

# **Transformative Vision of Buddhism**

*The Lotus Sutra and The Shobogenzo*

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## SESSION ONE

### I. Introductory Remarks:

- A. The **esoteric** dimension is the dimension of universal spiritual experience where all religions originate and meet.
- B. The **exoteric** dimension is the dimension of relative philosophical interpretations and expressions where individual differences emerge within and among religions.
- C. This program is designed to be an exoteric exposition of the esoteric dimension in terms of Mahayana Buddhism in the context of the 21st century human condition, culture, and issues.
- D. The program is an intellectually rigorous spiritual discourse for the purpose of leading the participants to the esoteric dimension, which is within each individual, and not an academic discourse in which the participants are expected to obtain merely intellectual knowledge.

### II. Why do you study Buddhism?

- A. Why do you study spiritual philosophies and practices at all?

### III. The purpose of authentic spiritual teachings is the attainment of complete freedom and complete emancipation from the limited to the limitless or from the finite to the infinite, one expression of which is unlimited and optimal conscious evolution.

- A. The process of spiritual evolution is two-fold:

1. The process of awaking to higher dimensionalities of consciousness from the relative objective dimensionality (*samsara*) to the absolute subjective dimensionality (*nirvana*) to the absolute transcendent dimensionality (*dharma*);
2. The process of awakening to higher orders of creativity and compassion.

- B. **Samsara**: the empirical field of the finite—the phenomenal world of space, time, and change—the world of becoming and of the insubstantial appearing to be substantial—the world of perpetual frustration—*nirmanakaya/sprul-sku* (*dharmakaya-sambhogakaya-nirnamakaya*).

C. **Nirvana**: the immanent field of the infinite—the noumenal world of spaceless-timeless-changeless plenum continuum—the world of the substantial seen as insubstantial from the samsaric world—the world of permanent bliss—*sambhogakaya/longs-sku (dharmakaya-sambhogakaya-nirnamakaya)*.

D. **Dharma (as Dharmakaya or Gzhi)**: the transcendent-immanent field of the infinite-infinite (the infinite involved) —the Matrix of both the noumenal and phenomenal worlds—*dharmakaya/chos-sku (dharmakaya-sambhogakaya-nirnamakaya)*.

1. The term “dharma” has multiple meanings, each of which is determined by the context in which it is used.
2. Dharma means (1) the Being or the Law that *holds and supports* the phenomenal universe in order and (2) every phenomenon in the universe that *upholds and is supported* by the Being or the Law that is the Matrix of Creative Holomovement.

IV. Buddhist philosophy has unmistakably preserved certain traits which at the outset formed the very life force of Buddhist thought and which still vitally concern us as a truly spiritual force. (Philosophy is herein understood as the perennial quest for meaning.)

A. These traits are *the emphasis on immediate experience* and *the rejection of everything that might make us lose what is essential in our dealings with the problems of life*.

B. The most salient feature of Mahayana Buddhist philosophy is its *dynamic process orientation*:

1. The Mahayana Buddhist philosophy views the samsaric world in terms of process—a constantly forming, reforming, and transforming complex of substanceless elemental processes that are of interdependent origination—*pari passu* with immediate experience and awareness.
  - a) This process orientation radically differs from the structural orientation of both Hindu and Western philosophies as well as Hinayana philosophies.
  - b) The Buddhist orientation is, both cognitively and linguistically, non-entitative; it maximally refrains from the tendency for “thingification.”
  - c) Analogically speaking, the Hindu and Western views are particle-base, while the Buddhist view is wave-base.

d) The esoteric Buddhist philosophy views all phenomenal existence as devoid of substance or reality – that the whole phenomenal world has *absolutely* no reality.

(1) “Sensibility or ponderability is inversely proportional to reality or substantiality.” (FMW)

2. The esoteric Buddhist philosophy views Nirvana as the absence of relative motion and Dharma as being imbued with dynamic absolute movement.

a) Both Nirvana and Dharma are real and substantial.

b) Both Nirvana and Dharma are infinite, though the infinitude of Dharma is *infinitely* higher than Nirvana – analogically speaking, the infinitude of the former being an involution of the latter.

c) Nirvana is an equivalent of Atman; Dharma is an equivalent of Brahman.

(1) The difference is that the former are seen in terms of process, while the latter are seen in terms of structure.

## V. The Four Noble Truths and The Eightfold Noble Path – A Mahayana Interpretation:

### A. **The Four Noble Truths** (Catvāri ārya-satyāni)

1. Dúhkha: Too narrow to breathe; the state of self-enclosure in the samsaric world.

2. Samúdaya: Co-location or co-determination with vectorial causal momentum.

3. Niródha: Cessation; coming to the end.

4. Marga: Way, path; trail (of deer)

a) The Way is in the Going.

b) Marga: A syntropic, evolutionary process of continual unfoldment and generation into higher order.

c) Samúdaya: An entropic, devolutionary process of repetitive stagnation and degeneration into lower order.

B. Twelve-linked (**nidhāna**) netlike principle of *dependent origination* (**pratītyasamutpāda**) —the basic connectedness of dynamic phenomena (the Pratyekabuddha way):

1. Spiritual liberation comes when you realize that the phenomenal world has no self-existence at all.
  - a) The awareness-knowledge of this is *vidyā* and the phenomenal world *seems* to exist only in the absence of *vidyā* or in *avidyā*.

C. **The Eightfold Noble Path** (Ārya-ashtānga-mārga)

1. Samyag-drsthi (holistic vision):
  - a) Samyak/samyag: Belonging together, unified, holistic, integral.
  - b) “Holistic” means to unfold from Dharma or Reality or the Ground of Being in accordance with the principle of unfolding wholeness.
  - c) Drsthi: Seeing without thingification.

