the floor and meditating – or just about to meditate. And no mystical, exaggerated metaphysical connotations apply here. It's just a simple existence: that you are there. As much as what we are doing right now, I am here, and you are there.

You sit on your earth, quite rightly so, and you are partially listening, and partially wondering. And that is a sense of being; you are being here, in fact, whether you are miles away from here. Your thoughts may be wandering around about all over the country – Alaska, San Francisco, New Mexico, New York City, Boulder, Red Feather Lakes, whatever. But nevertheless, you are here, in fact you are here. That's kind of a physical awareness that you are sitting, that you are aware of what you are, including your mental states of a daydreaming world. Physically, you are here. You are simply here. Psychologically, it is questionable. But somehow when we try to make that a defined situation – that psychologically you are here at the same time – it's very hard work. In fact, we could go as far as to say unless you attain enlightenment, you are not psychologically here. So that's a big project that we try to work on. But we have something to work with: that is to say that you are physically here. That's psychosomatic body anyway. That's something to begin with, something to work on.

The disciplines that have been handed down from generations to generations from both lineages of Kagyü tradition and Nyingma tradition at this point boil down to the same thing: it's a question of learning how to be here. There are a lot of cheap philosophical attitudes that one can take by saying "Be here now, everything's okay." Or "You're

being here, that's great." But we're not talking in terms of "Be here now, because everything's a rose garden, and everything's smooth and pleasurable", particularly. Often the notion of meditation traditions has been misrepresented by saying that people who meditate are trying to get into a blissful state of mind. It is positive thinking: those who have lost a meaningful life should go and meditate so they find the purpose of life. The purpose of life is to be happy. At that point somehow we are missing the point. A meditator who would like to begin their practice should sit without planning, should sit meaningfully without it being a big deal. You could sit on your floor properly, as opposed to your perching on your floor. You can do that very simply. Whereas if you begin to question whether you are sitting properly or not, then you begin to perch. One just sits very simply, directly.

And then there's a sense of being, obviously, a sense of existence -- that you are there; you are breathing; you are sitting. You feel your head; you feel your arms; you feel your shoulders. One doesn't have to go through the process of trying to build up a sensory awareness program here, particularly, which is quite a different approach than this one. But once you sit, obviously you feel that you are sitting, which is extremely simple. And then, there is the tradition of practice of what's known as the Four Foundation of Mindfulness practices, which maybe comes to you simultaneously, or maybe comes to you gradually, whatever. The basic point of the sitting practice of meditation is to sit --actually sit properly. The complications of thought patterns and confusing [with religion?] with the techniques of all kinds, however they come up, however they go away, those are just mental creations, just thought process rather than meditative insight as such.

You can take two types of attitudes: one is "just do it" and one is "just wait." You can wait: you sit down properly and then you wait. Even with the practice, even with the discipline, the technique, you still try to wait for something to happen. Or maybe you wait for nothing to happen, and you're thinking, "This is it!" But still you are waiting for something or other. The other attitude is just to be, which is the correct one. Just to sit and to be. Marpa once said, "Meditating is trying to look at your own eyes without using a mirror." That seems to be the point: we're trying to look at our own eyes without using a mirror. The only way to do it is just to be there.

It is absolutely necessary for a meditator, or if anybody is seriously interested, that they should not get any feedback of promises from the teachings. Maybe they could experience some landmark guidance, as to what particular starting point engaging yourself in. This first portion of the practice of meditation is known as *śamatha*, which literally means "the development of peace." But in this case, the development of peace in the sense of simplicity rather than pleasure as such, which is one of the biggest misunderstandings when we talk about "peace on earth." "May the lofty forces bring peace on earth." We are talking about happiness: plenty of food, plenty of clothes, plenty of money, which is a big misunderstanding of the mystical meaning of peace of any schools. When we talk about the state of peace, even the state of tranquility, we are talking purely in terms of simplicity; uncomplicated -- just a state of being which has no extra attachment; detachment around it, so it's seemingly peaceful. A simple rock, sitting on the ground. There's a sense of directness involved when we talk of the idea of a state of peace. Feel one's body: that body exists. Not in the sense of sensorial practices: "Now I'm feeling my toes. Now I'm feeling my ears, my temple and my

shoulder, my heart and everything. Blah, blah." We just simply feel our body. The body sits there on the ground, and *you are that*. Body.

And metaphysically it has been said that such an attitude of your body is the psychosomatic body, but it doesn't really matter what the book says. It is your mind's body sitting there. It doesn't matter which part is your mind and which part is your body, really. What difference does it make, anyway? Everything we experience in our life is experiential, needless to say. If we don't have experience of life, we don't have life; we are reduced to a corpse. As long as we are not a corpse, we experience our life. One can't go beyond that: when you experience your life, you experience your life. It's experience; facts or figures don't really matter. You are *experiencing* life. Maybe there is a certain level of facts and figures: whether you're experiencing your life as pleasurable 75% and painful 25%, or the other way around, whatever. Even those facts and figures are also experiential. You experience that you have a logical conclusion that things exist independent of imagination. We feel better, we feel more scientific. But even scientific discovery is also experience at the same time.

So that body that we have, we might have blonde, dark, reddish hair, we might have a light complexion or a dark complexion, wearing red clothes, a yellow shirt, blue jeans, whatever we wear, whatever we have on our body, whatever we possess in our basic state of being -- that is experience. When you wear clothes, you experience that you are wearing clothes. You don't really wear them as such, really. If you try to find [something?] out, you try to find out through the channel of experience. So the only conclusions come after experientially: I said I am so-on-and-so-on because I had the experience that somebody took my photograph and I happened to find myself wearing a necktie. It's a photograph of an experience, in fact, rather than that you are actually wearing a necktie.

When your body sits, it is experience: it is body sitting. So let us not complicate that beyond the necessary. It's not practical to go into details like that. You can waste lots of time, but still conclusions become experience. So that is why the world is known as world of mind, obviously, quite rightly so. This experience of ours -- sitting on a meditation cushion, trying to feel body, experience body, experience breathing -- is something that we should work on. That's what's known as the development of peace, simply saying that the development of unnecessary complications of pain, potential pain, but simplifying into one-pointedness which is the development of peace. And that seems to be the basic point of the foundation of mind[fullness] of body: that is the beginning, starting point of śamatha experience is the development of mindfulness of body.

Techniques may vary: working on your breathing experience. Or quite possibly, sometimes even breathing becomes irrelevant: you just sit there. But you are still experiencing. Experiencing our form, experiencing atmosphere, experiencing a sense of life, and experiencing even sense of some kind of purpose, and experiencing a sense of time, experiencing a sense of temperature. Also you can experience how solid is the ground you are sitting on. Maybe you are sitting on very solid earth, like where you are sitting on right now. But you can experience some kind of different levels. Maybe there could be a big hole underneath your body that could collapse any moment. You could find yourself in a dark pit. Or you're sitting on a crystal rock that can't be penetrated,

never been explored. So you can't bury yourself, create more of a hole if you're shy of the world, because the seat underneath you is made of solid crystal rock; you can't dig a hole and dive into it.

All kinds of experience take place, but all of those are relevant experience. We can't quite say such experiences are particularly neurotic – or for that matter we can't say that those experiences are particularly sanity expressions, as such, alone. But such experiences are just experience, a real and true and direct experience that we have. And maybe that's the best way to begin from this point – awareness of the form; mindfulness of the form. The four foundations of mindfulness which we discussed tonight is mindfulness of the form.

You're welcome to ask questions.

Q: I have questions from two different statements you made. The first one was: is the sense of joy and excitement that you talk about and the sense of appreciation indulging oneself in spiritual materialism?

CTR: That's very smart of you. It is always good to check that to begin with, whatever you hear. But I think actually, at this point within that kind of attitude of the possibility of spiritual materialism it might happen that you might have the attitude of "love-and-lighties," whatever. Having had some kind of warnings that such a kind of situation is possible, it might happen to you. And then you have a new discovery that you are not purely trying to secure yourself in an ego-oriented situation, which is what spiritual materialism actually is. That you find yourself in some sort of selfless joy, and that joy is not particularly glorifying anybody or anything – oneself or others. But there is something that clicked. Once you clicked something properly, you feel good, not because you did it or somebody else did it, but because there is something that is taking place; there is some kind of connection that has been made. Therefore you feel more wholesome, rather than spiritually materialistically joyful, which is regarded as very hollow, and has the orientation towards trying to build oneself up, rather than that you have experienced anything at all.

Q: Thank you. Okay, and a second question actually arose at the time that Muktananda was speaking to us, but it seemed to apply to your comment on meditation as trying to get into a blissful state of mind as a sort of a pitfall. Because I distinctly felt that when he talked about…on the experience of the guru's grace that only the guru could give you which would lead to a stilling of all thoughts and an experience of love immediately. There was a bit of sensationalism that I couldn't quite connect with -- that he would say something like that to a naïve audience, so that a lot of people would think "Oh, I'm going to meditate now so I can have that blissful experience that he'll give me." And I wondered where you view that as coming from in his tradition.

CTR: It's coming from India somewhere. But India is a big country and all kinds of things could come out of India. I think we have this kind of problem: I heard that Muktananda was going to spend one year in America and then he's going to go back to home. There one big problem with that kind of a relationship with a teacher and a student: that it's enormously generous of Muktananda to spend one year in America. And then he's going back home. Americans can't take just one year's chuck of time, a

heavy-handed blast of thick chocolate bar for one year, and then suddenly there's nothing. I think that's one of the problems we have here: a lot of the oriental teachers have experienced or regarded their occidental students as somewhat sensational-minded and somewhat looking for the easy way to get around. Nobody drives a stick shift; everybody drive's an automatic car. There is obviously a yearning toward automation, even spiritually, which has become one of the biggest problems. Consequently, promises that have been made have become cheap. Not necessarily that such a teacher is a cheap person, fundamentally. But at the same time that the understanding of the mentality of this country needs enormous research work, and the teachers come out, or any teachers have experienced an American student type person are not representing real America. They're just certain Americans who are willing to come out and are willing to wear a loincloth in India. But they're not true Americans. Such problems become big problems, in fact. Particularly spirituality is becoming a big deal. There is a big problem actually that exists.

I think that the tradition that Muktananda is coming from it's traditional for magicians, some kind of tantric master lineage. He probably didn't bother to research America. He's relying on his magic. He doesn't have to say anything profound particularly. He could babble anything, and be sure that his magical power would turn anybody on. Which has been happening a lot, a great deal at this point. So it is the tantric tradition approach of automation meeting the American tradition of automation and creating a spiritual atomic bomb.

Q: It seems like, in part, if Muktananda comes here for a year it's very much on the same level of an American Student going to India for a year and going to see a guru and saying, "I'll stay for a couple of weeks if you could give me some teachings. And maybe if they're really good I could stay two more weeks." But, it's not really there in a way.

The question of the joy and its relation to spiritual materialism: you talked about suppressing conflicting questions. When that's given up, it seems like there's a quality of energy that comes out of that, that is part of that joy. As with being here now; there's a question if I could be here now, everything's going to be great. Or if I could work with my body through an awareness approach and feel my ears and feel my toes, then there's a quality of "good" or "that's great." It seem like with just sitting, I don't know if it's a neutral state, but you're just sitting, you're not judging your sitting as being good or your sitting as being good or that your feeling anything in particular in that kind of way.

CTR: I think so, yes. I think the important thing is that there's a sense of carelessness in a positive sense. Not frivolity or mindlessness, but carelessness of a certain particular type. One just does it. You just sit and do it. In fact I have experienced that the people who took part in the last dathün sat here and had some idea of what they were going to do, but at the same time had a lot of questions as to what they were about to do and what they were going to get out of this. Questions were thrown back and forth all the time with them. And obviously they know quite clearly they could leave any time. They're not committed to an institution, signed up by their parents. There's enormous freedom that they have. Strangely, people lost heart and regained their heart at the same time while they sat for dathün for one month. They somehow still stuck together.

They sat. They finished it (heroically of course.)

But I think that has something to say about the whole thing, that such a situation exists. Obviously, we find in the Zen tradition that people sit for many days in sesshins. And some kind of experience happens, that there is no promise or no particular purpose. But one still just does it. Questions still exist of course, even after you have accomplished it, masterfully: "What happened?" "Is that good for me?" your friend might ask you. "If you go through that thing, what happens to you? Should I do it?" And maybe your answer would be, "If you like. But there's nothing happening there, in particular." And in fact, that turns on your friend. He's way into it. For some strange reason, there's some kind of magic involved in that, in particular the non-commercial, non-salesmanship kind of approach, which might be the most cunning way of advertising.

Q: See, I've been going around asking the people how they liked it. I haven't gotten much. Do you feel like the awareness movement or the growth movement in a way, although it strives to help people in touch with themselves, in a way is very dangerous, because of reinforcing your ego.

CTR: I don't think so if you approach it in a certain very special way. Reinforcement of ego needs testimonial kind of reports. Usually a testimonial is supposed to be a positive thing: how great it was. But still, I don't see any problem, particularly with ego reinforcement as long as the person begins to sit and practice. Maybe with the ego-ambition style at the beginning, but then something begins to turn around, and your whole trip begins to fall apart, as you do it properly. I think that's the most painful part a lot of people feel, especially those who are already involved in a lot of spiritual trips. They've had the experience of doing that again and again. They find that this particular style of sitting and doing nothing is devastating. We had, last time, a lady who came from California. She was rather fat and wearing a kind of bedspread outfit. She was very sweet and very kind, and she realized that this particular approach that we're doing is not on the level of covering up one's problems but exposing it. And she saw that as Satan-worship, worshipping Satan. Turning yourself away from light and you're obligating (?) darkness. She was very freaked out, and she left.

Q: Rinpoche, the way you spoke about Muktananda, sort of flashed to I also thought that way about Karmapa's tour. Could you maybe speak a little about him?

CTR: Well, for one thing it's hard to speak on behalf of the future: it hasn't happened yet. You can make a comment on the past, which is much easier to do. If there's no textbook, you can't make a commentary. [Tape is turned]

Q: I mean the idea of him only coming for a year.

CTR: Well, I think the way the Karmapa handles himself is maybe a similar approach, but fortunately, the Karmapa doesn't have a lot of American students around Rumtek. It's being protected by some unknown coincidence. Very few people are allowed to go there because of the visa. Consequently, he doesn't have that many visitors coming to his monastery, as being a popular Western hangout-ashram. I think there's something about that: his situation is protected. Another situation is that I don't think the

Karmapa's into a particular "love-and-light" of anything at all. He's into his own tradition. He speaks very boldly and very directly. Obviously he takes pride in his own lineage, and he looks at himself many times and makes fun of that as well. Wait and see what happens. You shouldn't rush.

Q: I seem to find myself vacillating between waiting for something and being when I sit. Does the sense of appreciation apply to that whole thing?

CTR: Are you one of the dathün people?

Q: No.

CTR: No? Well, the question is…One doesn't try. "One doesn't try" necessarily doesn't mean "you don't try therefore you should wait." I think there's a problem of too much future orientation. If you are present oriented, then you just do it. "Keep on trucking" in order to get to somewhere else. If you think of your destination, probably you will cease to truck. It's a really blunt approach to life –very blunt, and very realistic. There's no romance involved except the joy of the present -- that such a thing does exist, that you can keep trucking. Which, itself is somewhat heroic: you are marching, but that's okay. Nothing can go wrong with that. You're still reminded by your irritations anyway.

Q: Rinpoche, can the term "being in the now" sometimes be misused? Would you speak on that?

CTR: The term "now?"

Q: "Being in the now."

CTR: Well, "be here" is a worse term; "being in the now" is, in fact, a better one. When we talk about "be here," "here" is associated with "now." If you have "now," you have this experience which is "here", in my territory. You can't be in the present without "me" existing, me watching the nowness. So I think "being here" is one of the biggest problems as far as terminology is concerned, rather than "now". Now is very convenient, it's a very good word. Now is just "that" rather than "this" particularly. Now is "that" without being "here". There is no reference point involved. "Be here now" which destroys the whole purpose of "be here now."

Q: I had a different perspective than that when I was asking the question. It seems that my personal problem in relating to this thing is that the word "now" creates a great amount of fear, a great amount of misunderstanding as to what "now" is. Because it seems to create a choice that I'm not quite sure…

CTR: And that's it! I think that's great, because then you are left with no choice at the same time. And you're supposed to have a choice, which is your interpretation of what "now" is. But at the same time now has a sense of emptiness and a sense of non-existence and at the same time a sense of fullness as well. That's it. That seems to be the point we're trying to get at. It's a so powerful thing, a powerful word, "now." It's a so powerful word that it doesn't have any particular connections, and therefore one begins

to feel threatened. The fear comes from wanting to stick to the past or the future, obviously. You have a difficulty ungluing yourself from either the future or the past. It is not particularly pleasant, not particularly painful, but it is demanding.

Q: In sitting meditation, we sit and hold a posture. And perhaps we have the desire to scratch or move our legs, but unless we're in pain, we just hold the position. Now when I move into life, on one occasion, just the other day, I found I was feeling very irritated and nervous. And I expressed that by fidgeting, and doing that. So I decide just to keep my hands still, and then I could really get the feeling of my irritation more clearly – by not expressing it as fidgeting. Is that in any way a step from sitting meditation to moving out into everyday life?

CTR: I think so, in a sense. But at the same time, a student who sits is not particularly recommended to hold their irritations to the extreme. As a result you might find that you cannot stand up and walk even when the whole thing finishes. But it is recommended that you change your postures, but not give into the level of inquisitive mind trying to manipulate you. On the first warning, it's a false warning, the second warning is a false warning. Maybe the third warning is the actual mechanical, physical one, and that's traditional approach to the whole thing. Which actually relates to the life actually, very much so, just as you said. When you sit, you don't actually sit away from the world, away from experience, but you relate with your day-to-day life in terms of meditation in action.

Q: I was wondering if you could say something about physical manifestation during sitting that are, in my experience, sensational types of heat coming off and heart beating, and sort of strange things that I consider as hindrances, and feel should be suppressed or ignored. I don't know quite how to handle it.

CTR: Well, I think that's basically the technique. You have to let go more of the technique. Don't hold yourself tight to begin with. A sense of openness, a sense of casualness is necessary when you begin to sit.

Q: But these things seem to occur with me at moments when I'm just getting into a rather relaxed state.

CTR. I think that that's very, very sensitive thing. Whether you're watching yourself get relaxed or whatever. It's a very delicate matter. A sense of leap is necessary. Having had already experienced a sense of leap, one usually just lets things come and go. Bodily sensations come and go. One doesn't try to do anything with it, particularly.

Q: I suppose I was thinking in terms of when these things happen judging then: "this is the right track" or "this is the wrong track" and then manipulating.

CTR: That's your thought. Just be aware of those questions as your thought pattern, rather than anything else. You see then you find yourself on a completely free level, if you can label everything that happens in your state of mind and your discursive thought: "this is thought, this is thought, this is thought, this is thought." So everything becomes thought. Strangely enough, one begins to realize that right and wrong doesn't actually exist, and safe and not-safe doesn't actually exist. Everything is regarded as a

thought pattern, which needs a certain type of bravery.

Q: So one should be open to these things.

CTR: Regard them as a thought pattern: let them move through. Easy come, easy go. Maybe that's your motto.

Q: Rinpoche, tonight I heard you say several times that we should develop this awareness that we do exist. Could you discuss this in the context of the many times I've heard you try to impress upon us that we don't exist?

CTR: Well that seems to be the basic point, actually. We do exist. You are there, the chef (?) And you are there as a person. And that is just a simple way of approaching the whole thing. But then, once you begin to reconciliate yourself with your existence – actually you are there – then you begin to twist around the whole thing. You being finding, "wait a minute, what is this all about?" You being to find out that you don't exist at all. But that's not particularly a problem: it's a question of the duration of gradual understanding. You can't experience non-existence, non-ego, if you don't experience ego or existence. That seems to be the basic point. At the beginner's level there's no harm to experience that there is something that exists – not in the sense of tripping out and being an ego-centered person. Or planning that you are going to become a well-to-do tertön(?) or anything like. But just in the simple level that you exist because sit on the meditation cushion and you breathe, and that's okay.

Q: You talked about feeling one's body when you sit as being very simple and very direct. There's no how-to-do-it in terms of trying to get particular techniques – "Oh, now I feel my toes, and now my knees." It seems to be a self-existing thing – like you said, "experiencing is experiencing." So feeling one's body is just feeling one's body. So why do we need to sit to do that?

CTR: I can't think of any better way to do it than that. If you walk, if you drive, if you eat, if you sleep, can you bring up some kind of activity which is similar to sitting that is an [imperishable?] state of being?

Q: You mean without particular physical entertainments that would distract us from that feeling?

CTR: Yeah.

Q: So the feeling of sitting is the feeling of our body in a stable state?

CTR: And a natural state: you are not bound to any particular activities as such; you're just sitting. Even if you drive and sit, you're driving. Or if you're hanging out on your street corner, looking for entertainment.

Well, we should close our happening tonight.

Talk 3
August 20, 1974

CTR: Yesterday, we discussed the question of form, and the question of how to relate with the practice physically, and the simplicity of being on earth. We could continue to discuss the further attitude that is required: not only purely sitting on earth, but a sense of survival; a sense of life force that is connected with a part of the breathing practice of meditation. Also, there's an attitude of a sense of being in the point of view of survival. You are not particularly reduced into a peaceful earth when you sit and meditate. But you have your pulse; your heartbeat; your body. You can listen to sounds; you can see vision; you can feel temperature throughout your body: a sense of survival. That seems to be one of the basic points of awareness, mindfulness in this case. You are completely, totally in touch with what happens in your system --as we discussed yesterday, not in the sense of sensory awareness style, particularly. But there is a sense of certainty that you are alive.

A strange coincidence actually happens with that: usually when you feel that you have a flu, a fever and you are sitting and meditating at the same time, obviously at the beginning there is a sense of wretchedness, but then you begin to realize the sense of having a body, possessing a body, a sense of aliveness, a sense of a living quality. Or for that matter, if you feel that there is pain in your joints, your legs, your knee, your back and your neck, there is a sense of survival. Because any pain that we experience ordinarily is related with a sense of death. Sickness is close to approaching your death. At the same time when you feel you experience a sense of panic or sickness, there is a feeling of life that is trying to push and force a sense of being -- a sense of well-being is trying to re-accumulate again. So there is a sense of being that actually takes place. So particularly in the sitting practice of meditation, whenever a sense of discomfort is involved, that brings an enormous sense of livelihood.

The second stage of the foundations of mindfulness is livelihood. There is a sense of survival notion, which brings also, obviously, a sense of threat at the same time. This approach has to be very direct and very simple -- extraordinarily simple, extraordinarily literal. We are not trying to bring out any mystical or religious experience in our practice of meditation. We are not trying to gain a pleasurable state or happiness of any kind in particular. Or for that matter, we are not seeking for pain deliberately, or trying to punish ourselves deliberately, either. So there is a sense of struggle that still goes on between the body and sensation of body and mind. [That] relationship takes place constantly.

Sometimes such physical discomfort in the sitting practice of meditation is generated from the earth or the floor that you are sitting on, as if there is enormous magical power that begins to transmit through your body; that the sickness of the earth is completely transmitted in[to] your system. You feel hurt in the base of your body, and this pain and irritation begins to come up your spine, your arms, your neck and your eyelids and your head. That is not particularly regarded as mystical experience or something that we should particularly cultivate. Those are the natural tendencies that we experience -- a sense of life. You see the point is that once we begin to ignore life as reality -- pain as reality; pleasure as reality – and we are seeking for something higher – a spiritual goal of anything – then the problem is that when we have those difficulties, we tend to panic

a great deal. We begin to find that we are maybe losing our track, context, connections, our logic, our faith, since we are not getting the ideal hospitality that is promised by – whoever they are.

Most of the problems that we face in our lives is not so much of being unable to bring ourselves into a higher level of spirituality (which actually doesn't exist.) There is a level of spirituality that exists, obviously but not a *higher* level of spirituality. The level of spirituality that we are talking about, that we are experiencing ourselves – in the true mystical experience that all traditions agree on simultaneously -- is the level of earthbound-ness. Being with the earth, being with the body, being with the trees, being with the rocks, being with the grasses, being with the water, being with the highway, being with the traffic lights. Being with your father, mother, policeman, your lawyer. Those experiences we have usually are regarded as too dirty by those who seek a supposedly snobby spiritual trip. They are too low for you too even associate with them; one should snare them and look down upon them, saying to yourself, "I am above all this." Somehow by doing so, one is cutting off one's tie with basic sanity, and one is developing a dreamworld of insanity.

So, we have problems with the usual thinking pattern: anything good is connected with heaven, anything bad is connected with the sewage system. That is just fiction. Somehow, such logic doesn't work. Particularly when you try to practice, such logic doesn't work. It doesn't happen that way. The basic point here is that the more sense of contacts, of connection with the earth in the sense of being alive. You have a pair of eyes, a pair of ears, a pair of nostrils, one mouth, two arms, two legs. You have this thing called "body", which some people refer to you as Jack or Jill or whatever – Michael, Judy – and it is you whether you like it or not. The more we try to drift away from this thing, we end up in enormous trouble, problems. We think we are confused, therefore we try to get away from it, but we are more confused trying to get away from the confusion itself. So there is endless…without reference point of sanity. You are running away from one confusion because another confusion occurred. That creates enormous chain reactions of an echo system. You find yourself finally nowhere and painfully nowhere. Completely trapped in the bottom pit of hell, if you'd like to put it that way; complete claustrophobia. In the nest of the Black Widow.

This morning, when I stepped out of my trailer, I sat up in a chair on the porch and looked around. I said to myself, "How beautiful this place is. So many beautiful clouds and beautiful trees and greenery and everything. In the distance, people are meditating in the tent. Everything is fantastic and ideal! It's a perfect world." But then, the first message has arrived that somebody's going to come up and talk to you about business. That particular world somehow didn't exist, or sort of shrunk into a concept of you feel a sense of being hassled. But still, the clouds are there and everything's there, but they don't exist; they're sort of shrunk into this timing and programming of your scheduling. I found myself smiling at myself at the time and also reflecting about what am I going to talk about tonight at the same time. So since we're going to raise the question of feeling – livelihood – that was the best message of all. Finally, those dreamy levels of appreciating the nature of whatever are brought down to the level that one has to relate to one's schedule. That is best of all. There is enormous sanity involved with that: finally, you can't hover around or gallivant around. You are brought down: your duty is to keep your schedule. There is no choice. People arrived already; you can't kick

them out.

Sometimes, a lot of truth of life is very confusing and very indignant to a lot of us. We feel we deserve more happiness, less hassle, and etc. But seeing that once we find ourselves in the situation of complaining, in the midst the complaining process you find yourself being sane, suddenly. In the midst of enormous bundles of insanity, there is the sudden realization of sanity. You have to face this fact directly and very simply -- precisely. That is something that we are talking about in this case: a sense of feeling; a sense of experiencing the experience of being alive. Such a thing could happen in the midst of chaos.

Whenever there is more chaos, there is some tendency to check back that usually happens. And the checking back process becomes reality; clear reality. All of those can be exemplified by the sitting practice of meditation. When you begin to sit and meditate, you find there is a lot of chaos, conflict, uncertainty, and also a sense of being a fool. But at the same time, you begin to hear more sound, you being to see more sight, you being to feel more body; a sense of being alive. We are slowly approaching towards the notion of sanity. Slowly, slowly we are approaching towards the notion of sanity. And sanity in this case is having contact with reality, as full, as much as possible, which is known as all kind of fancy names of it. It's called enlightenment, liberation, freedom, buddhahood.

