

The Concept of Education in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism

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ABSTRACT

Education in Buddhism as a subject on its own has hitherto attracted the attention of very few scholars. Reference is made to some pertinent remarks on the topic by Ananda W.P. Guruge, which then are related to education in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism. An explanation is given of what is meant by Indo-Tibetan Buddhism in this paper and of what in Sanskrit and Tibetan corresponds to 'education'.

As chief doctrinal innovations in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism are briefly discussed the Bodhisattva ideal and the concept of 'skill in means', being the preconditions for the development of Indo-Tibetan education. With the help of original Indian Buddhist sources, viz. the canonical description of the 'five approaches to the ultimate emancipation of mind', an attempt is made to give an idea of the somewhat unique education systems of Tibetan Buddhism. Alongside the discussion of the 'five approaches or enterings' the central methodology of Dharma reception and transmission is referred to, being comprised of two kinds of hermeneutic possibilities pertaining to what has been called 'gradualism and subitism'. These two concepts could well serve as a solid foundation for a comprehensive Buddhist philosophy of education.

To the best of my knowledge, Ananda W.P. Guruge is the scholar who has to his credit most of the publications dealing with education in Buddhism. In numerous books on Buddhism, education is rather cursorily treated in the context of religious culture, for instance, or of Buddhist modernism. Guruge has explored education in Buddhism as a discipline per se and has lucidly written about the topic. Twice he stresses the need for further research:

The information available on Buddhist education – both past and present – is extremely limited. A few attempts have been made to unravel a Buddhist philosophy of education with modest results as a comprehensive analysis of the literature has not been undertaken... Of equal significance is to examine whether concepts, modalities, methods and practical approaches developed by Buddhist education are, in any way, relevant to current efforts in educational development.¹

The paucity of information on Buddhist education is corroborated by Guruge's bibliography given at the end of his substantial article on the subject in hand in the *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*.² As for the desirability "to examine whether concepts, modalities, methods and practical approaches developed by Buddhist education" are relevant in the present-day world, Guruge has himself given an answer in his paper "The Impact of Buddhism on Education and Social Equality in South Asian Cultures",³ summing up his findings thus:

Once again, Buddhism provides much-needed inspiration... continues to make a significant contribution to the universalization of knowledge and education.⁴

In general, what Guruge writes about education in Buddhism as a whole, also applies to education in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Information on education by itself is

marginal, and the task to treat this theme is, indeed, a formidable one because Indo-Tibetan Buddhism denotes the whole gamut of Hīnayāna (here used in a historical sense, not pejoratively), Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna developments. Even the above-mentioned conclusion drawn by Guruge that Buddhism “continues to make a significant contribution to the universalization of knowledge and education”, I think, also holds true of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism in spite of – or one may even say on account of – the purely secular and Communist education system in Tibet since the foundation of the “Autonomous Region of Xizang”. Despite immense woeful upheavals due to differences in ideology and Weltanschauung and the well-known political developments, it can be maintained that the spread of Tibetan Buddhist thought and culture in the world by means of teaching, literature, etc. is unprecedented in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. The persisting need, as emphasized by Guruge, “to unravel a Buddhist philosophy of education” has, nevertheless, also to be seen with regard to Indo-Tibetan Buddhism. In view of the extreme complexity of the Central Asian Hīna-, Mahā- and Vajrayāna traditions I cannot help confining myself to only a few aspects of a vast topic badly in need of systematic treatment. Compensating, as it were, for being in many respects wanting in exhaustiveness, I shall try to draw the attention to some original sources which may hopefully prove quintessential for our understanding of the Concept of Education in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism.

Indo-Tibetan Buddhism here indicates that, for want of space and time, the present topic has to be limited to that formative phase in the history of Tibetan Buddhism when the Tibetans had direct contact with the living tradition of Indian Buddhism, viz. from the time when a script was introduced for their language in the first half of the 7th cent. AC (a readaptation to the needs of the Tibetan language of a northern form of the Indian Gupta alphabet)⁵ until the last Tibetan monk scholar had to leave the famous Buddhist university of Nālandā, fleeing from the Muslim conquerors in about 1236.⁶ Now the question arises as to how Indian and Tibetan Buddhists of the said period understood education, viz. processes of teaching, training and learning. As for Sanskrit and Tibetan equivalents of ‘education’, in modern dictionaries is found a variety of words to choose from. For the present discussion, however, the Sanskrit word *śikṣā*, *bslab* or *bslab pa* in Tibetan (=學), may be taken as an equivalent to ‘education’. The etymology of this Sanskrit term is, indeed, very informative: It derives from √ *śikṣ* which – being a desiderative of √ *śak* (to be able, to be competent) – for example, means ‘to wish to be competent, attempt, undertake, learn, study, practice, wish to bestow, offer one’s service, wish to help, befriend;’⁷ *śikṣā*, *inter alia* denoting ‘learning, study, knowledge, skill, teaching, training, instruction, helping, imparting (cf. also the meaning ‘the science teaching the proper articulation and pronunciation of Vedic texts’)’ can well be seen as covering the standard meaning of education.

