

Primordial Wisdom Mind: The Dzogchen View

Truth is one; many are its names.

—*Rig Veda*

The Nature of Mind

What is your mind? The nature and fruition of 'mindfulness of breathing' (*shamatha, sati, smrti, bhavana*) is the continuous awakening into our trans-conceptual, selfless, always already present compassionate love-wisdom mind, nondual primordial awareness itself, the ground and ultimate Nature of Mind (*sems nyid, cittata, dharmata, gzhi, rang rig yeshe*, gnosis). Bright indwelling Presence of That (*vidya, rigpa*).

Who is your mind? This nondual ultimate Presence of the all-pervading awareness ground already embraces the relative presence of your personal awareness arising and abiding herein—this 'feeling of being' that is your awareness of being here in space and time. This 'Big Mind' and 'Small Mind' are a prior and present unity. You are that bright numinous unity! Feel That now at your spiritual Heart (*hridayam*).

What is your mind? On the accord of the subtlest and most profound Buddhist *Dzogchen* teaching the nature of your mind is all-embracing timeless immediate vast *primordial awareness-consciousness* itself, precisely as it is, prior to conceptual elaboration, uncontrived and utterly free of qualities and attributes, objective or subjective.

This nondual state of perfect equality may be experienced directly (*yogi pratyaksa*), just as it is, prior to thinking about it. This knowing-feeling apperception of the original awareness ground of all arising reality is primordial wisdom—*jnana, yeshe*, gnosis. Such primordial awareness is beyond empirical observation, beyond the pernicious split between a subject and its objects of knowledge; beyond concept and belief. It transcends all dualistic discursive description. It is limpid, luminous clear light cognizance, all-pervading and unceasing—original primordial Nature of Mind itself.

Such ineffable ultimate primordial awareness may be revealed in three ways. 1) It may be pointed to in the negative, apophatically (*via negativa*), by describing what it is not. *Neti, neti*—not this, not that. For example, it does not exist objectively, as an object that can be observed, perceived, conceived, or grasped. Nor is it an object of worship or praise. Nor is it subjective nihilistic nonexistence. It is not an affirmation nor a denial of anything at all. It is beyond the metaphysical extremes of either existence or nonexistence, being or not being.

Therefore basal awareness cannot be an *object* of perceptual or conceptual cognition. Primordial awareness embraces, pervades, and is instantiated in ordinary mind and its bodily physical support. It is not an object grasped by the mind.

2) Primordial awareness may be pointed to in the positive, kataphatically, by describing what it is in human experience. Thus it is luminous, clear, limpid, lucid, vivid, pristine, blissful, all-pervading, nondual and 'primordially pure' (*kadag*). It is space-like empty boundless openness, entirely beyond our concepts and beliefs *about* it. Yet, it is always 'spontaneously present' (*lhundrup*), bright Presence experienced directly at the spiritual Heart (*hridyam*). Thus is the prior and present unity of primordial awareness and its spontaneous presence 'already accomplished from the very beginning'.

3) Primordial awareness may be pointed to through analogy. It is like formless empty space with no beginning nor end, embracing all relative spacetime form. It is like the vast open sky in which myriad clouds appear and then vanish, leaving no trace. Like the sun who's impartial all-permeating light illumines and animates all things equally. It is like a crystal sphere, or a mirror that reflects apparitional objects appearing before it.

Thus is the Ultimate Truth of the nature of primordial awareness utterly ineffable, beyond all conceptual fabrication and elaboration. And yet, wonder of wonders, relatively, we arise, participate, experience and are instantiated in it. So, we must not deny but respect this karmic cause and effect spacetime dimension of Relative Truth. Here we assiduously cultivate loving-kindness and compassionate *bodhichitta*, the very heart of the Path of the Buddha's oracular Mahayana teaching vehicle.

Who am I? What is my mind? We are always already that ultimate primordial awareness, here and now. Better yet, as we shall soon see, we may know and feel it directly, upon the mindful *prana* spirit wind of the breath. (Ch. 7, *Appendix A*)

Nineteenth century *Dzogchen rime* master Shechen Gyaltsap Rinpoche (2020), root lama of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, unfolds the *Dzogchen* Great Perfection View of this everyday miracle of primordial awareness-consciousness itself:

Self-cognizing awareness is beyond verbal expression. It is the union of primordial purity and spontaneous presence, the sole sphere of self-arisen primordial wisdom...It is the immaculate, ultimate expanse, sugatagarbha (Buddha nature)... Awareness—self-arisen primordial wisdom is the actual nature of ordinary mind. It is itself unaltered by such dualistic subject-object cognitions. It is beyond thought, word, and formulation. It is the great state beyond the ordinary mind...It is the nature of mind...free of any arising and cessation throughout the three times (past, present, future)...

Empty luminosity, beyond all movement...endowed with the essence of awareness is primordially beyond both bondage and freedom...This is the characteristic of ultimate

reality, the unconditioned, uncompounded dharmata...the state of great equality...by nature stable, peaceful, unmoving, everlasting...one and only sphere...perfect ground beyond movement and change...indwelling primordial wisdom that purifies the mind's defilements...nondual...beyond identity or difference...

Everything that is pervaded by the ground, the dharmata, is simply the display of primordial wisdom, the appearance of the ground...awareness, all-pervading and unceasing...luminous state of the ground. Such is essential heart of the teaching of the sutras of definitive meaning and of the tantras.

The Great Perfection...Everything is fully included, perfected, open and free, in the state of the single, self-arisen, primordial wisdom. This is precisely why it is called *perfection*. And because the ground to be realized, the path to be traversed, and the result to be attained are none other than the self-arisen primordial wisdom, it is *great*...the Great Perfection.

The mind is deluded but the nature of mind, which emerges as a result of purification, is primordial wisdom... recognize directly the unborn nature of (your) present mind.