Quite possibly you find, "Is it as simple as this?" And also you might say, "I have to learn the next trick." Well, it seems that is the next trick, and the first trick at the same time. Having a sense of being, life, which brings our mind into a one focused-pointed situation. When you finally sit, meditating, you actually do sit, properly. There's no question about that. Even though you are maybe miles away from your cushion, but still you sit. And strangely you can keep both contacts -- being a hundred miles away from your home, and you're sitting on your meditation cushion-- some communication's been kept, still. You might call it a kind of schizophreniac level of communication that's taking place. Being aware of the irritations of your body and being aware of your thoughts. There is a sense of life involved; some sort of reality; some sort of magic, if you'd like to put it that way; a sense of some kind of force that is taking place: that you are actually there. It doesn't matter whether you have an enormous pornographic show in your mind or you're watching a battlefield in your mind or you're having a delicious meal with your parents. You're still sitting on your meditation cushion. There is some connection; some sanity is taking place, actually. The physical tokenism of sitting on the cushion actually is more than tokenism: it's a commitment; it has life on its own, it has some kind of truth and honesty and genuineness involved. That seems to be the basic point of the idea of livelihood, the aspect of the second foundation of mindfulness practice.

Questions are welcome. The gentleman in the hat.

Q: Rinpoche, would you say that the general chaos and insanity we have in this country promotes the possibility of us actually finding our own sanity.

CTR. I think that's what brought you here. And further sanity? Let's see what happens.

Q: I don't know if I have a question, exactly.

CTR: Thank you.

Q: Pardon?

CTR: Somebody else might have a question.

Q: I was looking over what I wrote here, and I was confused with your description of pain being connected to death and then I have panic and sickness connected to life. Could you talk some more about that?

CTR: Well, I think actually they're saying the same thing. Pain…When you say, "I'm sick," that is how you die. First you have to get sick, then you die. So there is always automatically panic, or warning, or sense of unpleasantness. Your friends will say, "Oh, poor old thing. You feel bad, let me take care of you," or some level of that area. You've been told that as if you're dying. Even if you have a splinter in your thumb -- that's terrible and somebody rushes and pulls it out with tweezers, trying to save you from death. That is usually the case: any chaos that comes up in our life is an expression of that you are approaching death, and someone is trying to save you from that. That is the problem. Or the promise or the reminder, actually of how life is felt. That seems to be the point. From that point, experiencing chaos in your life, panic or whatever, is also a reminder of life at the same time. Death cannot be experienced unless you experience life. Life can be experienced because of the intensity of demand toward death. In the sitting practice of meditation, when you feel an ache in you legs, your knees, your back and so forth is not very good: you're about to die, relatively speaking. It's an approach toward death: you're sick somewhat with the pain. That brings another struggle that you try to live, you try to meditate, try to live at the same time takes place. So a sympathetic interchange takes place with the pain and pleasure from that point of view. Do you understand?

Q: Well the problem I see is once the chaos begins, the possibility of stepping back from it is so difficult. In other words, you're saying, "experience the pain…"

CTR: Well, you don't have to step back, particularly. Just try to look at the situation that you feel pain. When you feel pain, that pain doesn't kill you on the spot. You don't find yourself dropping dead on the spot. There's something trying to take you over, trying to survive. That's the life force. You are not all that delicate. You are in fact somewhat tough and you have a force of life. The obstacles provide force of death. And try to fight between the two constantly happening. A lot of vigor takes place when you feel slightly irritated and painful. Like if your legs hurt when you sit and meditate, a lot of vigor takes place, trying to compensate that pain with something beyond; trying to live at the same time. So there's a lot of struggle and sense of being interested, being living.

Q: Thanks.

Q: When you use the word "livelihood", in my reading in Buddhism before, I've come

across the term "right livelihood" as one of the principles of Buddha. I had always interpreted that to mean that you should be following a profession or a right line of work. But does that principle also include within it the sense of life you've been describing tonight?

CTR: Well, were talking about livelihood in a different way. This is the sitting practice meditational thing. The eightfold Noble Path talks about right livelihood, which is having the right kind of occupation of life. Not being aggressive and destructive to other sentient beings, and being kind and so forth. In this case, we are talking in terms that your livelihood is your practice. This is a special kind of livelihood, a special kind of life, realization of life – that you could feel a sense of vigor and energy that takes place in the process of the practice of meditation. You are actually, in some sense, you could say quite safely, fighting death; fighting aggression.

Q: Rinpoche, in my sitting practice, I attempt to have a certain sense of following my breath, but I got the impression tonight from what you were saying that that didn't really matter. That all that was important was just to sit, just to be on the cushion. Whether your thoughts were anywhere else or with your breath, or with anything didn't seem to matter.

CTR: I think we're saying the same thing, actually. It is necessary to relate with the breath because that accentuates the whole thing of being on the meditation cushion, sitting at the same time. Because breathing is also a symbol of being alive. If you stop your breathing, you're dead. So there's a sense of experiencing life, which goes on, constantly takes place.

Q: Because I feel that sometimes when I've…maybe it comes not necessarily in a judgmental sense like "this was a good sitting" or "this was a bad sitting," but I feel like sometimes, I hear the gong and then I hear the gong again, but I didn't sit. I was there, in that room, but I didn't…

CTR: That precisely the point where you do need the discipline of the breathing. Then you begin to feel that you are actually breathing. And then you begin to feel the aches in your body; you are actually alive and you are struggling; being alive and struggling; struggling; life, etc.

Q: I'm confused about what you were just saying: that whatever you are doing, wherever, if you sit, there's some connection. A force. Is that like, if you're into sitting, then in a sense you're always in that same kind of sitting awareness, like you said, whether you're eating with your parents or this, that or the other thing. Is that it?

CTR: I think that's the case, actually. If you sit, actually if you sit, you are making yourself connections with the world and yourself. That also brings understanding to post-meditation experience as well. That you sat, that mindfulness comes back to you that you sat, constantly.

Q: You've used the term "sitting properly", and I wondered what you would see as sitting improperly.

CTR: Basically, simply, sitting improperly (gestures?) I think your guess is a good as mine, actually. We don't have to define particular logical rules and regulations. If you're not there, you're not sitting. Sometimes you can sit properly even if you're not there. You still sit properly.

Good luck, sir.

Q: Could you say something about the post-meditative experience after sitting a dathün? It seems to be some sort of very disoriented depression of some sort -- a very haunting emptiness, which I find hard to deal with.

CTR: Well that's the challenge, actually. The dathün situation provided enormous security. It has a program and meals were served at a certain particular time. You know more or less basically exactly what's going to happen. There is regularity of all kinds of things that took place. But then you broke the shell of your egg and suddenly a little chick comes out of that, who's been sitting for dathün and has to handle the rest of the world. I don't think there's any particular prescribed ex-dathün people to relate with reality. I think anything that you can do is trying to experience the world. Dathün means one-month long meditation, which you can reduce into a minute-long meditation; a fraction of a second-long meditation that could relate with the rest of the world. So that you have mini-dathüns taking place for the rest of your life – every second; every fraction of a second.

I think it's a question of how brave you are. One has to be brave. That's one of the problems that we face: once you are raised in a highly disciplined circle of organization, monastic discipline…when you step out of it, you feel that your skin has been torn off. You don't even have skin that [iron?] your clothes. You feel completely threatened by the world. That seems to be one of the problems. But I think you can handle it, as much as you've been handling your own neurosis journey dathün.

Good luck, sir.

Francis.

Q: Rinpoche, I'm a novice at meditation and even Buddhism. I'm going to have to go back to my family soon and they will ask me, "What did you learn in this seminar?" I'd just like you to say in a few words where should I begin an explanation of this experience here.

CTR: Well I think we have to be quite clear at this point whether you're going to…your question is concerned with what you're going to tell your family, or what you're going to do yourself. As far as what you're going to do to yourself…(laughs) whatever…in terms of this practice, you're going to be present. You're going to experience life as it is rather than expectations with your past and desires for the future. But your going to relate with your life in the fullest sense as it is.

I think that one of the problems that exists with our society is so much speed. So much evaluation is taking place. So you can say that you have learned -- if you talk with your family -- you can say that you have learned to be slower. Slow down your speed and

appreciate your family. Appreciate your wife's cooking, food, appreciate your kids if you have kids. And appreciate your job. And that seems to be the point. I hope you live up to it; actually, what you say to them is not the point.

Usually what happens is, we have so many things to do in life, we jump back and forth. We don't experience anything at all except our computer machine, our typewriter. That has been the problem, constantly. So the question here is to experience everything in it's own court. When you drink hot tea it burns your lips, your tongue. That's reality. That's a lesson in how to drink tea. Everything is very literal and very direct and very personal. Extremely personal and direct and very simple and, in fact, somewhat demanding. But I think that's necessary.

Gentleman at the wall.

Q: What impressed me so much about your talk about your scene on the porch was the power of Earth. And the way I see it now, in light of what you said tonight, is that even the Buddha and certainly the bodhisattvas, and probably all the mahasiddhas are second in power to the power of Earth. So the powers they have… and I for the longest time, thought that that the Buddha could stop the world, or the bodhisattvas could be impervious to the rules of Earth. And now I seem to believe, from what you said, that their powers relate only to relating to the challenges that Earth throws at them. They are second to Earth.

CTR: There's something in that.

Q: Good. That's a great load off my mind.

CTR: Good luck, sir.

Q: When you talked about checking back while you're sitting, I assume you mean checking back experiences, things you've gone through or things that have happened to you in your daily life. No?

CTR: No, checking in the sense of just checking, without any purpose. Just check -- don't cut out the rest of it. It's a kind of jerk, a constant jerk. That's it. Once you start to check back and evaluate the whole thing, the whole thing becomes extremely messy. The whole thing, checking back, is a sort of leak in your pipe. So checking in this case is just look, look, look. That's it.

Q: Thanks.

CTR: Maybe we have to close at this point, I'm sorry to say. Tomorrow as I understand it correctly, if that's the case, we're having a nyinthun tomorrow. Right? I would like to request everybody to take part in this, because the nyinthun is a highlight of our seminar, actually. In which you can experience what we've been talking about. Hopefully, the nyinthun is placed in the middle of the seminar that you're attending so that further questions might arise from it, further discussions might arise from it and can be worked on, can be related with. This is very important. Also we would like to, for the sake of our American karma is concerned, that we don't want to put too much

unnecessary speed and energy without slowing down halfway through. Nyinthun seemed to be the best way to slow down and provide you with a whole day just purely to yourselves, completely to yourselves. This land is yours, you can sit here and you can expand yourself. The 375 acres of land that we have is yours. And in fact you can expand: this continent is ours.

And it is necessary discipline, actually, very important. A lot of things that we discuss are not covered by descriptions or talks, but can only be covered by experience. That seems to be a very important point, for you to realize that. I personally feel guilty or bad that somebody came up to the seminar and heard lots of talks and attended a lot of discussions and asked a lot of questions, without attending nyinthun, they've gone back home. They collected maybe a lot of gems, but gems wrapped up in garbage. There's no purification that took place. That's where we stand at this point. So I'd like to highly encourage and would like to push you at this point. If you could take part in what we'll be doing tomorrow it will be extremely beneficial, endlessly beneficial, without benefit. Thank you.

Talk 4
August 22, 1974

CTR: …Some questions about effort. Generally the question is…there is an emphasis on spontaneity and also emphasis on discipline at the same time. Often seemingly there's a contradiction between the two. The notion of spontaneity in this case is a question of directness and a question of fearlessness. The idea of being with the first thought seems to be the main point. Spontaneity is not particularly regarded as an abrupt thing or a sudden thing particularly. Spontaneity is a continual situation. There is freshness that takes place in every moment—all one's life experience or in the sitting practice of meditation, whatever -- some sense of delight in the situation; some sense of less concern with accuracy and being precise; a sense of clear seeing. The notion of spontaneity is also connected with that which doesn't bring tension to one's system, physically or psychologically.

Actual tension, irritation is based on a sense of [being] unable to be spontaneous. There are two conflicting energies fighting with each other --the energy of wanting to let go and the energy of wanting to hold still. Spontaneity, at this point, [it] could be said, is the essence of sense of humor, the essence of joy; delightful. Almost this has the element of naiveté in some sense. Spontaneity could be said to be the opener of the doors to freedom. At the same time, a true spontaneous approach can't take place unless there is at the same time a sense of discipline; they go together, constantly. Whenever there is a sense of joy, a sense of humor, the joy comes from being there properly, fully. Humor comes from being there fully. Even spontaneity itself is possible because you are there to experience the experience of spontaneity. And being there is also discipline at the same time. What we're discussing about is not actually the sitting practice of meditation alone, but we are talking in terms of a general life situation that is experienced throughout the day, throughout your life. Discipline is different from effort, but at the same time, discipline means exertion. The notion of effort is like dealing with a bureaucracy – one has to go through all kinds of channels, application forms, and all kinds of things until you get what you want. Effort is that you have to crank up your body, crank up your mind and finally you try to aim it at your particular goal. It's very loose and at the same time it is very clumsy, but there are possibilities of developing exertion, which is much more direct.

When you feel unresourceful, depressed, or you feel as if you're at the top of the world, there is a sense of indulgency that takes place. And after a sense of indulgency you can't go on – you are still being entertained either by a pleasurable or a painful situation, whatever it may be. So the question is very direct: exertion is kind of bringing yourself back to square one, to the "first thought" level. A sense of solidness begins to take place in the positive sense. But you might say, "This is very well, but how do I begin?" And there is a different perspective on how we begin the whole thing: right at the beginning we don't begin "properly". We begin as what we are, which is to say, maybe in a distorted way, a confused way. You have no idea of how to actually begin properly, but you begin somehow or other: one just does it. People often are bothered by this haphazard way of beginning and look for perfection of some kind. But somehow, if you look for perfection, there's no such thing at the time, on the spot. One has to start with the confusion and imperfection, which is absolutely necessary; definitely necessary.

And again, there is a sense of spontaneity with starting with the clumsiness, as if one is playing games with oneself, making a fool of oneself at the beginning. Let us be fools; let us do it. And that is also spontaneity, in fact. The sense of a primitive way of beginning -- sitting practice or awareness practice in an everyday-life situation -- is the first glimpse of spontaneity, which comes with a sense of exertion at the same time. One has to continue; one has to commit oneself to what we are doing. The question of discipline always comes along with having begun something. One has begun already and then let us keep walking. The idea of egolessness and the idea of spiritual attainment – all those questions are, in fact, a nuisance in the beginning. The more one has higher goals, metaphysical ideas, that much [more] self-conscious we become. We can't even be a fool, which is absolutely disastrous. We are stuck halfway through, not being a wise person, and not being a fool; constantly constipated.

The question of exertion is an interesting point. In Sanskrit the word is *virya,* which literally means "hard-working." Or another word: "becoming acquaintance to working hard; becoming accustomed to working hard." There is a suggestion of some kind of routine that takes place all the time. Whenever there is the very high, thick doorstep in front of you, should you climb over it, or should you try to avoid it? There's always that thing to climb over, there's all kinds of possibilities to try to avoid. Maybe sometimes we'd rather [pay?] a hole through the wall rather than cross the doorway, but it is necessary to step over the doorstep and conduct oneself properly, so to speak.

In the life situation, often things are not particularly consciously involved with spiritual questions, but questions of life: communication, sense of honesty and a sense of skillfulness. A sense of demand of all kinds takes place in one's life. And there is a succession of seemingly dead ends. The thick walls begin to approach us and we can't go any longer beyond that. There is a constant challenge that takes place. At some point we become so accustomed to such challenges constantly happening. There are all kinds of irritations that take place every minute of our life -- sometimes even pleasurable situations become irritable. So there are constant reminders that blockage takes place all the time. When a person is willing to make acquaintance with that blockage that is exertion. Not so much to the fact that you should try to make things smooth -- try to create less blockage, or try to create a better situation, or any of those -- but simply just become acquainted with those blockages; problems after problems that come up. That is what's called a path, in fact.

Treading (?) on the path is taking a trip round obstacles after obstacles. The path is made out of obstacles, otherwise, there's no path -- it becomes a free ride. So it's important to think in terms of exertion, at this point, which is related to the third foundation of mindfulness, which is effort. In fact, one doesn't put that much effort; one [should] just be open. The reference point comes to you; so in other words effort comes to you. You acknowledge the effort and go with it, rather than that we should work out and crank up our gearshift, whatever.

The question of exertion is extremely important connected with mindfulness of effort. There is the primitive notion of overcoming obstacles and there is also the sophisticated notion of regarding obstacles as the path at the same time. Both those polarities take place at the same time; constantly works together. The question of nourishment,

feedback, seems to be meaningless, because there is constant feedback of the nature of struggle, rather than that you should be fed by healthy, good food particularly. So the question of right effort brings the definite notion that there is path, and one doesn't have to check with one's guru, or whatever, every ten seconds. But there is, actually, some experience taking place on your path. There is pattern; there is texture of the path. The style of energy begins to flow by itself. So there is constant, so to speak, feedbacks taking place. Unless one wants to be nursed by some parental figure very badly, everything is very obvious.

So from that point of view, this four foundations of mindfulness practice is designed [for] people who practice meditation in remote areas, in fact, where there is the least contact with the teacher, and maybe the least contact with fellow members of the sangha. And it is somewhat aimed at those people who are involved with maybe domestic life, economic pressure. So it is applicable, because there is constant things happening. Working in the factory, putting together nuts and bolts, or being a college professor. All the realms of occupations that might exist in the world are always applicable, because such teaching of meditation at this point is geared for lonely people --which doesn't mean to say that some are not lonely: everybody is lonely people. As soon as you cut your umbilical cord, you are lonely; you dissociate yourself from your mother and father. You begin to grow up into a lonely person. The more poetic way of saying it is "aloneness", I suppose, but actually it's saying the same thing. It is interesting that somebody thought…that somebody was kind to such lonely people, and decided to work on that particular project and came up with such ideas as practicing meditation. It's very kind and remarkable. And that's maybe what's called compassion.

It is necessary to realize those areas of exertion, areas of loneliness, areas of discipline, which brings the question of mindfulness of effort. In the sense of aloneness, loneliness, in the sense of need for exertion which could be a source of an enormous romantic trip – the yearning toward some kind of monasticism. But at the same time it could be a very real one, because it is connected with everyday-life situation at the same time.

Well, we could have a discussion.

Q: What you just said about…the last two things you just said about this discipline, about not relying on being able to check back with the guru every ten seconds or minutes, or whatever it was, and also the possibility of going two different ways. What you just said, getting into a sort of…well I'm not sure I remember what you just said – maybe it's my interpretation – but when you were talking about not checking back with the guru every ten seconds, was that to say that when you ask a question, and there is a…and you are somewhat aware of there being an answer also there, that you should, rather than check back with the guru, you should be willing to stick your neck way out, somewhat on your own impetus?

CTR: Well, you see, one does that anyway, all the time. One does stick one's neck out in any case. One pretends to be not doing it when you find such safe, reliable security such as a guru, or solid parents. You can communicate with them; you put your neck down and you pretend to be very helpless and wretched. But as soon as you're out of their sight, you usually stick your neck out anyway. So the question is, at this point, to

make this known to everybody, including your guru, that you are working on yourself in any case. So to speak, make it equal (?).

Q: Which is checking back with him?

CTR: No, I think there is a situation there already. The answers that might come to you through your guru might be the same that you experienced. There is fluctuations of life; the situation is always there; experience is always there. And one begins to find that there is some pattern. And instead of your mind is preoccupied with asking somebody else how this is all about, you might stick with that and just work with it. The only purpose of the teacher seems to be is that he will push you back to square one.

Good luck, sir.

Q: I feel somewhat confused about being spontaneous and feeling somewhat impulsive and indulgent. Could you talk a little about that?

CTR: I could play back our tape.

I think the question is very simple, actually, not all that complicated. Impulse and frivolity is based on hard-working, some kind of gimmick, trying to shield off the sore points. Spontaneity, real spontaneity is based on – everything's out in the open, there's nothing to play games with anything. Just work with what is there, very simply and directly. And what was the other one?

Q: That was it.

CTR: That's it, yeah.

Q: You talked this evening about exertion, the need for exertion, and I think I understand that. But in other places you've talked about letting go and letting be, and at this point both in meditation practice and in other facets of our discipline I still sense somewhat of a…that those are different, that there is some kind of difference between exertion and letting be or letting go. Could you speak something about that?

CTR: Well, strangely enough, in this case exertion is letting go and letting be at the same time. There is a very strange twist in the logic. I don't know how many lawyers would buy this. But the truth of the matter is, however that the notion of exertion is the outcome of leap, and openness and let be. You can't be "be" unless you let go. And you can't let go unless you push yourself, which is exertion. So it's saying the same thing, that when you actually be, spontaneously there -- open, let go and free -- that freedom is not so much abandoning the hustle and bustle problems alone. That could be boredom. If you just abandon everything you have, the complications of life, and think that is salvation, that is kind of blank; flat, whereas the actual notion of freedom here is to step into freedom, which is a push. One has to push oneself. Whenever there is doubt, a question of blockage, which I discussed earlier on, then one has to push oneself, which is exertion, which is also letting go at the same time.

Q: Somehow in there…I guess my experience of exertion relates somehow to

aggression, and that seems to present a problem.

CTR: Well, we have a problem with the language actually, in this case. We have to think in entirely different ways. It's a Buddhist way using the word "exertion," which is a translation of *virya*, which doesn't mean aggression; which means working hard. Which doesn't mean competitiveness or goal-oriented toward a particular thing. I think that's one of the problems that we might face in using a word. Words are pure at the beginning; they make their sense right at the beginning. But then they're abused so much, and finally we don't have any resources – like Transcendental Meditation is nowadays called just purely TM, just by its initials, and it doesn't mean particularly much to people. A situation like that developed…

But there's no aggression where virya is concerned. You see aggression obviously means to fight against something and to get what you want without paying the cost. In this case, the push is you're not getting anything out of it, except you find yourself leapt and floating and being freed. But you can't even hold onto that: you can't freeze yourself in midair. You can try it.

Q: Thank you.

Q: On the idea of exertion as you were just talking about it, in terms of practice, would that imply more of exertion in terms of discipline in setting up an attitude towards our practice, and a ground, a basis for our practice instead of while we're sitting to sort of squeeze and push hard, rather than just being there when we're sitting.

CTR: Well, I think that everything that we've talked about in terms of meditation practice is on the level of attitude. Actually, that's the basic assumption. Moreover, in this case, it's not so much to deliberately push oneself, in the same level as if you've been Rolfed. But it's attitude that there's a leap; it's available. There's potentialities of that. Not only that but actually it comes close to you, and you can let go with a certain amount of exertion.

Q: Could I ask one other thing? When you were talking last time about the token of physical sitting, it reminded me of the story that you told about the monkey who imitated a yogi who was sitting. The monkey would sit like he did for years and years. And the day the yogi got enlightened, the monkey got enlightened. I was wondering if you could explain a little better about how our "imitation meditation" works.

CTR: I think you said it.

Q: I didn't say anything!

CTR: If you insist.

Q: You're welcome.

Q: In one of the seminary tapes, you used the word "leap" and you used it again tonight, and I don't understand…

CTR: I beg your pardon

Q: You used the word "leap"

CTR: "Leap?"

Q: Yeah, and I don't understand what you mean by that.

CTR. Well, that's leap [gesturing?]. Let go and you find yourself walking, and then you find that there's no ground to walk and you find yourself [on an] enormous cliff. You've lost your ground. The only way to do is just to go along with it. And that happens in your life. I wouldn't suggest that you do it literally. Metaphorically or psychologically speaking.

Q: Rinpoche, in regard to meditation practice is the loneliness that you speak of an attitude that we cultivate or a given fact of the situation?

CTR: Both. It's both. Actually, much more on to the given situation. Sometimes, if you take that attitude, it could be a source of security: you find you can keep company with your loneliness.

Q: Thanks

CTR: Glasses.

Q: Would you say more about the element of naiveté involved in spontaneity?

CTR: Well I think that's purely a question of … [for] some strange reason [a] mixture of naiveté and pride. You can be successful in conning yourself constantly. Actually, you being able to achieve the achievement of the whole thing. You develop your own version of a kind of special trade, a successful business in which you can be snobbish and resourceful; one-upmanship. And at the same time you can let go. That's the kind of situation that happen. The naiveté is usually, basically speaking, except [in the case of an] underdeveloped child, most of the people, at the adult level, anyway, they're not really naïve. Nobody is actually naïve at all. They play the game of being naïve, because they know that they're getting out of it. They could get into it very easily. Even if they made a mistake, they could be pardoned --dishonorable discharge, honorable discharge, whatever.

Q: It's like playing like you're ignorant, then?

CTR: Well, with a certain sense of intelligence, obviously.

Q: Yeah. Thank you.

CTR: You're welcome.

Q: Could you say something about the idea of spontaneity in relation to the creative process?

CTR: Well, I think if you list them down, if you named, one after the other, the possibilities of it, then it ceases to become creative. So, in order to be creative and spontaneous, you have to experience it, you have to do it; otherwise you kill the whole thing. It's up to you.

Q: I'm thinking about the statement that you made about dharma art: the idea of non-aggression and that relationship to spontaneity.

CTR: Yeah, well, it's non-aggression. Simply what you experience is not particularly connected with pull and push area, give and take. But it is an expression of what you are, what you have. And consequently, by strange coincidence, the product of your work becomes a masterpiece.

Q: How does that relate, in terms of art, to the idea of doing something to make a statement about something? Is there spontaneity involved in that process?

CTR: Make a statement about something?

Q: To create a piece of artwork, for instance, to make a statement about something.

CTR: Such as?

Q: A preconceived notion of wanting to make a statement about something rather than having it just be a spontaneous, meditative kind of experience.

CTR: Well, all the works of art that so far we know are inherited from generations and generations in the past. We can't produce fresh art any longer. Most works of art are the product of some tradition or culture of something or other already. We cannot create a fresh thing. But it's not so much that, in terms of product, but it's the attitude at the time. Like the brush strokes of the Zen school of art is already an established tradition. Thankga painting is already an established tradition. And even, from that point of view, the abstract art of the modern school also has its concepts already established. So if you begin to fight back, and yourself emerge from those established situations, and make yourself unique, it is not possible at all. You have nothing left. People try it in all kinds of ways; all kinds of strange artwork is being presented. But still, it remains in the realm of the same kind of expressive art that is connected with a tradition of some kind. So I think if you are trying to escape from the means or the mediums that are being presented, there's no way out. Were stuck with it in any case. But it's the attitude behind the whole thing which could be spontaneous and direct.

Mainly, the person should be trained as an artist by a very orthodox and enlightened teacher. That person should be trained in a very conservative way. That goes with meditation, art, music, anything. [One] should be trained in a very strict discipline in the beginning. And then, when you begin to feel that you can afford to open yourself, and you can express yourself, I think the spontaneity exists in that particular context. The basic point of spontaneity is possible because exertion is possible, discipline is possible, therefore spontaneity is possible at the same time. That's the basic point.

Q: Thank you

Q: Rinpoche, when you talk about the blockage that you experience during meditation, during the dathün, I had the experience of physical blockages in my body. I feel a sort of clogged up feeling in various parts of my body. I was wondering whether this was a manifestation of something you were talking about, and whether you can do something physically -- I especially got it in the chest area -- whether there's a physical thing you can do rather than just sitting there, meditating.

CTR: Do what?

Q: I don't know.

CTR: What are you trying to find out?

Q: Well, instead of just sitting there practicing following the breath, is there anything else one could do to deal with the physical blockage?

CTR: The idea of physical blockages is also, as we mentioned before, part of the textures of the path. That's it. That is your path. Try to follow the path rather than destroy the path. If you want to have a path to follow, you've got to have those. But those are not particularly regarded as bad or good or anything particularly. This is not particularly regarded as masochistic at all. Those things are necessary. Those particular blockages and problems bring you down to the earth level. You actually feel that you are actually there, rather than drifting amongst clouds.

Q: Thank you.

CTR: You're welcome.

