

# De Sint-Denijsbode



---

## Het spirituele leven

---

(Uit de inleiding van *A Survey of Buddhism*, door Sangharakshita, p. 25-28, 9de editie Windhorse)

## Schema

---

### Zorgvuldig in kaart gebrachte stappen

Het spirituele pad verloopt in stappen. De boeddhistische traditie heeft deze opeenvolgende stappen en fasen zorgvuldig in kaart gebracht op basis van de ervaring van de Boeddha.

### Verschillende stijlen en methodes

De onderdelen van het pad worden in diverse volgorden en vanuit verschillende standpunten voorgesteld en gerangschikt.

- Edel Achtvoudig Pad
- Tien Perfecties en Tien Stadia
- Zeven stadia van zuivering
- Dertien verblijven
- Tweeënvijftige yana's

### Eén doel, één basisstructuur

Achter al deze formuleringen zit dezelfde *architectuur*: stap voor stap, van brug naar brug, trainen van

- Ethiek (sila)
- Meditatie (samadhi)
- Wijsheid (prajna)

### Ethiek

Goed gedrag is een uiting van een positieve instelling van de geest.

- In de Hinayana ligt de nadruk op het achterlaten van dorst, haat en onwetendheid.
- In de Mahayana en Vajrayana ligt meer nadruk op Maitri (liefde) en Karuna (mededogen). Handelen op basis van altruïsme bevordert het ontstaan van *samadhi*.

## Samadhi of meditatie

Training van concentratie en hogere bewustzijnsstaten.

'Boeddhistische filosofische waarheid onderzoeken en deze transformeren van abstracte waarneming in een concreet innerlijk besef, waardoor bevrijding van verdriet en verkeerde opvattingen, belichaming van nirvana en de functies van verlossing allemaal worden bereikt. <sup>1</sup>

Er zijn ontelbare oefeningen

- Hinayana: lichaamsgewaarzijn en metta
- Mahayana: daarbovenop: leegheid ervaren
- Vajrayana: ook mantra's, visualisatie van Boeddha's en Bodhisattva's (= lichaamsenergieën manipuleren om hun transcendente tegenhangers op te wekken.

Alle oefeningen leiden naar zuivering.

## Wijsheid (prajna)

Wijsheid verwerven gebeurt in drie stappen:

- 'Horen' (= leren via luisteren, lezen...)
- Kritisch denken
- Meditatie (ook *contemplatie* genoemd niet meer *nadenken* over bijvoorbeeld *er is lijden*, maar er vol overgave en vertrouwen mee zitten.)

Echte Wijsheid ontstaat in deze derde fase.

Wijsheid = een rechtstreeks, niet-conceptueel bevatten van de transcendente werkelijkheid.

- In de Hinayana: de dingen uitsluitend zien als *dharmas* (ultieme elementen van het bestaan). --> Arahantschap
- De Mahayana ziet de *dharmas* zelf als *sunyata* (leeg). --> Boeddhachap

Voor beide stromingen is dit het doorbreken van het net van de waan.

De diverse systemen van beoefening (Sarvastivada, the Sautrantika, the Yogacara or Vijnanavada, and the Madhyamaka) zijn geen concurrerende denkwijzen die zichzelf juist en de andere vals noemen.

Het zijn verstandelijke formuleringen van opeenvolgende stappen waarbij telkens de formuleringen van de vorige stap aan diggelen worden geslagen. Zo kan de beoefenaar stap voor stap een minder beperkte ervaring van de werkelijkheid krijgen.

## Tekst

---

While the experience of Enlightenment is instantaneous, the approach to it is always gradual. In Buddhism, therefore, the spiritual life consists essentially in the following of a path, the successive steps and stages of which have been carefully mapped out by tradition in accordance with the spiritual experience of the Buddha and his disciples, both immediate and remote. As temperaments and methods of practice differ, this path can be formulated in various ways and the number and order of its constituent factors determined and described from various points of view. Thus it comes about that we have not only the Aryan Eightfold Path and the Path of the Ten

---

<sup>1</sup> Door Sangharakshita geciteerde woorden van Mr. Chen, één van zijn leraren in Kalimpong.