"Thoughts and emotions are the play of pure primordial awareness. They arise within it; and dissolve back into it." (Dilgo Kyentse Rinpoche) Human happiness begins by accepting our conceptual uncertainty about That. Ultimate human happiness, harmless Happiness Itself—liberation, enlightenment—is resting in the present moment to moment trans-conceptual, contemplative continuity of primordial awareness. In this way our original love-wisdom mind may be seen as the 'wisdom of uncertainty' whose fruition becomes the contemplative certainty of wisdom. We awaken to That (*tat*) each moment now. In the clear words of Shechen Gyaltsap (2020):

When a firm conviction arises in you to the effect that all phenomena are empty and devoid of self, that their fundamental nature is...the union of appearance and emptiness—emptiness endowed with every perfect quality—relax at ease in the natural flow of the uncontrived fundamental nature, the fourth state of the mind, free of every thought relating to past, present, or future (the three times).

What is your mind? Who am I? 'That I Am', without a single exception. Practice, understanding, realization, and skillful compassionate expression for the benefit of living beings of our already present love-wisdom mind Presence requires the culturing of altruism, patience and courage.

That is how it is that we human guests of this phenomenal world may choose to be happy. *Happiness is a choice*, the inexorable result/fruition of where, when and upon

what we choose to place our attention, our human awareness, each moment now. We learn through relative practice the conscious 'placement of attention' upon our non-conceptual awareness, our already present indwelling ultimate primordial love-wisdom mind (*buddhajnana*). Bright spontaneous awareness Presence (*vidya, rigpa*) of That!

The choice of happiness? We practice moment to moment—between myriad 'spaced out' distractions—grounding mindful mantra breathing while unifying our devotional mind with the perfect mindstream of the *Dzogchen* master, seen as the primordial Buddha himself. He/she abides one cubit above the crown of the head, then dissolves into light entering in and pervading your entire body and mind

To be sure, at the beginning our awareness practice of primordial wisdom mind is mostly concepts and beliefs about it. Yet, we receive glimpses—'brief moments many times'—of the ultimate truth of it. This happens not in some future happy mind state, but from the beginning of the establishment of your practice with a qualified 'spiritual mentor'. Thus do we persevere upon this joyous, difficult Path.

Yes, 'I am' a relatively embodied, self-conscious, thinking-feeling self-ego-I; but I am so much more. On the accord of the masters of the great Primordial Wisdom Tradition of our species, I am always that very 'I Am That I Am' *selfless* Presence of this vast primordial awareness ground. That timeless selfless unbounded whole in which this thinking, feeling 'I', and its experience of physical and mental stuff is the 'supreme source' in whom this all arises and participates.

Please know that while ultimate 'no-self' always embraces relative self, your selfless no-self 'I Am Presence' is not at all a self—a smarter or 'higher' version of your grasping, presumptive self-ego-I. As Buddha told so long ago, "No-self is the true refuge of self." That primordially pure no-self that we are is the very Nature of Mind.

Dzogchen View and Practice: The Supreme Teaching

What is your mind? Who is your mind? What is the very ground of your mind? The Nature of Mind? Who am I? Who is it in whom you and all of this arises? Now Dear Reader, you have a relative conceptual understanding of these urgent questions from the Buddhist nondual *Dzogchen* view. Such relative questions reveal ultimate answers. So, let's venture more deeply into the actual nature of your mind, that you may awaken to the 'innermost secret' peace and the joy of it.

In the Vajrayana 'fruition vehicle' our nondual primordial awareness ground is symbolized and personified as iconic all-good Samantabhadra (Tib. Kuntazangpo; in Mahamudra teaching it is Vajradhara), primordial *Adi* Buddha who is our direct experience of all-pervading 'basic goodness' of the whole of reality itself and of our true nature—ultimate dimension of *dharmakaya*. Samantabhadra is the *dharmakaya* Buddha who represents the 'basic space' (*dharmadhatu*) of phenomena, the intrinsic emptiness

(*shunyata*) of form. He is depicted in *yab-yum* union with his consort Samantabhadri who represents appearance/form—aboriginal unity of form and its emptiness ground.

Buddha told long ago, "Form is empty; emptiness is form." This indivisible unity of relative form and its ultimate emptiness ground are the Buddha's Two Truths—Relative Truth and Ultimate Truth—outshining as primordial *Adi* Buddha Samantabhadra whose very innermost Presence you actually are.

Samantabhadra is sky blue in color sitting in *samadhi* of the vast awareness expanse of empty space and encircled by an aura of rainbow light, the basic elements of form arising from him/her for all of us. He is naked representing the utter absence of conceptual artifice. He is the absolute or ultimate 'primordial purity' of the awareness ground itself, the very nature of your mind. He is who you are; your ultimate 'supreme identity'. *Emaho!* How Wonderful!

In the Vajrayana Secret Mantra *Dzogchen* teaching tradition that primordial awareness ground state—perfect and always present as our 'innermost secret' Buddha nature Buddha mind—is the wisdom heart seed of perfect enlightenment.

Essence, Nature, Energy. Now the 'empty primordial awareness ground state' is itself "ultimately empty of any shred of self-existence" (Nagarjuna), known to the wise as the 'emptiness of emptiness'. Still it displays in spacetime as having three interdependent aspects: *essence, nature,* and its arising *energy* naturally and spontaneously expressing in the world as skillful compassion for the benefit of living beings. We here quite artificially conceptually separate these three faces of the timeless, boundless *Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen* in order to understand that they are ultimately an ontological prior and phenomenally present unity.

Cognitive Caveat: From the metaphysical ontology you choose, arises the phenomenal reality you deserve. So choose wisely. Your human happiness depends upon it.

Let us now briefly visit these three facets of the precious gem that is our 'supreme source', nondual ultimate primordial awareness ground of all this arising relative spacetime form. Including you and me.

1) *Essence.* The *essence* of the fundamental primordial awareness-consciousness ground (*gzhi rigpa*) is *primordial purity (kadak)*, clear light emptiness aspect of the ground, free of the afflictive negative emotions (fear, anger, hatred, grasping desire, greed and pride), and as well, empty of intrinsic ultimate existence.