Samyag-drsthi is Holistic Vision that the human being is already and always Buddha—Nirvana and Dharma are already and always the ground of being of the human being.

2. Samyak-samkalpa (integral thinking):
  - a) Samkalpa: To put seams together.

Samyak-samkalpa is Integral Thinking that unfolds from Holistic Vision that in Reality, *to be is to be a Buddha*—to be untouched by samsara and to abide in Nirvana in the bosom of Dharma.

3. Samyak-vac (meaningful speech):
  - a) Vac: Speech.
  - b) Samyak-vac is Meaningful Speech, which reflects the Matrix of Meaning that is Dharma and which is creative in the sense of “in the beginning is the word.”

4. Samyak-karmanta (right action):
  - a) Karmanta: Action.
  - b) Samyak-karmanta is Right Action, which is action with concern for the whole, taking other people into consideration and assisting them in the development of their vision.
5. Samyag-ajiva (holistic living):
  - a) Adjiva: How to conduct one's life.
  - b) Samyag-adjiva is holistic, balanced living of giving and receiving that supports one's spiritual practice and development and that brings both spiritual and material wealth and abundance.
6. Samyag-vyāyāma (integral discipline):
  - a) Vyāyāma: Effort; discipline.
  - b) Samyag-vyāyāma is Integral Discipline that is integral with the rest of one's life and conducive to one's wholesome spiritual development.
7. Samyak-smṛti (complete mindfulness):
  - a) Smṛti: Remembrance-*cum*-inspection; holding the content of one's mind steady so that one can continually learn and evolve more.
  - b) Samyak-smṛti is Complete Mindfulness that arises when one holds the content of one's mind steady as a whole without fragmentation.
  - c) Samyak-smṛti is the state of self-remembering and self-inspection that is characterized by the heightened attentiveness of one's inner and outer environment.
8. Samyak-samadhi (complete integrity):
  - a) Samadhi: The state of awareness in which the contents of consciousness fall into a harmonious pattern; the state of being attuned to the call of the whole within

and without; in-depth appraisal of the interiority of one's consciousness; to hold together completely.

- b) Samadhi signifies, ontologically, the state of complete oneness with the whole, and epistemologically, the state of complete innerstanding of the whole. Therefore, samadhi is the state of complete integrity.
- c) Samyak-samadhi is Complete Integrity wherein the entire contents of consciousness fall into a harmonious, holistic pattern and whereby one becomes attuned to the call of the whole within and without.

D. The Eightfold Noble Path and the Principle of Unfolding Wholeness:

1. The Unfolding Wholeness: Holistic Vision → Integral Thinking → Meaningful Speech → Right Action.
2. The Infrastructure: Holistic Living ↔ Integral Discipline.
3. The Superstructure: Complete Mindfulness ↔ Complete Integrity.

## SESSION TWO

### VI. Review of and Addition to Session One:

#### A. Unique Features of Mahayana Buddhism:

Buddhist philosophy has unmistakably preserved certain traits which at the outset formed the very life force of Buddhist thought and which still vitally concern us as a truly spiritual force. (Philosophy is herein understood as the perennial quest for meaning.)

1. These traits are *the emphasis on immediate experience* and *the rejection of everything that might make us lose what is essential in our dealings with the problems of life.*
2. The most salient feature of Mahayana Buddhist philosophy is its *dynamic process orientation*:
  - a) The Mahayana Buddhist philosophy views the samsaric world in terms of process—a constantly forming, reforming, and transforming complex of substanceless elemental processes that are of interdependent co-origination or mutually unobstructed interpenetration—*pari passu* with immediate experience and awareness.
    - (1) This process orientation radically differs from the structural orientation of both Hindu and Western philosophies as well as Hinayana philosophies.
    - (2) The Buddhist orientation is, cognitively and linguistically, non-entitative; it maximally refrains from the tendency for “thingification.”
    - (3) Analogically speaking, the Hindu and Western views are particle-base, while the Buddhist view is wave-base.

#### B. Key Concepts:

1. The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path (The Śravaka-Arhanth Way)
2. **Samsara** is the descriptive term for *humanity's ongoing activity of constructing a rough draft of reality out of the varied elements of experience*, which structures his attitudes and valuations.



- a) Samsara is aptly called “that which has been constructed (Skt. *samskrta*).
  - b) It is the nature of any construction that it is always on the verge of collapse and thus prompts the individual to engage in further constructions to prop up his “original” fragile construction.
    - (1) This has the effect of getting the individual frantically running around in a maze of his own making.
  - c) Samsara as a construct co-emerges with the *egological construct*.
  - d) The samsaric realm is the phenomenal universe and corresponds to the relative-objective dimensionality of consciousness.
3. **Nirvana** is described as “not being something that has been constructed” (*asamskrta*), as being “calm” (*śānta*), “unborn” (*ajāta*), “without origination” (*anutpāda*), “the cessation” (*nirodha*) and nonexistence (*abhāva*) of whatever is frustrating and unbalancing,” and “nonlocalized” (*apratisthita*).
- a) The nirvanic realm is the noumenal universe and corresponds to the absolute-subjective dimensionality of consciousness.
  - b) Both samsara and nirvana are essentially descriptions of specific experiences.
4. **Dharma or Dharmadhātu (the realm of dharma)** is the transcendent-immanent field of the infinite-infinite or involved infinite:  $(\infty)^\infty$  — the Matrix of both the nirvanic-noumenal and the samsaric phenomenal worlds.
- a) The term “dharma” has multiple meanings, each of which is determined by the context in which it is used.
  - b) Dharma means
    - (1) Being or Law that *holds and supports* the phenomenal universe in order;
    - (2) Every phenomenon in the universe that *upholds and is supported* by the Being or the Law that is the Matrix of Meaning and Creation.

c) The term *dharma* is derived from the verbal root *dhr* “to hold, to uphold, to carry, to possess.”

