

Buddhist Meditation: *Shamatha* and *Vipashyana*

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

The nature of mind is clear light.

—Gautama the Buddha

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Buddhist Meditation is the necessary means and method for awakening to, and compassionate expression of our always present indwelling love-wisdom Buddha mind (*buddhadhatu*, *buddhajnana*)—subtle numinous Presence of That—by whatever name or concept. Buddhist meditation practice—yogic mind training—has two voices, *shamatha* quiescent mindfulness, and *vipashyana* analytic penetrating insight. Both are imperative to engaging and completing the Buddhist path, as well to approaching the *Dzogchen* path.

For 25 centuries Buddhist philosophy and practice has changed, and been changed by every cultural tradition it has entered. For example, as Indian Buddhism entered China its spacious *shunyata*/emptiness metaphysical foundation came to be seen and experienced through the natural earthy fullness of Chinese Taoist (Daoist) philosophy and practice.

Here the Indian Buddhist primordial emptiness of self and its experienced phenomenal world became *The Way* or Path of Tao, the natural order of the *kosmos* itself. In contradistinction to Indian Buddhist dialectics, conceptual speculation and orthodoxy were resisted in Taoism. The propitious result of this metaphysical mergence became Mahayana Ch'an Buddhism, then Zen Buddhism upon entering Japan. In Japanese Zen meditation (*zazen*) the practice is *shikantaza* (*shamatha*, "just sitting").

Just so, Indian Buddhism was changed as it entered Tibet with Padmasambhava in the 8th century and merged with the indigenous Bön tradition, which already contained the very nondual view and practice we know as *Ati Dzogchen* (*Appendix B*).

In the 20th century Indian Mahayana and Tibetan Vajrayana (Tantrayana/Mantrayana) Buddhism became firmly established in the West—in Europe and in the United States. Once again Indian and Chinese Buddhism have both changed and been changed by Western mind and culture. The efflorescence in the West of non-objectivist, non-conceptual, nondual view and practice of esoteric Buddhism have tamed some of the cognitive excesses of our prevailing cultural metaphysic that is monolithic, monistic Metaphysical Scientific Materialism/Physicalism.

Meanwhile, the wanton materialism and consumerism (Ken Wilber's "Boomeritis") that has colonized the Western heart and mind—along with its pseudo-scientific empirical hyper-objective habit of mind—has trespassed the nondual primordial purity of Indian and Tibetan Buddhist meditation systems as they have evolved through the Four Tenet Systems (Boaz 2020) to become the teaching pinnacle that is *Ati Dzogchen* and Essence *Mahamudra* view and praxis (*Ch. 2 below*).

My reflections on Buddhist meditation herein represent an imperfect attempt to balance this prodigious coming to meet of the complementary wisdom mind-streams of the subjective wisdom of the East, and the objective wisdom of the West. "O East is East and West is West, and *ever* the twain shall meet" (apologies to Kipling).

What Is Meditation?

Meditation is a simple non-conceptual but conscious cognitive activity that opens a finite human awareness portal into the infinite vast expanse of all embracing primordial awareness-consciousness being itself in whom we arise and participate.

This fecund *kosmic* consciousness womb is the unbounded unbroken whole in which, or in whom meditator, and everything else that arises in spacetime as our experience is embraced and included. It is this infinite order of timeless, formless, all-pervading *ultimate* reality that enfolds *relative* finite spacetime reality as it continuously unfolds, arises, participates, and is thereby instantiated—including all of us.

Thus is finite meditation our instant and continuous *connection* to that nondual infinite whole. This is more or less the nondual Primordial Wisdom view as it has arisen in the cognitive history of our species.

Meditation (*dhyana/jhana, Ch'an/Zen, bhavana*) literally means *cultivation* or development of inner peace and equanimity, altruistic compassion, and skillful luminous wisdom for the benefit of living beings. How? Through *contemplation* of, or meditating upon the primordial ground of being, by whatever name or concept. Luminous, numinous Presence of That.

Non-conceptual, nondual *samadhi* (*sam*/perfect, *dhi*/wisdom mind) is the *ultimate* result of *relative* yogic (yoking, union) meditation practice. *Dhyana/samadhi* is the final state/stage of the Buddha's Eightfold Path (*Pali Canon*) to perfect wisdom; and the 6th of the Six *Paramitas*/Perfections of the Mahayana Path.

Meditation is "self-regulation" mind training as focused attention and awareness which moves the practitioner from thinking discursive cognition to trans-conceptual contemplative cognition, where abide peaceful, lucid, compassionate, blissful mind states.

We shall soon see that mindfulness (calm abiding, *shamatha, sati*)—Buddha's "mindfulness of breathing (*anapanasati*)—is the invariant ingredient in all systems of meditation, whether secular or religious/spiritual.

By virtue of our indivisible prior and always present love-wisdom mind unity of inclusion in that vast whole, there abides herein a bright, numinous *Presence* (*vidya, rigpa, Christos*) of this primordial reality ground—by whatever name or conceptually contrived concept—necessarily always already present at the spiritual Heart (*hridayam*) of the participant, whether in a meditative "state of Presence", or in a conceptual state of distraction. It is this prodigious practice of mindful meditation that awakens the practitioner to the nondual (subject-object unity) innermost truth of our being here in time.

In other words, the practice of meditation offers a finite cognitive link or connection to the prior, infinite primordial awareness-consciousness ground that is the indivisible unity of we finite participating parts with the infinite, all inclusive whole itself.

The short term, and long term experiential result of such contemplative practice is an emotional sense of peace, well being, and connectedness, even bliss—which is life-changing as it becomes integrated into our lifeworld of relative space and time.

Who Is It That Meditates?

While it is the self-ego-I who *chooses* to establish a meditation practice, and who chooses the *placement of attention/awareness* upon the object of meditation—the breath, or emptiness/buddha nature—it is our basal, primordial love-wisdom Buddha mind itself that meditates us. The mind of self-ego-I, Suzuki Roshi's "Small Mind", is already included and embraced by primordial emptiness of Buddha mind/wisdom mind—"Big Mind". It is this vast aboriginal mind or ground that assimilates the physical, perceptual, mental, and emotional raw data of experience, then wondrously organizes it all into nonjudgmental, non-conceptual, nondual "primordially present" love and wisdom—in short, our always present love-wisdom mind—bright Presence of That. We learn through meditation practice to settle into, gently rest in, and then spontaneously express in love-wisdom conduct that pristine primordial Buddha nature of mind (*buddhadhatu, buddhajnana*).

It is *relative*, conventional mindful mantra prayer, upon the life-giving *prana/spirit wind* of the breath, that connects to *ultimate* meaning (Ultimate Truth) which embraces *relative* meaning (Relative Truth) in the whole of this contemplative process. This post-conceptual, dualistic relative Small Mind stabilizing process reflexively refers beyond itself to nondual, all embracing ultimate Big Mind which necessarily embraces and includes it. Such a penetrating unifying process demonstrates the mythopoetic nondual "logic of the non-conceptual" which transcends and includes our dualistic discursive mind (Klein 2006).

