

Appendix I

On the practice prescribed in The Scripture on the Resolve of Meditation in Which the Buddhas All Stand Up Before One (Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra, 般舟三昧經) from Volume Two of ‘The Greatness of Introspection With Stillness of Mind’ (Móhē Zhǐguān, 摩訶止觀) by Zhìyǐ (智顗)

First there is Zhìyǐ’s general introductory description of Buddhist meditation practice:

Practicing the Great Practice

To encourage progress in the four ways to attain meditative resolve (samādhi, 三昧) and entry into the ranks of the bodhisattvas, we teach about introspection with stillness of mind (śamatha vipaśyanā, 止觀). Those that aspire to the most sublime rank will not climb the ladder without practice. By skillfully understanding how to churn and skim milk, ghee may ultimately be attained. On this, The Lotus Sūtra says:

"And I see the Buddha's children cultivating various practices because they seek the path of enlightenment."

There are many methods of practice. To summarize them, we will speak of four kinds:

1. Always seated
2. Always walking
3. Half seated, half walking
4. Beyond being seated or walking

Generally called ‘samādhis’, they control and straighten out one’s concentration of resolve. On this, Nāgārjuna’s Commentary About the Longer Scripture on the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment (Mahā Prajñā Pāramita Upadeśa, 大智度論) says:

"The skillful mind abides in a single place without stirring. This is what is called ‘the resolve of meditation’ (samādhi, 三昧)."

The sphere of purpose (dharma dhātu, 法界), also called the transcendental nature of life’s purpose and the spiritual realm, is this single place. With proper meditation one is able to abide here without stirring. Introspective meditation on the mind depends upon connecting with these four practices to control and straighten out one’s mental concentration and, because of this, they are called ‘resolves of meditation’ (samādhis, 三昧).

(Now we skip the part on Zhìyǐ’s practice of ‘always being seated’ and continue at the part on the practice of ‘always walking’, which he describes as ‘the resolve of meditation in which the Buddhas all stand before one (pratyutpanna samādhi, 般舟三昧). This closely follows the words of the scripture on this practice found in Appendix H.)

The Resolve of Meditation (samādhi, 三昧) attained while Always Walking

- A. First there is a part on describing the methodology
- B. Then there is a part on encouraging its cultivation

A. The Methodology is in three parts:

1. The body, that which is allowed and that which is prohibited
2. The mouth, that which is spoken and that which is silent
3. The thinking mind, that which is stillness of mind and that which is introspection

This resolve of meditation appears in the Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra (般舟三昧經), which is translated as The Scripture on the Resolve of Meditation in Which All the Buddhas Are Standing Up Before One.

There are three meanings to ‘The Buddhas Standing Up’. It is a reference to:

- a. The Buddhas' majestic power of grace (prabhāva bala, 威力)
- b. The power of the Buddha’s resolve (samādhi bala, 三昧力) (from their original vows)
- c. The power attained through the practitioner's own merits and virtues (puṇya bala, 功德力)

In this meditation, one is able to see all the Buddhas in the ten directions of space standing up before one. One sees as many of them as a person with sharp eyes would see stars on a clear night. Because of this, it is called 'the resolve of meditation in which all the Buddhas stand up before one' (pratyutpanna samādhi, 般舟三昧).

A stanza of verse in Vasubandhu's Commentary About The Scripture on the Ten Levels of Grounding in the Transcendental Nature of Life's Purpose (Daśa Bhūmika Vibhāṣa, 十住毘婆沙論) says:

"The levels of grounding in mental resolve (samādhi bhūmi, 三昧住)

Are distinguished as being little, medium, and much.

These are the various aspects

That need to be discussed."

In the different levels, some are in the first stage of meditation (prathama dhyānam, 初禪) while others are in the second, third, or fourth, or somewhere in between these four levels. Upon inspiring the power of diligent effort, one is able to produce mental resolve, and so one is said to become grounded in it.

* The first stage of meditation has little.

* The second has a medium amount.

* The third and fourth have much.

Some remain grounded in this resolve for a short time, and there is said to be little.

Some see just a little of this world, and there is said to be little resolve.

Some see just a little of the Buddha and there is said to be little resolve.

Becoming grounded in a medium or large amount of resolve is also like this.