2) *Nature.* Yet, the empty primordial ground is also spontaneously present in/as physical and mental form. Buddha told, "Form is empty; emptiness is form." The nature of emptiness is the arising of form. Form and emptiness are utterly interconnected and interdependent. This is known as 'Interdependent Arising'. The nature of emptiness is

to arise as *Spontaneous presence (lhundrup)*, the nature of all the emerging spacetime phenomena of samsara and nirvana; and the basis of the law of karma that pervades human thought, intention, and action. (Ch. 10) *Essence-Kadak* and *Nature-lhundrup* are an indivisible unity. Again, the luminous mind of Shechen Gyaltzap (2020) on the primordial empty awareness ground and nondual meditation upon it:

The mind's nature or ultimate mode of being — can be said neither to exist nor not to exist...It is not existent; even the buddhas have not seen it. It is not non-existent; it is the ground of samsara and nirvana...The nature of the mind is wholly untrammled and does not fall into the extremes either of permanent existence, or of nothingness.

When you meditate on it (do not) follow your past thoughts, nor elicit future thoughts; neither should you be concerned with your present state of mind. The mind in its fourth state (is) free of thoughts of the three times, unstained as it is by mental factors, is clear...lucid, vivid, and awake...Do not stop your thoughts; do not indulge them...

Whatever thoughts arise, neither accept nor reject them. Just relax in their very nature. Whatever good or bad experiences occur... do not cling to the good ones, and do not shy away from the bad... Hope, fear, doubt, and anxiety — all belong to the dualistic state... Thanks to the view of great purity and the equality of phenomenal existence, the knot of duality is cut through...

It is absolutely imperative that you have compassion...Begin with the cultivation of *bodhichitta*, and then (take refuge) with great devotion in your own teacher above the crown of your head...Then as he melts into light and dissolves into you, let your mind mingle with his, and remain in the state of great bliss, the dharmata beyond the ordinary mind...This is so important...Abandon hope and fear, abandon all worry and doubt.

3) *Energy*. Wonder of wonders, the *essence* and *nature* of the primordial awareness ground spontaneously manifests as this great gift of relative matter and energy, $E = mc^2$, spacetime form — *ultimate bodhichitta*, compassionate *energy* — which then expresses as *relative bodhichitta* — loving-kindness, skillful compassionate thought, intention, and action for the benefit of living beings. You shall discover, if you have not already, that

skillful *bodhichitta* spontaneously arising from your intimate rest in the ultimate Nature of Mind, is the essential cause of your own human happiness.

Sadly, the primordial ground is mostly obscured to we human beings by atavistic primal ignorance (*avidya, marigpa, ajnana*) of the truth of the matter. We 'cut through' (*trekchö*) and 'leap over' (*tögal*) delusion and ignorance through the practice of the *Dzogchen* Path of the View, the Meditation, and the Action/Conduct. Through these three faces/voices of the Path we recognize, then realize the ultimate primordial awareness ground itself as our true Buddha essence Buddha nature—our 'supreme identity'. Full *bodhi* realization of this 'not existent not non-existent' groundless ground of aboriginal awareness is the ultimate Fruition/Result of this conceptually abstruse Path—liberation from suffering, enlightenment, Buddhahood, Happiness Itself. (Boaz 2021a Ch. 2)

What is your mind? *That* is your mind! Numinous, spontaneous, happy Presence of That! Yet, no more than interesting concepts before one furthers one's practice of it.

Review of the View. We have seen that pure aboriginal primordial awareness ground of being—bright Presence of That—by whatever conceptual understanding, is already present in the mindstream of all living beings. That is the View. It may be contemplatively recognized, then realized by human beings as the nondual luminous cognizance of clear light, primordial awareness love-wisdom mind.

That *ultimate* 'groundless ground' enfolds, embraces, pervades, and protects our fourfold unified human awareness-consciousness cognitive processional as it unfolds in *relative* time. These four states and stages may be seen as an interdependent prior unity of a psycho-emotional-spiritual awakening process. Immediate Presence and its innate human happiness is always present at any moment in any state or stage. It need only be recognized in that moment here and now. It is not elsewhere. Your peace and happiness is already present now! Knowing that, everything is known. Please consider it well.

Broadly construed, the four mind states and life stages of our multidimensional human cognition are: 1) immediate ordinary direct attention/perception, prior to naming; 2) objective, conceptual cognition; 3) subjective, contemplative, intuitional cognition; and 4) perfectly subjective nondual (*yogi pratyaksa*) cognition.

We live most of our lives in state/stage one and two. Fuller functioning and happy human being here arise as state/stage two stabilizes in compassionate conduct and engages state/stage three, which with assiduous practice opens into state four, and in due course and by grace becomes life stage four. (Ch. 7)

In the meantime, rest here and now in the primordial Nature of Mind, however imperfectly. Know and feel that this process constitutes a cognitive 'paradigm shift' of the highest order. That then is the approach to *Dzogchen* View and the Practice.

Ignorance and Liberation: Primordial Wisdom No-Self Help

Alas, it is the primal ignorance (*avidya, marigpa, ajnana*) of habitual dualistic conceptual grasping and clinging by a perceiving subject-self onto its perceived and much desired separate objects—and the materialist 'illusions of knowledge' that arise there from—that the fluent 'primordially pure' freedom of the nondual *ultimate* selfless, formless 'groundless ground' becomes the *relative* solid stuff of physical and mental form, our all too real impermanent (*anitya*) spacetime realities. Losing this stuff to which we are so attached, or fear of such loss, is the main cause of human suffering. (H.H. Dalai Lama 2000; Wallace 2012; Boaz 2020 Ch. VI)

What is your mind? Let us briefly engage a mereological analogy. Mereology is the study of the relation of parts to wholes. Parts are interconnected particulars, themselves lesser wholes or holons abiding in an ascending greater ever more inclusive whole. Wholes transcend, embrace and subsume their participating holonic parts—holonic wholes within wholes—ultimately embraced by the vast selfless, formless primordial unbounded whole itself, primordial awareness ground of being itself.

