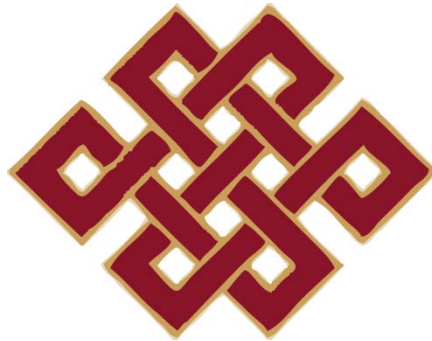


Principia Dharmata:
The Buddhist View of the Nature of Mind

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Without past, present, future; empty awake mind.
—Mipham Rinpoche

The crux of the matter. In the *Mahayana* Buddhist view of *Madhyamaka Prasangika*—the Middle Way Consequence School of Nagarjuna (2nd century), Chandrakirti (8th century) and Tsonghapa (14th century)—even the Ultimate Truth that is fundamental great emptiness (*ma-hashunyata, dharmakaya*) is not a frozen absolute, that is, it is not an essentialist, metaphysical logocentric idol or “false absolute” existing unconditioned and *independently* as an unknowable “other” transcendent creator God, metaphysical essence, or some vast substrate, entity, being or thing. Emptiness is not a transcendent, deeper reality prior to arising appearing form. Rather, emptiness is a non-essential *relativized* absolute, abiding ontologically *interdependently*, as “dependent arising” or “Interbeing,” a timeless infinitely vast causal nexus of arising interconnected causes and conditions (*vasana/quantum “qubits”*). This Buddhist View is non-essentialist. There is no *essential* reality at all. Reality is merely the relative-conventional dependent arising of spacetime mental and physical forms. Reality is then, relatively real, but not ultimately or absolutely real. H.H. the Dalai Lama terms this seeming paradox the “emptiness of emptiness.”

It is important for us to avoid the misapprehension that emptiness is an absolute reality from which the illusory world emerges... it's not some kind of [entity] out there somewhere... emptiness must be understood as 'empty of intrinsic or independent existence'... form's ultimate nature... (It) does not imply non-existence of phenomena but the emptiness of phenomena... its ultimate mode of being... the basis that allows form [to] arise as emptiness.

—H. H. The Dalai Lama, *Buddhadharma Quarterly*, Fall, 2002

How then does emptiness exist? Emptiness is established by our relative conventional minds. Therefore emptiness does not exist ultimately. Again, it exists merely conventionally, as the reified, conceptually imputed dependent arising of form. Emptiness is not some deeper reality but merely the conventional, intersubjective reality of the relative spacetime things that appear. Emptiness (shunyata) does not mean nihilistic nothingness or non-existence, as we shall see.

The forms of emptiness. There is then a seminal relationship of the Buddha's Dependent Arising (*pratitya samutpada/tendril nyingpo*) of forms and their Emptiness matrix base. “Form is emptiness, emptiness is form.” Shakyamuni Buddha taught three aspects of this interdependence of form and emptiness: *causal*, all phenomena and processes depend upon prior causes and conditions; *mereological*, wholes are dependent on their parts and parts are dependent on their wholes; *conceptual imputation*, all arising phenomena and processes are real only by relative-conventional interobjective and intersubjective attribution and designation with no *inherently* real or absolute existence. Therefore all arising physical and mental forms are merely the products of our social interobjective and cultural intersubjective deep background linguistic categories of understanding. With this view of ontological relativity Bohr, Quine, Kuhn and the Neo-Pragmatists would agree (p. 12 ff). Therefore, according to H.H. The Dalai Lama:

First, all conditional things and events in the world come into being only as a result of the interaction of causes and conditions. They don't just arise from nowhere, fully formed. Second, there is mutual dependence between parts and the whole: without parts there can be no whole, without a whole it makes no sense to speak of parts... Third, anything that exists and has an identity does so only within the total network of everything that has a possible or potential relation to it. No phenomenon exists with an independent or intrinsic identity. (H. H. The Dalai Lama, 2005, p. 64)

Therefore, all phenomena arise in dependence upon prior causes and conditions; phenomena arise in mutual interdependence of parts and wholes within the vast unbroken whole; phenomena are absent any separate, essential intrinsic existence because they exist only in dependence on all other related causes and conditions. And this absence of inherent existence or selflessness is emptiness. Phenomena really do exist relatively, but not absolutely. And again, all phenomena are dependently and conceptually designated, that is, they exist only by way of relative-conventionally reified perceptual, conceptual and linguistic attribution, imputation and designation. The relative world of form and formless form arises from our concept/belief "categories of understanding," all in the vast interdependent causal nexus of the ultimate, basal emptiness ground. Kant and Quine would agree.

Moreover, emptiness is selflessness, the absence or nonexistence of an intrinsically existing nature or self. Buddhist *Madhyamaka Prasangika* teaches of the "two selflessnesses," the selflessness of the person (*rangtong*), and the selflessness of other phenomena (*shentong*). The stabilized mind realizing emptiness—the union of *shamatha* and *vipashyanā*—is the realization of the utter absence of self-nature in all arising phenomena, both "self" and "other." This is the liberating realization of the wisdom of emptiness that is the union of the prepared relative mind with its ultimate emptiness basis or source. And this *Madhyamaka* Middle Way emptiness is none other than the Buddha Nature of the *Yogachara* school. According to his holiness the Dalai Lama there is no *essential* difference between these "two wisdoms"—that is to say, between emptiness (*shunyata*) and Buddha Nature (*tatagatagarbha*). Realizing emptiness we realize our intrinsic Buddha Nature. Realizing our Buddha Nature we realize emptiness.

The Buddha's great foundational teaching of no-self (*anatman*), impermanence (*anitya*) and interdependent arising (dependent origination/*pratitya samutpada*) are unified, then realized in these two wisdoms. And this realization is the happiness that cannot be lost (*mahasukal/paramananda/beatitudo*). Ignorance (*avidya/marigpa/ajnana*) that is Attraction (desire, greed, pride) and Aversion (fear/anger, aggression) is the non-recognition and failure of realization of these three that is the root cause of human suffering and human evil. This ignorance that is suffering then is a *conceptual* (*vikalpa*) superimposition or projection (*vikshepa*) onto our direct *perceptual* experience. Thus we "miss the mark" (*hamartia/sin*) of the timeless nondual perfection of the indwelling presence of impermanent, selfless, empty, interdependent outshining (*abhasa*) Reality Itself. The possibility of release from this ignorance that is suffering is, of course, the practice of the Buddha's Eightfold Path, as we shall see.

Cause and effect—the Principle of Causality—and its subset, karma, is possible only in a *Kosmos* whose phenomena is interdependently arisen and therefore empty of intrinsic existence. The Buddha's *Heart Sutra* (*Prajnaparamita-hridaya-sutra*) expresses the “fourfold profundity” thusly: “Form is emptiness; emptiness is form; emptiness is not other than form, form is not other than emptiness.” Emptiness (selflessness/impermanence) and the interdependent arising of mental and physical form are nondual, a prior unity. No emptiness, no form. No form, no emptiness.