Before concentrating on original sources that may be helpful for us in approaching the present topic, I would like to forestall a possible objection. The examples to be cited for our discussion are all part and parcel of Buddhist soteriology, apparently standing in stark contrast to the requirements of today in terms of non-denominational, intercultural global education. Appositely, the universality of Buddhism has already been highlighted by Guruge as follows:

An overriding factor which conditioned the Buddhist attitude to teaching, learning and research has been the intellectual liberalism which the Buddha expounded: his injunction to his disciples, as pointed

out earlier, was to eschew tradition and dogmatism and to submit even his own teachings to critical examination. From a social point of view, he upheld the capacity of every individual irrespective of caste, class, creed or sex, to attain the highest intellectual and spiritual goals of his Path of Deliverance by means of application and perseverance. From an intellectual standpoint, he denounced both conservatism and the tacit acceptance of an idea on someone else's authority.⁸

In a compendium, which is one of the most authoritative texts of all the schools of Tibetan Buddhism, and of the dGe-lugs-pas in particular, there is a quotation from a truly remarkable scripture bearing testimony to the universality just mentioned without, however, involving inclusivism:

Whatever speech is excellent, Maitreya, is Buddha word.⁹

As for soteriology, in a paper I pointed out the interesting definition of it provided by English lexicographers: a) 'doctrine of salvation' and b) 'the science of hygiene'.¹⁰ As far as Buddhist doctrine is concerned, there is no dearth of analogies, drawn in the scriptures, between doctrinal points and medicine, and if one wishes to find out a genuine affinity between Buddhism and science, it certainly is the affinity between Buddhism and medicine.¹¹ *Dharma*, in Tibetan *chos*, as soteriology involves hygiene, 'outer hygiene', presupposing 'inner hygiene' and *vice versa*.¹² Similarly, there is the perennial universal demand for health education starting right from childhood and pertinent during the whole of one's lifetime; and it goes without saying that the greatest store is to be set by universal standards of medical education. What counts both in the *Dharma* soteriology and in medical science are not dogmas and theories, but verifiable positive results. A physician is only considered successful, if he or she insist on adequate prevention of disease, administer effective medicine and give proper medical care to effect a cure and thereby bring about a full recovery. Prerequisite for all this are both general and specialist education. Likewise, since in Buddhism the root cause of all suffering is ignorance or spiritual blindness, from the very beginning of its history education has been playing the key role in order to overcome ignorance and realize ultimate freedom from suffering. It can be maintained that also Indo-Tibetan Buddhism has been significantly contributing to the 'universalization of knowledge and education', as has to be shown by discussing in brief the salient features of doctrinal innovation and its consequences.

In the *Mahāvvyutpatti*, the magnificent encyclopaedia of Buddhist technical terms, stock expressions and categories compiled by Indian and Tibetan scholars in the 9th century AC, traditional education is divided into three main categories (*trīṇi śikṣāni*, Tib. *bslab pa gsum*):

a) *adhiśīlam*, 'training in higher morality', b) *adhicittam*, 'training in higher thought', and c) *adhiprajñā*, 'training in higher wisdom'.¹³

In all the above-named three *yānas*, 'vehicles' or main Buddhist traditions, 'training in higher morality' is the indispensable basis for the other kinds of training without which the chief goal of all education cannot be achieved. Higher education without the right motivation, according to all Buddhist schools, will prove dangerous in the extreme to the detriment of oneself and others. In spite of this unanimity, in the Mahāyāna schools the understanding of *adhiśīla*, although in a number of texts practically identical to that of the Hīnayāna schools, differs in many other scriptures from that of the latter in a point that is crucial for monasticism. In the

Vinayaviniścaya-Upāliparipṛcchā, for example, in the context of the Bodhisattva ideal – in contrast to the Arhat ideal of the Hīnayāna – in one’s moral training, desire, provided other appropriate means to benefit sentient beings are not available, is not necessarily considered an obstacle. If a Bodhisattva blindly gives himself up to indulging in sensual pleasures, this is, of course, reprehensible. On the other hand, if in his Bodhisattva career he is sufficiently mature and accomplished, so the text says, desire is just a negligible flaw or may even be regarded as blameless. Moreover, in the Vajrayāna tradition desire counts as one of the decisive means to attain final emancipation with the proviso that those who employ this means are adepts in the truest sense of the word.¹⁴ Given these facts, it can be said that to some extent, although not altogether, the clear-cut distinction between Buddhist monasticism and lay life in terms of theory and practice was blurred. This state of affairs induced, as it were, a wholesome, creative tension instrumental in enriching the scholastic education systems by discovering a new catholicity that was to produce a new kind of encyclopaedic education. Apart from the Bodhisattva ideal, the most important doctrinal innovation in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism – although there are scholars who tend to speak of ‘only old wine in new bottles’ – is the cultivation of ‘skill in means’ (*upāyakauśalya*, Tib. *thabs la mkhas pa*) to achieve ‘one’s own and all sentient beings’ final emancipation’. Doctrinal innovation was the reaction, *inter alia*, to manifold Brahmanical and Jaina challenges during the centuries and later on to initially very strong opposition when Buddhism was introduced in the Land of Snows. In Early Buddhism, solely the Sangha as ‘a learning society’ was in charge of preserving and propagating the teachings of the historical Buddha.¹⁵ In due course of time, the need was felt to increase the ‘early missionary exercise’ on the part of the Sangha by having recourse to a *Bodhisattvayāna* so as to meet the ever growing demands on the Buddhists to react sensibly to a constantly and rapidly changing society. Modifications with regard to ‘training in higher morality’ seemed practical, and also in the realms of ‘training in higher thought and wisdom’ skillful means, methodologies, were propounded and developed with considerable ingenuity. Concerning subject matter and the incommunicable quintessence of higher thought culminating in wisdom and penetrating insight, innovations did, in fact, not make any sense. The doctrinal innovations of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, as mentioned, gave an enormous impetus to Buddhist education. Its height has been aptly described by Guruge and Joshi.¹⁶ In the following, I shall try to characterize as succinctly as possible the ancient Tibetan system of religious education, including, all the same, in the context of a Bodhisattva’s skill in means, much of secular education that has become universally relevant. For this purpose, I shall make use of an ancient classification found in both the Pāli Canon and in the Buddhist *śāstra* literature in Sanskrit which, well-known to the Tibetans, appears to have scarcely been taken note of by modern scholars.