To use physical examples, a whole human being has holonic organ systems which subsume cells, which subsume molecules, then atomic structures down to quarks and leptons, and the almost entirely empty space within them.

Just so, planets are holons participating in more inclusive solar systems, galaxies, galactic clusters, universes/multiverse. All of this physical and mental spacetime stuff is embraced in a great utterly conceptually ineffable formless, timeless, selfless, awareness-consciousness primordial ground—name it as you will.

This aboriginal awareness ground is the unbounded *ultimate* whole, reality being itself in whom all *relative* spacetime holonic parts being here in time and form arise, participate and are instantiated. The arising unfolding explicate parts are primordially enfolded by the natural nondual awareness ground itself, "implicate order of the unbounded whole", as physicist David Bohm told it (1993).

Because this great ultimate awareness whole embraces all of emerging spacetime, and indeed the perennial 'three times'—past, present and future—we have, *ipso facto*, never ever departed from it. All of us, our 'supreme identity' that is our love-wisdom mind Presence are awareness-consciousness manifestations of this boundless 'supreme source' itself. We cannot ultimately be separate from it, nor from one another in it—all of it relative holons playing here in all-pervading perfectly subjective ultimate whole that is reality being itself.

We have seen that this ultimate perfectly subjective awareness whole and its constituting parts are always already a prior ontic, epistemic, and phenomenal unity. Our wisdom mind views the relatively separate parts as unified in the great whole that is Suzuki Roshi's ultimate 'Big Mind' whose cognizant Presence pervades all of the particulars of relative conventional 'Small mind'. We humans have the awareness

capacity to experience, awaken to, and realize that awareness ground through the practice of the Path. Or so it is told by the wisdom avatars, *mahasiddhas*, saints and sages of our Great Wisdom Tradition.

This innermost love-wisdom mind Presence of the unbounded whole itself has many names. Indeed, each wisdom tradition has its own name for the timeless primordial ground, another name for the indwelling Presence of it, and yet another name for nondual realization of it. (*Appendix B*) "What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet." (Juliet Capulet)

What's in a name? A name (*namarupa*) is a concept *about* the thing named. It is merely a linguistic, iconic representation of that named. It must not be conflated with the pre-linguistic, trans-conceptual, nondual actuality of that named. That said, our conceptually ineffable always already present love-wisdom mind (*buddhajnana*) is the felt sense *direct experience* of spontaneous Presence of That (*tat, sat*) named, beyond any conceptual definition, elaboration or limit.

Thus does nondual wisdom intelligence deracinate our concepts and beliefs about it so that we know it immediately, intimately, directly (*yogi praryaksa*), just as it is prior to filtering it through our prosaic, well defended concept-belief cognitive systems.

In short, our primordial awareness love-wisdom mind, numinous Presence of That, bestows a subtle trans-rational knowing-feeling awareness that transcends yet embraces our often destructive 'wild horse of the mind'. This busy thinking mind brims with its endless concepts, judgments, and personal and collective beliefs—our inherited deep background materialist, mostly subconscious sociocultural 'global web of belief' (Quine 1969). Upon such thinking rides our afflicted cognitive biases with their fear, anger, hatred, ego-grasping desire, greed, and foolish pride.

There is present now upon and within each mindful *prana* breath a luminous peaceful, subtly blissful cognizance in the selfless absence of discursive conceptual thinking of ego-I that transcends yet embraces the semiotics (semantics, syntax, pragmatics) of mere dualistic language arising from habitual global concept-mind. Mindful Presence is inherently present in the midst of all such distractions. But don't *believe* this! It's just more concepts and beliefs. As Buddha told, "Come and see."

Few people experience this inner peace consciously, intentionally. Few people know that it is already present within our human mindstream. Few people are aware that it may be consciously developed and increased. Without such mindful intervention we habitually abide in our familiar, not so comfortable cognitive comfort zones, almost forever. Through such obsessive negative cognition we construct a kind of conceptual, cognitive gilded cage of hope and fear. Our way out is wisdom mind Presence within.

But wait! Has not everyone had natural spontaneous glimpses, little blissful *samadhi* experiences of this presence of peace and love that "passes all understanding"? Meditation practitioner or not, Presence is blissfully present in the mother's love for her child; in the father's first sight of his newborn; in the trans-rational moment of orgasm;

and in the empty instant of a sneeze. Presence is abundantly present in the feeling of peace and connectedness to everything in a beautiful sunset, or in the forest green buried in deep winter snow. It is always present in the instant bliss of peak, beyond belief spiritual experience—*samadhi/satori*—whether one is religious or not.

Moreover, Presence is alive in 'the zone' of aerobic exercise; and the martial arts. Indeed, such an innermost balance of body, mind and action, beyond thinking—quiescent calm of that—is the very foundation and fruition of the martial arts, and of supreme athletic endeavor. Effective psycho-emotional-spiritual movement is grounded in the life-force energy that we know as *prana, lung, c'hi, pneuma/Holy Spirit*, entering in, along with oxygen and nitrogen, upon each breath. Indeed, 'breath' means 'spirit' in all of the Indo-European languages, as we have seen.

Well, how shall we consciously make such 'spiritual experience' present in our busy lives? So, let us now further venture in to how it is that we may have such happiness and peace most of the time, even among all the distractions and adversity that mortal human flesh is heir to.

Our primordial wisdom tradition knows quiescent, peaceful, first person selfless nondual primordial wisdom by many names, among them—*jnana, yeshe, gnosis, selfless kenosis*. Indwelling wisdom 'instant presence' is *vidya, rigpa, christos, Atman* that is Brahman, the 'I Am That I Am' Presence of Moses and the Prophets, and of Jesus the Christ. (*Appendix B*)

Nondual cognition—"not two, not one, but nondual"—is a feeling-sense knowing that is radically free of thinking; free of a knowing subject separate from its object known; free of the dualistic split between self and other; between self-ego-I and God; free of this sad and tiresome I-other false dichotomy that is inherent in conceptual mind's logical syntax of language. Our innermost esoteric love-wisdom mind is utterly nondual. Yet, to wisdom mind it is ultimately always perfectly present, however imperfect it may seem to a relative separate self-ego-I. All of the wisdom masters and avatars of our species have taught this great truth.