Impermanence (*anitya*)—*gross* (long term change) and *subtle* (continuous moment to moment change)—is the truth that timeless motion or change is the only constant. We are not stable, permanent objects or entities, but inherently and radiantly empty causal processes, selfless quantum event moments (*vasana*), forever changing relative continua in the infinitely vast continuum that is ultimate Reality Itself. Experience is continuous change. From this vast matrix basis we—and our mind created spacetime reality—aggregate, arise, dwell, disaggregate and return. Full *bodhi*, full awakening is not realizing some “other” transcendent ultimate truth, being or creator godhead, abiding beyond or beneath the world of form, but seeing and knowing this interdependent, impermanent, empty, relative conventional spacetime reality exactly “*as it is*.” This primordial awareness wisdom of emptiness is always present. It is who we actually are. The realization of this is the cause of our release from, not adversity but our emotional response to adversity, that is suffering. And this freeing is the cause of both our relative and ultimate happiness.

Subtle impermanence is difficult to grasp. It is cloaked in the “cloud of unknowing” ignorance (*avidya*) that is our fear and denial of death (“We cannot overcome our death anxiety, but we can meet it with courage.” —Paul Tillich. We can meet it with the luminous clarity of clear light mind.) And from this fear comes the preconscious Attraction and Aversion that cause the negative afflictive emotions (fear, anger, greed, pride) that cause terrible suffering. Through mindfulness and the practice of the Path we remember again and again, and finally moment to moment that “samsara and nirvana are one (*samatajnana*).” We hold this awareness that our constantly changing mental life—the patter of our stream of consciousness—is the beautiful process of our intrinsic impermanence, and this need not be denied through conceptual superimposition of a false permanency. This awareness is our mindfulness. It is the powerful antidote to our fear of death. As our attachment to that illusory sense of self permanence is liberated, the primordial fearful self-contraction from being in time is released and we fully engage the adversity and diversity of the otherness of our lives. We come to relate with this “other” and with others, not as objects, but as if this all were actually us, which it is. This is the awakening to the Buddhist *wisdom of emptiness* that is our actual identity, our already awake Buddha nature.

The *bardos* (intervals) of life and death are then, a continuous unified process. Emptiness and its dependently arising phenomena—our concepts of the Two Truths, Absolute Truth and Relative Truth—are one and the same (*samata*) non-discursive unbroken whole, the transpersonal, transconceptual, discursively ineffable but not contemplatively ineffable, utterly nondual one truth.

Thus, impermanent, relative phenomena arise only interdependently from the infinite vast expanse of their prior causal nexus, the infinite potential of their emptiness base (*gzhi*) or primordial sourceground (*cittata, cittadhatu*). This Supreme Source (*cittadhatu/kunjed gyalpo*) is Ultimate Truth (*paramartha satya*) that is Reality Itself (*dharmata/chos nyid*). This is the ultimate mode of being for all the interdependent things and beings of the spacetime dimension of Relative Truth (*samvriti satya*). Independently existing permanent phenomena, arising *ex nihilo*, from nothing, independent of prior causes and conditions is not logically or empirically possible, therefore quite unbelievable. A bit of a problem for Western and Eastern monotheism. If phenomena were really separate and independent, how could one thing effect or interact with another? This is the intractable “interaction problem” of epistemological dualism in both the East and West.

Thus, matter and Spirit, Science and Spirituality—these two seemingly incommensurable paradigms—participate together in a dialectic that is one luminous unbroken whole. And herein abides the diaphanous beauty (*awaré*) of impermanent, empty, selfless, continuous change. When you really look, you can see it—the great outshining beauty of it. This is the basis of the sublime in human experience.

So, if the objective and subjective phenomena of reality do not *ultimately* exist and are *ultimately* “unfindable” after 2,500 years of philosophical, scientific and *noetic* (mind/spirit) analysis, we must ask how it is that phenomena *appear* to exist.

The question is not *whether* they exist but *how* they exist. They exist, but not in the manner in which we perceive them. They lack any discrete, intrinsic reality. This absence, or emptiness, of inherent existence is their ultimate nature...It is critical to understand that *Madhyamaka* does not say that things are absent of inherent existence mainly because they cannot be found when sought through critical analysis. This is not the full argument. Things and events are said to be absent of inherent or intrinsic existence because *they exist only in dependence on other factors*...In other words, anything that depends on other factors is devoid of its own independent nature, and this absence of an independent nature is emptiness... Nagarjuna says that things and events, which are dependently originated, are empty, and thus are also dependently designated...[He] concludes there is nothing that is not empty, for there is nothing that is not dependently originated. Here we see the equation between dependent origination and emptiness...the path of the Middle Way, which transcends the extremes of absolutism and nihilism.

—H. H. the Dalai Lama, *Buddhadharma*, Winter 2004, p. 20

How then do phenomena exist? The world is real, not from its own side, but merely nominally, by perceptual and conceptual relative interobjective and intersubjective conventional imputation and designation, the cognitive acts of sentient perceptual and conceptual liv-

ing nervous systems. Kant, Wittgenstein, Quine, Habermas, Wallace and Wilber have translated this wisdom of ontological relativity for the West (p. 12 ff, p. 16 ff).

According to Buddhist scholar-practitioner and philosopher of science Alan Wallace, this “intersubjectivity lies at the very heart of the Buddhist worldview and its path to spiritual awakening.” Buddhist soteriology sees the individual not as an *independent* ego, but as a dependent self—our relative spacetime bodymind—arising as an *interdependent* being process from a vast bright emptiness, an infinite causal nexus or matrix of prior causes and conditions. In this holistic Middle Way view the ego-I exists, as with all phenomena, not permanently nor absolutely, but only nominally and *relatively*, through its own cognition, namely conceptual imputation and designation. We have hitherto bestowed the epithet “Ontological Relativity” upon this process. *Ultimately* however, all the phenomena of reality are “empty of self-nature,” utterly devoid of any shred of essential or intrinsic existence.

Therefore, there is inherent existence neither in Being Itself, nor in non-being, nor in the spacetime dimension of Becoming. Mahayana master Nagarjuna’s “tetralemma refutation” refutes 1) reified existence, 2) nihilistic non-existence, 3) both existence and non-existence, and 4) neither existence nor non-existence. How then do the *Prasangika Madhyamikas*—Nagarjuna, Chandrakirti, Tsongkhapa, Mipham—refute the *Svatantrika Madhyamika* and the *Cittamatra* “Mind Only School” charges of nihilism and skepticism? Once again, nihilism is avoided by accomplishing the delicate balance between negating too much of reality (nihilism), and negating too little (absolutism/eternalism/substantialism).

“Existence is the view of realism. Non-existence is the view of nihilism. Therefore the wise abide neither in existence nor non-existence” (Nagajuna/Garfield 1995). *Prasangikas* then, make no assertions as to true or false, valid or invalid, existence or non-existence. They cannot even assert that they make no assertions. For example, to assert non-existence implies an existence to negate. A radical middle way indeed. Philosophers call such arguments “*reductio ad absurdum*,” the process of formal reasoning that derives a contradiction from a set of premises, then concludes that the entire argument is fallacious.