Q: Two questions: Spontaneity seems very seductive sometimes. For instance, experiencing a sense of spontaneity, and joy, and delight -- somehow it seems to lead into a kind of frivolous energy. Then all of a sudden you realize the spontaneity is gone. How does the discipline work? Is it just a matter of seeing that happening all the time?

CTR: Well, discipline works right at the beginning, rather than discipline is trying to catch [up] with the spontaneity afterwards. So spontaneity <u>is</u> discipline at the beginning. Spontaneity has a sharp eye; clear-seeing is discipline already. That seems to be the basic point. When you feel that there is delightfulness, there is a sense of resourcefulness, a sense of openness involved, those things can occur because you are being disciplined. Otherwise, you couldn't actually relate with them. It would be like something gliding off your hand: you can't actually catch them. So in order to feel true appreciation of the spontaneity, one has to have discipline at the same time. Discipline in this sense is not necessarily holding down, slowing down in any case, but actually making the connections with what's going on there. So it's a question of connection at this point.

Q: But when it starts to feel like that frivolous energy is happening and spontaneity is

lost…

CTR: No, not quite. When you begin to feel that the frivolous energy begins to take place, you have both the possibilities of tuning into discipline as well as spontaneity, even then. So there is lots of room for it.

Q: The second question is something that came during the discussion group today. For me, at least, it seems that the whole path is permeated by a sense of ignorance; the only reason we practice is that we feel ignorant. That isn't really the case is it? I've heard you talk about the fact that the only thing we're going to finally realize is that there is nothing to realize, or that there is no ignorance and therefore no enlightenment, etc. My question in: how does that relate to effort and energy? It seems to be binding; it seems to be very painful for myself, and I feel it around me, irritating…Oh, never mind.

CTR: Well, I think, actually, what you said is well said. The question of ignorance being path, or path exists because of ignorance is precisely the case. You don't make a journey … if we want to get from here to Boulder, we take the journey to Boulder because we're not in Boulder. Otherwise, we don't make the journey: it's redundant. So because you're not there, therefore you're doing it. Because you have no idea what happens once you get there. Obviously that's the pattern, that's the obstacles, that's the blockages we've been talking about. But I don't think there's any problem with that: one has to relate with that as also being… you begin to see a certain aspect of the dharma, that you're maybe seeing vaguely, maybe seeing slightly clearly, maybe seeing more clearly, maybe seeing further clearly. But still, you're seeing it, so you can look both ways: that you're being ignorant, [but] at the same time you're intelligent because you're ignorant.

Q: Can you say something about dealing with areas of personal weakness? If you perceive in yourself a weakness with the way you have of relating with some energy or something, how do you relate to that?

CTR: Well, that's also blockage. You feel that the "weakness" seems to be a very polite way of putting a "loss of resourcefulness" -- not having enough energy, you have no reserves anymore. I think that's also the structure of the path: there is a sense of that you've run out of your gasoline; you can't drive anymore. There's a sense of being confused. But I think you don't actually deal with being weak, but at the same time you're being weak. You just do it; you just be with it; you just be weak. And then once you begin being weak, then you begin to generate energy because you're being weak. In order to be weak, you also need energy to be weak. Otherwise, you can't exist. You begin to appreciate that something is happening; which is a reminder and actually that it takes place. It takes place in the room or place, whatever. It begins to happen. There is a situation to be; to exist – because you're weak, which is very energetic.

Q: If you see a weakness and you decide—you don't decide; there's no space to decide, you just go into it – then what's the difference between… how do you know when you're just being foolish and when you're actually doing something?

CTR: One doesn't, but one has to do it. Because you are up to your own resource in any case.

Q: So you're advocating going into it, rather than…?

CTR: Yeah.

Q: OK

CTR: Good luck.

Q: Does what you said about leaping have anything to do with the quality of dakinis, or that energy?

CTR: Well, not particularly. I think what we're talking about is on the beginner's level, and has nothing to do with dakinis or a parachute, particularly.

Q: It seems like, taking a leap or leaping has to do with recognition of space or openness.

CTR: Yeah, sure. Obviously. But we don't give it a name, particularly. We just do it.

Well maybe we should close ourselves. The further reference point to the fundraising pitch has been done, and I would like to say something about it. What happened so far with our development in our community – our scene, so to speak – generally is concerned, is that there is a lot of energy and people being able to practice more and work together. The growth of community has been enormously energetic, and practical and at the same time honest and non-spiritually materialistic. And such achievement has come to a situation. But in order to continue to proceed beyond this level is not so much that particularly that tomorrow morning you come up with a fat check as such.

But I think the question of what we are involved in is anyone who takes part in here would care to take the attitude of "there is need for help of some kind." That's the kind of question that we plant in your subconscious mind [so] that you'll be haunted. And some kind of attitude is that taking it personally rather than thinking in terms that the administrators might make a goof. Therefore, there's not money; they mismanage it so therefore there's a problem. Or maybe they can go bye (?), they have done good work already, they've survived already. Why can't they do so in the future? Which is a kind of impersonal attitude, and at the same time taking advantage of the facilities with that kind of attitude is not very fair, and it doesn't seem to be a particularly kind attitude.

So the question is sort of taking it very personally: you are here; I am here; everybody's here. We are sharing this earth, and particularly this particular patch of earth that we are sharing together, specifically which is much more so than the usual sharing the earth. You could come back and you could work with us. You could be here; and I could be here; we all could be here. This is a possibility of trying to recreate the sort of solid situation that we've been able to work and particularly in the area of the practice of meditation. This land has provided for that. So it's a question of taking some kind of attitude of personal interest, which we need very much. But rather than just purely, as I said, coming up with the money on the spot, but we can't relax too much in the situation at this point. We do need urgent help; but even then, let us not make that into

a purely urgent situation alone. But as land payment grows larger and larger every year. You have the knowledge this year, so if you could help us in the future reference of next year or the year after, whatever. Keep that in your mind. It's a very personal thing rather than purely organizational bureaucracy. So keep that in mind. Think about it and maybe dream about it.

Thank you.

Talk 5
August 23, 1974

CTR: Mindfulness of mind is the fourth category of the four foundations of mindfulness. The question of mind is, in this case, both experiential as well as intuitive; experiential in the sense that it has the qualities of reflecting all kinds of emotions; intuitive because there's also possibilities of experiencing a glimpse of clarity at the same time. Such a glimpse of clarity can't be regarded as particularly insightful -- it is just the basic makeup. That seems to be generally how we operate ourselves in our life situations. The awareness practice that's connected with this particular mind is confusing in some sense. Whether you relate with the emotional aspect or intuitive aspect, the aspect of emotional upsurge, or the aspect of momentary clarity…that seems to be one of the sources of restlessness that occurs in the practice of meditation, basically. We are unable to decide, unable to rest or live with which one to be with. The emotional aspect is quite provocative and often entertaining; securing. And the clarity aspect is often refreshing, and a sense of relief occurs at the same time. So there is a conflict between those two, which is actually the basis of the restlessness that occurs in the sitting practice of meditation.

In order to apply the fourth foundation of mindfulness, it does seem to be necessary for us to be clear. So the student doesn't particularly decide on either of those two situations, and try to decide on either of those purely random[ly] or maybe [via] logical conclusions. But at the same time, the student should be able to relate with both those situations. The sense of relief and the changing of the reference point takes place; changing of gearshift, so to speak, takes place from one mood to another mood. There's occasional clarity [that] takes place between one mood to another mood. But at the same time, there is also enormous demand in terms of emotions. Particularly in sitting practice, it comes in the form of memories, habitual thought patterns, fantasies, expectations of the future. And the question is generally asked whether we should try to pull back on those preoccupations and try to be a good boy -- clean, pure. Or else, sometimes boredom demands that one might as well get into these little entertainments. There's a short relief of tension; one can get into fantasies of this and that, memories of this and that. [One] feels hypnotized, so therefore, you could kill time. And maybe ten minutes [are] gone; five minutes gone; three minutes gone. And a sense of relief and a sense of guilt takes place at the same time.

The mindfulness of mind, in this case, is largely focusing on those two types of situations: the clarity and emotional cloudiness. So a person could start on, [to] take an example, the confusion and emotional cloudiness. And that is…often hesitating. There is uncertainty whether the student should come back to the breathing awareness practice or whether the student should remain exploring or finding out the emotional cloudiness. So the mindfulness of mind technique offers this particular approach, which is being with whatever happens. The movement of breath and pulsation of body and fickleness of thoughts all takes place at the same time, simultaneously. Obviously, you don't stop breathing when you think. And one goes on constantly, and there is a larger notion of covering both areas – that of the breath and that of the thought patterns. Usually we're demanding ones, maybe.

The question of concentration usually means that we can't split our awareness' focal

point to more than one object. Whenever we talk in ordinary terms of concentration, we're talking in terms of paying attention to one thing at a time. But in this case of mindfulness of mind level, the awareness or concentration could develop panoramically. It's like shining a beam that becomes expanded as it is reflected off an object. There is the touch of the highlights of the emotions, touch of the highlights of the breath both being seen simultaneously. It becomes very much a mind activity at that point -- that it is why it is called the foundation of mindfulness of mind. The cognitive mind is actually functioning in its utter precision. You may hear sounds, you might see vision, sight of all kinds, you might have thought patterns of all kinds, but all of those are somewhat related. Therefore, there is a binding factor, which is the mind, and therefore whenever there is mind, there is the possibility of being aware of what's happening, rather than reducing your focus of concentration to one particular level alone.

With regard to the other subject, the gaps that happen, or the sense of clarity, is concerned that's also very simple. When the focus of mind begins to change to different themes (?), which involves personally you (which literally means emotions here -- it's something that involves you personally, therefore you make a big deal out of those) there's a gap that doesn't involve a big deal about you but just a change of shift like taking rest between the right and left legs, putting weight on each other; transferring weight on each other. When the shift takes place, there is also a kind of gap which is not particularly mystical or anything special: there is just a change of shift or a change of emphasis that takes place. And that gap also could be covered by the sense of presence of awareness. It's like sunlight reflecting on both the precipices of mountains as well as in the valleys simultaneously. So, such awareness probably can't be actually experienced as such and referred back to oneself by saying, "I'm being aware. I'm now being fully mindful." But there's a sense of being there that takes place; a sense of being takes place. A sense of touching takes place. One is experiencing a sense of touch on the level of emotions; one is experiencing a sense of touch on the level of gap; one is experiencing a sense of touch on the other side of the shore, the other shore as well. So there is an even distribution of mindfulness that takes place.

So this brings another question -- "What do we mean by mindful?" -- if you're not particularly talking in terms of fully committing yourself into that very moment. Mindful, at this point is that you are experiencing a sense of gentle touch all over the place, all your state of mind. It's like stroking a kitty-cat. You feel each hair as your finger moves down. There's some continuity as well as some individuality at the same time. The question is -- the object, so to speak, here -- is to be total, rather than to be selective. Of course, if you try to be selective, and try to find the famous mindfulness experience, and if you look harder, you begin to lose it – there's no such thing as really mindfulness at all, and the whole thing becomes illusion. You find yourself in an onionskin peeling off: you think that you're being mindful, but then you're watching yourself being mindful, and then you're watching yourself doing that, and then you're watching yourself doing that. There's a constant, constant, constant reflection back and forth, and finally one gets completely bewildered. So from that point of view one has to give up the idea of developing or cultivating true mindfulness as such, but just to accept what's going on, and make the best of it, so to speak. And leave the world undisturbed, rather than trying to disentangle too efficiently (?).

The question of mindfulness is, from that point of view, not at all demanding. It's not particularly hard work, but at the same time, it is extremely demanding. Because if you have something to put your effort and energy into to deal with the demand, you have an occupation; you feel better. But once you're suspended in the middle of nowhere, touching and experiencing, but not being there at the same time either, that's very dubious. The best experience that a person who takes the practice of mindfulness would feel is that [he] feels that there's more to go; more to develop. That you have done something completely [at the] half-hearted level, not fully, but you are there constantly at the same time.

So that seems to be the basic point. And that is connected with the notion of the definition of *Dharma*, which is "aggressionlessness." "Aggressionlessness" is the definition of Dharma; "without aggression." So meditation practice – particularly at the first level – is the true introduction to the Dharma, to actually experiencing Dharma, the living Dharma. And therefore it is regarded as non-aggression action. Whereas there could be a strong possibility that if we push ourselves to an enormous concentration level, and try to push ourselves and painfully exert ourselves more than necessary, then it becomes aggression at the same time.

And the reason why this gliding through the different landscapes of mind landscape [sic] is possible, and at the same time the person doesn't become wooly-minded is because there is a sense of actual experience takes place at each moment. In order to be dreamy, vague, one has to pay less attention to what's happening. In this case, because there is actual contact, actual touch, the touching of the surface of the mind actually takes place very gently, so therefore it is not particularly heavy dosage in the beginning but in the long run, as we go on as we continue our practice it becomes impressionable to our mind.

I suppose if talk too much of it, we would get more clouded. We could have a discussion.

Q: I get confused by sitting meditation and, say, doing some kind of activity. And I wonder what the difference is between sitting and being aware of your breathing – what goes on in the situation in a meditation hall – and working a job or doing some other work. In other words, what's the difference between sitting and being aware of your work?

CTR: Well, the question seems to be that, in sitting practice, there is continual awareness or continual mindfulness being developed throughout the whole thing. In the case of awareness that develops during post-meditation experiences, like work situations and such like, there is a sense of checking rather than trying to cover the whole area. That seems to be the suggestion of mindfulness in everyday life situations is not so much that you should watch yourself constantly. That tends to be at the schizophreniac level: you try to be aware and you try to accomplish the job at the same time. The idea there is the sense of [a] short spell of taking a look at yourself, which then brings the notion of spontaneity in your daily activities, and becomes accurate at the same time whatever you are doing. That seems to be the differences. It's a question of flashing your awareness while you are doing your job, and sitting practice is concentrated notion of that: you don't even flash, but you try to carry it out all the time.

Q: Rinpoche, I wanted to know if, as one practices longer, the quality of the mind changes. As one's neurosis lessens how the quality of the mind actually begins to differ. To me it would seem that there might be more gaps and less holding on to emotional kinds of thought patterns. And I wondered if the nature of the thought patterns changed.

CTR: Well, it seems that what actually happens is that when there is more gaps, there is, in the midst of the gap, there is more thought [that] comes. And then in the midst of that thought, there are gaps. That thought produces that gap produces more thoughts. So I think it's a question of constantly rediscovering oneself. You can't really…you have to stop sorting yourself out. And until one has come to the conclusion, or give[n] up hope, from that point of view, there is no such thing as "once when you become good at it, then things will be okay." There is no such thing at all. There is overlapping rediscovery of oneself; constantly rediscovering. There are so much things to know about oneself. One has not actually related with oneself in any way. So, finally this energy of thought becomes harmless, not irritable to oneself. Until that level, there's no situation that one can take rest, particularly.

Q: Thank you. There was one other question. When you talked about, "If we push ourselves we become aggressive," I sense that it's very difficult for me to know when I'm pushing myself that far. Are there any signposts to know that?

CTR: Well, I think that's a natural sort of organic thing. When you push yourself harder, you find that you've been pushed back. There is automatic rebounds and a reminder takes place.

Q: Okay. Thank you.

CTR: Over there.

Q: I get confused about the idea of half-heartedness and non-aggression. I get a feeling of almost a passivity or inactivity, and I'm wondering would it be non-aggressive if you were passionate without grasping. Where is the room for being passionately such-and-such or passionately this-or-that?

CTR: What are you trying to find out?

Q: I know! Well, you know, once you told me that the only thing that was continuous was conflict. That seemed to be an ongoing process. And I have thought that one conflict was the notion of teachings to understand and awareness to develop, and that can be very passionate; a real forcefulness to that or a desire with that. And then there's this kind of feeling I can get into of "mehhh…", you know? And those feel like passionate extremes which are in conflict. So where's nonaggression with all that stuff?

CTR: Well, the continuity of conflict in some sense contains non-aggression, because there's possibilities of looking at it from a meditation point of view, from an awareness point of view. You might find a very rugged desert with cactuses sticking up and thorns growing and everything, and harsh rocks and landscape. But still there is the

possibility of it all being very still if you look over it; if you glide over it. They're seemingly threatening but at the same time, they're very still; they're very earthy. So this is kind of difficult to actually look at too logically. But there is possibilities of how ups and downs one might experience. That in itself becomes the evenness at the same time. There is continually experiences involved, and continual journeys taking place. And somehow, fight somehow doesn't apply…fighting for it doesn't make sense.

Q: Or resistance?

CTR: Mm hmm. They are there, so therefore they are a symbol of peace. Not that they are so gentle and smooth, soft particularly. But somehow the texture doesn't make any differences. The existence of those things and how they exist seems to be more important than the texture of it. And that is precisely the meaning of awareness, of mindfulness: you learn how to do that; how to look at those. As from an existential point of view rather than trying to even them out, trying to landscape out completely, where the big boulders are. Try.

Black hat?

Q: Working with the notion of mindfulness of mind, panoramic view, breathing, let's say; working with some kind of fantasy; seeing it. What leads one into the fantasy in such a way that the invention of the airplane would result? In other words, how do you invent something? I mean, I assume the invention of the airplane is the result of some fantasy of flying.

CTR: Is there a problem?

Q: Well, I'm maybe picking up on the notion of being passive. A certain kind of passive…even the sitting. Maybe we shouldn't have airplanes, I don't know …

CTR: Too late.

That's an interesting mind. When we talk about the awareness being completely there, we're not particularly talking about passivity as such, necessarily. But we are talking in terms of being sensitized completely, which is called clarity. So, I think it's a question of some spontaneous clarity and sensitivity automatically tells you how to walk, how to eat, which happens with our childhood, how to pronounce words, breath. All those things are not deliberate educational process, you just pick [them] up as you are accustomed to be with yourself -- as you have sensitivity already developed. So it happens that way.

So, some people might invent airplanes, because someone feels that way. Rather than particularly you want to fly, or you have a fantasy about a bird, a fixation about a bird, particularly. But somebody has an idea of gliding, and feels right. And maybe trial and error for several generations, and somebody picks up that idea and finally here we are. I think it's more of a feeling than purely a sharp concern for desire, particularly. I think that's the fundamental scientific approach to discovering the phenomenal world. It's not so much that they want to calculate and find out facts and figures; but they want to feel the world -- like the Darwininan theory of how to feel shapes. And there are

suggestions taking place, constantly. There is a sense of feeling right.

I remember myself for the first time flying in an airplane from the Tibetan border to India. I thought it was going to be a sensational experience, like you finally enter into the inside of a bird and fly with a bird. To my disappointment, it was not anything like that at all. You just go into a cabin, a trailer, and that trailer takes off. It seemed to be okay -- very natural.

Q: Thank you.

Q: Rinpoche, do I understand correctly that the four foundations of mindfulness are all within śamatha practice?

CTR: Yes.

Q: Okay. Then I have two questions. The first is that I always interpreted śamatha practice to involve precision and sharpness -- a focused beam -- and you mentioned that mindfulness of mind is like an expanding beam, so that it seems to create an internal panorama, some kind of awareness of an internal panorama, rather than a precise zeroing in.

CTR: Well, I think the … we are not talking … [the] panoramic question at this point, [is] not so much like the level of vipaśyanā, but what we are discussing here is still in the level of sharpness, but a different kind of sharpness, a different concept of sharpness. The basic idea is being that you could develop precision simultaneously, at once, with a lot of other points. It's like looking at your toothbrush: you see all the points at once. And then you have the recognition, "This is a toothbrush." You don't have the actual, literal and gross awareness of seeing each hair on the toothbrush, whatever, but you have the sense of seeing them all together, completely.

And that's what's being discussed in the scriptures as the analysis of seeing the tail of a cow. When somebody looks at the tail of the cow, you are looking at the totality of all. You might just see a black object, but you are seeing each hair actually. Otherwise, you can't see a tail at all. So you are seeing every one hair separately, individually, therefore you have this black big object you're seeing it. So that's actually the analysis of śamatha: it's very direct and literal, but at the same time it could be a totality, it could be panoramic.

The vipaśyanā type of panoramic is much more associated with light and wind, air. And śamatha type of panorama is involved with precision and literal sense. There is divided levels of highlights simultaneously presenting, like you see, you hear, you feel but you could still develop precision at once, and that seems to be the basic point.

Q: So it's not a spacious panorama, then?

CTR: It's a question of awareness-of-the-highlights kind of panorama, rather than being spacious, being concerned with the atmosphere, particularly, but being aware of the objects.

Q: Okay, my second question is it seems that the emphasis of mindfulness…it seems like mindfulness involves primarily a kind of internal awareness, and I understood Buddhist meditation with the eyes open to be not focused or in any sense really internal, but somehow neither internal nor external. But mindfulness sounds very internal. Almost as if you could do it with your eyes closed just as well.

CTR: Well, it's the other way around as well at the same time. You have a mind; you have sense[s]. You still have ears and you could still feel the temperature of the air around your body. The question of mindfulness is in some sense a viewing of the sense perceptions as well as the cognitive mind. Both of them are seen as one lump sum. If you see a design in front of your meditation cushion on the rug, or grass growing in front of your zafu, you are seeing the grass and the design on the rug, but that is your mind at the same time. The whole world is made out of your mind. Rather than there is a mind and it is separate from the rug; separate from the plant; separate from the tent.

You see, it's…the whole thing is extremely personal. I prefer to call it "personal" rather than "phenomenological." Because when you talk about phenomenological, that has a lot of illusions about it. But if you talk about personal, that actually is your thing there: your version of the table; your version of the rug; your version of your pain; your version of your child crying; your version of your fly sitting on your nose. It's your mind doing all those things. But at the same time it is independent: fly is obviously fly; it's not just purely your mind, obviously. But it is your mind at the same time, otherwise you can't experience it. So that kind of dual situation takes place.

Maybe we should stop discussing too much of philosophy. But however, it is possible in developing awareness practice, that you can feel your mind being fly and fly being your mind. It doesn't matter which way it goes; it doesn't really matter at all. We don't have to sort out the world's problem on that point. We just try to be with the world, which is yours and mine as well at the same time. Mind and world are mixed together. And something happens there, which is very real to you because it is very personal to you. If you try to sort it out, it will be entirely difficult, impossible almost, in fact. Such a problem is only able to sort out, and able to clarify, and able to separate the different energy of the illusion outside and the illusion inside, is only on the tantric level. That magic is merged at once. But in the earliest training process, even if one is trying to attempt to separate which part of fly is your mind, which part of fly is actually fly sitting on your nose is not advisable even to explore that.

So the question is, keep sitting.

Q: In the beginning when you have the experiences of the touch, feeling, how does that come about? Some of that doesn't seem real, but you still feel touched.

CTR: How does that come?

Q: Yeah, how does the feeling come to you?

CTR: Well, you see, that 's particularly the point: it doesn't have to be particularly real. Maybe unreality is real and we have no way of checking that, particularly. We run into a metaphysical problem again. One doesn't have to find out the case history,

particularly. If you feel something is unreal, as far as unreality is concerned, that's real enough. We can go as far as that, rather than exploring the whole thing to make sure that what we are doing is completely valid, and everything is okay. Somehow, that implies, once you do that, than you become more of a scholar than a practitioner, in fact.

Q: In one of your previous lectures you made the statement that the sickness of the Earth is transmitted to the body. I think it came up in connection with the pain connected with the meditation. And that it would come up the spine, up to the eyes. In our group discussion, we couldn't decide whether you meant that literally or metaphorically when you spoke about "the sickness of the Earth." Could you comment on that?

CTR: I think I meant both -- metaphysically as well as literally.

Q: Well when you say "literally" do you mean something like water rays? Or in what sense do you mean it literally?

CTR: Well, I think there is…you feel a sense of actually what you are doing. If you hold a hot cup of tea in your hand, you feel that heat is transmitting through your hand. Actually, it's happening. There is some magic about reality, actually, doing that. It's very real and very personal. And at the same time, you have the concept that you might spill that cup of tea over your shoulder or on your chest or on your laps. You might panic more, and try to hold more tight, which might cause that at some point you might spill over you laps.

Q: Oh, yeah.

CTR: That's tea ceremony.

Black hat.

Q: Hello. This problem of following…I sort wanted to talk about practice a little in terms of what you were saying. It seems like I have the problem, a little, in practice of watching my breath somehow too carefully. But I'm not sure. It's like during the middle of dathün, I had four days where it seemed like I didn't miss a breath. It was like, " Out…out…" But I'm wondering if I was just getting myself into some sort of hypnotic state, because later that all fell apart, and I was back with my thoughts. Which was okay with me, but I just wondered if I had, like, been working too hard, pushing too hard for something there.

CTR: That sounds pretty good! I think that's how the whole thing's supposed to happen.

Q: What I'm wondering is: how do you know when you've hypnotized yourself? Are you just open to letting the whole thing fall apart?

CTR: You go berserk, I suppose.

Q: Well, I'm working on it. All right.

Q: I seem to have reached a plateau in meditation, where I have discovered that I've reached a level of cognitive reverberation, where the mind says, "You're not yet meditating." Reverberation concerning phenomenological data, and memories of the past, before I came here. How does one deal with this?

CTR: I wonder! Maybe you couldn't deal with it. If you try to deal with it, it might become a problem.

Q: A breakthrough comes through. For me, it's a problem of efficiency.

CTR: Well, that's the problem. One has to break the computer machine. And cut the wires, and hammer it down.

Q: How?

CTR: Just do it. Without hurting yourself.

Q: Thank you, sir.

CTR: That was very mystical!

Q: In sitting, I can be very peaceful and sometimes become very clear for moments, and then afterwards, walk outside and have a situation develop. And the emotions that I thought I had somehow subdued, would just completely throw me. And I just wondered, if I continue sitting over the period of a long, long time, would it eventually all become smooth? I think in terms of that goal.

CTR: There's more to come! Good luck.

Moustache over there.

Q: In terms of emotions and the mindfulness of mind, you referred to it at the beginning of your talk, but I was sort of preoccupied with my own conflicting emotions, and I didn't quite pick up on how emotions and mind connect, or how the practice begins to integrate emotions and mind so that you might eventually have some kind of self-confidence that transcends conflicting emotions.

CTR: What's the problem?

Q: The confidence seems to be a little late.

CTR: Able to what?

Q: The confidence seems to be taking its time. The conflicting emotions are still dominant. Maybe that's the same hopeful thing…

CTR: I think so. And at the same time, it's a workable situation. That is the source of developing mindfulness at the same time. Without those particular material

substance[s], there is no journey. That is the actually the stuff that the practice of meditation consists of; working with the conflicting emotions, as well as the occasional changing gap from another gap, and the sense of creating relief. Those two situations are the only situations that take place within oneself. Without that, there is actually no mediation. I think people have the wrong concept of meditation: that once you become professional at your practice of meditation, that you don't have to think one single thought, and everything is just, "breathe…" That's horrific, in fact -- it's becoming a zombie.

Q: How do you connect that to cutting through conflicting emotions? Is there such a thing?

CTR: Well, I don't think so. Conflicting emotions you don't cut, you utilize them. Cutting through comes with the ego itself. The hard core can be cut, but the tentacles can be…pickled.

Q: Occasionally in my practice, when there is some kind of panorama going on -- that there's two things going on at the same time, breathing and something else -- as soon as that happens, it's kind of a weird feeling. Like, as soon as there's more than one thing happening, it's like there's nothing happening at the same time. Does that make any sense? I mean as more and more things get added that seem to be happening at the same time, they get transparent.

CTR: Yeah, that sounds familiar.

Q: It feels funny.

CTR. Yeah…Good luck. Do you want to say something more?

Different Q: You said that as the practice goes on, the mind becomes more impressionable?

CTR: Yeah.

Q: Could you explain that a little better?

CTR: Well, I think that there's appreciation of little things that happen in the everyday life situation. It becomes humorous and workable. And sound and sight, feeling and experience become real. That whole thing becomes very personal and actually real. So therefore it's impressionable. You are never tired of looking at the same piece of rock sitting outside of your door. Each time, it's refreshing.