The ancient classification in question, which I think immensely useful for throwing light on what has been called above ‘a new kind of encyclopaedic education’, are the five *vimuttāyatana* (Sanskrit *vimuktyāyatana*, Tib. *rnam par grol ba’i skye mched*), explained in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (*Pañcakanipāta*), in the *Dīgha Nikāya* (*Saṅgīti-*, *Dasuttara-Suttanta*) and in their Sanskrit equivalents¹⁷ in the form of a long quotation found in Yaśomitra’s *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, commenting on a short reference to the five in Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. In a modern English translation of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, from which I am about to quote, *vimuttāyatana* is translated as ‘bases of deliverance’, which corresponds to Xuanzang’s translation of

the term (解脫處), occurring in Vasubandhu's opus; Paramārtha's rendering of the same (解脫入) is worthwhile mentioning here, because it underlines the dynamics in the learning processes: 'enterings into deliverance', based on $\bar{a}+\sqrt{yat}$, 'to strive, endeavour, arrive, reach'. In a new translation of the *Dīgha Nikāya* it reads:

Five bases of deliverance: Here, (a) the Teacher or a respected fellow-disciple teaches a monk Dhamma. And as he receives the teaching, he gains a grasp of both the spirit and the letter of the teaching. At this, joy arises in him, and from this joy, delight; and by this delight his senses are calmed, he feels happiness as a result, and with this happiness his mind is established; (b) he has not heard it thus, but in the course of teaching Dhamma to others he has learnt it by heart as he has heard it; or (c) as he is chanting the Dhamma...; or (d) ... when he applies his mind to the Dhamma, thinks and ponders over it and concentrates his attention on it; or (e) when he has properly grasped some concentration-sign, has well considered it, applied his mind to it. At this, joy arises in him, and from this joy, delight; and by this delight his senses are calmed, he feels happiness as a result, and with this happiness his mind is established.¹⁸

Unless the commentary to this text is consulted, from the text itself it cannot be gleaned that by deliverance should be understood realization of Arhatship. The parallel explanation of the 'five enterings into deliverance' in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* and in Yaśomitra's citation is more detailed and thus makes it crystal clear that all the five ways lead to final emancipation,¹⁹ viz. a) listening, b) teaching, c) reciting, d) thinking analytically, and e) sitting in meditation and working on a meditation-object. According to the passage in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, a monk who relies on any of the 'five bases or enterings' vigilantly and resolutely, finds peace of mind; with him the malign influences come to an end and unsurpassed spiritual success is achieved. In Yaśomitra's quotation it, furthermore, says that a monk or nun, relying on any of the five and whose minds are concentrated, see and know in accordance with fact, become weary of *samsāra* and realize desirelessness and release. By dint of their recollection and concentration the malign influences are overcome and Nirvāṇa is realized. So here in Yaśomitra we evidently find references to what in the Pāli exegetical literature is described as the various stages of purity and types of insight-knowledge leading to the realization of *mārga* and *phala* of the *āryapudgalas*. As far as I know, the only scholar who wrote a long article (actually a *dhammadesanā*) in Thai on the 'five enterings into deliverance' is Bhikkhu Buddhādāsa, one of the renowned Ācariyas of Thailand, also well-known to scholars of comparative religion. In his booklet,²⁰ he states that in Theravāda Buddhism the topic has not been given any real attention and that this neglect is, perhaps, due to the widespread opinion that only by sitting in meditation and with the help of meditation-objects – in opposition to study, teaching, chanting and analytical thought – ultimate release can be obtained. To some extent in Tibetan Buddhism, too, we find a strong inclination towards ascetic life and occasionally a bias against erudition. Thus, for instance, Tibet's great poet-saint Mi la ras pa²¹ scoffs at some learned monk scholars. This, however, should be taken *cum grano salis*; with accomplished masters, such a 'bias' can be seen as salvific means to counteract vanity, sanctimoniousness, or to encourage genuine Dharma practice.

Nonetheless, bearing in mind the Bodhisattva ideal, promulgated by the Mahāyāna schools, and the concept of 'skill in means', occupying a key position in the

Mahāyāna and being of paramount importance in the Vajrayāna, it seems reasonable to assume all the five ways, equally leading to enlightenment and emancipation, formed the classical structure of the education systems in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism. As for the first way, viz. listening to a Dharma exposition, it is not difficult to envisage that listening – in ancient India another word for studying – with onepointedness of mind can culminate in Arhatship, for the Tripiṭaka is full of accounts, according to which listeners – and extraordinary listeners at that – realized the various stages of stream-entry, the fruition of once-return, never-return, and of Arhatship. It is, of course, possible to explain experiences of enlightenment, triggered off by a profound Dharma exposition given by a charismatic personality, as being the final outcome of long-standing, previous Dharma studies **and** practice. In the framework of the application of efficient pedagogic means, however, it is also feasible to associate ‘enlightenment through listening’ and, likewise, through the other four ‘enterings into deliverance’, with instantaneous realization. With the Tibetans, who exposed themselves not only to Indian, but as well to Chinese forms of Buddhism, notably Chan Buddhism, these two kinds of hermeneutic possibilities developed into two strands of reception and transmission of Buddhism, called by Seyfort Rugg ‘gradualism and subitism’.²² Already in Early Buddhism we find ample evidence for gradualist Dharma exposition. According to tradition, the historical Buddha himself coined the term *ānupubbikathā*, ‘gradual instructions’ bearing on “generosity, on morality and on heaven, showing the danger, degradation and corruption of sense-desires, and the profit of renunciation... a sermon on Dhamma in brief: on suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.”²³ Judging by the literary output, it can be maintained that the most prominent form of Bodhisattvayāna exposition of doctrine in the Indo-Tibetan Mahāyāna is that system of theory and practice propagated by Tibetan masters on a grand scale, called by them *lam rim*, *mārga-krama* in Sanskrit. *Lam rim* treatises are systematic descriptions of the ‘gradual way’ – i.e. regular, orderly procedure – to Buddhahood.²⁴ For the Buddhist educationist, needless to say, the most logical procedure for Dharma exposition was the gradual one. I have dealt with this topic in a paper from which I would like to excerpt the thematic structure of the *Sūtrasamuccaya*, Tib. *mDo kun las btus pa*,²⁵ ascribed by Indian and Tibetan masters to Nāgārjuna, the founder of the Madhyamaka school. Since the Tibetans consider Nāgārjuna as the originator of their *lam rim* genre of Dharma exposition, which reached its apex in Tsong Khapa, the celebrated author of the *Lam rim chen mo*, the table of contents of the *Sūtrasamuccaya* may give us at least a rough idea of what is to be understood by gradual Dharma exposition. In this compendium-cum-anthology Nāgārjuna maps out the way leading to Buddhahood, beginning with the status of the worldling, of the *prthagjana*, to whom he seeks to bring home, by providing many long and short quotations from canonical Hīna- and Mahāyāna scriptures, the ‘utmost rareness’ of precious Dharma teachings. The structure-cum-table of contents, the division of his anthology of *sūtra* passages into themes and sub-themes is as follows:

1. The Utmost Rareness of a Buddha’s Appearance
2. The Utmost Rareness of Being Born a Human Being
3. The Rareness of Obtaining and Auspicious Rebirth
4. The Rareness of Having Faith
5. The Rareness of Aspiring after Buddhahood
6. The Rareness of Great Compassion
7. The Rareness of Giving up Obstructive Conditions

8. The Rareness of Really Serious Dharma Practice on the Part of Householders
 - a) The Dharma Practice of Householder-Bodhisattvas
 - b) Wrong Practice, the Evil of Taking Life, etc.
 - c) Further Wrong Practice on the Part of Lay Persons – Attachment to Life, Riches, etc.
 - d) Spiritual Friends Prerequisite for Really Serious Dharma Practice
9. The Utmost Rareness of Beings who are Truly and Resolutely Intent on the Tathāgatas' Complete Nirvāṇa
10. The Utmost Rareness of Beings who are Resolutely Intent on the Universal Vehicle (*Ekayāna*)
11. The Utmost Rareness of Beings who Progress in the Direction of a Buddha's and Bodhisattva's Sublime and Exalted Position

Notwithstanding this mainstream exposition of Mahāyāna lore, the teaching of 'enlightenment by listening' easily lends itself, as mentioned, to think, argue, and teach in terms of subitism. For this purpose, in certain Mahāyāna circles Buddha word was invoked to back up another doctrinal innovation, viz. the doctrine of the *tathāgatagarbha*, in common parlance 'Buddha-nature', inherent in all sentient beings. In all likelihood the *Buddhavacana* they had in mind resembled the following passage in the *Āṅguttara Nikāya*:

Monks, I know not of any other single thing so quick to change as the mind:
insomuch that it is no easy thing to illustrate how quick to change it is.

This mind, monks, is luminous, but it is defiled by taints that come from without;
that mind, monks, is luminous, but it is cleansed of taints that come from without...²⁶

In this Pāli text two things are referred to: a) the incredible rapidity of the changing mind and b) the fact that at the core one's mind is luminous or immaculate. The Mahāyānist hermeneutists, seeing the need for salvific means, presumably inferred from the two things that, instead of pursuing the most arduous path of cultivating the perfections prerequisite for a Bodhisattva concentrating on his career, the only requirement for realizing enlightenment would be introspection, spontaneity, and naturalness. Later on, as we shall see, there was pronounced controversy among those who insisted on the *krama-mārga* exposition of Dharma and the adherents of the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, viz. over the stances on gradualism and subitism (lit.: 'simultaneism'), involving the gradual / simultaneous polarity – *krama / yugapad* in Sanskrit and *rim gyis / cig char* in Tibetan.²⁷ As shown above, already in the Pāli canon are found passages clearly pointing in the direction of both gradualism and subitism. The same holds good of Nāgārjuna, although some scholars take him to be a nihilist: Apart from his dialectical works and apophatic methodology, in some of the writings traditionally attributed to him he draws on what has been called positive ontology. Thus, for example, we read in the *Sūtrasamuccaya*, in which Nāgārjuna quotes from the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*:

Mahāmāti asks for [a clarification]: The Exalted One has made known in other discourses the Essence of the Tathāgata (*tathāgatagarbha*). The Blessed One describes it as naturally bright, pure 'from the very beginning' – and therefore purity *per se* ... as inherent in all living beings... How then, Exalted One, does positing the Essence of the Tathāgata differ from the dogma of a Self posited by the founders of [other] religious and philosophical schools? Those

founders, Blessed One, posit a Self which, too, is permanent, called ‘the agent’, devoid of properties, omnipresent and imperishable. – The Lord replied: The dogma of a Self, Mahāmati, posited by the philosophers is not the same as my teaching of the Essence of the Tathāgata; for the Tathāgatas teach this Essence in the sense, Mahāmati, that it is emptiness, ultimate reality, Nirvāṇa, non-origination, signlessness, wishlessness, etc. The Tathāgatas, the Worthy Ones, the Fully and Completely Enlightened Ones, teach, by means of the Essence of the Tathāgata, the state of being free from false discrimination and appearances so as to make the ignorant cast aside their fear when they hear about non-self... the Tathāgatas teach this doctrine [of the *tathāgatagarbha*] with a view to attracting those philosophers who are given to the dogma of a Self...²⁸

This excerpt from the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* makes it quite clear how the concept of ‘skill in means’ was employed: Here we have applied educational psychology by means of which the propagation of Buddhist doctrine among non-Buddhist Indians and later on Tibetans was meant to be facilitated. The second aspect of the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, in particular, is a pedagogical device of great moment. In contrast to many gradualist Bodhisattvayāna scriptures according to which, only after so many aeons of *bodhisattvacaryā*, a Bodhisattva can attain Buddhahood in the remotest future, the teaching of the ‘Buddha-nature’ that all sentient beings are possessed of, turns out to be an immense encouragement to study and practice the Dharma with great enthusiasm. A further subtle aspect of applied educational psychology is the teaching that those who embrace the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine as ‘one of the supreme teachings of the Mahāyāna’, are to be considered as being possessed of ‘highly developed or of the sharpest faculties’ (*tikṣṇendriya*, Tib. *dbang po rnon po*).²⁹ Its corollary is that those who are *tikṣṇendriya*, have all potentialities, by dint of their inherent Buddha-nature, to realize Buddhahood spontaneously ‘here and now’.