So, dependently arising spacetime phenomena really do exist conventionally—they are established by *interdependent* relative-conventional minds—yet they are devoid of any *independent* intrinsic or absolute existence (Newland 2009). Just so, emptiness itself, the conceptual luminous basal primordial sourceground is likewise empty of inherent existence. It’s not so much that arising form is empty, but that there is only emptiness. It’s emptiness all the way up, and emptiness and all the way down. And this we know, is the “emptiness of emptiness.” Yet, there is this impetuous brightness, this luminous clarity of emptiness, as we shall see.

Thus does Buddhist Middle Way *Prasangika* avoid the skeptics and the deconstructionist charge of “logocentrism,” an absolute logos—theistic creator God, Brahman substrate—the logical contradiction that is a dualistic logocentric creator idol or *eikon* essentially separate from its creations. If God is a transcendent, independent, separate “other,” how does He interact with His creation (the “problem of evil” and the dualist interaction problem)? Therefore, the emptiness nature of nondual Ultimate Reality cannot be primordially signified. Derrida’s clamorous critique of logocentric absolutes obtains. Rather, Ultimate Reality is empty of any

shred of primordially signified intrinsic essential existence. Interactions occur only in the relative conventional world of spacetime, the intersubjective perspectival dimension of Relative Truth (*samvriti satya*). His Holiness the Dalai Lama has stated that the Madhyamaka Prasangika is the only Buddhist school that does not reify a primordially existent, essentially real entity, whether mental/mind or fundamental emptiness itself. Emptiness is itself truly empty and cannot be a logocentric creator producing logocentric spacetime stuff.

Emptiness objective and subjective. His Holiness further distinguishes between objective emptiness and subjective emptiness.¹ Objective emptiness or the “objective luminosity” is a “non-affirming negative phenomenon,” the absence or negation of any independent or intrinsic existence, or independent self. But the Buddha’s Great Emptiness (*mahashunyata*) is not ultimately a non-affirming negative (*prasajya*). In the highest view of the nondual tantras—the view of *Prasangika*, *Dzogchen* and Highest Yoga Tantra (*Anuttara yoga tantra*)—negated phenomena appearing to a self as relative-conventional reality are replaced by subjective emptiness (*nay lug*), the affirming clarity and luminosity of the clear light (*‘od gsal/prabhasa*), the nondual cognitive-emotive yogic direct perception (*kensho, pratyaksa*) of the experience of the presence (*vidya/rigpa*) of the pure bright clarity of the emptiness of form (H. H. The Dalai Lama, 2000). The activity of this “wisdom realizing emptiness”—with its complementary the *Madhyamaka* Great Compassion (*mahakaruna*)—is the path to liberation from suffering that is Ultimate Happiness Itself (*mahasuka/paramananda*).

So there remains, after the negation of objective and subjective gross and subtle forms encountered through the form and formless mindfulness, quiescence, introspection and insight practices, a subtler outshining luminosity as the vast expanse of the Madhyamaka Great Emptiness manifests itself interdependently as form from the “primordial purity” (*kadag*) of the primordial ground or base (*gzhi*). For Tibetan Buddhists, this fundament of clearlight ground luminosity is the ultimate nature of Reality Itself (*cho-nyid/dharmata*), the nature of primordial consciousness, our very awareness essence or Nature of Mind (*sems nyid/buddhi*). Regarding the *Dzogchen* view of this ultimate base, the three Buddha Bodies or the “*Trikaya* of the Base” that is our supreme source (*cittadhatu, kunjed gyalpo*): its *Essence* is emptiness (*shunyata*), its *Nature* is luminosity (luminous clarity/*gsal ba*), its *Energy* emanates continuously as the great cosmic gift (*jinlab*) of compassion that is light/motion/form (*tsal/rolba*) arising, and in human conduct as wisdom/compassion (*thugs re*) for the sake of all beings (p. 45 ff and Appendix A, *Dzogchen, The Great Perfection*). “Within the essence original wakefulness which is primordially pure (*kadag*) manifests the nature, a radiance which is spontaneously present” (*lhundrub*). (Mipham Rinpoche).

Thus, we must negate objective and subjective arising phenomena. But again, as Tsongkhapa reminds us (Newland 2009), we must know and correctly identify the negandum, for if we *negate too much* of this arising, appearing reality we depart the Middle Way and fall into dark nihilism (*ucchedavada*) where our compassionate ethical precepts and conduct have no basis for motivating us on our lifeworld path. Here our choices and actions don’t really

¹ For some finer points of this teaching see *The Nature of Mind, The Buddhist View: Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen*, ©David Paul Boaz, 2006, www.davidpaulboaz.org.

matter. If we *negate too little* of this form arising from its emptiness base we fall into the opposite extreme of absolutism or eternalism (*sarvastavada*), reifying then clinging to desire-mind phenomena and failing to accomplish the liberating nondual wisdom of emptiness. Our separate self-sense, the narcissistic independently existing ego-I, is at first necessary to develop our view and ethical sense, Kant's "moral law within us." This sense of a permanent self at first serves as a vehicle for managing our relative conventional existence and our ostensible development or "progress" on the Path, as we have seen. "We must become somebody before we can be nobody." We must develop some "ego strength" in order to deconstruct the ego. But this self cannot be an independent, permanently existing entity. It is rather, a dependently arising, impermanent, intersubjectively relative, merely spacetime existence. Yet it is a real existence. Thus do the *Madhyamaka* schools of the *Mahayana* accomplish a Middle Way between these two destructive extremes that are absolutism and nihilism (p. 21, "Toward a Middle Way Between Modern Absolutism and Postmodern Nihilism").

But let us remember, "*madhya*" or "middle" also connotes a negation, so the *Madhyamaka* is the Middle Way path that is no-path. Thus we cannot cling to or defend even this excellent balance that is the Middle Way lest it too become the ideology of a "false idol" of a logocentric absolute. Indeed, we have nothing at all to cling to. Yet, there is here, at the Heart this gentle brightness—mirrored by the spiritual master—a support beyond all concept and belief. It is this presence (*vidya*) that protects and sustains the practitioner on the path to the happiness (*mahasuka*) of freedom, our liberation from the ignorance (*avidya*) that is suffering.

Why is this ontological negation of the self-sense of the ego- I—the emptiness or "no-self of the individual"—so important? Because it is our defense of the Attractions and Aversions of Narcissus, this non-essential but all too real self-sense that causes the fearful negative afflictive emotions—anger/aggression/fear, pride/envy, desire/attachment/greed that is ignorance (*avidya/marigpa*), the root cause of human suffering and unhappiness. "All the evil, fear and suffering of this world is the result of attachment to the self" (Shantideva).

The Two Truths and the Four Noble Truths. What then shall we do with this precious life we've been given? For liberation from the ignorance that is suffering the Buddha taught the *Four Noble Truths*. 1. *Life is filled with suffering.* There are different kinds of suffering: physical and emotional pain; the free-floating anxiety that is the preconscious fear of death; general dissatisfaction with the adversity of life; the suffering of change and uncertainty; and the suffering of the negative afflictive emotions. 2. *Suffering has a cause.* This cause of suffering is ignorance (*avidya/marigpa*) of the true nature of things as empty/selfless, impermanent and interdependent. From this arises the ego self-sense that then causes Attraction and Aversion which lead to the destructive negative emotions (fear, anger, greed, pride). 3. *There is release from suffering.* If we liberate ourselves from conscious and preconscious ignorance we liberate ourselves from suffering. 4. *The Eightfold Path* is the life practice that accomplishes this awakening liberation that transcends the flourishing that is relative happiness (*felicitas*, relative *eudaemonia*), and results in the fruition of the perfect Happiness Itself (*mahasuka*, *paramananda*, ultimate *eudaemonia*, *beatitudo*) that is Buddhahood.