Q: So you mean that each time, the mind becomes less frozen, more open? There's more space going on, less rigidity…

CTR: That's right

Q: Set patterns…

CTR: Well, we should close ourselves….

Talk 6
August 24, 1974

CTR: Most of the part of the seminar we discussed the basic attitude and means of relating with sitting practice of meditation. Some suggestions were made in terms of taking an attitude from the sitting practice-type attitude that should extend to everyday life situations. But there is never mentioned yet the post-meditation practice. So I would like to raise that point which is experiencing…which is on the way to experiencing vipaśyanā from śamatha practice. Śamatha practice is what we've been discussing in the four foundations of mindfulness and so on.

Vipaśyanā literally means "clear seeing." The general translation of the term used is "insight meditation." It is an attempt to develop or prepare the bodhisattva's path, the bodhisattva's way of practicing paramitas or whatever you have -- bodhisattva's activities: working with other people. So in order to do that, one has to slowly expand one's meditative state of concentration or clarity. Śamatha experience is sort of the kindergarten level at the beginning. It is very important: one has to begin from somewhere, so it is beginning at the beginning and simply carrying out discipline and the medium whatever is available at a given time. Using body, breath and mind. Those seem to be the only available medium that we have in this particular world, planet.

From that simplicity, vipaśyanā begins to develop. The more simpler, the more literal at the beginning is much more workable. I wouldn't exactly say that it is successful as such, particularly, but it is workable.

[Big Pause. Student: I'm just putting out a fire.]

The student might find difficulties, all kinds of difficulties, throwing himself into the world. There might be a tendency of some kind on the part of the śamatha students to be reserved and be cold, rigid. Which is not regarded as particularly a problem: that seems to be the general purpose, in some sense. One has to develop some sense of stillness, solidity in order to bring the sense of openness -- something to open with. So in order to balance the extremes, it has been suggested that students should develop awareness or post-meditation practice throughout the whole day.

The reason why it is called post-meditation as opposed to just general awareness is because the notion of post-meditation is that you have something relate to. The sitting practice is just the starting point. You've begun some reference point as related to yourself and just general awareness. And from that basic awareness, general pattern, you step out and expand yourself into everyday life. So meditation is the beginning, it's the source, the basic inspiration. From that, slowly other things begin to emerge.

From that point of view, there is very little differences between sitting and not sitting. The idea is that the student would develop, eventually, a fuzzy boundary between sitting and not sitting. Some continuity takes place; a continuity with precision. The awareness that develops with the meditation-in-action approach is not so much to try to recreate an awareness state but to reflect back. You might ask, "How do you reflect?" and "where to reflect back?" but at this point, it's rather vague. One has to try it.

The awareness or the recollection that the person develops throughout the day is unconditional experience. It's a sudden glimpse of something which doesn't have a description or certain particular experience. It's just some sense of memory. That's why it's called "recollection." Memory in the sense that the concept of awareness does exist. So therefore that acts as a reminder. And from that memory, some kind of jerk takes place, which is a short glimpse, a very short glimpse; a microsecond short glimpse.

There is an attempt to possess that -- hold on to that and try to find out, very inquisitively -- but such an approach seems to be not advisable, because then there is the possibility that you might try to create an artificial awareness which is based on the watcher and self-consciousness and all the rest of it. So it is… that particular experience is…can't be captured. We can't even sustain it. And, in fact, the suggestion has been made that the person should, in fact, disown it. So there is recollection, disown it, and then just continue with the cooking or whatever, one doesn't have to be startled. Sometimes it is hardly noticeable; there is something [that] happens, but maybe one might think that it is just one's own imagination – probably nothing happened at all. But it doesn't really matter. One does not particularly try to keep a record of anything.

That seems to be a very insignificant thing to do. If that is the only awareness, the big deal that we're talking about, you might ask, "What happens? What does it do to you?" Well, we could talk about all kinds of virtues, and the importance of it, but actually I feel that we shouldn't get into that too much. But maybe just an appetizer – a few remarks on that.

The basic logic is the continuity of chain reaction of mental process and ego-clinging network is what's known as the samsaric whirlpool. In that there is…we are not only surviving, being in samsara, but we are manufacturing at the same time future samsara from the present moment. So the samsaric chain reaction could keep continuously grow[ing] and we have the security of our ego for the next minute, the next month, the next year. We make sure that we have enough ego left to hang onto. In a quite interesting way we manage to manufacture our own future from the present experience of hanging onto the neurosis. So that's what's known as karma, karmic debt. You have the subject of the present karma and then from there you create future karma. Because the present karma is inescapable, so then you don't want to change the shift. You feel somewhat settled down into it; therefore you create further security from that basis. So in other words, we feel quite satisfied in some sense, although we do complain and we feel [we] suffer. Nevertheless, people enjoy living in a samsaric world, because that's much more entertaining. Even suffering itself is entertaining, because we chose (?) one's own existence, self and ego and so forth.

So this kind of awareness is the main way to cut the present moment that plants a further seed of karmic chain reactions. In other words, it shortens the life of ego from that point of view. And that seems to be one of the basic points. And also, the present situation, which is the karma you created which you can't escape, but using that as a working basis, rather than trying to reject the present situation altogether, which is impossible. So therefore [the] awareness process is a way of sabotaging a continual attempt, a continual process that ego has managed to administrate its organization.

So I think that much suggestion is good enough. The post-meditation experiences sometimes will be clouded with all kinds of ups and downs. There is sense of enormous excitement, and [one] feels that one is actually making some progress, whatever that is. Sometimes, one is completely regressing and everything is going wrong. And then there is this kind of neutral period where nothing really happens and things are somewhat flat. But, however, any of those situations are good; they're not regarded as particularly signs of progress or signs of regression particularly at all. But there are what's known as the three types of temporary meditative experiences which also could occur in sitting practice as well as awareness practice as well. That is the temporary meditative experience of pleasure or joy, the temporary meditative experience of emptiness, and the temporary meditative experience of clarity, luminosity. And those experiences are not regarded as signs of progress particularly at all, so one must just maintain one's continual practice.

So that seems to be the preparation towards the bodhisattva's action; at this point that we are working, for a period, on ourselves to develop. And having developed oneself, then there will be possibilities of working with sentient beings, other people, and dealing with situations, which is largely based on how a person is able to accomplish sabotaging the background of ego. And when there is that much less neurosis, that much more wisdom and skillful means begin to appear.

Well, we can say a lot of other things, but I think maybe we could stop here and have a discussion.

Q: Yesterday, you talked about the gap that we experience in meditation, and how that is just another thing, just between two different emotions or thoughts. And today, you mentioned the experience of emptiness and clarity, and these are all sort of being regarded as not particularly desirable. They just sort of happen. And my understanding of meditation so far is that these are things we're supposed to cultivate -- seeing the gap as something we're supposed to…that's why we're doing it. I guess I'm just a little confused on that.

CTR: Well, we're talking about a lot of different kinds of gaps. There is the gap between one mood and another mood, which we discussed yesterday. And then there is the awareness, which could be said to be a gap, which will cut through the continuity of ego's struggle to survive. Another gap, which we haven't mentioned, is the notion of *shunyata* and that kind of experience of greater gap and so forth. But these three types of experience –emptiness, clarity, and joy – are not regarded as gaps. They are just a phase. You might feel the joy for several weeks or a few days, and the sense of emptiness a few days or few weeks. That happens, you know, as you go on meditating -- there is a change in meditative experience, which is just simply experience rather than a sense of being. The thing that we should cultivate -- or if you'd like to put it that way, work on -- is the awareness; the basic awareness of checking, if you'd like to call it, jerk, that kind of reviewing, unconditionally reviewing. That seems to be necessary.

Q: Rinpoche, after all of what you've said, I'm still a bit unclear about why one would come to a seminar, or one would study sutras. Why not just sit and practice awareness?

CTR: Well, precisely, why not? We have to know what is awareness to begin with, and

have to study somewhere. I suppose you could stop coming to the next seminars after this and practice awareness…

Q: Only one doesn't. I'm just wondering why one continues.

CTR: Well, ask yourself.

Q: …you talked at the beginning of the dathün – I think that you were describing that … you sit and there was something in …we were developing skillful means. I thought about that quite frequently during the dathün, because I seem to tend to associate skillful means with communication. And I just became quite aware of the fact that there was very little taking place in my attempts at communication with anyone. And it seemed that there must be some point of contact between where we are – wherever that is – and where skillful means begins. Could you describe that?

CTR: Well, I think that skillful means are not so much of shooting [an] arrow at [a] target particularly. You can shoot [an] arrow at the empty sky and it still could be an accurate shot.

Q: Thank you.

CTR: You're welcome.

Q: I'm trying to connect up some of the different concepts that we mentioned this week, and I have a feeling that maybe when you were saying that through meditation in action, we'd be reflecting back on this rather vague feeling of awareness, that you might have been talking about the same thing as when you talked about maintaining an openness to intuition. Is that so?

CTR: I don't think so, actually. They are quite different. This awareness has no attitude. It just can be said as memory. Largely what you experience is the tail end of that kind of memory. And maintaining openness to… at this point is not a sudden glimpse as that, it's a certain kind of style one begins to adopt which is a kind of attitude. This one is completely abstract. It is therefore possible that this could cut through the neurotic process of ego. Maintaining openness, on the other hand, also could be an expression of neurosis in some sense. Maybe an enlightened (a lighter?) neurosis.

Q: So that you don't do anything at all, except to sit, which allows you to experience this reflection in your daily activities. It's just a direct result of sitting.

CTR: That's right, yeah. Maybe 700 times a day.

Q: Okay.

Q: I've been feeling very confused about a lot of things, but one particularly: the question of happiness. I seem to hear all the time that suffering is the basic reality, and yet I feel that the wish for happiness is equally real.

CTR: Mmm hmmm

Q: And I guess I'm hearing – I don't know if it's being said – but I guess I'm hearing that it's being said that happiness is merely an illusion. And yet to me it seems like basic sanity. And when you said the other day that being in touch with reality – many people gave it fancy names like enlightenment -- it sounded to me like just what everybody…like just… being in touch with reality is happiness.

CTR: Well, I think your question is…being in touch with reality is...what do you mean by that, actually?

Q: What do I mean by that?

CTR: Yes.

Q: Whatever you meant by it when you said…

CTR: I see.

Q: In fact, that was the other thing I was going to say. Reality, you know: when you start breaking it up, what reality?

CTR: Well, the reality is…I suppose you could say that it is almost unreachable, and you can't be in contact with reality. Then you make reality into a relative reference rather than a complete one. You are not in it, but you are outside of reality. So that seems to be the worst problem. I think from that point of view, the concept of happiness is also [a] widely used word. It could be just happiness in the sense of pleasure and satisfaction. There's another type of happiness is also a kind of neurotic happiness is that in the state of insanity there's a kind of joy. And then the tantric tradition talks about *mahasukkha*, the great joy or bliss. It's a kind of -- if you call it happiness -- is unconditional and can't be referred to as pleasure particularly, but just happy.

So we have a large area there. Like a word like love has lots of meanings, and happiness also means alot. So if you're talking about pleasure, then obviously, you know, it's direct. So in order to experience some kind of unconditional experience – if there is such a thing at all – then one could be satisfied in some sense because there's no struggle. You could say that is happiness. But at the same time it is not particularly pleasurable. That's doesn't mean to say that it's painful, either, you know, it's an open space. In other words, the sense of happiness now, or the bliss that's traditionally used is there's no need for security. And never sorting (?) for it and a sense complete freedom. Therefore the notion of bliss begins to come up. And anyway, in particular in the Buddhist tantra, that's the basic notion of bliss.

Pain, on the other hand, is equally as real as much as pleasure in ordinary life. But somehow pleasure is a much shorter-type period, and pain is usually longer. That seems to be the problem. And also within pleasure there are certain hassles involved, which could be said as suffering, *dukkha*. So it's not so much actually that everything's painful all the time, or [that] pain is the reality alone. But there is a hassle involved,

constantly.

Q: It seemed to me that again it was the same thing as came up when you talked about pain bringing us over to a point where the life force would start reviving and pulling us back. And the same thing was true with something else – I forget what it was. And here too: in joy would come the suffering, and the suffering would pull us back and in that would come up the seeds of happiness. So that everything is a self-regulating…like a thermostat in your house, how you don't get too cold or too hot…

CTR: Yeah. Well, that's true. That's what the… there's a strain on the electricity, which is called neurosis.

Q: Thank you. But when other thing: but when you say that getting in touch with reality -- and people give it fancy names like Buddhahood or enlightenment -- but that's like you're here and reality's out there, whereas it's really in you also. So you're not getting to be at one with some thing out there, but with something that's out there and in you.

CTR: Well, we're getting into a metaphysical area here. You can't even say you're "one with" because then that means you had two and now you've become one.

Q: And you're out there saying it.

CTR: Mmm hmm, and so it's a question of actually zero. So it's not coming in or going out, but it's just the separateness just dissolves on the spot.

Q: Thank you.

Q: You spoke about awareness being…you called awareness "memory". Is that memory a memory of some state of being? It seems to me it's got to be a memory of something. Or maybe a memory of nothing. Is the memory something that has to do with a faint recollection of a state of being before the development of ego that we're still linked to?

CTR: I don't think so. This is not particularly a profound experience at all. It's just that memory of information, which you don't actually understand, which is that you should develop awareness. It's an unconditional memory because of its inadequacy; therefore it happens to match the final unconditional somehow, in a very strange way. So it's imitation, sort of artificial unconditional. It's inadequacy; not having complete comprehension as to what awareness is all about. So you have that, whatever, and somehow, very strangely, that brings the unconditional into it as well: eventually it cuts through ego. It's a very primitive one. And that's why it's workable: it's primitive and nothing fundamental anything. So it's just almost memory of bewilderment, which brings a jerk, and puts oneself back to square one each time.

Q: Is there something in our state of being, though, that does recollect something previous to the development of ego? Or is that…

CTR: Yeah, well that's the whole idea of the ego functions on it, with it. If there's no pulsation or fickleness in ego's existence, ego couldn't survive. So there is gaps that is

not recognizable, but natural gaps there all the time. It's like having space. That's maybe too refined at this level for us to look at. That's why it is possible that part of the components of ego consists of non-ego. That's why it is possible to dissolve ego.

Q: I find sometimes that glimpses seem to come later, that sudden jerk, like many hours later or the next day, and it doesn't really help the situation. And I don't know what it is that makes it come back.

CTR: Well, I think that glimpses should…one can be open to it, towards the possibilities of the recurrence of it. Once you are willing to open yourself to such a possibility, it comes much more frequent[ly]. It becomes in fact it leads to (?) some kind of effort, some kind of discipline. This is by no means direct, deliberate effort, but there is the sense of accommodating possibilities of it. And this is not particularly designed to save yourself from the given chaos of the day; this is long-term range. And that seems to be the basic point. And meditation on the whole, even the practice of awareness, is not regarded as a painkiller in any sense.

Q: Can you say something about *shunyata* experience?

CTR: I think that requires another seminar.

Q: To what degree is it necessary to have a conceptual grasp on the meditation process in contrast to trusting the organic nature of practice itself?

CTR: Well, I think those both come side by side. If there's some personal experiences [that] becomes real to you, and [the] learning situation becomes that much more personal to you, and they begin to make sense to you. So it had to be side by side rather than that you have a good understanding in order to have an experience, or that you have too much experience, and not having understanding. It happens simultaneously. It is necessary to know the functions of the mind, but even then that doesn't have to be a technical study particularly, just a study of one's own mind. I think they come together at some point, unless that person has a particular blockage in terms of resistance to intellectual studies – deliberately trying to avoid that area – of a bad experience in the past, or whatever. In such a case, maybe the person should push a little bit, so that the books are not your enemies, but they could be included in your practice.

Q: Thank you.

Q: During the dathün, I felt that I was getting into sitting practice much more deeply than I ever had before. And now, since the nyinthun, I feel like my meditation is really terrible – like I don't want to do it. And it's almost like the whole experience of the dathün never happened. And I guess what I want to know is if your practice can really regress.

CTR: Well maybe the dathün never happened.

I think…well there is sort of overlapping from one situation to another situation, particularly when one is trying to push oneself too hard. The ambition begins to slow

down your speed at some point. That sort of tends to happen. But as long as that meditation is regarded as using your mind rather than your imagination, I don't see any problem with the regression, particularly. In order to give up practicing meditation, you have to give up your mind, which is maybe doing the same thing, so you can't even do that. It's actually…meditation practice is a very haunting experience; once you begin, you can't give up. The more you try to give up, the more spontaneous openness comes to you. It's a very powerful thing.

Q: I seem to feel like I keep hitting ego's basic twist in working with awareness, and that it seems to justify or validate whatever's happening. And it's sort of like I can be conscious and aware of sowing the seeds of bad karma, as you say, and the awareness sort of seems like it's be okay to…that's what's happening when you're aware of the present. So it seems like it's strengthening ego rather than cutting through.

CTR: You mean the awareness?

Q: Yeah.

CTR: How come?

Q: It just justifies whatever's happening.

CTR: Well, obviously if you watch, and if you try to work on awareness as collecting your income and obviously that situation happens, but the idea of disowning when awareness takes place. You see, the whole thing is very simple, and one doesn't have to make long-range plans to get around ego. Once you begin to do that, then something else around you, which makes a greater long-range plan for you, which is ego. So if we begin to do that, there's no way out: one is completely trapped. But everything has to be very immediate and direct – like awareness is a very simple matter: it just happens. Not just your analyzing it, you're trying to just find it and understand it. You don't have to do any of those. It's a simple action – in the midst of enormous chaos, and problem maybe. It's a simple one; it's more of a question of just simplifying any situation rather than there's a particularly big problem.

Q: Thank you.

Q: When in sitting practice -- or whenever—when there is no longer such a strong sense of foreground/background yet there is still a strong sense of unwholesomeness, what is the ground of the unwholesomeness?

CTR: I should find out!

There is enormous opportunity to look at and find out what it is. Otherwise, everything's being answered; there's nothing to do. Just look up your dictionary, and all your problem's been solved. You don't have a sense of the journey. So I think that's the basic attitude, actually rather than what's the problem solved(?). And in a particular situation like that, there's such richness happening. One can at least take the opportunity of that richness and find out more. One doesn't have to be creepy about it, particularly. One just does it.

Q: Rinpoche, the last thing you said about when we have less neurosis, I not sure if I understood. "Skillful means and wisdom will then begin to appear." When I hear you say that, I react to it hopefully; I think of a goal: I can reach that state of less neurosis. Could you say something about whether I'm being too hopeful in this, or whether I have any understanding of…?

CTR: There does seem to be a particular problem -- that we try to pretend that we don't understand anything at all or not that we know that actually [in] the practice of meditation everybody's trying to gain enlightenment. That's kind of an open secret. Everybody knows that anyway; knows that it'll do you some good. So we have to get that clear rather than, "Of course, we don't look at those things but we do something else." But on the top of that, it doesn't really matter: that's just a concept or idea that we have, like "One day we are going to die." We know that; that's kind of a concept, at this level anyway.

So then there is another situation, that is an immediate situation: that you have a practice happening that had to be direct. At some point, even that concept becomes meaningless, because that's been known for a long time; it becomes just a shell; just a word; a concept; it doesn't really matter. I don't see any problems with that. So the question is immediateness and directness.

Q: So there's no problem of being too hopeful.

CTR: Well, it's a question of not necessarily hopeful in the sense that you feel poor, that you want to be rich, but in the sense of that… there could be a sense of inquisitiveness; open-minded towards skillful means and wisdom. That kind of open-mindedness and willing to associate oneself with it rather than saying, "I'm not ready for it" and "I'm too bad for it." You see, that's very present and immediate rather than one day it's going to happen to you. There is possibilities that it might take place even at this point. So it's a question of the dharma of myth and the dharma of a living situation.

Maybe we can close at this point with a few words coming up.

Coordinator (?): I just wanted to say a few things for the sake of each of us. I would like to thank Rinpoche for providing this opportunity and for sharing these teaching with us; and to thank each one of you for coming and participating and helping do the work that's required to have a seminar; and for your very friendly and mellow attitude during the whole time. In particular, I'd like to thank the two cooks. And also, I'd like to thank you for your very generous participation in donating your money. It seems that it will now be possible to invite everyone back for the fall and the winter and for next summer. Thank you very much.

CTR: Well I hope that you'll be able to take something back home, or, if you're going to stay here, keep something in your purse. That what we discussed should be worked on, so that make sure that our effort is perpetually useful and put to good use rather than building up further spiritual materialism, which seems to be the present (?) of each one of us, in terms of trying to apply the things we discussed into an everyday-life situation. I think everybody here has been doing the practice of meditation -- most of

you have received instruction and so forth. So it would be very important to try to keep a daily schedule of the practice of meditation, and, if possible, try to create some kind of space at least once a month, or once a fortnight to have a space of mediation. Facilities are available in all the Dharmadhatus in the different areas of the country: they have nyinthuns scheduled for everybody. And if you are living by yourself, and are being extremely busy, it would be good to give yourself a present of a free day once in ten days or two weeks, and sit in practice and work on particularly the practice of meditation. And try to simplify the life around you, and start it from that angle, which is very important.

Thank you for your patience.

Coordinator: One thing I forgot is I should announce is that Naropa Institute will not be in session over the winter. This decision was made as a result of yesterday's meeting here. So it will reopen the beginning of next summer to offer degree programs and it will continue at that point. Yes, next summer. Beginning.

Techniques of Mindfulness
Talk 4: Mindfulness of Effort
August 28, 1974

Lecture given at Tail of the Tiger, Barnet, VT, August 28,1974. Transcription by Tom Weiser, July, 2010, from audio files on the website "Chronicles of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche"
(http://www.chronicleproject.com/CTRlibrary/techniques_of_mindfulness.html accessed July 2010)

CTR: I thought today we'd discuss mindfulness of mind, which is, I think…What did we discuss? Effort? We discuss effort? Oh, I beg your pardon. Yeah, we're discussing effort, great!

The question of discipline and the question of patience, and the question of exertion, seems that there's some uncertainty. The ethical aspect of life, what one should be doing, and the instinctive aspect of what one would like to do, often we find that they're in conflict: the instinct is not properly met with the ethical attitude. And that brings a lot of tiredness, struggle and loss of heart through the practice, into the practice, with the practice. So I think [what] we are discussing at this point is the meeting point of the instinct and effort put together. Often when we talk about effort in the pejorative sense, we are talking in terms of going against, indulgency of natural flow, and trying to behave oneself, in a certain sense, which is source of alienating oneself with reality and also which brings a lot of non-mindfulness – a great deal. So the question is, if there is natural instinct which is right and appropriate, then there is no problem. But at the same time, it is not as simple as that. It is the realization of natural instinct first, rather than casual natural instinct taken as good gift and going along with it haphazardly.

The practice of mindfulness of effort is developing a clear-seeing vision to be able to relate with instinct that exists, so that exertion and patience can develop. We might talk about what you mean by instinct. What is that? That particular instinct we are talking about is [the] instinct of self-consciousness. Almost we could talk about unconditional self-consciousness. Quite similarly to what we discussed the other day: the question of livelihood, life, a sense of life. In this case, in fact, we go further then just a sense of survival, a sense of life alone. We go to the point of having a basic sense of consciousness, self-consciousness.

When we relate with things, the world, there is…one of the first flashes [that] takes place is a sense of duality, separateness. And from that, then we begin to evaluate or pick and choose; involve ourselves into decision-making; executing desire, will. So in this case, we are not particularly trying to be good and absolutely perfect. But we are trying to utilize these tendencies that does exist in our system, psychological system. The first one is being a sense of duality, the sense of separateness -- just a plain cognition, and at that level, the cognitive mind is somewhat unconditional, because we haven't made up our mind yet at the time. We just project it. Because [of] our projection, we get feedback that we are projecting -- we exist, we are here and that is

there. That is more or less just about it. There is no hope and fear or anything further things involved. It is just a simple recollection, a simple memory. That seems to be one of the basic patterns.

Without realizing or recognizing the sense of self-consciousness, it would be difficult to develop effort. Having developed that sense of somehow unconditional reference point of view, then it is possible to extend that, utilize that to living situations -- awareness, practice of awareness -- which brings the sense of effort. That effort is not based on a particular plan, aim, but just a simple unconditional effort to be, with the help of following the breath or whatever in the sitting practice or in an everyday-life situation, whatever. The process is developed already so there is possibilities of experiencing sort of a purpose of life, which is somewhat vague and dubious, but at the same time, the purpose of life is somehow to solidify some area in some way or other.

The whole thing becomes rather vague at this point, but even the vagueness itself may be the stepping -stone or solidity. In the right effort of applying the practice of meditation, usually it's the breaking the ice, so to speak, at the beginning. There is somehow an unknown force that is imposing power on us, that we don't want to do it, that we don't want to get into the practice of meditation. There is almost a kind of schoolboy mentality --- that you don't want to go to school. And that could be easily broken down, that problem could be easily broken down by being aware of … of the awareness of resistance. And there you are already; you've started already. Your resistance is used as a doorstep to step over. And then beyond that there is no problem, except little hassles that are involved with the practice – irritating thoughts, bodily discomfort or whatever. There's no further problem.

At that level, the notion of patience comes. It's not so much patience as "put up with the problem; bear the pain" as such, but patience in the sense of the effort to maintain non-aggression. That's the definition of patience: remaining non-aggressively. And aggressiveness brings a sense of trying to find out the productivities that's developed through sitting practice or whatever; the evaluation of trying to gain something which would act as encouragement, landmark, achievement. So in fact the purpose of patience at this point is to overcome the achievement orientation, achievement orientation being aggression.

And then the question of exertion or *virya,* which is the unceasing interest to this particular approach of sitting practice and awareness practice in general…Usually the problems of sloppiness and things like that comes from the notion of discrimination. Discriminating in the sense of looking for some right way to do the whole thing, and thinking that what's happening and the problematic situation what's there is because you did [it in] the wrong way. And constantly right way. Having not found the way, that therefore you're having problems, and if you have found the right way, then everything's going to be okay: smooth meditation, smooth awareness, smooth life and so forth.

[But] That looking for an alternative is the problem that goes against the sense of exertion. Exertion is non-discrimination in the sense that you push everything into that area, [and then] you just go along with it, like driving on a wet (wide?) highway, disregarding all the signposts, all the remarks you might see on the road, or all the

different transport you might pass by. But still, you keep driving. It's the non-discriminatory approach [which] is the exertion.

Which doesn't mean to say that a person has to be somewhat dull or dumb, and transform the person into a tank, particularly. It's a question of continuity and steadiness that's very much necessary. So on the whole, everything brings us to the point here that the practice of awareness, mindfulness practice requires a lot of work, a lot of energy, effort, surrendering and a lot of recognition that there's a working base that does exist, and one doesn't have to look for another, better alternative. It's a question of regarding the whole thing as an ongoing journey. That journey has begun already, that little progress toward the goal is by no means a big deal. And it has to be an ongoing process, a constant ongoing process. And effort is not so much pushing, but bare attention to what's happening. Bare attention doesn't mean to say that you hold bare attention, but you keep going as your bare attention.

Well, we could discuss about that.

Q: Were you saying that it's good not to watch the signposts -- sort of not get stopped by them; not get interested them? You're just sort of passing them and acknowledging?

CTR: Well, that's usually the style. And obviously these signposts are the mark of a journey of some kind, the journey you're taking, but at the same time, not particularly a big deal.

Q: You said that the resistance was -- the resistance to meditation, to one's practice – was somehow broken down by just the awareness of the resistance. But I've been somewhat under the impression that there was always some form of resistance somewhere that was somehow always working. Is that true?

CTR: I think so. Otherwise, there wouldn't be any journey.

Q: Right. But there seems to be some sort of initial breakthrough that you do have to make to some kind of resistance.