As the hyper-judgmental "wild horse" of conceptual mind simmers down and rests in wisdom mind Presence of the very primordial Buddha *nature of mind*, already present love-wisdom arises as peaceful loving kindness and ethical conduct toward all living beings—including oneself. In the Buddhist Mahayana tradition such altruistic compassionate thought, intention, and action for the benefit of human and other living beings—including our Mother Earth—is known as *bodhicitta*.

No small matter is at stake in our consideration of the what and the who of meditation. All the buddhas (awakened beings), sages, and *mahasiddhas* have told it: the loving-kindness expression of altruistic *bodhicitta* is the real cause of human happiness.

Indeed, by the lights of some recent postmodern cultural anthropology, it was not survival of the fittest, but survival of the kindest—Late Paleolithic Homo proto-altruism—that is the primary cause of the rise and success of the otherwise unexceptional species *H. sapiens*, the only extant species of the genus Homo.

So, we learn to counter our harsh judgments of self and others with loving kindness; we accept whatever arises in Small Mind—the senses, concepts, and feelings—exactly as it is. No need to try to change anything. No need to fix anything. No need to try to stop thinking; nor to try to accomplish "positive thinking". Simply witness, without evaluation, your thoughts and feelings as they come and go. Witness this display of the mind with gentle loving compassion, like a mother watches her child at play.

Meta-cognitively, reflexively be aware of your awareness in this moment now. No need to change or censor any of it. No need to grasp at or reject or react to any of it. Thoughts are merely thoughts. Thoughts cannot harm us. They need not become harmful negative emotions. Thoughts possess only the power that we *choose* to bestow upon them. It's all the magical display of the mind. No need to like or dislike your experience. All that arises in the mind is utterly natural. Easier said than done.

And because the primordial ground of the mind—*The Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen, dharmakaya*—is utterly untainted by negative thought and emotion, just so, the contents of mind arising therein are "primordially pure" in their ultimate nature, albeit not quite so pure from the relative view. The mind and all its stuff are always a prior and present unity with its perfectly subjective primordial source/ground. No problem at all.

So, please don't take your scattered "monkey mind", your "wild horse of the mind" too seriously. The adventitious negative afflictions of the mind—*Aversion*: fear, anger, hostility, hatred, regret/guilt; and *Attraction/Attachment*: raging sense desire, greed, pride, jealousy/envy—all may, through practice, be lifted and released via our love-wisdom mind connection. That is the gift of Presence inherent in contemplative mindfulness practice. It's a *choice* of the judicious placement of attention/awareness. There's plenty of self-effacing humor here. Discover it, laugh with yourself, rest and be happy.

The Buddha told it well, "Let it be as it is and rest your weary mind, all things are perfect exactly as they are". Your *ultimate* Buddha mind/wisdom mind Presence already knows this. Let us learn to connect to it through our *relative* imperfect meditation practice. Peace of mind and *bodhicitta* compassion is the wondrous result.

It is through this radical skillful "right understanding" and self-acceptance that meditation effects its miraculous result. Such nondual wisdom cannot be told in words. Wisdom mind experiences it directly through *feeling* awareness—this "peace that passes all understanding". So, we simply practice—mindfulness and mantra—opening to receive that lucent already present Presence—without expecting anything at all. Who am I? All the avatars who have incarnated into earth time have told it: living Presence of That I Am!

Therefore, your primary responsibility is *awareness management*. So, right now be reflexively meta-cognitively aware of your present awareness. As compassionate, non-judging witness Presence, monitor whatever arises in the mind—sights, sounds, smells, your breath, feelings of love, sense desire, anger, thinking, guilt and past regret, worry about the future, present mood states, anxiety, impatience, gratitude. There's plenty to worry about. And lots to be happy about. From the view of your loving Buddha mind, observe the whole show—without evaluating or judging any of it. That is the View. That is the Meditation. So, settle in upon the mindful breath, with a mantra if you have one (e.g.

OM AH HUM) and rest in the already present Presence of your Buddha nature/Buddha mind. Do it now for two minutes. Relax into it and enjoy. Go ahead and do it now.

Your psychological attitude now is *shoshin*—Zen Mind/Beginner's Mind—placing in abeyance questions, judgments, the grasping/attachment and aversion/avoidance that is the constant activity of the busy mind of your self-ego-I. Enjoy your open awareness with a minimum of self-identification. Such "open monitoring meditation" is the first step of *shamatha*, "focused attention meditation". Who is it that meditates? It is your Big Mind love-wisdom mind—clear light now present Presence of That.

Shamatha (*sati, smriti, bhavana*)—calm abiding—may be seen as the foundation of Buddhist contemplative and ethical practice. *Shamatha* literally means calm or quiescent abiding. It is the Buddhist antidote to the distracting mind states of *excitation* or obsessive sensory desire and stimulation, and *laxity* or failure of focused attention on the breath, or Buddha Presence, or emptiness, or other object of meditation.

By cultivating quiescent, non-conceptual *shamatha* or "calm abiding" we utilize the breath, or other meditation object, to settle the "wild horse of the mind" into, and then rest in clear peace of the vast expanse of spacious, boundless emptiness/*shunyata*—the very nature of *dharmakaya*—nonlocal, nondual whole of always present Buddha nature of mind.

Shamatha

Shamatha is, as Buddha told, "mindfulness of breathing"—the gentle *placement of awareness-attention* upon the movement of the breath in the belly; the *feeling* of the breath, over and above mere *thinking* about it. Meditation is not a higher form of thinking. Wisdom mind Presence is not a "higher self" upgrade of our habitually thinking self-ego-I. Contemplative practice is mostly trans-rational, non-conceptual, nonlocal, even nondual, beyond the destructive duality or separation of knowing subject and its objects known. As quantum pioneer Werner Heisenberg told, "The separation between subject and object does not exist. Subject and object are only one".

Quiescent mindfulness develops focused attentional stability and a bright vivid acuity of the mind upon its contemplative object—the movement of the breath, emptiness/Buddha nature/Buddha mind, or an image of the Buddha, or tantric meditation deity, or for Christians, the luminous indwelling heartfelt Presence of the Christ. After all, That is who we actually are!

Indeed, Lord Buddha, by his own account, accomplished his final *bodhi* mind love-wisdom mind awakening through engaging the mantra seed syllable OM while abiding in undistracted, selfless "mindfulness of breathing" (*Appendix A*).

"Mindfulness of breathing" (*anapanasati*) is then the skillful method or means for accomplishing *shamatha* or meditative quiescence. Moreover, on the accord of Buddhist scholar-practitioner B. Alan Wallace (2007):

Mindfulness...must be accompanied by the mental faculty of introspection...the function of monitoring the meditative process...

a type of metacognition...in the development of *shamatha*,
swiftly detecting the occurrence of either excitation or laxity.