In the above-cited table of contents of the *Sūtrasamuccaya*, in the tenth theme occurs the term *ekayāna*, which I have rendered as ‘universal vehicle’ denoting, *inter alia*, complete intellectual liberalism and into which both the gradualist and subitist doctrines were fully integrated. This *ekayāna* philosophy prevailed, so it seems, when the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet, inspired by Śāntarakṣita, the famous doxographer and representative of gradualist Dharma exposition, was consecrated as Dharma Center of bSam yas in about 779 by Padmasambhava, alias Guru Rin po che, the originator of the subitist rÑing ma pa school of Tibetan Buddhism. Besides integration and harmonization, an essential component part of any philosophy of education is academic controversy, the cultivation of the art of debate, in order to nurture acuteness of mind leading to penetrating insight. In India such cultivation already had a long history, and Tibetan Buddhism, too, had its first ‘highlight’ about thirteen years after the foundation of bSam yas, viz. the Great Debate between the gradualists and subitists / simultaneists, lasting from 792-794, also known as the bSam yas debate. This event took place between the followers of ‘a non-scholastic, spontaneist and more or less quietist Dhyāna (Chan) Buddhism – represented by several Chinese and Korean Ho-shangs and in particular by their best-known protagonist in Tibet, the Ho-shang Mo-ho-yen (*hva śang Mahāyāna*) – and the scholastically highly developed and monastically organized Yogācāra-Mādhyaṃika tradition of India – represented by Śāntarakṣita and his disciple Kamalaśīla.’³⁰ Seyfort

Ruegg has treated the bSam yas debate with scrupulous attention to detail, describing its profound impact on the development of Tibetan Buddhism. According to the Tibetan historical texts, the Great Debate ended with Mo-ho-yen's admitting defeat and King Khri Srong lde btsan's decree that the Chan school's subitist / simultaneous teachings should no longer be propagated in the Land of Snows.³¹ The Tibetan king's decree suggests that in this remarkable methodological debate politics definitely had a role of play. As can be read in Seyfort Ruegg's monograph, the Great Debate proved extremely stimulative for the development of further thought and literature pertaining to Tibetan educational philosophy, produced by most creative Ācāryas of all the main schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

Now let us revert the 'five approaches to enlightenment and emancipation'. Although in the teaching of the five *vimuttāyatana*s no positive ontology is involved as in the case of the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, in terms of educational psychology the message of the 'five enterings', too, can safely be regarded as being conducive to encouragement and enthusiasm for Dharma studies and practice. These two things, obviously being instrumental in bringing about best success as the consummation of all educational efforts, are actually implied in the above-cited Pāli and Sanskrit passages: by one's gaining a grasp of both the spirit and the letter of a given teaching there arises joy, delight, and happiness. As for the first approach by listening to the Dharma, 'listening', as mentioned, was also taken to mean 'studying'. Linked to the concept of *bodhisattvacaryā*, in due course studying developed into the study of sciences. According to Indo-Tibetan exegetical literature, five main branches of science (*rig gnas che ba*) came to be known, constituting the 'complete science' pertaining to a Bodhisattva:

- 1) *nang rig pa* = *adhyātmavidyā*, 'interior science' of the Dharma, permitting the achievement of 'supreme science' (*ājñā*)
- 2) *gtan tshigs rig pa* = *hetuvidyā*, 'epistemology and logic'
- 3) *sgra rig pa* = *śabdavidyā* (*vyākaraṇa*), 'grammar'
- 4) *gso ba'i rig pa* = *cikitsāvidyā*, 'medicine'
- 5) *bzo rig pa* = *karmasthānavidyā* (*śilpa*), 'arts, crafts, and techniques'

The sciences nos. 2-5 figured as sciences ancillary to *adhyātmavidyā*, aiding the Bodhisattva in propagating the Dharma and in performing altruistic deeds. The study and practice of these sciences on the part of Indian and Tibetan masters is a topic that regularly occurs in the description of their education and intellectual activities to be found in a vast body of biographical and hagiographical literature. In the above list only the 'main branches' of science are included. Tibetan borrowings from India were not, strictly speaking, confined to the areas of Buddhist religion and philosophy. They embraced quite large sections of Indian civilization.³² When Buddhism had nearly completely disappeared from Indian soil due to the Muslim conquest of Northern India and Hindu inclusivism, a most remarkable transfer of Buddhist culture and Indian civilization to Tibet was achieved.

The second entering into deliverance through teaching the Dharma to others, in addition to the original meaning of orally imparting teaching to others, Buddhādāsa has convincingly equated teaching with writing, with conveying ideas or a message by writing.³³ That writing as a *vimuttāyatana* can and should be a means to effect a catharsis, was also hinted at by Nietzsche who was convinced that linguistic education is education of mind and character. He, for instance, wrote: "To improve one's style of

writing (text production) means to improve one's thinking."³⁴ Writing compendia, treatises, and dramas, or composing ornate poetry – with the Tibetans even compositions of religious music are known, and operas, although research done on this is next to nothing – were (and with the Tibetans still are) time-honored pursuits in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism for one's own catharsis and for the benefit of others, as Śāntideva has modestly put it.³⁵ Indo-Tibetan educational literature is indeed vast, and still a tremendous amount of work has to go into its exploration.

