

A Brief Overview Comparing the Core Theories, Cultivation Practices and the Interrelationships of Buddhism, Daoism, Brahmanism and Yoga

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Abstract

Philosophical systems of the East have long been researched in the West. With the flux of recent scholarship, especially in the last fifteen years, many new discoveries have been made. These discoveries have shed much light on comparative studies and reveal many new and previously unknown connections. This paper has used the scholarship of various contemporary authors to compare and contrast the main philosophical systems of the East which includes Buddhism (both Theravāda and Mahāyāna), philosophical Daoism, Brahmanism, yoga and sometimes Jainism. This paper has used as many early classical textual references as possible from a variety of sources to establish precisely and clearly what the various ancient philosophies were and how they were used. The paper not only compares their theories but also their techniques of cultivation. Comparisons are made between, the idea of a self/soul or no-self, the notion of liberation, the use of breathing techniques, the theories of sending energy in a certain direction and the different key textbooks used by the varying philosophical systems. The key findings are that even though each system is different to the other, they have also taken ideas and concepts from each other and mixed them into their own systems of cultivation. They do though seem to all share one common denominator which is at their base and this is that they all follow some form of theory related to the concept of non-action.

Keywords: Buddhism, Daoism, Brahmanism, yoga, comparative studies

1. Introduction

1.1 Aims and Objectives

This paper has two goals. The first is to describe the general theories of Buddhism, philosophical Daoism, later Brahmanism, yoga and sometimes Jainism. The word “general” is used here because each system has a large number of schools with an array of differing philosophies and ideas. The aim is to convey some of the core and essential components of each philosophy as opposed to the minute details. The second goal of this paper is to selectively compare and contrast these systems, so as to specifically portray that they can be linked and that they may all have their origin with the idea of non-action at their core.

Ancient India-China relations are central to this paper. There is little detailed discussion on how these ideas mixed with each other. Instead there are specific examples given of how the philosophies and systems of cultivation clearly have some similarities.

1.2 Significance

There are numerous scholars who are experts in their respective fields such as Johannes Bronkhorst for Buddhism, James Mallinson for Brahmanism and yoga and Victor Mair for sinology. There are also various authors such as Victor Mair, Jean Filliozat, David White, Surendranath Dasgupta, Joseph Needham, Catherine Despeux and Michel Strickman who have detailed some very specific India-China connections and the connections of different schools within India itself. This paper attempts to discuss the relationship between four different schools of thought, which is something that has rarely been attempted.

1.3 Methodology

The paper begins by discussing the possible origins of meditation and a common denominator that may link all schools of thought together. This paper has been set up by describing some of the core philosophies of each

system of cultivation, followed by a summary of some of the meditation techniques used by each. The summary of the cultivation techniques is constructed to provide a kind of catalogue of the most popular techniques, from some of the most renowned teachers, so that readers may use these works or references for more narrow research and study in the future. As each of these four philosophies have a very long history, with an enormous number of written documents related directly or indirectly to them, this paper has purposely found texts and quotes that have similarities to each other and uses them to compare and demonstrate various connections. The comparisons include but are not limited to the concept of non-action, the idea of a self/soul or no-self, the notion of liberation, the use of breathing techniques, the theories of sending energy in a certain direction and the different key textbooks used by the varying philosophical systems. As this paper covers many topics and therefore conveys more broad-based and selective correlations, the comparisons are purposely kept more generalised in their analysis. The author recognizes the need for further investigation into each individual similarity or difference between the systems, to fully confirm, how or if they have influenced each other. As the paper discusses various forms of cultivation techniques, it also deliberately uses the works of non-academic authors who are regarded as experts in their respective arts. Authors such as Tirumalai Krishnamacharya, B.K.S Iyengar, T. K. V. Desikachar, Ajahn Brahmavamsa and Shodo Harada are some examples. The paper is separated into five main sections:

- 1) Theravāda Buddhism
- 2) Mahāyāna Buddhism
- 3) Philosophical Daoism
- 4) Brahmanism (especially later Brahmanism) (Note 1)
- 5) Yoga

This paper endeavours to use specific early classical textual references from a variety of sources to establish a generic outline in regard to what the various ancient philosophies were and how they were used. The paper also strives to use the works of various contemporary scholars in their respective fields so as to keep up to date in a field that is quickly progressing. The works of Johannes Bronkhorst for Buddhism and James Mallinson for yoga have been particularly important for this paper.

In regard to the use of *Pāli*, Sanskrit and Chinese words within the paper, they are used once in closed brackets behind a new concept, word or theory, after which, only the English words are used. Where there is no equivalent English word or appropriate translation, the *Pāli*, Sanskrit and/or Chinese word/s are used in italics. For Buddhist terms, the paper uses *Pāli*, for Brahmanism or yogic terms, the paper uses Sanskrit. Where the *Pāli* and Sanskrit words sound similar enough to English terms (all three languages are Indo-European languages), they have been kept in their original language. The Buddhist *Sutta* names are used with the English translation in brackets behind them, as their *Pāli* names are more commonly used than their English ones.

2. The Possible Origins of Meditation through the Concept of Non-action

Bronkhorst (2017, p. 362) explains that the Vedic religion had its centre in the north-western parts of the Indian subcontinent, including much of what is now Pakistan. Vedic religion was concerned with elaborate sacrifices, which were carried out by sacrificial priests for the advantage of rulers. Vedic religion was inseparable from a particular political set-up. On the other side of the continent, there was another area in the eastern parts of the Ganges valley, in a region called the Greater Magadha. It appears that it was this area where the birth of meditation, yoga and spirituality would emerge.

Bronkhorst (2017, p. 363) goes on to explain that the Vedic religion did not know the idea of rebirth and karma as Vedic literature did not mention it. Vedic religion was not concerned with rebirth and karmic retribution but rather with the correct performance of sometimes highly complex rituals in the service of the various royal courts. This situation did not continue forever as unfavourable events, such as the invasion by Alexander the Great, destroyed the political structures on which the performance of Vedic ritual depended and signalled the end of Vedic religion as it had existed so far.

Bronkhorst (2017, p. 364) explains that Brahmanism emerged out of this breakdown period of the Vedic period as a socio-political ideology in which the Brahmins claimed for themselves alone, the highest position within society. They were able to do this due to their exclusive knowledge of sacred texts and their extreme ritual purity. From here they started to produce texts in relation to correct preservation of memorised Vedic texts and domestic ritual (which now focused on individuals). Added to this was the idea that the Brahmin was now depicted as an ascetically-inclined individual who concentrated primarily on personal rites and avoided much contact with the outside world. Bronkhorst (2017, p. 364) further explains that outwardly this idea was sold via the production of literature that was not exclusively aimed at Brahmins. The two best examples of this literature were the

Mahābhārata and *Rāmāyaṇa*. Within this literature is the key idea that these holy men within the forest had extraordinary powers. Brahmins also developed certain ideas about language. They claimed that Sanskrit, the language of Veda was the only language and all other languages were corruptions of this eternal one (Bronkhorst 2017, p. 365).

On the other side of what would become India in the area of the Greater Magadha were peoples whose sole concern in life was dealing these ideas of *samsāra*, karma and rebirth. In relation to how the Jains and Buddhists dealt with these “problems,” it may be said that the essence of their cultivation could be summed up as: Suppression of mental and physical activity.

Suppression of activity was a reaction to the conviction that all activity leads to karmic retribution, a belief accepted by Jainism and other religious movements at the time. Buddhism, it turns out, though accepting the doctrine of rebirth and karmic retribution, accepted it in a form different from Jainism: Buddhism did not accept that *all* physical and mental activity necessarily has a consequence, most probably in a future life. The authentically Buddhist practices were not therefore variations of the attempt to stop all physical and mental activity, as was the case in Jainism and elsewhere. (Bronkhorst, 2012, p. 5)

The Jains took this idea of non-activity to the extreme *Āyāraṃga* (Āyār) 1.8 (7).7.2-8/228-53:

Here we find a description of a voluntary starvation to death, accompanied by an as complete as possible restraint with regard to all activity and movement. It is the culmination of a life of training and preparation. (Bronkhorst, 1993, p. 35)

Buddhism took another approach:

It is perhaps more surprising that the early Buddhists are against all these practices. In some cases, they contrast the non-Buddhist practices aiming at non-activity with what are, in their opinion, the practices to be performed in their stead. Rather than fasting, restraining the mind and stopping the breath, one should perform the four *dhyānas*. And rather than aiming at the non-functioning of the senses, one should remain equanimous in the face of the experiences they offer. (Bronkhorst, 1993, p. 30)

Later Brahmanism also took its own approach and seemed to have criticized certain aspects of this non-activity, while taking on other parts of it. We find such criticism in the *Bhagavadgītā* (3.4-7).

A man does not reach the state free from activity by not performing actions; and he does not attain perfection by merely abandoning [activity]. For no one ever remains without activity even for a moment, because everyone, being powerless, is made to perform activity by the *guṇas* which are born from Original Nature *Prakṛti*. He who sits, restraining his organs of action [but] thinking with his mind of the objects of the senses, he is said to be deluded and of improper demeanour. But he, Arjuna, who performs discipline of action (karma yoga) with his organs of action, restraining his senses with his mind, unattached, he excels. (Bronkhorst, 2007, p. 29)

In the above paragraph it appears that the non-action of Arjuna was meant to be one who has discipline in action (which most likely means doing the required actions of your caste) but with restraint of the senses. As Arjuna was a warrior it is possible that his form of non-action was not the highest level that could be obtained by a yogi. It appears that in later Brahmanism, the highest form of non-action was when the mind is completely still of any mental fluctuations what so ever.

The goal of yogic practice in some of the early *Upaniṣads* and the *Mokṣadharmā* is to attain a state of consciousness not unlike deep sleep, a state of consciousness so attenuated that its attainer is said to be “like a log of wood.” (Wynne, 2007, p. 43)

It is difficult not to notice the correlation to Laozi’s non-action (or emptiness in action) *wúwéi* (無為) and the idea of non-activity that has been the cornerstone of ancient Indian thinking. One may argue that the essence of Laozi’s Dao is based on the idea of non-activity, with much of his book giving examples of this. Laozi’s idea of non-activity though was different to that of Buddhism, later Brahmanism and Jainism.

It seems that while Buddhism wished to obtain stillness of the mind (in relation to the senses) so there could be clear insight into the nature of reality, later Brahmanism wanted the mind to be completely still of any activity whatsoever. It appears that the origin of meditation was based on the idea of non-action, so that there could be no karmic retribution and one could achieve liberation from the cycle of rebirth or reincarnation. Here we see the early meaning of “enlightenment” being very different to the modern usage of the word. In ancient India, enlightenment referred to someone who no longer returns to the human realm (or other realms). For the Brahmins it meant “liberation” by reconnecting with the universal principle, and for the Buddhists, it meant

“blowing out” (the end) but for both it meant not returning to *saṃsāra*.

3. The Idea of a Self/soul or No-Self within Ancient India and Beyond

The idea of a self/soul or no-self has permeated ancient Indian thinking since early times, it could be summarised as follows:

Later Brahmanism: There is a life principle that is one in the same with the universal principle (see *Kāthopaniṣad*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* and *Chāndogyaopaniṣad* for more details on the idea of *ātman*). In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.4.5) it says:

That self is indeed Brahman, as well as identified with the intellect, the *manas* and the vital force, with the eyes and ears, with earth, water, air and the ether, with fire and what is other than fire, with desire and the absence of desire, with anger and the absence of anger, with righteousness and unrighteousness, with everything identified, as is well known, with this (what is perceived) and with that (what is inferred). As it does and acts, so it becomes; by doing good it becomes good and by doing evil it becomes evil, it becomes virtuous through good acts and virtuous through evil acts. Others, however, say, ‘the self is identified with desire alone. What it desires, it resolves; what it resolves, it works out; and, what it works out, it attains.’ (Swami Madhavananda, 1950, p. 712).

Jainism: There is a life principle (*jīva*) that is individual and not part of the universal principle.

Theravāda Buddhism: There is the idea of no-self (*anattā*). See the *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta* (*The Discourse on the No-Self Characteristic*) for further details.

Mahāyāna Buddhism: Buddha-nature or *tathāgatagarbha* or *buddhadhātu* is emptiness (*śūnyatā*), which is the absence of an independent and substantial self. The Dalai Lama (2010) says:

Although Buddhist schools accept rebirth, they hold that there is no solid self. For Buddhists, the main topic of training is emptiness or selflessness, which means the absence of a permanent, unitary and independent self or, more subtly, the absence of inherent existence, either in living beings or in another phenomenon.

Yoga: Some yoga schools had the idea of a spiritual principle. The separation of the spiritual principle in *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* is the isolation of the *puruṣa* (spiritual principle) of *Sāṅkhya* (that which sees) from *prakṛti* (material principle) (Mallinson & Singleton, 2016, p. 397). In some texts such as the *Vimānārcanākalpa*, *Pañcārthabhāṣya* and *Yogabīja*, yoga seems to follow Brahman ideas, with the goal of yoga described as the union of the individual and supreme self (Mallinson & Singleton, 2017, pp. 4-18). In the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* (IV.34) it says:

Kaivalya, liberation, comes when the yogi has fulfilled the *puruṣārthas* (object of human pursuit), the fourfold aims of life and had transcended the *guṇas*. Aims and *guṇas* return to their source and consciousness is established in its own natural purity (Iyengar, 2002, p. 283).

In philosophical Daoism the idea of a self was not emphasised, nevertheless it was still mentioned. *Dàodéjīng* (chapter nineteen) says, one should lessen the self and have few desires. This is probably the earliest mention of an “ego” in ancient Chinese literature.

《道德經·十九章》此三者·以為文不足·故·令有所屬·見素抱樸·少私寡欲。

These three [are] not enough to be [a] doctrine, therefore, have [an] affiliation [with] seeing [the] plainness, embracing simplicity, [and] lessening [the] self [with] few desires.

4. Words Used to Describe the Idea of Meditation in Ancient Literature

Anāpānasamṛti (Sanskrit) or *ānāpānasati* (Pāli): “*Sati*” means mindfulness and “*ānāpāna*” refers to inhalation and exhalation. This word is used in the *Ānāpānasati Sutta* (*Breath Mindfulness Discourse*).

Dhyāna (Sanskrit) or *jhāna* (Pāli): This refers to certain meditative states in Theravāda Buddhism and is a core aspect of the Thai Forest tradition. In Sanskrit, *dhyāna* means, “meditation, thought, reflection (Williams, 1872, p. 461).” *Chán* (Mandarin), *dhyāna* (Sanskrit), *jhāna* (Pāli) and Zen (Japanese) are all the same word but in four different languages.

Bhāvanā: This is a word used within Buddhism in conjunction with other words. For example; mind (*cittā*) *bhāvanā*; wisdom (*paññā*) *bhāvanā*; kindness (*mettā*) *bhāvanā*; concentration (*samādhi*) *bhāvanā*; tranquillity (*śamatha*) *bhāvanā*; and insight (*vipassanā*) *bhāvanā*. Based on these examples a proposed translation of *bhāvanā* is “cultivation.”

Samādhi: This word tends to be translated as “concentration” or “meditative absorption.” In Chinese it is translated as *sānmǎ* (三昧), this translation is based on having similar sounds to *samādhi*. In the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* practitioners move from *dhāraṇā* to *dhyāna* and then to *samādhi*. The term “*samādhi*” derives from the root *sam-ā-dha*, which means “to collect” or “bring together (Gunaratana, 1988, p. 158).” In the early Buddhist texts, *samādhi* is also associated with the term *śamatha*. In Buddhism *samādhi* tends to have the same usage and meaning as *jhāna*.

Śamatha: This is the probably the widest spread, most well-known and standard form of Buddhist meditation. It is commonly known as the meditation which calms the mind and is normally based on the awareness of the breath. Directly it can be translated as “tranquillity” or “calm abiding.”

Vipāśyanā (Sanskrit) or *vipassanā* (*Pāli*): This is known as insight meditation and especially insight into the Three Marks of Existence (*tilakkhaṇa*) (Note 2). *Vipassanā* meditation in conjunction with *śamatha* meditation seems to be a necessary part of nearly all Buddhist traditions. Within Buddhism the words *vipassanā*, *śamatha* and *jhāna* can be confusingly mixed together. This is explained clearly by Thanissaro Bhikkhu, as he sums up many details in regard to Buddhist meditation.

If you look directly at the *Pāli* discourses — the earliest extant sources for our knowledge of the Buddha’s teachings — you’ll find that although they do use the word *śamatha* to mean tranquillity and *vipassanā* to mean clear-seeing, they otherwise confirm none of the received wisdom about these terms. Only rarely do they make use of the word *vipassanā* — a sharp contrast to their frequent use of the word *jhāna*. When they depict the Buddha telling his disciples to go meditate, they never quote him as saying “go do *vipassanā*,” but always “go do *jhāna*.” And they never equate the word *vipassanā* with any mindfulness techniques. In the few instances where they do mention *vipassanā*, they almost always pair it with *śamatha* — not as two alternative methods, but as two qualities of mind that a person may “gain” or “be endowed with,” and that should be developed together. One simile, for instance (SN 35.204), compares *śamatha* and *vipassanā* to a swift pair of messengers who enter the citadel of the body via the Noble Eightfold Path and present their accurate report — Unbinding, or *nibbāna* — to the consciousness acting as the citadel’s commander. Another passage (AN 10.71) recommends that anyone who wishes to put an end to mental defilement should — in addition to perfecting the principles of moral behaviour and cultivating seclusion — be committed to *śamatha* and endowed with *vipassanā*. This last statement is unremarkable in itself, but the same discourse also gives the same advice to anyone who wants to master the *jhānas*: Be committed to *śamatha* and endowed with *vipassanā*. This suggests that, in the eyes of those who assembled the *Pāli* discourses, *śamatha*, *jhāna* and *vipassanā* were all part of a single path. *Śamatha* and *vipassanā* were used together to master *jhāna* and then — based on *jhāna* — were developed even further to give rise to the end of mental defilement and to bring release from suffering. This is a reading that finds support in other discourses as well. (Bhikkhu Thanissaro, 1997).