As subtle introspective awareness detects that the mind has wandered from its object of meditation, through one or another thinking/feeling distraction, attentional awareness is immediately returned to the peaceful quiescent breath—again, and again.

The practitioner gradually "progresses" through the nine stages of *shamatha*. Its ultimate accomplishment leaves only *samadhi*, nondual pure awareness, luminosity, and bliss. Thoughts continue to arise but "self-liberate" at or near the instant of their arising, leaving no karmic imprint.

So, as *shamatha* evolves through its nine stages—the final stage being nondual *samadhi*—the mind is now prepared to "rest in its natural state", the wisdom of emptiness, *Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen*, free of conventional realities and of attentional objects of meditational support, for example the breath, or mantra, or image presence of a deity. Meanwhile, use the supports.

Potential distractions arise as before, and pass away as they will, without intervention, introspection, judgment or antidote. The mind rests in the always already present purity of its own nonlocal, nondual natural state of original primordial awareness-consciousness itself, the very Buddha nature of mind. The result is peaceful bliss. But, in the meantime, remain close to the breath, and get a mantra (e.g. *OM AH HUM*). The mind that is filled with the light and vibrational sound of mantra has no remaining space for afflictive thoughts and emotions.

That all said, most of this "no-self help" is mere idealized concepts and beliefs *about* meditation, until one enters into it by establishing an effective practice. Let a qualified teacher help you establish your practice, then introduce you to a qualified *Dzogchen* meditation master, and a like-minded *sangha* community.

An effective meditation practice cannot be learned from a book, not even this one, nor from a DVD series by a famous spiritual person. Still, books and tapes by Buddhist masters, and yogis and yoginis may be helpful in clarifying basic principles—how it all fits together; and why bother in the first place?

Thus it is, mindfulness practice—fully realized or not—transforms the habitually self-referencing "selfing" mind via training in deep, spacious inner peace. The gradual result is a loving, happy, always imperfectly stable mind. Thus does *shamatha* provide support for the vivid clarity and direct wisdom of true *vipashana* realization. While *shamatha* calms the distracted mind, *vipashyana* reveals and stabilizes the nondual view of primordial emptiness, very nature of *dharmakaya*.

Vipashyana

Vipashyana literally means "extraordinary seeing"—penetrating direct clear seeing that is the primordial purity of yogic direct perception (*yogi pratyaksa*)—prior to the

reflexive superimposition (*vikshepa*) of discursive conceptual mind. Buddhist *Vipashyana* is "analytic insight meditation".

Such insight is direct, non-conceptual, transpersonal seeing (*samadhi*, Zen *kensho/satori*) of the empty absence of "any shred" of ultimate intrinsic existence of all spacetime phenomena; to wit, the *ultimate* emptiness of all the *relatively* real appearing physical and mental stuff of our busy lifeworld realities. We shall see in these pages that this initially rather offputting radical emptiness notion becomes the main source of our human happiness. And yes, it requires kind patient practice, and a bunch of courage.

So, *vipashyana* insight transcends but embraces clear thinking through clear *direct* seeing. Here the knowing subject does not merely intend its object of knowledge, but is aware of the direct *feeling* experience of being already present in it, with no distance or separation at all. Again, just for a moment, settle now into the breath in the belly and *feel* the bright delight of "primordially pure" seeing without thinking about it!

Hence, *shamatha* and *vipashyana* meditation together liberate perception and conception from their habitual and constricted experience of the myriad objects arising in objective time, with all their random and wandering distractions, thereby permitting the gaze of the mind to settle into, and rest in its subjective, innermost body of present moment, here now bright "feeling experience". This is the bodily location of human happiness. It happens upon the breath. Remain close to the breath.

English poet William Blake called this healing purification of awareness of our constant objective inherently dualistic thinking—"cleansing the doors of perception".

In this way are Aldous Huxley's "doors of perception" opened wide to the "micro-phenomenological" purity of our inter-subjective, direct present moment blissful "feeling experience", prior to the dualistic semiotic conceptual contraction that is our all too human deep cultural background (unconscious) materialist "global web of belief" (Quine 1969).

Thus, upon an encounter with a lovely red rose, we drop our "expectational bias" about its objective meaning—"Yes, that's a red rose"—and encounter it intimately with all of our sensory, aesthetic, and feeling awareness. It is by way of meditation that we "stop to smell the roses" of our feeling nature—our affective, awake and delightful "lived experience". Stop and see for yourself.

This intrapersonal *awareness management skill set* changes everything. It enriches the dance of both verbal and nonverbal interpersonal awareness in our relationships with those within our sphere; and especially with our most beloved. Greatly enhanced human happiness and well being is the wondrous result, as many of you well know.

Thus do our arising realities become the subtle feeling experience of poetry. Thus does the shaman-poet dwelling in mythtime, at the root of attention and just prior to the world, sing,

Everything is alive!
Trees, grasses, wind dancing,
guides me. I understand
the songs of the birds!

"The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven" (Wm. Shakespeare). Thus do we unify the lucent heaven of our divine nature with the fervent earth of our bodily existence.

Wisdom Mind No-Self Help

But wait! If "I change my mind, and so change my brain" (Begley 2007) by meditation, I fear that I might "tune in and drop out" of life, quit my job, leave my family as did the Buddha, join some cult, get on drugs, and wind up on the streets, or worse.

Psychologists have a name for such fearful cognition: "catastrophic expectations". We're all a little frightened of change. Not to worry. As the prodigious self-ego-I becomes *gradually* aligned with your compassionate love-wisdom mind Presence of this vast primordial whole, committed meditation practitioners still show up for work, pay the bills, and change diapers. All the attractive and aversive stuff of always thinking, furiously desirous self-ego-I that we have come to know and love still exists in abundance in our conventional, *relatively*, really real "real world out there" (RWOT). So stuff still exists.

It's just that all this physical and mental stuff of form doesn't exist absolutely or *ultimately*. In the really big picture, as Buddha told, "Form is empty; emptiness is form". So we, as a separate self, need not get hung up on the absolute reality of it. We learn to chill out and stop taking our ego life drama so seriously. We learn to drop our spooky "conformational bias"—that all new data are interpreted as supporting our current skeptical "global web of belief"—and adopt the refreshingly open *shoshin* cognitive posture of our already present peaceful Zen mind/Buddha mind. Perhaps we are not the center of the universe after all. Now that's a scary thought!

Try this. Return for one minute to your love-wisdom mind Presence. Then say to yourself: "Self, as open Buddha Mind Presence, *What* do I feel in this very moment now? If I feel happy, *how* did I do it? If I do not feel happy, *how* did I do that? *Who* is it that acts out this comedy-drama of my life? Who am I, really? *What* is really real, and not so real. *What* is the most important thing for me to feel, and to do right now? *How* will I feel it? How will I do it? *When* is the best time to do it?