CTR: Yeah. Which is realizing the resistor itself is journey. You have begun already by relating with your resistance.

Q: But if the resistance is too great, there can be a problem there, I suppose.

CTR: Well, I think that's a matter of how much you feed it. If you try to eliminate resistance, then you are feeding it. Whereas, if you just acknowledge that such a thing as resistance does exist, then I don't see any problems. The very idea of practice occurred in your mind, and that much resistance occurred in your mind at the same time. It depends on whether you want it make a big deal about the resistance, which makes the resistance greater by trying to eliminate it altogether and looking for a smooth practice without any resistance.

[gap]

Q:…Is it the same attitude as touch and go then?

CTR: I think so. Obviously these four topics doesn't conflict with each other, they're complementary all the way (?), very much so.

Q: I'm not clear about how the instinct to practice arises or is uncovered, and how that was related to the sense of duality. Could you go over that again?

CTR: Well, sense of duality is there already. We don't have to particularly make a study of it particularly. But instinct to practice is because there is somebody to practice. Like if you're interested in eating food, having the idea that such a thing does exist makes you more interested in eating food – the very idea of food, in your mind or in your actual physical situation. If there's no concept of food involved at all, you could be constantly hungry, but you wouldn't want to eat food particularly. There's nothing to do. So, in the same way, there's something…some basis exists of some self-consciousness; of "this does exist". And therefore this is the beginning of practice.

Q: But once you know that you're hungry and that there's food, you don't particularly experience any conflict about eating, generally. But people experience conflict about practice.

CTR: Well, I think it's an evaluation problem. People probably would have a conflict on food – if you should vegetarian or a meat eater. And precisely the same thing, the practice has somewhat been presented to you has nothing to do with you, but it's a way of transforming you into a better personality. So you are already alienated by the very idea of practice: that you are not good enough, but you could be better if you practiced more. That is already a way of alienating the whole thing by way of presenting practice in that way.

So, in this case, the particular approach or the mindfulness of effort is concerned is not so much that it is a way of reforming yourself, but starting with what you are, just be what you are with exertion, with discipline. You don't have to start at the best of your ability particularly: you just do it.

Q: Rinpoche, you talked about not being goal-oriented in your practice. Are you limiting that just to the concept of…as that applies to sitting practice, or would that apply to, let's say, other things in your life outside of sitting, as well.

CTR: I think we're talking [about] this in terms of spiritual development areas -- areas of mindfulness. It should be a plain mindful; pure mindful rather than anything else implied around it. So that could be sitting practice as well as awareness. I mean one can't say that you shouldn't be goal-oriented. If you're going to, say, ask a question right now you can't be without a goal-orientation -- you can't even open your mouth. And energy like that goes on. But whenever we put a spiritual implication behind it, you have a greater goal, which is a greater problem.

Q: You said something about the attempt of the mind…within the psychology of the mind is the attempt to solidify everything, which, if I understood you correctly, means that in this case we transmute that into using whatever arises as a solid on which we

step to go on. Is that a correct understanding? Because, I'm not quite clear about how we can use the tendency of the mind to want to solidify everything in this case as an adjunct to practice rather than to pull us away from practice.

CTR: Well, you see, there's no problem involved. If you begin to regard the whole thing as a way to get away from some problem, then you have created the reference point and therefore you're solidifying it, the problem. Whereas if the attitude is just fresh, direct, the sense of duality does exist but let us utilize it, let us work with it rather than trying to sabotage that sense of self-consciousness particularly deliberately. So everything's included.

Q: I'm not clear on how to keep awareness of the breath and at the same time being aware of the resistance or the obstacle or the sense of duality. It seems to me that to be aware of resistance would and does take me away from being aware of the breath. Can these be done simultaneously – to work with the resistance while at the same time being aware of the breath?

CTR: Well, they're both saying the same thing. The breath is alternating experience; it comes and goes. And the resistance is also sort of pulsation. The impulse to resist comes in spells. So somehow, keeping with the breathing – sometimes breathing actually is a way of distracting your attention from awareness, mindfulness. And sometimes breathing becomes a help at the same time. So one has two uses of the techniques. That's why all the techniques are regarded as not particularly 100% good. As soon as you have to introduce something – some techniques – the techniques could take you away from the integrity of practice. And could help at the same time. Which is also part of the game of the resistance. But if you include the whole thing as just one big sweep that continues in your life, then there is no problem. One doesn't have to try to discriminate fish to fowl, or fowl to what?

Q: Thank you.

Q: …if you try to eliminate the resistance, you feed it. If the resistance is strong enough that you don't sit, how do you get started?

CTR: Well, actually, there's no such thing as a strong resistance.

Q: Well, I know, like, I don't sit. And…so that…something's making me not sit.

CTR: Well, I don't see any problems. What is that?

Q: Somehow…I guess what I'm asking – Do you set yourself…the resistance may be unconscious. Do I then try to just sit anyway, and acknowledge that the resistance is there? That seems like a very strong effort, which is fighting…I don't know how to get started and not fight resistance at the same time.

CTR: Well when you have resistance, you have an awareness of it. That, in itself, is mindfulness. So you sat already. And in any case, you'll be caught.

Q: Then does it just…

CTR: And sitting is not a big deal, you know. Sitting is just one of the expressions of mindfulness. And maybe it happens in our life – one eighth of our life consists of sitting if you're a particularly good sitter.

Q: You say it's not a big deal, but in New York you said very clearly that sitting was the only path to basic sanity.

CTR: Yeah…

Q: So that sounds like a big deal.

CTR: We're not talking about sitting as cross-legged in particular sitting. But in this case, we're talking about developing the attitude of sitting practice. You realize that sitting practice happens to you anyway. You thought you had gotten away from sitting practice by resisting, but you're still doing it. So it's very haunting, once the idea is introduced into your head.

Q: Several times, while sitting, I came to a place within myself where there was a dialogue taking place between one who questioned and one who answered. I wonder if this is at all useful or if it is not part of it.

CTR: Well, I don't think we can talk about useful, particularly, or not being useful. That's part of it. It's like you're living in the world. You have a sky above and earth below and they're talking to each other. I think there's a lot of need for sense of humor at that point. If you took everything seriously, then it becomes entirely something else than path. There is the need for sort of softness of some kind. It doesn't really matter – the mental chatter is okay.

Q: But it's not mental chatter, it doesn't take place in my head at all.

CTR: You mean you do it, orally?

Q: It takes place within me, in the center.

CTR: Well, that is mental chatter.

Q: It is?

CTR: Yeah. That's what it's called. It sounds very bizarre when you call it mental chatter, but that's it.

Q: [inaudible]

CTR: Whether it depends on your head or your heart doesn't really matter: it's still mental chatter.

Q: [inaudible]…valuable

CTR: Well, mental chatter is the echo. So I don't think we can say it's not valuable. We can't say this is not valuable or this is valuable. On the whole, what you're trying to do is not get into dealership. But we're just trying to be straightforward with ourselves. Whatever you have, you can't cut off and say, "I have an invaluable finger. I should cut it out." You can't reject yourself like that.

Q: You said that if there's a tendency to everything too seriously, then the whole thing turns into something else that is then not the path. What is that then? What is that inversion?

CTR: Well, I think that there is more production of karma is being built, rather than eliminating karmic causation, which is the opposite way. The path is supposed to eliminate karmic causality.

Well, time for dinner.

APPENDIX III – MEDITATION JOURNALS

Vipassanā Meditation Journal

9/1/09
Introducing the idea of not moving (this from Gunaratna). I see that I'm constantly fiddling with my posture, constantly correcting it. I decide not to do that. But what if there's a problem? I give myself permission to correct by undoing. But wait – as I write this, I change my mind. From now on, I'll notice the "problem" then stay with the breathing and see if I can use the breath to "tranquilize the formation."

I notice that time seems to pass much more slowly than usual in my meditation. Is this an effect of closing my eyes? I've noticed in the past that time passes more quickly in analytic meditation than in śamatha.

I notice that one advance in my meditation – I no longer allow myself to obsess about whether I'm manipulating my breath or not.

When I open my eyes, there's a period in which my breathing is still primary in my attention. It feels as if I'm organized in a different way than usual. I'm not quite "me." A brief taste of my skandhas – the "heap" of bodily sensations of breathing is different than the "heap" of seeing (which is how I usually organize my experience.)

9/2/09
Busy thoughts, a lot of coughing. Hard to stay with the breath. Today I used the breath as a vehicle for soothing pain and holding in the body.

9/4/09
Working with the sense of the "whole body breathing." This seems similar to the instruction I received in my first dathün: "Be the body breathing."
It's easier for me to sit still without "correcting" posture now. The meditation brings a sense of heaviness to my body.

9/5/09
Working with mindfulness of bodily sensations coming and going. This really heads toward non-doing. I can see my tendency to freeze my movement and try to fix it: a series of interruptions and wrenches in the flow of small movements. When I let go of this habit and simply observe, my body is freed to move in myriad small ways. (That letting go is non-doing. The movements themselves are non-doing, too.) I can see how this could lead to several "higher" investigations:

1. My body is an aggregate – many parts moving independently
2. My body is impermanent, constantly changing.
3. My body is not strongly under my control, not really *mine*. It moves, adjusts, and breathes without me doing anything.

9/6/09
At the Denver Insight Meditation Community.
We do walking meditation for 30 minutes. One of the instructions is that when we are beset by a thought or emotion we can stop walking and investigate. I find that this

gives me the sense of the thought or feeling coming to fruition and then dropping away.

9/7/09
Still working with sensations coming and going. I'm better now at catching myself about to correct my posture, better at the non-doing of letting my posture correct itself. I notice that as I put more attention on the whole body, my breathing slows and calms. When I put more attention on the breathing, I manipulate it in subtle ways. That Ego of mine surely likes to thrust itself into situations where it's not needed. Like a little kid trying to take credit for whatever situation he finds himself in. "Pay attention to ME."

9/8/09
Working with sensations in the body. Adding in an occasional Alexander Technique direction. Now I can see how "doing" my AT tends to be. In this session, I give directions and do nothing – just allow things to move. I feel confident that this style of practice is heading in the right direction. Keeping my eyes closed helps with this process. When I open my eyes, I get more distracted. During the session, I move between eyes open and eyes closed, mostly keeping them closed.

9/9/09
Working with keeping contact of the full length of the breath. I'm bring AT into the meditation, in that I'm bringing consciousness up to me "mental balcony" – forward and up to the prefrontal lobe. I tend to smile when I do this, and it also seems to help my posture.

Mixed emotions arise during the session – sadness, tenderness, panic, perhaps a little happiness? It's a little hard to know whether I'm distracting myself from the breath with a kind of entertainment or if I'm including something that I usually exclude.

I'm also beginning to try to bring in post-meditation mindfulness.

9/14/09
Working with body scans as a means of going through the components of the body. I did some of the Bruce Frantzis "melting water" scans during standing meditation. That and being open – allowing energy to fill out with in me unobstructedly – this gave my arms a new, full shape.

In meditation, the scans seemed to concentrate my mind better – I could do them with eyes open. Less discursive thought. It's hard to feel what's going w/ internal organs. Scanning for tension in the muscles led to a feeling of heaviness. (I realized that I could use this technique as a method to tranquilize the body.) Scanning for openness in joints led to more sense of movement and lightness.

9/17/09
Scan of body parts. This was more interesting and experiential than I'd feared. Contacting different body parts yielded different sensations. Hair gave me a kind of buzzy aura (as did sweat glands later). Certain body parts implied other – urine implies bladder, sweat implies gland. Some were hard to contact – liver and (surprisingly) heart. I used my breath to investigate body parts – like sonar. If I listened, I could begin to make out outlines, characteristics of certain organs. This did

not lead to the disgust that other commentators asserted. For instance, when I thought of snot, I also contact sinuses and experienced a feeling of openness behind my nose.

9/21/09
It takes longer than my usual session (about 45 minutes) to scan all body parts. When I contacted sinews (connective tissue), my shoulder blades unwound, rotating so that the inferior angle came in, distal angle rotated up and out.

Also working with locus of "self" – where am "I" watching from – in prefrontal cortex – adds smile. "Hair" – buzzy. "Flesh" – relaxing.

In general this supports the "disaggregating" of the body. I am aware of many energies, many characteristics included in "body." Does not yield a sense of disgust (Perhaps that would come from conceptually engaging…)

9/22/09
Four Element Meditation. It's easy to locate the air element – when I focus on it, I experience lots of cycles of movement within my body. Fire is not so hard – mostly I feel warmth. Earth shows up as heavy/light (I didn't try hard/soft.) Water was the hardest to locate. I worked with a sense of cohesion, of things staying together – back to the connective tissue. It was helpful to work with a sense of stretching an elasticity.

I scanned for pairs: fire and air, earth and water. My heart responds well to being warm and light!

9/23/09
Four Element. This meditation can be used as a corrective – following LTG's postural instructions (legs heavy, torso light, head lightest.) I look for earth – heaviness in the limbs, lightness in body and head. I also look for lightness in the shoulder girdle. It's helpful.

Just looking for movement seems to bring movement to the body. Many windings and unwindings, spirals. I enjoy these movements, and try not to indulge in them nor invent them. Water remains the most obscure element, but I sense it in stretchiness, expansion and contraction. Perhaps flow?

10/7/09
Feelings (Feeling Tone) Noticing that I'm mostly aware of feelings of discomfort in the body. Not that I'm uncomfortable all the time, but that these are the feelings that I notice. Hard to notice pleasant/unpleasant/neutral mental states. They're gone before I've noticed the categorization. The shifting of focus toward grasping the vedana is itself a metal state with its own vedana that supplants the old state.

10/8/09
Working a little with just allowing unpleasant states of the body to be. (Usually as soon as I notice an unpleasant state, I want to fix it.) A lot of unpleasant sensations centered in neck and right shoulder. When I just let them be, I notice that they tend to melt away.

Throughout this process, I've been noticing how this meditation encourages dividing things up, disaggregating. I ask, "Is this a pleasant bodily state?" Leads to the question: "Which part?" All experience is divisible into parts, some pleasant, some not. I'm also noticing that a great deal of experience falls into the "neither" category.

I began to explore the "impulse" aspect of vedana. Maybe I can tell whether a thought is pleasant or unpleasant by whether I move toward it or not. Surprise! I notice that I move *toward* unpleasant thoughts. Why? It's fear! I'm trying to ward those thoughts off. As if I cannot remove myself, so I try to remove the thought. I have the sense that this warding-off is the most unpleasant part of the experience. The experience of warding off *is suffering!* What I call anxiety is not, in fact the emotion, but rather the unpleasant experience of trying to avert a not-quite instantiated thought.

10/12/08
Meditation on feeling
Someone else in the shrine room today. I felt aversion to him. Then, as I sat, I realized that I could barely sense him at all. He wasn't making much sound, and those sounds were not particularly troubling. What I was feeling aversion toward was a GCP! The unpleasant feelings arose in response to a mental image. Or perhaps the unpleasant feeling was arising in response to an emotional state generated by the GCP – this is complicated! Which came first the Vedana of aversion or the emotional state?

10/13/09
Mindfulness of Mind

Particularly working with the three poisons. I notice that I mostly have mind pervaded by anger, and that this anger is often directed at myself. When I look at this without judgment (that's difficult – I usually have judgment which results in more self-aversion) I feel compassion.

I find it difficult to find any mind pervaded by generosity or with compassion (except for the above experience). But I realize that I do have a number of "aha!" moments, and that could be seen as mind pervaded by wisdom.

How to see mind pervaded by delusion? I'm not sure. (Chanting in the neighboring shrine room is a focus for anger.)

10/14/09
Mindfulness of Mind/Mental Factors

Today I'm noticing how subtle mental states can be. I realize that in my attempt to perceive a mental state, I tend to try to freeze the previous state, especially if it was an obvious one (or maybe if I noticed that I was distracted by it.) But this strategy doesn't work: I'm too late – that previous state has been supplanted by the action of "freezing" it.

I notice that this freezing has a bit of fear in it. I've been noticing a lot of fear – fear of not getting a desirable thing, fear of losing a desirable thing and fear of getting something undesirable. Fear of failure (and in that, fear of not having started a process

I was supposed to start – like the dream of discovering that I've got a midterm for a class I didn't realize I was in.)

There are small, furtive pains in my heart…

There was a lot of clarity in my meditation today. My eyes were open and time passed quickly.

It's still hard for me to notice the mental state of delusion, but the mental state of distraction is more evident.

Mental music distracted me today. But I also found that I could keep my attention open and allow the music to continue to play. It felt like fuel-of-excitement then, and I was reminded of AT and the idea of expanded sphere of awareness: more and more can be included in this awareness.
I think that this whole sequence is leading to an understanding of suffering: suffering by freezing. It seems that just applying mindfulness via bare awareness helps unfreeze a mental state.

I'm more and more grateful for this practice.

10/15/09
More of the same – it's still hard to see the mind of delusion. There was more distraction today. There's also a feeling of concentration and exaltation, like I'm looking up into my own mind with more clarity.

10/16/09
[I didn't write this at the time, but I have a strong remembrance of it]
Working with mental states, I notice a lot of anger. It keeps coming up, and I get irritated about it. There shouldn't be so much anger in my mind stream! Now I'm angry about being angry. I let that go, and just put bare awareness on the mental factor of anger. This process goes on for a little while, and then my anger-at-being-angry goes away and instead there's an upwelling of compassion for the poor being that has to sit in the midst of so much anger.

10/18/09
Mindfulness of Dharmas: Five Hindrances

My mind felt quite bright today. I wanted to keep my eyes open. It feels (God save me from the Woo-woo!) as if I'm working with a higher "vibration" – a more energized, clearer set of mind and object.

Fear/anxiety is still difficult to place in terms of mental states/hindrances.

Sometimes, it feels that there are not words to describe the infinitesimal gradations of thoughts and emotions.

Today I thought of mental states in the t'ai chi terms "excessive" and "deficient." Is this a mind that is contracting and grasping a Self? Is this a mind that's over-expanding into

planning and fantasy? Dissipating and becoming fractured?

The Hindrances have introduced "doubt" and I find that I can sometimes identify it. I also notice myself trying to identify past mental states. I realize that "big" emotions and fantasies leave turbulence in their wake. I try to notice and name the flickering changes in this turbulence, and again realize that there are emotions for which I have no names; instead there's a familiar "felt sense". Perhaps this is dangerous: perhaps the sutta is asking me to be diligent and learn the full extent of the genus *kleśa*.

10/20/09
I'm noticing how meditation on mind and mental states tends to pull me up into my "mind". Today I realized that I could include my body. (That, in fact, I could use the insight from my Mind Only meditations and remember that this "body" is not separate from this "mind".)

Sleepy and scattered today. However, I noticed that anger made me more wakeful and focused. I also noticed that anger could feel pleasant or unpleasant, just as torpor can feel pleasant or unpleasant.

10/21/09
Working with mental states as they manifest in the body, particularly torpor: I'm interested in including the psychophysical whole in my meditation.

I heard H clattering in the hallway outside the shrine room. I felt irritation. I simply noticed the mental factor of ill-will, then felt compassion for the whole situation arise spontaneously.

10/23/09
Notice first – don't correct. Allow a correction to unfold. Training in noticing is training in appreciation and renunciation (I tend to stress the latter.) Immediate correction is training in speediness and aggression. Noticing without correcting is training in gentleness and non-attachment.

Not a highly emotionally charged session today, so I worked with torpor and restlessness. Noticing how these two manifest in the body as expansion and contraction. Particularly in my heart, which is feeling contracted. Noticing the contraction in my heart helps it expand. At one point in the session, the upper right quadrant of my torso expanded (it had been contracted around tenderness in the area of my gall bladder.)

10/25/09
Today, I worked with the causes and effects that lead to mental states. This investigation didn't lead to a lot of discursiveness today, but I could see that it might. I tried to use it lightly – ask about causes and then let go.

I have more and more sense of a psychophysical unity, and a better ability to see fairly light states of ill will and grasping. I especially notice judgments around the behaviors of others in the shrine room (moving, leaving early.) It struck me with some force that one could make a correction without any ill will at all. I aspire to that!

In general, this was a bright, slightly buzzy session. The umdze signaled for tonglen and I found it difficult to reconcile that practice with bare awareness. I worked with the aspiration that others might be free of painful mental states. I also saw tonglen as the opposite of the instruction to focus on the out breath and dissolve on the in breath.

10/27/09
5 skandhas

First of all, I notice that this is actually an example of non-analytic cessation: the non-arising of a certain state because it is supplanted by another, less malignant state (like neutral bacteria in the gut that prevent non-beneficial bacteria implanting themselves.) R walks into the shrine room and I notice a spurt of ill will (I'm well trained in this!) I use this noticing as the basis for analysis: to which skandha am I clinging. Already, my mind has turned from ill will and toward an understanding of my own suffering arising through clinging.

Some skandhas are easier for me to notice than others. At first I was really only aware of the first and fourth skandhas. Then I began to see how the second skandha shows up: when I cling to fear about my papers not getting done in time, I'm warding off what I project will be an unpleasant emotion. And I think that clinging to experiences is probably the third skandha.

Some things are hard to place: reputation, creativity, competency.

Today I alternated between analysis and śamatha (thank you, Jirka!)

10/28/09
5 Skandhas

I'm noticing the concept "Mine" a lot. Yesterday, I was aghast when K took the remainder of a bottle of wine all for himself. Since I had recovered it from the feast and set it out for my housemates, I somehow thought of it as "mine," to be used in ways that I approved. I was upset because he appropriated it as "his" to be used in ways that he approved. Was my behavior clinging to the first skandha (wine is physical object belonging to me)? Or is it clinging to fourth skandha (there are rules of behavior that I approve of?)

Today I could see that I cling to MY perceptions. I wondered if I could relax enough so that I could experience "perception is occurring" without positing "I" and "mine." Today's clinging mostly centered on "me" as possessor. (A favorite!)

10/30/09
Began the session counting to 108 breaths. That was hard.

11/1/09
Started session again by counting breaths to 108. This really did seem to settle my mind well. A couple of things came up that seem important:

I'm beginning to see the possibility of perception without perceiver, of experiencing emotion without that experience implying a Self that is threatened or made more secure by that emotion. I'm also getting a feel for samskaras, which I now understand as psychophysical processes with a beginning, middle, and end. This leads me to an insight about consciousness: it's like the water that samskaras bubble through, the quiescence to which mind returns when samskaras subside.

I gave a thought-lecture on the role of teacher and student as complicated samskaras that are sustained performatively. Hence we are all wheel-spinners constantly reinforcing our samskaras. The Buddha learned how to reverse that wheel-spinning.

11/2/09
I'm getting better at dissociating Self from experience. A moment of shimmering experience occurred; a translucent, alive psychophysical process. I thought, "Yes! Let go!" And then realized that I was experiencing the mental state of desire, lusting for Attainment. (And I also realized that desire is warm, the fire element of Padma. Is it therefore appropriate for the Desire Realm or just one of my pet *kleśas*?)

I'm smiling more in my meditation these days. Seeing more lightly negative states. Doubt shows up in the question "How am I doing?" or in mental fantasies in which I describe my experience to someone else (this can also partake of Pride.)

Here's something that cracked me up: I was on a discursive jag about something beautifully philosophical, a thought-lecture on a profound topic when it suddenly occurred to me: "<u>This</u> is the mental state of delusion!"

Since I'm noticing the psychophysical process, I can see how certain thoughts curdle or color that process. It's better not to add those kinds of thoughts to the process. I understand better the metaphor of replacing a bad peg (mental state) with a good one.

11/3/09
Thoughts without a thinker. My sessions lately have been pretty spacious and equanimous, with the occasional flashing of joy or pain. (Again, consciousness as an ether through which samskaras flash.)

Creativity is a theme today. Lila, the primordial play. Creativity that does not belong to the Self, that does not serve to bolster the Self, just as feeling (*vedanā*) and emotion need not be seen as threatening or reinforcing the Self)

I can see the possibility (brought up by Darrin in t'ai chi and by Lloyd Burton at the Insight Meditation Society) that freeing oneself from the obsessive creativity of Self-generation could liberate a lot of energy.

I'm feeling grateful for these teachings.

11/8/09
Six Ayatanas

This mediation led me to an experience of separation of mental factor and object. There

are no "angry thought" just minds with accompanying mental factors that apprehend objects, which are themselves devoid of those factors. When I think "B & K" that mental object is not angry: my mind is colored with the mental factor of anger. Therefore, guarding the sense gates means being very clear about the distinction between perception (of both sense and mental objects) and the mental factors that color the minds that perceive them. I needn't do anything about that coloration; just observe the process with bare awareness.

I've been using this practice a lot in post meditation. It really helps to lower the emotional pressure.

I had a somewhat Madhyamaka thought today: does the mind that perceives the sensations in my body also perceive visible objects? (Once again, thanks, Jirka.)

11/14/09
I've missed writing on paper, so now I'm making a quick note. I had a small bout of pre-dawn panic this morning. Arrived for meditation with a little trepidation. Mind moving off the breath to possibly dangerous thought – scanning for sharks in the mental sea. This reminds me of an insight that I had when working with ayatanas that I'm not sure that I recorded – a thought may "feel" as if it is intimating some sort of danger but that may not be valid. For instance, I might think about B & K and begin to clench. The feeling of the clench makes me think that there is a real danger and so I go further into the clench, which gives further reinforcement to the hypothesis ("Something unpleasant is arriving!") But the emotional precursor may not be accurate, just self-fulfilling.

Back to today: I began using the seven factors (I can only ever remember 6 of them.) My technique was: notice when they're present. Or even better: notice the extent to which they are present. My session had a certain luster and warmth, particularly when I emphasized equanimity and energy. My mantra was something like "Meet all experience with equanimity and energy." I feel optimistic about this.

11/15/09
Nyinthun today at Marpa – I sit a session (have to write papers!) Noticing the difference between practicing with CTR's instructions and GF's: when I practice CTR's instructions, I feel more heartbroken, less optimistic. When I first sat down it took me a little while to settle – I was just coming in from a teleconference call. I worked with CTR's one-side breath, and then began to bring in the seven factors of enlightenment. The meditation began to get warm and glow-y. I remembered a sensation I had yesterday or the day before – that my Self was like a candle flame, constantly flickering, causing the air to look distorted. I allowed my central channel to dissolve in this way (this is where I'm the most solid, where ME resides: I generally think that I "drive" my body from someplace behind my eyes.) This actually relates to something else that I've noticed and been working with: the sense that although I seem to be following the breath, in reality, much of my awareness is in my visual field. I've been working on relaxing the visual field, of allowing it to be present without "hardening" and solidifying the ME-that-looks.

I had a fairly interesting (entertaining?) meditation going, and then Eirikur read a

section from the '73 transcripts on mindfulness of the body (tashi tendrel!). Bummer! CTR's description Mindfulness of the Body had the effect of solidifying everything, bringing it "down to earth" in a sad and heavy way. I sat with that for a little, and then decided that it was okay to add back the seven factors of enlightenment and let the meditation get light again. I realized that I hear the in CTR's description that I'm not "relating to the body properly", that there's fundamentally a problem (which is funny, because I believe his view is that there's fundamentally not a problem.) I also realize that in GF's presentation, I look at bodily sensations with bare awareness and, in a way there's no problem. The sensations are just what they are. And this is funny, because in a way the Theravādan view seems to state that there *is* a problem.

11/16/09
Slept late, then had a hard time of getting myself to actually arrive on the cushion. Sure, I was sitting there, but I don't think you could count it as meditation. Maybe I'll do another session later tonight.

11/17/09
Sleepy morning. I awoke at 5 AM in a panic over the state of my papers. I kept going in and out of meditation. It's hard to sustain mindfulness and remember my object of meditation. Joining my meditation with the seven factors was helpful, but, alas, not sufficient.

