

Mahamudra Retreat 2016 Notes  
B. Alan Wallace

- Wednesday, March 30, 2016
  - Buddha: “It is in this fathom-long body with its perceptions and its mind that I describe the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the way leading to the cessation of the world.” *Samyutta Nikāya* II 36
- Thursday, March 31, 2016
  - The Buddha’s *Discourse on Loving-kindness*: “May all beings be happy and secure; may their minds be contented. Whatever living beings there may be— feeble or strong, tall, stout, or medium, short, small, or large, seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near, those who are born and those who are yet to be born— may all beings, without exception, be of good cheer. Let no one deceive another nor despise any person anywhere. In anger or ill will let no one wish any harm to another. Just as a mother would protect her only child even at the risk of her own life, even so let one cultivate a boundless heart toward all beings. Let one’s thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world—above, below, and across— without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity. Whether one stands, walks, sits or lies down, as long as one is awake, one should maintain this mindfulness. This, they say, is the Sublime State in this life. Not falling into wrong views, virtuous and endowed with Insight, one gives up attachment to sense-desires. Verily such a person does not return to enter a womb again.”
  - “Here, monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with loving-kindness, likewise the second, the third, and the fourth direction; so above, below and around; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with loving-kindness, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from enmity and free from distress.” [*Dīgha Nikāya* 13]
- Friday, April 1, 2016
- These four opponent powers that are essential for successful purification are:
  - The power of regret: One begins by reflecting on regret; the awareness that actions we have committed bring suffering to ourselves and others. This is not the same as guilt, which implies a negative and helpless state of mind and is not useful, but a sort of “intelligent regret,” which is a very positive and creative mental state aimed at correcting the mistake so we won’t repeat it.
  - The power of reliance: To correct our mistakes or negative actions directed toward either the Four Jewels or other sentient beings, we take refuge and generate bodhichitta. We rely on the Buddha who is our role model, the dharma that is the teachings of the Buddha, and the sangha.
  - The power of remedy (the antidote): These are positive actions of body, speech, and mind that we do to purify the negativity. This is “building the wall” of good karma. This can include kind deeds, chanting mantras, meditation, etc. and the dedication of the merit of what we have done to help anyone we may have harmed.
  - The power of resolve: This is our ongoing determination to never repeat the negative action and then not doing it again.

- Monday, April 4, 2016
  - *The Vajra Essence*: “Then Boundless Great Emptiness asked, “O Bhagavān, if all meditative experiences, whether pleasant or rough, are far from being the path to omniscience and bring no such benefit, why should we practice meditation? Teacher, please explain!” The Bhagavān replied, “O Vajra of Mind, when individuals with coarse, dysfunctional minds agitated by discursive thoughts enter this path, by reducing the power of their compulsive thinking, their minds become increasingly still, and they achieve unwavering stability. On the other hand, even if people identify conscious awareness but do not continue practicing, they will succumb to the faults of spiritual sloth and distraction. Then, even if they do practice, due to absent-mindedness they will become lost in endless delusion. The mind—which is like a cripple—and vital energy—which is like a blind, wild stallion—are subdued by fastening them with the rope of meditative experience and firmly maintained attention. Once people of dull faculties have recognized the mind, they control it with the cords of mindfulness and introspection. Consequently, as a result of their experience and meditation, they have the sense that all subtle and coarse thoughts have vanished. Finally, they experience a state of unstructured consciousness devoid of anything on which to meditate. Then when their awareness reaches the state of great non-meditation, their guru points that out, so they do not go astray. For that to occur, first one undergoes great struggles in seeking the path, one takes the movement of thoughts as the path, and finally when consciousness settles upon itself, that is identified as the path. Until unstructured awareness, or consciousness, of the path manifests and rests in itself, because of the perturbations of one’s afflicted mind, one has to gradually go through rough experiences like the ones discussed.”
- Wednesday, April 6, 2016
  - “The Four Greats”
    - Great compassion: Why couldn’t all sentient beings find happiness and the causes of happiness? May they find it! I shall help them! May the guru and the deity bless me that I may be able to do so.
    - Great loving-kindness: Why couldn’t all sentient beings be free of suffering and the causes of suffering? May they be free! I shall help them! May the guru and the deity bless me that I may be able to do so.
    - Great empathetic joy: Why couldn’t all sentient beings never be parted from sublime happiness, free of suffering? May they never be parted! I shall help them! May the guru and the deity bless me that I may be able to do so.
    - Great equanimity: Why couldn’t all sentient beings dwell in great equanimity free of attachment to that which is near and aversion to that which is far? May they dwell there! I shall help them! May the guru and the deity bless me that I may be able to do so.

Thursday, April 7, 2016

- [Five powers](#) (Skt. *pañcendriya*; Tib. རྒྱལ་ལོ་ལྔ་, *wangpo nga*; [Wyl.](#) *dbang po lnga*)
  - [faith](#) (Skt. *śraddhā*, Tib. རྣམ་པར་ཤིག་, *dad pa*)

- [enthusiasm](#) (Skt. *vīrya*, Tib. [བརྩོན་འགྲུས་](#), *brtson 'grus*)
- [mindfulness](#) (Skt. *smṛti*, Tib. [དྲན་པ་](#), *dran pa*)
- [concentration](#) (Skt. *samādhi*, Tib. [ཏིང་ངེ་འཛིན་](#), *ting nge 'dzin*)
- [wisdom](#) (Skt. *prajñā*, Tib. [ཤེས་རབ་](#), *shes rab*)

April 8, 2016

- William James:
  - “Where preferences are powerless to modify or produce things, faith is totally inappropriate, but for the class of facts that depend on personal preference, trust, or loyalty for actualization, “faith is not only licit and pertinent, but essential and indispensable. The truths cannot become true till our faith has made them so.”<sup>1</sup>
  - “In what manner do we espouse and hold fast to visions? By thinking a conception *might* be true somewhere, it *may* be true even here and now; it is *fit* to be true and it *ought* to be true; it *must* be true; it *shall* be true for *me*.”<sup>2</sup>

April 10, 2016

- “Bahiya, you should train yourself thus: In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how you should train yourself. When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Bahiya, there is no you in terms of that. When there is no you in terms of that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of suffering.”<sup>3</sup>

April 13, 2016

- Stanford physicist Andre Linde<sup>4</sup>:
  - “A healthy scientific conservatism usually forces us to disregard all metaphysical subjects that seem unrelated to our research. However, in order to make sure that this conservatism is really healthy, from time to time one should take a risk to abandon some of the standard assumptions. This may allow us either to reaffirm our previous position, or to find some possible limitations of our earlier point of view.” P. 449
  - “Now let us turn to consciousness. The standard assumption is that consciousness, just like space-time before the invention of general relativity, plays a secondary, subservient role, being just a function of matter and a tool for the description of

<sup>1</sup> *The Will to Believe and other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 80.

<sup>2</sup> *A Pluralistic Universe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 148.

<sup>3</sup> *Bahiya Sutta*, Ud 1.10

<sup>4</sup> Andrei Linde, “Inflation, Quantum Cosmology and the Anthropic Principle” in *Science and Ultimate Reality: Quantum Theory, Cosmology and Complexity, honoring John Wheeler’s 90th birthday*, edited by John D. Barrow, Paul C. W. Davies, and Charles L. Harper, Jr., 426-458. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004

the truly existing material world. But let us remember that our knowledge of the world begins not with matter but with perceptions.” pp. 450-51.

- “This model of material world obeying laws of physics is so successful that soon we forget about our starting point and say that matter is the only reality, and perceptions are nothing but a useful tool for the description of matter. This assumption is almost as natural (and maybe as false) as our previous assumption that space is only a mathematical tool for the description of matter. We are substituting reality of our feelings by the successfully working theory of an independently existing material world. And the theory is so successful that we almost never think about its possible limitations.”
- “Is it possible that consciousness, like space-time, has its own intrinsic degrees of freedom, and that neglecting these will lead to a description of the universe that is fundamentally incomplete? What if our perceptions are as real (or maybe, in a certain sense, are even more real) than material objects? What if my red, my blue, my pain, are really existing objects, not merely reflections of the really existing material world? Is it possible to introduce a ‘space of elements of consciousness,’ and investigate a possibility that consciousness may exist by itself, even in the absence of matter, just like gravitational waves, excitations of space, may exist in the absence of protons and electrons?” p. 451
- Could it be that consciousness is an equally important part of the consistent picture of our world, despite the fact that so far one could safely ignore it in the description of the well studied physical processes? Will it not turn out, with the further development of science, that the study of the universe and the study of consciousness are inseparably linked, and that ultimate progress in the one will be impossible without progress in the other?” p. 451

April 15, 2016

- Bhikkhu Bodhi: “Nyanaponika himself did not regard ‘bare attention’ as capturing the complete significance of satipatthāna, but as representing only one phase, the initial phase, in the meditative development of right mindfulness. He held that in the proper practice of right mindfulness, sati has to be integrated with sampajañña, clear comprehension, and it is only when these two work together that right mindfulness can fulfill its intended purpose.”
- *The Economist*: “The biggest problem with mindfulness is that it is becoming part of the self-help movement—and hence part of the disease that it is supposed to cure. Gurus talk about ‘the competitive advantage of meditation.’ Pupils come to see it as a way to get ahead in life. And the point of the whole exercise is lost. What has parading around in pricey lululemon outfits got to do with the Buddhist ethic of non-attachment to material goods? And what has staring at a computer-generated dot got to do with the ancient art of meditation? Western capitalism seems to be doing rather more to change eastern religion than eastern religion is doing to change Western capitalism.” [“*The mindfulness business: Western capitalism is looking for inspiration in eastern mysticism,*” Schumpeter (<http://www.economist.com/news/business/21589841-western-capitalism-looking-inspiration-eastern-mysticism-mindfulness-business>)]
- Buddha: “Just as if, Nandaka, there was a four-legged animal with one leg stunted and short, it would thus be unfulfilled in that factor; so too, a monk who is faithful and

virtuous but does not gain samatha of the heart within himself is unfulfilled in that factor. That factor should be fulfilled by him... A monk who has these three but no vipassana into principles pertaining to higher understanding is unfulfilled in that factor. That factor should be fulfilled by him.” The description of vipassana mentions the seeing, exploring and discerning of activities (*sankhāra*). The mention of ‘activities’ here implies the three characteristics – impermanence, suffering, not-self – of phenomena, conditioned according to dependent origination. The meditative discernment of the nature of conditioned reality is the central meaning of vipassana... Vipassana refers to the wisdom qualities such as understanding, discrimination, discernment. Samatha soothes the emotional defilements such as greed and anger, while vipassana pierces with understanding the darkness of delusion.”<sup>5</sup>

- Buddha<sup>6</sup>:
  - When my concentrated mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished and rid of imperfection, when it had become malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, I directed, I inclined my mind to the knowledge of recollection of past lives.”
  - The Buddha narrates how, with the achievement of the fourth dhyāna, he recollected the specific circumstances of many thousands of his own former lives over the course of many ages of world contraction and expansion.
  - “This was the first true knowledge attained by me in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose, darkness was banished and light arose, as happens in one who is diligent, ardent and self-controlled.
- Buddhaghosa’s *Path of Purification*, Ch. 12, “The Supernormal Powers”
  - In order to show the benefits of developing concentration to clansmen whose concentration has reached the fourth jhāna, and in order to teach progressively refined Dhamma, five kinds of mundane direct-knowledge have been described by the Blessed One. They are: (1) the kinds of supernormal power, described in the way beginning, “When his concentrated mind is thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, and has become malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability,<sup>1</sup> he directs, he inclines, his mind to the kinds of supernormal power. He wields the various kinds of supernormal power. Having been one, he becomes many ...” (D I 77); (2) the knowledge of the divine ear element; (3) the knowledge of penetration of minds; (4) the knowledge of recollection of past lives; and (5) the knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of beings.
  - So just as when a goldsmith wants to make some kind of ornament, he does so only after making the gold malleable and wieldy by smelting it, etc., and just as when a potter wants to make some kind of vessel, he does so only after making the clay well kneaded and malleable, a beginner too must likewise prepare for the kinds of supernormal powers by controlling his mind in these fourteen ways; and he must do so also by making his mind malleable and wieldy both by attaining

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<sup>5</sup> Bhikkhu Sujato, *A History of Mindfulness: How Insight Worsted Tranquillity in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, Santipada, 2005, Chapter 8.

<sup>6</sup> [M 36] Cited in Ñānamoli, Bhikkhu. (1992) *The Life of the Buddha: According to the Pali Canon*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, p. 23

under the headings of zeal, consciousness, energy, and inquiry,<sup>3</sup> and by mastery in adverting, and so on. But one who already has the required condition for it owing to practice in previous lives needs only prepare himself by acquiring mastery in the fourth jhāna in the kasiṇas.