1. The body, that which is allowed and that which is prohibited:

The body is always allowed to walk. When one walks, one avoids evil acquaintances as well as foolish people, relatives, and those from one's hometown. One always remains in solitude and does not hope for or seek favors from other people. If one is always begging for one's own food, one does not accept any special favors or invitations. One beautifully adorns the place of enlightenment (bodhi maṇḍa, 道場) and furnishes it with many offerings, including incense, ritual foods and sweet fruits. One cleans and bathes one's body and changes into clean clothing before entering into it. One focuses only on practicing circumambulation (clockwise) around this altar of enlightenment for a period of ninety days. To do so, it will be necessary to have three kinds of spiritual friends (kalyāṇa mitra, 善知識):

- a. *A teacher* (ācārya, 教授) skilled in the inner and outer disciplines who is able to help reveal and eliminate one's problems and obstacles in attaining this resolve of meditation; In the place where one learns of this resolve of meditation, one regards one's teacher like one looks upon the Blessed One. One does not harbor any feelings of anger or resentment towards one's teacher, and one does not critically assess the teacher's strengths and weaknesses. One should be willing to cut off one's very skin and flesh as an offering to one's teacher, much less make any other sacrifice. One receives one's practice from one's teacher like a servant obeying the head of the household. If one bears any malice towards one's teacher, the resolve of meditation sought will be extremely difficult to attain.
- b. *A provider, or sponsor* (dānapati, 外護) protecting one from the outside world, one who is like a mother serving her child.
- c. *Those sharing the same practice* (sāhacarya, 同行), friends who will walk together with one through even the most dangerous place.

It is necessary that during this ninety-day period one shoulder one's vow that, even if one's flesh and bones wither and rot, one will not cease training in this resolve of meditation until one attains its realization.

"Raising up a great faith that no one can break,

Arousing a great diligence that no one can match,

One will enter into a transcendental knowledge that no one can surpass."

One must always obey and serve a skillful teacher.

- Until the end of the three months, one will not have a mind of worldly thoughts and desires for even as long as it takes to snap one's fingers.
- Until the end of the three months, one will not have to lie down and rest for even as long as it takes one to snap one's fingers.
- Until the end of the three months, one will walk without having to rest, except to sit down and eat, or to relieve or clean oneself. When doing so, one leaves the sanctuary to the left and returns back into it from the right.

One also teaches of the scripture to people without any hope or expectation of attaining clothing, food or any other form of compensation from them.

On this, there is another stanza of verse in Vasubandhu's Commentary About The Scripture on the Ten Levels of Grounding in the Transcendental Nature of Life's Purpose (Daśa Bhūmika Vibhāṣa, 十住毘婆沙論) that says:

"Being intimately close to good spiritual acquaintances,
Having diligence and being without laziness or negligence,
Having a transcendental knowledge and discernment that is firm and strong, and
Having a power of faith that is never shaken or led astray."

2. The mouth, that which is spoken and that which is silent:

- For ninety days the body is always walking without rest.
- For ninety days the mouth is always chanting the name of Amita Buddha without rest.
- For ninety days, the mind is always thinking about Amita Buddha without rest.
- Sometimes invocation and remembrance are simultaneous.
- Sometimes there is remembrance first and invocation afterwards.
- Sometimes there is invocation first and remembrance afterwards.

These aspects of invocation (chanting) and remembrance (thinking) follow each other continuously without any time for rest.

When one invokes the name of the Buddha of Infinite Life & Light (Amita), the merits and virtues attained are equivalent to those from invoking the names of all the Buddhas of the ten directions. However, one only uses the name of Amita as the focus of this practice. To indicate the essence of this,

In step after step,
Word after word and
Thought after thought,
One only abides in Amita Buddha.

3. The thinking mind, and introspection with stillness of mind:

One thinks of the Enlightened Being of Infinite Life & Light (Amita Buddha, 阿彌陀佛) who is found hundreds, thousands and millions of Buddha-lands to the west, where there are bejeweled grounds, pools, and trees. There is a bejeweled assembly hall here where this Buddha is seated among the bodhisattvas, teaching the scripture. For a period of three months, one is always 'keeping the Buddha in mind'. How does one do so? One thinks of the thirty-two auspicious signs of the Buddha, looking at them one after another in reverse order, from the mark of the thousand-spoked wheel on the soles of the feet up to the fleshy protuberance on the crown of the head. Then one looks at them in proper order, from the sign on the crown down to the thousand-spoked wheel on the soles of the feet. In doing so, one thinks to oneself 'may I also attain these auspicious signs'.

The first meditation - on the nature of emptiness (śūnyatā, 空):

One thinks to oneself, 'must I attain enlightenment through my mind or my body?'

The Buddha did not use the mind or the body to attain enlightenment.