Dhāraṇā: This is a yoga term which refers to the early stages of concentrating the mind on one point, as concentration gets better, one moves to *dhyāna* and then as one gets even more absorbed in concentration, *samādhi*. Together they are known as a three-stage process called *saṃ-yama* (integration). The process is described clearly in *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*. For further details see Iyengar (2002, pp. 178-182).

5. Theravāda Buddhism

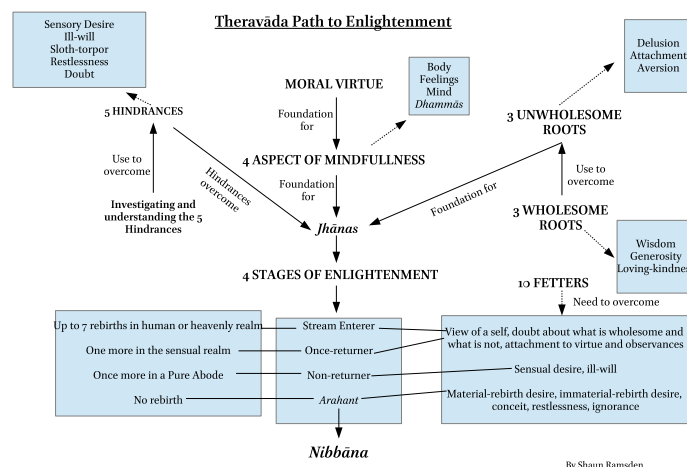


Figure 1. The Theravāda path to enlightenment

Figure one above describes the basic Theravāda path to enlightenment (or one such model as there are many potential variations). It begins with moral virtue or ethics (*sīla*) which is the basis for a calm mind by which one can thereby engage in successful mindfulness (*sati*) practises. Mindfulness can be based on either the body, feelings, mind or *dhammas*. Mindfulness is the basis for the *jhānas* (deep meditation), which allows one to enter into one of the Four Stages of Enlightenment (*sotāpanna*, *sakadāgāmi*, *anāgāmi*, *arahant*). Each stage is based on overcoming fetters (*samyojana*), with the highest stage being that of an *arahant* which means that one will not be reborn. To help one enter *jhāna*, the Three Unwholesome Roots (*akusala-mūla*) should be overcome by using the Three Wholesome Roots (*akusala-mūla*). The Five Hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇāni*) should be conquered by investigating and understanding them, which once again helps one to enter into *jhāna*. Entering into *jhāna* is the primary goal of most Theravādan schools.

5.1 Early Buddhism

Proto-Buddhism which could be summed up as Buddha's life story before the formation of the *saṅgha* was most likely the basis from which Theravādan Buddhism developed. It could be summarised as a four-step process:

- 1) Awakening: Material goods do not make for happiness. Buddha thought life at its essence was unsatisfactory (suffering).
- 2) Renunciation: The giving up of an ordinary life, material goods; everything.
- 3) Middle Way: Later on, we find Buddha called this, the Noble Eightfold Path (*āryaṣṭāṅgamārga*).
- 4) Meditation: The primary method to achieve enlightenment was meditation built on the foundation of the Noble Eightfold Path.

5.2 Overview of Theravāda Buddhism

Theravāda Buddhism gives us some insight into early Buddhism before it underwent various cultural changes. The key points of the Theravāda path are as follows:

Texts studied by practitioners are based on the *Pali Canon (Tīpiṭaka)* which is the closest thing available to Buddha's own words. The most important *Sutta* in the *Pali Canon* is sometimes said to be the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta (The Great Discourse of the Foundations of Mindfulness)* (Note 3). This *Sutta* describes the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri ariyasaccāni*) and how suffering is caused by the Five Aggregates (*pañcupādānakkhandhā*) (also known as the Five Khandas in English). It goes on further to describe how craving (*taṇhā*) (the cause of suffering) is established through agreeable and pleasurable circumstances which come about by satisfying the six senses which are the input source for the formation of the Five Aggregates. The *Sutta* describes how one should cease this craving by detaching from the Six Senses by using the Noble Eightfold Path which includes the Four Aspects of Mindfulness (*kāyā, vedanā, cittā, dhammas*) and the Four *Jhānas* which leads one to become an *arahant* (direction translation: deserving).

Traditionally the first three sermons given by Buddha were:

- 1) *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (The Setting in Motion of the Wheel of the Dhamma)*: The two extremes, the Middle Way, the Four Noble Truths (their twelve insights) and the Noble Eightfold Path are discussed.
- 2) *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta (The Discourse on the No-Self Characteristic)*: The no-self, Five Aggregates and impermanence of the Five Aggregates are mentioned.
- 3) *Ādittapariyāya Sutta (Fire Sermon)*: In this sermon the Six Internal Sense Bases (*ajjhattikāni āyatanāni*) (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind which leads to eye contact, ear contact etc.) are discussed. The idea of contact with the consciousness which makes feelings and cravings is mentioned. The Six External Sense Bases (*bāhirāni āyatanāni*) (visible forms, sound, smells, tastes, touches and mental objects) are also mentioned.

Theravāda Buddhism teaches that the "consciousness" comes in "contact" with the "sense bases" which in return creates a "feeling" and then a "craving." Buddha taught that each of these sense bases are burning with passion, aversion and delusion which all lead to suffering. Buddha probably taught achieving *nibbāna* (Note 4) from suffering came about by detaching oneself from the Six Base Senses by which the burning of passion (craving) would fade away.

The core philosophy of Theravāda includes:

- The Four Noble Truths, which specifically discuss the idea of suffering (Note 5).
- Dependant Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) and the Twelve Links (*nidānas*) which is a theory that describes *samsāra* (Note 6), karma and rebirth (Note 7).

- The Five Aggregates which are especially related to impermanence (*annica*).
- The Five Hindrances, which are created by the Five Aggregates.
- The Noble Eightfold Path, which is the path to *nibbāna* and consists of eight practices: Right view, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right *samādhi*. The first practices of the Noble Eightfold Path seem to set the practitioner up for meditation (Note 8).
- Three Unwholesome and Three Wholesome Roots (Note 9).
- The Four Aspects of Mindfulness, which are the foundational practises that lead to *jhāna*.
- The Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*satta bojjhaṅgā* or *satta sambojjhaṅgā*), which include, mindfulness, investigation into the nature of reality, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration and equanimity. These seem to be developed especially out of mindfulness practises.
- The Four *Jhānas*, which are directly used to become an *arahant*.
- Ten Fetters.
- The Six Realms of Existence.
- The Four Stages of Enlightenment (or Four Levels of Enlightenment).

The primary philosophy of Theravāda Buddhism seems to be based on the idea of no-self. The earliest mention of no-self maybe in the *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta* (*The Discourse on the No-self Characteristic*). In this discourse one gets an idea of what Buddha may have meant by no-self. The key points are as follows:

- There are Five Aggregates which means there are five bundles that constitute and completely explain a sentient being's mental and physical existence.
- The five bundles, aggregates or heaps are: Form (*rūpa*), sensations (feelings received from form) (*vedanā*), perceptions (*saññā*), mental activity or formations (*saṅkhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*).
- The aggregates demonstrate that they are each in themselves impermanent, subject to suffering (*dukkha*) and thus unfit for identification with a "self."
- In the Theravāda tradition, suffering arises when one identifies with or clings to a bundle. This suffering is extinguished by relinquishing attachments to the aggregates.

5.3 Theravādin Meditation Techniques

Theravādin meditation techniques can be highly varied depending on the school the technique comes from but the general key features that most schools include or adhere to are as follows:

- 1) Awareness: Abiding in conscious awareness by just watching thoughts come and go without having a conversation with them. This is also somewhat mentioned in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (*The Great Discourse of the Foundations of Mindfulness*).
- 2) Observing the breath: The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (*The Discourse of Establishing Mindfulness*) says to go into a forest and sit underneath a tree and simply watch the breath. If the breath is long, then notice that it is long, if short, then notice it is short. The *Ānāpānasati Sutta* (*Breath Mindfulness Discourse*) is a discourse that details the Buddha's instructions on using awareness of the breath (*ānāpāna*) as an initial focus for meditation. The *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (*The Great Discourse of the Foundations of Mindfulness*) also discusses this method of being mindful of the breath.
- 3) *Nimittas*: These are heavily discussed in Theravādin Buddhism, see Ajahn Brahmavamsa (2005) for further details.
- 4) *Jhāna*: The ultimate goal is to enter into the *jhānas* or deep meditation, see Ajahn Brahmavamsa (2005) for further details on the Thai Forest meditation technique used to enter *jhānas* (Note 10).

6. Mahāyāna Buddhism

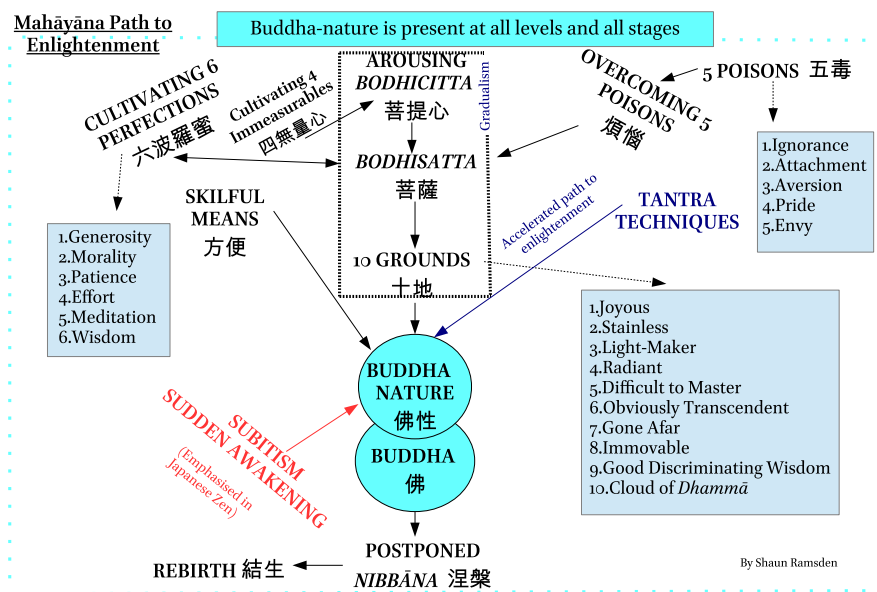


Figure 2. The Mahāyāna Path to Enlightenment

In figure two above, the reader can immediately see a completely different model when compared to Theravādin Buddhism. In this case the aim is to become a Buddha and not an *arahant*. There is also postponed *nibbāna* and thereby rebirth, instead of, *nibbāna* and no rebirth. The routes to *nibbāna* in Mahāyāna are also different of which there are four. The first is the gradual path (gradualism), where one initially arouses *bodhicitta* by cultivating the Four Immeasurables (*brahmavihārās*), then one works on becoming a *bodhisatta* by overcoming the Five Poisons (*kilesas* or 五毒) and cultivating the Six Perfections (*pāramī*), after which one then works on the Ten Grounds (*bhūmis*) by which one can find their Buddha-nature which has actually always been there and is thereby present at all stages and levels. The second route which is emphasised in Zen Buddhism is sudden awakening (subitism) where one suddenly realises their Buddha-nature. The third route is the accelerated one, which is used in Tibetan Buddhism and requires “initiation” into tantric techniques. The fourth route is that of skilful means (*upāya*). Making a bed from scratch using a manual could be regarded as the gradual path. If someone taught you the skills to make the bed then this would be a skilful means. The parable of the burning house in the *Lotus Sutra* is a famous skilful means story.

6.1 The Evolution of Buddhism under Foreign Conditions

As Buddhism travelled to East Asia and eventually north to Tibet, it under went various changes, whereby new schools of Buddhism emerged that could all be grouped under Mahāyāna Buddhism. The three main schools are as follows:

- 1) *Ch’an* (禪) Buddhism from China
- 2) Vajrayāna along with *Mantrayāna*, *Guhyamantrayāna*, *Tantrayāna*, Tantric Buddhism and Esoteric Buddhism that are associated with Tibet, Mongolian and Bhutan
- 3) Zen Buddhism from Japan

Each of these schools are highly varied and their approach to Buddhism differs. Subitism is sometimes emphasised in Zen, tantric practices can be emphasised in Tibetan Buddhism and skilful means is discussed in the *Lotus Sutra* (which is emphasised in *Ch’an* Buddhism). Three key features that all of these schools have in common are:

- 1) The path of the *bodhisattva* where ones strives to become a fully awakened Buddha, a *samyaksambuddha* or *samyaksambodhi*, which is done for the benefit of all sentient beings and is therefore also called the “*bodhisattva* vehicle (*bodhisattvayāna*).” It could be said that Buddhism changed from the Theravādin tradition, where the path is about “me” to a path that is now about “you” (hence the postponement of *nibbāna* in the *bodhisattva* path). This idea of changing the path to be about “you” is extremely apparent in Tibet Buddhism and the works of the Dalai Lama (who is meant to be the incarnation of the *Bodhisattva* of

Compassion or *Avalokiteśvara*). The idea of the *Bodhisattva* path can be summed up in the following three verses:

With a wish to free all beings
 I shall always go for refuge
 to the Buddha, *dhamma* and *saṅgha*
 until I reach full enlightenment.
 Enthused by wisdom and compassion,
 today in the Buddha's presence
 I generate the Mind for Full Awakening
 for the benefit of all sentient beings.
 As long as space endures,
 as long as sentient beings remain,
 until then, may I too remain
 and dispel the miseries of the world. (Gyatso, 2002, p. 119)

Repeating these verses three times is used to generate the altruistic intention of *bodhicitta* and is a part of the ceremony for generating *bodhicitta*. See Gyatso (2002, pp. 113-119) for further details.

- 1) Most schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism incorporate the Ten Grounds which are levels of attainment, along with the cultivating of the Four Immeasurables, Six Perfections and also emphasise the idea of the Five Poisons and the importance of overcoming them.
- 2) The concept of Buddha-nature is central to all Mahāyāna schools.

6.2 Buddha-Nature

In *Chán* Buddhism, Buddha-nature is called *fá xìng* (佛性). It is also called *jué xìng* (覺性) which means "awareness nature." Zen Buddhism came from *Chán* Buddhism, so Buddha-nature is also called *bussō* (佛性) in Japanese.

A possible variation to the words Buddha-nature but with the same meaning is the *tathāgatagarbha*. In Chinese *tathāgatagarbha* is *rú lái zàng* (如来藏). In Chinese *càng* (藏) means "to hide," "store" or "conceal." Within Mahāyāna Buddhism the terms *tathāgatagarbha* and *buddhadhātu* are used interchangeable. This allows us to get a possible definition of the word *tathāgatagarbha* for the early Chinese Buddhists; "a Buddha-nature that is stored within in us but hidden under layers of conditioning."

Tathāgata is primarily a *Pāli* word that Gautama used when referring to himself, it is commonly found in the *Pali Canon*. The word means "one who has thus gone." It can also be translated as "one who has thus come," and thereby could potentially have the meaning that the *tathāgata* is beyond all coming and going. The "*garbha*" means "root, embryo and essence (Lopez, 2001, p. 263)." Peter Harvey (2013, p. 139) translates *tathāgatagarbha* as "embryonic Buddha" and explains that this embryo is seen in all living beings and that no matter how deluded they are, they can mature into a Buddha.

According to Wayman and Wayman (1990, p. 42), the idea of the *tathāgatagarbha* is grounded on the concept that there is an intrinsically pure consciousness which is capable of growing into Buddhahood. In the *Tathāgatagarbha Suttas* it is this pure consciousness that is regarded to be the seed from which Buddhahood grows.

The *tathāgatagarbha* of sentient beings
 Is like the honey in a cave or tree.
 The entanglement of ignorance and tribulation
 Is like the swarm of bees
 That keep one from getting to it.
 For the sake of all beings,
 I expound the true *dhamma* with skilful means,
 Removing the bees of *kilesa*,

Revealing the *tathāgatagarbha*. (Grosnick, 2007, p. 97)

6.3 Three Key Features of Tibetan Buddhism

As Tibet was one of the later countries to receive Buddhism, it incorporated various ideas from different schools of thought: Buddha-nature (most likely from China), tantra techniques (most likely from India's yogis) and the idea of no-self (probably from the Theravādins). Tibetan Buddhism is incredibly varied in its schools of thought and teachings. Some generalised and well-known features of Tibetan Buddhism are as follows:

First feature: Doctrine of two truths. *Madhyamaka* school of Mahāyāna Buddhism was founded by *Nāgārjuna*. This school set forth the Buddhist doctrine of the two truths which differentiates between two levels of reality (*satya*) in the teachings of the Buddha. These were the "provisional" (*saṃvṛti*) truth and the "ultimate" (*paramārtha*) truth. The provisional truth is the world we see through our conditioned mind, while the ultimate truth is the real reality of the world which is one empty of any mental conditioning.

Second feature: The concept of emptiness. *Nāgārjuna's* major thematic focus was the concept of emptiness (*śūnyatā*). The Dalai Lama (2010) gives a definition of emptiness. He says it does not mean zero but instead that it is something which is there but what is there, has no independent absolute existence, as everything is always changing and therefore dependent on something. As part of his analysis on the emptiness of phenomena in the *Mūlamadhyamakārikā*, *Nāgārjuna* critiques own-being or own-becoming (*svabhāva*) in several different ways. He discusses the problems of positing any sort of inherent essence to causation, movement, change and personal identity. *Nāgārjuna's* logical analysis is based on four basic propositions (Dumoulin, 1998, p. 43):

- 1) All things (*dhamma*) exist: Affirmation of being, negation of non-being
- 2) All things (*dhamma*) do not exist: Affirmation of non-being, negation of being
- 3) All things (*dhamma*) both exist and do not exist: Both affirmation and negation
- 4) All things (*dhamma*) neither exist nor do not exist: Neither affirmation nor negation

Yogācāra's believe the world is made up by the way you see it with your mind and therefore to some degree, everything is an illusion. This illusion is a kind of emptiness as there is lack of subject-object duality (a real lack of subject-object, not an imagined one). The *Yogācāra's* said there are three realities: Transcendent reality (the ultimate reality of viewing things with an empty mind), dependent reality (the world seen through mental conditioning) and the imaginary reality (the reality of dreams). See *vijñapti-mātra* for further details.