So, let us not denigrate our ego-I. We need it to show up for work, and to choose, in fear and trembling, to establish and continue our mindful meditation practice. Please respect your unruly ego-I. Gautama the Buddha of this present age told it well (*Dhammapada* 160):

Your own self is your mainstay, for who else could it be?
With you yourself well trained, you obtain a mainstay
hard to obtain.

So, we need not give up or entirely transcend our restive ego-I! An intelligent, well-trained and courageous relative self is required to understand, recognize, and

realize ultimate selflessness, or 'no-self' (*anatman*). We practice the Path in order to align and lift the narcissism of self into the wisdom light of selfless altruistic *bodhichitta*.

So be present to yourself, moment to moment, here and now. Metacognitively, reflexively, witness your mindstream, whatever arises, positive or negative, free of critical judgment. Accept yourself just as you are now. Like a mother loves and accepts her only child. You are that wisdom mother. And you are that precious child. No need to try to connect to this Great Love. You are always already connected. Just feel That.

Therefore, give thanks for the precious gift of your life, just as it is now. Know and feel that you are always embraced in loving Presence of your always already present love-wisdom Buddha heart Buddha mind. Do it now for 60 seconds. And again later, 'brief moments many times' until it becomes a bright continuity of the mindful happy-sad pure awareness that you are now.

Hence, we need not be concerned that Buddhism ignores the importance of human self-esteem, and motivation for 'success' in life, and all the other attributes of the 'fuller functioning self' of modern Western ego psychology. Perhaps the antidote to the modern psychological affliction of low self esteem is no-self esteem!

Be that as it may, thinking mind is inherently dualistic and self-centered, and therefore often the cause of our pain. We habitually think and see in dualistic terms: self-other, either-or, good or bad, existence or non-existence, life or death. Lonely dualistic cognition indeed. Our habitual thinking mind is the natural limit of binary, true-false language, the mode of operation of narcissistic self-ego-I. The result is often confusing, painful and destructive to living beings; and as well to our Mother Earth. Thus do we train the obsessively thinking wild horse of the mind in peaceful, trans-conceptual mindfulness meditation.

Peaceful nondual cognition is then, broadly construed, 'post-empirical', trans-conceptual contemplative or meditative cognition, more or less free of the inherent dilemma of binary, dualistic thinking mind. It happens—however imperfectly—breath by mindful breath. Mindful continuity of that. That is your mindfulness meditation practice. That is your primordial wisdom imperative. This very moment now, settle into your breath in the belly and rest in That. Go ahead and do it now for a minute or two, or more. Simply observe what arises in the comedy drama of your mind—thoughts, feelings, images, fear, anger, desire—without evaluation or judgment. It's merely passing thoughts coming and going. None of it has any reality that you don't give it. Breathe, relax, and enjoy. (Ch. 7)

It is this mindful cognition that we practice in order to heal the duality of the pernicious subject-object split and know, through *direct experience*, beyond concept and belief, the primordial awareness whole in whom this all arises. That is how we see and feel and recognize it. That is how we awaken to it. That is how we realize it in

spontaneous kind compassionate conduct. To see or not to see, that is the question. By now we know the answer. Practice it now on your own terms. Good questions already contain their answers. Please consider this for just a moment.

There exists in the engagement of conscious mindful breathing an inherent peaceful, spacious, quiescent and powerful interdependent unity of perceiving subject, and all its objects perceived, of I and other, just prior to this extrinsic and non-essential subject-object split. The conceptual barrier, the dark cloud of uncertainty that is the duality of knower and something 'other' known does not exist in this generous bright spaciousness of trans-conceptual mindful awareness; in this luminous quiet space between our thoughts. "The gap between subject and object does not exist." (Werner Heisenberg, discover of the seminal quantum Principle of Uncertainty)

The prior unity of phenomenal stuff and its observer/perceiver? You shall know it *directly* (*yogi pratyaksa*) upon the breath as quiescent, subtle, innermost peace, subtle bliss, feeling-sense of personal well being, of interconnectedness and completion through which naturally arises an authentic, active caring for all living beings. That peace and bliss effortlessly and spontaneously expresses itself as *bodhicitta*, 'purity of heart', the thought, intention and action for the benefit of all living beings. And this, on the accord of the great Primordial Wisdom Tradition of our species, is the primary cause of both *relative* human flourishing, and Happiness Itself, the selfless harmless compassionate *ultimate* happiness that cannot be lost.

Please consider these profound and beautiful words of the recent great Tibetan Master Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche expressing the nature of nondual *bodhi*-wisdom mind:

Thoughts and emotions are the play of pure awareness. They arise within it, and dissolve back into it. To recognize pure awareness as the heart source of thought and emotion is to recognize that our thoughts have never begun, have never existed, and have never ceased.

Primordial awareness happiness indeed. What is your mind? That is the very nature of your mind.

Wisdom Mind is Instant Connection to the Vast Awareness Whole

We have just seen that our nondual love-wisdom mind is the view of Ultimate Truth (*paramartha satya*). But in the conceptual view of spacetime conventional Relative Truth (*samvriti satya*) continuously arising therein, thoughts and emotions are not always so wise and loving. And they are all too real. We give them their reality by reifying them into something solid. Thus does a slight or an insult to our sensitive ego

become real destructive anger that we obsess about for weeks, or years. And it's no more real than a passing cloud in the vast empty sky of primordial awareness.

Hence, as we purify and stabilize our mind in the subtler more peaceful ultimate view, negative thought and emotion filled distractions continue to arise, yet need not overly trouble us. Emotions are but the natural display and adventitious play of distracted mind, and are not ultimately other than innate awareness-consciousness-being itself, primordial boundless whole, 'supreme source' or awareness ground of all arising and appearing relative spacetime phenomena, including all of us.

The main question is where we choose to place our attention/awareness now. Of whether or not we *choose* to recognize our connectedness to that Ground. Our peace and happiness is always this choice.