In the *Prasannapada*, Chandrakirti's great commentary on Nagarjuna's *Exposition of the Middle Way*, we learn of the natural interrelationship of the Buddha's Two Truths of the Middle Way that are emptiness and the dependent arising of form, and the Buddha's Four Noble Truths. Chandrakirti reasons that, if we will first postulate the interrelated prior unity of the luminous emptiness base and its arising interdependent phenomenal appearances ("form is emptiness, emptiness is form"), we can then postulate the casual connection, the cause and effect relationship, between the first two Noble Truths—*The Truth of Suffering* and *The Truth of the Cause/Origin of Suffering*. This causal connection is the natural law of karma—thought, intention, action and effect (positive and negative imprints). Karma is, according to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, a subset of the general scientific law of causality—the Causal Principle—that governs the realm of relative-conventional spacetime reality, the reality dimension of Relative Truth (*samvriti satya*). Thus, from ignorance (*avidya*) arises concept mind (*manovijnana*) and with it the adventitious Attraction and Aversion that causes the egoic negative afflictive emotions—fear, anger, greed and pride—and attachment to the self (*klesha*-desire mind/*klishtamanovijnana*) that results in the causal, karmic mental and emotional imbalances that produce the destructive behavior that causes suffering. The positive emotions of Buddhism's Four Boundless States (The Four Immesurables)—the positive mindstates of loving kindness, compassion, joy and contemplative equanimity—result in a causal-karmic mental and emotional balance and stability that produce the behavior that causes happiness. We reap what we sow. What we give is what we get. "*What you are is what you have been. What you will be is what you do now*" (Shakyamuni, the Buddha).

Thus, according to Chandrakirti, from an understanding of the prior unity of the selfless emptiness and the dependent (interdependent) arising of form (*pratitya, samutpada*) we can understand the causal relationship between these First and Second Noble Truths. Then we may consider the possibility of a way to the final cessation of suffering—of its cause or origin—a path or bridge to liberation from this ignorance and imbalance (*avidya/marigpa/ajnana*) that is the root cause of human suffering. Thus follows the Buddha's Third Noble Truth, *The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering*. And if this cessation is possible—and by the demonstration of the lives of all the buddhas and *mahasiddhas* of our Great Wisdom Tradition, it clearly is possible—we can then postulate the Fourth Noble Truth, *The Eightfold Path* that is the mind training prescription or program of both gradualist dualistic and nondual practice that is the spiritual path. This path (*marga/lam*) transforms (attentional plasticity) habitual, deep background intersubjective negative mental, emotional and attentional imbalances or mindstates into our indwelling natural innate transcendent wisdom of emptiness, the *Prajnaparamita*, Great Mother of all the buddhas, the "perfection of wisdom" that is the end of this ignorance that is suffering. This is the great truth that realizes and actualizes our primordial source or ground state, and beyond, to the ultimate perfection of buddhahood, perfectly awakened state and activity of being in form that is always already present and fully awake within each one of us from the very beginning. "The child knows the mother."

The result or fruition of the Eightfold Path is the gradual ("brief moments many times"), then sudden permanent non-conceptual realization of the state of this conceptually transcend-

ent perfection of wisdom (*prajnaparamita*)—the luminous wisdom of emptiness. This state is decidedly not mere conceptual speculation. The weight of our entire contemplative Wisdom Tradition grounds this view and path in the practice of meditative quiescence (*shamatha*), penetrating insight (*vipashyana*) and compassionate lifeworld conduct under the guidance of, and with great devotion to the spiritual master. Here the committed practitioner takes refuge in the *Three Jewels*—the living Vajra Master viewed as the *Buddha*, then the *Dharma* that is the teaching of the Buddha, and finally the *Sangha*, the Buddhist spiritual community, as well as the *rigzin sangha*, the lineage of all enlightened beings of the three times. These three generate the *la/energy* that nourishes, holds and protects the practitioner on this difficult journey to the fruit of enlightenment, the compassionate ultimate happiness that cannot be lost. “The fruit is no different at the pinnacle of enlightenment than it is at the primordial base” (Adzom Paylo Rinpoche).

According to H. H. The Dalai Lama, all states of consciousness—negative or positive—indeed all phenomena are pervaded by this luminous clear light wisdom of emptiness that is the “wish fulfilling jewel” of Primordial Awareness Itself (*gnosis/jnana/yeshe*) (H. H. The Dalai Lama, 2000). From this ground it all arises, dwells, and into this it all returns, with no essential separation at all. The dynamic intrinsic awareness, this always present primordial wisdom heart presence of our “supreme source” (*cittadhatu*) is *vidya/rigpa*.

All limbs of the Buddha’s teaching have this one purpose—to lead us to the nondual primordial wisdom. It participates in and pervades all views and paths for one who is capable of accessing it... All things flow from emptiness, and return again to emptiness. This is dependent arising...the dynamic display of the mind. This is the true nature of arising phenomena, the nature of reality itself.

—Adzom Paylo Rinpoche

Let us then remember, moment to moment, wherever we go, whatever we do, the great truth that this always present wisdom presence is our actual “supreme identity.” *Tat Tvam Ami*. That I Am.

Knowing and feeling: the unity of wisdom and compassion. The Buddhist *Ma-hamudra*, *Madhyamaka* and *Dzogchen* traditions agree: nondual realization and perfection of the ultimate truth of the Nature of Mind (*sems nyid*), Ultimate Reality Itself (*chos nyid*), luminous emptiness (*shunyata*), Absolute *Bodhicitta* of the *Trikaya of the Base* can be accomplished neither by the ambulations of common conceptual mind, nor by reflective intellect, nor by the “attentional stability, brilliant clarity and joy” of contemplative quiescence practices, although all of these are requisite aspects or stages of the path. According to the highest or subtlest *Madhyamaka* and tantric teachings, even realized contemplative quiescence (realized *shamatha*) is not altogether free of conceptual grasping and contrivance (ignorance/*advidya*)—though it is often mistaken to be so. Mind training in reflective conceptual understanding, and also in meditative quiescence and equipoise must be unified with the compassionate heartmind of Relative *Bodhicitta* (both aspirational and active engaged)—the “mind of enlightenment”—and with the

parallel wisdom of penetrating insight (*vipashyana*), attained through the noetic contemplative analysis of insight practice under the guidance of a qualified master.