Avoid "Why" questions. They have little practical positive value and lead to ego-self-stimulating, often negative speculation and conceptualization. For example, "Why do I continue to do this, and that?" "Why can't I stop thinking/doing this, and that?" "Why is my boss such a jerk? "Why won't I establish an effective meditation practice"? "Why does the world exist? "Why does $E = mc^2$? "Why" questions are usually "How" questions in disguise. "Why" questions are often more productive when converted to "How" questions.

Be that as it may, all of this *relative* form and our thinking about it is absent and empty of any permanent *ultimate* existence. Appearing spacetime reality is not as it appears! Our self-ego-I is not nearly as real as it appears! We change our view and belief about reality a bit—away from self and toward our selfless Buddha mind—and a lot of our anxiety and suffering drops away.

Really understanding this unity of Buddha's Two Truths—relative form its ultimate emptiness—imperfectly frees us from fear and anger, and thus opens our hearts and minds to our always present Presence of *bodhicitta*—benefiting living beings—which is after all, the main secret of human happiness. And this places the unruly narcissistic self in its "supreme identity"—our primordial Buddha love-wisdom mind—bright always present Presence of That. Everyone in our sphere of influence benefits, especially those we love the most.

As Buddha told so long ago, "Wonder of wonders, all beings are Buddha".

So, that is more or less the Buddhist Mahayana view of the Path of meditation. We align a diaphanous empirically unfindable and unprovable yet conventionally all too real unruly self with selfless Buddha mind Presence, more or less moment to moment, and skillfully work and play in a beautiful, relatively real, but not ultimately real world with enhanced peace, and often great happiness.

Contrary to an all too common misunderstanding about Buddhism, we are not required to give up, put down, or otherwise abolish our self-ego-I! Buddha's way is to work with it, lift and align it with our always present Buddha love-wisdom mind, all the while remaining aware of ego's very subtle duplicity. Buddha mind "is already accomplished from the very beginning", deep within us, here and now. It is That to which we awaken—step by mindful step—upon the Buddhist Path.

Therefore, "Leave it alone and let it be as it is". No need to *try* to change anything at all. Rather, simply place your attentional awareness upon your subtle always already present Buddha nature/Buddha mind. Bright Presence of That.

So now, just for this precious moment, experience profound thankfulness for your precious life, just as it is now, imperfections, pain, worry and all. Feel that gratitude within your heart of hearts. Then feel your good will intention to benefit living beings, however imperfectly. No need to fabricate it. It's already present. Open to receive it.

Begin and end each day with this selfless affirmation: "Thank you for the gift of my life, just as it is now". This will help you to stay present to Presence of your Buddha nature/Buddha mind—your already present Heart's desire. *Feel* for a moment this post-conceptual peace of mind. Now know that there is nothing other than this. Practice that—"brief moments, many times"—amid all of the myriad distractions.

Through such wisdom mind considerations we come to see clearly that our habitual thoughts and feelings have no real substance in themselves—but are rather an apparitional will-o'-the-wisp, utterly dependent upon our constantly changing distracted and unfocused mind states. Thus arises all-important loving self-acceptance, like the unfailing love of the mother for her frightened child. From that Great Love spontaneously arises loving-kindness and acceptance of others.

We now begin to see the humor of our absurd, obsessive self-referential story-narrative—why I-Me-Mine is always right, never wrong; and always the center of the universe. If everyone acted like that the world would be in a real mess. The bad news: everyone *does* act like that! And the world *is* in a real mess. We need your help. We're all in this reality boat together.

True, some of the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" are abated as our compassionate intrapersonal relationship with our indwelling love-wisdom mind Presence grows, and through that our interpersonal relationships flourish (even with "difficult people").

Still, much of the natural adversity that mortal flesh is heir to remains unabated. We never get enough of the stuff we want; and we get far too much of what we don't want. And we're still impermanent (*anitya*), living in the constant presence of our physical death. And that requires courage; the courage not to fall into readily available ego defenses that sublimate our powerful onto-pathological deep fear of nonexistence into the endless outer distractions of work and play. So, *stop* and smell the roses. Love-wisdom mind Presence, it is said by those who know, has a very subtle aroma of roses.

Awareness Management

What is it that changes with the Buddha's "mindfulness of breathing"? It is our habitual *reaction* to adversity; and our *response* to that opportunity! Anxiety, anger, and dread lose most of their power over us. That is to say, we no longer *choose* to submit to the negative stuff. We choose instead to place our awareness—amid myriad distractions—upon our quiescent mantra breath, always present mindful Presence of That. That is the simple practice of the Path. What a relief! But just reading about it means very little. Yes, fortunately, mindfulness practice must actually be practiced.

So, with our attention nearly always placed upon the love-wisdom Buddha mind Presence that rides each mindful mantra breath we are, however imperfectly, at peace.

Thus is human happiness very much a matter of awareness management. Human happiness is, very pragmatically, a direct result of where we choose to place our present attentional awareness, moment to moment, here and now. That is our instant connection to innermost peace.

We have more control over our *present* mind state than we may have imagined possible. Our continuity of mindful awareness practice, "brief moments, many times", makes it so.

Abiding calmly in this centrist Buddhist (and centrist Hindu, Taoist, Judaic-Christian) Middle Way view and practice, things aren't nearly so worrisome. Our lived experience is all the more vivid and beautiful. Ultimately, in the proverbial final analysis, even as we live in the uncertainty and impermanence of this "dark cloud of unknowing", "there is no problem whatsoever in this world" (Suzuki Roshi). That is the aboriginal wisdom of all embracing dimension of Ultimate Truth, our selfless Big Mind that pervades and embraces this all too real world of fraught Small Mind conventional Relative Truth.

Just so, these two reality realms are utterly indivisible, an always already prior and present non-conceptual, nondual inseparable unity—bright Presence of That. Such a peace may be beyond discursive, conceptual understanding; but it is readily present to our

feeling mind, our contemplative indwelling love-wisdom Buddha mind, when we *remember* to open to receive, and then retain it. So, breathe mindfully right now for a few moments. Rest in that bright "unborn, unceasing, uncreated," mind space between your thoughts. Well, when is the best time to do it? Yes. Now is the time.

The key principle that grounds contemplative practice is this: both human happiness and human suffering arise from our present mind state! So, we consciously manage our awareness by taming and training the "wild horse of the mind" in placement of attention on our innermost indwelling love-wisdom mind Presence (vidya, rigpa). In Buddhism this process of the Path begins with calm abiding (shamatha) upon the breath, beyond our thoughts and beliefs about it.

Basic Mindfulness Practice: Quieting the Wild Horse of the Mind

The subtlest, nondual "innermost secret" practices of *Dzogchen*, Essence *Mahamudra*, Definitive *Madhyamaka*, *Saijojo* Zen, all begin with mindful *shamatha*. "Secular" mindfulness practice also begins, and often ends here. Fear and bias against human cognitive religious/spiritual depth is taboo in "scientized" Western culture. How is this so?