- For a malleable consciousness is wieldy, like well-smelted gold; and it is both of these because it is well developed, according as it is said: “Bhikkhus, I do not see anyone thing that, when developed and cultivated, becomes so malleable and wieldy as does the mind” (A I 9).
  - “Normally one, he adverts to [himself as] many or a hundred or a thousand or a hundred thousand; having adverted, he resolves with knowledge, “Let me be many” (Ptis II 207), is called success by resolve because it is produced by resolving... That given as follows, “Having abandoned his normal form, he shows [himself in] the form of a boy or the form of a serpent ... or he shows a manifold military array” (Ptis II 210), is called success as transformation because of the abandoning and alteration of the normal form... That given in this way, “Here a bhikkhu creates out of this body another body possessing visible form, mind-made” (Paflis II 210), is called success as the mind-made (body) because it occurs as the production of another, mind-made, body inside the body...” What is success through the sciences? Masters of the sciences, having pronounced their scientific spells, travel through the air, and they show an elephant in space, in the sky ... and they show a manifold military array” (Ptis II 213).
  - “Having been one, [he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one. He appears and vanishes. He goes unhindered through walls, through enclosures, through mountains, as though in open space. He dives in and out of the earth as though in water. He goes on unbroken water as though on earth. Seated cross-legged he travels in space like a winged bird. With his hand he touches and strokes the moon and sun so mighty and powerful. He wields bodily mastery even as far as the Brahmā-world]” (D I 77).
  - Herein, the four planes should be understood as the four jhānas; for this has been said by the General of the Dhamma [the Elder Sāriputta]: “What are the four planes of supernormal power? They are the first jhāna as the plane born of seclusion, the second jhāna as the plane of happiness and bliss, the third jhāna as the plane of equanimity and bliss, the fourth jhāna as the plane of neither pain nor pleasure. These four planes of supernormal power lead to the attaining of supernormal power, to the obtaining of supernormal power, to the transformation due to supernormal power, to the majesty<sup>7</sup> of supernormal power, to the mastery of supernormal power, to fearlessness in supernormal power” (Ptis II 205). And he reaches supernormal power by becoming light, malleable and wieldy in the body after steeping himself in blissful perception and light perception due to the pervasion of happiness and pervasion of bliss, which is why the first three jhānas should be understood as the accessory plane since they lead to the obtaining of supernormal power in this manner. But the fourth is the natural plane for obtaining supernormal power.
- Arthur C. Clarke’s Three Laws

- Clarke’s first law: When a distinguished but elderly scientist states that something is possible, he is almost certainly right. When he states that something is impossible, he is very probably wrong.
- Clarke’s second law: The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible.
- Clarke’s third law: Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

April 17, 2016

- *The Vajra Essence:*

- “Then Bodhisattva Vajra of Pristine Awareness asked, “O Teacher, Bhagavān, if buddhas and sentient beings and all qualities of the path and fruition are none other than the ground dharmakāya, the sugatagarbha, what is the purpose and the nature of the teachings on the many sādhanas, maṇḍalas, buddhafields, teachers and their retinues, and so forth? Please explain!” He replied, “O Vajra of Pristine Awareness, for the nature of the ground sugatagarbha to be made manifest, you may strive in various ways to create and transform things with your intellect. Consequently, all contrived experiences of bliss, luminosity, and nonconceptuality; of attentional dispersion, excitation, and scattering; of laxity, dullness, and torpor; and of pains, joys, and sorrows are forcefully aroused, until finally all thoughts are calmed in the nature of the ground, and primordially present consciousness is identified. Such meditation entails transforming the nirmāṇakāya into the path, in which the state of naturally settled mindfulness is sustained. Nowadays, everyone regards this as their standard practice, but the problem is that they do not attain the fruition of liberation. So once you have ascertained the view, you must reveal the nature of the ground, Samantabhadra. For this there are two possibilities: directly identifying it in your own being, and identifying it in dependence upon the expedient path of the stage of generation. O Vajra of Pristine Awareness, for the direct identification within your own being, you first establish all the phenomena included in saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as emptiness. Once you have ascertained them as displays of the space of ultimate reality, you identify this state as the great revelation and apprehend your own nature. As a result, you naturally settle in ground pristine awareness as the great freedom from extremes. This is the swift path, the yāna of the Great Perfection. If you practice by resting naturally and effortlessly until the culmination of the dying process, you will unquestionably become a buddha. On the other hand, if, through the power of previous bad karma, you fall under the influence of distractions and spiritual sloth, at the point of death you will die as an ordinary being.” pp. 101-102
- “Now, for the main practice, genuine knowledge and realization of the one taste of all of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in the ocean of the original ground is called the *view of the vast expanse of space*, and this entails the manifestation of your own nature as the dharmakāya, devoid of signs. As for meditation, throughout beginningless lifetimes in saṃsāra, the original, primordial ground, Samantabhadra, has pervaded the mindstreams of all sentient beings, just as sesame oil pervades sesame seeds. However, under the influence of dualistic grasping and clinging to true existence, the mind becomes dimmed, as if by darkness, and deluded. But now, apart from identifying your own nature, there is nothing whatsoever on

which to meditate, and you thereby gain freedom for yourself. As a result of holding your own ground, freedom is experienced in the domain of pristine space, unstructured and unmodified by the intellect, and you are infinitely immersed in great, self-emergent, primordial rest. This is like space merging with space. Previously, your intellect demarcated outer from inner and grasped at them as being distinct. Now, ascertaining that there is no outer or inner, you come upon the nature of great, all-pervasive openness, which is called *meditation free of the intellect and devoid of activity*. In such a meditative state, motionlessly rest your body without modifying it, like a corpse in a charnel ground. Let your voice rest unmodified, dispensing with all speech and recitations, as if your voice were a lute with its strings cut. Let your mind rest without modification, naturally releasing it in the state of primordial being, without altering it in any way. With these three, dispensing with activities of the body, speech, and mind, you settle in meditative equipoise that is devoid of activity. For that reason, this is called *meditative equipoise*. p. 178

- Tsongkhapa received instructions on Dzogchen from Vajrapāṇi, with the visionary Lhodrak Khenchen Namkha Gyaltsen as his channel. These teachings, entitled *Garland of Supremely Healing Nectar*<sup>7</sup> are included in Tsongkhapa's Collected Works, and he praises them as being free of excess, omission, and error.<sup>8</sup>
- HH the Dalai Lama: "As is said in an oral transmission by the great lama Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, when the great Nyingmapa adept Longchen Rabjam gives a presentation of the ground, path, and fruit, he does so mainly from the perspective of the enlightened state of a Buddha, whereas the Sakyapa presentation is mainly from the perspective of the spiritual experience of a yogi on the path, and the Gelukpa presentation is mainly from the perspective of how phenomena appear to ordinary sentient beings. His statement appears to be worthy of considerable reflection; through it many misunderstandings can be removed."<sup>9</sup>
- Paul Davies: "Whatever strategy is used, searching for ET is still a huge shot in the dark. There may be no intelligent life out there, or even life of any sort. But to not even try would be hugely disappointing. Part of what makes us human is our sense of curiosity and adventure, and even the act of looking is a valuable exercise. As Frank Drake, the astronomer who began SETI on a shoestring budget in 1960, expresses it, SETI is really a search for ourselves, who we are and how we fit into the great cosmic scheme of things." <http://time.com/3969378/search-for-extraterrestrial-intelligence/?xid=homepage>
- Classical (Non-relativistic) ontology
  - Metaphysical realism is the view that (1) the world consists of mind-independent objects; (2) there is exactly one true and complete description of the way the

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<sup>7</sup> *Zhu lan sman mchog bdud rtsi phreng ba* (Collected Works, Vol. Ka). An English translation of this work is found in *Life and Teachings of Tsong Khapa*, ed. Prof. R. Thurman (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1982) pp. 213-230.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.

<sup>9</sup> H.H. the Dalai Lama, *The Meaning of Life*, translated and edited by Jeffrey Hopkins (Boston: Wisdom, 1992), 99.



world is; and (3) truth involves some sort of correspondence between an independently existent world and a description of it.<sup>10</sup>

- Descartes: Primary qualities are thought to be properties of objects that are independent of any observer, such as solidity, extension, motion, number, and figures. These characteristics convey facts. They exist in the thing itself, can be determined with certainty, and do not rely on subjective judgments.
- Sigmund Freud: “The problem of a world constitution that takes no account of the mental apparatus by which we perceive it is an empty abstraction, of no practical interest...No, our science is not an illusion. What would be an illusion would be to think that we might obtain elsewhere that which science cannot give us.” (*The Future of an Illusion*, 1927)
- Arthur Conan Doyle: “Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth.”

April 18, 2016

- Special theory of ontological relativity
  - Wolfgang Pauli and Carl Jung: Mental and material phenomena originate from an integral domain prior to the distinction of mind and matter, the *unus mundus*, a unitary domain of archetypes that manifest as configurations of mental and physical phenomena. The existence of this archetypal realm was essential to explain the causal connections that exist between the psyche and the body.<sup>11</sup>
  - Buddhist methods for contemplatively exploring the “form realm”: Once you have settled your mind in its natural state, you may initially gain experiential access to this realm of pure forms by focusing on the earth element, or you may start with any of the other elements of water, fire, air, or space.<sup>12</sup> According to traditional Buddhist sources, each of the above methods provides experiential access to emblematic representations, or archetypes, of the whole quality of the elements they symbolize.<sup>13</sup>
  - Buddha: “In this manner, monks, the wise, experienced, skillful monk abides in happiness here and now and is mindful and introspective as well. What is the reason for that? Because, monks, this wise, experienced, skillful monk acquires the sign of his own mind.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Hilary Putnam, *Realism with a Human Face*, ed. James Conant. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990), 30.

<sup>11</sup> Harald Atmanspacher & Hans Primas, “Pauli’s Ideas on Mind and Matter in the Context of Contemporary Science,” *J. of Consciousness Studies*, 2006; Harald Atmanspacher and Hans Primas, “The hidden side of Wolfgang Pauli,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 3, (1996), 112–126; C. G. Jung, *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung. Volume 14. Mysterium Conjunctionis*. Second Edition (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970), par. 767.

<sup>12</sup> *Visuddhimagga*, V. 1-42; Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, Louis de La Vallée Poussin, trans.; Leo M. Pruden, English trans. (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), VIII. 36.

<sup>13</sup> Paravahera Vajirañña, *Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Buddhist Missionary Society, 1975), 145.

<sup>14</sup> *Saṃyutta Nikāya* [SN V 152]. From Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, 2:1636, with modification of the original translation.

- *Dhammapada* 1: “All phenomena are preceded by the mind, issue forth from the mind, and consist of the mind.”<sup>15</sup>
- *Ratnamegha Sūtra* of the Mahayana canon: “All phenomena are preceded by the mind. When the mind is comprehended, all phenomena are comprehended. By bringing the mind under control, all things are brought under control.”<sup>16</sup>
- General theory of ontological relativity
  - *The Foolish Dharma of an Idiot Clothed in Mud and Feathers*: “To summarize, novices enter the authentic path by means of investigation and familiarization, so first go to a place of solitude, sit on a comfortable cushion, and generate bodhicitta, the aspiration to achieve perfect enlightenment. With sincere devotion, offer prayers of supplication to your guru and take the four empowerments.<sup>17</sup> Then identify the primacy of the mind among the body, speech, and mind, dispelling any uncertainty about this point. Then carefully investigate this so-called mind in terms of its initial place of origin, its location in the interim, and its final destination. Analysis of these points reveals the emptiness of its origin, location, and destination. Then investigate the mind as the agent that conjures up all kinds of thoughts, seeking out its shape, color, and form, as well as its source, beginning, and end, and whether it really exists or is totally nonexistent. By doing so, once you have determined with confidence that it cannot be established in any way at all, you have entered the path.”
  - “At Sāvathī. Now the bhikkhunī Vajirā, having robed herself and taken her bowl and upper robe, entered Sāvathī before noon to collect food. Having wandered through Sāvathī and returned after her meal, she entered the Andha Grove and sat down at the foot of a certain tree to rest during the heat of midday. Then Māra, the evil one, approached the bhikkhunī Vajirā and, desiring to cause fear and consternation, to make her hair stand on end and cause her to fall away from concentration of mind, addressed her with this verse: ‘By whom was this being made? Where is the maker of the being? From where does a being arise? Where does a being cease?’ Then the bhikkhunī Vajirā thought, ‘Who is this human or non-human being who speaks this verse?’ And then she thought, ‘It is Māra, the evil one, desiring to cause me fear and consternation, to make my hair stand on end and cause me to fall away from concentration of mind.’ So the bhikkhunī Vajirā, realizing that it was Māra, the evil one, replied to him in verse: ‘A being! Why seize upon this word? A wrong view Māra surely has? A mere heap of conditions this, where no ‘being’ can be found. As when, with all its parts assembled, ‘Chariot’ is the word then used. So when the aggregates exist, one

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<sup>15</sup> *Dhammapada* 1. See also Gil Fronsdal, *The Dhammapada: Teachings of the Buddha* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2008), 3. The *Dhammapada* is the second book of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*.

<sup>15</sup> From the *Ratnamegha Sūtra* (*Cloud of Jewels Sūtra*), quoted in Nyanaponika Thera, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*, 198, with modification of the original translation.

<sup>16</sup> From the *Ratnamegha Sūtra* (*Cloud of Jewels Sūtra*), quoted in Nyanaponika Thera, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*, 198, with modification of the original translation.

<sup>17</sup> The four empowerments are (1) the vase, or water empowerment, (2) the secret, or crown empowerment, (3) the wisdom—primordial-consciousness, or vajra empowerment, and (4) the word, or bell empowerment. See glossary; GD 255–57, 271; VE 249.

speaks of ‘being’ by convention. It is just suffering that arises, suffering that stays and disappears. Nothing but suffering arises, suffering ceases and nothing else.’ And Māra, the evil one, thinking, “The bhikkhunī Vajirā recognizes me,” vanished away, grieved and dejected. [*Samyutta Nikāya* 5.10; <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/ireland/wheel107.html>]

○ *Milindapañhā*, 25:

Then the venerable Nāgasena spoke to Milinda the king as follows:—

”Your majesty, you are a delicate prince, an exceedingly delicate prince; and if, your majesty, you walk in the middle of the day on hot sandy ground, and you tread on rough grit, gravel, and sand, your feet become sore, your body tired, the mind is oppressed, and the body-consciousness suffers. Pray, did you come afoot, or riding?”

”Bhante, I do not go afoot: I came in a chariot.”

”Your majesty, if you came in a chariot, declare to me the chariot. Pray, your majesty, is the pole the chariot?”

”Nay, verily, bhante.”

”Is the axle the chariot?”

”Nay, verily, bhante.”

”Are the wheels the chariot?”

”Nay, verily, bhante.”

”Is the chariot-body the chariot?”

”Nay, verily, bhante.”

”Is the banner-staff the chariot?”

”Nay, verily, bhante.”

”Is the yoke the chariot?”

”Nay, verily, bhante.”

”Are the reins the chariot?”

”Nay, verily, bhante.”

”Is the goading-stick the chariot?”

”Nay, verily, bhante.”

”Pray, your majesty, are pole, axle, wheels, chariot-body, bannerstaff, yoke, reins, and goad unitedly the chariot?”

”Nay, verily, bhante.”

”Is it, then, your majesty, something else besides pole, axle, wheels, chariot-body, banner-staff, yoke, reins and goad which is the chariot?”

”Nay, verily, bhante.”

”Your majesty, although I question you very

closely, I fail to discover any chariot. Verily now, your majesty, the word chariot is a mere empty sound. What chariot is there here? Your majesty, you speak a falsehood, a lie: there is no chariot. Your majesty, you are the chief king in all the continent of India; of whom are you afraid that you speak a lie? Listen to me, my lords, ye five hundred Yonakas, and ye eighty thousand priests! Milinda the king here says thus: 'I came in a chariot;' and being requested, 'Your majesty, if you came in a chariot, declare to me the chariot,' he fails to produce any chariot. Is it possible, pray, for me to assent to what he says?"

- Hilary Putnam (1926 – 2016), an American philosopher, mathematician, and computer scientist: “elements of what we call ‘language’ or ‘mind’ *penetrate so deeply into what we call ‘reality’ that the very project of representing ourselves as being ‘mappers’ of something ‘language-independent’ is fatally compromised from the very start.*”<sup>18</sup>
- Werner Heisenberg: “We have to remember that what we observe is not nature herself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning.”<sup>19</sup>
- William James: Everyone is “prone to claim that his conclusions are the only logical ones, that they are necessities of universal reason, they being all the while, at bottom, accidents more or less of personal vision which had far better be avowed as such.”<sup>20</sup>
- Anton Zeilinger (Institut für Experimentalphysik, Universität Wien): “One may be tempted to assume that whenever we ask questions of nature, of the world there outside, there is reality existing independently of what can be said about it. We will now claim that such a position is void of any meaning. It is obvious that any property or feature of reality ‘out there’ can only be based on information we receive. There cannot be any statement whatsoever about the world or about reality that is not based on such information. It therefore follows that the concept of a reality without at least the ability in principle to make statements about it to obtain information about its features is devoid of any possibility of confirmation or proof. This implies that the distinction between information, that is knowledge, and reality is devoid of any meaning. Evidently what we are talking about is again

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<sup>18</sup> Hilary Putnam, *Realism with a Human Face*, 30.