As these “two legs of enlightenment”—wisdom and compassion—are unified, habitual seeking and material and conceptual grasping at happiness, even the Great Happiness of liberation, are liberated. Now realization of the utterly unmediated awareness continuum—dynamic intrinsic awareness wisdom—that is always already present in our everyday “ordinary mind” streaming from the primordial base or ground is effortlessly and spontaneously accomplished. The ultimate perfection of this process is Buddhahood. (For extensive documentation see B. Alan Wallace, *Balancing the Mind*, 2005, p. 230, and his *The Attention Revolution*, 2006. For esoteric wholeness fundamentals see Anne C. Klein’s *Unbounded Wholeness*, 2006, and for the inseparable relationship of reflective conceptual thought to nondual mystical experience see Anne Klein’s excellent *Knowledge and Liberation*, 1998. For transforming the destructive emotions see Lama Tsultrim Allione’s *Feeding Your Demons*, 2008. For an excellent translation of Longchenpa’s teaching on the three *Dzogchen* instruction cycles see Keith Dowman’s superb *Old Man Basking in the Sun*, 2006).

To “spiritually” recognize, then realize and perfect this vast emptiness Nature of Mind—the clear light of the mind beyond the “web of belief” that is the mind’s mere cognitive contents—is to realize the temporal impermanence (*anitya*) of ego-self in time, and the utter absence (*shunya*) of it in space. The on-going failure of realization in the former instance I have termed *objective dualism*, in the latter instance, *subjective dualism*. The normal, unhappy result is the two aspects of ignorance (*avidya*), or “missing the mark” (*hamartia/sin*). These two are *secondary ignorance* or clinging to the sense of self (the ego-I) in space and time, and *primary ignorance*, grasping at reified spacetime phenomena as substantial, permanent, eternal and absolute or ultimate (Boaz, 2004).

Therefore, according to the greater esoteric or nondual “innermost secret” Buddhist View—*Dzogchen*, *Essence Mahamudra*, *Definitive Madhyamaka* and *Saijojo Zen*—this emptiness residue of self cannot be nihilistic nothingness or utter non-being. Rather, this reality is the prior unity of emptiness and awareness that is the very ground luminosity, the potential of everything that arises. This is “The Bright” of the Upanishads (“Upanishadic Monism,” Atman Self and Brahman are One), the monadic *gnosis*, radiant essential basal clearlight mind nature itself. This then is the *knowing* aspect of liberation. As this basal Primordial Awareness Wisdom (*gnosis*, *jnana*, *yeshe*) becomes truly manifest in the lifeworld as the wisdom of kindness, and then the permanent and profound *activity* (not emotion) of loving compassion (*karuna*) for the welfare of all living beings, it becomes, in direct proportion to that, our own ultimate happiness (*beatitudo/mahasukha/paramananda*), Happiness Itself.² This is the *feeling* or emotional aspect (*ishtha, bhakti*, bliss, devotion) of liberation.

² In the Middle Way (*Madhyamaka*) *Mahayana* there are three kinds of compassion: exoteric/outer, esoteric/inner, and greater esoteric or nondual “innermost secret.” The first is relative, directed toward sentient beings. The second, toward the ignorance (*avidya/marigpa*) that causes the suffering of beings. The third is absolute, the equanimity of resting in the dynamic intrinsic awareness of the nondual state of presence (*vidya/rigpa*) of the Supreme Source (*cittadhatu*). This compassion without an object is the innermost esoteric/secret unity of compassion and

The “always already” present, indwelling innate, intrinsic and spontaneous presence (*vidya/rigpa, lhundrub*) of this primordial wisdom happiness is who we are now. It cannot be found outside, in the past, or in the future. This primordial dynamic intrinsic awareness is the ontic prior unity of appearance and emptiness. “Form is emptiness; emptiness is form.” Because this emptiness base (*gzhi*) or sourceground (*cittadhatu*) is utterly untainted and primordially pure, all thought and concept, even our negative emotions are apertures opening into the depth of this all pervasive primordial purity (*kadag*)—if that is, we can surrender these defiling concepts at the instant of their arising. *Indeed, the great paradox (to the relative mind) is that everything that arises from this purity of the Base is already perfectly self-liberated and utterly free of conceptual elaboration and negative emotional corruption—empty in essence, luminous clarity by nature, and spontaneously compassionate in its expression. Thus, “as it is already accomplished” we effortlessly and spontaneously “relax into it,” this very moment (Appendix D).* Such is the Buddhist Middle Way *Prasangika* view of the Nature of Mind. And this, according to H. H. the Dalai Lama, is compatible with, even complementary to the *Dzogchen* view, the former offering causal, theoretical approaches, the latter offering practical approaches to liberation. And it is this *Prasangika/Dzogchen* unity that suggests a middle way between the seeming incommensurable paradigms of Science and Spirituality.

So, these two—luminous knowing and feeling—pervade the unity of outer, inner, secret and innermost secret (nondual) understanding of the emptiness (*shunyata*), selflessness (*anatman*), impermanence (*anitya*) and interdependence (*pratitya samutpada/tendril nyingpo*) of esoteric Buddhism’s gradual yet always “already accomplished” path to liberation from the ignorance that is suffering. Such a post-metaphysical, post-transcendental understanding was perfectly expressed 800 years ago by Soto Zen Patriarch Dōgen:

Midnight. No waves
No Wind. The empty boat
Flooded with moonlight.

the wisdom of emptiness. From emptiness, compassion spontaneously arises. Through compassion, emptiness is realized. There is no essential difference. They are the same (*samata*), a prior unity.

A Glimpse of the Great Perfection³

The nature of mind is the unity of awareness and emptiness...
The nature of mind is clear light.

—Shakyamuni Buddha

In order to lead living beings to understanding
I taught all the different *yanas*...

—Shakyamuni Buddha (*Lankavatara Sutra*)

Dharma in a cold climate: the supreme teaching. In the ancient *Nyingma* tradition of Tibetan Buddhism the traditional Three Vehicles of Buddhahood—*Hinayana/Theravada*, *Mahayana*, and *Vajrayana* are viewed as the nine vehicles to liberation/enlightenment. According to H.H. The Dalai Lama the first eight vehicles utilize our ordinary obstructed mind as the causal path to enlightenment and ultimately Buddhahood. Such renunciation and transformation takes many lifetimes. However, in the Fruitional Vehicle the mind itself is primordially pure and always already Buddha from the very beginning. This subtlest and most direct vehicle, the Ati Yoga of *Dzogchen*, the Great Perfection utilizes our already present dynamic intrinsic Primordial Awareness Wisdom as the path. This path is considered by most Buddhist masters to be the pinnacle of all of the Buddhist vehicles to liberation and may, under the most auspicious circumstances, be accomplished in a single lifetime. This wisdom is the “unchanging *rigpa* awareness” that is no other than Samantabhadra (Kuntazangpo), the primordial *Dharmakaya* (perfect body of truth, empty in essence and the very nature of mind) Adi Buddha who is our pristine fundamental original nature, our “innate mind of clear light,” primordially pure and utterly untainted by the karmic winds of conceptual thought and negative emotion (Longchen Rabjam 2007). This numinous luminous presence of *vidya/rigpa* awareness wisdom is inherently present in all human beings. Indeed, all the arising phenomena of ordinary mind always are this pristine primordial wisdom awareness. That is the actual nature of all phenomena. And that is the supreme identity of human beings, without a single exception.