Due not only to our fear of the deep subjectivity of the unknown, but to the objectivist bias of our deep cultural background Western ideology—Scientific Materialism/Physicalism that has entirely colonized the Western mind—there exists a powerful sociocultural taboo against moving our secular mindfulness meditation practice beyond mere breathing techniques to anything more deeply subjective—like human cognitive state/stage four perfectly subjective nondual yogic experience (*yogi pratyaksa*).

Secular mindfulness, while highly beneficial in managing stress, and some psycho-emotional disorders, limits cognitive experiential depth to state one perceptual, state two conceptual, and early state three contemplative state and life stages (cf. *Introduction* above). For the practitioner to penetrate more deeply into the primordial nature of mind the objective, subjective and spiritual guidance of a meditation master is required. After all, That love-wisdom mind nature is who we actually are—our "supreme identity".

Be That as it may, wouldn't it be nice to *directly* experience that primordial love-wisdom mind Presence that you already are? There's no time like the present.

Therefore, bracket for a moment your present quiescent practice, if you have one, and all your questions and beliefs—just for this precious moment now—and give yourself *two minutes* of peace. It's easier than you think. If you find this following mindfulness practice useful, the Buddha has some surprising suggestions to deepen your practice, and enhance your present happiness. Mindful caveat: You cannot learn, nor experience the basic space of *shamatha* mindfulness by reading about it. It must be assiduously practiced.

"Without past, present, future; empty awake mind" (Ju Mipham Rinpoche).

Your Mindfulness Practice: Ten Steps to Bliss. Sit up straight, uncross your legs, cast your partially closed, unfocused eyes down slightly so that your neck is straight, and place your attention upon the breath in your belly. Relax jaw, neck, gut. Experience the breath naturally rising and falling in the belly. *Feel* that.

1. *Opening Prayers and Refuge.* Thank you! First, briefly experience deep gratitude for the great gift of your life exactly as it is now. Then feel your great good will intention that your life may benefit living beings. This affirmation is most important. It opens the heart and mind to receive selfless grace by shifting attention from self to the benefit of others.

Refuge Prayer: "Until the full *bodhi* of enlightenment, I take refuge in the Buddha, the dharma, and the *sangha*".

2. *Attention!* Now, with eyes open, gather the "wild horse of the mind" by *placement of attention* upon your breath as it rhythmically, naturally arises in your belly. Breathe normally. Just for this moment—without grasping at, or rejecting anything—witness your awareness. Be reflexively aware of your awareness; of the *prana/spirit* life force current that animates you with each and every breath. Stay and be present only to your breath.

3. *The Polyvagal Breath.* Continue with eyes open. Breathe in normally for five seconds; then out for seven seconds, through pursed lips, like breathing out through a small straw. Practice this for three, seven, or nine times, as you wish. Then breathe normally. Polyvagal breathing interrupts the production of cortisol, the stress hormone, produced by the adrenal cortex. This inhibits its flow along the vagus nerve (CN-X) which innervates all the organs of the parasympathetic nervous system—heart, lungs, digestive—instantly reducing the "fight or flight" stress response (Porges 2014).

Now, with each breath feel your busy mind settle into its natural state of wakefulness—your clear light love-wisdom mind Presence—that aspect of you that is utterly one with the great source of everything—your safe place, free of thoughts, concepts, beliefs; free of past and future; free of judgment, fear, anger, guilt, and pride; momentarily free of narcissistic self-ego-I. No need to think about it, or fabricate it. Open and feel it. Be that stillness now. *Feel* this peace that passes all understanding.

4. *Prana: The Spirit Wind.* Now, with eyes open or closed, feel life force energy of gentle *prana* spirit wind—the very "breath of life"—as it enters in upon the breath, then pervades every space of your body and mind—all physical, mental, emotional, spiritual structures. *Prana, c'hi, lung, pneuma*-Holy Spirit is the subtle form of gross spacetime physical light energy/matter form ($E = mc^2$) arising continuously from formless, spacious, vast boundless whole, basic space (*dharmadhatu*), formless primordial awareness-consciousness ground itself (*dharmakaya*) in whom you, and all of this spacetime form arises, participates, and is happily instantiated.

Enjoy this feeling of delight within you. Feel your connectedness to everything. No need to try to create it. Your mindful Presence upon the breath is always already present

now. That is your "supreme identity". Who am I? That I Am! Feel That. It is That to which you awaken upon the mindful breath.

5. *Your Alpha Breath Posture.* Now, with your gaze still slightly downward, briefly close your eyes, raise your eyebrows and focus attention behind your forehead. Feel a subtle, focused fullness in your forebrain. You are now *directly* experiencing subtle, but observable waking *alpha* and *theta* brain rhythm—the non-conceptual "relaxation response" which replaces "fight or flight" stress response. Breathe and enjoy. Notice here the profound sense of your luminous wisdom mind Presence. Magnify and amplify it. No need to think about it; simply feel its lush emotional texture.

6. *Let Being Be.* Now, slightly open your eyes. As the mind begins to wander from the breath, thoughts and feelings naturally arise. No problem. *Whatever arises, let it be as it is.* No need to grasp at, or reject anything at all. No need to try to "meditate"; or to stop thinking; or to block troublesome thoughts; or to *try* to do anything at all. There is no goal. Just breathe. Always return to the breath in the belly. Simply remain present to your breath—again and again. That is your basic meditation. Simple enough, but not too simple. As Einstein told, "Make everything as simple as possible, but not simpler".

Without your attention, thoughts and feelings "self liberate" at the very instant of their arising. They dissolve and pass on the out breath. Or watch them gently flow by like a cloud in the vast empty sky, leaving no trace. *Choose* to transfer your attention from busy thoughts and feelings to that spacious sky-like source of the mind—again and again. That is the simple process of mindfulness of breathing".

More or less absent thoughts and concepts, and the emotions they induce, your post-empirical, non-conceptual Buddha mind Presence is revealed just as it is—luminous and clear. Kind compassionate activity of love spontaneously arises from That. As your mind is filled with spacious, unifying clear light wisdom of love, little space remains for the negative stuff.

As Buddha told so long ago, "Let it be as it is and rest your weary mind; all things are perfect, exactly as they are....Wonder of wonders, all beings are Buddha".

So, briefly greet whatever arises—positive, negative, neutral—then label it "*distraction*", and return your *attention* to the breath, again and again. Your happiness and peace ride the mindful breath.

Now say to the busy mind: "Peace, be still". Say to the grasping self, "Peace, I Am". Let it be so.