<sup>19</sup> Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy: The Revolution in Modern Science*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), based on lectures delivered at University of St. Andrews, Scotland, Winter 1955-56.

<sup>20</sup> William James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 10.

- a unification of very different concepts. The reader might recall that unification is one of the main themes of the development of modern science.”<sup>21</sup>
- John Archibald Wheeler (1911–2008): The universe consists of a “strange loop,” in which physics gives rise to observers and observers give rise to at least part of physics. The conventional view of the relationship between observers and the objective world is that matter yields information, and information makes it possible for observers to be aware of matter by way of measurements, which could be depicted as follows: matter → information → observers. Wheeler, on the contrary, proposes that the presence of observers makes it possible for information to arise, for there is no information without someone who is informed. Thus, matter is a category constructed out of information, and Wheeler inverts the sequence: observers → information → matter.<sup>22</sup>
  - John Archibald Wheeler (1911–2008): “It is wrong to think of that past as “already existing” in all detail. The ‘past’ is theory. The past has no existence except as it is recorded in the present. By deciding what questions our quantum-registering equipment shall put in the present we have an undeniable choice in what we have the right to say about the past.”<sup>23</sup>
  - *Mind in the Balance*: “Since the dawn of modern science, physicists have been trying to understand the evolution of the universe ‘the bottom up,’ starting with the initial conditions. Today the beginning of the universe is conceived in terms of the Big Bang. But Hawking and Hertog challenge this entire approach, declaring that like the surface of a sphere, our universe has no definable starting point, no defined initial state. And if you can’t know the initial state of the universe, you can’t take a ‘bottom-up’ approach, working forward from the beginning. The only alternative is to take a top-down approach, starting from current observations and working backwards. But how you work backwards depends entirely on the questions you ask and the methods of inquiry you adopt in the present... According to Hawking, every possible version of a single universe exists simultaneously in a state of quantum superposition. When you choose to make a measurement, you select from this range of possibilities a subset of histories that share the specific features measured. The history of the universe as you conceive

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<sup>21</sup> Anton Zeilinger, “Why the Quantum? ‘It’ from ‘bit’? A participatory universe? Three far-reaching challenges from John Archibald Wheeler and their relation to experiment” in *Science and Ultimate Reality: Quantum Theory, Cosmology and Complexity, honoring John Wheeler’s 90th birthday*, John D. Barrow, Paul C. W. Davies, and Charles L. Harper, Jr., eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 201-220, passage cited: 218-219.

<sup>22</sup> Paul C. W. Davies, “An Overview of the Contributions of John Archibald Wheeler,” In *Science and Ultimate Reality: Quantum Theory, Cosmology and Complexity, Honoring John Wheeler’s 90th Birthday*, ed. John D. Barrow, Paul C. W. Davies, and Charles L. Harper Jr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 3–26. p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> John Archibald Wheeler, “Law without Law,” in *Quantum Theory and Measurement*, ed. John Archibald Wheeler and Wojciech Hubert Zurek (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 194.

of it is derived from that subset of histories. In other words, you choose your past.”<sup>24</sup>

April 19, 2016

- Scientific reservations about introspection as a means to exploring the mind: Introspective observations are:
  - Unstable and impossible to verify
  - Useful only for understanding meditative states, but not ordinary and pathological mental states
  - Subject to contamination by theory
  - Subject to phenomenological illusion
  - Subject to concealment and misrepresentation by unconscious mental processes and motivations
  - Subject to distortion due to the observer-participancy
- William James on introspection<sup>25</sup>
  - “*Introspective Observation is what we have to rely on first and foremost and always.*” The word introspection need hardly be defined—it means, of course, the looking into our own minds and reporting what we there discover. *Everyone agrees that we there discover states of consciousness.*” p. 185
  - “introspection is difficult and fallible; and ... the difficulty is simply that of all observation of whatever kind... The only safeguard is in the final consensus of our farther knowledge about the thing in question, later views correcting earlier ones, until at last the harmony of a consistent system is reached.” pp. 191-2
- Albert Einstein: “...on principle, it is quite wrong to try founding a theory on observable magnitudes alone. In reality the very opposite happens. It is the theory which decides what we can observe.”<sup>26</sup>
- Georges Henri Joseph Édouard Lemaître (1894 – 1966), Belgian priest, astronomer, and professor of physics at the Catholic University of Leuven, proposed the theory of the expansion of the universe, and he also proposed what became known as the Big Bang theory of the origin of the Universe, which he called his “hypothesis of the primeval atom” or the “Cosmic Egg.”
- Genesis 2:7: “Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”
- Stephen Hawking: The human race is just a chemical scum on a moderate-sized planet, orbiting around a very average star in the outer suburb of one among a hundred billion galaxies. We are so insignificant that I can't believe the whole universe exists for our benefit. That would be like saying that you would disappear if I closed my eyes.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Stephen W. Hawking and Thomas Hertog, “Populating the landscape: A top-down approach” *Physical Review* 3 **73**, 123527 (2006); Martin Bojowald, “Unique or not unique?” *Nature*, Vol. 442, Aug. 31, 2006, 988-990.

<sup>25</sup> William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (New York: Dover Publications, 1950)

<sup>26</sup> Cited in Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Beyond: Encounters and Conversations* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 63.

<sup>27</sup> From an interview with Ken Campbell on the 1995 show [Reality on the Rocks: Beyond Our Ken](#).

- Steven Weinberg: “The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless.”<sup>28</sup>
- Evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould: “Evolution is purposeless, nonprogressive, and materialistic.”<sup>29</sup>
- Thomas Hertog: “Whether or not we exist seems, in the Big Bang theory, completely irrelevant. But there’s one catch: The Big Bang theory does not explain how the universe came into existence... This created somewhat of a crisis in cosmology, because not only did the Big Bang remain outside the realm of science; furthermore, it seems that it was precisely, mysteriously designed, so to speak, to create just the universe in which life could emerge... The shape of the [six] hidden dimensions in string theory determines the laws of physics in the visible dimension. But the hidden dimensions can have all sorts of shapes, which leads to an ensemble of universes, each containing different laws of physics... we can describe the physics of the Big Bang, it’s not going to predict a unique world. It leads to a reality, a worldview which is completely different from what we have in Lemaitre’s cosmology. String theory gives you a multiverse, an ensemble of universes with different laws of physics which coexist in the theory simultaneously and which have certain relative probabilities determined by the laws of physics. You can think of that quantum reality a bit like a tree. The branches represent all possible universes, and our observations — we are part of the universe, so we are part of that tree — and our observations select certain branches, and hereby give meaning, or give reality, to our past in a quantum world... Quantum theory indicates we may *not* be mere chemical scum. Life and the cosmos are, in the quantum theory, a synthesis, and our observations now give in fact reality to its earliest days.” [http://www.tedxleuven.com/?q=2012/thomas-hertog]
- The Buddha’s description of the universe appears to be fundamentally incompatible with that of modern physics and astronomy. For example, in the *Āṅguttara Nikāya* 3:80 (*Numerical Discourses* pp. 313–14), the Buddha gives a description of the universe in which there is no mention that the moon is particular to planet earth and that other planets have their own moons. It assumes that each “world system,” which may be equivalent to a planet inhabited by sentient beings has one sun and one moon. Each world system has Mount Sineru at its center, surrounded by the same four continents described by the Buddha in the fifth century BCE. Buddhist tradition and modern astronomy both present the universe as vast in time and space, with countless planets, or “world systems” capable of supporting living, conscious organisms. But the differences between the detailed descriptions of planets are obvious.
- A second area of incongruity between Buddhism and science has to do with the causes of natural phenomena. To take just one example, in the *Samyutta Nikāya* one finds the question asked, “Why does the weather become warm, why does it become cold, why are there storms, why does it become windy, why does it rain?” The Buddha answers that these phenomena are each caused by a particular class of devas (see *Connected Discourses* pp. 1028–29). This answer could hardly be more different than the explanations presented by modern meteorology.

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<sup>28</sup> Steven Weinberg, *The First Three Minutes: A Modern View of the Origin of the Universe* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1993), 154.

<sup>29</sup> *Ever Since Darwin: Reflections in Natural History*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1980/1992), 14

- A third area of incompatibility between Buddhist and scientific descriptions of the physical world has to do with history of our world and other worlds as explained in discourses attributed to the Buddha. The early canonical texts speak of past buddhas, three of whom are said to have lived in northern India in the very same region where Gotama lived and taught. Their lifespans were remarkably long. Kakusandha had a lifespan of 40,000 years, Konāgamana of 30,000 years, and Kassapa of 20,000 years. Our Buddha, Gotama, who volunteered to appear in our world at a time of spiritual degeneration, lived for only 80 years. For the clearest statement of this, see *Dīgha Nikāya* sutta no. 14 (*Long Discourses* pp. 199–200). In stark contrast to all such Buddhist accounts, contemporary archaeology, anthropology, and paleontology give us a remarkably precise and accurate account of the history of humankind and human civilizations, and one conclusion we can draw from their investigations, with near certainty, is that there were never any advanced Buddhist civilizations in India preceding Gotama Buddha. And there is certainly no scientific basis to support the hypothesis that humans in earlier civilizations had lifespans of up to 40,000 years.
- The Buddha declared, “Whatever the Tathāgata says is just so and not otherwise” (*Aṅguttara* 4:23), and “Whatever is seen, heard, sensed, and cognized, all that I know, all that I have directly known” (*Aṅguttara* 4:24). This means that when he made such statements about past buddhas and their lifetimes, he was doing so on the basis of direct experience—his own direct experience—in advanced states of meditative consciousness.

April 20, 2016

- *Vimuttiimaggā* (by Arhat Upatissa, 1<sup>st</sup> c. C.E.): The standing and walking postures are particularly suitable for lustful natured personalities, while sitting and reclining are more appropriate for anger-natured personalities. [Ehara, N.R.M. et al. tr., *The Path of Freedom (Vimuttiimaggā)*, Kandy: BPS, 1995, 61]
- Buddhaghosa’s *Visuddhimaggā* (430 C.E.): Whichever posture is effective for developing concentration is the one to be adopted. (128)
- *Vajra Essence*: “O Vajra of Mind, first merge this mind with external space<sup>43</sup> and remain in meditative equipoise for seven days. Then fix your attention on a pebble, a stick, a physical representation of the Buddha, or a syllable, and remain in meditative equipoise for seven days. Then imagine a clear, radiant, five-colored bindu at your heart, fix your attention on it, and remain in meditative equipoise for seven days. For some, this places the mind in a state of bliss, luminosity, and vacuity. This experience, devoid of thought, like an ocean unmoved by waves, is called śamatha with signs. Some cannot calm their thoughts because the mind is so agitated, and they experience uncomfortable pains and maladies in the heart, the life-force channel, and so on. Those with unstable minds, with a wind constitution, or with coarse minds may fall unconscious or slip into a trance. Such people should relax and let thoughts be as they are, continually observing them with unwavering mindfulness and careful introspection. p. 20
- *Essence of Clear Meaning*: “...whether or not you have identified pristine awareness within yourself, you who become muddled due to distraction and sloth should first mount your discursive mind, which is like a cripple, onto your vital energy,<sup>69</sup> which is like a blind, wild steed. By tethering [your mind] with meditative experience and sustained attention so that you can meditate uninterruptedly, eventually all coarse and subtle obsessive thoughts will seem to be purified—and uncontrived, primordially



present consciousness will manifest.” p. 57.

April 22, 2016

- The Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé (1284–1339) (*The Great Instructions*) associates the small stage of the yoga of single-pointedness with the Mahāyana Path of Accumulation, the first of the five paths culminating in perfect enlightenment.
- The Ninth Karmapa, Wangchuk Dorjé (1556–1603) states (*Mahāmudrā: The Ocean of Definitive Meaning*): “How then should one seek to realize śamatha? It is highly praiseworthy for someone to achieve śamatha at the threshold to the first *dhyāna* [within the form realm], as stated before. Failing that, one would do well to realize a single-pointed concentration in the desire realm.”
- Tselé Natsok Rangdröl (b. 1608) (*The Lamp of Mahāmudrā*): “One-pointedness, the first yoga of Mahāmudrā, has three levels: small, medium and great. One-pointedness, for the most part, consists of śamatha and the gradual progression through the stages of śamatha with support, without support, and finally to the śamatha that delights the tathāgatas. During that process, grasping gradually diminishes.”
- The venerable Domang Gyatrul Rinpoche (*Naked Awareness*): “The first stage of single-pointedness occurs with the accomplishment of śamatha, wherein one single-pointedly attends to one’s own awareness, which is primordially unceasing and luminous.”
- Buddha:
  - “I know of no other single process which, thus developed and made much of, is pliable and workable as is this *citta*. Monks, the *citta* which is thus developed and made much of is pliable and workable. Monks, I know of no other single process so quick to change as is this *citta*...Monks, this *citta* is brightly shining (*pabhassaram*), but it is defiled (*upakkiliṭṭhan*) by adventitious defilements (*āgantukehi upakkilesehi*). Monks, this *citta* is brightly shining, but it is free from adventitious defilements.”
  - *Aṅguttara Nikāya* A.I.10-11 implies that loving-kindness (*mettā*) is a quality of the brightly shining *citta*, and says it leads a person to meditatively develop one’s *citta*. This passage implies that the brightly shining *citta*, which is always there to be “uncovered,” is already endowed with loving-kindness, providing a sound basis for any conscious development of this quality.
- Buddhaghosa’s *Path of Purification*:
  - “as soon as it [i.e., the bhavaṅga] arises the hindrances are quite suppressed, the defilements subside, and the mind becomes concentrated in access concentration. IV, 31
  - IV, 32. “Now, concentration is of two kinds, that is to say, access concentration and absorption concentration: the mind becomes concentrated in two ways, that is, on the plane of access and on the plane of obtainment. Herein, the mind becomes concentrated on the plane of access by the abandonment of the hindrances, and on the plane of obtainment by the manifestation of the jhāna factors.”
  - IV, 33. “The difference between the two kinds of concentration is this. The factors are not strong in access. It is because they are not strong that when access has arisen, the mind now makes the sign its object and now re-enters the life-continuum, just as when a young child is lifted up and stood on its feet, it

repeatedly falls down on the ground. But the factors are strong in absorption. It is because they are strong that when absorption concentration has arisen, the mind, having once interrupted the flow of the life-continuum, carries on with a stream of profitable impulsion for a whole night and for a whole day, just as a healthy man, after rising from his seat, could stand for a whole day.”