Perfections and Ten Stages — two of the best-known formulations — but also the Path as consisting of seven stages of purification, thirteen 'abodes' (viharas), fifty-two yantras, and so on, the list being practically interminable. What we may call the architectonic of the Path, however, does not vary, just as the different types of bridges, built in accordance with the same principles of mechanics and for the same purpose, reveal the same basic structure. This architectonic is most clearly exhibited in the formula of the Three Trainings (trisikṣā), namely Morality (sīla), Meditation (samādhi), and Wisdom (prajña), which according to one tradition was the recurrent theme of the discourses delivered by the Buddha during his last tour, and concerning which he is represented as declaring, 'Great becomes the fruit, great the advantage of samādhi, when it is set round with sīla. Great becomes the fruit, great the advantage of prajña when it is set round with samādhi.'

In its primary sense sīla means 'behaviour' and in its derived sense 'good behaviour'. All behaviour, good or bad, is the expression of a mental attitude. Despite the formidable lists of precepts with which, in practice, Buddhist ethics has tended to become identified, sīla is in the last analysis defined in purely psychological terms as those actions which are associated with karmically wholesome mental states and dissociated from those which are karmically unwholesome. What constitutes a wholesome mental state differs from one yana to another; or rather, there is a difference of emphasis. For the Hinayana, good actions are those connected with the wholesome mental roots of non-greed (alobha), non-hate (adveśa), and non-delusion (amoha) — for the Mahayana and Vajrayana, those inspired by love (maitrī) and compassion (karuṇā) for sentient beings. Bodily and verbal actions being the extensions of mental states, these states can be induced by the performance of the actions, whether good or bad, self-regarding or altruistic, which are their natural expression. In this fact lies the importance of sīla as a preparation for samādhi.

*Samādhi* or meditation (the translation is approximate only) comprises the exercises by means of which the practitioner attains mental concentration and the superconscious states, as well as these states themselves. It is the heart and centre of the Buddhist spiritual life. In the words of a modern authority, its significance is that 'It is the use of concentrated force to investigate Buddhist philosophic truth and transform it from abstract perception into a concrete inner realisation whereby liberation from sorrows and false views, embodiment of Nirvāna, and the functions of salvation are all attained.' Broadly speaking, in the Hinayana the term samādhi generally refers to the practice of the meditation exercises, and in the Mahayana to the spiritual states attained by such practice. Thirty-eight or forty meditation exercises are enumerated, but in fact there are more. Among the most popular are the contemplation of the ten stages of decomposition of a corpse, by means of which craving (lobha) is destroyed, the cultivation of loving-kindness (maitrī) towards all sentient beings, which destroys hate (dveśa), and mindfulness of the bodily movements and the process of respiration, which leads to the destruction of delusion (moha). The Mahayana makes use of the same exercises but combines them with the practice of sunyata. In the Vajrayana, meditation includes the repetition of the mantras of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and the visualization of their forms which, after being conjured forth from the voidness, worshipped, and meditated upon, are resolved back into it again. There are also various

exercises which, by manipulating the gross energies of the physical body, aim at activating their subtle and transcendental counterparts. Whatever the type of exercise may be, the aim of it is to attain a state of purity and translucency of mind wherein the Truth can be as it were reflected.

In general *prajna* or wisdom is threefold, as based upon learning; (literally 'hearing'), upon independent thought and reflection, and upon meditation (*bhavana*, that which is [mentally] developed, or 'made to become'). Here the third kind of wisdom proper is to be understood. This may be described as a direct, non-conceptual apprehension of transcendental reality. For the Hinayana such apprehension arises when things and persons are viewed exclusively in terms of dharmas, or ultimate elements of existence; for the Mahayana, when the dharmas themselves are seen as *sunyata*. In either case the result is a permanent disruption of the web of delusion resulting in one instance in the attainment of Arahantship and in the other of Supreme Buddhahood. What, for want of a better word, we are compelled to term Buddhist philosophy is, in fact, essentially the conceptual formulation of the non-conceptual content of wisdom or Enlightenment. Correctly understood, the Sarvastivada, the Sautrantika, the Yogacara or Vijnanavada, and the Madhyamaka are not rival systems of thought, one of which must be true and the rest false, but expressions on the intellectual plane of successively more advanced degrees of spiritual insight. The technique is for a philosophy pertaining to a more advanced degree of insight to utilize the formulations of a less advanced degree in order to undermine its basic assumptions, thus impelling the practitioner to move from a more to a less limited experience of Reality.