Third feature: The diamond mind. In a book written by Jeffery Hopkins but based on the Dalai Lama's oral teaching he describes the following:

I have great interest in the statement by many wise persons in all orders of Tibetan Buddhism that their systems come down to the same final principle (Dalai Lama, 2016, p. 41).

Dalai Lama (2016, pp. 42-43) goes on to describe the names given to this basic principle:

- Fundamental innate wisdom of clear light
- Fundamental innate mind of clear light
- Space-diamond pervading space
- Ordinary consciousness
- Jewel Mind
- Innermost awareness
- Diamond mind of clear light

Dalai Lama (2016, p. 42) explains that everything, without exception, is complete in the continuum of "innermost awareness," and that inner awareness is naturally arisen since it has always been and will always be.

6.4 Mind Training

In Tibetan Buddhism mind training is called *lojong*. The essence of *lojong* is training the mind to stop grasping at the self.

Whatever harms are in the world, whatever dangers and sufferings are in the world, all of these arise from grasping at the self; what good is this great demon for me? (From *A Commentary on the "Seven-Point Mind Training* by S é Chilbu Chökyi Gyaltzen) (Jinpa, 2011, p. 58).

If "self-grasping" is the greatest demon to ever exist, what is the antidote for it? *Nāgārjuna*, in a *Letter to a*

Friend gives the answer:

Even stupid animals such as cows know how to rescue themselves from suffering; they know how to get water when they suffer from thirst; they know how to get fresh new shoots when they suffer from hunger. Thus, being concerned about our own suffering is not the Wise Ones' way of thinking. *Bodhisattvas* always neglect their own happiness and wisely concern themselves with the benefit of countless other beings. This is their great significant quality. Through this, Wise Ones are not only able to accomplish their own highest happiness, but are also able to fulfil the needs of countless other beings (Wangchen, 2009, p. 100).

An example of mind training (not meditation) from the Theravādin schools are the *brahmavihāras* which are known as a series of “four Buddhist meditation practices” and are designed in order for one to cultivate them. They are sometimes also known as the, Four Immeasurables (*appamaññā*). See Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000, p. 89) for further details.

The four *brahmavihāras*:

- 1) Loving-kindness (*mettā*): Generally wishing happiness for all beings
- 2) Compassion (*karuṇā*): The wish for all beings to be free of suffering
- 3) Empathetic joy (*muditā*): Happiness for others good fortune
- 4) Equanimity (*upekkhā*): Equanimity in all of life's ups and downs

6.5 Breath Training

The Chinese Daoists and many Chinese Buddhists used the breath to influence their *qì* as did the yogis, who used their breath to influence their *prāṇa*. It is interesting how for both the Daoists and the yogis, the words *qì* and *prāṇa* can both mean life force, energy and/or vital breath. It is also important to note that there was a tradition of not breathing (seen as a very high level of cultivation) in meditation amongst both the ancient Chinese Buddhists and Indians. *Prāṇāyāma* is mentioned in verse 4.29 of the *Bhagavadgītā*, it describes the breath as completely stopping to remain in trance. Venerable Hsuan Hua also taught that external breathing reaches a state of stillness in correct meditation.

A practitioner with sufficient skill does not breathe externally. That external breathing has stopped, but the internal breathing functions. With internal breathing there is no exhalation through the nose or mouth, but all pores on the body are breathing. A person who is breathing internally appears to be dead but actually he has not died. He does not breath externally but the internal breathing comes alive. (Hua, 2004, p. 46)

6.6 Mahāyāna Buddhism Combined the Idea of No-Self and Emptiness Together

6.6.1 The Doctrine of No-Self According to Chán Buddhism

In Chinese no-self is written *wúwǒ* (無我) which means “no/without self.” In the Mahāyāna tradition it is said, the nature of all aggregates are intrinsically empty of independent existence. The early Mahāyāna Buddhist texts link their discussion of emptiness to no-self and *nibbāna*. They do so, states Choong (1999, p. 86) in three ways. First, in the common sense of a monk's meditative state of emptiness. Second, with the main sense of no-self or “everything in the world is empty of self.” Third, with the ultimate sense of *nibbāna* or realisation of emptiness and thus an end to rebirth cycles of suffering. It is therefore sometimes stated that the no-self doctrine is another aspect of emptiness, its realisation is the nature of the *nibbāna* state and an end to rebirths.

This idea is summed up in the *Classic Śamatha-vipassanā Meditation Manual*, chapter six: The actual cultivation, written by Śramaṇa Zhiyi (沙門智顓) (538-597 CE), it says:

As for each of the and every one of all the *dhammas*, consisting of causes and conditions, they are empty, devoid of any [inherently-existent] entity. One puts the mind to rest and penetrates to the original source. It is on this account that one is known as a *śramaṇa* (Bhikshu Dharmamitra, 1990, p. 105).

6.6.2 The Doctrine of No-Self According to Tibetan Buddhism

Nāgārjuna denied there is anything called a self-nature as well as other-nature, emphasising that “such obsessions can be prevented by the perception of emptiness (Kalupahana, 2015, p. 56).” For further details on *Nāgārjuna's* analysis of emptiness, see Billington (2002, pp. 58-59). In Tibetan Buddhism (*Gelug* tradition) a framework is given to prove there is no-self. This framework is based on the analysis of whether or not this “I” truly exists and if it does, where? The framework is as follows (Wangchen, 2009, p. 205):

- 1) Reflecting on whether an inherently existing self exists among the aggregates
- 2) Reflecting on whether the inherently existence self exists separately from the aggregates
- 3) Conclusive reasoning: The conclusive reasoning is, if the “I” neither exists among the aggregates or exists separately from them, then the “I” cannot exist at all.

Lama Tsonghkapa said:

Gaining the pure realisation of emptiness is not only a matter of being able to negate the inherent existence of the self. It is just as important to maintain the existence of the “I” at the conventional “I.” (Wangchen, 2009, p. 211).

6.6.3 Intrusive Philosophical Daoist Influences in Chán Buddhism

Chinese Buddhism and later Tibetan Buddhism (probably from Chinese Buddhist influences) mixed the idea of emptiness and no-self together as one concept. The most likely reason for this is that Chinese Buddhists combined the core philosophical Daoist idea of emptiness with the core Theravādin idea of no-self as a means to understand a difficult and complex concept.

Goddard (2007, p. 19) describes how Daisetsu Suzuki spoke of it as:

The natural evolution of Buddhism under Daoist conditions.

The idea of emptiness/nothingness in Chinese Buddhism is mentioned in detail in the *Not Real Empty Doctrine* 《不真空論》 *Bùzhēn Kōnglùn*. The philosophical Daoist influences are apparent in this text. In philosophical Daoism the idea of *wú* (無) or emptiness/nothingness is especially emphasised (see *Dàodéjīng* chapter eleven and chapter forty-eight for two examples). In the *Not Real Empty Doctrine* text below, the use of the character *wú* (無) or emptiness/nothingness is used many times.

《不真空論》有其所以不有，故雖有而非有，有其所以不無，故雖無而非無。雖無而非無，無者不絕虛；雖有而非有，有者非真有。

[To] have is so [to] not have, therefore, although [you] have, yet [you do] not have (無), [to] so have is not nothing (無), therefore, although [there is] nothing (無), yet [there is] not [really] nothing (無). Although [there is] nothing (無), yet not [really] nothing (無), nothing (無) is not completely empty. Although having, [is] yet not having, having is not really having.

Traditionally speaking the first Buddhist text in Chinese was the *Forty-two Chapters Spoken by Buddha Classic* 《佛說四十二章經》 *Fú Shuō Sìshí'èr Zhāng Jīng*. In this text we find the character for Dao (道) used well over sixty times. We also see the characters for non-action, *wúwéi* (無為). This text gives clear insight into how early Buddhism was immediately changed and adapted to fit the new Chinese culture.

《佛說四十二章經第二章》佛言：出家沙門者，斷欲去愛，識自心源，達佛深理，悟無為法。內無所得，外無所求，心不繫道，亦不結業。無念無作，非修非證，不歷諸位，而自崇最，名之為道。

Buddha said, [the] *śramaṇa* [who has] left [his] home, cuts off [his] desires [and,] gets rid [of his] affections, [he] knows [the] origins [of his] heart, penetrates [the] depth of Buddha's principles [and] awakens [to the] method of non-action (無為). Having emptiness (or nothingness) [with]in, [and] seeking nothing (or emptiness) externally, [his] heart [is] not tied [by any] method, [and he is] also not bound [by] karma. Thinking [of] nothing [and] doing nothing, not cultivating, not attaining, without passing through all [the] positions (steps), yet [he him]self [reaches the] loftiest [of all], [this is] called the Dao (道).

We also see strong parallels between the *Dàodéjīng*, chapter eleven and the idea of intangible, *wú xíng* (無形) and tangible, *yǒu xíng* (有形) in Chinese Buddhism. In chapter eleven of the *Dàodéjīng* it talks about the use or “being” (tangibleness) of a cup lies in its “non-being,” or emptiness (intangibility).

《道德經·十一章》埏埴以為器，當其無，有器之用。

Mould clay so [as to] make [a] vessel, by its emptiness (無), [the] vessel has use (有).

《大乘顯識經》舌與食物俱有形色而味無形。

In a Chinese Buddhist text called the *Dàchén Xīnshì Jīng* it says: [The] tongue and foods all [have their] tangible (有形) (visible) colours, yet [they also have] tastes [that are] intangible (無形).

It is sometimes mentioned by Chinese Buddhists that there are two types of meditation. The intangible type, where one just remains in their own awareness or the tangible one, where one focuses on something (such as the tip of the nose).

The *dāntián* (丹田) is another intrusive concept consistently used and mentioned in ancient Chinese Buddhist texts. In a famous Buddhist text called the *Classic Śamatha-vipassanā Meditation Manual*, chapter nine: Treatment of disorders, written by Śramaṇa Zhìyī (538-597 CE), it says (Bhikshu Dharmamitra, 1990, p. 177):

《修習止觀坐禪法要.九章》次有師言躋下一寸名憂陀那此云丹田。

Next [there are] masters [that] have said: One inch below the navel [is] called the *yōutuónà* (*udāna*). It [is] said [this is the] *dāntián*.

Udāna is one of the five *vāyus* (the one that is responsible for the upward breath). It is also one of the ten petals or *prāṇas* which is said to be regulated by the *manipūra cakra*.

6.7 Buddhists Brought Medical Knowledge with Them to China at a Very Early Stage in History

The Indian Buddhists did not just bring Buddhism with them, they also appear to have played an especially critical role in the history of Chinese medicine. This is extremely important because many Chinese meditation practices were based on Chinese medicine theory (one such example is the microscopic orbit meditation). According to certain scholars, some of the so-called famous ancient God-like Chinese medicine doctors, appear to have come from India. Two such examples are *Hu àu ó* (華佗) and *Biǎnquè* (扁鵲).

In most accounts of Chinese medical history, one reads of the transmission of Indian medicine to China in the early medieval period via Buddhism. In the vast number of Chinese Buddhist texts pertaining to healing from the period, no human figure is more elaborated than the “Medicine King,” *Yīwáng* 醫王, known in Sanskrit as *Jīvaka Kumārabhṛta*. Historical studies of Indo-Sinitic medical exchange in English, French and Chinese long have pointed to similarities between the biographies of *Jīvaka* and the legendary Chinese physicians *Biǎnquè and Hu àu ó*. (Salguero, 2009, pp. 183-184)

It is possible to know that Buddhists were connected to China at least as early as Prince *Líuyīng* 劉英 (who died 71 AD) but probably much earlier. These connections are important because they portray how early the Buddhists may have been bringing medical knowledge to China and how early they were influencing meditation techniques within China (if there were even any at such an early stage).

《後漢書.列傳.西域傳》世傳明帝梦见金人·長大·頂有光明·以問群臣·或曰:「西方有神·名曰佛·其形長丈六尺·而黃金色。」帝於是遣使天竺·問佛道法·遂於中國图画形象焉·楚王英始信其術·中國因此頗有奉其道者·後桓帝好神·數祀浮屠·老子·百姓稍有奉者·後遂轉盛。

In the *Hòu Hànsū* (above), it describes how in the West there is a god whose name is *F ó* (佛) (Buddha), after which a golden statue of him is described. The *Hòu Hànsū* is a book that covers the history of the Han dynasty from 6 to 189 CE. Meaning that Buddha was already well known in China around that time, clearly portraying networking between India and China.

Even though Chinese medicine is famous for its acupuncture theory and points, which contributed heavily to the various schools of later Daoism, it was the Indians who had written about *marma* points (most likely the precursors to acupuncture points and *cakras*) possibly as early as around 1700 BCE but especially from the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* (Frawley, Ranade, & Lele 2003, p. 8). Similarities between these two systems of medicine are numerous, for example: Using the pulse as the primary tool for diagnosis and having many similar concepts (five elements - five movements; yin/yang - *puruṣa/prakṛti*; *jīng/qì* - *vīrya/prāṇa*; hot/cold - *pitta/kapha*; conception/governing vessels - *idā/pīngala*; five tastes - six tastes etc). Both Chinese medicine and *Āyurveda* have far too many similarities for it to be mere coincidence (Note 11).

It is interesting to note that according to Bronkhorst (2007, p. 56) it is with Buddhism and the Greater Magadha area that the origins of *Āyurveda* begin. If this is correct it furthers strengthens the argument that Greater Magadha had a highly developed culture with sciences that were especially advanced for that time in human history. Bronkhorst (2007, p. 58) explains that there were differences in the practice of medicine between the Vedic cultural area and Greater Magadha, and that *Āyurveda* does not have its roots in Vedic medical practices.

The healing of these Brahmins as described in the above passage ... magico-religious, using sorcery, spells and, amulets and reminiscent of the early Vedic medical tradition reflected in the *Atharvavedaḥ*. This form of healing is, on the whole, contrary to the empirical and rational medicine of the early Buddhist and *Āyurvedic* literature, in which references to magical techniques are rare (Bronkhorst, 2007, p. 58).

6.8 Mahāyāna Meditation Techniques

All Mahāyāna schools use chanting as meditation in their own respective languages. Below are the three main schools of Mahāyāna and their meditation techniques.

Ch’an Buddhism: For a detailed version of early *Ch’an* Buddhist meditation, see the *Classic Śamatha-vipassanā Meditation Manual*, written by *Śramaṇa Zhìyī* (538-597 CE). The opening lines of chapter six: The actual cultivation, is as follows:

As for the cultivation of calming-and-insight, there are two modes. The first is cultivation while sitting. The second is cultivation while moving through objective conditions and as one relates to the objective sphere (Bhikshu Dharmamitra, 1990, p. 103).

The text goes on to explain that in “calming during seated meditation” there are three methods (Bhikshu Dharmamitra, 1990, p. 105):

- Calming by anchoring attention on an object in the objective sphere (i.e. tip of nose or navel).
- Calming through controlling the mind (i.e. exerting control no matter what comes up in the mind in order to prevent it from running off and becoming scattered).
- Calming through realisation or truth (i.e. *dhammas* are simply produced through cause and condition, therefore, if the mind does not seize upon them, the false thinking mind will come to rest).

Followed by this are two methods of insight used during seated meditation (Bhikshu Dharmamitra, 1990, p. 109):

- Counteractive insight (i.e. contemplation of impurity aimed at counteracting desire, contemplation of loving-kindness aimed at counteracting hatred, contemplation of the sense realms to counteract attachment to the self and contemplation of breath counting aimed at counteracting excessive discursive thinking).
- Right insight contemplation (i.e. the contemplation of all *dhammas* as devoid of inherently existent aspects and also as produced from cause and condition etc).

The text goes on to further to describe that when the practitioner is in meditation, if his mind is dim and he is falling asleep (sinking), then he should cultivate insight to bring forth illumination. If his mind is moving about (floating), then he should cultivate calm in order to bring it to a halt (Bhikshu Dharmamitra, 1990, p. 111).

Zen Buddhism: See Harada (1993, pp. 73-83) for a Zen Buddhist meditation technique based on Hakuin Ekaku teachings (this technique of meditation clearly has Chinese origins with its focus on the abdomen). The key feature of Zen meditation in all schools is the emphasis on posture.

These forms are not the means of obtaining the right state of mind. To take this posture is itself to have the right state of mind. There is no need to obtain some special state of mind. (Suzuki, 2011, p. 7)

Tibetan Buddhism: Meditation techniques can be vast and varied and sometimes appear to have been influenced by later Indian yogic techniques. See Dalai Lama (2008, p. 94) and Dalai Lama (2016, p. 12) for two different forms of visualisation techniques. For a highly detailed description on how one school of Tibetan Buddhist does *cakra* meditation, see Gangchen (2010). Another example of Tibetan visualisation meditation is *tummo* meditation. It is also called *Chandali* yoga and creates “yogic heat.” This style of breathing was mentioned in the *Six Dharmas of Nāropa* (1016-1100 CE) and has similarities with the *haṭhayoga* school of thought. The vase breathing technique is especially important.

The vase breathing meditation comprises four steps: Inhaling; filling the right and left channels with air; milking the air from the two side channels into the central channel; and exhaling or shooting up like an arrow (Yeshe, 2015, p. 122).

The overall technique of *tummo* is very complex, see Yeshe (2015) for full details. A very short and simplified version of it (vase breathing) was described by Drukchen Pema Karpo (1527-1592 CE) in *A Record of Mahāmudrā Instructions*.