- Thus, this radiant *citta* exists whether or not it is obscured with defilements or free of them. Buddhaghosa refers to this radiant mind as “the naturally pure (*pakati-parisuddham*) *bhavaṅga-citta*. [*Āṅguttara Nikāya* A.I.61]
- The early *suttas* discussed dying and going to sleep as parallel states, with dreamless sleep as a state of uninterrupted *bhavaṅga*.
- The *Milindapañha* [pp. 299-300 ] compares it to the radiance of the sun, for it is naturally pure and radiant. It is the resting ground-state of consciousness which is not turned towards the senses, and it acts as the foundation for the process of non-karmically-active life, of which it is the characteristic factor: the state it returns to when not doing anything else. The equation of the *bhavaṅga* with the radiant *citta* is directly asserted in the commentaries, as well as the *Milindapañha*, which cites similes indicating that while the normal functioning of *citta* is like light, which may get cut off, the *bhavaṅga citta* of dreamless sleep has a radiance which exists whether or not it is obscured.
- *Kathāvatthu* 615 calls it the *citta* of the very last moment of a person’s life.
- Asaṅga: With the achievement of śamatha, “due to the absence of mindfulness and of mentation, when the meditative object is dissolved and released, the mind rests in the absence of appearances.”<sup>30</sup>
- Vasubandhu: With the achievement of śamatha, technically known as the “threshold to the first dhyāna, the five sense consciousnesses are dormant.”<sup>31</sup>
- Tsongkhapa (*The Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*): “Therefore, the śamatha that serves as the basis for vipaśyāna by which one achieves the ārya paths of all stream-returners and once-returners...is the threshold to the first dhyāna.”
- Tsongkhapa (*The Medium Exposition of the Stages of the Path*):
  - “At that time, while in meditative equipoise no appearances of your own body and so on arise, and there is a sense as if the mind has become indivisible with space. When rising from that state, there is a sense as if the body is suddenly coming into being.”
  - “All *samādhis* prior to the achievement of the *samādhi* of the threshold [to the first dhyāna] are single-pointed attention of the desire realm. So judging by the great treatises, there seem to be very few who achieve even śamatha.”
- *The Vajra Essence*:
  - “Now, to remain for a long time in the domain of the essential nature of the mind, I shall be watchful, observing motion, keeping my body straight, and maintaining vigilant mindfulness.” When you say this and practice it, fluctuating thoughts do not cease; however, mindful awareness exposes them, so you don’t get lost in them as usual. By applying yourself to this practice continuously at all times, both during and between meditation sessions, eventually all coarse and subtle thoughts

<sup>30</sup> *Śrāvakabhūmi, Yogasthāna III*, Bihar MS., 12a6–5.

<sup>31</sup> Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, English trans. Leo M. Pruden, vol. 4, 1231.

will be calmed in the empty expanse of the essential nature of your mind. You will become still, in an unfluctuating state in which you experience bliss like the warmth of a fire, luminosity like the dawn, and nonconceptuality like an ocean unmoved by waves. Yearning for this and believing in it, you will not be able to bear being separated from it, and you will hold fast to it. If you get caught up in bliss, this will cast you into the desire realm; if you get caught up in luminosity, this will propel you into the form realm; and if you get caught up in nonconceptuality, this will launch you to the peak of mundane existence. Therefore, understand that while these are indispensable signs of progress for individuals entering the path, it is a mistake to get caught up in them indefinitely. This is called *ordinary samatha of the path*, and if you achieve stability in it for a long time, you will have achieved the critical feature of stability in your mindstream. However, know that among unrefined people in this degenerate era, very few appear to achieve more than fleeting stability. pp. 20-21

- “O Vajra of Mind, the rope of mindfulness and firmly maintained attention is dissolved by the power of meditative experience, until finally the ordinary mind of an ordinary being disappears, as it were. Consequently, compulsive thinking subsides and roving thoughts vanish into the space of awareness. You then slip into the vacuity of the substrate, in which self, others, and objects disappear. By clinging to the experiences of vacuity and luminosity while looking inward, the appearances of self, others, and objects vanish. This is the *substrate consciousness*. Some teachers say that the substrate to which you descend is ‘freedom from conceptual elaboration’ or the ‘one taste,’ but others say it is ethically neutral. Whatever they call it, in truth you have come to the essential nature [of the mind].” p. 28.

April 24, 2016

- Seven-point meditation posture of Vairochana: 1) legs in vajra (full lotus) position or crossed; 2) hands in mudra of meditative equipoise; 3) back straight; 4) jaw relaxed, tongue against pallet; 5) head tilted forward; 6) eyes slightly open, gaze directed downwards; 7) shoulders level and relaxed.
- Six Preparatory Practices:
  - Sweep and clean the room and arrange the altar.
  - Make offerings on the altar, e.g., light, food, incense, water bowls, etc.
  - Sit in a comfortable position and examine your mind. Do breathing meditation to calm your mind. Then establish a good motivation. After that, take refuge and generate the altruistic intention by reciting the appropriate prayers.
  - Visualize the merit field with the spiritual mentors, buddhas, bodhisattvas, and so forth. If this is too difficult, visualize Shakyamuni Buddha and consider him the embodiment of all Buddhas, Dharma and Sangha.
  - Offer the seven-limb prayer and the mandala by reciting those prayers.
  - Make requests to the lineage spiritual mentors for inspiration by reciting the requesting prayers.

April 25, 2016

- Tsongkhapa:

- “One cause [of introspection] is to focus the attention on an apprehended aspect such as of the body of a deity, or to an apprehending aspect such as the sheer awareness and the sheer clarity of experience. Then by devoting yourself to mindfulness, as explained previously, sustain the attention by continuously monitoring whether or not there is scattering elsewhere. Recognize this as a critical factor for sustaining introspection.” [From “The Way to Develop Introspection That Recognizes Them while Meditating” in *The Medium Exposition of the Stages of the Path*]
- “Even those who claim to stabilize their minds without an object of meditation must first think, “I will keep my attention such that it does not stray toward any object whatsoever,” and then keep their attention in that way. After they have focused on the mind itself as an object of meditation, they must be certain to fix on this object without straying in any way. Thus, their own experience contradicts their claim that they have no object of meditation.” [From “Objects of meditation for purifying afflictions” in *The Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*].
- *The Essential Instructions of the Mahāsiddha Maitrīpa* (as explained in *A Spacious Path to Freedom*)
  - Śamatha in which the attention is focused on conceptualization: “In relation to the excessive proliferation of conceptualization, including such afflictions as the five poisons or the three poisons, thoughts that revolve in subject/object duality, thoughts such as those of the ten virtues, the six perfections or the ten perfections—whatever wholesome and unwholesome thoughts arise—steadily and non-conceptually observe their nature. By so doing, they are calmed in non-grasping; clear and empty awareness vividly arises, without recognition; and it arises in the nature of self-liberation, in which it recognizes itself. Again, direct the attention to whatever thoughts arise; and without acceptance or rejection, let it recognize its own nature. Thus implement the practical instructions on transforming ideation into the path.”
  - The ultimate śamatha of maintaining the attention upon non-conceptualization: “With the body possessing the seven attributes of Vairocana, sit upon a soft cushion in a solitary, darkened room. Vacantly direct the eyes into the intervening vacuity. See that the three conceptualizations of the past, future, and present, as well as wholesome, unwholesome, and ethically neutral thoughts, together with all the causes, assembly, and dispersal of thoughts of the three times are completely cut off. Bring no thoughts to mind. Let the mind, like a cloudless sky, be clear, empty, and evenly devoid of grasping; and settle it in utter vacuity. By so doing there arises śamatha of bliss, luminosity, and non-conceptuality. Examine whether or not there enters into that attachment, hatred, clinging, grasping, laxity, or excitation, and recognize the difference between virtues and vices.”

April 26, 2016

- Buddha:
  - “In the same way, there are cases where a foolish, inexperienced, unskillful monk remains focused on the body as the body... feelings as feelings... the mind as the mind... phenomena as phenomena—ardent, introspective, and mindful—putting aside attachment and disappointment regarding the world. As he remains thus

focused on the body as the body, his mind does not become concentrated, his defilements are not abandoned. He does not take note of that fact. As a result, he does not abide in happiness here and now, nor with mindfulness and introspection. Why is that? Because the foolish, inexperienced, unskillful monk has not acquired the sign of his own mind...”

- “In the same way, there are cases where a wise, experienced, skillful monk remains focused on the body as the body... feelings as feelings... the mind as the mind... phenomena as phenomena—ardent, introspective, and mindful—putting aside attachment and disappointment regarding the world. As he remains thus mindful of phenomena as phenomena, his mind becomes concentrated, his defilements are abandoned. He takes note of that fact. As a result, he abides in happiness here and now, and is mindful and introspective as well. Why is that? Because the wise, experienced, skillful monk has acquired the sign of his own mind.” [*Sutta Nipāta* V 152]
- Other references to the “sign of the mind” (*cittanimitta*), are found in *Samyutta Nikāya* VI 151; *Āṅguttara Nikāya* III 423; and *Thera-gātā* 85, which reads, “Having acquired the sign of the mind, sensing the savor of solitude, practicing jhāna, masterful, mindful, you attain a pleasure that is not hedonic.”
- Five faults: (1) Spiritual sloth and (2) forgetting the practical instructions, (3) laxity and excitation, (4) non-intervention, and (5) intervention—these are regarded as the five faults.
- The eight interventions: (1) the basis [yearning for *samādhi*] and (2) that which is dependent upon it [striving], (3) the cause of that [faith] and its (4) result [pliancy], (5) not forgetting the meditative object, (6) recognizing laxity and excitation, (7) intervening to eliminate them, (8) and when [laxity and excitation] are calmed, there is tranquility.
- Six powers: (1) hearing, (2) thinking, (3) mindfulness, (4) introspection, (5) enthusiasm, and (6) familiarity.
- Four mental engagements: (1) focused engagement, (2) interrupted engagement, (3) uninterrupted engagements, (4) effortless mental engagement.

April 28, 2016

- The Seven Line Prayer

HUNG ORGYEN YUL GYI NUP JANG TSAM  
HUNG In the northwest frontier of Oddiyana,

PEMA GE SAR DONG PO LA  
In the heart of a lotus

YAM TSEN CHOG GI NGÖ DRUP NYEY  
Sits the one renowned as Padmasambhava,

PEMA JUNG NEY ZHEY SU DRAK  
Who achieved the wondrous supreme siddhi,

KHOR DU KHAN DRO MANG PÖ KOR

And is surrounded by a host of many dakinis.

KYED KYI JE SU DAK DRUP KYI  
Following in your footsteps, I devote myself to practice.

JIN GYI LAP CHIR SHEK SU SÖL  
Please come forth and bestow your blessings.

GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG

- (From Karma Chagme’s *A Spacious Path to Freedom*) Orgyen Rinpoche says: “Astonishing! The ongoing cognizance and luminosity called “the mind” exists, but does not exist even as a single thing. It arises, for it manifests as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, and as a myriad of joys and sorrows. It is asserted, for it is asserted according to the twelve *yānas*. It is a label, for it is named in unimaginable ways. Some people call it the mind-itself. Some non-Buddhists call it “the *ātman*.” The *Śrāvakas* call it personal identitylessness. The Cittamātrins call it “the mind.” Some people call it “the middle way.” Some call it the perfection of wisdom. Some give it the name “*tathāgatagarbha*.” Some give it the name “Mahāmudrā.” Some give it the name “ordinary consciousness.” Some call it the sole *bindu*. Some give it the name “*dharmadhātu*.” Some give it the name “the *ālaya*.”

To introduce this by pointing it out directly, past consciousness has disappeared without a trace. Moreover, future realization is unarisen, and in the freshness of its own present, unfabricated way of being, there is the ordinary consciousness of the present. When it stares at itself, with this observation there is a vividness in which nothing is seen. Awareness—direct, naked, vivid, unestablished, empty, limpid luminosity, unique, non-dual luminosity and emptiness. It is not permanent, but unestablished. It is not nihilistic, but radiantly vivid. It is not one, but is manifoldly aware and luminous. It is not manifold, but is indivisibly of one taste. It is none other than this very self-awareness. This is a real introduction to the primordial nature of being.

In this the three embodiments of the *buddhas* are indivisibly complete. As utterly unestablished emptiness, it is the Dharmakāya. As the clear radiance of emptiness, it is the Sambhogakāya. Appearing everywhere without impediment, it is the Nirmāṇakāya. Simple, singularly complete, it is the Svabhāvakāya.

To introduce this by pointing it out forcefully, it is your very own present consciousness. When it is this very unstructured, self-luminous consciousness, what do you mean, “I do not realize the mind-itself”?

There is nothing here to meditate on, so what do you mean, “it does not arise due to meditation”?

When it is just this direct awareness, what do you mean, “I do not find my own mind”?

When it is just this uninterrupted clear awareness, what do you mean, “the nature of the mind is not seen”?

When it is the very thinker of the mind, what do you mean, “it is not found by seeking it”?

When there is nothing at all to do, what do you mean, “it does not arise due to activity”?

When it is enough to leave it in its own unstructured state, what do you mean, “it does not remain”?

When it is enough to let it be without doing anything, what do you mean, “I cannot do it”?

When it is unified, indivisible clarity, awareness, and emptiness, what do you mean, “it is affirmed and unaffirmed”?

When it is spontaneously self-arisen without causes or conditions, what do you mean, “I can’t do it”?

When the arising and release of thoughts are simultaneous, what do you mean, “they do not occur together”?

When it is this very consciousness of the present, what do you mean, “I do not recognize it”?

The mind-itself is certainly empty and without basis. Your mind is intangible like empty space. Is it like that or not?—observe your own mind!

Empty and void but not a nihilistic view, self-arisen, primordial consciousness is original, clear consciousness. Self-arisen and self-illuminating, it is like the essence of the sun. Is it like that or not?—observe your own mind!

Awareness, primordial consciousness, is certainly unceasing. Uninterrupted awareness is like the current of a river. Is it like that or not?—observe your own mind!

The dispersing thoughts of ideation are certainly not being grasped. This intangible dispersion is like a hazy sky. Is it like that or not?—observe your own mind!

Recognize all appearances as self-appearing. Self-appearing phenomena are like reflections in a mirror. Is it like that or not?—observe your own mind!

All signs are certainly released in their own state. Self-arising and self-releasing, they are like clouds in the sky. Is it like that or not?—observe your own mind!

April 29, 2016

- *The Foolish Dharma of an Idiot Clothed in Mud and Feathers:*  
“The body is like a paper bag blown by the wind.  
Speech is like the sound of air passing through a pipe.  
This mind is the creator of both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.  
Among these three, identify which is primary!”
- Professor of Cognitive Science Donald D. Hoffman (from “The Case Against Reality”<sup>32</sup>)
  - The central lesson of quantum physics is clear: There are no public objects sitting out there in some preexisting space. As the physicist John Wheeler put it, “Useful as it is under ordinary circumstances to say that the world exists ‘out there’ independent of us, that view can no longer be upheld.”