(1) Dharma holds *existentia* or thatness (*quid est*) vs. dharma holds *essentia* or whatness (*quod est*).

(2) Dharma carries its own existence, that is, Dharma-as-such is self-existent.

d) As an organizing principle, that which is termed dharma (either in the singular or the plural) discloses itself in the dynamic development of experience, which as such is the ongoing elucidation of the actual context of a person’s life.

e) **Trikāya: Dharmākāya—Sambhogakāya—Nirmānakāya.**

(1) *Dharmakāya (chos-sku)*: The gestaltism (*kāya*) of Being’s meaningfulness.

The gestalt that Being’s or the whole’s meaningfulness assumes in the experiencer’s (that is, Being’s) awareness of it.

The deeply felt understanding or the innerstanding of the nonduality of Being’s open dimension and its originary awareness (*ye-shes*).

(2) *Sambhogakāya (longs-sku)*: The gestaltism (*kāya*) of mutual (*sam*) enjoyment (*bhoga*).

The gestalt in which Being spatializes itself as a world-spanning horizon of meaning with possible regions of concern and engagement, which horizon is charged with implicit complementarity of critical acumen and efficacy.

As a gestalt, *sambhogakāya* reverberates with Being’s wholeness, which comes to presence as Being’s autoprojection, as its geometrization, with which the experiencer becomes fully engaged.

(3) *Nirmānakāya (sprul-sku)*: The gestalt in which Being expresses itself in guiding images of cultural forecast.

This gestalt, which in its variations expresses Being’s creativity, is the creative force in the human individual that makes him develop his cultural norms.

## 5. Shoho-Jisso:

- a) *Shoho-Jisso* is a uniquely Chinese/Japanese Buddhist term, though the term *jisso* is used in the Lotus Sutra as the translation of *dharma-svabhāva* (dharma as such—dharma in its intrinsicity).
- b) *Shoho* means all phenomena (*dharma*) and *jisso* means Reality-in-its-intrinsicity or Being-in-its-beingness (*Dharma*).
- c) *Shoho-Jisso* (*shohojisso*) means all dharmas (phenomena) are none other than the manifestation/projection of Dharma—Eternal Reality and Sempiternal Truth.
- d) *Shohojisso* can only be realized through *bucchiken* (*tathāgata-jñāna-darśana*).

## 6. Sangan—Three Levels of Cognitiveness-Awareness:

- a) *Ke* = *Prajñā* = *Shes-rab* = Intellectual-analytical (critical/discriminative/analytically appreciative) acumen = Representational/objectifying/conceptual thinking = *Understanding* of the phenomenal (samsaric) universe.
- b) *Ku* = *Jñāna* = *Ye-shes* = Intellectual-spiritual acumen = Intuitive meaning-awareness (existential/originary/introceptive awareness) = Nonrepresentational/non-objectifying/supraconceptual thinking = *Innerstanding* of the noumenal (nirvanic) universe.
- c) *Chu* = *Tathāgata-jñāna-darśana* = Transcendental integration of *ke* and *ku*.
  - (1) *Tathāgata* = The process of deeply feeling, understanding, and innerstanding *Being-in-its-beingness (Dharma)*, which sums up the evolutionary thrust for optimization (optimization thrust) in the emergence of a new dynamic regime in the manner of a dissipative structure (*buddha*).

(2) *Darśana* = Seeing (of Being).

## 7. Sunya (Chinese—Koog/Japanese—Ku):

- a) *Sunyata*: The *open* dynamics of Being or Being's *openness*. (noun)
- b) *Sunya*: *Open*. (adjective)

c) ***Stong-pa***: This Tibetan equivalent of the adjectival Sanskrit *sunya* has a verbal character and describes a *voiding* in the Whiteheadian sense of “*not allowing permanent structures to persist.*”

d) To translate *sunya* as “empty” or “void” is a mistranslation.

(1) ***Sunyata as Dharmatā (the nature of Dharma) is not a vacuum but a plenum.***

e) *Sunya* or *stong-pa* describes (1) the *actual no-thingness* or *non-substantiality* of the temporal phenomenal universe; (2) the *apparent nothingness, non-existence, or non-substantiality* of the atemporal noumenal universe; and (3) the *openness, the open dimensionality, the open directionality, the infinitude, and the no-thing substantiality* of Being-in-its-beingness or Reality-as-the-Matrix-of-Meaning.

## VII. Buddha and Bodhisattva:

### A. *Buddha/sangs-rgyas*:

1. It is misleading to use the Sanskrit adjective *buddha* as a noun. As a past participle of the verb *budh* “to awake,” it describes an experiential state; it does not denote a thing in nature as does the word “rock.”
2. The translation of this term to the “awakened one” is a form of thingification—making a thing out of that which is a process without a beginning or an end.
3. The dissipation (*sangs*) of darkness that is at once the spreading (*rgyas*) of light.
  - a) Therefore, *buddha/sangs-rgyas* is a dissipative process-structure.
4. What is referred to as “*buddha*” is the approximation symmetry transformation of Being-as-such, whereas what is known as “ordinary person” is a displacement symmetry transformation.
  - a) In no way is the original perfect symmetry of Dharma affected by its transformations.
  - b) Dharma alone exists in and as Eternal Reality and Sempiternal Truth.

B. Bodhisattva vs. Śrāvaka-Arhanṭ & Pratyekabuddha.

1. The idea of bodhisattva, central to the Mahayana form of Buddhism, evinces a social awareness that before the arising of this idea was unknown or largely neglected.
2. Unlike the arhanṭ and the pratyekabuddha who attempt to escape from or remain unaffected by the world, the bodhisattva is a world-engaged experiencer.
3. The standpoint in the Mahayana is no longer concerned with picturing the world as a totality of entities, but with the primordially of experience as it expresses itself in and through an individual's experienced life-world.
4. The bodhisattva of the 21st century will engage in a spiritual activism, in which world and individual transformations are not separated from each other but constitute one integral, evolutionary movement.