Expel the stale breath three times. Slowly inhale the upper air through the nose. Draw up the lower air and apply yourself to holding it as much as you can. That which is called the “mind difficult to completely tame” is focused upon as being nothing other than wind, so that when the movement of the wind ceases, thoughts that stray toward objects will also cease (Roberts, 2014, p. 111).

7. Philosophical Daoism

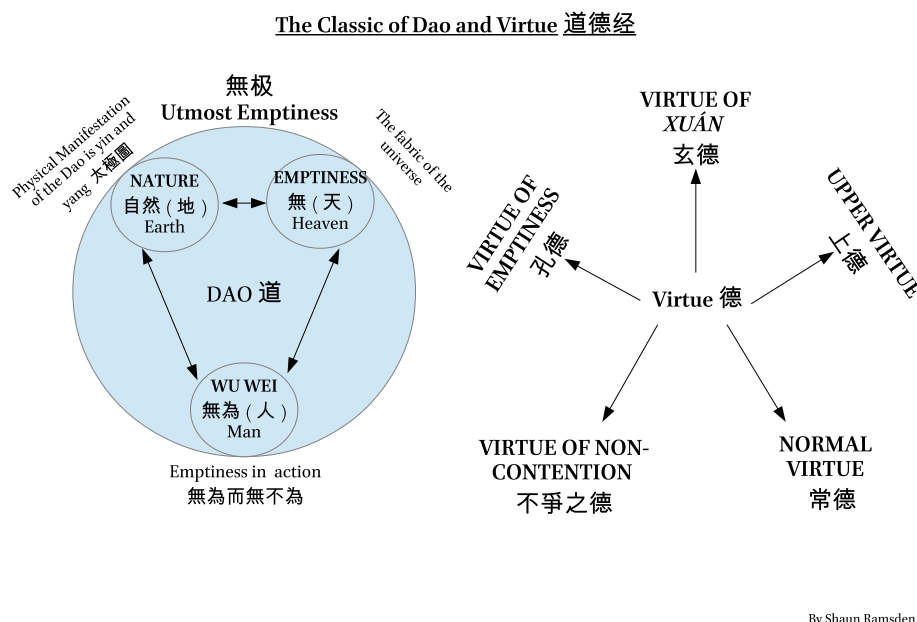


Figure 3. The Basic Principles of Philosophical Daoism

Figure three above is based on the authors interpretation of the key principles presented in the *Dàodéjīng*. The Dao part on the left is based upon the sky, earth and man model presented throughout ancient Chinese thought. The sky is empty, *wú* (無), and the laws of nature are based on yin and yang (duality). Man adheres to the earth’s laws through the philosophy of emptiness in action or non-action, which means, to abide by nature’s way as a guiding principle for living. To adhere to the skies emptiness, one uses emptiness as a guiding philosophical system. To further expound on these ideas the five “virtues” were given by Laozi which provide examples of how to live according to the sky and earth. For example, the value of a cup lies in its emptiness and nature does not interfere or contend; it just is.

7.1 Two Types of Daoism

1) Daoist religion (道教): This was created by the ancient Chinese as a response to the arrival of Buddhism (Knauer, 2006, pp. 90-91).

2) Daoist philosophy (道家):

- Defining what is philosophical Daoism is difficult, as the belief system incorporates many different ideas over a long period of time. The author would include the works of Laozi, Zhuangzi and associated texts, together with those Daoist practices centered specifically around the abdomen under the heading of “philosophical Daoism.”

The reason for grouping practices centered around the abdomen as related to philosophical Daoism is as follows; it seems as though within China, Laozi was the first author to use the word “abdomen” in his writings in a philosophical sense.

《道德經·第三張》是以·聖人之治·虛其心·實其腹·弱其志·強其骨。

Dàodéjīng, chapter three: So, [the] sage manages [by] emptying the heart, filling the abdomen, weakening the will [and] strengthening the bones.

《道德經·第十二章》是以·聖人·為腹不為目·故·去彼取此。

Dàodéjīng, chapter twelve: So, [the] sage does [with his] abdomen [and does] not do [with his] eyes, therefore, [he] leaves that [and] gets this.

While the abdomen may simply refer to the stomach, and is therefore a simile that means, all one needs in life is to have enough food to be satisfied. Knowing the heavy emphasis that is placed on the abdomen in Chinese martial arts, Daoism in general and some forms of Daoist meditation; combined with the fact that in Japan the character used for “*tanden*” (*dāntián*) is *hara* (腹), which is the same used by Laozi and it may suggest a much

deeper meaning than just a simple body part.

- Possible early proto-origins in the Western Zhou dynasty with Indo-European nomads, connecting the philosophy of Dao to that of Zoroastrian Iranians and Vedic Indo-Aryans.

Just as one could easily argue that Dao is the core concept presented in the *Dàodéjīng*, one may also put forward the idea that *ṛta* permeates all early *Ṛgvedic* thought due to it being the principle of cosmic order. There is a strong correlation between the idea of Dao presented in the *Dàodéjīng*, and that of *ṛta* (truth/cosmic order) from the Vedas, where *ṛta* could be described as:

The principle of cosmic order that ensures the integrated functioning of the natural order, divine order, human order, and sacrificial order (Holdredge, 2004, p. 215).

The idea of *ṛta* is commonly mentioned as being equivalent to the Zoroastrian concept of *aša* (Ara, 2006, p. 107), with both having tripartition/tripartite function at their basis. Zoroastrian; earth, atmosphere, and heaven (Ara, 2006, p. 107). Society was based on three groups; “*āthravan* (priest) *rathaēštār* (one who stands in the chariot, a warrior) and *vāstryō-fšuyant* (husbandman, farmer)” (Ara, 2006, p. 106). The concept of *ṛta* has three key features; “*gati* (continuous movement or change), *saṅghaṭana* (a system based on interdependence of parts) and *niyati* (inherent order of interdependence and movement)” (Sharma, 1990, p. 16), while society was based on; *Brāhmaṇa* (priest) *kṣatra*, (warrior) and *vaiśya* (herder-cultivators). The Dao also followed tripartition:

《道德經.四十二章》道生一·一生二·二生三·三生萬物。

Dàodéjīng, chapter forty-two: [The] *Dào* produces one, one produces two, two produces three [and] three produces [the] ten thousand things.

《道德經.二十五章》故·道大·天大·地大·王亦大。

Dàodéjīng, chapter twenty-five: Therefore, [there is the] great *Dào*, great sky, great earth [and the] king [who is] also great.

In proto-Daoism we also see tripartition in relation to the *Yijing*'s trigrams, along with the sky, earth and man (天地人) model presented throughout early Daoist thought; chapter ten: *Tàihóng* (泰鴻) of the 《鶡冠子.泰鴻》 *Héguānzi* is one such early example where this model (sky, earth, man) is mentioned.

While the Dao, *ṛta* and *aša* were not necessarily dualistic in themselves, their surrounding philosophies were. Zoroastrian; dualism was based on two fundamental causal principles; chaos and order, which were the underlying existence of the entire world (Ara, 2006, p. 107). For Vedic dualism see *Nāsadīya Sūkta*. We can also note that these same dualistic and tripartition divisions are central to the *Sāṅkhya* school (*puruṣa*, *prakṛti* and the *gunas*). Early Daoist literature also mentions dualism through the idea of yin and yang (see *Dàodéjīng* chapter forty-two) as does proto-Daoism with its use in the *Yijing* (broken and solid lines).

Similarities between Dao and *ṛta* can be found throughout each concept's literature. Just as the Dao preceded god (see *Dàodéjīng* chapter four), we find *ṛta* also came before the gods.

The *ṛta* or dharma was not created or willed by any being or beings, the gods or any other above them. It existed before them but became known to them. (Brown, 1961, p. 373)

Committing oneself to the Dao and there is harmony and longevity (see *Dàodéjīng* chapter thirty and forty-two). Committing one's actions to the governance of *ṛta* and there are many “goods,” such as health and survival.

Indian people ... placed on the side of ‘good,’ such things as: happiness, health, survival ... The highest good (summum bonum), however, expresses itself in the total harmony of the cosmic or natural order characterized as *ṛta* ... The prescribed pattern of social and moral order is thus conceived as a correlate of the natural order ... This convergence of the cosmic and the moral orders is universally commended in due course in the all-embracing appellation of dharma. (Bilimoria, 2007, p. 33)

This strong correlation between the Dao and *ṛta* can be summed up in the way they are both very similar to nature, the natural world, nature's regulation, nature's order and nature's way.

In the *Ṛgveda Samhitā* (c.1500–1200 BCE), the earliest and most authoritative of the Vedic texts *ṛta* is the principle of cosmic order that ensures the integrated functioning of the natural order ... As the regulative principle of the natural order *ṛta* governs the movements of the sun, moon, and stars, the rhythms of the seasons, and the cycles of day and night. *Ṛta* is the power of natural law that causes the rains to fall, the rivers to flow, and the sun to send forth its light. (Holdredge, 2004, p. 215)

In the *Dàodéjīng*, chapter twenty-five, it says:

《道德經.二十五章》人法地·地法天·天法道·道法自然。

Man patterns (models) [him-self on the] earth, [the] sky patterns (models) [it-self on the] Dào [and the] Dào patterns (models) [it-self on] nature.

These tripartition and dualistic features mentioned above may have an Indo-European origin, as Indo-European society followed a tripartite ideology, while its myths and religions were based on dualism (Mallory, 1989, pp. 139-140). If proto-Daoism was developed in the Zhou dynasty with the *Yijing*'s trigrams being one such example, and the hypothesis of Ramsden (2021) is correct, in that the Zhou kings were Indo-European in culture; combine this with the idea that the Andronovo culture (an Indo-European culture) was Indo-Iranian (Mallory & Adams 1997, p. 20) and the Zoroastrians (who were Iranians – second migratory wave of Indo-Iranians) and the Indo-Aryans (first migratory wave of Indo-Iranians) (Note 12) were the progenitors of Vedic culture (there is much evidence for this, with one key piece being; Vedic Sanskrit and Avestan are almost mutually intelligible, see Ramsden (2021, pp. 9-11) for further details) (Note 13), then the fact that the concepts of Dao, *ṛta* and *aṣṭa* appearing to be similar may not actually be so coincidental.

- There is no evidence to suggest a person named Laozi ever existed (Mair, 1990, pp. 119-130).
- Some scholars note parallels between the *Dàodéjīng* and the *Bhagavadgītā* (Mair, 1990, p. xv).
- Early Daoists were generally known as the *huánglǎo* (黃老).
- Chinese *dàoyīn* (導引) (Note 14) has a strong correlation to Indian yoga. Its connection is not based on modern-day *āsana* (as originally *āsana* was related to seated meditation postures) but may potentially be based primarily on breathing techniques. One example of early *dàoyīn* practises is described below.

《莊子.外篇.刻意》吹呬呼吸·吐故納新·熊經鳥申·為壽·而已矣·此道引之士·養形之人·彭祖壽考者·之所好也。

[*Zhuāngzǐ* said:] Blow, breath out, exhale, inhale; expelling [the old], thereby receiving [the] new, [stand] vertical [like a] bear, [and] extend [the body like a] bird, [so as] to [have a] long life, that is it! This [is] the scholars *dàoyīn*, [and what the] people [who] nourish [their] form, [and those who wish to] examine *Péngzǔ*'s longevity [are] fond [of].

In the《說文解字》*Shuōwén Jiězì* we are told that the “*dào*” (導) of *dàoyīn* (導引) means the “*yīn*” (引) of *dàoyīn* (導引). The “*yīn*” (引) of *dàoyīn* means to draw, stretch or pull, like you would a bow. In numerous ancient texts (Note 15) we commonly see the *dàoyīn* (導引) characters used with the character *qì* 氣 (導引蓄氣·導引致氣·行氣導引·導引行氣). The character 氣 *qì* (Note 16), has had many meanings over the centuries but can mean “vital air/energy.”

In regard to *prāṇāyāma*, the yoga practitioners from the Krishnamacharya tradition explain that *āyāma* means to extend and stretch (Desikachar, 1995, p. 54) while *prāṇa* has the exact same meaning as *qì*. In this case *prāṇāyāma* would mean to extend and stretch the vital air/energy (by using the breath). The author would translate *dàoyīn* as, “stretching, pulling, leading (or guiding).” As mentioned above this stretching or pulling is most commonly used with the character for *qì*. Here we get the exact same meaning as *prāṇāyāma*.

- A book called *Laozi* was compiled around 300 BCE, probably by various authors over a certain time period.
- The *dé* part of the *Dàodéjīng* may have been in response to the more hierarchical and authoritarian governing systems that were developing at the time.
- Comparisons can be drawn between India's idea of non-action (karma means action) and Laozi's non-action. The Jains followed a non-action primarily of the body, the Buddhists followed a non-action specifically of the mind to the senses, the Brahmins followed a non-action of the mind and the Daoists followed a non-action of action, which means living as naturally as possible.
- It's difficult not to notice the striking similarities between Laozi's Dao and Kapila's *Sāṅkhya* school. Both are strongly dualistic and atheist and both have the theory of three: *Sāṅkhya* has the three *guṇas* and Dao has the sky (天), earth (地), man (人). The correlations between the idea of the Dao and *Puruṣa* are also similar.

This *Puruṣa* is all that yet hath been and all that is to be. (*Rgveda*, mandala ten, hymn ninety, verse two)

《道德經.第一章》無名天地之始·有名萬物之母。

Dàodéjīng, chapter one says: Nameless, the start [of the] sky [and the] earth. [To] have [a] name, the mother [of] ten thousand things.

- The ideas of Dao and *dé* (德) have permeated Chinese language and thinking. In Mandarin, “I know” is *wǒ*

zhīdào (我知道), “I know the Dao.” A person of high morals and wisdom is said to have *dào dé* (道德), Dao and virtue.

7.2 Core Principles of Daoist Philosophy

- 1) Emptiness and how it has manifested all that exists: Based on the idea of the *wú jí* (無極) (see *Dào dé jīng*, chapter eleven and chapter twenty-eight).
- 2) Naturalness, *zì rán* (自然): Based on the idea of the *tài jí* (太極) or yin and yang and follows the laws of nature (see *Dào dé jīng*, chapter twenty-five).
- 3) No action, yet nothing is not done, *wú wéi ér wú bù wéi* (無為而無不為): Based on using the above two principles in daily life (see *Dào dé jīng*, chapter forty-eight).
- 4) Five “virtues”: Laozi’s virtue is built on living in accordance with the above three principles and does not have anything to do with integrity or morals in the modern sense of the word (see chapter five where Laozi says, the sage treats the people as straw dogs).
- 5) The ultimate goal of early Daoists appears to have been longevity (Note 17) and therefore survival and health (see *Dào dé jīng*, chapter thirty-three).

7.3 Daoist Meditation Techniques

- 1) Laozi: Breath like a baby (see *Dào dé jīng*, chapter ten). This method hints towards some form of breath observation without any interference.

《道德經第十章》專氣致柔，能嬰兒乎。

Concentrate [your] *qì* (breath) [to] attain softness, can [you be like an] infant?

- 2) Embryo Breathing Classic 《胎息經》 *Tāixī jīng*: This text conveys a breathing technique where both the in breath and the out breath initiate from the abdomen (See appendix 4 for a full translation of the text).

《胎息經》胎從伏氣中結，氣從有胎中息。

[The] embryo comes [from the] accumulation [of] concealed *qì* [the] *qì* comes [from] having breathed [at the] embryo.

The *Tāixī jīng* is probably the first detailed version of *tūnà* (吐納) breathing that was mentioned in old Chinese medical books like the 《傷寒雜病論》 *Shānghán Zábìng Lùn*. It was also mentioned in the 《後漢書》 *Hòu Hànshū*, where it is clearly described as a type of breathing method.

《後漢書·列傳·崔駰列傳》呼吸吐納

Tūnà breathing.

- 3) *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子 also recommended breathing practices:

《莊子·內篇·大宗師》古之真人，其寢不夢，其覺無憂，其食不甘，其息深深。真人之息以踵，眾人之息以喉。屈服者，其嗑言若哇。其耆欲深者，其天機淺。

The *Zhēnrén* [of] old, [did] not dream [when] they slept, they [did] not feel anxiety, [their] food [was] not sweet, [and they] breathed deeply. *Zhēnrén* breathed with [their] heels, [while] everyone [else] breathed with [their] throats. [When] surrendering, their choking words [were] like [the] sound of vomiting. Their deep lusts, desires, [and] their [understanding of the] the skies design [is] shallow.

《淮南子·精神訓》吹呶呼吸，吐故內新。

《論衡·道虛》若吹呶呼吸，吐故內新，熊經鳥伸，鳧浴猿躩，鴟視虎顧，是養形之人也，不以滑心。

The same eight characters (underlined above) of this breathing that are found in 《莊子·內篇·大宗師》 *Zhuāngzǐ* are also mentioned in the 《淮南子·精神訓》 *Huáinánzǐ* and the 《論衡·道虛》 *Lúnhéng Dào Xū* as seen in the above two lines. It is interesting to note the emphasis on the out breath with the three characters: *Chuī xǔ hū* (吹呶呼), while only one character for the in breath, *xī* (吸).

- 4) Melting butter visualization (with an emphasis on the *dāntián*) to treat “Zen sickness” (see Hakuin Ekaku: *Idle Talk on a Night Boat*, 《夜船閑話》 *Yasen Kanna*).
- 5) Certain styles of Zen Buddhist meditation probably give the most detailed version of a common type of Daoist meditation (meditating on the breath in the abdomen). Focusing on the abdomen is intrusive to Buddhism, see Harada (1993, pp. 73-83) for the details on the meditation technique.

The key feature of many types of Daoist meditation is the focus on the abdomen, sometimes called the *dāntián* and/or sea of *qì qìhǎi* (氣海) (Note 18). Many forms of Daoist meditation appear to be based on Chinese medicine theory as the *dāntián* was first mentioned as a part of early medical theory.