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/04/the-illusion-of-reality/479559/>

- The mathematical physicist Chetan Prakash proved a theorem that I devised that says: According to evolution by natural selection, an organism that sees reality as it is will never be more fit than an organism of equal complexity that sees none of reality but is just tuned to fitness. Never.
- The idea that what we're doing is measuring publicly accessible objects, the idea that objectivity results from the fact that you and I can measure the same object in the exact same situation and get the same results — it's very clear from quantum mechanics that that idea has to go. Physics tells us that there are no public physical objects.
- Geffer [the interviewer]: It doesn't seem like many people in neuroscience or philosophy of mind are thinking about fundamental physics. Do you think that's been a stumbling block for those trying to understand consciousness?
- Hoffman: I think it has been. Not only are they ignoring the progress in fundamental physics, they are often explicit about it. They'll say openly that quantum physics is not relevant to the aspects of brain function that are causally involved in consciousness. They are certain that it's got to be classical properties of neural activity, which exist independent of any observers—spiking rates, connection strengths at synapses, perhaps dynamical properties as well. These are all very classical notions under Newtonian physics, where time is absolute and objects exist absolutely. And then [neuroscientists] are mystified as to why they don't make progress. They don't avail themselves of the incredible insights and breakthroughs that physics has made. Those insights are out there for us to use, and yet my field says, "We'll stick with Newton, thank you. We'll stay 300 years behind in our physics."
- I'm emphasizing the larger lesson of quantum mechanics: Neurons, brains, space ... these are just symbols we use, they're not real. It's not that there's a classical brain that does some quantum magic. It's that there's no brain! Quantum mechanics says that classical objects—including brains—don't exist. So this is a far more radical claim about the nature of reality and does not involve the brain pulling off some tricky quantum computation. So even Penrose hasn't taken it far enough. But most of us, you know, we're born realists. We're born physicalists. This is a really, really hard one to let go of.
- As a conscious realist, I am postulating conscious experiences as ontological primitives, the most basic ingredients of the world. I'm claiming that experiences are the real coin of the realm. The experiences of everyday life—my real feeling of a headache, my real taste of chocolate—that really is the ultimate nature of reality.
- Padmasambhava (Excerpted from *Natural Liberation*): Engaging in the Search for the Mind: "Perform the *adhisāra* and the gaze as before. Steadily place your mind in the space in front of you, and let it be present there. Examine well: what kind of an entity is this—your mind that you have placed today? Look to see if the one who is placing and the mind that is being placed are one or two. If there were two, there would have to be two minds, so one must be in Buddhahood, while the other roams about in the cycle of existence. So carefully, decisively observe whether they exist as two. If there is not more than one, is that one the mind? Observe: what is the reality of the so-called "mind"? It is impossible to find it by searching among external objects.



Let the one who is pondering, “What is the mind like?” observe that very consciousness, and search for it. Steadily observe the consciousness of the meditator, and search for it. Observe: in reality is the so-called “mind” something that exists? If it does, it should have a shape. What sort of a shape does it have? Look nakedly and seek it out. Decisively look to see what sort of a shape it has, whether it is a sphere, a rectangle, a semi-circle, or a triangle and so on. If you say it has one at all, show me that shape! If you say there is nothing to show, tell me whether it is possible for there to be a real shape that cannot be shown. Identify the emptiness of shape. Likewise, let yourself check to see whether it has any color, size, or dimension. If you say it has none of those, then observe whether it is an emptiness that is nothing. If you say it is an emptiness that is nothing, then how could an emptiness that is nothing know how to meditate? What good is it to say you cannot find it? If it is nothing at all, what is it that brings forth hatred? Is there not someone who thinks the mind has not been found? Look steadily right at that. If you do not discover what it is it like, carefully check whether the consciousness that wonders where it is itself the mind. If it is, what is it like? If it exists, there must be a substance and a color, but are they forthcoming? If it does not exist, you would be like an unconscious corpse; but isn’t there someone who thinks? Thus, within the parameters of existence and non-existence, decisively observe how it is. In that way draw your awareness in and direct it.

Due to differences in intellect, some may report that they find nothing within the parameters of existence and non-existence. Let them carefully examine the mind that thinks nothing is found. Is there something that is steady? Is there a clarity? Is there a steady emptiness? Examine! If they report that there is a stillness, that is *sāmatha*, so that is not the mind. Seek out awareness, and come up with its nature.

If they say it is an emptiness, that is one aspect, so let them seek out awareness. If they say there is a consciousness that is sort of stationary and sort of clear, but inexpressible, they have identified it a little bit, so they should come to certainty and identify it.”

May 1, 2016

- Padmasambhava (Excerpted from *Natural Liberation*): “Identifying Awareness:
  - Have all your pupils sit in front of you in the posture bearing the seven attributes of *Vairocana*. “Now place your awareness right in the space in front of you, steadily without modification, fixedly without wavering, and clearly without a meditative object. While so doing, given the differences in intellect, in some, a non-conceptual, unmediated, conceptually unstructured reality will arise in their mind-streams. In some there will be a steadiness in awareness. In some, there will be a steady, natural luster of emptiness that is not an emptiness that is nothing, and there will arise a realization that this is awareness itself, it is the nature of the mind. In some, there will arise a sense of steady clarity, and in others, a sense of straightforward emptiness. In some, appearances and the mind will merge; appearances will not be left outside, and awareness will not be left inside, and there will arise a sense that they have become inseparably equalized. It is impossible that some such kind of experience will fail to occur.
  - [Consciousness] is just this clear, steady consciousness that is ordinarily, naturally present right now. It is not grounded in the nature of any shape or color, so it is

free of the extreme of substantialism. While it is non-existent, it is a steady, clear, natural luminosity that is not created by anyone, so it is free of the extreme of nihilism. It did not originate from a certain time, nor did it arise from certain causes and conditions, so it is free of the extreme of birth. The mind does not die or cease at a certain time, so it is free of the extreme of cessation. While it is non-existent, its unimpeded creative power appears in all manner of ways, so it is free of the extreme of singularity. Although it appears in various ways, it is liberated without having any inherent nature, so it is free of the extreme of multiplicity. Thus, it is called the “view that is free of extremes.”

- It is said to be “free of bias and partiality.” This alone is called the “mind of the Buddha.” The mind of a sentient being, that which becomes a Buddha, that which wanders in the cycle of existence, and that which experiences joy and sorrow are all this alone. If this did not exist, there would be no one to experience *saṃsāra* or *nirvāṇa* or any joy and sorrow, which would imply a comatose extreme of nihilism.
- This alone has been created by no one, but is self-arisen, primordial, and spontaneous, so it is called “primordial consciousness.” Such awareness as this does not originate from the profound instructions of a spiritual mentor, nor does it originate from your sharp intelligence. Primordially and originally, the natural character of the mind itself exists just like that; but previously it has been obscured by inborn ignorance, so you do not recognize or ascertain it, you are not satisfied, and you do not believe. So until now you have remained in confusion. But now grant it to the master of wealth. Know your own nature. Know your own flaws. That is called “identifying the mind.”
- Lobsang Do-ngak Chökyi Gyatso Chok (“Oral Instructions of the Wise: Questions and Answers Regarding the Views of Mahāmudrā, Mahāsandhi, and Madhyamaka”): “When engaging in such Mahāmudrā meditation, śamatha is achieved by focusing on the mind, such that one seeks the view on the basis of meditation. In dependence upon this śamatha, the mind is settled with the aspect of correctly determining the origin, location, and destination of the mind as being identityless. With the reinforcement of vipaśyanā, there are two stages in general. Specifically, in the tradition of Marpa, Milarepa, and Gampopa there is the method of identifying the essential nature of the mind in dependence upon *caṅḍālī*.<sup>33</sup> So that is called the Mahāmudrā. In the Geluk tradition, Paṅchen Lobzang Chökyi Gyaltsen wrote a root text and auto-commentary on the unique form of Mahāmudrā according to the oral lineage of the mahāsiddha Dharmavajra and his spiritual son [Sangyé Yeshé].”
- Jé Tsültrim Zangpo (“An Ornament of the Enlightened View of Samantabhadra: Secret Guidance Nakedly Granted to Dispel All Misconceptions Regarding the View of the Clear Light Great Perfection”)

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<sup>33</sup> Tib. *gtum mo*. A meditative practice designed to bring forth realization of emptiness, with a side effect of generating intense heat arising from the navel cakra. It is described in *The Vajra Essence* as “great, empty awareness, devoid of activity, the fire of primordial consciousness, the union of bliss and emptiness, which blazes as a display of the power of the five facets of primordial consciousness.”

- “The practice of differentiating is called *guidance to the ultimate reality of the mind, self-emergent primordial consciousness*. To proceed in the extraordinary practice of such differentiation of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, you must purify the negative habitual propensities of your ordinary body, speech, and mind and then purify your body, speech, and mind by practicing the method of transforming them into the three pure vajras of the body, speech, and mind of the jinas. That must come first. By such outward and inward differentiation, you engage in the discipline of pristine awareness, and in the phase of practice of purifying your body, speech, and mind, the vigorous practices of the body, speech, and mind are strenuous practices. Therefore, without the practice of releasing all effort and settling your body, speech, and mind in their natural states, the practice of the effortless path will be difficult. So in order to pacify all the karmic energies and conceptual fabrications, you must apply yourself to the practice of settling your physical, verbal, and mental behavior in their natural states. If you do that for a very long time, that is an effective method for achieving stillness, but when appearances arise as illusions, that may prevent you from cutting off thoughts of reification. So you must again strive in various activities of the body, speech, and mind, as you did before, and try to cause appearances to arise as illusions. Thus, settling your body, speech, and mind in their natural states is a superb method for developing stillness of the mind, and applying yourself to the practice of letting be is essential for developing the wisdom of realizing the emptiness of true existence. For a disciple who is imbued with such stillness of the mind, not being disturbed by compulsive thoughts and with the special wisdom of ascertaining the absence of true existence of whatever appears, it is easy for the guru to point out the dharmakāya, the primordial consciousness that is present in the ground of being. When sustaining the recognition of pristine awareness, that, too is easy. There are many such reasons for being imbued with those qualities, so the uncommon preliminary practices are also very important.

May 2, 2016

- Padmasambhava (Excerpted from *Natural Liberation*): Training in Śamatha without Signs:
  - Now alternately tightly concentrate your consciousness, wholly concentrating it without wavering, and then gently release it, evenly resting it in openness. Again concentrate, and again release. In that way, meditate with alternating constriction and release. At times, steadily direct your gaze up into the sky. Steadily focus your awareness with the desire to be without anything on which to meditate. Relax again. At times, steadily, unwaveringly, direct your awareness into the space on your right; at times, direct it to the left; and at times, direct it downwards. During each session, rotate the gaze around in those directions.
  - Occasionally inquire, “What is that awareness of the one who is focusing the interest?” Let the awareness itself steadily observe itself. At times, let your mind come to rest in the center of your heart, and evenly leave it there. At times, evenly focus it in the expanse of the sky and leave it there. Thus, by shifting the gaze in various, alternating ways, the mind settles in its natural state. As indications of

this, if awareness remains evenly, lucidly, and steadily wherever it is placed, śamatha has arisen.

- If awareness becomes muddled and without mindfulness, that is the problem of laxity, or dimness; so clear it up, inspire it, and shift your gaze. If it becomes distracted and excited, it is important that you lower your gaze and release your awareness. If *samādhi* arises in which there is nothing of which you can say, “This is meditation,” and “This is conceptualization,” this is the problem of oblivion, so meditate with alternating concentration and release, and recognize who is meditating. Recognize the flaws of śamatha, and eliminate them right away.
- Flawless śamatha is like an oil-lamp that is unmoved by wind. Wherever the awareness is placed, it is unwaveringly present; awareness is vividly clear, without being sullied by laxity, lethargy, or dimness; wherever the awareness is directed, it is steady and sharply pointed; and unmoved by adventitious thoughts, it is straight. Thus, a flawless meditative state arises in one’s mind-stream; and until this happens, it is important that the mind is settled in its natural state. Without genuine śamatha arising in one’s mind-stream, even if pristine awareness is pointed out, it may become nothing more than an object of intellectual understanding; and one is left simply giving lip-service to the view, and there is the danger that one may succumb to dogmatism. Thus, the root of all meditative states depends upon this, so do not be introduced to pristine awareness too soon, but practice until there occurs a fine experience of stillness.”
- *The Enlightened View of Samantabhadra:*
  - “Without seeking causes or effects elsewhere, identify the agent who roams within the three realms of saṃsāra, and hold fast to the instructions for liberating this being.
  - When he spoke those words, the all-accomplishing Faculty of Mentation replied, “That agent is I. The body and speech that depend on me are mutable.”
  - The teacher replied, “O Faculty of Mentation, tell me about your form, shape, and color.”
  - Faculty of Mentation answered, “I am formless emptiness. I definitely transcend shape and color.”
  - The Bhagavān asked, “O Faculty of Mentation, what is the origin from which you first arose, the location in which you dwell in the interim, and the destination to which you will finally go?”
  - Faculty of Mentation replied, “I am unarisen emptiness, so there is no origin from which I arose. I am nonlocal emptiness, so there is no place where I am located. I am unestablished emptiness, so there is no destination to which I will go.” p. 166
- Jé Tsültrim Zangpo (“An Ornament of the Enlightened View of Samantabhadra: Secret Guidance Nakedly Granted to Dispel All Misconceptions Regarding the View of the Clear Light Great Perfection”), continued...
  - “Moreover, when following the instructions on purifying the mind within the context of purifying the body, speech, and mind, you must realize the homogenous emptiness of true existence of all phenomena included in the outer physical worlds, their inner sentient inhabitants, and of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. In that regard, first of all, the creator of the whole of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is this very

mind of yours. This point is made in numerous sūtras and commentaries. So if you ascertain this mind of yours as being empty of true existence, simply by extending that reasoning, you will ascertain all phenomena to be empty of true existence. So the guru will enable the disciple to discover how all phenomena depend on the mind, and consequently, how the mind takes a primary role within the context of the body, speech, and mind. Moreover, a person with sharp faculties who can determine that this mind, which plays such a dominant role, cannot be established as truly existing from its own side as something really, substantially existent is someone who can determine the absence of true existence with even subtle reasoning simply by being shown partial reasons for establishing that. For such a person, by the power of revealing the mere absence of any color or shape of the mind, and by demonstrating just the reasons why the mind is devoid of any [true] origin, location, and destination, that person will proceed to establish the absence of true existence of the mind by way of subtle reasoning that refutes the subtle object of negation. Thus, by the power of relying on such reasoning, people with superior faculties are able to realize the emptiness of all phenomena. However, it is very important for people like us to hear and reflect upon the Madhyamaka treatises, to comprehend all the reasons that establish the absence of true existence, and to establish the nature of emptiness just as it is taught in the Madhyamaka...”