Presence Now. Now, with eyes partially open, *feel* your present connection to indwelling love-wisdom Presence that you actually are, by whatever name, right here upon each mindful breath. Rest for a couple of minutes, or more, in this spacious primordial essence-nature of mind—your always already present Buddha mind—by whatever concept or belief. Directly experience, and enjoy.

7. *Mantra Practice.* If you wish to add the great Buddhist mantra *OM AH HUM*, or *OM MANI PADME HUM* (*Appendix A*) to your *alpha* breath practice, please do so. It's a touchstone that will aid in managing distractions, and subtly, instantly connect you to the inherent power of your *bodhi* mind Presence. Mindful practice brimming with mantra prayer has little space for distraction! Remain present to mantra—"brief moments, many times"—in your cognitive foreground or background throughout the day and night. Please give yourself this gift of light, one minute, several times a day, and through the long night.

8. *Real Practice.* A: Practice all steps immediately upon rising for 15-30 minutes, or longer; B: practice your *alpha* mantra breath only, 15-60 seconds during the day "brief moments many times"; C: practice all steps 10-20 minutes just before sleep with emphasis on quiescent peace of mind. These three will establish a profound continuity of enlightened awareness day and night. Evening practice is especially important if you have sleep troubles (*Appendix A*). Be the entire night in your love-wisdom mind Presence. Let this be your love-wisdom lullaby and good night.

9. *Dream Work Practice.* Upon arising, before meditation, very briefly write down important dream *images*. A dream narrative is not required. Primary images only. No need to "analyze" the dream; or try to figure out "what it means". "Work the dream" in the first person tense. Speak as the key person, or image in the dream thusly: "*I am----*, and *I feel----*". Don't talk *about* the image. *Be* the image. *Feel* the image as if it were you. It's your dream after all. Do this with a loved one if possible. You will find it most revealing. Now practice your morning meditation as usual; and be present to key dream images.

Encourage your dream life toward lucid dreaming. Soon, with "good karma" and a bit of luck, you will consciously enter the blissful "Pure Land of Sukavati". Pray for this.

10. *The Dedication of Merit.* Now, close this and all practice sessions, of whatever length, by "dedicating the merit" and goodness generated by your practice to the benefit, happiness, and ultimate liberation of all living beings. Utter this great aspiration: "*By this good may all beings be free of suffering, and the causes of suffering. May all beings have happiness, and the causes of happiness—for as long as space remains*". This bodhisattva *bodhicitta* intention shifts self-centered practice from merely benefiting self—which it certainly does—to the benefit of both self and all living beings. Astonishingly, this is the very best way to be happy yourself! As if self and no-self were ever separate at all.

The mindful upshot of all this noise about quiescence? Simply rest in your always present Buddha nature of mind. As distractions inevitably arise, return to your mindful mantra breath, again and again. Such patience and diligence will establish a deep, subtle, peaceful and abiding continuity of your innate love-wisdom mind—luminous Presence of That. *Emaho!* How wonderful! *Mahasukaho!* Ultimate Happiness Itself!

If you wish to greatly enhance your practice please open your heart and mind to a qualified meditation mentor/master—a "spiritual friend", and a spiritual community. This shall readily increase your effectiveness in the world, and your happiness with the world.

The Bodhisattva Vow. After a few months, or a few years of practice you may wish to consider this vow. Should you choose to do so, ask your teacher, or better yet your Lama, Roshi, or Ajahn to witness it. Without further comment, here is the Bodhisattva Vow, "Refuge Heart" of the Buddhist Mahayana-Vajrayana teaching vehicle:

Just as all the Buddhas have generated bodhicitta, the mind of enlightenment, and accomplished the stages of the Bodhisattva Path, so will I, for the benefit of living beings, accomplish that same path. Until then, I take refuge in the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha.

From 8th century Middle Way Madhyamaka *Mahasiddha* Shantideva:

May precious bodhicitta take its birth
In those in whom it has not taken birth.
And where it has been born, let it not cease,
But increase ever more and more.

— *The Bodhisattva's Way of Life*

For the complete *Brief Course*, visit *Appendix A*, "Let It Be: Basic Mindfulness Meditation". Please review these two supports for your practice—the above "Mindful Ten Steps to Bliss", and *Appendix A*—weekly, until it becomes natural. The Bibliography offers a basic reading list for contemplative study.

Review of The View

The analytic "penetrating insight" that is liberating *vipashyana* reveals this great nonlocal (beyond time and space), nondual (subject-object unity) truth of the *buddic* wisdom of emptiness/*shunyata*, that we may utilize it in selfless service of sentient beings—compassionate *bodhicitta*—being here in time and form.

For esoteric Tibetan Vajrayana practice mindful *shamatha*, *vipashyana* and *bodhicitta* are the View and Path that bears the Fruit or Result of realization of the inseparable, indivisible unity of: 1) arising, appearing phenomena and emptiness; 2) of vivid clarity and emptiness; and 3) of bliss and emptiness.

Therefore, *shamatha* mindfulness bestows peace of mind that opens into *vipashyana* (and many other practices)—selfless open awareness Presence (*vidya*, *rigpa*) that facilitates entering in direct penetrating insight of the very nature of mind—intimate, mostly concept free liberation that is our "supreme identity" with the vast spacious, empty boundless whole (*dharmadhatu*) of appearing reality itself (*dharmakaya*). *Emaho!*

In whom does this all arise? It is this ultimate primordial awareness-consciousness itself, numinous vast whole in whom relative human awareness-consciousness is always a luminous instantiation. We are never separate from That. Good to know as we go through the days, and the nights of our lives. Knowing this changes everything!

However, there is no need to *believe* any of this. The Buddhadharma is less concepts and beliefs, and more direct experience. As Buddha told so long ago,

O Monks, do not believe what I teach
out of respect for me. Come and see.

The Neuroscience of Meditation and Our Experience of Self

What are the neurobiological influences of mindfulness meditation on human behavior; how do these influences effect our sense of self-ego-I; our brain structure and function; relative human flourishing; and ultimate happiness and freedom of the liberation from suffering, enlightenment, and Buddhahood?

Buddhist masters and neuroscientists agree, "mindfulness of breathing" ("focused attention meditation"), and "compassion meditation" both facilitate 1) a beneficial shift of attention from obsessive, usually fraught *self-referential thinking* and concern for "I, Me, Mine"; which 2) bestows a sense of inner peace and self-acceptance; which 3) reduces anxiety and anger toward self and others; which 4) enhances altruistic thought, intention and action for the benefit of all living beings, 5) enhancing personal well being and happiness. How shall we understand this cognitive process in the gloss of neurobiology?

Unfocused, ruminating, wandering mind, under sway of the brain's "default mode network"—the medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC) and posterior cingulate cortex (PCC)—significantly increase self-referential attention—"selfing"—with its always present fear/anxiety, anger/hostility, greed/pride, and negative judgments about self, which are then projected onto others. The micro-cognitive result of such negative emotion in the individual is stress, ill-will, and unhappiness. The macro-cognitive result in the collective human sociocultural cognosphere is alienation, despotism, war, and endless suffering.