《太上老君中經·卷上》丹田者·人之根也·精神之所藏也。

[The] *dāntián* [is] the root [of a] person. (See appendix 5 for a translation)

According to Chinese medicine theory, by putting the heart fire (the mind's intent) underneath the kidney water in the abdomen, the body is able to make kidney *qì* or steam. The character for *qì* (氣) is steam coming off of rice. This kidney *qì* is the base *qì* of the body. The kidneys also contain the pre-heaven *qì* (先天之氣). In nearly all traditional Chinese meditations the *qì* is sent down (this is the opposite to yoga, where energy is normally sent up).

王宗岳《太極拳論》氣沉丹田。

In the *Tàì jíquán lùn* it says: [The] *qì* sinks [to the] *dāntián*.

There is another character for *qì* that is pronounced the same way, *qì* (炁). It is an uncommon character and is sometimes used when writing religious Daoist talismans.

The idea of the Chinese abdomen can be summarised as follows:

- 1) One should send *qì* heart fire or intent down to the abdomen to make *qì* or to store it.
- 2) Breathing should initiate and be controlled by the abdomen.
- 3) The root of a person is the abdomen.
- 4) Focusing on the abdomen is commonly emphasised in Chinese internal martial arts where all movement should initiate from it.
- 5) In Chinese medicine it stores the sperm, menstrual fluid, pre-heaven *qì* and kidney *qì* which are seen as the foundation for the entire body.

This idea that the fire (on the upper part of the body) should always return to the water (in the lower part of the body) has been a core theory in Chinese medicine since early times. If the fire was unable to return to the water (in the lower part of the body), the body would be in a state of illness. The idea was to always increase the kidney's concealing, *cáng* (藏) function so that it could solidify, *gù* (固) the concealment of yang *qì* (fire) in the abdomen. In this way, the mind (fire) was anchored where it would not be easily irritated or disturbed.

《道德經·二十六章》重為輕根·靜為躁君。

Dàodéjīng, chapter twenty-six says: Heavy is root [to the] light, quiet is [the] monarch [to the] irritable.

The fire mentioned above is specifically related to kidney fire (or yang) and was occasionally known as the dragon fire. This is because in ancient times within China it was sometimes believed that when the dragon stays in water there is no rain, when the dragon moves, then there is rain. This idea is represented in the *Book of Changes*, 《易經》 *Yìjīng* by the *kǎn guà* (坎卦) where yang is in the middle of two yins.

《医理真传》龍行則雨施·龍藏則雨止. (Zheng, 2009)

In the *Yìlǐ Zhēnchuán* it says: [When the] dragon moves then rain comes, [when the] dragon hides then [the] rain stops.

This emphasis on the abdomen has permeated Chinese thinking for two millennia, the author calls this idea “concealing the dragon fire.”

8. Brahmanism

Later Brahmanism, Hinduism and yoga have many different schools of thought and appear to be all related to each other in some way or another. They do though seem to have common threads and ideas throughout.

8.1 The Early Ideas of Karma and Saṃsāra

It appears as though the early ideas of karma and *saṃsāra* do not have their origins with Brahmanism but instead with Buddhism.

Greater Magadha was a cultural area in which Vedic religion played no role. An important feature of the culture of this area was the belief in rebirth and karmic retribution, the belief that the present life will be followed by other lives whose qualities are determined by acts carried out in the present or preceding lives. A number of religious thinkers—among them the founders of Buddhism and Jainism—were not

happy with the thought of an endless cycle of rebirths and looked at ways to break out of it. The Buddha and the Jina taught different ways to put an end to rebirth and karmic retribution, that is, they taught different paths to liberation. This was clearly the central concern of these teachers and their followers, a concern that had nothing to do with the concerns that find expression in Vedic religion (Bronkhorst, 2017, p. 362).

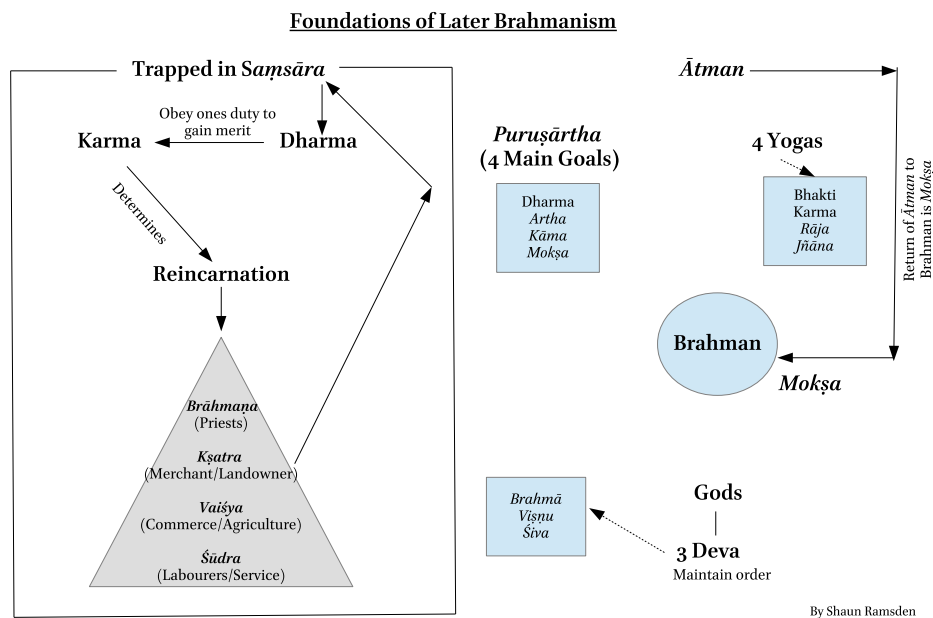


Figure 4. Foundations of Later Brahmanism

Many scholars (such as Friedrich Max Müller) have reconstructed a type of proto-Indo-European religion based off the *R̥gveda*. One needs to be wary of doing this as many nuances and complexities are involved, see Jackson (2002) for an in-depth analysis in regard to this issue. In most of these reconstructions we find the names of *R̥gvedic* gods and goddesses used. The following six tend to be the most significant:

- 1) *Dyáuṣ* (Sky-God)
- 2) *Pr̥thvī* (Earth Goddess)
- 3) *Aśvin* (Twin Horseman)
- 4) *Uṣás* (Goddess of the Dawn)
- 5) *Sūrya* (Sun God) associated with *mitrāv́arunā* (whom have a strong relationship with *ṛta*)
- 6) *Indra* (Storm God)

While the six gods mentioned above are only based on reconstructions, we can confirm that the three most important deities in the *R̥gveda* were most likely *Indra*, *V́aruna*, and the *Ńasatyā* (another name for the *Aśvin*) (Anthony, 2007, p. 50). One may note here some significant changes as these gods clearly lose their importance within later Brahmanism/early Hinduism to gods such as *Viṣṇu*, *Brahmā* and *Śiva*. Another example of an important shift is with regard to *ṛta* and dharma, where dharma somewhat takes on the concept of *ṛta* in later Brahmanism (Note 19).

While many features of early Brahmanism became lost or changed with time, others still kept their significance even though in a different way. Indo-European society was based around three groups; the priests, the kings and the warriors. It appears that while god/s gave these peoples cows; an important source of just about everything, it was the role of the warrior to procure more cows, which were then given to the priests, who would sacrifice them back to the god/s, which played the all-important and encompassing role of maintaining cosmic order (Mallory, 1989, p. 138).

Given this enormous importance of cattle within the socioeconomic order, it comes as no surprise that the Indo-Europeans were always interested in preserving the cattle they had and in procuring more. Their prayers are filled with requests for cattle, and cattle raiding seems to have been one of the most important

pursuits of the warriors (Lincoln, 1976, p. 63).

The Proto-Indo-Europeans established for themselves: The differentiation of priests and kings as differing types of the sovereign; the priest's role as ritual specialist, the king's as that of complete man; the separation of the three social classes; the unique position of cattle as the intimate companion of man *ab origine* and source of all good things; and, last, the crucial importance of sacrifice in the creation and preservation of the world order (Lincoln, 1976, p. 43).

The author would argue that in general, there are two primary forms of Brahmanism. Early Brahmanism (Vedic religion) which did not know the idea of rebirth and karma (Vedic literature does not appear to mention it) (Bronkhorst, 2017, p. 363). This early Brahmanism was primarily concerned with the correct performance of sometimes highly complex rituals in the service of the various royal courts (Bronkhorst, 2017, p. 363). Later Brahmanism (which emerged out of the breakdown period of the Vedic period) was very different, where the Brahmin was now depicted as an ascetically-inclined individual who concentrated primarily on personal rites and avoided much contact with the outside world (Bronkhorst, 2017, p. 364). It is this Brahmanism that begins to incorporate many of the ideas that we now see in Hinduism such as karma and reincarnation.

Brahmanism is an ancient belief system with a complex history, figure four above, only describes one potential simplified later model of it, so as to help the reader grasp some of its fundamental concepts. On the left is the idea of *samsāra* which is very different to Buddhism. In Brahmanism, dharma can mean "one's (cosmic) duty" and does not mean Buddha's teachings or natural laws. There is reincarnation and not rebirth. There is reincarnation into one of the four main castes as opposed to rebirth into one of Six Realms. Later Brahmanism had a self (*ātman*) while Buddhism had no-self. In later Brahmanism the goal was for *ātman* to reunite with Brahman by which *mokṣa* was achieved. This was normally accomplished through the use of one of the four yogas. Buddhism instead aimed to "blow out" (the flame) or achieve *nibbāna*, so there was no rebirth. Brahmanism also included the four traditional aims of life and many different gods, with the three devas being of significant importance.

8.2 Comparing Later Brahmanism to Buddhism

If we were to imagine a white piece paper with nothing on it, we could call this the Buddhist mind of enlightenment. If we now take this piece of paper and put as many black dots on it as possible, we now have the unenlightened mind. As long as there are black dots (conscious imprints formed by the Twelve Links of dependent origination), there is something to be reborn. Once the white paper is clear of all the black dots, it is over (*nibbāna*), as there is nothing to be reborn.

Later Brahmanism, Hinduism and yoga believe in reincarnation (not rebirth). Now if we imagine this white piece paper and instead draw a big black dot in the middle, here we have the soul (*ātman*) that is reborn and reborn until it is pure enough to once again to return and merge with the universal soul (Brahman) whereby one achieves *mokṣa*.

The idea of rebirth in Buddhism, which is a form of continuity and the idea of reincarnation from later Brahmanism, where a soul is reincarnated, create two different models of *samsāra*. Later Brahmanism's *samsāra* referred to a cycle of reincarnation, where one had to do their duty or dharma to gain karmic merit, so as to be born into a higher caste. In the Buddhist version of *samsāra* one was bound to the cycle of rebirth through the afflictions (*kilesas*) and the actions that one took because of them, whereby the Twelve Links led to rebirth which focused not a caste system of rebirth but of six different realms.

One of the earliest mentions of karma in later Brahmanism comes from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.4.5). The idea of karma in later Brahmanism is described below:

The long and short of it is that doing good and bad deeds under the impulse of desire, anger, etc., is the cause of the *ātman*'s identification with everything; its undergoing transmigration and passing from one body to another; for impelled by this, the self takes one body after another. Therefore, good and bad deeds are the cause of its transmigratory existence. Scriptural injunctions and prohibitions are directed to this. Herein lies the utility of the scriptures. (Swami Madhavananda, 1950, p. 715).

8.3 Similarities between the Brahman's Heart and the Chinese Heart

The Brahman's heart is one that stores Brahman and is not something physical in the tangible sense. A similar idea is found in Chinese medicine theory. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.1.7) it says:

The heart, O Emperor, is the abode of all things and the heart, O Emperor, is the support of all beings. On the heart, O Emperor, all beings rest. The heart truly, O Emperor, is the supreme Brahman. His heart does

not desert him, who, knowing thus, worships it (Kawosa, 2020, p. 93).

In Chinese medicine theory, it is the heart, *xīn* (心) that stores the spirit, *shén* (神) and is the only “organ” that does not have the flesh, *yu è zi p áng* (月子旁) character attached to it (陽, 肝, 膽, 腎, 膀胱, 脾, 胃, 肺). The fact that it does not have a flesh character attached to it, indicates that the heart was seen as something more than just an organ, in that it was something intangible. In Chinese language, the mind and the heart both use the same character, *xīn* (心), giving the character two different but possibly intermixed meanings.

8.4 A Key Feature of Later Brahmanism was to Bring the Soul in an Up and Outward Direction

Many of the key teachings of later Brahmanism are found in the *Mahābhārata*, *Bhagavadgītā* and *Upaniṣads*. The core aspect of later Brahmanism is that the soul must reconnect with the universal soul and to do this, it should leave the body in an up and outward direction. This idea of sending the energy upwards is found in the *Bhagavadgītā* (8.10/12).

Chapter 8.10: He who does so, at the time of his departure, with a steady mind, devotion and strength of yoga and setting well his life force in the centre of his eye brows, he attains to this Supreme Divine Person (Radhakrishnan, 2014, p. 273).

Chapter 8.12: All gates of the body restrained, the mind confined within the heart, one’s life force fixed in the head, established in concentration by yoga (Radhakrishnan, 2014, p. 273).

It is also mentioned in the *Upaniṣads*:

Kāthopaniṣad (6.16): There are 101 channels of the heart. One of them flows to the head. Going upwards my means of it, one reaches immortality (Mallinson & Singleton, 2017, p. 187).

In the *Bhagavadgītā* (8.24-25) we find a similar concept where it is more auspicious to die in spring and summer. In the first six months of the year, the energy is moving up and outwards. This helps the soul go up, out and possibly back through the fontanelle; the place from which it traditionally first came in.

Chapter 8.24: The six months of the northern path (of the sun), then going forth the men who know the Absolute go to the Absolute (Radhakrishnan, 2014, p. 278).

Chapter 8.25: The six months of the southern path (of the sun), then going forth, the yogi obtains the lunar light and returns (Radhakrishnan, 2014, p. 278).

Sending the energy upwards is also at the heart of *haṭhayoga* practice:

Kuṇḍalinī (a goddess) resides at the base of the spine and through practices that initially only included visualisation, but subsequently in *haṭhayogic* traditions, acquired physical components, is made to rise up through the central channel (*suṣumna*), to the crown of the head where she is united with her male counterpart *Śiva* (Mallinson & Singleton 2017, pp. xix-xx).

8.5 Meditation Techniques in Later Brahmanism/Hinduism

As previously mentioned, later Brahmanism wanted to make the mind completely still of any activity whatsoever.

The early Brahminic teachings on meditation certainly drew upon the non-dualistic philosophy of the early *Upaniṣads*. The goal of yogic practice in some of the early *Upaniṣads* and the *Mokṣadharmā* is to attain a state of consciousness not unlike deep sleep, a state of consciousness so attenuated that its attainer is said to be “like a log of wood.” (Wynne, 2007, p. 43).

As later Brahmanism was the predecessor of Hinduism, most techniques used in Hinduism are either directly or indirectly developed from later Brahmanism. The four most common forms of meditation nowadays are:

- 1) Chanting and mantra: This is done firstly by chanting out loud, loudly, (with perfect precision in regard to pronunciation) after which the chanting is changed to chanting underneath the breath and finally the chanting is done in the mind.
- 2) *Ōm* is pronounced AUM in English and is the first chant usually taught, followed sometimes by the *Gāyatrī* mantra. In the *Chāndogyopaniṣad* (first *Prapāṭhaka*) it says:

Let a man meditate on the syllable *Ōm*, called the *udgitha*; for the *udgitha* (a portion of the *Sāmaveda*) is sung, beginning with *Ōm*. The full account, however, of *Ōm* is this: The essence of all beings is the earth, the essence of the earth is water, the essence of water the plants, the essence of plants, man, the essence of man, speech, the essence of speech the *Ṛgveda*, the essence of the *Ṛgveda* the *Sāmaveda*, the essence of the

Sāmaveda the *udgitha* (which is *Ōm*). That *udgitha* (*Ōm*) is the best of all essences, the highest, deserving the highest place, the eighth (Müller, 1900, pp. 1-2).

- 3) Visualising one of the Hindu gods in the mind’s eye as to take on its characteristics and therefore benefits.
- 4) Mixed forms of meditation that include a variety of techniques. One such example is the ghee lamp meditation called *trāṭak* meditation. According to Johari (1998, p. 63) *trāṭak* meditation is a form of meditation designed to raise the energy level of consciousness by focusing on a source of light, with the ghee lamp being the most beneficial for this purpose. This process of concentration and meditation on the ghee lamp flame can be divided into ten stages. See Johari (1998, pp. 63-64) for further details.