- Therefore, you should loosely rest pristine awareness in the nature of the empty space of cognizance and remain there without modification. That must be a stabilizing meditation alone, without analyzing the object of negation. This must lead to the ascertainment of emptiness by way of stabilizing meditation, without reliance upon rational analysis regarding the absence of unity and multiplicity and so on of the object of negation. For that to happen, you must first ascertain how connate self-grasping holds to the very subtle object of negation, as taught in the Madhyamaka Prasaṅgika tradition. The omniscient Longchenpa states that all the reasons that refute that must lead to the ascertainment of emptiness that is determined by the authentic logic presented in the Madhyamaka treatises. Moreover, the emptiness presented in many treatises of the Great Perfection scriptures and revealed treasures is similar to the emptiness asserted according to the Prasaṅgika tenets. Thus, the reasons that determine the absence of an origin, location, and destination in the pith instructions that establish the emptiness of true existence of the mind when granting experiential instructions determine the emptiness of all phenomena. In short, with the unification of appearances and emptiness—the emptiness of existence of all phenomena from their own side, and their conceptually designated, or merely nominal, merely apparent nature—you must gain pristine ascertainment of the meaning of emptiness arising as dependent origination without refuting its empty aspect, and the meaning of dependent origination arising as emptiness. So, as explained previously, after you have been given teachings on differentiating the mind and pristine awareness, and you are attending to the essential nature of cognizance and have achieved stability there, you must analyze and determine cognizance, too, as being unreal and empty, without its being apprehended as truly existent or substantial. That is the analysis of such pristine awareness itself being emptiness, and it is the meditation that

unifies pristine awareness and emptiness. But since that is meditation on the emptiness of the nature of existence of pristine awareness, it is the emptiness in the union of pristine awareness and emptiness.

- Here is the way to practice meditative equipoise upon uniting pristine awareness and emptiness. As explained previously, without needing to analyze the empty space of the nature of existence of pristine awareness, you should merge cognizance with the nature of the empty space of cognizance, and without modification attend to the nature of undifferentiated emptiness and cognizance. When you can do that, you have found the union of pristine awareness and emptiness. So, without needing to freshly analyze the demarcation between pristine awareness and emptiness or the emptiness of the nature of existence of pristine awareness, by the power of your previous analysis, simply by recalling the empty space of the nature of existence of pristine awareness, this will lead to the ascertainment of that empty space. Then you should rest that cognizance in the nature of that empty space and without modification sustain that. This is the meaning of *merging space and pristine awareness*. By the power of familiarizing yourself with that, eventually the radiance of pristine awareness will dissolve into pristine awareness, and the ground pristine awareness will be revealed. Then that will arouse the exceptional wisdom that realizes emptiness of the existence of the ground pristine awareness from its own side. In this phase of uniting pristine awareness and emptiness you are sustaining something that is the same or similar to an ārya's primordial consciousness of meditative equipoise, free of dualistic grasping to pristine awareness and emptiness as being different.
- *The Vajra Essence:*
  - This is the most sublime of all Dharmas. It is a general synthesis of all the paths, the goal of all yānas, and an expansive treasury of all secret mantras. However, only those who have stored vast collections of merit in many ways, over incalculable eons, will encounter this path. They will have aspired repeatedly and extensively to reach the state of perfect enlightenment, and they will have previously sought the path through other yānas, establishing propensities to reach this path. No others will encounter it. p. 11
  - “This Great Perfection is the yāna of the unsurpassed fruition. That which manifests the great reality that pervades all of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is called *bodhicitta of the ultimate ground*—you need apprehend only this. Apart from this, intellectually fabricating so-called bodhicitta with effort entails generating a mental state in which you view yourself as the meditator and other sentient beings as objects of meditation—an attitude that is as limited as a teacup. In the expanse of the Great Perfection—the original nature of the great equality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—the mode of existence of the ground itself is known, just as it is, by means of great, omniscient primordial consciousness. To speak of having bodhicitta greater than the vision of great, all-seeing primordial consciousness would be like saying you must seek moisture elsewhere, even though you already have water. P. 14
  - “In general, to enter this yāna and put it into practice, you must have all the following characteristics:
    - ▶ Belief in the Dharma and in your guru

- ▶ Unwavering trust in the path
  - ▶ Earnest mindfulness of death and the conviction that all composite phenomena are impermanent, so that you have little attraction to mundane activities
  - ▶ Contentment with respect to food, wealth, and enjoyments
  - ▶ Insatiability for the Dharma due to great zeal and determination
  - ▶ Integration of your life and spiritual practice, without complaining
- When such people with stable minds—without being boastful about the mere number of months or years they have spent practicing in retreat—see this entrance and undertake the practice, they will definitely achieve the supreme state of Buddha Vajradhara in this very lifetime.” p. 12
- “In this present lifetime, if you...have firm faith and belief in [the Great Perfection] and strong, unflagging enthusiasm—the time has come to practice. When fortunate beings come to the gateway of the profound Secret Mantra[yāna], apart from simply having strong faith and belief, there is never anything else—such as clairvoyance, omens, or auspicious circumstances—to make them think that the time has come to practice secret mantra. Once you have obtained a human life and encountered a guru and the secret mantra Dharma, if this is not the time to practice the Great Perfection, then there will never be a better time than this in another life—this is certain. p. 13

May 3, 2016

- *The Enlightened View of Samantabhadra:*
  - “Now it is crucial for you to know your own causal characteristics. There are two kinds of paths: Individuals with supreme faculties proceed within themselves by way of direct crossing over, and individuals with middling or inferior faculties proceed gradually, in dependence upon the grounds and paths. To investigate this, first of all merge your mind with empty, external space and remain in meditative equipoise for twenty days. By so doing, individuals of the first type will perceive the originally pure essential nature of the primordial ground with the eye of wisdom, and they will identify this within themselves.”
  - “Individuals of the latter two types will be tormented by confusion and distress, and since their minds do not seem to merge with space, they will pass the time in fabrications and striving, while becoming caught up in many thoughts. Here is the way for them to enter upon the grounds and paths. They should practice by abiding in consciousness and recognizing the movements of thoughts, as follows: Like people watching a show of optical illusions, by meditating diligently with keen enthusiasm, all the subtle and coarse assemblies of thoughts will be *calmed* in the ocean of the primordial ground, they will abide in a state of unwavering *stillness*, and there will arise the experience of *śamatha*. At this time there will arise bliss like the warmth of a fire, luminosity like the breaking of dawn, and nonconceptuality like an ocean unmoved by waves. The *vivid perception* of mindfulness that does not bifurcate stillness and movement in that state is called *vipaśyanā*. When you have identified *śamatha* as a meditative experience and then naturally sustain it with mindfulness, free of attachment and clinging, the appearances of meditative experiences will naturally vanish, and single-pointed mindfulness will manifest.” pp. 166-167

May 4, 2016

- One day Milarepa returned with firewood to his cave, and found it invaded by five horrific demons with eyes as large as saucers. Shocked, Milarepa politely introduced himself and asked them to leave. At this, the demons became menacing, surrounding him while growling, grimacing, and laughing maliciously. Milarepa was alarmed and attempted the most powerful of exorcism recitations, to no avail. The demons became even more threatening. Next, the yogin tried with great compassion to pacify them with Buddhist teachings, but they still remained, more vivid and horrible than before. Finally, Milarepa realized that his approach was mistaken, and that he needed the most direct means possible. Having proclaimed the fearlessness which he had discovered in his practice, Milarepa followed the training given him by his guru. He invited the demons to stay with him and to receive his hospitality. He also challenged them to a friendly contest of teachings. “Ye ghosts and demons, enemies of the Dharma, I welcome you today! It is my pleasure to receive you! I pray you, stay; do not hasten to leave; We will discourse and play together. Although you would be gone, stay the night; We will pit the Black against the White Dharma, and see who plays the best. Before you came, you vowed to afflict me. Shame and disgrace would follow If you returned with this vow unfulfilled.” The last mode of enlightened activity, “ferocity,” is the final resort for an accomplished yogin like Milarepa. He did this with the challenge, “we will pit the Black against the White Dharma, and see who plays the best.” Here he was referring to the black magic and sorcery of his past training, his central shadow, directly confronted by the white magic of Buddhism, which can accommodate and purify the black. Having challenged the demons, Milarepa arose and rushed with great confidence directly at them. They shrank in terror, rolling their eyes and trembling violently, and then swirled together into a single vision and dissolved. With this, the activity of ferocity was completed, and Milarepa the black sorcerer was reclaimed by Milarepa the white sorcerer.

May 8, 2016

- Buddha:
  - “I know of no other single process which, thus developed and made much of, is pliable and workable as is this *citta*. Monks, the *citta* which is thus developed and made much of is pliable and workable. Monks, I know of no other single process so quick to change as is this *citta*...Monks, this *citta* is brightly shining (*pabhassaram*), but it is defiled (*upakkilittāhan*) by adventitious defilements (*āgantukehi upakkilesehi*). Monks, this *citta* is brightly shining, but it is free from adventitious defilements.”
  - *Ānguttara Nikāya* A.I.10-11 implies that loving-kindness (*mettā*) is a quality of the brightly shining *citta*, and says it leads a person to meditatively develop one’s *citta*. This passage implies that the brightly shining *citta*, which is always there to be “uncovered,” is already endowed with loving-kindness, providing a sound basis for any conscious development of this quality.

May 9, 2016



- William James: Everyone is “prone to claim that his conclusions are the only logical ones, that they are necessities of universal reason, they being all the while, at bottom, accidents more or less of personal vision which had far better be avowed as such.”<sup>34</sup>
- Stephen Hawking & Thomas Hertog:
  - “The bottom up approach to cosmology would be appropriate, if one knew that the universe was set going in a particular way in either the finite or infinite past. However, in the absence of such knowledge one is required to work from the top down... In top down cosmology the histories of the universe thus depend on the precise question asked, i.e. on the set of constraints that one imposes... The top down approach we have described leads to a profoundly different view of cosmology, and the relation between cause and effect. Top down cosmology is a framework in which one essentially traces the histories backwards, from a spacelike surface at the present time. The no boundary histories of the universe thus depend on what is being observed, contrary to the usual idea that the universe has a unique, observer independent history... This is in sharp contrast with the bottom-up approach, where one assumes there is a single history with a well defined starting point and evolution.”<sup>35</sup>
  - How you understand the past depends entirely on the questions you ask and the methods of inquiry you adopt in the present. Every possible version of the past exists simultaneously in a state of quantum superposition. When you choose to make a measurement, you select from this range of possibilities a subset of histories that share the specific features measured. The history of the universe as you conceive of it is derived from that subset of histories. In other words, you choose your past.
- Shakespeare, from *As you Like It*:  
 “All the world’s a stage,  
 And all the men and women merely players;  
 They have their exits and their entrances;  
 And one man in his time plays many parts,  
 His acts being seven ages...  
 Last scene of all,  
 That ends this strange eventful history,  
 Is second childishness and mere oblivion;  
 Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.”
- *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life* (II: 35-36): “My enemies will not remain, nor will my friends remain. I shall not remain. Nothing will remain. Whatever is experienced will fade to a memory. Like experiences in dreams, whatever is experienced is reduced to a memory, and all that is past is seen no more.”
- Andrei Linde: The problem of “frozen time”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> William James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 10.

<sup>35</sup> Stephen W. Hawking and Thomas Hertog, “Populating the Landscape: A Top-Down Approach,” *Physical Review D* 73, no. 12 (2006): 123527; Martin Bojowald, “Unique or Not Unique?” *Nature* 442 (Aug. 31, 2006): 988–90.

<sup>36</sup> Andrei Linde, “Inflation, Quantum Cosmology and the Anthropic Principle” In *Science and Ultimate Reality: Quantum Theory, Cosmology and Complexity, honoring John Wheeler’s 90th*

- “The resolution of this paradox suggested by Bryce DeWitt is rather instructive (DeWitt, 1967). The notion of evolution is not applicable to the universe as a whole since there is no external observer with respect to the universe, and there is no external clock that does not belong to the universe. However, we do not actually ask why the universe as a whole is evolving. We are just trying to understand our own experimental data. Thus, a more precisely formulated question is why do we see the universe evolving in time in a given way. In order to answer this question one should first divide the universe into two main pieces: i) an observer with his clock and other measuring devices and ii) the rest of the universe. Then it can be shown that the wave function of the rest of the universe does depend on the state of the clock of the observer, i.e. on his ‘time’. This time dependence in some sense is ‘objective’: the results obtained by different (macroscopic) observers living in the same quantum state of the universe and using sufficiently good (macroscopic) measuring apparatus agree with each other.” p. 449
- “Thus we see that without introducing an observer, we have a dead universe, which does not evolve in time. This example demonstrates an unusually (450) important role played by the concept of an observer in quantum cosmology. John Wheeler underscored the complexity of the situation, replacing the word *observer* by the word *participant*, and introducing such terms as a ‘self-observing universe.’” pp. 449-450
- Paul C. W. Davies: “Without a miracle, how can something come to exist that did not exist before?”<sup>37</sup>

May 10, 2016

- Anton Zeilinger (from *The New Physics and Cosmology: Dialogues with the Dalai Lama*):
  - “You can have different concepts, like particle and wave, which for us exclude each other. We don’t know how to make sense of them together. Why does Bohr say these two exclusive ideas are complementary? Because the apparatus that you use to see the wave is different from the apparatus you use to see the path of the particle. The important point which is new in modern physics is that the observer, the experimentalist, decides by choosing the apparatus which of the two features, particle or wave, is reality. The observer has a very strong influence on nature, which goes beyond anything in classical physics.”
  - “If you could use the right apparatus, then you would see wave-particle effects for everything.”
- *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life* [IX 101]: “The continuum of consciousness, like a series, and the aggregation of constituents, like an army and the like, are unreal.” The

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*birthday*, edited by John D. Barrow, Paul C. W. Davies, and Charles L. Harper, Jr., 426-458. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

<sup>37</sup> Davies, Paul C. W. “An overview of the contributions of John Archibald Wheeler” In *Science and Ultimate Reality: Quantum Theory, Cosmology and Complexity, honoring John Wheeler’s 90th birthday*, edited by John D. Barrow, Paul C. W. Davies, and Charles L. Harper, Jr., 3-26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 21

*Pañjikā*, pp. 158-159, reads: “A continuum (*saṃtāna*) does not exist as some ultimately existent unity. However, it has the form of a successive stream of moments that have arisen as the condition of causes and effects, because of the nonperceptibility of a distinct [moment]. Therefore, for the sake of convention, the buddhas have used the term *continuum* as a nominal designation in order to explain those moments with one word. Hence, it exists only as a designation... Likewise, because of the nonrecognition of a single [member] from those other members, an aggregation does not exist as a single thing consisting of combining elements... Thus, this [aggregation], too, is only conventionally existent.”