- One does not use the mind to attain the Buddha's body, and
- One does not use the body to attain the Buddha's mind.

How is this so? The Buddha is not of the body or of the mind. Therefore, one does not use the body or the mind to attain perfect enlightenment (sambodhi, 三菩提). With the Buddha's physical form already having been transcended, the Buddha's consciousness will be transcended as well, with consciousness (vijñāna, 識) being transformed into transcendental knowledge (jñāna, 智)

The Buddha taught the truth of transcendence (nirodha satya, 滅諦). The foolish do not understand it, but those with transcendental knowledge understand it thoroughly.

- One does not use the body or the mouth to attain enlightenment, and
- One does not use knowledge or discernment to attain enlightenment.

How is this so? In the nature of emptiness, one is searching for a knowledge that cannot be attained and one is seeking to understand the identity of something that cannot be known. And there is really nothing to be visualized, because emptiness as the source of all purposes does not really exist as anything (that can be perceived as a mental image). Furthermore, the idea of this source itself having any existential nature must also be dismissed and transcended.

The second meditation - on mental constructs with a hypothetical existence (prajñaptisat, 假有):

- a. This meditation is like seeing the seven kinds of treasure, one's family or all of one's closest friends in a dream and then rejoicing. After awakening and remembering the dream, one does not know what place one was in. Like this, one keeps the Buddha in mind.
- b. And it is like the man (in the scripture) who heard of the courtesan in Śrāvastī named 'Beautiful Lady' (Sumanā, 須門). Upon dreaming of making love to her that night, his mind rejoiced. After awakening and remembering his dream, he realized 'she did not really come to me and I did not really get to her'. However the pleasurable thought of their rendezvous remained in his mind nevertheless. One should understand that keeping the Buddha in mind is also like this.
- c. And it is also like the hungry and thirsty person who (in the scripture) walked through a great desert. Upon falling asleep, he dreamt of attaining some delicious food. Upon awakening with an empty stomach, he reflected about how everything that exists is like a dream. One should also understand that keeping the Buddha in mind is like this as well.

When keeping the Buddha in mind in countless thought after thought like this, one must never stop to rest. In keeping the Buddha in mind like this one will be reborn in the land of the Buddha of Infinite Life & Light. This is called keeping the Buddha in mind (buddha anusmṛti, 念佛) through 'mental images' (nimitta, 相). The following analogies are also found in this scripture:

- d. It is like a person holding a precious jewel of beryl, with its blue color being reflected in everything inside and outside of it.
- e. It is like a monk that contemplates the white bones of a skeleton, with thoughts of various different colors rising up in his mind from his meditation on them. These colors do not really rise up from outside, nor do they really exist in the bones. They are all really just imagined in his mind.
- f. It is like an image in a mirror. It does not come from outside the mirror and it does not arise from inside of it. Because the mirror is clean, one sees the image's shape. Like this, with the visible form that is seen by the practitioner being pure, that which exists in the mind will be pure.

In properly desiring to see the Buddha, one will see the Buddha. Upon seeing the Buddha, one will ask the Buddha to teach about the true nature of life's purpose (dharma, 法). Upon asking the Buddha about this, one will be rewarded with hearing the scriptures and there will be great rejoicing.

The third meditation - on the dialectical principle of the middle way (madhyamā pratipad, 中道):

One thinks to oneself 'since I do not really go anywhere to see the Buddha, where does the Buddha that I see come from? I see that which I keep in mind. It is my mind that creates the Buddha, and it is through my visualization and remembrance that I see the mind of the Buddha. The mind of the Buddha is really my own mind seeing the Buddha. The mind does not really know or see any other Buddha per se.'

- With the mind making mental associations there are delusions.
 - Only through transcending them is there the attainment of real spiritual freedom (nirvāṇa, 涅槃).
- It is really impossible to reveal this in words, as they are all made of mental associations. Having established that there are such mental associations (saṃjñā, 想), they are understood to be endowed with the nature of emptiness and so be without a real existential nature of their own.

There are two stanzas of verse in The Scripture on the Resolve of Meditation in Which the Buddhas All Stand Up Before One (Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra, 般舟三昧經) on this:

The first stanza is from chapter two 'On Practice' (Caryā, 行)

"Those who are thinking are not recognizing the mind.

In having thoughts, one does not see the mind.

With the mind raising up mental associations (saṃjñā, 想), there are delusions.