9. Yoga

Foundations of Yoga

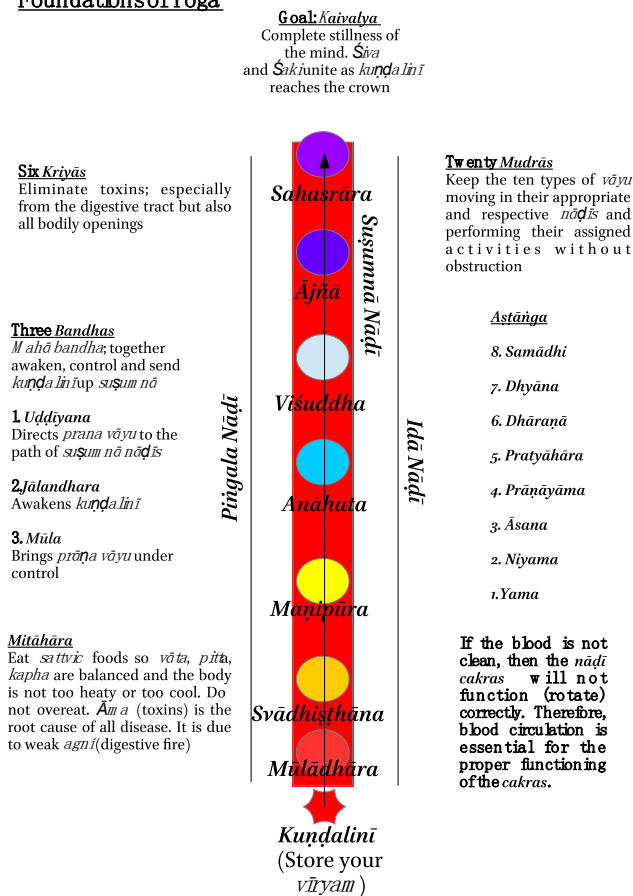


Figure 5. Foundations of Yoga (based on the work of Krishnamacharya, 1934)

Figure five above gives one possible reconstructed model of yoga that may have been used by the “father of modern day yoga,” Tirumalai Krishnamacharya. This model is based on one of the various *haṭhayoga* models where the goal was to send *kuṇḍalinī* (a female type energy associated with *Śakti*) up through the seven *cakras* to the crown of the head (associated with *Śiva*), whereby one achieved *kaivalya* and complete stillness of the mind. This was attained primarily by; following the *aṣṭāṅga*; celibacy; the elimination of toxins; eating of foods neutral in nature; and the use of *bandhas* and *mudrās* to move energy from the left and right flanking channels up the central one.

9.1 The Key Features of Yoga

9.1.1 Four Main Types of Yoga

In modern times yoga is commonly described as having four main paths or types, namely *karma yoga* (yoga of action), *bhaktiyoga* (yoga of devotion), *kriyāyoga* (yoga of transforming internal energies) and *jñānayoga* (yoga of knowledge). Both *haṭhayoga* and *kriyāyoga* come from *rājayoga*. In ancient India there were many different types of yoga, see Mallinson and Singleton (2016, pp. 23-35) for further details.

9.1.2 *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*

Yoga's emphasis is on the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* which describes an eightfold method called *aṣṭāṅgayoga*:

- 1) Morals and ethics (*yama*)
- 2) Personal observances (*niyama*)
- 3) Physical poses (*āsana*)
- 4) Breathing exercises (*prāṇāyāma*)
- 5) Turning the mind inwards (*pratyāhāra*)
- 6) Concentration or fixation on a single point (*dhāraṇā*)
- 7) Meditation (*dhyāna*)
- 8) Meditative absorption (*samādhi*)

According to the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* the primary goal of yoga is as follows:

Thus, the most important yoga text, the *Yoga Sūtra's of Patañjali* (400-500 C.E.) defines yoga as 'the cessation of the transformation of awareness.' This state is called concentration (*samādhi*) ... When Yoga Sutra's state that the meaning of yoga is *cittavrttinirodhah*, it means that yoga refers to a dualistic truth, the realisation of the total separateness of the principle of consciousness, *puruṣa*, from the material principle, *prakṛti*. Yoga as the goal of practice in this text means separation, isolation and concentration, not union (Jacobsen, 2005, p. 4).

Two centuries prior to the composition of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* saw the beginning of the Buddhist *Yogācāra* school, whose identifying feature was the practice of yoga. The *Yogācāra* textual corpus was considerably more extensive than that of the *Pātañjala* tradition. It also clearly influenced the text of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*. The importance of *Yogācāra* Buddhism for the understanding of yoga in India in the first millennium CE has been widely overlooked by scholars (Mallinson & Singleton, 2017, p. xvii).

9.1.3 Tantric Yoga

Tantra means "a system of essential ritual or instruction." It is usually associated with visualisations of a deity or deities (with the goal to reach union with the deity), performing certain rituals (such as the consumption of forbidden substances) and mantra repetition (*japa*) in order to gain supernatural powers. Tantra has a strong connection with the idea of *cakras* and the concept of a yogic body. *Cakras* are not exclusively used by tantric cults as they are also used by *hathayoga* practitioners (Mallinson & Singleton, 2017, pp. xvii-xix) and Buddhists (especially *Vajrayāna* Buddhists). As tantric yoga had (and still has) many schools of thought, with a complex history and a vast number of practises, further in-depth discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.

9.1.4 *Cakras* and *Kuṇḍalinī*

David White is one of the leading scholars on the history of *cakras*. Summarising his work on the *cakras* is as follows (White, 2010): There have been various *cakra* systems with the first being a four-fold *cakra* system, *cakras* have always sat aligned on the spinal column of the (yogic) subtle body. This first system was developed by Tibetan Buddhists and the *cakras* were probably initially related to mystic locations of the mind (waking, dreamless, dreaming and maybe an enlightened type state). The goal from the beginning was to bring an energy up this central column of the yoga body. As time went on this energy was called *kuṇḍalinī*, a female energy with a strong relationship to *Śakti*, which resided somewhere in the lower *cakras*. Initially these *cakras* were affected by sound through mantras but were later affected through *mudrās* and *bhandas* (where all orifices were sealed) and other *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* practices that aimed to raise *kuṇḍalinī* from the base *cakras* up into the skull (and sometimes beyond it). The *yoginīs* at each *cakra* play an especially important role through the cremation ground-based anthropophagy of the *yoginīs* or *ḍākinīs*. In the case of the *cakra* system, as the *kuṇḍalinī* (which has a strong relationship to sperm) reaches each level of the *cakra/yoginīs*, the *yoginīs* were given a sort of "fuel/food" by which they would in return, endow the yoga practitioner with a certain power (*siddhiḥ*) as the *cakra* "opened." Eventually all *cakras* could open giving various powers until the *cakra* in the skull "opened" by which the process was complete. In one system though the process was complete when the *cakra* at the tip of tongue opened by which a saliva-like nectar fluid was produced and the practitioner swallowed/drank from it (actually he was offering this liquid to *kula-kuṇḍalinī* as libation).

It is interesting to note that while the *dāntián* is sometimes equated with the *manipūra cakra* (see page twenty-eight above), in regard to the way it is used in many *Tājjí* circles (in that it is believed to provide immense martial power and physical strength) and *qigōng* groups (there is a common belief it can create

miraculous healing and can make one very healthy), it seems nearly identical to the *svādhiṣṭhāna cakra* in the way that this *cakra* can cure illness, create great strength and be used martially.

This *svādhiṣṭhāna cakra* lies two angulas above the *mūlādhāra cakra*. If by doing *prāṇāyāma abhyāsa* according to the *krama* and rules *caitanya* is attained in this *cakra*, then this will destroy all diseases. There will be an astounding increase in good health. Any amount of physical work can be done without any fatigue. Even enemies will admire and adore one who has *caitanya* in this *cakra*. Violence will run away and hide from him. Even a tiger and cow will live in peaceful coexistence in his presence (Krishnamacharya, 1934, p. 10).

As mentioned before, the *dāntián* was originally used as a medical concept in ancient China, how, why and when it changed to become something so similar to the *svādhiṣṭhāna cakra* is unclear, nevertheless, the similarities between them do suggest that the Daoists in-particular may have been externally influenced by an Indian source from outside China. Much further investigation is required to deny or confirm this.

9.1.5 *Brahmacharya*

Brahmacharya or non-indulgence in sexual activity (or a form of it) was commonly practiced by those affiliated with later Brahmanism (and Hinduism), Buddhism, yoga and some forms of Daoism. The Hindus follow/ed the idea of *brahmacharya* (leading a life according to *Brahman*) which was the first of four age-based stages (*ashrama*) of a human life; the student or *brahmacārī* spent twenty-five years with his teacher studying the *Vedas*. The *brahmacārīns* were divided into two types, the *upakurvaṇa* and *naiṣṭhika*. The former meant those that offered some return to the teacher. They were only celibate for a certain period of time. The *naiṣṭhika* on the other hand remained celibate till their death (Sharma, 2004, p. 30). Hindus may have practiced this form of celibacy so that young men focused on their studies and learnt self-control.

For Buddhists there was complete celibacy (abstinence of any sexual activity), which was most likely done for renunciation purposes. *Brahmacarya* is traditionally regarded as one of the five *yamas* in yoga, as declared in verse 2.30 of *Pātañjalayogasāstra*. In verse 2.38 of *Pātañjalayogasāstra* it states that the virtue of *brahmacarya* leads to the profit of virility (*vīrya*). In later schools of yoga this profit of virility not only leads to good health but also accumulates energy in the lower *cakra/s* which strengthens the ability to raise energy upwards. Just as *qì* and *prāṇa* have identical meanings, it seems so does essence/sperm, *jīng* (精) and *vīrya*. Forms of celibacy were also mentioned in both medical and certain Daoist texts within China. In the《黃帝內經》*Huángdì Nèijīng* it says:

《黃帝內經·上古天真論篇第一》故藏于精者·春不病溫。

Therefore, [by] storing [the] essence/sperm [in winter], [in] spring [there is] no warm disease.

Sexual techniques are mentioned by both the ancient Chinese and ancient Indians. Similar sexual techniques are found in both the *Kāmasūtra* and the *Plain Girl Classic*, 《素女經》*Su Nü Jing*.

There were also groups in ancient India and China that did not follow celibacy but instead believed in using sex to achieve certain goals such as health and longevity. The techniques used by these groups could be highly varied. There does appear to be three core themes within these group's literature in both the Indian and certain Daoist/Chinese traditions (not philosophical Daoism):

- 1) Semen reabsorption
- 2) Absorbing the sexual energy/essences of one's sexual partner
- 3) Restraint of ejaculation

Semen reabsorption:

According to Mallinson (2018, p. 183), the most important *mudrā* by implication was the *vajrolīmudrā*, which is, "a method of drawing liquids up the urethra, which, through enabling *bindudhāraṇa*, the retention of semen, is said to lead directly to *Rāja Yoga*." One purpose of *vajrolī* could be described as follows:

It is an oblique dismissal of those who "take upwards" (*ūrdhvaṃ nayanti*) "semen that is falling into/from a woman's vagina" (*yuvatibhagapatatbindum*). The probable meaning is that these yogis are turning back their semen as it begins to fall during sexual intercourse, i.e., they are preventing ejaculation (Mallinson, 2018, p. 187).

In ancient China there was a technique of semen reabsorption too. This technique was done to prevent ejaculation and was debated quite heavily in ancient literature as some argued for it, while others argued against it. This semen reabsorption technique was actually a retrograde ejaculation (probably unbeknown to the practitioner) which was done by pressing the fingers on the perineum slightly before orgasm.

The Dao of yin and yang is to treasure the semen. If one can cherish it, one's life may be preserved. Whenever you ejaculate, you must absorb the woman's *qi* to supplement your own. The process of "reestablishment by nine," means practicing the inner breath nine times. "Pressing the one," refers to applying pressure with the left hand beneath the private parts to return the *jīng* and restore the fluid. "Absorbing the woman's *qi*" is accomplished by "nine shallow and one deep" stroke. Position your mouth opposite the enemy's mouth and exhale through the mouth (Wile, 1992, p. 104).

Absorbing the sexual energy of one's sexual partner:

Both the Chinese and Indian traditions also shared the idea of absorbing a partner's energy/essences for health and other reasons. While in the *Dattātreyaśāstra* we see the goal of *vajrolī* to stop the loss of semen and therefore death (Mallinson, 2018, p. 188), there is a later shift in the literature, where in the *S śāstrā* tradition, the *vajrolīmudrā* becomes used in relation to absorbing their female partners sexual fluids (Mallinson, 2018, p. 190). Here we see parallels to the Chinese literature.

Over and over it is announced that if the going out of the male *jīng* to meet the female *jīng* (or blood in some texts), is the normal course, then logically if this is reversed, and the woman plays the host, it is man who rebirths himself as an immortal. The concrete process of absorbing the "external medicine" and raising one's own *jīng* to feed the higher centres in the brain is often analogised as "reversing the flow of the Yellow River" by means of a "water wheel," which pulls it up against the direction of the breath and the normal flow of *qi* in the meridians (Wile, 1992, p. 35).

We see a similar idea used in the *S śāstrā*:

In its teachings on *vajrolī* (4.78–104) the *S śāstrā* praises the technique's usefulness in bringing about *bindusiddhi*, mastery of semen, but its description of the practice starts with instructions for the yogi to draw up a woman's *rajas* from her vagina through his penis ... Should his semen fall during the process, he must draw that upwards too, and the mixing of the two substances within the yogi's body is the mixing of *S śā* and *S kti* (Mallinson, 2018, p. 190).

We also see a similar theme among these yogis, and certain Daoist sects in that women are rated second to men and are sometimes seen as a kind of enemy (not in the literal sense).

Unlike other early texts which teach *vajrolī*, the *S śāstrā* does not say that it can be practised by women. In keeping with its Love Magic heritage, however, the *S śāstrā* does say that the *bindu* of one who has mastered *vajrolī* will not fall even if he enjoys himself with a hundred women (Mallinson, 2018, p. 190).

In the early texts, the female partner is called "woman" or "enemy," but by the last she has become "other," "crucible," or "stove." (Wile, 1992, p. 45).

Ejaculation control:

The ancient Chinese had various methods for ejaculation control, which included, mental imaging, breath control, perineal compression, pubococcygeal contraction, teeth gnashing, abdominal techniques, along with other practises, such as entering dead, withdrawing live, and changing partners when there is arousal (Wile, 1992, p. 47).

Mallinson (2020a) discusses the subject of sexual restraint in great detail. Here we find yogic techniques related to ejaculation control. One technique which is identical to that taught orally in many Daoist sects (not related to philosophical Daoism) is as follows:

Meanwhile, in most *haṭha* texts *amarolī*, the *mudrā* of the *Amara* lineage, is a method of mastering the ejaculatory impulse for which the celibate yogi trains by restraining the flow of urine (Mallinson, 2020a, p. 188).

Mallinson (2018, p. 204) does mention the *vajrolī* connection to tantric Buddhism but makes the point that much more research is required to grasp the depth of these connections.

As I have noted above, *vajrolī* is likely to have at least some roots in tantric Buddhist traditions ... Some modern practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism claim that *vajrolī* has been used by Tibetan adepts to absorb the combined products of sexual intercourse as part of an unbroken yogic tradition that is more than a thousand years old (Mallinson, 2018, p. 204).

9.2 Haṭhayoga

Haṭhayoga appears at the end of the first millennium CE. A formalised system of it was taught in the thirteenth

century CE in the *Dattātreyayogaśāstra*. Methods were drawn from tantric yoga and those of *Pātañjala* (Mallinson & Singleton, 2017, p. xx).

The primary goal of *haṭhayoga* was (and still is for some schools) to send the energy (*kuṇḍalinī* or *bindu* or *prāṇa* or *hamsa* depending on the tradition) up the central channel called *suṣumṇā*; in order to achieve liberation or immortality. *Haṭhayoga* actually conveys two different models.

Two Models of *Haṭhayoga*

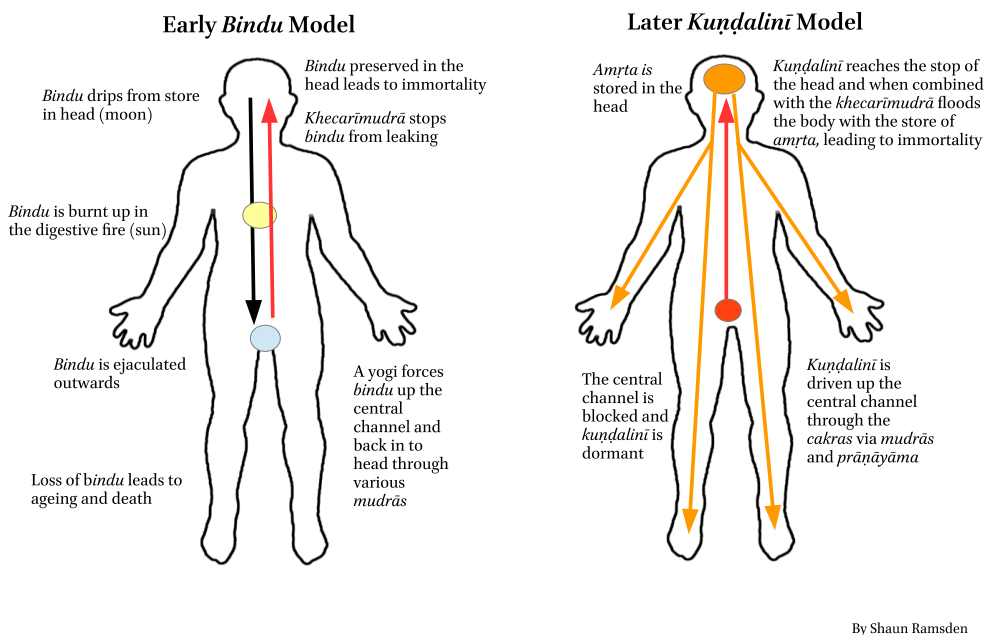


Figure 6. Two Models of *Haṭhayoga*

The first model is where *bindu* is returned to the head and also prevented from dripping its store within the head (*candra* or moon). This is because in normal bodies, semen continually drips from its home in the skull, whereby it is either ejaculated or burnt up in the digestive fire (or the sun), which ultimately leads to ageing and death. The yogi can reverse this though by impelling *bindu* up the central channel and back into the head by the means of various *mudras*, thereby attaining immortality for the practitioner. Other *mudrās* are used to inhibit the dripping of this *bindu*. This model is evident in early *haṭha* texts such as the *Amṛtasiddhi* (Note 20) (Mallinson & Singleton, 2017, p. 180). Even though the detailed workings of this model are not specifically mentioned, nor explained in texts prior to the *haṭha* corpus, this model has a clear antecedent in the ancient ascetic tradition of the *ūrdhvaṛetāḥ tapasvī* (the ascetics whose seed is turned upwards). This tradition is closely associated with the practice of yoga in texts like *Mahābhārata*, where the loss of semen is prevented at all costs (Mallinson & Singleton, 2017, p. 180). This could be why the headstand is the “king of all *āsanas*.”