- Empty forms of virtual reality:  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/alex\\_kipman\\_the\\_dawn\\_of\\_the\\_age\\_of\\_holograms](http://www.ted.com/talks/alex_kipman_the_dawn_of_the_age_of_holograms)

May 13, 2016

- From the article “Buddhist meditation and cognitive sciences”<sup>38</sup>:
  - Regarding the kinds of dialogues that are promoted by the Mind & Life Institute, anthropologist Geoffrey Samuel comments, “much of what happens in this process is less a dialogue between equal systems of thought than an assimilation of the more ‘acceptable’ elements within Tibetan and Buddhist thought into an essentially Western context.”
  - One Mind & Life scientist, Richard Davidson, has bent over backwards to avoid causing offence while defending materialism. He comments: “Certain scientific assumptions are themselves based on well-established principles,” adding (via the circumlocution “some would say”) that: “the dependence of mind on brain is one such assumption that has been subjected to countless empirical tests, and each and every one of them has provided support for this general claim.”
  - Philosopher Jay Garfield: “Our introspective awareness of our cognitive processes, no matter how sophisticated, is as constructed, and hence as fallible as any other perception,” so reported experiences of pure consciousness may be illusory. “Perception, we learn from empirical research, is never immediate, and never devoid of inferential processes. It is guided by attention and pretension, mediated by memory and low-level inference.”
  - Neuroscientist Jonathan Cohen: “Neuroscientists want to preserve both the substance and the image of rigor in their approach, so one doesn't want to be seen as whisking out into the la-la land of studying consciousness.”
  - Definition of “la-la land:” You know when you see someone and think, “wow, they're in their own world.” Well, that world is la la land.
- Psychologist Anne Treisman commented in the 2009 Mind and Life conference in Dharamsala that perception is a kind of externally guided hallucination. We create experience rather than “photographing it,” so psychologists regard subjective reports as data, rather than as factual accounts.
- Cesare Cremonini, was a friend of Galileo and among his contemporaries who refused to look through a telescope to confirm or refute Galileo's discoveries. He explained his refusal with the words, “I do not wish to approve of claims about which I do not have any knowledge, and about things which I have not seen... and then to observe through those

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.danielsimpson.info/archive/buddhist-meditation-science-1sd>

glasses gives me a headache. Enough! I do not want to hear anything more about this.” [*Opere*, II, 564, which is a letter from Paolo Gualdo to Galileo]. Cremonini was paid to teach Aristotle (in fact, he said when under investigation by the Inquisition that he would have to return his pay if he declined to teach Aristotelianism). More generally, the heavens in Aristotle were supposed to be incorruptible and hence there are no sunspots, so why look through a telescope? Cremonini’s reasons were thus philosophical and ruled out Galileo’s observations *a priori*, so there was no need for telescopes.

- Giulio Libri was an opponent of Galileo who also refused to look through a telescope, but his reasons appear to have been more practical: in his book *Natural Magic* of 1589, Giovanni Battista Della Porta had shown that all manner of optical illusions were possible and at the time of Galileo no complete theory of optics was available to distinguish between genuine effects and tricks or self-deception.<sup>39</sup>
- Nobel laureate physicist Richard Feynman: “It is only through refined measurements and careful experimentation that we can have a wider vision. And then we see unexpected things: we see things that are far from what we would guess—far from what we could have imagined. . . . If science is to progress, what we need is the ability to experiment, honesty in reporting results—the results must be reported without somebody saying what they would like the results to have been . . . One of the ways of stopping science would be only to do experiments in the region where you know the law. But experimenters search most diligently, and with the greatest effort, in exactly those places where it seems most likely that we can prove our theories wrong. In other words we are trying to prove ourselves wrong as quickly as possible, because only in that way can we find progress.”<sup>40</sup>
- For a brilliant overview of rigorous scientific research that dares to challenge the prevailing materialistic dogma that reduces the mind to brain function, see *Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* by Edward Kelly and Emily Williams Kelly. For critical assessments of this work by respected scientists and scholars, see the amazon link: [http://www.amazon.com/Irreducible-Mind-Toward-Psychology-Century/dp/1442202068/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1463114410&sr=8-1&keywords=irreducible+mind](http://www.amazon.com/Irreducible-Mind-Toward-Psychology-Century/dp/1442202068/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1463114410&sr=8-1&keywords=irreducible+mind)
- William James: “Introspection is difficult and fallible; and ... the difficulty is simply that of all observation of whatever kind... The only safeguard is in the final consensus of our farther knowledge about the thing in question, later views correcting earlier ones, until at last the harmony of a consistent system is reached.”<sup>41</sup>
- William James: “Psychology, indeed, is today hardly more than what physics was before Galileo, what chemistry was before Lavoisier. It is a mass of phenomenological description, gossip, and myth, including, however, real material enough to justify one in the hope that with judgment and good-will on the part of those interested, its study may

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.galilean-library.org/site/index.php?/topic/1277-refusing-to-look-through-galileos-telescope/>

<sup>40</sup> Richard P. Feynman, *The Character of Physical Law* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967), 127, 148, 158.

<sup>41</sup> William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (New York: Dover Publications, 1890/1950) I:191-2 & 197-8.

be so organized even now as to become worthy of the name of natural science at a not very distant day.”<sup>42</sup>

May 15, 2016

- Buddha: “There are cases where a wise, experienced, skillful monk remains focused on the body as the body... feelings as feelings... the mind as the mind... phenomena as phenomena—ardent, introspective, and mindful—putting aside attachment and disappointment regarding the world. As he remains thus mindful of phenomena as phenomena, his mind becomes concentrated, his defilements are abandoned. He takes note of that fact. As a result, he abides in happiness here and now, and is mindful and introspective as well. Why is that? Because the wise, experienced, skillful monk has acquired the sign of his own mind.” [*Sutta Nipāta* V 152]
- Cittanupassana (Contemplation on the Mind) (from the *Maha-satipatthana Sutta*)
  - And how, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu dwell perceiving again and again the mind (citta) as the mind?
  - Here, bhikkhus, when a mind with attachment (raga) arises, a bhikkhu knows, “This is a mind with attachment”; or when a mind without attachment arises, he knows, “This is a mind without attachment”; when a mind with anger (dosa) arises, he knows, “This is a mind with anger”; or when a mind without anger arises, he knows, “This is a mind without anger”; when a mind with delusion (moha) arises, he knows, “This is a mind with delusion”; or when a mind without delusion arises, he knows, “This is a mind without delusion”; or when a lax mind (samkhittacitta) arises, he knows, “This is a lax mind”; or when a distracted mind (vikkhittacitta) arises, he knows, “This is a distracted mind”; or when a developed mind (mahagattacitta) arises, he knows, “This is a developed mind”; or when an undeveloped mind (amahagattacitta) arises, he knows, “This is an undeveloped mind”; or when an inferior mind (sauttaracitta) arises, he knows, “This is an inferior mind”; or when a superior mind (anuttaracitta) arises, he knows, “This is a superior mind”; or when a concentrated mind (samahitacitta) arises, he knows, “This is a concentrated mind”; or when an unconcentrated mind (asamahitacitta) arises, he knows, “This is an unconcentrated mind”; or when a mind temporarily free from defilements (vimutticitta) arises, he knows, “This is a mind temporarily free from defilements”; or when a mind not free from defilements (avimutticitta) arises, he knows, “This is a mind not free from defilements”.
  - Thus he dwells perceiving again and again the mind as the mind in himself; or he dwells perceiving again and again the mind as the mind in others; or he dwells perceiving again and again the mind as the mind in both himself and in others. He dwells perceiving again and again the cause and the actual appearing of the mind; or he dwells perceiving again and again the cause and the actual dissolution of the mind; or he dwells perceiving again and again both the actual appearing and dissolution of the mind with their causes. To summarize, he is firmly mindful of the fact that only the mind exists. That mindfulness is just for gaining insight

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<sup>42</sup> William James, “A plea for psychology as a science.” *Philosophical Review*, 1, 1892, 146-153. (146).

- (vipassana) and mindfulness progressively. Being detached from craving and wrong views he dwells without clinging to anything in the world. Thus, bhikkhus, in this way a bhikkhu dwells perceiving again and again the mind as the mind.
- Nāgasena: “Mindfulness, when it arises, calls to mind wholesome and unwholesome tendencies, with faults and faultless, inferior and refined, dark and pure, together with their counterparts . . . Mindfulness, when it arises, follows the courses of beneficial and unbeneficial tendencies: these tendencies are beneficial, these unbeneficial; these tendencies are helpful, these unhelpful. Thus one who practices yoga rejects unbeneficial tendencies and cultivates beneficial tendencies.<sup>43</sup>
  - Śāntideva [IV 45-47]
    - Even if exiled, an enemy may acquire a residence and followers in another country whence he returns with his full strength. But there is no such course for the enemy, the mental afflictions.
    - Once the affliction that dwells in my mind has been expelled, where would it go, and where would it rest and attempt to destroy me? Feeble in spirit, I am lacking in perseverance. Mental afflictions are frail and conquerable with the eye of wisdom.
    - Mental afflictions do not exist in sense objects, nor in the sense faculties, nor in the space between, nor anywhere else. Then where do they exist and agitate the whole world? This is an illusion only. Liberate your fearing heart and cultivate perseverance for the sake of wisdom. Why would you torture yourself in hells for no reason?
  - Qualities of the Mahayana Path of Accumulation (From Gampopa’s *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*)
    - One who has the Mahayana family cultivates bodhicitta, receives teachings from masters, and makes effort in the virtues until the warmth of wisdom is attained. During this time, progress is classified in four stages: realization, aspiration, greater aspiration, and achievement. Why is this called the path of accumulation? Because on it, one gathers the accumulations of virtue in order to become a vessel for the realization of warmth and so forth. Therefore, it is called the path of accumulation. These are also called the root virtues which are similar to liberation.
    - At this stage, twelve of the branches of enlightenment are practiced: A. the four types of mindfulness, B. the four types of perfect abandonment, and C. the four feet of miracle powers.
      - A. The Four Types of Mindfulness are:
        1. sustaining mindfulness of the body,
        2. sustaining mindfulness of feelings,
        3. sustaining mindfulness of the mind, and
        4. sustaining mindfulness of phenomena.

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<sup>43</sup> *The Milindapañhā: Being Dialogues between King Milinda and the Buddhist Sage Nāgasena*, ed. V. Trenckner (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1997), [Miln 37–38], cf. R. M. L. Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2001), 37.

These four occur during the lesser stage of the path of accumulation.

B. The Four Types of Perfect Abandonment are:

1. abandoning non-virtues which have been created,
2. not allowing new non-virtues to be produced,
3. producing the antidotes, virtues which have not arisen,
4. allowing those virtues which have arisen to increase.

These four occur during the middle stage of the path of accumulation.

C. The Four Feet of Miracle Powers are:

1. the absorption of strong aspiration,
2. the absorption of enthusiasm,
3. the absorption of the mind,
4. the absorption of investigation.

These four occur during the greater stage of the path of accumulation.

- Qualities of the Mahayana Path of Application (From Gampopa's *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*)<sup>44</sup>
  - The path of application begins after perfection of the path of accumulation. It has four stages corresponding to the realization of the Four Noble Truths: warmth, summit, acceptance, and the highest worldly dharma. Why is it called the path of application? Because there, one makes an effort to directly realize truth.”
  - A. Five faculties. Furthermore, during the stages of warmth and maximum warmth, five faculties are cultivated: the faculty of faith, the faculty of enthusiasm, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of samādhi, and the faculty of intelligence.
  - B. Five powers. During the stages of patience and highest worldly dharma, five powers are practiced: the power of faith, the power of enthusiasm, the power of mindfulness, the power of faculty, and the power of intelligence.
- Qualities of the first Āryabodhisattva bhūmi (From Gampopa's *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*)
  - At this bhūmi, regarding the obscuration of mental afflictions, all of the eighty-two mental afflictions that are subject to be purified in the path of insight are purified without remainder. Regarding the three types of speculative obscurations to knowledge, all that are like the bark of a tree are removed. At this time, the bodhisattva is free from the five fears. The *Ten Noble Bhumis Sutra* says: “As soon as one attains this Great Joy bhūmi, one is free of the fear of not making a living, the fear of not getting praise, the fear of death, the fear of rebirth in a lower realm, and stage fright in large gatherings.
  - Distinctive Abilities. *The Ten Noble Bhumis Sutra* says: A bodhisattva who abides at the bhūmi of Great Joy makes great exertion for his aspirations. If he is renounced, then in one moment he can enter into a hundred different types of samādhi and see one hundred Buddhas and be perfectly aware of their blessings. He can move one hundred world systems, proceed to one hundred different Buddhafields, manifest one hundred different worlds, and mature one hundred different sentient beings. He can abide for one hundred kalpas, see the hundred previous kalpas and the future hundred kalpas. He can open one hundred doors of

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<sup>44</sup> See also <http://www.lotsawahouse.org/tibetan-masters/patrul-rinpoche/stages-and-path>

Dharma teaching and manifest one hundred manifestation bodies, each with an entourage of one hundred bodhisattvas.

May 16, 2016

- *Excerpt from Chapter 13 on the “The Close Application of Mindfulness to the Mind” from A Compendium of Practices (Śikṣasamuccaya) by Śāntideva*
  - The close application of mindfulness to the mind is discussed in the *Ratnacūḍa Sūtra*: “Consider this, ‘While thoroughly experiencing the mind, what are those minds that become attached, or hateful, or deluded? Do they arise in the past, future, or present? Any mind that is past has vanished. Whatever is in the future has not come. Whatever arises in the present does not last.’ Kāśyapa, the mind is not found to be present inside, or outside, or both inside and outside. Kāśyapa, the mind is formless, undemonstrable, intangible, devoid of a basis, invisible, unknowable, and without any location. Kāśyapa, the mind has never even been seen, is not seen, and will never be seen by any of the buddhas. Apart from phenomena that arise from mistaken identification, how can one know the kind of process of anything that has never even been seen, is not seen, and will never be seen by any of the buddhas? Kāśyapa, the mind is like an illusion, for it apprehends many kinds of events by way of unreal conceptual projections... Kāśyapa, the mind is like the current of a stream, for it does not remain, but arises, passes away, and vanishes. Kāśyapa, the mind is like the wind, for it goes on for a long time and moves without being able to hold it. Kāśyapa, the mind is like the radiant light of a lamp, for it arises in dependence upon causes and conditions. Kāśyapa, the mind is like the sky, for it is temporarily obscured by mental afflictions and derivative mental afflictions. Kāśyapa, the mind is like lightning, for it instantly vanishes and does not linger... Kāśyapa, because the mind produces all suffering, it is like an enemy. Kāśyapa, because the mind destroys all the roots of virtue, it is like a sandcastle. Kāśyapa, because the mind mistakes suffering for happiness, it is like a fishhook. Kāśyapa, because the mind mistakes the identityless for an identity, it is like a dream. Kāśyapa, because the mind mistakes the impure for the pure, it is like a blue-bottle fly. Kāśyapa, because the mind inflicts many kinds of injuries, it is like an adversary. Kāśyapa, because the mind always looks for faults, it is like predatory goblin. Kāśyapa, because the mind always looks for its chance, it is like an enemy. Kāśyapa, because the mind is imbued with attachment and hostility, it always vacillates. Kāśyapa, because the mind robs all the roots of virtue, it is like a thief. Kāśyapa, because the mind is attracted to forms, it is like the eye of a fly. Kāśyapa, because the mind is attracted to sounds, it is like a battle-drum. Kāśyapa, the mind is attracted to smells like a pig that likes disgusting odors. Kāśyapa, the mind is attracted to tastes like a maid who eats leftovers. Kāśyapa, the mind is attracted to tactile sensations like a fly stuck in a dish of oil.
  - Kāśyapa, even though one looks for the mind everywhere, it is not to be found. Whatever is unfindable is unobservable. Whatever is unobservable does not arise in the past, or in the future, or in the present. Whatever does not arise in the past,



or in the future, or in the present really transcends the three times. Whatever really transcends the three times is neither existent nor non-existent...”