Scientific meta-research, synthesizing data from thousands of research projects since about 1970, reveal that all three of the classes of meditation—1) mindfulness focused attention (usually upon the breath); 2) open monitoring mindfulness (witnessing whatever arises in awareness without judging, grasping or rejecting); and 3) loving-kindness compassion meditation (feeling our natural empathy for living beings)—conclusively reduced or deactivated processing in some physical brain structures, while enhancing activity in others.

Just so: 1) Meditation reduced processing in the default mode network (PCC and MPFC) of the "selfing" wandering mind; which 2) reduced self-ego-I self-referential processing—habitual attention and concern about I-Me-Mine with its attendant anxiety, anger and ill-will mind states; 3) reduced activity in, and reduced physical size of the

amygdala which is responsible for fear and anger ("fight or flight"); 3) reduced stress related cortisol production by the adrenal cortex while blocking cortisol circulation throughout the upper body upon the autonomic vagus nerve (CN-X); 4) enhanced beneficial brain *alpha*, *theta*, and high amplitude *gamma* band oscillations (25 to 42 hertz), while reducing excessive beta activity; 5) reduced activity in the right prefrontal cortex which is active in fear, anger, and ill-will mind states; 6) greatly increased left prefrontal cortex processing which enhances feelings of altruism, compassion and forgiveness toward self and others; 7) induced increased, long term frontal cortex gyrification (neuroplasticity), which is permanent, even when contemplative practice ceases (Siegel 2013; Porges 2014; Begley 2007; Wallace 2007, 2009; *Scientific American*, November, 2014).

The no longer surprising result of this neuroscientific meta-research is greatly reduced preoccupation with self and its obsessive narcissistic self-narrative; reduced psycho-emotional stress; induced and enhanced subjective feelings of connection, well being, good will, and subjective reports of increased happiness.

Thus does mindfulness and other types of meditation train the "wild horse of the mind" in the *placement of attention*, and continued focus of awareness upon immediate, non-conceptual, present moment to moment sensory/feeling experience, upon the mindful breath—our eternal here and now connection—while shifting attention away from chronic unfocused wandering mind with its obsessive and unhappy attachment to self-ego-I.

Therefore, meditation clearly reduces or suspends the "selfing" that causes the terrible suffering secondary to our pervasive sense of a lonely, separate, fearful mortal self. And all of this through a program of mind training in present moment, trans-conceptual *feeling awareness* upon the breath—the placement and maintenance of attention upon the breath which settles the "wild horse of the mind" upon the very source and "nature of mind", boundless all embracing whole, nondual love-wisdom mind Presence of That, by whatever name or concept.

Yes, neuroscientific research demonstrates the profound value of meditation—especially *shamatha* calm abiding, and loving-kindness compassion meditation—in support of human flourishing and happiness. Indeed, there is a "mindfulness revolution" now abroad in the Western mind and its culture. Mindfulness training is alive and well in most of our institutions: education, medicine, psychology, the social sciences, business, government, military, and corrections.

This Western mindfulness cognitive reconstruction has even entered monotheistic organized religion—Judaism, Christianity, Islam. Abrahamic Monotheism has lost—under sway of the dominant cognitive paradigm that is Greek-animated proto-theistic Scientific Materialism/Physicalism (which has now colonized the Western mind)—much of its foundation in the contemplative mythos and praxis of the highest nondual (subject-object unity) teaching of our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition—Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, esoteric/mystical Christianity).

On this neurobiological view, human happiness is very much dependent upon an *awareness management skill set*—where, when, and how we *choose* to place our attentional awareness. In short, both happiness and unhappiness are the result of our *choices* as to

present *placement of attention*—negative emotions, or love-wisdom mind Presence—each moment now. Mindful awareness practice makes it so.

Cognitive neuroscience has identified two ways of experiencing the self—two modes of self-reference: 1) *narrative focus upon self*, our urgent all consuming story-drama about ourselves; and 2) *experiential focus*, bodily proprioceptive sense experience, with direct trans-conceptual feeling experience. These two modes are often hypothesized by cognitive scientists to be neurologically distinct. Buddhism has unified them.

Once again, volumes of research have demonstrated that in both meditators and non-meditators alike the *experiential focus* mode involving non-conceptual "mindfulness of breathing" as the Buddha called it, reduced egocentric narrative self-referential activity—in a word "selfing"—in the MPFC and PCC of the default mode network.

However, for highly skilled meditators habitual fantasy-reverie self-referential thinking of the untrained mind is absent during sitting meditation, and for varying periods of time following formal sitting meditation. For these yogis and yoginis processing activity of the default mode network is nearly quiescent (Siegel 2013). These skilled practitioners abide in a "walking meditation" mind state most of the time. And this cognitive state of "calm abiding" persists through several sleep states during the night.

In short, "advanced" meditators have demonstrated in many studies (Begley 2007; Siegel 2013) the capacity to maintain such stable quiescent contemplative mind states, with their corresponding brain rhythms (*theta* and *gamma*) in "post-meditation" activities—while "hewing wood and carrying water", and driving, talking, loving, and in even creative thinking!

Therefore, meditation practice for established meditators seems to facilitate the *choice* of a fluent cognitive ambulation from conceptual self narrative mode to a peaceful, even blissful non-conceptual experiential mode, almost at will. Indeed, the mind states of the nondual mode are usually experienced as pervading and embracing conceptual self narrative mind states. There seems to be no appreciable difference.

The global result of meditation practice in the meditator is calm, abiding, quiescent peace of mind, and a happy felt sense of connection and interdependence with all living things; and indeed, with the unbroken whole of *Kosmos* itself—even as inexorable human adversity continues to arise.

Mindful Thinking About Science and Spirit

We've just seen that hundreds of scientific studies with highly advanced Buddhist meditators, as well as beginning meditators, have demonstrated that subjective meditation states have objective neural correlates in the brain. Well and good. Does this factoid mean that trans-physical, post-empirical meditation experience can be reduced to merely physical brain states, as acolytes of our modern prevailing materialist metaphysic—the "scientific reductionism" of fundamentalist "Scientism"—believe?

Does the fact that Buddhist modernists, for example H.H. Dalai Lama, correctly state that Buddhism is, and has always been a contemplative "science of mind" mean that the Buddhist understanding of mind with its nondual Buddha nature of mind (*buddhadhatu*, *buddhajnana*) is also an objective science of mind in the same way that experimental psychology, or physics is?

It does not. Is the "mind of enlightenment" taught by all of the buddhas reducible to the mere EEG brightening of the left prefrontal cortex during an advanced meditator's heartfelt compassion for a living being in terrible pain? It is not. Yet, in the highest all-embracing nondual view, it is! It depends upon the view, relative or ultimate.