Mallinson and Singleton (2017, p. 181) explain that in *haṭhayoga* texts from the *Vivekamārtaṇḍa* onwards, this model is overlaid with the tantric *kuṇḍalinī* model of *layayoga*, complete with its associated *cakra* system/s which are not usually found in the earliest *bindu*-orientated *haṭhayoga* texts. In this model *kuṇḍalinī* rises up the central channel and upon reaching the store of *amṛta* (nectar of immortality) in the skull, floods the body with this liquid making the practitioner immortal. There are though contradictory elements to these systems in regard to the *khecarīmudrā* (tongue to pallet). In the *bindu*-orientated model, the *khecarīmudrā* is used to stop the leaking of *bindu*, while in the *kuṇḍalinī* model it is done to help the body to be flooded with *amṛta*. The *haṭhayogapradīpikā* for example incorporates both *khecarī* ideas (Mallinson & Singleton, 2017, p. 181).

The ancient Chinese had a somewhat similar model called the small heavenly cycle, *xiǎo zhōu tiān* (小周天), also known as the microscopic orbit. In this model the *khecarīmudrā*, *shé dǐ shàng è* (舌抵上腭) is used to connect the conception and governing vessels, *rèn dū èr mài* (任督二脈) which are very similar to *idā* and *pingala* of *haṭhayoga*. As the *khecarīmudrā* is used to connect the cycle at the top, the anus is lifted upwards so as to connect the cycle of energy on bottom, thereby creating an uninterrupted circuit of energy. See Chia (1993, p. 159) for further details on the small heavenly cycle.

A practice which has the elements of *khecarīmudrā* is described in three passages of the *Pali Canon*. In two of the passages the technique is said to bring the mind under control and in the third it is said to suppress the appetite (Mallison, 2007a, p. 17).

9.2.1 Purification, Food Intake and Body Postures

Purification of the body was important in many schools of yoga: The Six *Kriyās* are one such example. See Krishnamacharya (1934, pp. 37-43) for further details.

Mitāhāra: Eating the correct foods was also paramount for most schools of yoga. *Sattvic* foods were eaten so *vāta*, *pitta*, *kapha* (also known as the *tridoṣa*) were balanced and the body was not too heaty or too cool. See Krishnamacharya (1934, p. 35) for what foods can be eaten and for what foods should be avoided. Overeating was prohibited; *āma* (toxins) were seen as the root cause of all disease that came about through weak *agni* (digestive fire). See Frawley, Ranade and Lele (2003, p. 25) for further details.

All early *āsanas* were sitting postures. The goal of *āsana* was to set up a yogi to be able to practice *prāṇāyāma*. See Iyengar (1979) for further details on descriptions of various *āsanas*.

9.2.2 Breath Work

The primary goal of *prāṇāyāma* was to extent the in and out breath to be as long and slow as possible because how long you lived was commonly not counted in years but instead by the number of breaths you took (hence the emphasis on retentions).

The various forms of *prāṇāyāma* either aim to heal an illness or increase the length of the in and the out breath. In many systems of *prāṇāyāma* breath control is accompanied by internal mantra repetition. While the Jains held the breath, the Buddhists observed it, the early Daoist's breathed like babies or with the abdomen and the yogis aimed to extend the breath.

9.2.3 The Yoga Body

The yoga body is something very different to the biomedical body. It includes; *vāyus* (five different winds), see Krishnamacharya (1934, pp. 43-44) for further details; *cakras* (wheels); *padmas* (lotuses); *bindu* (seminal essence or sperm); *kuṇḍalīnī* (she who is coiled); *nāḍīs* (a network of channels); *susūmṇā* (central channel); *idā* (flanks and/or circles the central channel and is lunar); *piṅgala* (flanks and/or circles the central channel and is solar); *kanda* (bulb below the navel where 72,000 *nāḍīs* cross) and *prāṇa* (energy). The yogic body was not exclusively used in India as we also see it used in Tibet Buddhism. See Yeshe (2015) and Gangchen (2010) for further details on the use of the yogic body in Tibetan Buddhism.

9.2.4 Yogic Seals

Yogic seals or *mudrās* manipulate the breath or vital energies, see Krishnamacharya (1934, pp. 45-49) for twenty different *mudrās*. The earliest mention of *mudrās* is in the thirteenth century CE in the *Dattātreyaयोगशास्त्र* (Mallinson & Singleton, 2017, p. 228). The primary function of these *mudrās* is the make the energy enter and rise up *susūmṇā* and to control *bindu* (semen). The idea of *mudrās* have been used since very ancient times, Buddha may have tried the *khecarīmudrā*. The *śramaṇa* of Buddhas time would hang upside down in the bat pose in a manner of an inverted seal. Jain ascetics meditated by squatting to put pressure on the perennial region and thereby seal it (Mallinson & Singleton, 2017, p. 230). The most important *mudrā* in yoga is the *mahāmudrā* which combines the three primary *bhandas* and is the main method used to send energy up the central channel. The importance of the *mahāmudrā* has been stated time and time again throughout yogic literature.

In the *Gheraṇḍasamhitā* (chapter three) is says:

By mastering *mahāmudrā* the yogi can get rid of all disease (Mallinson, 2004, p. 61).

In the *Śivasamhitā* (chapter four) it says:

In this tantra I shall teach you the *mahāmudrā*, which is dear to me. In the past, adepts like Kapila have attained complete perfection after receiving it ... Stretch out the right foot and hold it with both hands. Block the nine doors, put the chin on the chest. Place the mind in the way of the mind and start holding the breath. This is *mahāmudrā*. It is kept secret in all the tantras (Mallinson, 2007b, p. 78).

In the *Goraksha Śataka* (1.57) it says:

Placing the chin on the chest, constantly pressing the left heel against the perineum and holding the extended right foot with the hands, the yogi should, after inhaling and holding the air full in the chest, exhale slowly. It (*mahāmudrā*) is said this is an extremely great *mudrā*, the destroyer of all human diseases (Swami Vishnuswaroop, 2017, p. 25).

Versions of the primary yogic *bhandas* are also used in the *Tàijíquán*.

王宗岳《太極拳論》虛領頂勁。

In the *Tàijíquán lùn* it says: Empty (relax) [the] neck [and have] strength (lift up) [in the] crown of the head.

Similar to *jālandhara bandha*.

武禹襄《身法八要》含胸拔背。

In the *Shēnfǎ Bāyào* it says: Contain [the] chest [and] draw out [the] back.

This is somewhat similar in practice to *uḍḍiyana bandha* in the way the stomach and chest come inwards to press the thoracic vertebrae outwards.

王宗岳《十三勢歌》尾闾中正。

In the *Shísān Shìgē* it says: Straighten [the] tail bone (which in turn causes the anus to raise upwards).

It is similar to *mūla bandha* when practised.

The term *mahāmudrā* is not exclusive to yoga. In Tibetan Buddhism the *mahāmudrā* is a type of meditation used in the *Kagyū* school of Buddhism (it has distinct yoga influences to it).

The Great Brahman has said:

Beings are polluted by seeking meditation.

There is nothing at all on which to meditate.

A single instant of being without yearning.

That is the meditation of the *mahāmudrā*.

(*The Bright Torch* by Tsel éNatsok Rangdröl) (Roberts, 2014, p. 167)

The preliminaries and explanation for this form of meditation according to Drukchen Pema Karpo (1527-1592 CE) in *A Record of Mahāmudrā Instructions* are as follows:

- 1) Sit with your legs in *vajra* posture
- 2) Arrange the hands in the meditation *mudrā* below the navel
- 3) Straighten the spine
- 4) Broaden the shoulders
- 5) Bend the throat like a hook, with the chin just pressing on the Adam's apple
- 6) Place the tongue against the upper palate
- 7) Your mind is changed by your senses and in particular your eyes, therefore, gaze a yoke's distance in front of you, without closing or moving your eyes (Roberts, 2014, p. 105).

The crossed legs cause the downward-expelling wind to enter into the central channel. The meditation *mudrā* causes fire-like wind to enter the central channel. The straight spine and straight abdomen cause the pervading wind to enter the central channel. The bent throat causes the upward-moving wind to enter the central channel. The tongue against the palate and the gaze cause the *prāṇa* to enter the central channel. As a result, the five winds enter the central channel, every karmic wind enters the central channel and non-conceptual wisdom arises. This is called the solitude of the body, the unmoving body and the naturally arising body. Expelling the stale breath and remaining silent is called the solitude of speech, the unmoving speech and the naturally resting speech. Do not contemplate the past. Do not think about the future. Do not meditate by deliberate action of the intellect. Do not view "emptiness" as nonexistence. Do not examine or analyse whatever appears in the present as the objects of the five senses using thoughts such as "is" or "isn't" but look inward. Be loose like a baby, letting the mind rest naturally, without an instant's distraction (Roberts, 2014, p. 106).

See Roberts (2014, pp. 107-123) for a full description of the main practice.

9.2.5 *Samādhi*

In the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra samādhi* is the final meditation stage. In *Vedānta* influenced texts *samādhi* is commonly defined as the merging of the individual with the supreme self (Mallinson & Singleton, 2017, pp. 321-323).

9.2.6 Yogic Powers

While the goal of yoga was commonly that of liberation, in many other cases the goal was to gain some form of super human power, such as the ability to fly. See Mallinson and Singleton (2017, pp. 359-366) for further details. See Krishnamacharya (1934, pp. 10-13) in regard to the powers gained by opening certain *cakras*.

This tradition of obtaining unique abilities from meditation is also a part of Buddhism. There are certain Buddhist texts (even though rare) that provide detailed instructions on how to obtain super human powers and abilities. One of these texts is the *Visuddhimagga (The Path of Purification)* written by Buddhaghosa. See Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (2010) for an English translation of the text. Central to this text is *kaṣiṇa*. See Clough (2011, pp. 77-95) for more on *kaṣiṇa* and super powers obtained from Buddhist meditation.

This idea of developing “powers” have been a part of Tibetan culture at least since the late Song and early Yuan dynasties. We know this not only from the story of Jetsun Milarepa but also from Marco Polo. In book one, chapter sixty-one, Marco Polo says:

If it should happen to be bad weather, there are certain crafty enchanters who are adepts in necromancy and the diabolic arts, they are able to prevent any cloud or storm from passing over the spot on which the Emperor’s Palace stands. The sorcerers who do this are called Tibet and Kashmir, which are the names of two nations of Idolaters.

He also mentions in the same chapter how they “can cause the cups to move from their place without being touched by anyone.”

9.3 Liberation

The ultimate goal of yoga was liberation: *Mukti* or *mokṣa* (liberation) or *kaivalya* (isolation). According to the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* *kaivalya* or isolation means the isolation of the *puruṣa* (spiritual principle) of *Sāṅkhya* (that which sees) from *prakṛti* (material principle) and its three *guṇas* (constituent qualities) by *viveka* (means of discrimination). The results of the flow of discerning cognition is omniscience (Mallinson & Singleton, 2017, p. 397). The Indian traditions sought liberation in different ways; the Jains achieved liberation through austerity (*tapas*); the Buddhist achieved it through meditation; the yogis achieved it through *āsanas*, *mudrās* and *prāṇāyāma*; the tantric practitioners achieved it through mantra and visualisation; the early Brahmans achieved it through ritual. The early Daoist’s on the other hand, appear to have aimed instead for longevity which was achieved primarily through non-action in daily living and various other techniques centred on protecting and nourishing the vital energies within the abdomen.

9.4 Buddhism and the Yoga of the Pātañjalayogaśāstra Share a Similar Framework

As previously mentioned, the *Yogācāra* textual corpus was considerably more extensive than that of the *Pātañjala* tradition. It also clearly influenced the text of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*. All words below are in Sanskrit, so the reader can see the correlation.

In the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*, it is commonly taught:

Symptom: *Heyaṃ - duḥkham* (chapter two, verse sixteen)

Cause: *Hetuḥ - avidyā* (chapter two, verse twenty-four)

Goal: *Hānam - kaivalyam* (chapter two, verse twenty-five)

Method: *Upāyam - viveka* (or *aṣṭāṅga*; eight-limbs) (chapter two, verse twenty-six).

In Buddhism it is taught:

Symptom: *Duḥkham*

Cause: *Avidyā* (first of the Twelve Links).

Goal: *Nirvāṇa*

Method: *Āryaṣṭāṅgamārga* (the Middle Way or Noble Eightfold Path).

Parallels between Buddhism and later Brahmanism can also be found in the *Kāthopaniṣad*. This text has caused much debate in the scholarly community of whether it came before or after Buddhism. One of the most famous verses is found below:

Know that the *ātman* is the rider in the chariot,

and the body is the chariot,

Know that the *buddhi* (intelligence, ability to reason) is the charioteer,

and *manas* (mind) is the reins.

The senses are called the horses,

the objects of the senses are their paths,

Formed out of the union of the *ātman*, the senses and the mind,

him they call the “enjoyer.”

Kaṭhopeniṣad (1.3.3-1.3.4) (Deussen, 1980, p. 287)

9.5 Commonalities Between the Vajrayāna Buddhist and Nāth Śaiva Traditions

For quite some time it has been noted by scholars that both *Vajrayāna* Buddhism and *Nāth Śaiva* traditions share much in common. How and why this is the case has been in debate for some time, especially in regard to which tradition came first; that is to say, who influenced who first. In an article by Mallinson (2019) entitled, *Kālavañcana in the Konkan: How a Vajrayāna Hāthayoga Tradition Cheated Buddhism’s Death in India*, much of the older work and more recent studies on the subject has been amalgamated and analysed in detail. The following key points were made (Mallinson, 2019, p. 2):

- 1) The *Amṛtasiddhi* was the first text to teach *hāthayoga*’s unique practices. It was composed in a *Vajrayāna* environment.
- 2) The *Amṛtasiddhi* was directly drawn upon in the creation and development of several later *hātha* texts, none of which were Buddhist and the earliest of which was most likely the *Nāth Śaiva Amaraughaprabodha*.
- 3) It is likely that *Konkan* and in particular the *Kadri* monastery (Mangalore) was most probably the place where the *Amaraughaprabodha* was composed, and that the composition of the text was due to appropriation from *Vajrayāna* Buddhists by the *Nāths* in regard not only to practice/terminology, but also to the *Kadri* monastery itself.
- 4) Evidence suggests that the overall *Kadri Vajrayāna* Buddhist tradition was absorbed into *Nāths* tradition and was not destroyed, nor was it expelled.

9.6 Yoga Meditation Techniques

Meditation techniques in yoga are incredibly varied, the four below are a little more common than others. There are three stages (see Mallinson & Singleton, 2017, pp. 283-291 for in depth details): *Pratyāhāra* (withdrawal), which is closely related to *prāṇāyāma*. *Dhāraṇā* (fixation), which means fixing or locking the mind on one single point, examples include; a *cakra*, the tip of nose or the tip of tongue. For tantric practitioners fixation sometimes meant the sequential visualisation of elements. *Dhyāna* (meditation), which means Buddhist-like meditation as it may have been taken from the Buddhists and other similar groups and then incorporated as a practice (Mallinson & Singleton, 2017, p. 288). Four common yoga meditation techniques are as follows:

- 1) *Prāṇāyāma* is mentioned as one of the two types of *dhyāna* in the *Mokṣadharmā* and *Mahābhārata* (Mallinson & Singleton, 2017, p. 127). For more on *prāṇāyāma* see Iyengar (2015).
- 2) *Prāṇāyāma* with internal mantra repetition.
- 3) Meditation using various *prāṇāyāma* techniques and seals so as to send the energy up the central channel. See Maehle (2014) for further details.
- 4) Meditation through *āsana*, for example *śavāsana*. See Mehta, Mehta, and Mehta (1990, pp. 150-151) for further details.

10. Conclusion

The common thread which links these four systems together is the idea of non-action. The idea of non-action among the four schools does vary quite considerably, it is as follows:

- 1) Buddhism: Non-action of the body (such as renunciation), non-action of the mind to the senses and meditation or the emptying of the mind so as to abide in the awareness of it.
- 2) Daoism: A non-action of action, which means living naturally in the way nature intended one to, with as little interference as possible.
- 3) Later Brahmanism and yoga: A complete non-action of the mind (or mental fluctuations).

The idea of a self/soul or a no-self has been of significant debate among the different philosophical systems:

- 1) Later Brahmanism: There is a life principle that is one in the same with the universal principle.

- 2) Jainism: There is a life principle (*jīva*) that is individual and not part of the universal principle.
- 3) Theravāda Buddhism: There is the idea of no-self.
- 4) Mahāyāna Buddhism: Buddha-nature is emptiness, which is the absence of an independent and substantial self.
- 5) Yoga: There is the concept of the spiritual principle and its separation or isolation.
- 6) Philosophical Daoism: The early Daoists may have believed in a self and that one should lessen the idea of a self and reduce desires (see *Dào dé jīng*, chapter nineteen).

All of the Indian traditions had the same goal which was some form of liberation. It seems that most early Daoists did not seek liberation but instead aimed for longevity. Each system used different methods to attain their goals. Even though the main goal of the Indian philosophies was that of liberation, their ideas of liberation varied.

- 1) Buddhism called liberation *nibbāna* (blow out or extinguish) which meant liberation from the cycles of rebirth. They achieved this through the Noble Eightfold path and focused primarily on seated meditation.
- 2) It appears that many Daoists aimed to achieve longevity through natural living and by storing and cultivating the energies within the abdomen.
- 3) Those associated with later Brahmanism aimed to unite their soul with the universal soul whereby *mokṣa* (liberation) was achieved. This may have originally been done through extreme ritual purity and recitation but was later achieved through the means of different forms of yoga.
- 4) The yogis also aimed for liberation which they sometimes call *kaivalya*. According to the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*, *kaivalya* (isolation), means isolation of *puruṣa* (spiritual principle) of *Sāṅkhya* (that which sees) from *prakṛti* (material principle) and its three *guṇas* (constituent qualities) by *viveka* (means of discrimination). This was usually achieved via *aṣṭāṅgayoga*. The *haṭhayoga* practitioners in particular focused primarily on bringing energy from the base of the spine to the top of the head and sometimes aimed for immortality (like some Daoists) or other superhuman powers.