## SESSION THREE

### VIII. Review Plus:

#### A. Distinguishing Features of Buddhism:

1. Buddhist philosophy as a perennial quest for meaning has unmistakably preserved certain traits, which at the outset formed the very life force of Buddhist thought and which still vitally concern us as a truly spiritual force.
  - a) These traits are (1) the emphasis on immediate experience (*imperience*), especially of spiritual awakening; (2) the uncompromising existential concern for what is essential in our dealings with the problems of life; and (3) the dynamic process orientation in contradistinction to structure orientation (Mahayana Buddhism).
2. Buddhism as a system of philosophic inquiry is the study of mind or mentation—its nature, process, and functioning—and the dynamic process orientation of Mahayana Buddhist philosophy evolved from its study of the process of mentation.
  - a) Buddhism is the original “science of mind.”
  - b) The evolution of Buddhist thought is the evolution of the understanding of mind being seen as a set of operators *re-presenting* the world to being seen as a holistic self-organizing process in which the totality, comprising mind-experience-world, dynamically evolves according to inherent guiding principles.
  - c) The truly innovative idea aspect of Buddhist thought was its emphasis on mind or mentation (Skt. *citta*, Tib. *sems*) and the conception of mind-mentation initially as a feedback-feedforward mechanism and then as a self-organizing process of the whole.
  - d) The rejection of the static notion of a self (Skt. *Ātman*) is not a truly innovative idea, but rather it only clarifies the distinction between that which exists “materially,” such as the so-called atoms, and that which exists “nominally,” such as ideas, notions, meanings.
  - e) The idea of mentation as process has found its expression in the idea of “path” or “way.”

The dynamic concept of path, in the course of the development of Buddhist thought, became synonymous with the unfolding of an individual potential rather than being conceived of as merely a “way out” of human suffering.

- f) What in a static world view is the end, in a dynamic, evolutionary world view is always a new beginning.
- g) This mentation-process orientation is the reason that Buddhism is essentially non-theistic.
- h) The Yogacara and rDzogs-chen thinkers, in particular, were mainly concerned with the question of how one could understand oneself in one’s psycho-spiritual development and of how one could understand the spiritual way as a process rather than an inert link between two static states.

(1) This approach led to the texts known by the name “tantra,” which means “weaving of life’s tapestry.”

3. Buddhist philosophy is based on the logic of super-symmetry ( $A \neq \text{not-}A$  &  $A = \text{not-}A$ ) in which the logic of symmetry ( $A = \text{not-}A$ ) and the logic of asymmetry ( $A \neq \text{not-}A$ ) are integrated, while Western science, philosophy, and religion are based on the logic of asymmetry: *Sangan = Ke-Ku-Chu*.

a) *Sangan*—Three Levels of Cognitiveness-Awareness:

(1) *Ke = Prajñā* = Intellectual/analytical/critical/discriminative acumen = Asymmetric logic = Representational/objectifying/conceptual thinking = Critical-analytical understanding of the phenomenal (samsaric) universe.

(2) *Ku = Jñāna* = Holistic/spiritual acumen = Introceptual meaning-awareness = Symmetric logic = Nonrepresentational/non-objectifying thinking = Holistic-appreciative innerstanding of the noumenal (nirvanic) universe.

(3) *Chu = Tathāgata-jñāna-darśana* = Transcendental integration of *ke* and *ku* = Supersymmetric logic = Transcendent-Kosmic innerstanding of Being-as-such or Reality-as-a-whole.

(A) *Tathāgata* = The process of Being’s evolutionary thrust for optimization in the emergence of a new dynamic regime in the manner of a dissipative structure (*buddha*). (B) *Darśana* = Seeing (of Being).

## B. Other Key Concepts:

### 1. Trikāya (*sanjin*): Dharmākaya (*hosshin*)—Sambhogakāya (*hojin*)—Nirmānakāya (*ōjin*):

a) *Dharmakāya* (*chos-sku*): The Ground of Being as the Matrix of Meaning =The Gestalt (wholeness structure) of Meaning that is immediately experienced (*imperienced*) through the innerstanding of the nonduality of the Ground of Being.

(1) *Dharmakāya* = *Dharmatā* = *Dharmadhātu* = *Buddhatā* = *Tathāgata-garbha*.

b) *Sambhogakāya* (*longs-sku*): The gestaltism (*kāya*) of mutual (*sam*) enjoyment (*bhoga*) = The gestalt that arises with the nirvanic experience or imperience.

(1) *Sambhogakāya* is the gestalt (wholeness structure) as which Being (*dharmakāya*) autoprojects and in which Being (*dharmakāya*) spatializes or geometrizes itself as a world-spanning horizon of meaning with possible regions of concern and engagement.

c) *Nirmānakāya* (*sprul-sku*): The gestalt in which Being ((*dharmakāya*)-*sambhogakāya*) expresses itself in guiding images of cultural forecast.

(1) *Nirmānakāya*, the gestalt that expresses Being's ((*dharmakāya*)-*sambhogakāya*)'s creativity, is the creative force in the human individual that makes him develop his cultural norms.