It is useful here to remember that the spectrum of human knowledge—from the objective conceptual understanding of mathematical physics, to the deep subjectivity of Buddha mind—is, when engaged by discursive concept mind—pervaded by metaphysical, or ontological speculation. And that is pervaded by nondual Buddha mind which embraces all human cognition, dualistic and nondual alike.

Philosophers of science and Buddhist lamas agree: that appearing spacetime reality is *ultimately* objective and material/physical is an unproven, unprovable metaphysical assumption/belief. (*Appendix D*). That reality is ultimately subjective and illusory is equally so. That reality is a centrist middle way between these two metaphysical extremes is still provisional, uncertain, fallible concept and belief. No problem at all. And the trans-conceptual definitive contemplative certainty of nondual Buddha mind? Clearly, that is beyond belief. We are thus naturally referred to deeper, post-empirical contemplative strata of cognitive formation.

Metaphysical scientific reductionism—the epistemological reduction of all appearing reality to mere physical phenomena—is the dogmatic hand maid to our prevailing Western cultural "global web of belief", namely, the much valorized and idealized metaphysic of Scientific Materialism/Physicalism—"Scientism" in its extreme proto-religious fundamentalist cloak.

The "scientific method"—systematic objective observation, measurement, experiment, and the experimental formulation and testing of hypotheses—is wondrously capable of revealing informational truths in the conceptual dimension of objective, physical spacetime appearing reality; the world of physics, cosmology, mathematics, and biology. Yet, such a monistic metaphysic methodologically ignores the entire dimension of subjective, non-conceptual, non-physical human experience, to wit: 1) the bliss of feeling emotional experience of personal and spiritual love; 2) the trans-conceptual contemplative experience of the perfectly subjective nondual primordial love-wisdom of the Buddha and of the Christ; and 3) the great nondual Primordial Wisdom Tradition of humankind that transcends yet embraces and includes the purely objective realm of modern science.

Physical science and our emerging inchoate Western Science of Consciousness, of which East/West contemplative science is a branch, must work together to pragmatically unify our objective conceptual, and subjective contemplative knowledge that is so profoundly displayed through these two complementary sciences, physical/conceptual

and contemplative/spiritual. That is our joyous urgent wisdom project as we enter in the 21st century Noetic Revolution that is now upon us. (Boaz 2021b, excerpted at davidpaulboaz.org)

Therefore, nondual primordial awareness wisdom (*jnana, yeshe*), that is expressed through human skillful discriminating wisdom (*prajna, sherab*) which includes objective, empirical, conceptual knowledge, and intuitive mythopoetic knowledge requires that we human beings utilize our innate *noetic cognitive doublet* that constitutes both the objective and subjective voices of the nonlocal, nondual whole of our human love-wisdom mind.

We must understand that these two are an ontologically prior, yet an epistemologically and phenomenally present complementary, indivisible unity. We utilize this handy cognitive doublet to ascertain both provisional and definitive truth, both relative and ultimate truth, and the ontic prior but always present indivisible unity of these two human cognitive modalities. As Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava told: "We accomplish ultimate truth only through relative truth. Practice these two as a unity". We must keep a holistic view.

Philosophy—*philo-sophia*—Western or Eastern is so much more than sterile academic philosophy. Traditionally, philosophy is the love of wisdom. Ultimately, philosophy is the prior and present unity of love and wisdom. For the spiritual practitioner philosophy is understanding the practical, skillful expression in compassionate conduct of this love-wisdom unity for the benefit of living beings. That is how we may *be* happy now. And that is the Buddha's teaching for the ages.

Kuhnian (Thomas Kuhn's 1961 breakthrough *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*) scientific "paradigm shifts" produce "scientific revolutions" every generation or two. Cases in point: in the 17th century Newtonian Revolution Isaac Newton utilized, but enhanced Galileo's theory of relativity; Einstein's Special Relativity Theory (SRT) enhanced Newton's relativity, and established the present relativistic scientific paradigm. Quantum electrodynamics (QED) corrected and included Einstein's Special and General Relativity Theory (GRT) establishing the present physics Standard Model (lambda cold dark matter/ Λ CDM) of particles and fields revealing in the process its own quantum incompleteness, as Einstein was quick to point out.

We are now perched rather precariously upon the cusp of a new knowledge/wisdom paradigm, a Noetic Revolution in matter, mind and spirit (Boaz 2021b) that begins to heal the relentless subject-object split between our objective and subjective cognitive modes of experience. Buddhist contemplative studies is facilitating this process as dialog continues between physicists, philosophers of physics, and practicing Buddhist scholars. And we need a lot more of it.

Therefore, lest we valorize too much in our clinging to the descending "scientific" metaphysic that is modern Scientific Materialism/Physicalism let us understand that all dualistic scientific and Buddhist theories are fallible, provisional and incomplete; impatiently awaiting that next more inclusive, syncretic but ever incomplete theory.

Just so, dualistic Buddhist dialectics—the two thousand year old colloquy that produced the Four Buddhist Tenet Systems—remains incomplete. We shall soon see that it is completed in the ultimate truth union of Buddhist *Dzogchen* and *Mahamudra*.

Incompleteness is the destiny of conceptual, dialectical, relative conventional truth, whether scientific or religious. Absolute *objective* certainty remains a pipe dream.

Clearly, the neuroscientific implications of meditation for the reduction of human suffering, and for human happiness are profound. Mindfulness meditation and loving-kindness meditation offer skillful regulation of negative emotional response to life's inexorable adversity by transforming the painful narcissistic self-narrative into peaceable, and altruistic states of mind.

We have now seen that through the assiduous practice of the Buddhist Path we learn to place our present moment to moment awareness—our *attention*—upon our trans-conceptual direct yogic (*yogi pratyaksa*) *feeling experience* of our innate already present Buddha nature/ Buddha mind. *This contemplative process opens a finite awareness portal into infinity wherein we connect with an aspect of ourselves that is selfless, non-conceptual, and profound.* We come to understand that we need not believe and defend our adventitious dreary and destructive negative ego-centric thoughts and feelings; stress is reduced; and human happiness is enhanced.

The psychological/emotional takeaway is this: our all too human mind—thoughts and feelings, positive and negative—are fleeting, inherently evanescent, ever changing, empty (*shunyata*), and impermanent (*anitya*). Knowing this, we, as self-ego-I, give them as much power as we choose. We do have this choice. Contemplative practice makes it so. Perhaps we might take ourselves less seriously, and with a bit of ego-self-effacing humor.

Thus does the Buddha's Fourth Noble Truth of the Path, with the Six Perfections, and the altruistic ethic of *bodhicitta*, result in ultimate happiness of liberation from ignorance (*avidya, marigpa*) that is the root cause of human suffering. The Buddhist Path provides a practical, contemplative way to remain present, moment to moment, to our already present, innermost Buddha mind—happy bright Presence of That. That is the Buddha's promise of primordial awakening to all of us—without a single exception.

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