One common factor among the four schools was that of using breathing techniques:

- 1) The Buddhists generally observed the breath.
- 2) The early Daoists may have breathed naturally like an infant or focused on the breath in the abdomen.
- 3) Those associated with later Brahmanism along with the Jains aimed for the cessation of the breath completely.
- 4) The yogis primarily aimed to extend the breath.

Another important comparison made in this paper is the sending of energy or other “substances” up or down.

- 1) The Theravādan Buddhists did not do anything in this regard. The Tibetan Buddhists sometimes sent their energy upwards. The Chinese Buddhists sometimes followed certain Daoists and sent their energy downwards.
- 2) Those associated with later Brahmanism tried to send their soul/energy up and out.
- 3) The yogis tried to push their *bindu* or *kuṇḍalinī* up to the head.
- 4) Many Daoists tried to send their *qi* downwards and into the abdomen.

In conclusion it appears that each of these systems is unique and had (or still has) its own methods of cultivation and ideas of liberation. It seems fair to argue that even though these systems are different from each other, some of them integrated particular ideas or theories from a different system other than their own. It is interesting that even though these philosophies are unique in their own way, they may actually have a common origin, in that they all follow some form of non-action, which was an idea that seems to have started in the area of the Greater Magadha.

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Notes

- Note 1. In this paper the term “later Brahmanism” is frequently used. By later Brahmanism, the author is referring to the Brahmanism that emerged out of the breakdown period of the Vedic period.
- Note 2. The Three Marks of Existence include: Impermanence (this refers especially to the contemplation of the impermanence of the body), no-self (contemplation on how you are not the Five Aggregates) and suffering (contemplating the Four Noble Truths).
- Note 3. See appendix 1. Fig. 7. The *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta* (The Great Discourse of the Foundations of Mindfulness) theory for further details.
- Note 4. The direct translation of *nibbāna* is to “blow out.”
- Note 5. See appendix 1. Fig. 7. The *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta* (The Great Discourse of the Foundations of Mindfulness) theory for further details.
- Note 6. The direct translation of *samsāra* is “wandering.”
- Note 7. See appendix 2. Fig. 8. *Samsāra* for further details.
- Note 8. See appendix 3. Fig. 9. The Noble Eightfold Path for further details.
- Note 9. The Three Unwholesome Roots include: Confusion/delusion (*moha*), sensual attachment (*ragā*) and aversion (*dosa*). The Three Wholesome Roots are: Wisdom (*paññā*), generosity (*dāna*) and loving-kindness (*mettā*).

Note 10. For the most practical aspects of Theravādin Buddhism in regard to its philosophy and cultivation methods, see Ajahn Chah (2002).

Note 11. It is important to note that the earliest detailed book of Chinese medicine, *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic*《黃帝內經》*Huángdì Nèijīng* arrives quite abruptly and suddenly on the scene within China, with detailed medical knowledge and theories. Up till now, there have been no texts that come before *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic* to portray a chronological development of medical knowledge and theories that are presented within this ancient text. Combine with the fact that this text most likely appeared after the arrival of Buddhism, surely warrants some serious investigation and research into why this is the case. Especially considering how more advanced India's medical systems were compared to China's ones.

Note 12. In regard to evidence of these two waves of migration, see Burrows (1973, pp. 123-140).

Note 13. Another key piece of evidence commonly cited is that of the four names of gods appearing in the Hittite-Mitanni treaty, where the Vedic gods *Mitrá* (possibly a kind of solar deity, known in Avestan as *Mithra* and has a strong connection to *ṛta*), *Várūna* (a sky-god, also connected with *ṛta*), *Indra* (god of storms, lightning and thunder) and the *Násatyā* (another name for the *Ásvin*; Avestan: *aspā*) can be clearly recognized (Burrows 1973, p. 123). These four gods have a strong relationship to the early proto-Indo-European gods (see page thirty-five above). It does appear that Buddhism also has its own evolution of these gods: *Várūna* (no change to the name), *Maitreya* and *Śakra*. One may note that among these Mitanni texts we also find the use of the word *ṛta*, where some royal Mitanni names contained it (Anthony, 2007, p. 49).

Note 14. One of the earliest in depth mentions (ca. 186 BCE) of *dàoyīn* type practises in China is in the 《引書》 *Yīnshū*.

Note 15. These ancient texts include but are not limited to: 《黃帝內經·靈樞經·官能》 *Huángdì Nèijīng, Língshū Jīng, Guānnéng*. 《黃帝內經·靈樞經·病傳》 *Huángdì Nèijīng, Língshū Jīng, Bìng Chuán*. 《黃帝內經·素問·奇病論》 *Huángdì Nèijīng, Sùwén, Qībìng Lùn*. 《史記·列傳·龜策列傳》 *Shǐjì, Lièzhuàn, Guīcè Lièzhuàn*. 《申鑒·俗嫌》 *Shēnjiàn, Sù Xián*.

Note 16. One may note here that the early Chinese ideas of *q* iare identical to the Indian ideas of *prāṇa*. Not only in regard to medical ideas but also in breathing practices.

Note 17. While some ancient Daoist authors wrote much about their health cultivation, *yǎngshēng* (養生) techniques and how they themselves lived a long life, there is no external evidence, modern or old, to suggest they lived long lives. Interestingly though, yoga has had various forms of external evidence, modern and old, to suggest its practitioners lived very long lives. For example, in the book of Marco Polo, chapter thirty-one, on the province of Kashmir, Marco Polo says, “there are in this country eremites, who dwell in seclusion and practise great abstinence in eating and drinking. They observe strict chastity and keep from all sins forbidden in their law, so they are regarded by their own folk as very holy persons. They live to a very great age.”

Note 18. Students of Chinese Medicine would have heard of an acupuncture point called the sea of *qì*, *qìhǎi* (氣海), which is one and half inches below the navel on/in the abdomen. The author spent many years trying to find the origin of this name and why this area of the body was so important. The most logical answer comes from ancient India: “Twelve digits above the anus and the genital organs and just below the navel, there is an egg-shaped bulb called the *kanda* (or *kandasthana*). From it seventy-two thousand *nāḍīs* are said to spread throughout the body, each branching off into another seventy-two thousand.” (Iyengar, 2015, p. 32).

Note 19. This shift from early to later Brahmanism is especially important as it provides powerful evidence into the origins of Old Indic (the language of the *R̥gveda*), how early Brahmanism was significantly different to Buddhism (conveying that Buddhism was not a branch or further development of Brahmanism), and how the ideas contained within the *R̥gveda* were originally superimposed on an indigenous people. Anthony (2007, p. 49) states that while most Vedic experts agree that the 1028 hymns of the *R̥gveda* were compiled in Punjab (northwestern India) and modern-day Pakistan (1500-1300 BCE), it is the deities, moral concepts and the Old Indic language of the *R̥gveda* that first appear in written texts in northern Syria.

Note 20. Actually, it is the c. 11th-century *Amṛtasiddhi*, which is the first text to teach any of the unique *haṭhayoga* practices and concepts (Mallinson, 2019, p. 2). It is also interesting to note that this text was composed in a *Vajrayāna* Buddhist environment which points toward a strong link between *Vajrayāna* Buddhists and *Nāth* yogis (to which *haṭhayoga* is especially associated with) due in part to both schools having a tradition of eight-four *siddhas* (Mallinson, 2020b, p. 421).

Appendix 1

Buddhist Theory According to the *Mahāsatipatthāna Sūta*

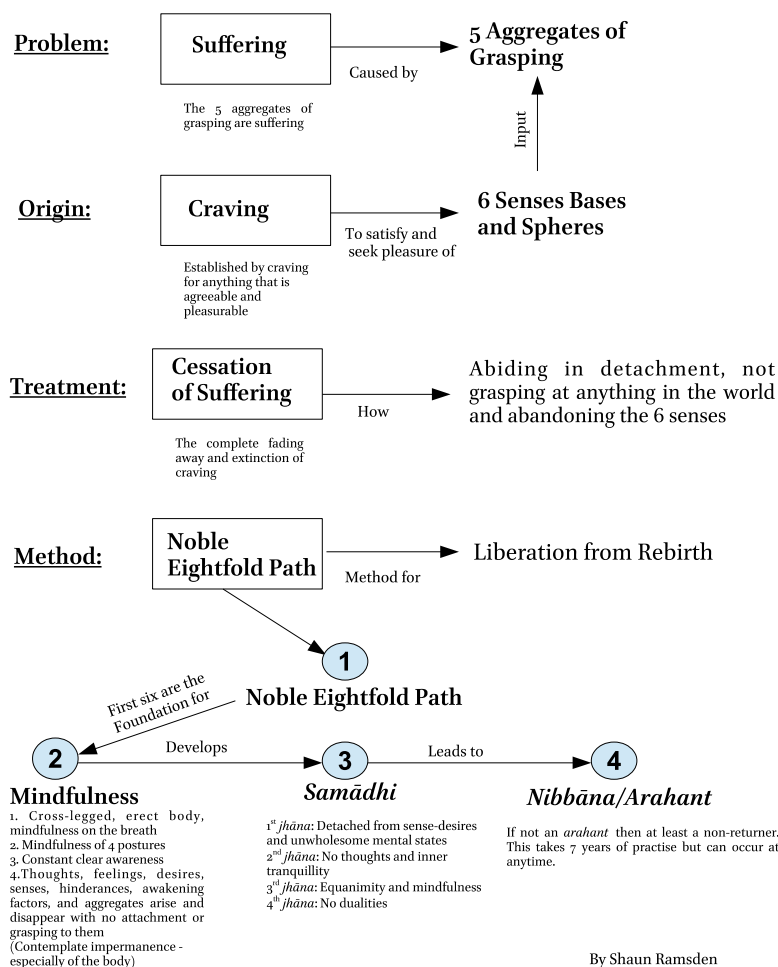


Figure 7. *Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta* (The Great Discourse of the Foundations of Mindfulness) Theory

Figure seven above is one potential model of the *Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta* (The Great Discourse of the Foundations of Mindfulness) theory which includes the entire Buddhist path in regard to becoming an *arahant*. The *Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta* (The Great Discourse of the Foundations of Mindfulness) discusses the Four Noble Truths. It says that suffering is equivalent to and caused by the Five Aggregates of Grasping (form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness). The origin of suffering is craving, which has been created by seeking pleasure of the six senses and six spheres (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; visible forms, sound, odours, flavours, touch and mental objects) which are the input mechanisms that create the Five Aggregates. As craving is the origin of suffering, it must be overcome by its complete extinction and fading away by abiding in detachment, abandoning the senses and not grasping at anything in the world. The method to do this is called the Noble Eightfold Path. The first six steps of the path create the basis for a practitioner to practise mindfulness, which is the foundation to do *samādhi* and thereby enter *jhāna* and become an *arahant* or at least a non-returner (*anāgāmi*). This is said to take seven years but can happen much faster.

Appendix 2

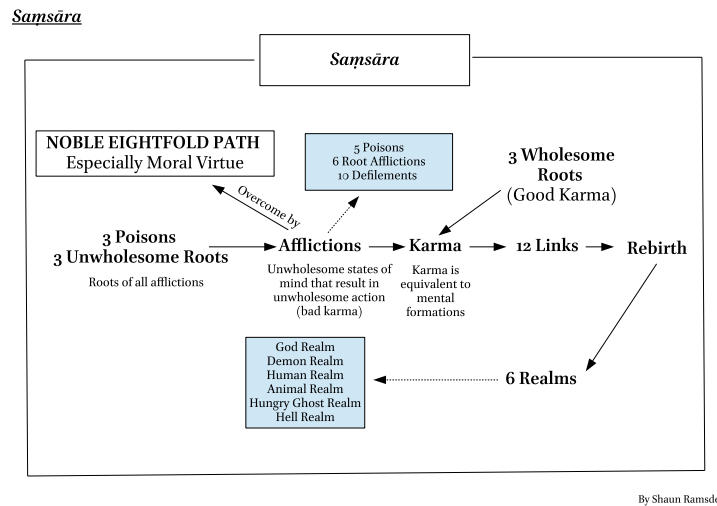


Figure 8. *Samsāra*

Figure eight above provides a model of the Buddhist idea of *samsāra*. *Samsāra* specifically refers to the endless cycles of rebirth. These endless cycles begin with the Three Poisons and Three Unwholesome Roots which are the root causes of the afflictions or unwholesome states of mind which result in (bad) karma by which through dependent origination and the Twelve Links one is reborn into one of the Six Realms. The afflictions are overcome by the Noble Eightfold Path and bad karma is counteracted by the Three Wholesome Roots to produce good karma, and therefore a favourable rebirth in a higher realm.

Appendix 3

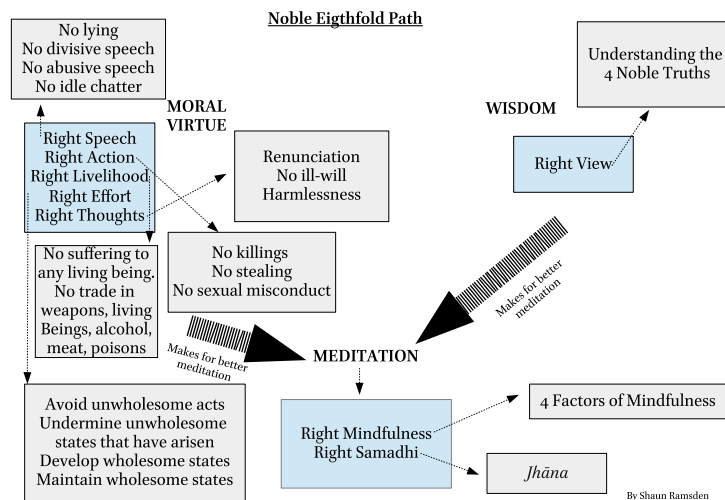


Figure 9. The Noble Eightfold Path

Figure nine above, describes some of the core teachings of Buddha, known collectively as the Noble Eightfold Path or Middle Way. The practice of moral virtue means, the cultivation of being virtuous, upright in character, ethical and moralistic. It includes; right speech (no lying, no divisive speech, no abusive speech, no idle chatter); right action (no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct); right livelihood (no business in weapons, poisons, alcohol, meat or slavery); right effort (cultivating and maintaining wholesome states of mind, and to undermine and avoid the unwholesome states); and right resolve (renunciation of the self or ego, no ill-will or ill intent and harmlessness).

Wisdom is also extremely important on the path to becoming an *arahant*, as ignorance is the first link of the Twelve Links. According to the *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta (The Great Discourse of the Foundations of*

Mindfulness), right view refers to the understanding of the Four Noble Truths and wisdom gained from them.

Right mindfulness means to maintain awareness of either the breath, body, feelings, mind or *dhammas* at all times. Right *samādhi* refers to deep meditation. When this state is achieved one can now begin to enter into *jhāna*. It is only through deep and deeper *jhāna* (there are four stages) that one is able to attain *nibbāna* and to become an *arahant*.

Appendix 4. 《胎息經》 *Tāixījīng*

胎從伏氣中結，氣從有胎中息。

[The] embryo comes [from the] accumulation [of] concealed *qì* [the] *qì* comes [from] having breathed [at the] embryo.

氣入身來謂之生，神去離形謂之死。

Qì enters [the] body, [this is] called life, [the] spirit leaves [the] form, [this is] called death.

知神氣可以長生。

Know [the] spirit *qì* [and you] can live long.

固守虛無，以養神氣。

[Be] entrenched [in the] void [of] emptiness, so [you will] nourish [your] spirit *qì*

神行即氣行，神住即氣住。

[The] spirit moves, so [the] *qì* moves, [the] spirit stays, so [the] *qì* stays.

若欲長生，神氣相注。

If [you] desire [to] live long, [the] spirit [and] *qì* [should] mutually join.

心不動念，無來無去。

[The] heart [does] not stir thoughts, not coming, [and] not going.

不出不入，自然常住。

Not out [and] not in, [it will] naturally dwell.

勤，而行之，是真道路。

[To] diligently do [this,] is [the] true road [of the] Dao.

Appendix 5. *Tàishàng Lǎojūn Zhōngjīng*

《太上老君中經·卷上》丹田者，人之根也，精神之所藏也，五黑之元也，赤子之府，男子以藏精，女子以藏月水。主生子，合和陰陽之門戶也。在臍下三寸，附著脊脊，兩腎根也。丹田之中，中赤，左青，右黃，上白，下黑，方圓四寸之中。所以在臍下三寸者，言法天地人。天一，地二，人三，時四，故曰四寸。法五行，故有五色。清水鄉，敖丘里。丹田名藏精宮，神姓孔，名丘，字仲尼，傳之為師也。兆常以夜半存心之，赤黑上行至絳宮，華蓋，各右繞之。太一入黃庭，滿太倉，養赤子，復入太淵，忽忽不知所在。復念太一，黑還入丹田中止。常念太一玄光道母養真人子丹，正吾身也，自兆名也，勿忘之。

[The] *dāntián* [is] the root [of a] person. [It] stores [the] vitality (*jīngshén*) ... [It is where a] male stores [his] sperm, [where a] female stores [her] menstrual fluid ... [It is] three inches below [the] navel ... [The] root [of] both [the] kidneys ... [In the] middle [it is] red, left green, right yellow, white [on] top, black underneath, [all in] the middle [of the] perimeter [of] four inches. [The] so [called] three inches below [the] navel [is] speaking [about the] model [of the] sky, earth and man. Sky [is] one, earth [is] two, man [is] three, [and the] four periods (seasons) [are four], therefore, [it is] called four inches. Modelling [itself on the] Five Movements, therefore [it] has five colours ... The *dāntián* [is] named, [the] palace of storing [the] essence (sperm) ...

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