### 2. Sunya (Chinese—*Koog*/Japanese—*Ku*):

a) *Sunyata*: Being's *openness* (noun) -- *Sunya*: *Open* (adjective).

b) *Stong-pa*: This Tibetan equivalent of the adjectival Sanskrit *sunya* has a verbal character and describes a *voiding* in the Whiteheadian sense of "not allowing permanent structures to persist."

c) *Sunya* describes (1) the *actual* non-substantiality of the phenomenal/samsaric universe (*nirmānakāya*) including the egological self; (2) the *apparent* nothingness or non-existence of the noumenal/nirvanic universe (*sambhogakāya*); and (3) the utter openness, the open dimensionality, and the infinitude of *dharmakāya*.



d) *Sunyata* as *Dharmatā* (the nature of Dharma) is not a vacuum but a plenum.

### 3. Buddha and Bodhisattva:

a) *Buddha/sangs-rgyas*: The dissipation (*sangs*) of darkness that is at once the spreading (*rgyas*) of light. Therefore, *buddha/sangs-rgyas* is a dissipative process-structure.

b) It is misleading to use the Sanskrit adjective *buddha* as a noun. As a past participle of the verb *budh* "to awake," it describes an experiential state; it does not denote a thing in nature as does the word "rock."

c) The translation of this term to the "awakened one" is a form of thingification—making a thing out of that which is a process without a beginning or an end.

d) What is referred to as "buddha" is the approximation symmetry transformation of *dharmakāya = dharmatā = dharmadhātu = buddhatā = tathāgata-garbha* through ecstatic cognitive intensity, whereas what is known as "ordinary person (sentient being)" is the displacement symmetry transformation thereof through stepped-down cognitive intensity.

e) In neither transformation the original perfect symmetry of *dharmakāya = dharmatā = dharmadhātu = buddhatā = tathāgata-garbha* is affected by its transformations.

### 4. Bodhisattva/Byang-chub-sems-dpa':

a) *bodhi/byang-chub*: self-refinement-consummate perspicacity.

b) *byang-chub-sems*: the individual's mentality suffused with and directed toward experiencing its self-refinement and consummate perspicacity.

c) *byang-chub-sems-dpa'*: a person who dares (*dpa'*) to direct his mentation to its source that is the whole's self-refinement and consummate perspicacity.

d) In the process-oriented Mahayana view, the bodhisattva (*byang-chub-sems-dpa'*) is the continuous unfolding of the Buddhahood in the world.

- e) The buddha is the evolutionary process-dynamic of light-spreading and darkness-dissipating, while the bodhisattva is the person attuned to and living in accordance with that process-dynamic which is the buddha.

C. The Notions of the Non-Self (*Anatman*) in Buddhism:

1. The ego exists only as the egological construct within the samsaric construct superimposed upon the substance-less phenomenal universe.
2. *Atman* is not an entity but a plenum continuum. *Brahman* is not an entity but timeless-spaceless opening that unceasingly opens.

IX. **The Way:** Within the history of Buddhist thought the idea of a way (Skt. *mārga*, *pratipad*, Tib. *lam*) has occupied a prominent place, not only as something that leads from one place to another, but also, and even more significantly, as being such that its has to be followed.

A. The *Theravāda* (*Sthaviravāda*/*Jōza-bu*/Teaching of the Elders) Conception of the Way:

1. The Way as a process of exploration in which the individual reflects on his own place and movement in his life-world as well as his responsibility toward it.
2. (1) The way of seeing a vision—the stream-enterer; (2) The way of concentrating on and cultivating the vision—(2-a) the once-returner; (2-b) the never-returner; (2-c) the arhant.
3. At each stage there are “fettters that tie a person down.”
  - a) Of all the fettters, conceit (Pali *māna*) occupies an important place, particularly and expressly at the stage of the arhant.
  - b) Whenever a person attempts to break away from the norms and standards of the mass by questioning and by no longer blindly accepting, he becomes dissociated from the herd. At this moment, there is the grave danger that just because of his becoming separate and different from the amorphous mass, he develops a feeling of superiority, puffs himself up in accordance with an overweeningly favorable opinion of himself.
  - c) Conceit is the emotional pollutant that poses as a “vision” (*drsti*), which is restricted to the feeling of belonging to an “inner circle” or the “elect.”

B. The Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha Ways:

1. **Śrāvaka:** A person who not only is willing to listen and to learn but also already patterns his life on a certain ethical code—a self-discipline (*samvara*) that develops and implements its own norms with respect to the autopoietic level on which he happens to be.
2. **Arhant:** A person who abides with the self-discipline pertinent to his social status and is willing to listen and to think—and who can engage thoroughly in creative imagination.
  - a) The arhant is the living embodiment of the śrāvaka ideal.

b) According to the Buddhists, *thinking* (thinking is searching for meaning and depends on a person's critical acumen) is characteristic of an astute and highly intelligent person, while *believing*, in the sense of taking things uncritically, is characteristic of the dull witted.

3. Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* and his autocommentary:

- a) The way of preparation.
- b) The way of linking up (with seeing the world afresh).
- c) The way of seeing (consisting of factors of the awakening process).
- d) The way of cultivation (= the Eightfold Path).

4. The breakthrough that makes a person see "with fresh eyes," that is, see the Four Noble Truths and what they mean in practical living, results in a curbing of the effectiveness of the pollutants and quasi pollutants (negative emotions or affective processes) in their latent operations.

- a) In Buddhist way of thinking, the affective process and the cognitive process are not separate.
- b) Pollutants are affective processes or emotions that tend to undermine a person's self-growth and confine him within the samsaric construct.
- c) Pollutants are wide-ranging such as delusion or hostility, while quasi pollutants are state-specific such as regret or drowsiness.

5. All Buddhist thinkers agreed that the pollutants were the main-spring of a living person's ordinary existence and prevented him from breaking free and transcending himself.