The third way to enlightenment, consisting of reciting and learning by heart the Buddhist teachings, evidently is the backbone of all educational activities. Much has been written about the stupendous achievements of those who had orally handed down the canonical texts for centuries before the Tripiṭaka was committed to writing. Reciting sacred texts can also be associated with doing *pūjā*, with liturgy. In all schools of Tibetan Buddhism, liturgy plays an important role. It mainly consists of devotional texts into which currents of Indian *bhakti* movements seem to have been integrated. In terms of educational psychology, in Tibetan monasticism liturgy used to have and still has an important function to fulfill, viz. to ensure an equilibrium between emotions and intellect. The counterbalance to liturgy in the Tibetan monasteries was – and still is – debating, already referred to above. In the Tibetan monastic tradition, for the sake of equanimity, liturgy and debating, the two important tools of monastic education, have always been used with circumspection so as to harmonize the two perfectly.

Regarding the fourth *vimuttāyatana* by means of analytical thinking, cultivating the art of debate is one facet of this way to penetrating insight; debating, as it were, is the dynamic aspect of analytical thought in the form of team work. It moreover goes without saying that the various types of *vimuttāyatana* as listed in the texts complement each other. Thus, according to the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the development of analytical thought, for instance, presupposes one's having learnt by heart and mastered philosophical tracts and textbooks on logic.

In conclusion, the fifth entering into deliverance concerns meditation proper, as described in numerous books on tranquility and insight meditation. Here I will restrict myself to one single observation on what has been called 'the Heart of Buddhist Meditation',³⁶ i.e. the proper application of mindfulness, Pāli *sati*, Sanskrit *smṛti*, Tib. *dran pa*, also rendered as 'recollection'. On the evidence of the teaching of the five *vimuttāyatanas*, there is a clear vindication that *ekāyana*, *inter alia* translated as 'the only way' and denoting the 'Heart of Buddhist Meditation', does not exclusively mean 'Vipassanā meditation'; it does, however, at any rate signify the proper application of *smṛti*, which is quintessential, with respect to the five *vimuttāyatanas*, in all Buddhist schools and *yānas*. In order to underline this fact, I used the expression 'tantric principle'³⁷ which, presupposing the application of mindfulness directed towards the totality of psycho-physical facts or phenomena at the very moment that one becomes aware of them in one form or another, denotes the efficacy of *smṛti*: achieving – in terms of educational science – objectivity and, at the level of *adhyātmavidyā* and *ājñā*, momentarily or, best of all, for good one's realizing release from conceptual construction or false imagining (*prapañcopāśama*). In spite of the incredible complexity of a mass of ritual and magic incorporated in the Vajrayāna, even here the 'Heart of Buddhist Meditation' plays the pivotal role as can be seen in Mi la ras pa:

Whatever you may meet in your daily doings
(lit.: four kinds of daily activity – walking, standing, sitting, and lying down),
You should contemplate its void and illusory nature.
Were even one hundred saints and scholars gathered here,
More than this they could not say...
Whate'er I see before me I take as my companion...
[i.e. mindfulness directed towards the totality of psycho-physical facts]
At this moment, all my sufferings have become a pleasure...
[lit.: *duḥkha* becomes *sukha*, by the efficacy of *smṛti*]
The universe and all its forms now appear but as the Dharmakāya
[in other words: *prapañcopaśama*].³⁸

Finally, I know of no better way to conclude my paper than to draw attention to Mark Epstein's fine book "Thinking without a Thinker", according to whom the methodology of *smṛtyupasthāna*, being the very heartbeat of Buddhist education as a whole, is **the** decisive contribution of Buddhism to present-day psychotherapy.³⁹ Psychotherapy and Buddhist education, including much of its Indo-Tibetan forms, can be regarded as invaluable assets in our coping with all challenges and problems to be faced by us as inhabitants of the 'global village'.

Notes

¹ Guruge, Ananda W.P., *Buddhism – The Religion and Its Culture* (Colombo: M. Senanayake Sridevi Printing Works, 1984), 157; see also Guruge, Ananda W.P., "Education, Buddhist", in: *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, vol. V, fasc. 1: Earth – Extra-sensory Perception (1990), published by the Government of Sri Lanka, 35.

² Guruge 1990, *ibid.* Three items may be added here: a) Joshi, Lalmani, *Studies in the Buddhist Culture of India* (During the 7th and 8th Centuries A.D.) (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967), 154-178 (Buddhist education and its centers); rev. ed. 1977, 121-141; b) Gunaratna, V.F., "Buddhism and Modern Methods of Education", in: Wijesekera, O.H. de A. (ed.), *Malalasekera Commemoration Volume* (Colombo: Kularatne, 1976), 111-115; c) Keuffer, Josef, *Buddhismus und Erziehung* (An Intercultural Study of Tibet from the Viewpoint of Educational Science). (Münster, New York: Waxmann Publishing Company, 1991) (secondary source). I am indebted to Birgit Lesch of Würzburg University for having brought this work to my notice.

³ See Tampalawela Dhammaratana, Bhikkhu and Pāsādika, Bhikkhu (eds.), *Dharmadūta, Mélanges offerts au Vénérable Thich Huyên-Vi* (Paris: Éditions You-Feng, 1997), 115-133 (including bibliographical updates).

⁴ Guruge 1997, 133.

⁵ Snellgrove, David and Richardson, Hugh, *A Cultural History of Tibet* (Boulder: Prajñā Press, 1980), 74f.