11/18/09
Werma practitioners chanting in the room next door – irritation and opinions arising. I tried joining that with the seven factors of enlightenment. I realized that I was completely lacking in the factor if investigation. My opinion had hardened, I'm not curious about them, not investigating the phenomenon. I've decided what it is; I'm satisfied with my (habitual) categorization, and I can sit back and enjoy my righteous irritation without further investigation.

11/20/09
This morning, I'm struck again by the separation of mental object and mental factors. There are no bad thoughts, only painful mental factors. Therefore, in the end there are no forbidden objects. One merely needs to let all objects be as they are. I can see how one could easily arrive at the "higher" views through this process.

A tender morning pre-meditation, dreams of B and themes of rejection. But the meditation cheers me up and in the middle of it, I can trot out the thought "my ex and her current boyfriend" and experience it like a puppet show, a drama that I concoct to scare myself.

It feels as if I can drop through levels of analysis in my meditation now, all the way down to body breathing and up to mental states and the factors of enlightenment. Still not much focus on vedana.

11/24/09
Loud chanting from scorpion seal practitioners next door. I shifted my object of meditation from breathing to hearing, which felt helpful (before that I felt that I was trying to ward off the sounds.) I still felt a fair amount of irritation. I could work with

that via the five skandhas and seven factors of enlightenment.

It also occurred to me that I could just change the time at which I meditate.

11/30/09
Back from Thanksgiving in California. I didn't practice while I was there. I can feel the difference on the cushion – my śamatha is not that strong, so my investigation keeps wandering. Already I can feel the techniques of investigation slipping into a kind of vagueness. I'm afraid that if I were to stop practicing them, I would lose them. Sure, they would have become incorporated in some way, but I fear that it would be in a kind of mushy, non-specific way. I value precision (as Rob says, "precision is sexy.") I wonder how much I've lost of the analytic meditation techniques that I valued so highly only last semester.

I agree with the assertion of GF and LB that these are cumulative exercises. I can see how I could begin with some body awareness, rise up to include feeling, then note the mental factors arising with those feelings, and finally touch into the teachings that help with them. Like beginning with investigation of the ayatanas, then resting in view of ayatanas or resting in view of Mind-only.

12/4/09
Yesterday and today, I worked with going through the foundations. Body scans led to feelings of greater movement and space. (A question came up with regard to the Goenka retreat I'm going to do in the spring: I've begun to appreciate having a bit of friendliness in the scan, a wish for the body to be spacious, mobile and comfortable. I think this is okay – in fact I think that it's the right way to relate to the body. I wonder if they will, too.) Mindfulness of feeling is still hard – there are so many parts to my experience, each with their own kinds of sensation. This foundation points out the speed of arising and ceasing of experience: as soon as I try to look at a sensation to determine whether it's pleasant or painful, it's already changed.

Mindfulness of mind – as I move into the later foundations, it feels as if I'm tuning into different frequencies, moving up and out from body into mind and space. Here's where I notice the possibility of shifting from vipassanā back to śamatha, from mindfulness of mind to mindfulness of breathing.

Tuning into the seven factors of enlightenment does bring in energy and joy.

Śamatha/Vipaśyanā Meditation Journal

1/14/10
Relatively stable meditation with thoughts blossoming into strategies every now and again. I worked w/ LTG's formless instruction – just notice which thoughts you're pursuing or pumping up. Allow things to be and dissolve. Remembering touch and go was helpful. There can be a sense of chastisement, a smack in the wrist, when I notice thinking. This creates a subtle hardening in the mind, or perhaps a tendency to reject the experience. Touch and go allows me to be with the experience, even if it's thinking, and then to let go. Less aggression, perhaps less effort.

Also noticing how I use my eyes (subtly) trying to follow the breath out and dissolve.

1/15/10
Busy mind today – I keep slipping into planning, losing the out breath. (I didn't do much t'ai chi today. I wonder if that correlates.) I moved my "command post" lower in my body and that seemed to help. I'm augmenting my practice with LTG's lecture yesterday (that third turning antidotes idea of separation). I've got a small mantra "no separation!" Therefore I'm trying to include everything with out fixing anything and also not pumping anything up.

In my t'ai chi and post meditation practice I've been interested in the idea of listening <u>for</u> qualities (for both presence and absence, as non-judgmentally as possible. Qualities such as mobility, weight buoyancy. It just struck me (as I write this) that I could listen for friendliness and maitri in interactions with others.

1/19/10
Busy-ish mind. Running off to plan Alexander lessons for chair turns. Even so, when I came back to the technique, I could actually do it. Using CTR's '73 instructions – allowing the breath to dissolve all around me – to the back and above me – helped. I didn't use my eyes so much. Once I was "out", I was able to allow anything to arise – irritation, sounds, whatever – and just be with them. (Luckily, the shouting practice next door was quiet today, so I wasn't tested too stringently.)

1/20/10
A sleepy morning. Hard to stay focused. Low-level irritation, a grumbling bad attitude. A spurt of anger wakes me up briefly. I try to remember impermanence.

1/21/10
Working with CTR's '73 instructions – simply sitting and breathing. I'm reading this as formless practice, with a slight emphasis on body and sensory awareness. Today, I'm able to do it fairly successfully. My eyes do their usual high-contrast thing, and Professor Monkey drops by for several lectures, but I am able to drop those fairly easily and without much repercussion.

I feel that I can understand CTR's reference to boredom: it's refusing to "play" with my thoughts and perceptions. They simply play themselves. I see this as related to my Goenka retreat and it's emphasis on equanimity. By allowing myself to be bored, I refuse to add any energy to the emerging saṅkhārā, and so it begins to unwind, to lose

momentum and dissolve.

1/22/10
Yesterday I walked by the creek, allowing myself to feel my psychophysical state. ("Feel my feelings" doesn't seem quite right – it was body and emotion together: a sense of tenderness, sadness, fear, a lump in the throat.) This state would usually propel me into a poor-me storyline, but yesterday I simply let it be. This relates with my understanding that a feeling may feel alarming and therefore propel us into alarm, into a fear narrative, but that we need not do so.

Today, on the cushion, I'm working with formless Mindfulness of the body. I see that lopsided breathing, "thinking", and touch and go can all be light-handed antidotes to drifting away from that sense of body – breathing – environment.

1/25/10
Oh, boy, that was a thoughtfest! A lot of calculations about buying a house and was it a problem or not. Generally pretty calm (I did take an Ambien last night…) Occasionally I would return to meditation in a loose way and I would notice the solidity of the previous thoughts – how real they had seemed and how much I had believed them.

1/26/10
Saying "thinking" feels heavy-handed, and also seems to violate mindfulness of effort. By the time I've realized that I'm thinking, I'm already most of the way back to the breath.

Returning to posture is pretty natural. I feel I don't need to work hard at that, just include it in my general awareness. A sense of "here." In fact, I feel that it's important for me to be light about that. It's easy for me to be over-concerned about posture. (Yet more and more I'm lightening up about that.)

Lots of thoughts about the house. How solidifying is hope and fear!

1/27/10
Today, the utility of "thinking" is more evident. I kept planning an AT lesson for chorus. (This percolated in my sleep as well – a slight anxiety about teaching group class.) I realized that I could use "thinking" in the firm-but-helpful way I use "I'd like to sleep for another hour." (This derived from Missy Vineyard.) It's a way of clarifying my intention.

Noticed again how I sue my eyes to "follow' or even "push" my breath out. When I include the space above me and behind me, this tendency relaxes.

I/31/10
A relatively expansive sit – last session, I explored a little the idea of listening for space in the mind as a way of mixing mind and space. Not only going out (in all directions, not just forward) but also inviting space in by noticing when it is already there. Pretty comfortable in my body – some body-centered AT thoughts.

2/1/10

Discursive today with an edge of emotional heaviness. Not speedy so much as sad. I remembered to dissolve myself out with the breath, and a few times it happened that the sad/slow emotional clot of thinking remained, but now it was in space, like a stage set. A little ironic, not so serious.

2/2/10
A spacious, luminous sit. Thinking still coming in – fantasy lecture/master class in AT – but fraught with pleasant, expansive feelings, so at least I'm not beating myself up about it. I've let go of the sense of psychosomatic body as a problem. Today my posture felt easy, expansive energized.

2/5/10
Just a bit hung-over. Mild irritation leading to a sense of heaviness, centralization. Hard to remember to go out. I'm working with the second foundation of mindfulness: life, recognizing irritation as a simple indication of my survival, an indication that I'm embodying a certain energy. This fits well with the Maitri rooms, and seems like a kind of remedy, but it also seems like it's not quite in synch with going out.

Hmmm…maybe I should apply touch and go.

2/6/10
I'm seeing the foundations as antidotes. "Thinking" is the strongest antidote and "body" is ground – the solidified, centralized, most resistant part of experience from which one goes out. Just dissolving out is the antidote to this. If the situation remains very solid and "thinking" is not enough to shatter it, one can respond to feeling – notice the preferences, the sense of survival instinct. When that helps to dissolve thoughts, there is a watcher who is solidified – a residue of the antidote. The power of the watcher is lessened by self-existing effort, and dissolved in mindfulness of mind.

These can happen rapidly and simultaneously, leaving a shocking gap.

2/7/10
"Thinking" is more heavy-handed than the sudden awareness that I am no longer following the technique (or perhaps it's the way I'm using "thinking") To me, there appears to be choice in it: should I use the label or not – because some thoughts are so light that the don't merit the label "thinking." Besides, there's the problem of the endless hall of mirrors: "thinking" begets "thinking." "Thinking" seems to invoke a concrete watcher with personality and choice – in short, "Me." Is this different than the "abstract watcher?"

Today I worked with "thinking" being a little less sharp: not a slice so much as a realization that leads right into a sense of expansion.

2/8/10
I read CTR's essay on negativity and saw how it fits in with mindfulness of life/livelihood. It's the simple fact of the arising of I-don't-like-it, the ripening of past karma. One simply sits with it, without the storyline of "I'm a heroic meditator." This is where boredom comes in, I think. I haven't really gotten there yet. But I have gotten to sitting with the spark of aversion.

Today, there were many such sharp shifts, small embers of aversion, each carrying with it the opinion that something was amiss, and each beckoning me to an explanation of what was wrong, and a strategy of how to fix it.

2/9/10
Busy mind – thinking of AT lessons, then returning to the meditation technique. Working a little with dissolving the watcher – "going out" from different parts of my body. An exploded Tom, which results in feelings of sadness and alarm.

2/16/10
Solidified mind today – dominance and insult are the themes. I'm fighting with Gary in t'ai chi, expressing anger at K. I can barely remember to meditate. Going out with the breath helps loosen and dissolve the thoughts. They disappear almost at once then – Bam! – I'm in them before I know it.

When I stick with the dissolution, I feel the heartbreak again. This time, I connect it with Maitri and wonder if it's the heartbreak of letting go of entertainment, of letting go of attainment. Heartbreak at dissolving the watcher. I think – wait – it's not that nothing happens. Everything happens in this state. I'm not sure I really buy it.

2/17/10
Forgetting the instructions. Thinking. Occasionally, I remember to come back to the body and dissolve out. I don't feel as if I'm progressing. There's nothing to do. I'm not even cultivating boredom well.

2/18/10
More successful. Is that right? Still exploring boredom – seeing it as non-doing. Being willing to accept things as they really are. I'm seeing the relating back to body (sense of being: this situation) and livelihood (pleasure/pain, preference). Also to negative negativity: there's no problem with preference, it's the dialog around preference that a problem. Basically, there's no problem at all, just our sense of problem.

The arising keeps happening, just let it be. This is another way of practicing equanimity in the face of samskaras. I desperately want to control all of this, to *do*. Padma's sense of continual improvement, of getting things *just right*. I want to manipulate body and mind to get the best result.

2/19/10
An aside: LTG has talked about the "appearance" of emptiness in the path of preparation as a mental consciousness (actually, the SADVC of an MC). I wonder if this is like the counterpart sign of a kasina.

Today, I had a brief sit (shoveling snow). I wondered if each of CTR's 4FM were a kind of antidote. I also briefly had the image of the self as a candle flame: a central, flickering phenomenon appearing solid because it is so rapidly and consistently replaced.

2/20/10

A good session in which I sometimes stayed out and felt energized and optimistic. A thought: the foundation of feeling can show up on many levels. I can see it as a dense klesha: I'm angry (strong aversion) therefore alive. No problem: touch and go. Or I'm managing to go out and dissolve and I'm pleased by that (preference: subtle clinging). That's okay, touch and go. Again, body: can act as stabilizer for wild mind (breath calms) or can be integrated more fully in stable mind. In other words, mind can infuse body: boy is not separate from expanding mind.

3/8/10
Sometimes I lose the object: there's a trickiness about "going along with the breath" vs. spacing out or thinking. But I do feel that there's more ability now to both go our and not leave the body entirely – to go out and include the body; to invite space into the body. This feels like it's in the right direction.

3/9/10
Mindfulness of effort/the watcher. I'm seeing that the watcher forms naturally. There's no need to put a lot of effort into the fact that I'm watching my breath. In fact, that's another elaboration: not first thought, but second thought.

3/10/10
Working with the watcher. Noticing how quickly it arises and the amount of storyline that accompanies it -- particularly around irritation at things that must be "fixed" (Like the damned Scorpion Seal chanters next door.)

3/15/10
Listened to CTR last night. I'm seeing Mindfulness of life as the "juiciness" of the practice. It's the gas, the struggle, the liveliness of continual response to preference. The automatic retreat from pain, the advance toward pleasure. In this way, it straddles body and effort.

I'm also "thinking" that *all* the schools have body practices and that the Vajrayana schools may tend to reserve these for the tantric completion phase practices. Wondered if we should divide schools into Abhidharmic/Analytic/Self-liberated.

Touching into mindfulness of life or livelihood, I feel more juice and more interest. I think this relates to a sense of earthiness, of here and now. Not leaving the "bodily struggle" to enter a god realm of bliss.

3/16/10
Mindfulness of effort – in arising thoughts as well as in the thought "thinking." That thought cracked me up and lightened things briefly. Still seeing this process as "letting things be."

CTR uses "mindfulness" in an unusual way: usually mindfulness has an object and a sense of recollection, or at least not forgetting. CTR seems to us them as antidotes or qualities. Maybe it is "just not forgetting": don't forget that you have a body; don't leave it behind and search for a god realm. Don't see preference as a problem, but rather as fuel for the meditative process. Don't overlook the fact that the effect happens without your taking credit or blame.

4/1/10
I've dispensed with the journal for a while, but this seems worthwhile talking about. For a while, I've been interested in the co-arising of wisdom and neurosis (this from my meditation practicum in Maitri and Mandala). I've noticed that when I see a neurotic pattern, my tendency is to try to get rid of it, or at best to freeze it in an attempt to see the wisdom. I've noticed this in my meditation, particularly around the use of the intervention "thinking." I notice that when I use "thinking", I tend to freeze the last thought so that I can see it, and dispense with it, so I can get back to the breath. This creates a schism, the watcher and the (naughty!) thought. I realize that I can be lighter about it, but now I'm interested in dispensing with the freezing altogether: dissolving the watcher. It feels that I am capable of this, that I can notice thinking and not freeze, just put less energy into the thought-inflation. Let it stay alive and unadorned. When I've done this, my meditation becomes more lively, and perhaps less definite. Less stop-and-start.

Late April

When the technique is going "well" I notice a sense of spaciousness (CTR's "gap?"). There's space between sounds, quiet. I can invite this into my body and feel a sense of "aggregation".

5/12/10
Mindfulness of Feeling – noticing that I appropriate these feelings to a self. I also noticed the resistance to "bad" feelings. This is the same resistance that I noticed when practicing "SPS" and that I realized was the root of suffering.

Today, in checking in with my motivation before meditation, I remembered that this is a practice of non-doing, especially during mindfulness of effort.

Dathün Śamatha/Vipaśyanā Meditation Journal

7/30/10
Mostly sleepy today in the cushion – drifting into hypnogogic thoughts. For a time, I worked with Greg Smith's advice to focus on the soothing nature of the breath. Allowing the whole body to be breathed and moved by the breath.

Pain in my left hip joint. A feeling of it being overstretched. I tried raising the height of the cushion. Not sure that helped – I think it's more a matter of settling into the hip joints – more lightness. I'm quite aware of the way in which I continually correct my posture. I bet that's perching.

My tendency in earlier retreats was to try to hold on to other practices. Fear of hurting myself (history of back problems) led me to try to integrate Alexander Technique into my sitting. The Goenka retreat gave me faith that non-doing was the proper approach. I began to do less and less, to leave the pain alone. The only AT I would allow myself was to "point my spine at the top of the tent," and then to leave things alone again. I gained confidence in non-doing. The sitting

became easier and easier. Eventually, I became convinced that non-doing included connecting with all of the ayatanas (more on that below).

8/2/10

More joy, more letting things go. Smiling during meditation in the morning.

8/2/10

Less pain in sitting. The hip joint is easier. Oryoki serving is leaving business in my head, or is providing a focus for busy-ness.

Working with Allyn's instruction to drop into the torso. I take this in the same way that I understand "heart/mind in the tan t'ien." I can see that I tend to use the visual field as the locus of where "I" am. Not sure I have a conclusion about this yet. Dropping into torso seems to connect me with breathing. I also feel the emotion of yearning (is this the genuine heart of sadness?)

Still experiencing sleepiness in the afternoon.
This would continue to be a problem. For the first few days, I simply went and took a nap. After that I largely relied on caffeine to keep myself awake. Toward the end, I tried just falling asleep on the cushion. Allyn had recommended that on the premise that falling over would jerk me back awake. Generally, I found that it didn't – I tended to fall over and recover shallowly. Gross laxity can be hard to combat (see below).

When I'm acting as head server, I work with standing meditation – feeling my body relaxing in a somewhat chaotic situation.

I often stood with my hands in the walking meditation mudra. Constantly looking around the room, and at the oryoki umdze. I also tried dissolving out, letting my awareness expand. I realized that I had more anxiety about what other people were doing than what I was doing. I can control myself; I can't really control others. In general, I felt that the head server "holds the mind of the team." My primary job was to radiate calm.

8/3/10

Noon – Mostly working with the focus of awareness in breathing. I habitually locate that behind my eyes, as if "I" were a homunculus driving my body. I'm having some success dropping it into my torso.

The tan t'ien is inscrutable, but seems to generate warmth (physical, not emotional). When I place the locus of awareness in the tan t'ien, I experience a sense of power and weight when I'm walking. The heart center is brighter and relates more directly to the head and neck.

Placing the locus of awareness in my torso changes the way I use my spine. My spine moves, sometimes by itself, sometimes because of concept and insistence. [*I'm referring to a non-doing movement versus a doing movement.]* In general, it's lighter, and my body has more movement. At the end of several hours of sitting, my neck is sore. It's achy –

there's no sharp pain.

It's hard to write about this. It's changeable, and I'm mostly pleased when the thoughts are light and I'm not steering or repulsing too hard.

Oryoki planning is a great source of mental busyness, as is thinking about teaching t'ai chi class.
Throughout the retreat, Professor Monkey made numerous appearances. I often found myself giving Dharma talks to myself. They were quite well crafted and helpful, except that they tempted me into solidifying myself. Which reminds me that CTR said that the purpose of life was to solidify some area or other.

8/4/10

Delight in sitting this morning (caffeine?) [*Throughout the retreat I wondered whether pleasant and expansive sitting was correlated with caffeine intake. AL didn't worry about that, pointing out that Bodhidharma wouldn't have cut off his eyelids if he'd discovered tea first. Also, I had many pleasant and expansive sitting sessions as the last sitting of the day, and those were decaffeinated. I also note that I've just moved from close placement to more open technique. During the Goenka retreat this corresponded with much less pain in the sitting.]*

Sitting outside AL's "palace" waiting for my interview, I enjoy the temperature and light. A squirrel nibbles tassels of grass. We've switched over to raising the gaze and going out with the outbreath, leaving the inbreath alone.

I experience a sense of radiance – my self radiating – which is pleasant. [*This radiating seems like a hallmark of CTR's approach. One connects and appreciates.]*

We're moving into Mindfulness of Feeling. AL says CTR referred to the "pleasure/pain meter. She instructs me to examine the pleasure/pain meter to see how I grasp or fend off and where I'm bewildered. This turns out to be a little difficult. I notice that I don't grasp or fend off my sense perceptions so much as my thoughts. Interestingly, it appears that I grasp unpleasant thoughts (I'm creating a stable, reliable Me, no matter how painful.) For instance, it's not the sound of Falicja's cough that is painful so much as the thought that I might catch her cold.

I don't feel bewildered (or pleasant or painful) about most of my sense perceptions – they feel neutral. I wonder: is bewilderment failure to notice?

I'm feeling a little better about "boycotting the inbreath." I allow myself to go into formless meditation. But the alteration between the structure of out and the formlessness of in feels too rapid, a bit forced. [*I talked about this with AL later, and she pointed out that I could just go out with the outbreath and stay out as long as I could. No need to come right back for next outbreath.]*

8/5/10
Dissolving into space as a practice of non-separation. *[Here, I'm making a connection of this meditation practice with teachings by LTG, that the Yogacara school is an antidote for the obstacle of believing in separateness. I saw the practice of dissolving as one of undoing needless*

boundaries.] I'm recognizing a species of excitation – the lecture. I make spontaneous (silent) soliloquous lectures on the cushion. I think that I can work with this by going out into the environment more. (Although I think that the typical antidote might be to go into the body more.)

I'm touching back into the experience of space and spaciousness that this technique augments. A pervading quite in which individual sounds hang like the components of a mobile. A distinctness. [*I recall this feeling of spaciousness and of distinctness of sounds and sights from my first dathün. In general, CT's instructions seem to utilize space more than the other meditative techniques that I've practice.]*

I continue to work with lightness, letting go of much of the work of the technique. [*AL approves of this. In one of CTR's transcripts, he says that as the meditator progresses, the instructor is basically getting them to do less and less. Ultimately, it seems to me the goal might be to do nothing at all – to leave experience completely naked and unadorned.]* I experience bewilderment as a sort of clamping down on "bad" thoughts. I'm trying not to do that, and instead trying to leave the thoughts freely moving instead of trying to freeze them. (This reminds me of Hope M's instruction to feel the habit before correcting it. Also Maggie's instruction not to immediately and jerkily correct a posture within the t'ai chi form.) This also relates to CTR's "jerk". Perhaps the jerk can be smoother. Not jerk followed by clamp, but jerk followed by motion that follows smoothly.

Noticed EB reading in the shrine room. Momentary clench of disapproval. But followed that by relaxing into not knowing about what she's doing and letting go of need to approve or disapprove. Getting better at letting others have their own practice, whatever it is (or isn't.)

8/6/10

Working with dissolving into space. At first, I took this as leaving my body. This seemed wrong -- a kind of dissociation. I began working with dissolving all of me – inviting space between body parts, space around thoughts, around pain. Last night, I achieved a groovy, spacious, almost swirly psychedelic state. I liked it [*I thought I was achieving something good]*, but tried to neither cling to that meditative state not push it away in favor of something "more correct."

This morning I worked with this technique again and ran into the Watcher. I definitely did not want to dissolve the Watcher. I <u>am</u> the Watcher, I think. Panic and resistance when I try to dissolve it. I also work with dissolving in oryoki and post-meditation. This is much more difficult, but I remember CTR's instruction: just recollect, don't try to hold onto the technique.

Dissolving into space definitely connects with t'ai chi and AT.

MI interview 8/6/10

"Jerk" or suddenly coming back is Self-Awareness. All objects are mind, but that's the 4th foundation. The 3rd foundation is effort, mind, the sudden gap that is self-awareness before it creates specificity.

Look for that gap. Eventually, the watcher will become an abstract watcher and then a divine watcher. It's just knowing what's going on, without a knower.

Instruction – mind the gap (my phrase by way of AT). Occasionally play with Mahamudra question: where do thoughts arise, where do they dwell, where do they go? Literally. What is the sense field of thoughts?

Sometimes, during the interview, I had the sense that AL was glowing (like Pema at Omega) Transmission?

AL said that space was mind, the ground of mind [*TW: Alaya, the unborn essence]* She agreed that this was a practice of non-separation, but said that objects were 4th FM, and space was 3rd FM.

8/7/10

Working with dissolving Self into space. Not exactly following breath so much as using breath as a reminder or stimulus. Sometimes this leads to that swirly state and I fear that I'm creating something artificial and "special' – like hyperventilating. I try not to create the state specially, nor to push it away, either.

For a little while in the last session, there was almost the feeling that "I" had disappeared – there was just awareness in space. Again, I tried not to create this state (even though it seemed pleasingly in the right direction) nor to push it away. For the most part, the Watcher remains solid, a hovering presence behind my eyes, or at least someplace around my head and neck.

I've been working with AL's Mahamudra question (where do thoughts arise/abide/go.) It's clear that they aren't in the visual or auditory field, but I seem to conflate them with bodily sensation a lot. When I look directly at them, or try to remain in the mental field, they become quite ghostly and evanescent – the metaphor of writing in the water is apt.

8/9/10
I ran into the issue of renunciation today. I don't want to give up Poor Me. [*This is the self-pitying persona that likes to grasp onto painful thoughts of betrayal, failure, etc.]* There's something about the feeling of heartbreak that I cling to. Also, hen I'm heading into lethargy, I really want to sleep. I want to tumble into oblivion. At that point, renunciation is not natural. The only recourse I have is to invoke a cheerless disciplinarian: Iron Karl.

I'll leave this as an open issue: at what point (if ever) does the mind of ignorance (lethargy) and the mind of self-pity (pride) experience natural renunciation?

8/11/10
Meditated outside after my MI interview. Quite delightful. Later, inside the tent (where it was too hot) I realized that there might be some subtle laxity in my outdoor meditation: sinking into deliciousness. Inside the tent, I experienced a bit of discomfort

and a tingling over my body, and an alertness. Mindfulness of livelihood highlights this: discomfort as something to be appreciated, something that wakes us up and rouses our survival instinct. This reminds me of CTR's slightly-too-tight suits. Stay hungry, says AL, but I like to overeat and fall asleep. It's so delicious!

PM
One of the MI's told me he was having a difficult time, that he felt his faith in Shambhala was shaken and that maybe he needed to find a different path. He was clearly in pain, and I felt very tender-hearted for him. I brought that to the final meditation session of the day.

Of course, I wanted to appropriate the feeling, to call it Bodhicitta. However, even acknowledging that bias, I still found that when I dissolved the feeling, it didn't get smaller; it grew. This confirms LTG's assertion that compassion can be developed limitlessly. Whereas Poor Me and Professor Monkey tend to shrink in space and dissolve (like writing on water), my warm-heartedness did not. It stayed and grew until I tried to appropriate it (Making myself the MahaTom-Sattva.) Then it receded, but still did not entirely disappear.

8/12/10
Acarya's advice about Poor Me: rise above it. I think this advice is meant to be taken literally: take the Garuda view that makes Poor Me recede into the size of its true importance. AL agreed that she was, in fact, giving me the vipaśyanā instructions. I believe that this instruction is heading toward nature of mind practice. (As the Mahamudra question indicates.) CTR describes vipaśyanā as more concerned with space [*find quote]*; AL says space is mind. Therefore, I say that gap = mind without obvious object, or mind that is simply aware of awareness.

8/15/10

AL has said that traumas (or perhaps "things we don't want to see") get "buried in the body" and that meditation allows them to arise again. Refraining from engaging with them allows them to be released. This corresponds to the work with saṅkhārās that the Goenka retreat facilitated. (As does AT) I'm more and more interested in using AT to inhibit samsaric response to stimuli, to manifest anger, for instance and not manifest the head/neck set.

I've been working with sinking mind (laxity) in combination with the question, "Where is the locus of Me?" Heart/mind in the tan t'ien produced a kind of dullness or sinking. It occurred to me that I could also invite in a brilliance as well. Chi can be bright as well as dark. Allowing heart/mind in the tan t'ien to stay dark means that I'm missing some of its overtones. My understanding of heart/mind in the tan t'ien has been incomplete.