Only through transcending these mental associations (asaṃjñā, 無想) is there spiritual freedom (nirvāṇa, 涅槃)

The second stanza is from chapter five 'On Non-Attachment' (Asaṅgatā, 無著)

"The Buddhas have attained emancipation from the thoughts of the mind.

The mind so untainted is clear and pure (of affliction).

With the five paths in the sphere of desire being so purified, they do not take on visible form.

In understanding this one attains a great awakening."

This is called the ‘seal of proof from the Buddhas’ (buddha mudrā, 佛印). Without any greed, attachments, prejudices or making of mental associations, all existence and desire is transcended. With nothing rising up, nothing will perish. This seal of proof is the source and very essence of the path of spiritual awakening. Those on the lesser vehicle of attaining spiritual freedom from affliction on an individual level are unable to refute it, much less the devils that are found in the realm of mortality. Vasubandhu’s Commentary About The Scripture on the Ten Levels of Grounding in the Transcendental Nature of Life’s Purpose (Daśa Bhūmika Vibhāṣa, 十住毘婆沙論) clarifies that bodhisattvas with a newly inspired mind:

- a. First, they keep the Buddha in mind in terms of the physical signs of the Buddha, their existence in this world, what causes them to arise, the fruits of their enlightenment and their practical functionality. This way, they attain the lower powers (prabhāva, 勢力) of spiritual resolve (samādhi, 定).
- b. Next, they keep the Buddha in mind in terms of attaining the Buddha’s forty unique virtues.⁶³ This way, they attain the intermediate powers of spiritual resolve.
- c. Finally, they keep the Buddha in mind in terms of the transcendental vows that are the essential nature of the Buddha’s spiritual life (dharma kāya, 法身) and attain the higher powers of spiritual resolve.

Yet they have no attachments to any thoughts about either the Buddha’s physical life or the transcendental nature of the Buddha’s spiritual life. In the twenty-fifth chapter of Vasubandhu’s Commentary ‘On Aids to Attaining the Resolve of Meditation Through Keeping the Buddha in Mind’ (助念佛三昧), there is a stanza of verse about this saying:

"Not greedily attached to the physical life (of this world),
Nor attached to the spiritual life (beyond it),
They skillfully understand all purposes
Always endowed with a serene stillness that is like empty space."

B. *Encouraging its cultivation*

If people aspire to attain a transcendental knowledge and discernment that is vast like the ocean so that one no longer needs to have a teacher or resort to the powers of spiritual penetration acquired through seated meditation, and if they aspire to see all of the Buddhas, hear them teach, and be able to faithfully accept and retain all of their teachings, the resolve of meditation attained while ‘always walking’ has the highest merits of all. This resolve of meditation (samādhi, 定) is the mother, the eye, and the father of the Buddhas. It is the great compassionate mother of enlightenment that neither arises nor perishes. All the enlightened beings that have descended into this world (tathāgatas, 如來) were born from this mother and father. If one smashed a million worlds with all their grasses and trees into atoms, and each atom became a Land of a Buddha, and all of these lands were filled with treasures to be used as alms, one’s blessings would be very great. But it would not be like hearing about this resolve of meditation and being without alarm or fear, much less faithfully accepting and retaining it, reciting it over and over and teaching about it to other people. There will be even more blessings if one cultivates it and learns of it with a perfectly resolute mind. But all of these are like a field that only indirectly produces the cow’s milk. How much greater still is being able to actually attain this resolve of meditation. Only then is it infinitely infinite. Vasubandhu’s Commentary also says the following on this:

"In the latter days when the world is afire, there will be traitors and rebels, fierce poisonous dragons and beasts, and a multitude of diseases that will assail people, but they will be of no avail. Those practicing this resolve of meditation will always be protected, kept in mind, and praised by the Buddhas, the gods, the dragons and the rest of the eight groups of supernatural beings who will all desire to come and see them. Those who hear about this resolve of meditation will acquire the four orders of merit that come from joyful acceptance (anumodanīya, 隨喜) of all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the past, present and future.⁹⁸ In actually putting this resolve of meditation into practice (through the actual work of delivering sentient beings), they will even far surpass these four orders of merit."

If they do not cultivate it like this, they will lose a measureless and priceless treasure, and those among humanity and heaven will fall into torment and grief. It would be like a person holding a bundle of sandalwood who was unable or unwilling to smell it, or a fool who had a gem that would grant any wish (cintāmaṇi, 如意珠) but traded it away for a mere ox. (these comparisons are found in chapter five ‘On Similes’ (Upamā, 譬喻) of The Scripture on the Resolve of Meditation in Which the Buddhas All Stand Up Before One).