The most important way to understand the Great Perfection is in terms of essence, nature and compassionate energy according to which the essence is primordial purity and the nature is spontaneous presence... all the phe-

³ See Appendix A and *The Buddhist View: Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen* ©David Paul Boaz, 2006 at www.davidpaulboaz.org, and Appendix A below. ***Dzogchen* Caveat:** Contemporary *Nyingma* masters warn that the *Dzogchen* view and practice is often misunderstood to be an antinomian, nihilistic denial of reality. Thus it is urgent that the actual practices of *Trekchö* and *Tögal* not be approached without the guidance of a qualified *Dzogchen* master. This teaching cannot be learned, let alone accomplished, from books and intellectual speculation. The great and precious knowledge treasure that is the Great Perfection is decidedly not a conceptual enterprise. Although the presence of the dynamic intrinsic awareness that is the luminous Nature of Mind abides now and always in ordinary mind, the ultimate realization of That requires, paradoxically, extensive “gradualist” tantric practice with a master, which in due course reveals the great paradox (to conceptual mind) that “it is already accomplished;” that which you seek is always already present from the very beginning. *E Ma Ho. Mahasukaho!*

nomena of samsara, nirvana and the path are, by their very nature, the rigpa awareness that is the primordial buddha Samantabhadra, and they are never outside of the primordial expanse of buddhahood... This the fundamental innate mind of clear light.

—H. H. The Dalai Lama in Longchen Rabjam 2007 p. 78

According to Sogyal Rinpoche (1992), Dzogchen is “the primordial state, the state of total awakening that is the heart-essence of all the Buddhas and all spiritual paths, and the summit of an individual’s spiritual evolution.” Therefore the practice of *Dzogchen* is the recognition, then realization of our always present inherent Buddha Nature, which is who we actually are from the very beginning.

Buddha cognition. According to H. H. The Dalai Lama, the subtlest view of the *Nyingma* lineage’s tantric Buddhist teaching is *Ati Dzogchen* (*Dzogpachenpo*, *Mahasandhi*) the Great Perfection. And the *Essence Mahamundra* of the Kagyu School, and the *Madhyamaka of the Definitive Meaning* are essentially the same as *Dzogchen* as to the View and the fruit or result, namely Buddhahood. On the *Dzogchen* view the realm of Relative Truth (*samvriti satya*)—form (objective reality) and formless form (mental and subjective experience)—arises from its primordial energy (*jnana prana*) within the perfectly subjective pristine cognition of the vast expanse of Reality Itself (*dharmadhatujnana/chos byings yeshe*). According to His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche (1991) this unity of the absolute space of arising phenomena (*dharmadhatu/chos byings*) with primordial consciousness itself, is the luminosity of clearlight primordial awareness wisdom (*gnosis/jnana/yeshe*), utterly free of conceptual elaboration and negative emotion. This is the perfect sphere of *Dzogchen*. This Ultimate Reality (*dharmata/cho nyid*) is the *Madhyamaka* luminous emptiness (*shunyata*) that is the inherent nature of relative spacetime phenomena (*dharmal/chos*) whose apparitional or illusory face (*dharmil/cho can*) emerges from its primordial purity (*kadag*) of the emptiness base (*gzhi*) as the limited consciousness of sentient beings who perceive, then reify, then conceptually designate (*maya/ignorance/ajnana/marigpa*) these appearances as the seemingly substantial phenomena of a reified, imputed, permanent, absolute and substantial everyday intersubjective relative-conventional reality. Yet all such instantiation of phenomenal consciousness is “always already” illumined by the radiant original face of this primordial awareness wisdom (*jnana/yeshe*) that is their (our) intrinsic actual nature, the very nature of mind (*cittata/sems nyid*). And That (*Tat/Sat*) is not other than the perfect sphere of *Dzogchen*, the Great Perfection.

In this profound and subtle “practice of Ati Yoga, which is also secret such that only the fortunate can understand it,” Buddhahood (Buddha-nature/*buddhadhatu*) is accomplished, according to His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche, when the fundamental, primal intrinsic awareness (*vidya/rigpa*) of the Buddha Body of Reality Itself (*dharmakaya/chos-ku*) is liberated, exactly as it is, directly here and now through the continuity of recognition—“brief moments many times”—realization and perfection of the primordially pure body of Samantabhadra (Kuntazangpo), the *Dharmakaya* Buddha, who is none other than the pristine cognition of the supreme reality that is *dharmadhatu*, the vast Absolute Space of all phenomena, beyond belief,

always already present as whatever arises in this very moment now, here in this very human body of light (*rang rig/rang rigpa*). In the words of great 14th century *Nyingma* master Longchen Rabjam (Longchenpa):

“Naturally occurring timeless awareness—utterly lucid awakened mind—is something marvelous and superb, primordially and spontaneously present. It is the treasury from which comes the universe of appearances and possibilities, whether samsara or nirvana. Homage to the unwavering state, free of elaboration.”

—Longchen Rabjam (2001)

This clearlight (*'od gsal*) absolute space (*chos byings*) of phenomena that is Ultimate Truth (*paramartha satya*) must not be conflated with the material, contingent relative dimension of spacetime that arises within and through it. The prior unity of these conceptual “Two Truths” that is the nonconceptual all-embracing one truth, the perfect nondual sphere of *Dzogchen*, is ontologically prior, subsuming, transcending yet embracing and pervading the physical and mental spacetime dimension, including the “space particles” of the ground state of the quasiphenomenal Unified Quantum Vacuum. *The great paradoxical (to concept-mind) conclusion then is this: ultimately there is no difference! In the pristine cognition of equality—Buddha cognition (samatajnana/nyam-nyid yeshe—the Two Truths are equal. One and the same. An ontic prior unity. The primal duality of the conceptual binary that is the Two Truths is resolved in this one great, conceptually ineffable but not contemplatively ineffable nondual truth. “There is not the slightest difference between samsara and nirvana” (Nagarjuna).*

The Unified Quantum Vacuum and the Great Perfection. Thus, from this ultimate view, the Zero Point Energy of the Unified Quantum Vacuum arises from the *alayavijnana*, the substrate consciousness that arises from the primordial wisdom consciousness (*jnana/yeshe*) that is not other than the emptiness base (*gzhi*), the *Trikaya* of the Base. And from this Quantum Vacuum arises *citta/sems*, the human bodymind along with the *kosmic* gift that is the entire spacetime mansion of Relative Truth (*samvriti satya*). These are the three consciousness dimensions—*citta, alaya and jnana*—of the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist view. O wonder of wonders, all beings are Buddha, *samsara* and *nirvana* are One! And all this, always here, now outshines perfectly just as it is, the natural state, ordinary “natural mind” the very nature of your (our) mind. So, as we surrender (*wu-wei, pistis/faith*) and relax into it, great joy (*mahasuka*). Nothing special (*wu shin*). *As we begin to see this post-transcendental, post-metaphysical, “ordinary mind” as the vast numinous primordial nature of reality—the very Nature of Mind—we wake up. “Now we spontaneously generate the love that is truly a refuge for all living beings.” (Vimalakirti).*

Again the great omniscient master Longchenpa transmits to us this supreme primordial wisdom (*gnosis, jnana, yeshe*) that is this very nature of mind (*citatta, sems nyid*), of *Kosmos*, of the vast infinite expanse of Reality Itself (*dharmata, cho nyid*).