6. Pollutants:	Cognitive/Ideological	Emotional
	Reductionism	Attachment (in the form of desires)
	Extremism	Anger-Belligerence
	Outrageousness	Arrogance or Conceit
	Dogmatism	Low-level Intelligence
	Ritualism	Indecision

7. The climax of this process is awakening (*bodhi*): The awareness of being done with whatever has been obscuring and of the non-recurrence of it is the awakening. "I am the way." This is to be the arhant.
8. The Mahayanists were quick to point out that this way is escapist in the sense that the individual shuts himself off from his world, which he does not comprehend as being a projection of his own mental activities, but naively assumes to be "out there," independent of any person who experiences it.
9. The **Pratyekabuddha** is a person who has had the experience of becoming awake (*buddha*), but who keeps this experience for himself (*pratyeka*) throughout his life.
10. The formation of the idea of **pratītya-samutpāda** (twelve-member interdependent causal nexus) is attributed to pratyekabuddhas, whose twelve members describe the principle of the basic connectedness of dynamic phenomena, breaks with the restriction imposed by the reduction of the Buddhist teaching to the Four Truths, which are geared to the śrāvaka understanding.

(1) **avidyā** (*mumyō*) *stepped-down cognitive intensity or intelligence* which prevents humanity from seeing and understanding the universe and himself aright <—> (2) **samskārah** (*gyō*) *reality-constructing and conditioning operations* <—> (3) **viññāna** (*shiki*) the *original resonance of consciousness* out of which *perceptual operations* emerge as the trend toward judgment <—> (4) **nāma-rūpa** (*myō-shiki*) the *symbolic resonance* out of which *denotations* emerge, comprising feeling, ideas, reality-constructing operations and cognitions, plus the welter of shapes and colors <—> (5) **śhadāyatana** (*riku-nyūsho*) *six cognitive fields*, which include *five sensory fields and one thought-intention field* with objective constituents <—> (6) **sparsha** (*soku*) one's *being-in-touch* or *contact* with one's inner and outer environment <—> (7) **vedanā** (*jyu*) *feelings* or *sensations*, which judge a situation to be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral <—> (8) **trishnā** (*ai*) *thirst* or *craving* for having more of the same if pleasurable and less if unpleasurable <—> (9) **upādāna** (*shu*) *clinging/attachment* arising from the make-belief differentiation between oneself and the rest of the world <—> (10) **bhava** (*wu*) seeing or mistaking one's *life-world* in the phenomenal realm as reality <—> (11) **jāti** (*shō*) *physical birth* into the phenomenal realm <—> (12) **jarā-marana** (*rō-shi*) the process of *physical aging-death*, representing all forms of suffering in the phenomenal realm.

(1) **avidyā** (*mumyō*) ignorance or lack of recognition of four noble truths <—> (2) **samskārah** (*gyō*) formations or impulses, which precede actions <—> (3) **viññāna** (*shiki*) consciousness (in the next life of the individual) <—> (4) **nāma-rūpa** (*myō-shiki*) "name and form," the psychological and physical

factors <—> (5) **shadāyatana** (*riku-nyūsho*) the six bases or object realms of the senses, which present themselves to the being after its birth <—> (6) **sparsha** (*soku*) contact with environment <—> (7) **vedanā** (*jyu*) sensations (out of which develops trishnā) <—> (8) **trishnā** (*ai*) craving <—> (9) **upādāna** (*shu*) clinging (to a womb) <—> (10) **bhava** (*wu*) existence or a new becoming <—> (11) **jāti** (*shō*) birth <—> (12) **jarā-marana** (*rō-shi*) old age and death.

11. Apart from the innovation of *pratītyasamutpāda*, the pratyekabuddha way is in all other aspects and details the same as the śrāvaka way, and both the śrāvaka as an arhant and the pratyekabuddha end up in a final static state characterized as evanescence and quiescence.

## SESSION FOUR

### X. Buddhism as a Transformative Vision for the 21st century:

- A. One of the most important features of Buddhism is its commitment to being a vital and viable spiritual force in offering solutions to the existential problems of human life.
1. Living a life completely free from the egological construct and preoccupations.
    - a) To become “somebody” is the most pervasive egological preoccupation.
    - b) Many people use spiritual pursuit as a means to become “somebody,” usually not overtly but covertly.
    - c) Buddhism shows a way of life beyond being or becoming “somebody.”
      - (1) The question is: Which would you choose to pursue—the transitory and illusory satisfaction of your ego, which inevitably leads to frustration and disappointment, or the eternal and substantial fulfillment of the whole, which naturally arises from your living in accord with the divine ground of being or the dharma?
      - (2) The majority of people pursue the former even in the field of spirituality.
      - (3) You must be completely honest with yourself with respect to which path you are pursuing.
      - (4) Authenticity is born out of this kind of total honesty.
      - (5) Human desires know no limit because they are shadowy reflections of the infinitude; no human desire knows true satisfaction because it attempts to contain that which has no limit within the bound of the finitude, that is the bound of sensorial and egological pleasures.
- B. Buddhist philosophy offers a Philosophy as a Way of Life in which the student learns to think, instead of believing, and in which the student in the process of learning becomes transformed.
- C. Buddhist philosophy, because of its unique process orientation, offers a new way of thinking and knowing that transcends and complements the prevailing reductionism.