8/16/10
The practice of dissolution, of letting go, is somewhat antithetical to journaling. Brilliant insights arise during my sitting sessions, only to fade away (like writing on water) (At least I can claim that they were brilliant because they are irrecoverable.)

Working with discomfort: I find discomfort can be a spur to liveliness, and antidote to

sinking mind. When I get mentally gabby, I can contact the body, particularly the tan t'ien to bring a little more sinking, more earthiness.

After the acarya's talk, I was quite revved up. There were a lot of clarifications I wanted to make with regard to her presentation of emptiness. I have a lot of energy connected to view (this a species of opinionated ignorance?)

I also realized that since "I" couldn't see gap (gap being absence of "I") the best thing to do is just rest.

[An aside: I hold an opinion of the Vajrayana: since it leaps to the nonconceptual state, it encourages dissociating. As I write this, I realize that I have little basis for it. I just like people to do their dishes.}

Still working on dissolving from different parts of my body. Noticing how often my thoughts are conflated with bodily sensation.

8/17/10
Working more with the field of mind consciousness. My meditation becomes more spacious, transparent, sparkly. At the stupa Joshua Mulder (sp?) said that CTR was more interested in atmosphere than object. I see this in this meditation technique. In fact, I keep giving up more and more of the technique and instead dissolving.

Able to work with irritation more successfully (except now when I'm trying to journal – I'm annoyed at [Sarah and Robert P] talking that's distracting me from holding on to my precious thoughts.) I'm seeing the tendency to elaborative elation as belonging to vipashayana and the tendency toward sinking as belonging to shamatha. When I proposed this to AL, she didn't object. AL Also agreed that
"I" would never see gap, but awareness would. Gap, I think, is awareness with no "I" or perhaps a more fluid, transparent "I". A mini-bardo, from which a new thought is born.

When I follow thoughts in the field of mental consciousness, mind begins to feel vast. I can include body consciousness, eye consciousness, ear consciousness, mind consciousness. I'm somewhat disassembled. I had the experience of a Self that was not quite disappeared, but hanging around like a Lone Ranger mask on a wide-open field.

I feel as if I'm working on mind not too tight, not too loose and somewhat transparent. Not excluding sinking mind or elated mind, but including all bandwidths.

8/20/10
If you're not Tiger (mindful) then there's a Tiger you don't know about in your jungle, and it will probably bite you.

I'm more and more able to work with irritation as wakeful energy. This seems very useful. I am currently viewing my meditation practice as energizing all the available frequencies of my mind so that it stays alert, engaged and restful.

Accept what is given. Awkward is good.

I'm feeling happy to be going to visit my family after retreat. Warm and expansive.

8/22/10
I'm interested in the practice of refraining from unnecessary comment. It seems to me to be the highest practice, the fruition, being unadorned experience. I see silence as being a lesser practice, a form but not fruition: there is always motion in the stillness.

My practice has moved to opening to all the different consciousnesses, opening to the vastness of the ayatanas, particularly the mental ayatanas. When I do this, mind also seems vast, but at the same time "skandha-fied." There are too many things in my experience to have opinions about, and so opinion seems to shrink. I have the sense of a little persona, a clot, or disembodied mask floating in the vastness. Things get very floaty, swirly. I try not to make that into a project.

I'm able to let go of many irritations, to experience the am wakeful energy, and to balance them with the settled-ness of the body. There are some irritations that I'm not able to do that with, feelings of fear and anger. My mind seems to curdle. It loses a sense of vastness and instead narrow down to an immediate focus. Shall we call these Kleshas? I think so. [*When I told AL about this, she laughed and agreed.]*

Related to this: I'm noting how mind can get stuck on objects, to congeal there. I'm also noticing how subtle concept can be. For instance, I looked down the road this morning, and saw a shirt hanging on a post and misidentified it as a person. This misidentification seemed like a pre-verbal thought, an innate concept like "face" that a child knows before it has any words. Each time the t'ai chi form turned me to face the inadvertent scarecrow, I had a jolt of recognition: "person" and then quickly thought "not-person." [*I think that these are innate cognitive obscurations, concepts that naturally form from our genetic inheritance and our interaction with this realm. We have an innate predisposition to be able to identify faces, and we are presented with many of them.]*

I see, more and more, how mind and body are interlinked (CTR: psychosomatic body] How, in a way, thoughts are a means of creating bodily sensations. Mind playing body like an instrument, an emotional light-show. Often, it's hard for me to distinguish the boundary of thought, emotion, and bodily sensation.

8/24/10

In the midst of an elaborate fantasy lecture that culminated with the phrase and image "the marketplace of the world," I came back to the present, and realized that I preferred the fantasy. The marketplace of the world was so lively, so inviting, so full of sounds and smells and sights and exotic people. The shrine room seemed pretty boring in comparison. Why come back there?

Sometimes, it's hard to let go of fantasy: coming back to the present feels like coming back to school. I think this resistance may lead to sinking and sleeping. In order to work with this resistance, I work with view ad renunciation. I ask myself "Is this thought helping you to connect with this moment?"

As the dathün unravels, discipline becomes difficult: I'm drawn into chatting, then angry when I want to be quite (and take a nap) when others are yapping.

TW: There's no problem with thinking as long as you don't lose parts of your mind.

8/25/10

Ready to leave. Today I gave a mini dharma talk on seeing the breakup of the dathün as bardo practice. [*Notice your reaction: irritation, blowing it off, clinging. See all of that as a reaction to cessation. Be with it, but don't pump it up.]* I tend to get irritated – Vajra sees the breakdown of form, the collapse of the rule of law. Back to the good kid/bad kid dynamic. [*I want to be a good kid, but the bad kids seem to be having much more fun.]*

I really appreciate AL's advice: don't punish or correct, but go to where the person is and celebrate that. *[Given during a dharma talk.]*

My thoughts are a means of orchestrating the feelings, both emotional and physical, that manifest within me. The symphony of samskaras. I partially control it, but partially it arises spontaneously as the ripening of karma (and the spontaneous flash of self-awareness?]

I began working with heart energy and the four immeasurables yesterday. Today, I'm feeling tender. I am creating Tender Me, Sad Me with a slight emotional tumescence. This character seems related to Poor Me. As I sit outside of the Palace, waiting for my interview, I try to connect Tender Me to my heart. My heart, it turns out, is not so pained: once more, I see that I don't need to get rid of anything: just include more [all of me, why not include all of me?] and the localized solidification will begin to dissolve, to self-liberate. (Oh, but the localized solidification is so intense, colorful, meaningful! Do I want it to self-liberate? Let me enjoy it a bit more!)

A family story: I'm crying at night (sleep-crying, like sleepwalking.) My mother comes into my room and asks me why I'm crying. I answer, "How should I know?"

8/26/10

Shifting the locus of "Me" to the heart center and working with the four immeasurables. Things are more tender. My irritation melts more easily. I want to do more of this.

Analytic Meditation Journal

9/8/10
Body as support for Self
I clearly regard my body as a support for Me. I'm afraid of losing my body and therefore losing my Self. . But I would trade my body for a better one.

Open question: what is Purity? Shantideva makes a big deal about what's seen as pleasant and desirable in the body versus what is experienced as unpleasant and undesirable. (For instance, you like her hair, but not when it's in your soup.)
But pleasant/unpleasant is not the same as pure/impure, I think. Pleasant can lead to the klesha of attachment, but unpleasant can lead to the klesha of aversion. While perceiving what's unpleasant in the body might lead to relinquishing it, it might lead to desire to abandon it altogether, which does not seem in the right direction. Therefore, it seems to me that pleasant and unpleasant is not the same as pure/impure.

DKLN says purity and impurity are synonymous with contaminated/uncontaminated by klesha. This seems more reasonable to me. So another open question: is the body inherently contaminated by klesha?
With my current Western "scientific" view, I'd be willing to accept that the body evolved with its own propensities that drive survival and reproduction. These inspire klesha – my body wants what it wants and becomes irritated without it. I have experienced being drunk with lust, or jittery with anger. Fear of hunger has driven me to paranoia.
I am largely driven by desire for pleasant bodily sensations and fear of unpleasant ones. (This seems to lead toward mindfulness of feeling.)

But another open question: is my body inherently thus, or is that merely a predisposition which the mind whips up into klesa? My previous experience in meditation was that even unpleasant sensation might be interesting, not something one need give up. Irritation as liveliness.

At the end of this meditation, my body felt quite buzzy – full of chi or energy. The last time I felt this was after the Goenka sessions.

9/9/10
Still open with the question "What is purity? It's clear that desirability or undesirability is dependent. My lover's name moves me, but only because I associate it with her. Her skin is desirable only because it's part of a living organism: I wouldn't want her dead skin. I can see how this line of analysis could head toward corpse meditations and other antidotes for desire. But this seems rather incomplete. For me, these reasonings head beyond desirable/undesirable and head quickly to emptiness or at least toward selflessness.

I'm mostly using purity as "not contaminated: not the result of klesha and karma." I wonder: is my eye in and of itself afflicted? Is it not pure in essence: sure I project lots of things on it, and that results in klesha and karma, but what about the eye all by itself? Here, again I start drifting toward dependence and emptiness: I only perceive my eye as an eye because of my conditioning, which is the result of klesha and karma. The eye

mind that perceives "eye" is afflicted. Or is it really? Open question.

9/11/10
The body is not inherently desirable, and yet having aversion to it must also be wrong. Don't we recognize precious human birth? Practicing undesirability of body seems like a clumsy antidote to me.

9/13/10
"The way to meditate is to meditate that the body is impure"
I briefly touched on the question of "does the body have a nature?" This line of questioning is heading toward madhyamaka, so I steered instead to "What is the perceived nature of the body?" Whether the body has an inherent nature or not, I perceive it with a nature. And that perception comes from a certain kind of mind which is, indeed afflicted with karma and klesha. I definitely perceive the body as a support for Me. I am very concerned about my bodily sensations, about whether they will lead to pleasure or pain. Whether they will serve to be a good (pleasant) support or bad (unpleasant) support for me. This is the basis of klesha and the karmic acts that proceed from klesha.

I thought about the body being unpure as in undesirable. This made me think that that line of antidoting would lead to putting aside the body as not desirable to me. It stuck me with a good deal of force that his was backwards. The problem is not in that the body is impure and therefore unworthy of Me. The problem is that there is no Me. The body is just the sensations, pleasant or unpleasant or neutral (and in my Dathün experience, they are almost all neutral). Hard to put this into words, but it had a great emotional impact. Body does not need to be put aside. In fact, it can't be "put aside" without suicide which is contraindicated as aggression or ignoring it which is contraindicated as ignorance. Therefore the only way to "purify" the body of klesha and karma is to put aside the Self.

The meditation could be on whether the body is a proper object of desire or aversion for Me, but (it seems to lower-case me) the better focus is whether there's a me that's worthy of holding an opinion about the body.

9/15/10
A brief session at Naropa today. I'm working with LTG's instructions to use impurity as an antidote to physical desire. It seems more applicable as a post-meditation practice than as a meditation practice. It's certainly the case that I have instances of physical desire at Naropa. I'm exploring this antidote in the context of DKLT's assertion that the Hīnayāna Four Foundations is the exploration of relative truth. Once again, I get hung up on the idea that impurity in the sense of ugliness is not really the relative truth. It's a one-sided version of the truth, a caricature. One way of thinking about it did make sense, though: that impurity/ugliness could be seen as part of the picture of the body. Yes, it's alluring and pleasant, but it's also true that it's not repulsive and unpleasant. It's changeable and so is the mind that views it. So in terms of the relative truth, I might be able to accept the ugliness practice as a method of creating a complete picture of the body in question.

9/16/10

It still seems most reasonable to see the ugliness aspect of body not as its nature, but rather as an aspect of its nature. Yes, there are things I find desirable, but they don't exist separate from things that I don't find desirable. In a way this could lead to healthier relationships – I'm wiling to be in relationship even with the things that I find ugly.

I'm also susceptible to the method of division: I find that ass beautiful, but I wouldn't be interested in it if it was cut off and presented to me. In fact, I'd find it horrible.

I'm using skeleton meditation in post-meditation. I plan to do some after lunch and before class. Whenever I find a woman attractive (and that's surprisingly often), I try to imagine her skeleton. I don't find this disgusting, but it does divert me from my habitual lust-gaze. And I can accept it because I have great confidence that she does, in fact have a skeleton.
I have a hard time with an antidote that I don't believe to be true. Just seeing a woman as ugly seems inaccurate (just as seeing her as beautiful is)

9/17/10
Met with LTG this morning. He asserted that the goal of the ugliness practice was to reduce the klesha of desire, and refuted my assertion that the ugliness practice should help define the nature of relative truth. In short, he said, these practices can never give a "complete" picture of relative truth. That is impossible (TW: Abhidharma not ontologically exhaustive). Instead, they provide an antidote to some klesha or delusion. They point out how things are <u>not.</u>

LTG maintains, therefore, that I'm clinging to view. He says that "impermanent" although a "truth" in the first turning, is not a truth in the second. And "emptiness" the big truth of the second is not the truth in the third. Views are never the truth – that can't be described. The point of the ugliness practice, then, is not to establish a more complete picture of the individual (as attractive a view as that may be) but to reduce the klesha of desire. Only once the kleshas are "balanced" can one worry about the nature of reality.

I understand that not only do I suffer from the klesha of desire but as I saw in dathün, I also suffer from the klesha of view. This practice is challenging because it asks me to give up view in favor of practice. LTG asserted that Buddhism is not philosophy but Path.

9/20/10
I've been practicing skeleton or ugliness in post meditation. I find that it's helpful to imagine that the attractive women in question each have a penis. That usually discourages my lust. Skeleton works, too, but is more a question of me getting interested in something else.

On the cushion, I worked with applying ugliness to B, and discovered I didn't want to make her ugly. I wanted her to be a desirable object (that Poor Me has been denied). Once again we meet the question of renunciation.

9/22/10
Feelings are suffering. Today I looked at how feelings that seem subtle – perhaps belonging to "all-pervasive suffering" might also be suffering of suffering. I mild discomfort behind my shoulder blade turns out really be a S of S that I was simply ignoring. But interestingly, when I experienced it as S of S, it began to loosen, to dissolve and rectify itself. I was making myself suffer, and didn't even realize it (or didn't pay attention to it.) Once I started paying attention, the suffering began to dissolve.

I also noticed that I suffer from some sensations because I'm afraid of what they portend. In a way, they seem to belong to all-pervasive suffering, a continual suspicion of what sensations are going to mean to Me. Will they help me or hurt me? Therefore, the sense of body as Mine or as a support for Me contaminates all feelings, and makes me grasp or resist depending on my calculation of there benefit or harm to Me.

9/23/10
When I put attention on a sensation and notice that it's suffering of suffering, often time, I let go of it – the sensation changes and moves. I wonder if this is a recognition of the fact that I'm hurting myself, and then a decision to stop doing that. I notice that with physical sensations, particularly the ache behind my right shoulder blade that plagued me at the Vipassanā retreat. I wonder if I can do this with emotions, too.

I can see how suffering of change works with pleasant feelings. Even if a feeling is pleasant, it will change, so I might cling to it and cause it to become suffering. Or, even if it's pleasant, it might be replaced by a more pleasant one, and therefore become unpleasant. Or I might remember a more pleasant one, and call the current one relatively less pleasant. In this way, memory and the klesha of view contaminate sensations. (Especially for me, where the klesha of view makes me think I'm having the wrong experience and therefore resist it and cause suffering.)

I'm a little concerned that this practice might head toward making all sensations unpleasant, but I remember LTG's instructions: this is only meant to be an antidote to clinging to Bliss, not a correct ontological assertion.

9/26/10
When I work with seeing how all sensations are suffering, I tend to soften and release physical holding. However, there is a mental concomitant: I become fearful, paranoid that all feelings will be unpleasant. I have a strong association of suffering with unpleasantness.

It is more difficult to see pleasant feelings as suffering. I can understand that they may become unpleasant in the future. I enjoy the flavor of tomatoes, but after the one hundredth tomato, I wouldn't like it. But in the moment, it may be pleasant and therefore hard to see as suffering. I get it philosophically that there is a grasping quality to me pleasure that contains all-pervasive suffering in it, that everything is bound to a body that has preferences and aversions, needs and things that are toxic. It's hard to get that viscerally. Perhaps that's related to the above: my viscera are conditioned, in the web of interdependence and therefore are embodied bias.

When I really get a hit of pleasant-as-suffering, I understand that on a gut level (there it is again!) I believe that somehow I can make everything work out, that I can achieve Better Dating Through Dharma and have a blissful life. That my dharma is problem-solving and therefore samsaric. In a way, when I really accept that all sensations are suffering, I can relax. There's nothing to be done, no strategy that's going to work, so I might as well give up trying to be right and …. And what?

9/27/10
I was investigating my attachment to view. Part of this attachment is the feeling I get when I've learned something, when I have something figured out. It feels pleasant; I like the feeling. I explored how this feeling might be suffering. It was difficult to even go there – at best, I ended up at "doubt tending toward the fact". But I could see that I avoid the feeling associated with groundlessness (anxiety) and instead prefer the feeling of "having established ground". In fact, when I project what a happy life would feel like, I imagine it as very grounded, with a deep sense of confidence and contentment. All of these I associate with some unshakable view. I allowed myself to consider that that deep sense of groundedness might itself be suffering. It was shocking. I didn't push myself further -- I simply allowed myself to rest with that sense of shock.

I did take some comfort in the idea (the new ground, the feeling of view, the feeling of learning) that there was white samsara and black samsara, samsara tending toward liberation and samsara tending away from liberation, and that perhaps learning and right view and the feelings associated with them were sub species white samsara.

I also realized that many pleasant feelings were dependent upon unpleasant feelings and would themselves become unpleasant feelings and therefore could be understood to be part of the suffering of change.

9/28/10
This meditation undercuts hope. It denies that the future may hold a better, brighter, suffering-free state of being. It can lead to resting in the present moment – after all, there really isn't a "better" moment to flee to. Or it can lead to feelings of despair. I feel both. I sometimes relax and give up the attempt to find the perfect moment. Or I feel despair and flee to creating views, explanations of why this is all okay, or how this will in fact lead to Nirvana. The klesha of the day, it seems, is view.

It seems related to a Pransangika approach: it cuts away delusion, but doesn't put anything in its place. It creates groundlessness. In this way, it's quite different from the Satipatthana practices I engaged with last year. Given this practice, I can understand why the Mahayanists would consider the Hinayanists gloomy or self-involved. The gloomy Hinayanists are the creation of the Mahayanists, the shadow side of the Prasangika approach.

Above, I'm engaging in the Klesha of view, an attempt to put my experience in some sort of order that will create a happier state, a state where I understand, and therefore anxiety is quelled. Is this the Buddhist path?

9/29/10
LTG has given me a new instruction: note feeling without associating it with "Me". I am

surprised that I am actually able to do this. This morning, I was particularly relating it to bodily sensation. I had the sensation of body as a composition that could be arranged in any number of ways. I'll confess that I was also mixing it with t'ai chi practice: allowing this mobile to have as its center the tan t'ien.

It struck me that without an "I" it doesn't matter if this composition is insulted. That's like insulting a painting. It doesn't carry (although "I", the painter might.)

10/1/10
When I practice with feelings without a "Me" I experience "skandha-fication" again. Part arranged in a composition like a mobile. Or like pebbles arranged in the shape of a dog. A dog appears, but there is no dog. My body seems softer, more mobile. Can I bring this into everyday activities, like typing a meditation journal? I'm interested to find out!

10/3/10
Practicing without "Me". This practice brings me back to Now, because all of my fantasies involve how things affected Me or will affect Me. Dropping Me makes the feeling or sensation of the fantasy the object. Just as in Dathün, I see that my thoughts are a means of playing my emotions like an instrument – creating scenarios that reward or challenge some past or future Me. Without a continuum of Me, there's little point in running the elaborate conversations in my head, which are mostly testing out various possibilities for Me.

When I practice dropping Me, my body feels more movable. This morning, I felt Chi in my arms (that's been happening regularly) and in my legs, too which is new and which I wanted to grasp and make much of. Hooray for Me.

Idea for paper: Keith Dowman (talk at Nalanda Friday, 9/30/10) asserted that Dzogchen was the original state, not the result of a Path. Therefore all of these practices point at that state, all of them may bring the practitioner to a place where s/he can glimpse that omnipresent mind. Or rather, a place where that mind glimpses itself separate from the Me.

10/5/10
Once again, I notice that practicing "not-Me" makes me much more aware of chi, and a sense of movement throughout the body, and mobility of individual parts.

10/6/10
Working with a new set of meditation instructions: analyzing "permanent" and "Self". In general, I think of permanent as enduring in an unchanging way. (As in "This will go on your permanent record.") I don't think that my Self is permanent in this way. I don't strongly believe that my Self existed before birth, and I'm not clear that it will exist in any way similar to Me after death. Rather, I think of them as somehow related, but not my Self. Or I don't experience Self as that thing that might endure in some way.

Nonetheless, in the course of this life, I imagine that there is a Self that somehow endures. There is an experience of making choices, or at least of having the capacity (and responsibility?) for making choices. I am the guilty one. The one to whom credit

and blame is due.

There is the ability to somehow orchestrate my experience, to influence what's happening. I can tell what's me because I can make changes to me. And even as I write that, I realize that there's a lot of Me that's not amenable to change.

So there is also non-choice to me: I am the perceiver, the experiencer. He who suffers.

I find "Self" slippery. As I sat, I thought that Me might be primarily be a reference point, a way of organizing experience that made sense. Back to my old definition: the Self is a persistent organizational hypothesis.

10/7/10
I don't tend to believe in "permanent" as eternal and unchanging. Rather, I believe in permanent as existing stably with inherent characteristics that vary within certain ranges. For instance, I expect the Flatirons to retain their shape, hardness and location. I expect the floor of my room to remain solid, for my computer to display "the same" picture. One could argue that I confuse similar things to be one thing. I feel in my gut that things really do arise, ABIDE, decay, and cease, where abiding can be stable, predictable, enduring and therefore functionally "permanent."

In this belief system "I" am the one who is able to recognize these stable characteristics, because I am also stable. [My persistent organizational hypothesis is useful, and allows me to form predictive hypotheses about my environment]. However, I have to recognize that everything does change (however slowly), so that there is a fundamental fear that in *this* instance, either I will have changed or the "permanent" object will have changed, and I will not, in fact experience it in a way that is similar to the last time I experienced it. My predictions could be quite wrong. This could be a basis for all-pervasive suffering.

10/13/10
Doing some informal analytic meditation in my car. I realized that Self has value – I'm uncomfortable if it's undervalued or overvalued. (And it's almost impossible for it to be fairly valued.) I thought about my relationships, how I feared that my partner would grow old and unattractive. Yet even though I fantasize a She Who Has Changed, I still imagine that somehow I have a commitment to the She who somehow hasn't changed. Because things have characteristics and because they are changing all the time, I have this anxiety that I won't somehow catch them at the right season – either they've changed or I've changed. Not ready, not ripe, too soon, too late. I think that this could be a part of either the suffering of change or of all pervasive suffering: the intuition that since things are always shifting and therefore the relationships between them are always shifting: it's almost impossible to get things lined up so that they are at an optimal (let alone good) relationship. (This is definitely heading in the direction of emptiness and interdependence.)

10/15/10
Working with new instructions: particularly "Can you imagine something that your mind can't think of that might not be impermanent?" I used this in analytic meditation,

and it brought me to a number of insights.

First, I thought that it was rather arrogant of me to imagine that I could think of everything! I recognized that in my experience, mind could certainly grow and develop. It changes, therefore it must be impermanent. I recalled Shantarakshita's assertion that an impermanent mind could not cognize a permanent entity. If entity depends on mind, it would mean that there is no permanent entity. In which case, the term "impermanent" is basically meaningless, since it's a negation of a non-existent.

Since the question is about "my" mind, I thought that if I could develop my mind to the point where it cognized a permanent entity, I wouldn't be "me" anymore. That wouldn't be my mind. (Just like in dathün where I realized that "I" couldn't see gap. But that perhaps mind could.

I saw that "I" am after all dependent. The person, Tom, the mind that cognizes the varied elements of my experience is a product of those experiences, not separate. So, just as much as "my" mind belongs to me, I belong to my mind.

My experience at dathün was that it was possible to integrate a wide variety of simultaneous experiences. One can meditate on all the sense gates together. Therefore, it also seems possible that "I" could expand to include even a mind capable of cognizing that which is not impermanent. This integration would no longer be "Me", but me is always changing anyway.

10/18/10
It seems possible that there is a mind that I can contact with thinking mind, yet not include (these are slippery concepts, these concepts-beyond-concept!) It seems possible that there is some mind that is not conceptual, the dharmakāya-mind (per D. T. Suzuki) that is not et differentiated. And it seems possible that if I could include it (which "I" cannot do, but which could be done, or perhaps "I" could stop including it, which could feel like the death of "I", but, it turns out, "I" is always dying anyway – that's the point of the impermanent mind meditations) – if this mind could be included with the other minds, it might help them self-liberate, just as my thoughts did at Dathün when more was included.

I have the mental image of the coordinating consciousness arising as the intersection of the other consciousnesses. If this non-dual consciousness could be included, the "I" would necessarily arise differently. Including the dharmakāya mind doesn't preclude the arising of the dualistic mind – in fact it's the necessary precondition. OR perhaps again, the dharmakāya mind also arises as the intersection of all other minds.

It also seemed possible that this mind might not be cold, but warm and vast. The Christ-consciousness, the Bodhicitta, the Mother.

10/19/20
This morning, it struck me that LTG hadn't asked me to search for something permanent, but rather something not-impermanent. This thought launched me off into some philosophical speculation. It struck me that I might not be searching for an Object at all, but something that was neither an Object nor a Non-Existent. These thoughts did

not open me up to possibility as much as the previous meditations had.

Nonetheless, I have found myself much more responsive to loving-kindness meditation. I don't know if this is related to the meditations I'm doing on Beyond Impermanent. (Karma is complicated!)

10/20/10
New instructions: Examining whether GCPs have any lakshana or inherent characteristics. My first response is that they do not, but that the things that they generalize about do – this leads me into thoughts about referent objects. Strictly speaking, a referent object must be the thing that you are experiencing at the very moment, otherwise, it's a memory and itself a GCP. (I would love to discuss and debate this more.)

Even though GCPs have no inherent characteristics, they nonetheless appear to invoke responses. The thought of something that I have to do in the future, that I will not be allowed to do in the future, or that I failed to do in the past usually invoke all sorts of feeling. These non-things seem to have effect!

This is the basis of the Alexander Technique: thought has effect on the state of the body. I've been exploring how invoking a GCP gets us into a neighborhood or *direction*. For instance, scanning for tension in the neck increases awareness of tension and may facilitate a release. The use of the GCP creates conditions that result in changes to SCPs. Now that I write this, that seems to be particularly the case in the Sattipathana practices: they don't attempt to create an ontologically complete set of experiences, but rather use GCPs that are soteriologically effective. It seems to me that all paths must involve discrimination of categories that should be accepted or rejected, and therefore must rely on GCPs in order to be effective.

All of this, of course is very much related to my exploration of the klesha of view. I experience strong physical ad emotional sensations in response to view. I think that some views are *mine* and some not mine.

10/22/10
GCPs are patterns, and (as I recognized with shock and disillusionment back in college) a pattern is there because you see it. A generality says something about particulars, but the particulars are not really contained by the generality. There's a certain uneasiness there, each particular fitting in a somewhat uncomfortable way, not quite consenting to be so constrained. The procrustean bed.