⁶ Roerich, George N. (ed., transl.), *Biography of Dharmasvāmin, Chag lo-tsa-ba Chos-rje-dpal* (Patna: Jayaswal Research Institute, 1959), XLIf.

⁷ Cf. n. 2 above, Gunaratna, op. cit., 111, quoting Bertrand Russell on education as having the same idea as the Buddha about a good teacher: "It is this attitude of *love* towards the pupil that makes a successful teacher."

⁸ Guruge 1984, 141.

⁹ Vaidya, P.L. (ed.), *Bodhicaryāvatāra of Śāntideva, with the Commentary Pañjikā of Prajñākaramati* (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1960), 205 (9. 43): *yat kiṃcīn Maitreya subhāṣitam, sarvaṃ tad Buddhabhāṣitam.*

¹⁰ Pāsādika, Bh., “Health and Its Significance in Life in Buddhism”, in: Gimmler, Antje; Lenk, Christian and Aumüller, Gerhard (eds.), *Health and Quality of Life. Philosophical, Medical, and Cultural Aspects* (Münster, Hamburg, London: LIT Verlag, 2002), 148.

¹¹ Pāsādika 2002, 154.

¹² With references to hygiene and to mental as well as physical health, see Bernhard, Franz (ed.), *Sanskrittexte aus den Turfanfunden X, Udānavarga I* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), XXVIII, 1; XXVI, 6 (corresponding to *Dhammapada* vv. 183, 204). For the corresponding Tibetan version see Dietz, Siglinde and Zongtse, Champa Thupten (eds.), *Udānavarga III* (Göttingen: V & R, 1990), 286, 257: *sdig pa thams cad mi bya ste // dge ba phun sum tshogs par bya // rang gi sems ni yongs su gdul // 'di ni sangs rgyas bstan pa yin // nad med rñed pa 'i dam pa ste // chog śes pa ni nor gyi dbyig // yid gcugs bśes pa 'i mchog yin te // mya ngan 'das pa bde ba 'i phul //* The *Udānavarga* verses slightly differ from the *Dhammapada* wording: a) “Abstaining from all evil, cultivating all that is wholesome, thoroughly training one’s mind – this is the doctrine of the Buddha.” b) “Health is the greatest gain, contentment the greatest wealth; the best friend is someone to be trusted, supreme happiness is Nirvāṇa.”

¹³ Sakaki, R. (ed.), *Mahāvvyutpatti* (Kyoto: 1926), 72 (929-932).

¹⁴ Cf. Skilling, Peter, “Une note sur l’Upālipariṣcchā”, in: *Linh-Son – publication d’ études bouddhologiques* N^o 6 (Joinville-le-Pont: Institut de recherche bouddhique Linh-Son, 1979), 19-27 (including the relevant bibliography).

¹⁵ Guruge 1984, 139f.

¹⁶ Guruge 1984, 142ff.; Joshi, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ For the relevant bibliography see my “Zu den Zitaten in Yaśomītras *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*” in: Karunadasa, Y. (ed.), *Ānanda – Papers on Buddhism and Indology. A Felicitation Volume Presented to Ananda W.P. Guruge on His Sixtieth Birthday* (Colombo: The Felicitation Vol. Editorial Committee “Vision House”, 1990), 26ff.

¹⁸ Carpenter, Estlin (ed.) *The Dīgha Nikāya III* (London: PTS, 1911), 241ff., 279: *Pañca vimuttāyatanāni. Idh’ āvuso bhikkhuno Satthā dhammaṃ deseti... so tasmim dhamme attha- paṭisaṃvedī ca hoti dhammapaṭisaṃvedī ca... api ca kho yathā-sutaṃ yathā-pariyattaṃ dhammaṃ vitthārena paresaṃ deseti... api ca kho yathā-sutaṃ yathā-pariyattaṃ dhammaṃ vitthārena sajjhāyaṃ karoti... api ca kho yathā-sutaṃ yathā-pariyattaṃ dhammaṃ cetasā anuvitakketi anuvicāreti manasā ’nupekkhati... api ca kho assa aññataraṃ samādhi-nimittaṃ suggahītaṃ hoti sumanasikataṃ... Tassa attha-paṭisaṃvedino dhammapaṭisaṃvedino pāmojjaṃ jāyati, pamuditassa pīti jāyati, pīti-manassa kāyo passambhati, passaddha-kāyo sukhaṃ vedeti, sukkhino cittaṃ samādhiyati. Idaṃ pañcamaṃ vimuttāyatanam.* For the English transl. see Walshe, Maurice, *Thus Have I Heard. The Long Discourses of the Buddha* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1987), 497f. Walshe’s translation “(b)... in the course of teaching

Dhamma...” should be corrected to “as he is teaching Dhamma in detail to others as he has heard and learnt it by heart...”

¹⁹ Hardy, E. (ed.), *The Aṅguttara Nikāya III* (London: PTS, 1897), 21ff.: ...*vimuttāyatanam, yattha bhikkhuno appamattassa ātāpino pahitattassa viharato avimuttam vā cittaṃ vimuccati, aparikkhīṇā vā āsavā parikkhayam gacchanti, ananuppattam vā anuttaram yogakkhemam anupāpuṇāti*. Cf. also Wogihara, U. (ed.), *Yaśomitra, Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* (Tokyo: 1932-36), 54f.: ...*sukhitasya cittaṃ samādhīyate. samāhitacitto yathābhūtaṃ prajānāti yathābhūtaṃ paśyati. yathābhūtaṃ prajānan yathābhūtaṃ paśyan nirvidyate. nirviṇṇo virajyate. virakto vimucyate... yatra sthitasya bhikṣor vā bhikṣuṇyā vā anupasthitā smṛtir upatiṣṭhate. asamāhitam cittaṃ samādhīyate. aparikkṣiṇās c' āsavāḥ parikkṣiyante. ananuprāptaṃ cānuttaram yogakṣemaṃ nirvāṇam anuprāpnoti*.