Self arising wisdom is *rigpa* that is empty, clear and free from all elaboration, like an immaculate sphere of crystal... It does not analyze objects...

By simply identifying that non-conceptual, pristine, naked rigpa, you realize there is nothing other than this nature... This is non-dual self-arising wisdom... Like a reflection in a mirror, when objects and perceptions manifest to rigpa, that pristine and naked awareness which does not proliferate into thought is called the inner power (*tsal*), the responsiveness that is the ground (*gzhi*) for all the arising of things... For a yogin who realizes the naked meaning of Dzogpachenpo, rigpa is fresh, pure and naked, and objects may manifest and appear within rigpa, but it does not lose itself externally to those objects.

—Longchen Rabjam, *The Treasury of the Dharmadhatu* (Commentary), Adzom Chögar edition (quoted in H. H. the Dalai Lama, *Dzogchen*, 2000)

Basic Principles. According to recent Tibetan *Dzogchen rime* master Tulku Urgen Rinpoche, the two innermost principles of *Dzogchen* are Basic Space (*dharmadhatu/chos byings*) and Awareness (*vidya/rigpa*). This Basic Space is pregnant luminous emptiness, the unity of emptiness (*shunyata*) and the clearlight luminosity (*'od gsal*). In *Dzogchen*, the innermost secret realization of Basic Space is *klong*, the infinite “vast expanse” of Reality Itself, transcending all conceptual elaboration, judgement and bias, beyond even the subtlest subject-object duality, beyond objective and subjective emptiness, beyond ground and path luminosity (Boaz, 2004).

As space pervades, so awareness pervades... like space, rigpa is all-encompassing... Just as beings are all pervaded by space, rigpa pervades the minds of beings... Basic space is the absence of mental constructs, while awareness is the knowing of this absence of constructs, recognizing the complete emptiness of mind essence... The ultimate dharma is the realization of the indivisibility of basic space and awareness [that is] Samantabhadra.

—Tulku Urgyen (*As It is*, Vol. I, 1999 and *Rainbow Painting*, 1995)

So Basic Space and Primordial Awareness Wisdom are a prior ontological unity. Emptiness and the clear light are a unity. According to the Third Dodrupchen Jigme Tenpe Nyima “the *rigpa* taught in the *Nyingma Dzogchen* approach and the wisdom of clear light (*Mahamudra/Anuttara-yoga-tantra*) are one and the same.”

In *Dzogchen*, on the basis of the clear light itself, the way in which the clear light abides is made vivid and certain by the aspect of *rigpa* or knowing. That is free from any overlay of delusion and from any corrupting effect due to conceptual thoughts, that will inhibit the experience of clear light... It is not accomplished as something new, as a result of circumstances and conditions, but is present from the very outset. . .an awareness that can clearly perceive the way in which basic space and wisdom are present. On the basis of that key point, the realization of clear light radiates in splen-

dor, becoming clearer and clearer, like a hundred million suns... Here the aware aspect of clear light or effulgent *rigpa* (which arises from essential *rigpa*) is stripped bare and you penetrate further into the depths of clear light... even as objects seem to arise... It is on the basis of this that you train.

—Third Dodrupchen Jigme Tenpe Nyima (quoted in H. H. The Dalai Lama, *Dzogchen*, 2000.)

The Supreme Source. A primary *Dzogchen* tantra, *The Kunjed Gyalpo (The Supreme Source)*, must surely be considered one of humankind's great spiritual treasures. According to *Dzogchen* master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, this prehistorical supreme nondual teaching has been transmitted from master to disciple directly, heartmind to heartmind, for thousands of years. However, historical *Dzogchen* wisdom dates from the teaching of Garab Dorje (b. 55 CE). The *Kunjed Gyalpo* tantra arises in the 8th Century and is the fundamental tantra of the *Dzogchen semde* (mind) teaching series. This reading of the great nondual primordial *Dzogchen* teaching is derived from Buddhist sutra and tantra understanding of the ultimate Nature of Mind, yet its truth essence runs, like a golden thread through the grand tapestry of humankind's primordial Great Wisdom Tradition. *Kunjed Gyalpo, The Wise and Glorious King* is Samantabhadra (clarity) and Samantabhadri (emptiness) in inseparable *yabyum* embrace— androgynous skylike primordial Adi Buddha—the union of clarity and emptiness that is none other than our original Buddha Nature, Supreme Source, Basis, primordial womb of everything. Sambantabhadra, this *Dharmakaya* Buddha speaks to the *Logos, Vajrasattva, Sambhogakaya* Buddha:

The essence of all the Buddhas exists prior to samsara and nirvana... it transcends the four conceptual limits and is intrinsically pure; this original condition is the uncreated nature of existence that always existed, the ultimate nature of all phenomena... It is utterly free of the defects of dualistic thought which is only capable of referring to an object other than itself... it is the base of primordial purity... Similar to space it pervades all beings... The inseparability of the two truths, absolute and relative is called the 'primordial Buddha'... If at the moment the energy of the base manifests, one does not consider it something other than oneself... it self-liberates... Understanding the essence... one finds oneself always in this state . . .dwelling in the fourth time, beyond past, present and future... the infinite space of self-perfection... pure dharmakaya, the essence of the vajra of clear light.

—Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, *The Supreme Source (Kunjed Gyalpo)*, 1999

Thus do the sutras and the tantras of Buddha's teaching and the bivalent dualities of the path—objective and subjective, self and other, observer and data, true and false, relative and ultimate—abide in the prior unity of the dependently arisen perfect sphere of *Dzogchen*, the

Great Perfection, ultimate mind nature, luminous innate clearlight mind that is always already the unity of awareness and emptiness, and of clarity and emptiness. Who is it, that I am? All the masters of the three times have told it. This infinite vast expanse of the primordial awareness wisdom continuum is who we actually are. *Tat tvam ami. That, I Am! That* is our supreme identity, great perfection of our always present Buddha Nature, deep heartseed presence of ultimate happiness that is both origin and aim of all our seeking.

H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche's Comments on Garab Dorje's Three Vajra Verses or The Three Essential Statements that are the Dzogchen View, Meditation and Conduct (translated by John Reynolds):

Verse I: Recognize your own true nature (The Base and View) "This fresh immediate awareness of the present moment, transcending all thoughts related to the three times (past, present, future), is itself that primordial awareness or knowledge (*yeshe*) that is self-originated intrinsic awareness (*rig pa*)." From this View arises the *Semde* teaching cycle.

Verse II: Choose the state of presence, beyond doubt (The Path and Meditation) "Whatever phenomena of *samsara* or *nirvana* may manifest, all of them represent the play of the creative energy or potentiality of one's own immediate intrinsic awareness (*rig pa'i rtsal*). One must decide upon this unique state for oneself and know that there exists nothing other than this." From The Path and Meditation arises the *Longde* teaching cycle.

Verse III: Continue in the state with confidence in liberation (The Fruit and Conduct) "Whatever gross or subtle thoughts may arise, by merely recognizing their nature, they arise and self-liberate simultaneously in the vast expanse of *Dharmakaya*, where Emptiness and Awareness are inseparable (*gsal stong gnyis med*)." From the Fruit and the Conduct arises the Secret *Upadesha* (*Mengagde*), or heart essence (*nyingthig*) teaching cycle.