The voice of, and immediate connection to our 'supreme identity' of this primeval source/ground is the ancient foundational mantra prayer *OM AH HUM* upon the naturally quiescent life force, mindful *prana* wind of the breath in the belly. Please recite it right now for 60 seconds as you *feel* heart and mind open to receive its already present quiet peace and subtle bliss. Let it be your respite from all of this heady conceptuality about non-conceptuality. Do it now for a minute or so, that you may feel it beyond your thinking about it. Without actual practice it's all just words. (*Appendix A*)

Our indwelling Christ/Buddha love-wisdom mind already knows all of this. Both positive and negative thoughts and emotions are like phantoms. They simply arise, abide and dissolve back into the luminous space of that trans-conceptual nondual awareness 'groundless ground' in which, or in whom this all arises, utterly selfless and absent or "empty of any shred of intrinsic existence." (Nagarjuna) Yet, to concept-mind it's all too real. Again, the love-wisdom mind of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche:

The mind is free of any true *inherent* reality...
To recognize the ultimate Nature of Mind is
to recognize its selfless emptiness...This is a
realization that occurs in the realm of direct
experience. It cannot be expressed in words.

This "direct realization" is our instant connection to the vast primordial awareness whole in whom we arise and participate. Indeed, as we have so often seen, this quiescent peaceful mind state is utterly conceptually ineffable to thinking mind. Yet, once again, it may be felt and known and experienced trans-conceptually, contemplatively, beyond thinking mind by our innate, always present innermost nondual love-wisdom mind Presence—by whatever name or belief. Our primordial wisdom injunction is this: place your attention/awareness now upon the breath in your belly. Breathe normally and simply rest here. Relax and enjoy. As you become distracted, simply return, again and again. That's it!

Such an awareness-consciousness adventure is not for the metaphysically timid. Nor for skeptical course minds. It altogether transcends, yet embraces our attachment to, and defense of the conceptual scientific, philosophical and even contemplative metaphysics that we have come to know and love. Yes, our engagement with our own indwelling love-wisdom mind requires a bit of relative, reflexively present conventional intellectual openness, and courage. We need an open, responsive, intelligent and courageous ego-I to approach such nondual wisdom. Such 'spooky' wisdom is here now present for the very few who will engage it.

We have seen that the ultimate Nature of Mind, boundless awareness whole (*dharmadhatu*) of Suzuki Roshi's Big Mind—since by definition it subsumes and embraces everything arising in the relative Small Mind dimension of our spacetime located experience—is the primordial awareness ground and 'supreme source' of our relative conventional human mind. Yes, this original ground is 'unborn and unceasing'; formless, changeless, selfless and "primordially pure from the very beginning", and even before. We are not imbued with ignorance at the beginning of the Path. We are not improved by the accumulation of wisdom at the end of the path. Rather, the Ultimate Nature of Mind—the *Perfect Sphere of Dzogchen*—is this diaphanous perfect awareness Presence always present in human awareness, this present moment, here and now. Big happiness! *Mahasukaho!*

And yes, we come to know it via *feeling*, the 'felt sense' of our innate, already present wisdom Presence—beyond thinking and belief, and so beyond doubt—*directly* upon each conscious mindful mantra breath. Transpersonal wisdom certainty transcends yet embraces our conceptual 'global web of belief'. Told Buddha, "This cannot be taught...This cannot be expressed in words...Come and see for yourself (*ehi passika*)." Buddha told it well: "Let it be as it is and rest your weary mind; all things are perfect exactly as they are." Such is the nondual formless dimension of Ultimate Truth, 'Big Mind' aboriginal awareness whole that transcends yet embraces the dimension of spacetime form, all this problematic stuff of Small Mind Relative Truth in which it arises, participates, and is instantiated.

The Buddha's Two Truths and the Middle Way. Thus arises Buddha's great wisdom pith from his profound *Heart of Wisdom Sutra*. The 'Fourfold Profundity': "Form is empty; emptiness is form. Form is not other than emptiness; emptiness is not other than form." This is the perfect unity of Buddha's Two Truths—Ultimate primordial awareness and its relative natural play of all the experience of mind.

Well, which of these Two Truths is the right and true one—the perfectly subjective all-embracing nonlocal boundless empty primordial awareness of Ultimate Truth; or local 'scientific' objective spacetime Relative Truth that bestows upon us a lapidary, hyper-objective, meaty purely physical spacetime existence?

Must we choose one or the other; *either* objective relative truth, *or* subjective ultimate truth? Our dualistic relative 'scientific' mind and its 'common sense' counterpart have—with a little help from our 'confirmation bias' (new data always confirms our current beliefs) cognitive legacy that is Greek Materialism—chosen to reduce this intellectually ominous perfect subjectivity of Ultimate Truth to the not altogether comfy ideology of the Relative Truth of Metaphysical Scientific Materialism/Physicalism—in its fundamentalist raiment, proto-religious 'Scientism'.

Alas, this bogus dichotomous choice perforce offers only one choice, that of our prevailing cultural ontology, that is to say, the deep cultural background ideology of Western (Greek) Materialism along with its epistemic sidekick Scientific Local Realism—an ultimately existing 'real world out there' (RWOT). *Either* it is absolute existence (Metaphysical Materialism), *or* absolute non-existence (Metaphysical Idealism). Either choice is a brand of metaphysical (ontological) extremism. The former is materialist substantialism/eternalism; the latter is idealist nihilism—'It's all just an illusion'. Dangerous false dichotomy indeed.

Mahayana *Madhyamaka* Buddhists have found a Middle Way between these philosophical extremes of permanent existence and nihilist non-existence. (*Appendix D* below; Boaz 2021a; Wallace 2012; H.H. Dalai Lama 2007)

Does Truth really require that we choose one or the other—scientific and 'common sense' objectivity or 'mystical' subjectivity? Isn't there both objective and subjective truth present in either pole of this bogus dilemma? Isn't the human mind with our human awareness actually a strange amalgam of the prior unity of the Two Truths—1) relative, exoteric, dualistic, conceptual, objective, and 2) ultimate, esoteric, contemplative, and perfectly subjective nondual?