1. Buddhist philosophy of life and the universe is based on the super-symmetric logic (*chu*) that transcendently includes the symmetric logic (*ku*—mythological) and the asymmetric logic (*ke*—rationalistic).
- D. Buddhist philosophy is the most advanced and multifaceted system of metapsychology that the world has ever seen, replete with profound and original insights into the nature of mind and mentation.
- E. Buddhism advocates *triratna* (three jewels of *buddha*, *dharma*, and *sangha*) and *trisharana* (threefold refuge in *triratna*):
1. *Buddha*: the central vortex of the evolutionary process of spiritual awakening which is expressed through an individual human being acting as a teacher.
  2. *Dharma*: the central teaching arising from the direct awareness of *dhārmata* that facilitates the process of spiritual awakening.
  3. *Sangha*: the community of students committed to spiritual awakening who gather in harmony and mutual support around the *buddha*.
  4. *Triratna* is the triad of an authentic teacher of truth, an authentic teaching of truth, and a harmonious community of authentic students, which is designed to facilitate authentic spiritual awakening, development, and evolution.
- F. Buddhism and Authentic Spirituality:
1. Authentic spirituality requires authentic spiritual awakening, which is tantamount to transcending the egological construct, concerns, and preoccupations.
    - a) Authentic spirituality requires individual authenticity and a culture of authenticity.
  2. Authentic spiritual awakening: Spiritual evolution from (1) *samsaric*, objectifying, perceptual-conceptual consciousness to (2) *nirvanic*, non-objectifying, introceptual-supraconceptual consciousness to (3) *dharmic*, subjectless-objectless, transeptual-transconceptual consciousness to (4) consciousness as the whole evolutionary thrust for optimization.



## XI. Summary Plus:

### A. Distinguishing Features of Buddhism:

1. A premium value is placed upon immediate experience, especially of spiritual awakening.
2. Uncompromising commitment to dealing with and resolving existential human issues.
3. Māhayāna's and Vajrayāna's dynamic process-thinking orientation stemming from Buddhist philosophers' sustained in-depth probing into the nature and the process of mind or mentation (Skt. *citta*, Tib. *sems*).
4. The truly innovative idea aspect of Buddhist philosophy is its emphasis upon mind or mentation and is the conception of mind-mentation initially as a feedback-feedforward mechanism and then as a self-organizing process of the whole.
  - a) Buddhist philosophy as a whole is a system of hermeneutical metapsychology-*qua*-metaphysics.

### B. Trikāya (*sanjin*): Dharmākāya (*hosshin*)—Sambhogakāya (*hojin*)—Nirmānakāya (*ōjin*):

1. *Dharmakāya* (*chos-sku*): The Ground of Being as the Matrix of Meaning =The Gestalt (wholeness structure) of Meaning that is immediately experienced (*imperienced*) through the innerstanding of the nonduality of the Ground of Being.
  - a) *Dharmakāya* = *Dharmatā* = *Dharmadhātu* = *Buddhatā* = *Tathāgata-garbha*.
2. *Sambhogakāya* (*longs-sku*): The gestaltism (*kāya*) of mutual (*sam*) enjoyment (*bhoga*) = The gestalt that arises with the nirvanic experience or imperience.
  - a) *Sambhogakāya* is the gestalt (wholeness structure) as which Being (*dharmakāya*) autoprojects and in which Being (*dharmakāya*) spatializes or geometrizes itself as a world-spanning horizon of meaning with possible regions of concern and engagement.
3. *Nirmānakāya* (*sprul-sku*): The gestalt in which Being (*(dharmakāya)-sambhogakāya*) expresses itself in guiding images of cultural forecast.

- a) *Nirmānakāya*, the gestalt that expresses Being's ((*dharmakāya*)-*sambhogakāya*)'s creativity, is the creative force in the human individual that makes him develop his cultural norms.

C. **Sangan--**Three Levels of Cognitiveness-Awareness:

1. *Ke = Prajñā* = Intellectual/analytical/critical/discriminative acumen = Asymmetric logic = Representational/objectifying/conceptual thinking = Critical-analytical understanding of the phenomenal (samsaric) universe.
2. *Ku = Jñāna* = Holistic/spiritual acumen = Introceptual meaning-awareness = Symmetric logic = Nonrepresentational/non-objectifying thinking = Holistic-appreciative innerstanding of the noumenal (nirvanic) universe.
3. *Chu = Tathāgata-jñāna-darśana* = Transcendental integration of *ke* and *ku* = Supersymmetric logic = Transcendent-Kosmic innerstanding of Being-as –such or Reality-as-a-whole.
  - a) *Tathāgata* = The process of Being's evolutionary thrust for optimization in the emergence of a new dynamic regime in the manner of a dissipative structure (*buddha*). (B) *Darśana* = Seeing (of Being).

D. : **The Four Noble Truths** (Catvāri ārya-satyāni)

1. *Dúhkha*: Too narrow to breathe; the state of self-enclosure in the samsaric world.
2. *Samúdaya*: Co-location or co-determination with vectorial causal momentum.
3. *Niródha*: Cessation; coming to the end.
4. *Marga*: Way, path; trail (of deer).
  - a) The Way is in the Going.
  - b) *Marga*: A syntropic, evolutionary process of continual unfoldment and generation into higher order.
  - c) *Samúdaya*: An entropic, devolutionary process of repetitive stagnation and degeneration into lower order.

E. **The Eightfold Noble Path** (Ārya-ashtānga-mārga):

1. **Samyag-drsthi: Holistic Vision** that the human being is in truth already and always the *Buddha/Tathāgata* and that *Dharmata/Buddhata* is in reality already and always the ground of being of the human being.
  - a) *Samyak/samyag*: Belonging together, unified, holistic, integral.
  - b) *Drsthi*: Seeing without thingification.
2. **Samyak-samkalpa: Integral Thinking** that evolves from the Holistic Vision that in reality *to be* is *to be a Buddha*.
  - a) *Samkalpa*: To put seams together.
3. **Samyak-vac: Meaningful Speech**, which reflects the Matrix of Meaning that is Dharma and which is creative in the sense of “in the beginning is the word.”
  - a) *Vac*: Speech.
4. **Samyak-karmanta: Right Action**, which is action with concern for the whole, taking other people into consideration and assisting them in the development of their own vision.
  - a) *Karmanta*: Action.
5. **Samyag-ajiva: Balanced Living** of giving and re-giving that supports one’s spiritual practice and development and that effects both spiritual and material abundance.
  - a) *Adjiva*: How to conduct one’s life.
6. **Samyag-vyāyāma: Integral Discipline** that is integral with the rest of one’s life and conducive to one’s wholesome spiritual development.
  - a) *Vyāyāma*: Effort; discipline.
7. **Samyak-smṛti: The Unified State of Self-Remembering and Self-Inspection** that is characterized by a heightened degree of attentiveness and attunement to one’s inner and outer environment.

a) Smṛti: Remembrance-*cum*-inspection; holding the content of one's mind steady so that one can continually learn and evolve more.