The Six Vajra Verses of Vairochana

These *Three Essential Points* (*The Three Vajra Verses*) of the essence, nature and energy of the Base, and of the Path and Fruition of it is contained in Vairochana's early *Dzogchen* tantra, the *Six Vajra Verses*, or "Cuckoo of the State of Presence" (*Rig-pa'I khu-byug*), the luminous presence of intrinsic awareness (*rig pa*) that each one is. The cuckoo is the sacred bird of the *Bonpo* founder Shenrab Miwo and is considered in the aboriginal *Bon* tradition as the king of birds, harbinger of spring and bearer of wisdom from the vast empty space. These early *Six Vajra Verses* of Vairochana and all of the hundreds of *Dzogchen* tantras and texts that followed are but commentaries on Garab Dorje's *Three Vajra Verses* or *The Three Essential Statements* (or points).

The Six Vajra Verses (translated by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu):

Verse 1 & 2: The Base (View): The nature of phenomena is non-dual (*gnyis med*), but each one, its own state, is beyond the limits of the mind (*semde*, mind meditation series).

Verse 3 & 4: The Path, Way of Practice (Meditation): There is no concept that can define the condition of "what is," but vision nevertheless manifests: all is good (*longde*, space meditation series).

Verse 5 & 6: The Fruit, Result, Way of Being in Action (Conduct): Everything has already been accomplished, and so, having overcome the sickness of effort (spiritual seeking), one finds oneself in the self-perfected state: this is the meditation, *mengagde/upasheda*, secret essence meditation series.

And from Jigme Lingpa, author of the *Longchen Nyingthig Heart Essence of the Vast Expanse*, on the nondual *Dzogchen* view at play in the world:

No Buddhas, no beings,
beyond existence and non-existence
Intrinsic Awareness Itself
is absolute Guru, Ultimate Truth.
By resting naturally, beyond fixation
in that inherently free
perfect innate Bodhi-mind,
I take refuge and actualize Bodhicitta.

–Jigme Lingpa, Longchen Nyingthig

“The perfect explanation of *Dzogchen*,” according to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is voiced in these profound words of Gautama Shakyamuni, our historical *Nirmanakaya* Buddha:

All that arises
is essentially no more real
than a reflection,
transparently pure and clear,
beyond all definition
or logical explanation.
Yet the seeds of past action,
karma, continue to cause further arising.
Even so, know that all that exists
is ultimately void of self-nature,
utterly nondual!

A Brief History of the Dzogchen Transmission

The nature of mind is Buddha from the beginning.

–Garab Dorje

In Uddiyana (Orgyen) in the second century CE, **Garab Dorje** (b. 55 CE), the human historical founder of *Dzogchen*, in his *Sambhogakaya* form, transmitted the great *Dzogchen* teaching to his heart son **Manjushrimitra** (*The Three Essential Statements* or *Three Vajra Verses*) who then classified these texts (the *Dzogchen Nyingthig*) and transmitted them to **Srisimha** who then transmitted them to **Jnanasutra**, **Guru Padmasambhava**, (the *Khandro Nyingthig*), **Vimalamitra**

(the *Vima Nyingthig*), and **Vairochana** (*The Cuckoo of the State of Presence*). Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava then brought the teaching from Uddiyana to Tibet in the 8th century CE, at the invitation of King Trisong Detsen. In the 14th century they were synthesized by **Longchenpa** (Longchen Rabjam 1308–1364) as the *Seven Treasuries (Dzodun)*, *The Trilogy of Finding Comfort and Ease*, *The Trilogy of Natural Freedom*, and *The Three Inner Essences*. In the 18th century **Jigme Ling Pa** (1730–1798) rediscovered the complete *Dzogchen Nyingthig*, including the above works, as a root mind *terma* (*gong ter*) and condensed its essence as the *Yonten Dzod* which is now known as the *Longchen Nyingthig* and is generally considered the authoritative expression of the Nyingma School's great *Dzogchen* tradition. *Nyingthig* means heartmind essence. Esoterically, the *Longchen Nyingthig*, the *Heart Essence of the Infinite Expanse* contains the precious heart essence of *Dzogchen*. It contains the innermost secret pith instructions, the *upadesha* (*mengagde*) and is transmitted from master to individual disciple directly, from heartmind to heartmind. The student prepares for this ultimate teaching by completing the foundational practices (*ngöndro*) before entering the secret pith instruction of the *mengagde* that includes the *Trekchö* and *Tögal* teaching cycles.

The *Nirmanakaya* Buddha Garab Dorje initially received the *Dzogchen* teaching as a direct transmission from the *Dharmakaya* Buddha **Samantabhadra** (*Kuntuzangpo*), the primordial *Adi* Buddhi, through the *Sambhogakaya* Buddha **Vajrasattva**, from whom emanates all spacetime historical (*Nirmanakaya*) Buddhas. Indeed, it is taught by some *Dzogchen* masters (Tulku Urgyen) that the ancient *Dzogchen* teaching was transmitted to Garab Dorje by the historical Buddha Shakyamuni (usually 563–483 BCE), the twelfth of the twelve great *Dzogchen* masters, in his *Sambhogakaya* form as Buddha Vajrasattva (Tulku Urgyen, 1995).

From a relative doxographic and historiographic view early historical *Nyingma Dzogchen* was formatively influenced primarily by the Indian Buddhist *tantras*, but also by Taoist *Ch'an*, indigenous Tibetan *Bon*, Tibetan Nestorian Christianity and Kashmiri *Shivaism* (Chogyal Namkhai Norbu 1996, Reynolds 1996).

The preceding is historiographic evidence based upon extant texts from the 8th through 10th centuries CE, and from recently discovered texts at *Tun Huang*, China (the *Rig Pa'i khu byug* and the *Bas Pa'i rgum chung*). However, according to certain *Dzogchen tantras* the *Dzogchen* lineage includes "the Twelve Teachers of *Dzogchen*" (Dodrupchen Rinpoche, *Tantric Doctrine According to the Nyingmapa School*). Not all of these masters were of the spacetime human realm. Some of these prehistoric teachers pre-date even the ancient *Nirmanakaya Bon Dzogchen* master Shenrab Miwoche (Tonpa Shenrab Miwo) who taught *Dzogchen* in *Olmo Lung ring* (Central Asia) circa 1600 BCE, long before the incarnation of the Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha (Namkhai Norbu, in Reynolds 1996). From there the teaching spread to Orgyen/*Zhang Zhung* and then Tibet. Indeed, the *Grathal gyur tantra*, and other texts teach that the great non-dual primordial *Ati Dzogchen* teaching, by whatever name, has appeared in inhabited star systems throughout the *kosmos* for many *kalpas*, long before the appearance of our solar system, and will continue long after its death.

Thus it is, for the *Nyingmapa*, and many other Buddhists, and non-Buddhists, the non-dual primordial *Dzogchen* teaching is the pinnacle of all spiritual teaching, and its view is

therefore most relevant to the task of unifying the two seemingly incommensurable paradigms—Science and Spirit/spirituality—as we embark upon the new Noetic Revolution in religion, science and culture.

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