Does not a holistic, non-reductionist account of our human being here in time require that we consider and utilize both of these voices or faces of our human nature—our 'noetic cognitive doublet' that is relative mind and its ultimate primordial awareness ground—the very nondual Nature of Mind (*sems nyid, cittata, gzhi rigpa, dharmata, rang rig yeshe*, gnosis) in whom this all arises and participates?

Perhaps Truth—*alethia* as wakefulness—is a middle way non-reducible complementary unity that includes both our relative and ultimate reality dimensions. Quantum pioneer Niels Bohr, discoverer of the quantum Principle of Complementarity and student of Taoism thought so. So do the Mahayana *Prasangika Madhyamaka* Middle Way Buddhists. (Boaz 2020, Ch. 5)

Such a centrist middle way view has been assiduously developed over the past 25 centuries by Buddhist, Hindu, Hebrew, and Christian masters. This centrist 'middle path' is seen in Buddhist Middle Way *Prasangika Madhyamaka*, foundation of unifying *Dzogchen* view and praxis; Hindu *Advaita* (nondual) *Vedanta*; Kashmiri Shaivism, Tibetan Nestorian Christianity, and Hebrew *Zohar* of the *Kabbalah*, with its profound later Christian mystical Hermetic philosophy and practice.

If only the astute and busy minds of physical and social scientists, not to mention philosophers and theologians, were not quite so averse to exploring it. Thus a very brief sociological excursus is here indicated.

Sadly, scientists of all stripes—even behavioral scientists whom one might expect to know better—too often display a reflexive antipathy toward any brand of subjectivity, especially that of our Eastern wisdom traditions.

A great misfortune has befallen the prodigious obsessively objective mind of Science, namely, the nearly universal, subtle cognitive bias known to the sociology trade as 'confirmation bias'—to wit, new information is reflexively interpreted as confirming our present conceptual and belief systems; our 'global web of belief'. (Quine)

We have seen that Science is cognitively grounded and steeped in Greek objectivist Local Realism/Materialism, which has become the prevailing paradigmatic ontology of Western metaphysics, namely, Metaphysical Scientific Materialism/Physicalism and naïve Common Sense Realism. Four hundred years of European Enlightenment Modernity—the Age of Reason—has firmly fixed it there. Thus are scientific social and physical theories perforce crammed into this purely objective, purely physical procrustean bed of 'scientific' belief and praxis.

The good news? Spooky quantum nonlocality/entanglement has compelled physics to grudgingly surrender classical Scientific Local Realism and face up to the truth of some variation on the theme of Niels Bohr's Antirealism. The right wing radical, super-spooky, purely mechanistic Many Worlds Interpretation (MWI) is a notable extreme ontic reaction to the inherent subjectivity of quantum mechanics. (Ch. 6; *Appendix D*)

Astoundingly, first person human subjectivity—psychological or ontological—is still largely taboo in Science, even in the human sciences! Do not most scientists view their task as discovering bias in their assumptions, hypotheses, and theories? The cosmic irony here is thick enough to sink in.

As to further exploration of a middle way between the metaphysical extremes of human objectivity and human subjectivity, of existence and non-existence, this profound notion of a centrist middle way complementarity is readily available in hundreds of popular books on Buddhist philosophy; and dozens of popular books on the relation of science, particularly quantum physics to Buddhist Madhyamaka Middle Way view and practice. I have written three of them. (Boaz 2020, 2021a, 2021b)

H.H. Dalai Lama has published dozens of introductory level books on Middle Way Buddhist philosophy, mindfulness meditation, and the very popular topic of Buddhism and Science—several of them New York Times best sellers. Alan Wallace and Ken Wilber have both contributed many important books on the matter, some of them of the highest possible excellence.

Well, how shall we recognize, then realize the prior epistemic unity of objective study and subjective contemplative exploration of our innate awareness wisdom mind

in order to recognize our prior interconnectedness with it, enter into it, and set ourselves free from adventitious human suffering?

Wisdom Mind is a Choice

In mindfulness practice upon the *prana* wind of spirit breath we allow thoughts to arise and dissolve by themselves, leaving no trace, like a cloud in deep blue empty space of sky. Thoughts and difficult emotions dissolve spontaneously and effortlessly into the vast spacious emptiness of the primordial awareness ground, the very Nature of Mind—if we quit trying (*Wu-Wei*) to solidify them, leave them alone and let them "self-liberate" of their own accord at or near the instant of their arising. Mindfulness meditation accomplishes this. (Ch 7; *Appendix A* below)

Ultimately viewed, difficult emotions are then a kind of pseudo-problem. But, from the relative view of self-ego-I they can seem like an emotional train wreck. Thus do we "Let it be as it is." (Gautama Shakyamuni the Buddha) Mindfulness of breathing—breath by purifying breath—accomplishes this result.

We've seen that mindfulness meditation is a conscious finite portal opening naturally into that bright infinite basic space of vast primordial awareness, between our worried thoughts—that we may see clearly, without grasping or rejection—what our realities actually are, and are not, beyond our confused and reactive emotively charged thinking about them. And yes, this requires assiduous contemplative practice.

Thoughts and emotions 'self-liberated' at the very instant of their arising have no impact, do no harm and so leave no karmic trace. (Ch. 10) Hence, there is nothing to fear from our negative thoughts and emotions. Just so, there is nothing solid to hope for or to gain from our positive thoughts and emotions. Thoughts are merely thoughts. They simply arise and recede as they will. They have no power that we do not choose to bestow upon them. Grasping clinging *attraction*, and fearful *aversion* are like illusive rainbows in the sky. There is no *ultimate* reality here to grasp at, nor cling to, nor reject. Although to fraught relative concept-mind it sure seems so.

Our negative and positive thinking and emotion have no more substance than a rainbow, or a cloud in the vast empty sky—unless we insist upon reifying them into something real and solid that we may then worry about and react to. Wasted energy.