8. **Samyak-samadhi**: The **Unified State of Spiritual Awareness** wherein the contents of consciousness fall into a harmonious pattern.

a) Samadhi: 1) the state of being attuned to the call of the whole within; 2) in-depth appraisal of the interiority of one's consciousness; 3) the state of complete concentration on and innerstanding of and absorption in the whole.

#### F. **Pratītya-samutpāda**:

1. The **Pratyekabuddha** is a person who has had the experience of becoming awake (*buddha*), but who keeps this experience for himself (*pratyeka*) throughout his life.
2. The formation of the idea of **pratītya-samutpāda** (interdependent causal nexus) is attributed to pratyekabuddhas, whose twelve members describe the principle of the basic connectedness of dynamic phenomena, breaks with the restriction imposed by the reduction of the Buddhist teaching to the Four Truths, which are geared to the śrāvaka understanding.

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3. Apart from the innovation of *pratītyasamutpāda*, the pratyekabuddha way is in all other aspects and details the same as the śrāvaka way, and both the śrāvaka as an arhant and the pratyekabuddha end up in a final static state characterized as evanescence and quiescence.

### G. Nine/Twelve (Levels of) Spiritual Pursuits or Ways (Yāna): A Vajrayāna View

The Spiritual Pursuits

The Follower's Intellectual Acumen

#### Hīnayāna/ Māhayāna

- |                                   |           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| (1) Śrāvakayāna (Hīnayāna)        |           |
| (2) Pratyekabuddhayāna (Hīnayāna) | Low Level |
| (3) Bodhisattvayāna (Māhayāna)    |           |

#### VAJRAYĀNA

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| (4) Kriyātantra (outer rituals)                   |              |
| (5) Ubhayatantra (between/both Kriyā and Yoga)    | Medium Level |
| (6) Yogatantra (turning in to the psychic forces) |              |

(Mahāyoga/Anuttarayoga)

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| (7) Mahāyoga (experiential activation of inner potential)                 |            |
| (8) Anuyoga (ever deepening appreciation of life)                         | High Level |
| (9) Atiyoga (dynamic complementarity of <i>shes-rab</i> and <i>thab</i> ) |            |

(rDzogs-chen/Ati)

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| (10) sems-sde     |                  |
| (11) klong-sde    | Super-high Level |
| (12) man-ngag-sde |                  |

Mahāyoga is like the foundation of all that is;  
 Anuyoga is like the way that all that is follows; and  
 Atiyoga is like the goal that all that is reaches.

--*rDo-rje sems-dpa' snying-gi-me-long*

1. Vajrayāna is the post-Mahayānic, non-reductionistic, holistic pursuit of the indestructible, ever dynamic core of Being.

2. The goal of which the rDzogs-chen thinkers speak is the whole, Being's pure potential, a singularity, which is forever unfolding in renewed meaningfulness.
  - a) The topic of the Atiyoga or rDzogs-chen is the transmutation of mentation into the sheer lucency of pure experience as one's resonance with the whole—the linking backward to the primal origin as a new beginning.
  
3. In Mahāyoga, in the developing phase in the individual's attempt to regain the lost unity of the human and the divine, appropriate activity (*thab*) as a means to rouse the latent potential and appreciative discernment (*shes-rab*) as a growing sense of wholeness form a complementary evolutionary fluidic dynamic.
  - a) Appropriate activity, the activation of the inner potential (*thab*), is the developing phase that leads to a new dynamic regime in a human being's microscopic reality.
  - b) Appreciative discernment (*shes-rab*) is a holistically inspiring and deeply felt presence and operation that links the experiencer with the whole, the macroscopic reality.
  - c) This endeavor is experienced as a process of bringing one's ordinary reality into union with one's higher-order reality. From the perspective of the fully matured individual, those realities are experienced as having always remained inseparable.
  
4. The transformation or symbolic re-creation of ourselves and our world starts from our embodiedness and enworldedness, which highlights the ineluctable presence of the person's body as animated by spirit or consciousness, its organizing principle.
  - a) My body is never an object but always a mode of experiencing myself and ordering my world.
  - b) Thus, my body is a formulated and formative energy, which in mythological language is a form of deiform nature (*lha*) with a distinct gestalt quality (*sku*).

XII. *The Lotus Sutra (Saddhāmapundarīka-sūtra)*:

- A. The concept of *upāya*— The Buddha’s skillful means or expertise.
- B. *Saddharmapudārīka-sūtra* is, along with such scriptures as *Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra (The Nirvana Sutra)* and *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra (The Garland Sūtra)*, one of the most advanced Buddhist scriptures.
- C. *Saddharmapudārīka-sūtra* unmistakably speak about the authentic, atemporal self that is distinct from the impermanent, non-substantial egological self.
- D. The egological self is *sunyata* in the sense of non-substantial, while the authentic self is *sunyata* in the sense of the open dynamics of Being with the creative evolutionary thrust for optimization.
- E. Regarding the center of gravity of *Kuon-honbutsu*, the eternally abiding Buddha, in the scheme of *trikāya*, there have been three different theories: Hōun, Chiki, and Nichiren.

XIII. Summary