- The *Ārya Ratnacūḍa Sūtra* also states, “By looking everywhere for the mind, one does not really see it inside or outside, nor does one really see it both inside and outside. It is not really seen among the psycho-physical aggregates, or among the elements, or the sense-bases. Since the mind is not really seen, asking, ‘From what does the mind arise?’ one looks everywhere for the continuum of the mind, and one considers, ‘Perhaps the mind arises from the presence of an object.’ Further, one ponders, ‘Whatever object that might be, is it other than the mind? Or is that very object the mind? If the object were different from the mind, then the mind would be bifurcated. On the other hand, if that very object is the mind, then how could the mind see itself? It is implausible that the mind sees the mind. Just as the blade of a sword cannot cut itself, and a fingertip cannot touch itself, I think the mind is incapable of seeing itself...’
  - Son of the family, furthermore, that which moves swiftly, ever so swiftly, without remaining still, like a monkey, like the wind, like a waterfall, and like the flame of an oil-lamp, travels far away. It is incorporeal, craves objects, experiences the six sense bases, and is conscious of one thing after another. ‘A stable mind’ is said to be one that is still, single-pointed, not agitated, not scattered, single-pointedly quiescent, and free of distraction.”
  - The *Ārya Akṣayamati Sūtra* states, “One resolves, ‘I shall strive to achieve this, and I shall not lose sight of this ultimate reality of the mind.’ What is the ultimate reality of the mind, and what is achievement? The mind is like an illusion. Devoting everything to that is called the ultimate reality of the mind. Renouncing all one’s possessions and totally dedicating oneself to the purification of all the buddha-fields is called ‘achievement’...”
- The Four Yogas from *Naked Awareness*
    - Single-pointedness occurs when a contemplative focuses his experience, without scattering away from the immaculate, vivid clarity and non-conceptuality of the mind, and remains single-pointedly in the stream of unified śamatha and vipaśyanā. At the stage of small single-pointedness there are four applications of mindfulness: (1) the application of mindfulness of non-compositeness, free of any thought of the body as being either clean or unclean; (2) the application of mindfulness of taintless bliss, without thinking of feelings as being either suffering or joy; (3) the application of mindfulness of the mind, free of conceptual elaborations concerning the mind being either permanent or impermanent; (4) the application of mindfulness of phenomena, cutting off superimpositions concerning the reality of nirvāṇa, without thinking of phenomena as either having or not having an identity...The meaning is that abiding in the space-like reality of emptiness and luminosity is single-pointedness...Up until single-pointedness, primordial consciousness that realizes the path has not arisen, so that is not genuine meditative equipoise. Thus, as subsequent appearances do not arise as illusions, there is no genuine post-meditative state...By cultivating that meditation for a long while, your mind will turn away from the eight mundane concerns, you will get rid of outer and inner parasites, and you will be able to display

supernormal powers such as meditative manipulation and domination of the elements and so forth. When that happens, the qualities of single-pointedness have arisen.

- If you relate to emptiness without intellectual fabrication, that is the experiential freedom from conceptual elaborations... From the very nature of the arising of the clear, immaculate, unborn ultimate reality of the mind, perfect *samādhi* manifestly realizes the essential nature of your own mind, which is like space, free of the conceptual elaborations.
- The homogenous taste of your conduct during the post-meditative state, without interruption due to conditions, is the one taste of experience... Although a variety of phenomena appear, they are of the “one taste” of the ultimate reality of your own mind; and all dualities such as oneself and others and *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are of one taste.
- The attainment of the state of spiritual awakening is free of the previous mental formations of taintless *karma* in the mind, free of the malady of subtle latent predispositions, free of *karma* that is of the nature of the mind, and in an inconceivable transition it is free of the appearance of transference into death. That is non-meditation, for it is the culmination... Wherever you look in terms of “is” and “is not,” the ultimate reality of your own mind perpetually arises as the clear light, ungrounded in anything such as an object or agent of meditation. That is the contemplation of non-meditation.

May 17, 2016

### Four Vidyādhara Levels of Dzogchen

**Four vidyādhara levels according to Dzogchen** (Tib. *rigdzin nampa shyi*; [Wyl. rig 'dzin rnam pa bzhi](#)) — the four levels of a [vidyadhara](#) which are specific to the [Dzogchen](#) or [Nyingma](#) tradition.

1. [matured vidyadhara](#) (Tib. *namin rigdzin*; Wyl. *rnam smin rig 'dzin*)
2. [vidyadhara with power over life](#) (Tib. *tsewang rigdzin*; Wyl. *tshe dbang rig 'dzin*)
3. [mahamudra vidyadhara](#) (Tib. *chakchen rigdzin*; Wyl. *phyag chen rig 'dzin*)
4. [spontaneously actualized vidyadhara](#) (Tib. *lhundrup rigdzin*; Wyl. *lhun grub rig 'dzin*)

### Related to the [Five Paths](#)

According to *The Vajra Essence*:

- “Due to the noble qualities of the Vision of Direct Perception, may we experience the benefits of the sublime Very Joyful Stage and the ground and path of a matured vidyādhara.
- By the power of Progress in Meditative Experience, may we cross over to the fifth stage known as Difficult to Cultivate, and may we attain all the noble qualities of the ground and path of a vidyādhara with power over life.

- Due to the virtues of Reaching Consummate Awareness, may we cross over to the eighth stage known as the Immovable, and may we attain all the noble qualities of the ground and path of a mahāmudrā vidyādhara.
- By the power of the intellect-transcending Extinction into Ultimate Reality, may we cross over to the great tenth ground known as the Cloud of Dharma, and may we swiftly attain the noble qualities of the ground and path of a spontaneously actualized vidyādhara.”

May 18, 2016

- William James: The extraordinary progress of science since 1600 “is due to a rather sudden finding of the way in which a certain order of questions ought to be attacked, questions admitting of mathematical treatment...The problems of philosophy are those that have not yet been solved by science. Indeed, the domain of philosophy may be partially defined by that criterion.”<sup>45</sup>

May 19, 2016

- *The Vajra Essence:*

“O Vajra of Pristine Awareness, if you do not know how to distinguish between conditioned consciousness and primordial consciousness, you may think conditioned consciousness is primordial consciousness and consequently circle about in delusion. So learn how to distinguish between them! *Conditioned consciousness* is the naturally present radiance and clarity of the unimpeded objects that emerge in the expanse of mentation, which, when they enter the sense doors, are bound by self-grasping. When looking out through the sense doors, that which appears as seeing, hearing, feeling, experiencing, and contacting external sensory appearances is called *conditioned consciousness*.

“Insofar as conditioned consciousness individually apprehends and recognizes names and things, and arouses the three closely held feelings of pleasure, pain, and indifference, all things appear to be separate and distinct. They are given individual names, and things are apprehended as being distinct. This acts as the basis from which emerge thoughts of attachment to your own side and aversion to the other’s side. [363] The good is apprehended as being good and is made into an object of hope, thus proliferating thoughts of yearning. The bad is apprehended as being bad, and this serves as a basis from which various thoughts of anxiety arise.

“What is called *mentation* manifests as the consciousness of appearances, it turns into appearing objects, and it causes appearances to be made manifest. From the very moment that a thought and a subject arise, what is called *mind* merges nondually with appearances and vanishes.

“*Primordial consciousness* is the natural glow of the ground, and it expresses itself as the five facets of primordial consciousness. Specifically, in the manifest state of the ground, great primordial consciousness, which has been forever present, abides as the aspect of lucidity and clarity, like the dawn breaking and the sun rising. It is not blank like an unimpeded darkness that knows nothing. All appearances are naturally present, without arising or ceasing. Just as heat is naturally present in the nature of fire, moisture is present in the nature of water, and coolness is present in the nature of wind, due to the unimpeded power in the nature of primordial

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<sup>45</sup> *Some Problems of Philosophy: A Beginning of an Introduction to Philosophy* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1911) pp. 22-24.

consciousness, there is total knowledge and total awareness of all phenomena, without its ever merging with or entering into objects. Primordial consciousness is self-emergent, naturally clear, and free of outer and inner obscuration; it is the all-pervasive, radiant, clear infinity of space, free of contamination.

“What are the causes and conditions by which conditioned consciousness is transformed into primordial consciousness? They are accurately knowing how thoughts of the phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa emerge—including the eight aggregates of conditioned consciousness and sensory appearances—and realizing the manner in which they are naturally perfect as displays of the kāyas and facets of primordial consciousness in the nature of ultimate reality. Then, from the time that you identify the dharmakāya, pristine awareness that is present in the ground, your conditioned consciousness is transmuted into displays of primordial consciousness. Then, regarding conditioned consciousness, by the illusory display of concepts of the self alone, primordial consciousness takes on the guise of conditioned consciousness, like a pile of stones being mistaken for a man. The transformation of this into primordial consciousness is like recognizing a scarecrow for what it is, instead of seeing it as a man. In this way, the correct realization of the mode of being of conditioned consciousness transforms it into primordial consciousness. It is not that conditioned consciousness must vanish into absolute space and primordial consciousness must arise from somewhere else. Instead, know that it just seems that way because of the functions of self-grasping and identitylessness.

“Conditioned consciousness is what makes the first moment of knowledge emerge in the aspect of the object, just as various images of planets and stars emerge in the ocean. What arises is closely held by conceptual consciousness; it is bound by reification, and you thereby become deluded. Knowledge of the reasons for this brings you to primordial consciousness.

May 21, 2016

- *The Vajra Essence:*

“If you do not know how to distinguish between the mind and pristine awareness, you will confuse the mind for pristine awareness, which will unfortunately lead to obstacles to achieving the state of liberation. So know how to distinguish them! As for the *mind*, there are the *deluded mind that clings to appearances*, the *mind that seeks the path by way of negation and affirmation*, and the *mind that takes consciousness as the path*.

“The deluded mind that clings to appearances is the ordinary mind of sentient beings who do not seek the path and who do not see an entrance to the authentic path.

“The mind that seeks the path is said to take the mind as its path, for in this case, the mind observes the mind, thoughts are observed with a conceptual mind, and you seek the path of merely arousing pleasure and pain through intellectual fabrications and the acceptance and rejection of virtue and vice.

“As for the mind that takes consciousness as the path, the experience of unimpeded ordinary consciousness, which is the ground of the mind, is not the realization of the view. As a result of such practice, outer appearances are reduced to an ethically neutral state, and since these appearances are taken to be real, reification is not counteracted. Inwardly, your own body appears to be ethically neutral, so the fixation of reifying the body is not counteracted. And since both outer and inner appearances are taken to be ethically neutral and autonomous, you do not transcend the mind, so this, too, is called the *mind*. Even if this were called ‘pristine awareness’—like giving a boy’s name to an unborn fetus—the characteristic of ascertaining pristine awareness in itself

would not have been realized. Unawareness is failing to realize saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as great emptiness. The terms *awareness* and *unawareness* are known conventionally by way of their respective functions.

“*Pristine awareness* first establishes everything included in the phenomenal world of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as emptiness. The reflections of the planets and stars in the ocean have no existence apart from the ocean, yet they are of the same nature as the displays of the ocean. Likewise, rainbows in the sky have no existence apart from the sky, yet those appearances are of the same nature as the displays of the sky. In the same manner, pristine awareness is actualized by correctly recognizing that things appear even though nothing exists from the side of the appearances, and that all appearances of the physical worlds and their sentient inhabitants have no existence apart from the ground sugatagarbha, while those appearances are of the same nature as the displays of the ground sugatagarbha.

“Like the dawn breaking in the sky, without need for meditation, you comprehend saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as being totally subsumed within great enlightenment. Without need for investigation, there is your own awareness, without grasping, that all of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is like the reflection of the planets and stars in the ocean. Without need for modification, there is natural liberation in the absolute space of the ground, the great purity and equality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Without need for objectification, there is a spacious dissolution into the great expanse, with no object, obstruction, or intentionality. In this way you experience and gain mastery over the inexhaustible ornamental wheels of the enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities of the jinas and jinaputras of the three times.

“Ultimately, simply by identifying the dharmakāya, pristine awareness that is present in the ground, you gain power over the life force of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. This is not a discussion of receiving empowerment through such things as water and symbolic pictures that are used as methods to awaken the mind. Rather, you know you have obtained the empowerments of the jinas and jinaputras and the oral transmissions of all the writings that emerge from primordial consciousness, pristine awareness. Thus, you have already simultaneously obtained all empowerments and oral transmissions. Therefore, recognize the importance of not mistaking the mind for pristine awareness...

“O Vajra of Pristine Awareness, if you do not know how to distinguish between what is and what is not the path, there is the danger that you may be led astray to what is not the path, and, unfortunately, not actualize the genuine path. So learn how to distinguish between them! The path of the perfection of wisdom consists of correctly realizing the view, the essential point of emptiness, and simply taking this knowledge as the path. Once you have realized the meaning of great emptiness, you know the nature of the whole of saṃsāra, nirvāṇa, and the path, and you experience absolute space. This is called the *pristine awareness of the Great Perfection*. The lucid, clear ground, free of contamination, is taken as the path. If you take consciousness as the path, you are taking aspects of consciousness as the path. If you take the displays of the ground, the purity and equality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, as the path, this is taking the essential nature as the path. It is called the *authentic path*.

“What is called *viewing discursive thoughts with discursive thoughts* is not the path. With respect to discursive thoughts, you may engage in such evaluations as denying and affirming and adopting the good and rejecting the bad, and finally regard merely unstructured consciousness as the ultimate view and meditation. But that is not the path. Even if you take the creative expressions of the mind and the essential nature of the mind as the path, since the mind is the basis of delusion, you will certainly not transcend the three realms. So that is not the path.”