²⁰ Buddhadāsa, Bhikkhu, *Tarng rougth hār prakarn* (“Five ways/means to be saved”) (Bangkok: 1968).

²¹ For a complete English translation of *Mi la ras pa'i mGur 'bum* see Chang, Garma C.C., *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*, 2 vols. (New York: Oriental Studies Foundation, 1962).

²² Seyfort Ruegg, David, *Buddha-nature, Mind and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective. On the Reception of Buddhism in India and Tibet* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1989).

²³ Cf., for instance, Rhys Davids, T.W. and Carpenter, Estlin, *The Dīgha Nikāya I* (London: PTS, 1890), 110: ...*Bhagavā ānupubbikathaṃ kathesi seyyathīdam dānakathaṃ silakathaṃ...* Walshe 1987, 124. For the equivalent Buddhist Sanskrit term *upadeśānupūrvī bauddhānām* see Schlingloff, Dieter (ed.), “Yogavidhi”, in: *Indo-Iranian Journal* (1963-64), 146-155 (45V2).

²⁴ Cf. my “Nāgārjuna’s Sūtrasamuccaya: Text and Living Tradition”, in: Bodhiprasiddhinand, Pathompong (ed.), *Pāli & Sanskrit Studies. Mahāmakut Centenary Commemorative Volume and Felicitation Volume Presented to H.H. The Supreme Patriarch on the Occasion of his 80th Birthday* (Bangkok: Mahāmakuta Rājavidyālaya Foundation, 1993), 185ff.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 187.

²⁶ Morris, Richard (ed.), *The Aṅguttara Nikāya I* (London: PTS, 1885), 10: *Nāham bhikkhave aññam ekadhammam pi samanupassāmi yaṃ evaṃ lahuparivattaṃ yathayidaṃ cittaṃ yāvañ c'idaṃ bhikkhave upamā pi na sukarā yāva lahuparivattaṃ cittaṃ ti. Pabhassaram idaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ tañ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhan ti. Pabhassaram idaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ tañ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi vippamuttan ti*. For the English transl. see Woodward, F.L., *The Book of the Gradual Sayings I* (London: PTS, 1932), 7f.

²⁷ Seyfort Ruegg 1989, 12.

²⁸ Cf. Pāsādika, Bh., *Nāgārjuna’s Sūtrasamuccaya: A Critical Edition of the mDo kun las btus pa* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1989), 172ff.: *blo gros chen pos žus pa / bcom ldan 'das kyis mdo gžan brjod pa las / de bžin gšegs pa'i sñing po gsungs pa de / bcom ldan 'das kyis rang bžin gyis 'od gsal ba / rnam par dag pas thog ma nas rnam par dag pa ñid... sems can thams cad kyi lus kyi nang na mchis par brjod do // ...* My English transl. appeared in *Linh-Son – publication d'études bouddhologiques* N° 17/18 (1981-2), 51f.

²⁹ Seyfort Ruegg 1989, 18, 84.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

³² Seyfort Ruegg, David, *Ordre spirituel et ordre temporel dans la pensée bouddhique de l'Inde et du Tibet* (Paris: Collège de France, Publications de l' Institut de civilisation indienne, fascicule 64, 1995), 101ff.

³³ Buddhādāsa 1968, 17ff.

³⁴ Cf. Reiners, Ludwig, *Stilkunst. Ein Lehrbuch deutscher Prosa* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1980), 14.

³⁵ Cf. Vaidya 1960, 3f. (I. 2, 3): *na hi kiṃ cid apūrvam atra vācyaṃ na ca saṃgrathanakauśalaṃ mamāsti | ata eva na me parārthacintā svamano vāsayaṭiṃ kṛtaṃ mayedam || mama tāvad anena yāti vṛddhiṃ kuśalaṃ bhāvayaṭiṃ prasādavegaḥ | atha matsamadhātur eva paśyed aparo 'py enam ato 'pi sārthako 'yam ||* Crosby, Kate and Skilton, Andrew (transl.), *Śāntideva. The Bodhicaryāvatāra* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 5: “2. Nothing new will be said here, nor have I any skill in composition. Therefore I do not imagine that I can benefit others. I have done this to perfume my own mind. 3. While doing this, the surge of my inspiration to cultivate what is skilful increases. Moreover, should another, of the very same humours as me, also look at this, then he too may benefit from it.”

³⁶ Nyanaponika, Thera, *Satipaṭṭhāna. The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* (Colombo: 'The Word of the Buddha' Publishing Committee, 1956).

³⁷ See my paper “Zur Entfaltung vollkommener Bewusstheit (*smṛtyupasthāna*) im Theravāda und Vajrayāna”, in: Scharfetter, Christian and Rättsch, Christian (eds.), *Welten des Bewusstseins, Band 9, Religion – Mystik – Schamanismus* (Berlin: VWB Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, 1998), 45-60.

³⁸ Tsultim, Lobsang (ed.), *rJe btsun Mi la ras pa'i rNam thar rgyas par phye pa mGur 'bum bžugs so* (Varanasi: Ilmi Press, 1971), 88, 236: *spyod lam rnam bži ci byed kyang || gang śar stong űid sgyu mar bsgoms || mkhas btsun brgya yi žal phye yang || de las lhag pa yong rgyu med || ... da lta ci snang grogs su śar || ... da lta sdug bsngal bde bar śar || ...da lta snang srid chos skur śar ||* See Chang 1962, 93, 230f.; square brackets are mine.

³⁹ Unfortunately only the German version of Mark Epstein's book *Gedanken ohne den Denker* (Frankfurt on Main: Fischer Verlag, 2000) came to my notice. I am indebted to Markus Marbaise of Würzburg University for having informed me about Epstein's book.