However, mere conceptual knowing of this ancient truth is not sufficient to change much, if anything. We must establish a transpersonal 'mindfulness of breathing' practice, under the guidance of a qualified meditation mentor/master, that we may know this directly, prior to our coercive individual and collective reticulum of reifying concepts and beliefs.

But wait! What about karma? Isn't it good to cling to positive thoughts and emotions that will serve to benefit all beings, and thereby make us happy? Isn't it good

to reject and suppress negative emotional stuff that makes us unhappy, angry and sick, and thereby harms ourselves, and through that harms those we love?

Skillful mindfulness practice bestows upon us a 'choiceless choice'. As our trained attention begins to rest in the natural, awake quiescent bright clarity, peace and bliss of innate wisdom mind awareness we are freed from the attraction, aversion and judgment inherent in creative self-ego-I cognitive bias. Thus may we experience directly, beyond our mostly unconscious conceptual "web of belief" our natural indwelling *bodhicitta*—uncontrived, spontaneous, effortless thought, intention and action to benefit all beings. "This cannot be taught." (Buddha) It is not a concept, nor belief. It cannot be contrived nor fabricated. Effort shall not accomplish it. Rather,

It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place
beneath. It is twice blest; It blesseth him that gives and him
that takes..." (Portia, *Merchant of Venice*)

This then is the relative and ultimate secret of human Happiness Itself. Good karma indeed.

Recognizing this great truth of *bodhicitta* begins and motivates the Path toward its ultimate realization, beyond hope and fear of a recalcitrant self-ego-I. But it requires the respect and cooperation of the unruly, not always cooperative non-entity that is self-ego-I. Thus does self—far from denigration and denial—become, in due course, a wisdom ally. This is an ultimate Middle Way view. Our primordial love-wisdom mind Presence is both the origin and aim of it; and the objective/subjective knowing of it. And wonder of wonders, "It is already accomplished", deep within us. No problem at all.

Therefore, in the Buddhist Vajrayana fruitional view, the primordial Nature of Mind is: 1) its *essence* is ultimate boundless formless emptiness awareness whole (*shunyata*, *dharmakaya*, *kadag*, *dharmadhatu*), primordial awareness ground in whom arises all the stuff of form—relative spacetime reality ($E=mc^2$); 2) its *nature* is luminous clarity (*sambhogakaya*); 3) its *energy expression* is love—wise, mostly selfless, kind, compassionate thought, intention and skillful action/conduct in time and space (*nirmanakaya*) for the benefit of all beings in form, including our Mother Earth.

Yes, these three are already an ontologically prior yet always present inseparable phenomenal unity, here and now, beyond the obsessive oppressive grasping and aversion of relative self-ego-I that acts out the desire of relative discursive thinking mind. Our selfless love-wisdom mind already knows this great truth. Mindfulness expresses it in human conduct as the "wisdom of kindness". Mindful practice of this great process brings it all together.

However, this is mostly just concepts, and more concepts about concepts, and concepts about no concepts. How shall we authentically abide the restive untrained horse that is concept-mind? It bears repeating: we train the egocentric 'wild horse of the

mind' to settle into, then rest and abide in its own always already present pristine awareness nature, the nondual, non-conceptual Nature of Mind—clear light awareness Presence of That. It is That that transcends yet gently embraces us. Mindfulness meditation is the prodigious skillful method that establishes—breath by mindful breath—this astounding human happiness result.

And yes, happiness is the result or fruition of this *choice* to establish a mindfulness practice? Well, how does it all end? As the mind turns inward from the heady furious desire of self-ego-I and learns to rest in its own natural, numinous peaceful nature—our innate intrinsic awareness—there is peace of mind, then a bit of subtle joy-bliss as one begins the action/conduct to benefit others—family and loved ones of course—but other beings in need, human and otherwise, including our precious Mother Earth. Once again, such *bodhicitta* is the primary cause of human happiness, both relative human flourishing (*eudiamonia, felicitas*), and ultimate liberation-enlightenment itself (*paramananda, mahasuka, beatitudo*).

Then, ultimately, should one choose to complete this wisdom Path, we are told by those who know that there is a stage of "no more learning", no goal directed meditation; only "empty awake mind", beyond the duality of judgment, of existence and non-existence, of past and future, of attraction and aversion; of enlightenment and ignorance. Those who know teach that there is now only the selfless peace and spontaneous compassionate activity of 'full *bodhi*-wisdom mind'. Indeed, as Hamlet told, "Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished."

Meanwhile, upon the Path to this remarkable Great Completion, mind is tamed, mostly kind, useful and happy; and at peace with itself. And that's a very good way to live this precious life we've been given; is it not?

As with any endeavor, 'self-mastery' takes a bit of courageous, patient practice. Yet, quite astonishingly, the benefits of quiet clarity of mind—peace and subtle bliss—are present almost from the very beginning. So be it. Let it be as it is. "That which you seek is already present within you...(Jesus) "It is already accomplished from the very beginning. To remain here without seeking more, that is the Meditation." (Garab Dorje) Understanding this, now arise and do some good. It will make you happy now.

Therefore, in this ultimate view, your primordial awareness love-wisdom mind is your choice. There is nothing to seek, nothing to fear, nothing to fix, and nothing to do; so that everything that you do is wise, skillful and kind. Sooner or later we learn to "Let it be as it is and rest your weary mind; all things are perfect exactly as they are." (Gautama the Buddha)

In this very act of seeking, the truth is revealed, just for a moment.
Buddha is within you, clear and bright and vast as space. That is the
Meditation. In this quiet vast emptiness there is nothing to construct

and nothing to do. In a carefree way, let it be as it is, and simply relax into it...Now then, rest in *That*.

—Lama Wangdor Rinpoche

What is your mind? This lucent already present primordial awareness Presence is your mind. *Wu shin*. Nothing special. Perfect as it is. Practice That. Rest in That and be happy. Now that you know, arise from your imperfect happiness and do some real good. That is the Conduct that results in the 'already accomplished' *Dzogchen* Fruition.

Thus it is. So be it. May all beings be happy.

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