The generality also predicts. This is what makes a useful hypothesis. The prediction also guides our awareness and helps create the situation, or helps create the pattern which we then see. (I'm recognizing this as I write it) Therefore, I guess – I almost hate to say this, because it is so trite – one really should try to see the best in people, to look on the sunny side, because one will inevitably see patterns, act on them and therefore create them. Or perhaps create them, see them, and therefore instantiate them. (When I left drum camp, I heard a car engine running raggedly and heard it as a conga solo)

10/23/10
Recipes, compositions, jokes – all GCPs. They're all conceptual frameworks for undertaking activities. The Path is a GCP. They're useful, and one can elaborate on them. I'm left thinking more and more that what one chooses to think about one manifests. Thinking shapes the mind. Practicing seeing something a certain way helps one recognize and therefore summon that thing. The pattern is there because I see it.

GCPs are not related to their referent objects in any meaningful way. They're not caused by that object. I want to debate this. I would hold either that a referent object is merely what one can experience at the same time as one experiences the GCP (seeing a specific collection of parts and thinking "table") or that any memory or collection of memories can be serve as a referent object.

In light of this, it seems somewhat absurd to think of MY opinions, MY compositions. If I were to take pride in my compositions, I would have to claim credit for MY SELF as the greatest one.

10/25/10
Began with playing with the Alexander Technique: making the seat of the self the prefrontal cortex. Noting the effect of that. Then including the heart and the tan t'ien, and then all of the chakras. These thoughts have effect. I began investigating the relationships of GCPs and SCPs. IT certainly seemed that GCPs could affect SCPs. My experience seems to bear out that the way in which I direct my thoughts creates an effect. Using a GCP like "softening" or "tension" I can bring awareness to aspects of SCPs (sensations) Do the GCPs cause these SCPs? They are at least related to the mental factors – I develop discrimination through GCPs. And these GCPs are themselves based on SCPs.

I fantasized a bit (standard dharma teachings in my mind) about patterns and how they arise. The patterns (GCPs) seem to arise spontaneously – CTR's mandalas. (Due to karma or inheritance or genetics?) There is even a pattern to the patterns that arise. I begin to use these as predictors and then think of them as laws. (Now I'm composing rather than remembering) But they're not laws, they're just observations, and created ones at that. I hold firmly to them: my view, my style, my history. And then the chafe begins: dukkha.

I ended the session with the conviction that all of these GCPs are compositions, creations. This somehow coincided (causal relationship?) with a sense of heart-opening. Swarming sensations (buzzing? Circulating like bees?) around my heart, and emotions that winked in and out without names, but with definite traces: gratitude? Tenderness?

10/26/10
More about GCPs and SCPs. Professor Monkey demonstrated that GCPs appear because of SCPs. For instance, if I were to plant corn in a row evenly spaced, and then were to plant another row behind it and continue the process, vertical rows would appear, as well as horizontal rows. If I were to plant the corn immediately behind the horizontal row – so close that it was touching – the horizontal rows might seem to disappear, subsumed into the vertical rows. These rows are there and useful – you could drive walk down them unobstructed – but only appearing because of the plants.

Breath seems so much a thing, and yet it too must be appearing contingently. Question: is that a GCP or a compounded SCP?

10/26/10
I am very excited by my meeting with LTG. In it, he asserted (or I heard) that conceptual mind is causally linked to perceptual mind. The conceptual mind arises and has the experience of perceiving a pattern. It mistakenly imputes that the pattern is there (which it is, but only because it is perceived!). The perception of the concept is not a problem, just the imputation of its inherent existence! Perhaps even such a concept as the coordinating Self!

Since concept is linked to perception, concept can, in turn, influence perception. This is what I do with the Alexander Technique. This is mind training.

10/27/10
Examining the source of my greatest klesha. It's not entirely clear. It seems to revolve around choice: what's best, what's worse. Better choices will lead to better feelings. Fear of not knowing, of being fooled. Belief in special – that I'm special and bad or that somebody else is special and got the good thing, especially the good feeling.

I may have to summon up the morning self-loathing and really examine the root of it. (And while I'm at it, I could "take apart the chord" and see what's in the psychophysical feeling complex).

LTG asserted that the path was not concept, but mind. The instructions seem like they should be the path, but I think LTG is saying that instructions aren't anything but suggestions on how mind might move.

10/28/10
Sluggish mind today (need more sleep). I asked my body what my greatest klesha is, and it responded, "desire." Wanting what I don't have, not wanting what I do have.

I take my feelings too seriously. I can summon the feeling of anxiety, and then I begin to manifest something about which to feel anxious. Some mistake, some thing I failed to do. I believe that there are circumstances (shifting, due to causes and conditions) that result in good feelings. I believe that somehow after the work comes rest and good feelings. I rarely project these feelings right onto the work itself. (T'ai chi – the meat of the action is in the transition, not the fruition.)

A kind of habitual sourness. And thinking that the sourness is a problem. Wanting to be something other than what I am. Imagining that I "be" something. Non-acceptance; resistance.

10/31/10
Impermanence plays into my kleshas. I fret over opportunities lost. I imagine what might have been with former girlfriends. The (happy) lives I might have led. Regrets (I've had a few). It's more what I mentioned above, the myriad variables that I believe I have control over, that all have to line up right to get the optimal result. The

impossibility of holding it all together, and the lacerating belief that someone else, that almost everyone else, has somehow gotten it right. (The torturing, inverse pride that I am the only one who hasn't gotten it right).

And yet the inability to tread the path of discipline forever. Or the treading of discipline only to find that I'm not quite inhabiting it – sitting on the cushion, but not meditating, doing t'ai chi but only on some surface level.

A feeling of staleness, of dissatisfaction. And dissatisfaction implies that there is a better place, a better way, a different way to engage. Yearning, which may be baby prajna. But unfortunately rather than seeing that there's another way to inhabit here, it believes that there could be a better here, but I've lost the opportunity. That someone else is inhabiting it.

A feeling of incompleteness,
Of movement misdirected.

If only I had the right….I'd be happy.

My klesha is padma – seeing the specialness of all things and believing that I do not have the right specialness.

11/1/10
My klesha involves the fear of choice, the perception of myriad choices, of better and worse paths. And the belief that these choices form who I am and indicate who I am. A fearful, confused person. A bad person? It reveals my *character*, which is perhaps unalterable.

I also feel the stab of feeling, which I interpret as despair. A constriction of the chest, a hot, sinking feeling. I think it indicates that something is terribly wrong. Bad choices have been made. I feel unable, *unwilling* to make the right choices. I drift, and hate myself for drifting. I hate myself for not making the right choices.

My klesha involves judgment. Overestimating and underestimating.

11/2/10
Today it feels that my klesha is jealousy. (Misery loves company: if I thought that everyone else were suffering the same as I, I would not be unhappy.) Again overestimation and underestimation: overestimating the experience of others, underestimating my own experience. It seems to me that I have not really accepted the first noble truth, especially the nature of all-pervasive suffering.

11/3/10
New instructions: looking at how "best" exists and whether it is separate.

Professor Monkey was very present this morning. I wondered whether he was resisting an assault on "specialness." I found myself in a debate with Lama Richard about whether t'ai chi could be separate from the great view of emptiness. I was referring back to Keith Dowman saying that Dzogchen was not the result of the path but rather

the crystallizing impulse. T'ai chi cannot be separate from emptiness. Views are not the path to emptiness, they merely point out the capacity of mind to experience emptiness, to experience non-duality. But the part of mind that conceives the dualistic conception "emptiness" is not the capacity of mind that experiences emptiness.

I waved this conversation away as yet more chatter, and then I realized that it bore on my question. It was a manifestation of the question, just as a view is a manifestation of emptiness. And I realized that my specialness would always be a manifestation of that same greater capacity – Tao, Buddhanature, God. That is the great non-separation. The desire to get the 10,000 things to line up right is Samsara. The experience of the arising of the 10,000 things spontaneously from the Tao is Nirvana.

11/4/10
It was hard to rouse my klesha today. It is associated with the sense of possibility, and the loss of possibility. But today, possibility seemed like a concept and not worth getting upset over. I realized that invoking the klesha often begins with invoking a physical state.

11/5/10
Having a few internal fantasy conflict dialogs on the cushion. I realized that I'm seeking a state of contentment and trying to achieve it by arranging outer circumstances. I could see that that's not going to be a successful strategy, that my relationship with the external circumstance is not separate from me. That felt correct, and that I'd gotten the view of "not separate" a little more clearly. Then there was a feeling of panic, of not knowing what to do, of not knowing how to get things to work out.

Later, I realized that I was still seeking feelings. I really have not accepted that all feelings are suffering. Instead, I think that contentment is a feeling, and that it's the one that I want to abide in. I wondered if maybe what LTG is advising is to rest in something that is not a feeling. Then what is it? (Is this the basis of my panic?)

As I write this, I remember the discussion we had in Meditation Practicum in which Olivia mentioned that she felt that she perpetuated suffering deliberately. I'm familiar with feelings: they're my world (as are concepts). Perhaps I'm panicking on some level because I recognize that the request is to give them up entirely and rest in something else unfamiliar. (But don't worry – the feelings will appear again.)

11/9/10
This morning, while looking out at the garden, it struck me that if I am arising interdependently, it matters what objects and people are around me. I must arise in dependence on them. It cannot be the case that I would remain the same in different environments – that hypothesis would make me permanent and independent. I remembered the teaching that it's important which companions you keep. This seemed like a possible justification for materialism.

As I write this, I think that probably LTG's answer to this is that more important than the objects themselves is the relationship to the object. (TW: story of the dog's tooth taken to be a relic of the Buddha.)

11/10/10
New instruction: find the phenomenal self of objects, which will be the object of negation of Mahāyāna.

This is a difficult for me. I find that I've already progressed into a view that there is no phenomenal self, that it all arises dependently. But I figure that I still have an emotional attachment to self of phenomena. One place that I noticed this belief is in feelings of anxiety: I believe that there are external objects that have "selves" that will cause me pain (or at least discomfort). Writing this, I think that I believe in the "self" of pain and of pleasure. The self of the Path and of my thesis. These are all GCPs.

In the course of my meditation I also noticed that I seem to believe in the self of my mind.

11/11/10
I spent a while trying to find anything that I could agree was a personal self. I can see from this meditation that my philosophical acceptance of the doctrine of *anatta* has been established. As I realized that table was broken down into molecules, into atoms, into condensation of energies and malleable bonds, I had a sense of dancing and pulsation in the room. My body also tends to get more movable when I thin of this.

Law as self. I still think that such things as gravity have a personal self. It's interesting, because I can certainly see that such things are GCPs and don't even have a self in relative reality. Nonetheless, when I think of Truth, I think of such laws, or mathematical realities. I can see that I also think that such GCPs as Anger or My Feelings for B have some sort of Self.

Phenomenal Self appears instinctively in that which can be agreed upon by individuals. In other words ice is slippery. "Watch out, you could slip on that." "Yes, I agree." Common consensus is not a vote on how things are, but rather an agreement that our experiences are consonant with each other. When Laurel asks me for a knife, there are several objects that I know she will agree are indeed a knife, and many others that she will agree are not knives.

Upshot of realization of no personal self or no phenomenal self. Perhaps it's in post meditation. If one realizes no personal self by asserting an atomic ontology, one may end up in post meditation with the idea that there really are such things as virtuous and non-virtuous mental factors, that there are poisons and antidotes. The realization of no phenomenal self (two fold emptiness) says that really there is no such thing. The danger to this is that one may assume that therefore there is no appearance of such a thing or effect of such a thing.

The above comes from my understanding of concept via LTG, and my interest in how concept is formed by SCP and in turn is a template for creation of new SCPs. Like a virus?

11/12/10
Today, I thought that the self of phenomena might be "whatever is going on" which can be viewed from myriad perspectives. I realize that this has logical problems, but it felt

to me that it accurately captures my unspoken belief. An object (or event if you prefer) can be viewed in infinite ways resulting in infinite experience. Still there's *something* happening there.

11/15/10
Today, P was sitting on my zafu. I had to sit on a gomden, and I found it less comfortable. This irritated me, and so had a good deal of momentum to my thoughts on what was a phenomenal self. I think I still go with that which can be agreed upon. Everyone in the room would be able to distinguish between a gomden and a zafu. This implies that there are characteristics that distinguish the two. Even accepting that everyone would experience the two differently, and that the two are always changing, nonetheless the characteristics are relatively stable. There's something that's enduring for more than a second, and that everyone in the room can agree upon.

LTG pointed out that an uneducated nomad would not have a definition of water. But if that same nomad were presented with a cup of water and a cup of urine, he would probably agree with me on which was water and which was urine. Again, stable characteristics that are concordant among a class of observers.

James Baraz lectured on the "essence" of a person as observed by others. I asserted interdependence: my characteristics only emerge in the interplay of myself and the observer. I'm not actually responsible for another's experience of me. (And yet there are ethics: perhaps it's best to say that I can have the intention to be non-harmful. I can engage in behavior which in general is considered non-harmful for a class of observers and yet still remain open to the idea that that behavior is nonetheless harmful to this particular observer.) R B told me that she led a game for campers in which one camper tries to guess who is being described by asking questions such as "If this person were a tree, what tree would they be." In her experience, the campers can usually guess who is being described.

I would say that the "self" is a predictor of concordant experience that has reliability.

11/17/10
LTG reiterated the instructions. It was a difficult session of instructions, because I didn't find what LTG was asking me to find, which is that Self is separate. Once he got around to letting me know that that was what the object of negation really was, I remembered that that was his major theme, of course. But now that I work with it, I don't see why this is any more than an aspect of personal self. (Singular, permanent, *independent*)

When I work with it in meditation, I notice that I experience more sensations of anger than usual. Maybe this is due to our interaction in the instruction session. But I also see that separate means possibly under my control, and possibly not. I get angry when I can't control things. (Of course I realize that I can't control some tings that are not separate from "me" such as my body…)

I also see that there must be separate minds, since I couldn't guess what LTG was trying to lead me to yesterday. Even in a system of interrelationships, there are distinct areas of organization that seem to act with some local autonomy. To a certain extent, this gets

us back to free will and determinism. If I'm not separate, how are decisions made?

I'm still interested in LTG's assertion of the appearance of concept mind arising on the basis of SCPs. This points out that mind does not arise separate from the physical body either, that it's not separate from physical sensation, or the physical chemistry of the brain. This lends support to Stephen Batchelor's assertion that Mahāyāna Buddhism tends to make a mind/matter split that is perhaps unwarranted, or is a first step in a philosophical argument that ultimately means to assert non-separation.

11/18/10
I was a little stuck on why LTG focused on *separate* for phenomena of self, since it is but one aspect of permanent, singular, independent, and in my recollection Shantideva actually begins by refuting singular. Moreover, in Milinda's metaphor of the chariot, it is singular that is also attacked.

Nonetheless, I did work with separate, and determined that especially with sound, I experience separation. I believe that the sound comes from someplace separate, and that it is separate from my consciousness, and therefore is rightfully predictive. (And rightfully may be condemned or praised.)

11/21/10
Meditating on separate. I could see that things are certainly separable physically. If one does not negate functionality, then one must acknowledge that some things adhere while others are separable. Some things, like my heart, are integral, others, like my hair are not.

Other people's minds seem to be separate from mine. If they were not separate in function, the Buddha could enlighten beings. People can keep secrets from me.

There are also objects that are hidden from me, things that are physically distant or otherwise outside of my perceptions. These seem separate. Also, there are objects that I cannot control.
I recognize that there are things that I don't consider separate from me, but that are also hidden, like the interior of my heart. And things that are not separate but which I can't control. Like my thoughts and emotions, or the quality of perceptions.

11/22/10
Today, I thought of separate as being *private*. My thoughts are private from another. This implies at least a functional separation. Then I wondered are my cognitions private from one another? Is my eye consciousness private from my ear consciousness? As I write this, I'm reminded of Jirka's analytic meditation question: "If the two are separate, where is the boundary?"

If they're not separate, then we're pointing at something that's not separate but has parts, which is coiling back on a Self, it seems to me.

12/1/10
What would be the self of phenomena? The thing that holds the phenomenon together. The plan, the thing that makes it recognizable as itself – like the score for the Messiah.

Each Messiah performance is different and yet each is recognizable as a performance of the Messiah. (Of coursed, this makes the GCP the thing and the SCP merely an instantiation. The thing that abides in space. (This makes the SOP independent)

The part of the phenomenon that is not my mind. (Agreeing that phenomena are not separate from mind.) In other words the part of the phenomenon that is not private, but is public and therefore independent (given that minds are private from one another, therefore separate.)

12/2/10
Today I noticed that each phenomenon has parts, which would have their own Selves. The drum beater has a head Self a shaft Self and a loop of cord Self. When I look at it that way, it's like the drum beater is a little community, and its larger Self seems quite questionable. I got a pretty strong sense of the argument Single and Many.

I've been struck by the variability of objects, and yet they are also stable. The Self of an object is that stability in it that allows me to experience a stable Self. I agree with CTR's assertion: we first create stable Other, which implies a stable Self. Or put another way, we experience a non-local, which implies local.

12/6/10
Phenomenal Self is that which is independent of me. It is that which is cause, not effect. Since it is cause it seems to stand outside of the web of cause and effect (not logically, but emotionally). It is that which I experience choicelessly: the hue of objects, their weight and temperature; that which, it appears, I can not change with my mind, but which impresses itself upon my mind. (Lots of Personal Self showing up here.)

Going along with the above: mind seems to have a Phenomenal Self. Emotions, mental factors seem to be characteristics. Essential Self and essential Other. If I posit them as non-dual, a non-dual experience that is interpreted into two parts (self/other) I discover that I've just pushed the phenomenal self up the experiential chain one step. Now Phenomenal self is that non-dual experience that gives rise to the appearance of Self and Other. However, I notice that things begin to get very unmoored: if anger doesn't have a phenomenal self, then it can truly appear as something else. Suddenly the ultra-flexible view and upaya of Mahāyāna begin to appear.

Perhaps consonant with that, my vision becomes very psychedelic.

A thought for my thesis shows up: First Turning is an exploration of Self, Second Turning is exploration of Other, Third Turning is an exploration of Space.

Analytical Meditation Retreat Journal
12/13/10
The beginning of my demi-retreat or personal intensive. I felt a lot of gratitude in the retreat, especially in reading the texts in this deep way. I was surprised at what emerged, the things that I was able to see. (For instance, it struck me that DPR's five points in his presentation of the 4FM probably came from this text, and were combined with CTR's 4FM in his presentation to KCL.)

I was also struck by how dense Pawo Rinpoche's commentary was. I thought three pages would be too little, but really two pages was about what I could handle. I also found that two readings was about sufficient. I needed to sit after that, and then do a third reading. I might choose to sit between each reading tomorrow. I also found that after two hours, I really needed to give myself a break, so I bought a chai and wandered, using Analayo's walking meditation instructions (just be mindful of mental state and disposition of body in space.)

I worked on LTG's instruction: what's the problem with the object of negation (In other words, why do we need to get rid of it? What's the problem with it hanging around? Does it really hurt us? If so, how?) Here's what I cam up with:
Purity – This creates a great deal of fear. I can be afraid of toxins, of organic contamination, of foods that are bad for me, and air that is polluted. This makes for a very circumscribed life. I can't work with "pollution," I can only try to rid myself of it. Ultimately, since I also include "polluted" elements, I will end up trying to get rid of parts of myself.

Purity is the path of fundamentalism and intolerance.

Pleasure – now that I come to write about it, I realize, that I mostly worked with the painful aspect of feeling. For instance, I felt quite viscerally the pain that is attendant upon the exhilarating feelings of falling in love: the fear of not acquiring, the over-estimation of the object of desire which leads to an inevitable deflation when that object turns out not to match the expectation. As I write, I also realize that there is a piece of rejection of the actual experience. Since the experience is not all pleasure, there's a rejection of the non-pleasure, a resistance to what is happening.

Permanent Mind -- The problem I found was inflexibility. Here I used LTG's idea of concept and how concept affects mind. The mind that perceives "permanent" makes itself rigid. It can't respond to the current situation. Or perhaps, it introduces another causal factor in the chain of dependent origination, and so the mind that arises is rigid, unable to actually respond to the other causal factors. It creates a kind of perpetuation instead of an unfolding.

Self of Phenomena – This was the most difficult. What I mostly came up with was that it's possible to use "real" phenomena" as a basis for a self that actually has characteristics and is therefore solid (substantially established). In other words, having undone the personal Self, on might find a way to take refuge in phenomenal Selves that recoalesce into a functional personal self.
I wasn't completely convinced by this.

It does seem possible that a self of phenomena could also reinforce pure (some phenomena are pure, some not) pleasurable, and to a lesser extent, permanent.

12/14/10
Sleepy this morning. A cup of chai helped.

I worked with the instruction to regard the body as illusion, feelings as dreams, mind as like space and phenomena as like clouds. Particularly body as illusion: I noticed that I

could decouple the sensations in my legs from my concept "legs". Then I tended to experience the sensation as something undifferentiated: a buzzing or swarming of chi. I am continually struck by the way concepts organize my experience and limit them. Concepts impose a shape on things, a shape that might or might not fit easily, and that compels resultant experience.

I'm very interested in how thoughts and concepts arise spontaneously. I'm currently seeing it very related to non-doing. These appearances arise, and I can let them go to change and dissolve, to recycle.

Once again (as yesterday, and during dathün) I noticed how my thoughts tend toward dharma talks: discourses on view. Is this angry or desirous? I think it's primarily a reaction against fear: I create meaning, underline it, embroider it, make sure that it's defensible, acceptable, even attractive. Can I interest you in a lovely dharma discourse?

12/15/20
Well caffeinated. I had read Analayo's section on views and also on joy today, and it infused my sitting today. I smiled a lot.

I was very strongly influenced by the insight of "not-non-existent" today. I worked with Pawo Rinpoche's commentary on Shantideva's Mindfulness of Body, going through the text and considering the arguments. They made a lot of sense: the body is not the same as its parts, nor is it different. It doesn't abide in the individual parts, and yet it cannot abide outside of them. Although this made sense, I kept also understanding that although the body could not abide in its parts nor outside of them *nevertheless it vividly appeared*, and that to deny this appearance would be a greater flaw then to assert its existence. The key is not to say that a body is totally non-existent, rather to understand *the nature of its abiding*.

Quote from text:
As long as the conditions are assembled,
This figure looks like a person.
Likewise as long as such is the case for the hands and so forth
One will see a body there;.

This investigation was full of humor. I kept seeing the body being negated, and yet popping back up. It was like taking a sword to a hologram. I did get the illusion-like nature of the whole thing. It occurred to me that the appearance of the body is caused: it arises through causes and conditions, but that the appearance was illusion-like. It has no causal potency. (Of course there's an ontological problem here:

The issue of choice and non-choice came up with regard to this causal potency: a pattern that I can see differently seems to have a weak causal potency (more GCP than SCP), whereas things I have no choice about (color for instance) seem to have more causal potency, and are therefore more on the SCP level.

I also worked with the question "What's the problem with seeing body as inherently existing?" I could see that one problem would be that one would be unskillful in working with it. Because one thinks that it exists, one might try to address it directly, to

make changes to it. But since it's merely emergent, based on other conditions, to work skillfully, one must work with those causal conditions. (Of course, one could argue that the causes themselves are emergent, therefore one needs to work on the causes of the causes, all the way back the causal chain into beginningless time.)

Another issue that occurred to me is that if one believes that there are inherent characteristics to the body, one will be looking for them rather than seeing that "body" is the result of characteristics, and not "characteristics" the result of body. I can see this psychologically: I might think, "I must have a true voice" because I have a Self. Rather than "I have a voice that is impermanent and changing all the time, and this voice is one of the characteristics that makes a Self appear." Perhaps I could be spared searching for such non-existents as True Voice, Life Purpose, Soul Mate and Vocation.

12/16/10
Working with Mindfulness of Feeling. Again today I was struck by the view of Not Non-Existent. (Morning was difficult: came in early, perhaps a little affected by liquor last night. Foggy, cranky, sleepy. Needed a couple of lattes to wake up)

I continue to be enchanted with the view that objects don't possess characteristics (do not bear their own entity) but rather appear because of those characteristics. A teacup doesn't *have* sides, a bottom and a handle. It appears as "teacup" because those elements have come together. In my internal dharma talks I often use the example of a triangle made of matchsticks. Is the triangle there? Yes. How does it abide? It abides by virtue of the matchsticks being placed in a certain way. Does the triangle have matchsticks? Probably not. Do the matchsticks make a triangle? Probably.

I struggled with the logic of the impossibility of contact, and came up with a couple of insights. One, there isn't an object out there that has characteristics that impress themselves upon you. This is especially true of feelings: there isn't a painful or pleasant object (In the commentary this is also demonstrate by relativity: what's painful for one is pleasant for another.) But what struck me as more profound was the idea that a single experience implies subject and object. Just as "body" appears because the elements of body are aggregated (and "body" ceases to be when the elements disaggregate), so the perception "painful experience" creates subject (sufferer) and object (Cause of pain).

I took a walk in the middle of the session, and had a somewhat psychedelic experience of objects as simply coalescences of qualia. I also got a hit on what Nagarjuna was talking about when he said there was no separation of "walker" and "walking"

I contemplated the question "What's the problem with believing in truly existent feelings?" I thought that that belief could lead to grasping after those feelings, and to believing that they might exist in people, views, practices. The disappearance of those feelings might indicate a problem with the external object. If feelings are truly separate and existent, one is victim to them.

12/17/10
A giddy, psychedelic morning especially the first analytic session. The analysis that I did on the body (not non-existent, but appearing due to conditions) is directly

applicable to mind. I had the sense of one-mind, a non-dual experience that nonetheless appeared as dualistic. It was hard to let it go, not pump it up into Spiritual Experience or Attainment. Brief visions (fleeting, daydream-like) of gods and demons; hope, desire and fear. I could understand why a firm basis of shamatha (or Mindfulness!) is necessary.

I believe that this experience is in the right direction. This foundation of mindfulness dissolves Mind as separate and truly existent with its own characteristics. Instead, it's like a candle flame, only arising because of other conditions (which only arise because of other conditions – it's turtles all the way down!) All kinds of appearance could arise.

I was a little stuck on Shantideva's assertion that mind was pure and liberated from the beginning. This became clearer in my last meditation: if "mind" like "body" is just an appearance arising because of conditions, it doesn't "have" those conditions. Just as a body doesn't possess hands, but rather arises as a sort of body in part because of the hands, a mind doesn't possess kleshas; it arises as a sort of mind because of kleshas. So the mind that arises doesn't possess the kleshas, and in that sense could be said to be free of them. The kleshas themselves are just appearances, themselves appearing because of energetic constellations.

The harm or problem in imagining the mind, as being polluted or impure is that one might try to rid it of pollution. In the first place that's putting the cart before the horse: the mind doesn't exist as such, so trying to work with it directly is fruitless, rather one needs to work on the conditions that give rise to the mind. Secondly, (and perhaps more importantly?) the mind that appears to possess kleshas is the same mind that appears to have been continuing since beginningless time. The karma one is attempting to purify is therefore endless (per Analayo). Therefore, the strategy of the Mahāyāna is to work on the conditions that cause the appearance of a mind that sees purity.

I actually did get a hit today of how Milarepa might say, "I don't see objects, I see pure appearances." For a little while, I could see that everything in my field of vision was simply arising because of causes and conditions, nothing had its own nature. Things were very vivid: glowing and not-quite-solid. When I walked in the hallway, through the art exhibit featuring freakshow images, it really did feel dreamlike. (Again, shamatha seemed very helpful, as it was difficult to simply abide in state and not try to pump it up as a sign of attainment, nor to push it away as entertainment.

In a way, this whole process seemed to push toward the Cittamatra (non-separation) and beyond.

I'm very pleased with the way this retreat has turned out. I feel that it really helped me to understand Pawo Rinpoche's presentation. Each day, different people showed up and meditated with me (today it was Dan Garbes) and that also helped me feel gratitude for Naropa and for my fellow Dharma journeyers.

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