

Bell (ghaṇṭā) and Vajra in Vajrayana Buddhism

Foreword

In our Dharma class, Bodo Balsys uses a Tibetan bell (ghaṇṭā) to start and end the session. It is used in conjunction with the vajra. In this document you will find some information and important Buddhist terms as Bodo defines and uses them.

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From The Internet (Tibetanbuddhistaltar)

https://www.tibetanbuddhistaltar.org/bell-and-dorje/?fbclid=IwAR2_fCgqWG2MfjluBdY-h5TUhK8KijPvfjXPTwsptb5y14be8MyBLxX8wZg

The bell and dorje (vajra) are two of these implements. The dorje, held in the right hand, represents **skillful means**, and the bell, held in the left, represents wisdom. Together these ritual implements represent the inseparability of wisdom and compassion in the enlightened mindstream. Looked at separately, each is a great treasure of spiritual meaning.

The word Dorje means Lord of Stones in Tibetan. It symbolizes the capacity to transform all experience into an experience of enlightened perspective. Everything in samsara, cyclic existence, is impermanent, and therefore, not to be relied upon. The dorje symbolizes the skillful means of transforming our ordinary experience to one that will propel us on our spiritual path. The dorje has five extraordinary characteristics. It is impenetrable, immovable, immutable, indivisible, and indestructible. The dorje is the indestructible weapon of the wrathful deities. It is the symbol of spiritual authority of the peaceful deities.

(About the peaceful and wrathful deities, see 'A Treatise on Mind', Vol. 5 a)

Bell (ghaṇṭā)



Plate 113: The ritual bell

From: Robert Beer, The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols, Shambala Publications, 1999, p. 245

Bell (ghaṇṭā) (From Tibetanbuddhistaltar)

The bell, also, is rich in symbolic meaning and power. Mainly the bell is the mandala of **Prajnaparamita**, the **Great Mother**, she from whom all reality comes forth. By its sound, the bell invites or attracts the deities to attend or participate and warns or drives away obstructing forces. The ringing of the bell can remind one of the emptiness of phenomena or bring the mind into greater awareness. As a musical instrument, its sound can be an offering to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

The hollow of the bell represents the void (śūnyatā) from which all phenomena arise, including the sound of the bell, and the clapper represents form. Together they symbolize wisdom (emptiness) and compassion (form or appearance). The sound, like all phenomena, arises, radiates forth and then dissolves back into emptiness.

If you look closely at the bell, you will see many markings or designs on it. Each of these has a meaning. On the rim of the bell is the disc of space that gives rise to the sound of emptiness. The vajra fence, the indestructible circle of protection which encircles the bell is bordered on both sides by a ring of pearls. The bottom ring is a ring of wisdom flames, representing the five primordial wisdoms. The top ring of pearls is another protective circle symbolizing the development of the higher states of consciousness which allow one to enter the celestial palace of Prajnaparamita. The flames are 2/4 associated with Manjushri, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, the vajras with Vajrapani, the Bodhisattva of Power, and the lotuses with Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of **Compassion**. This indicates that spiritual qualities are the true protection. Above the protective border are the makaras holding loops of jeweled pendants with vajras in between them. The jeweled pendants decorate the celestial palace. The vajras in between symbolize the eight charnel grounds within the mandala.

Above the jeweled loops and between the makaras are eight lotus petals representing the eight Bodhisattvas. The lotus petals are marked with syllables representing the eight consorts or offering goddesses. Above this is another double row of pearls with a row of vajras in between. These represent the inner walls and inner protection circle of the mandala.

The stem of the bell rises above this. At its base are lotus petals, representing Prajnaparamita's lotus throne. On the stem there are two sets of pearl rings, a lower set and an upper set. Together these represent the **six perfections**. In between them is either a square or round base. The square base represents the earth, the round a long life vase. The long life vase symbolizes the nectar of accomplishment and represents the nectar-filled body of the goddess Prajnaparamita whose face is above. Prajnaparamita represents the perfection (**paramita**) of the absolute non-duality of all the Buddha's wisdom or discriminating awareness (prajna). The binding of her hair represents the binding of all views into non-dual reality. There are five wisdom-jewels on her crown, which overlap onto the five front petals of the upper vajra's eight-petaled lotus pedestal. The bell is crowned at the top with a five or nine-pointed vajra.

Bell (ghaṇṭā) (From Bodo's Works)

The Love-Wisdom attribute is the bell (*ghaṇṭā*) that intones the immaculate Void of space. The vajra and bell are often used together in rituals, as the first represents the immutable power of the Jina, and

the bell the intrinsic emptiness of his Consort. The Activity aspect is embodied by the drum which rhythmically beats out the modifications of space in the form of a mantric sound. It integrates saṃsāra's domain with the emptiness of the all. This Element is governed by the Vajra family.

(Vol. 5 a, p. 143)

Ghaṇṭā: bell, symbol of the transient, the feminine, wisdom principle (*prajñā*). The *vajra* then represents the masculine, compassionate principle.

(Vol. 2, p. 287)

The bell (*ghaṇṭā*) governs the Fiery attribute of manas (the sight sense-consciousness). It is similarly held by the top left hands of all the Herukas, except Karma Heruka, who holds a sword. The reason for holding this bell in this most manasic of positions is that all attributes of mind must be subdued so that the voice of silence can be heard conveying the ear-whispered truths emanating from the domain of Mind. Eventually the resonance of Emptiness must be realised via mastery of the feminine principle that the bell represents. Wisdom is the outcome.

(Vol. 5 a, p. 194)

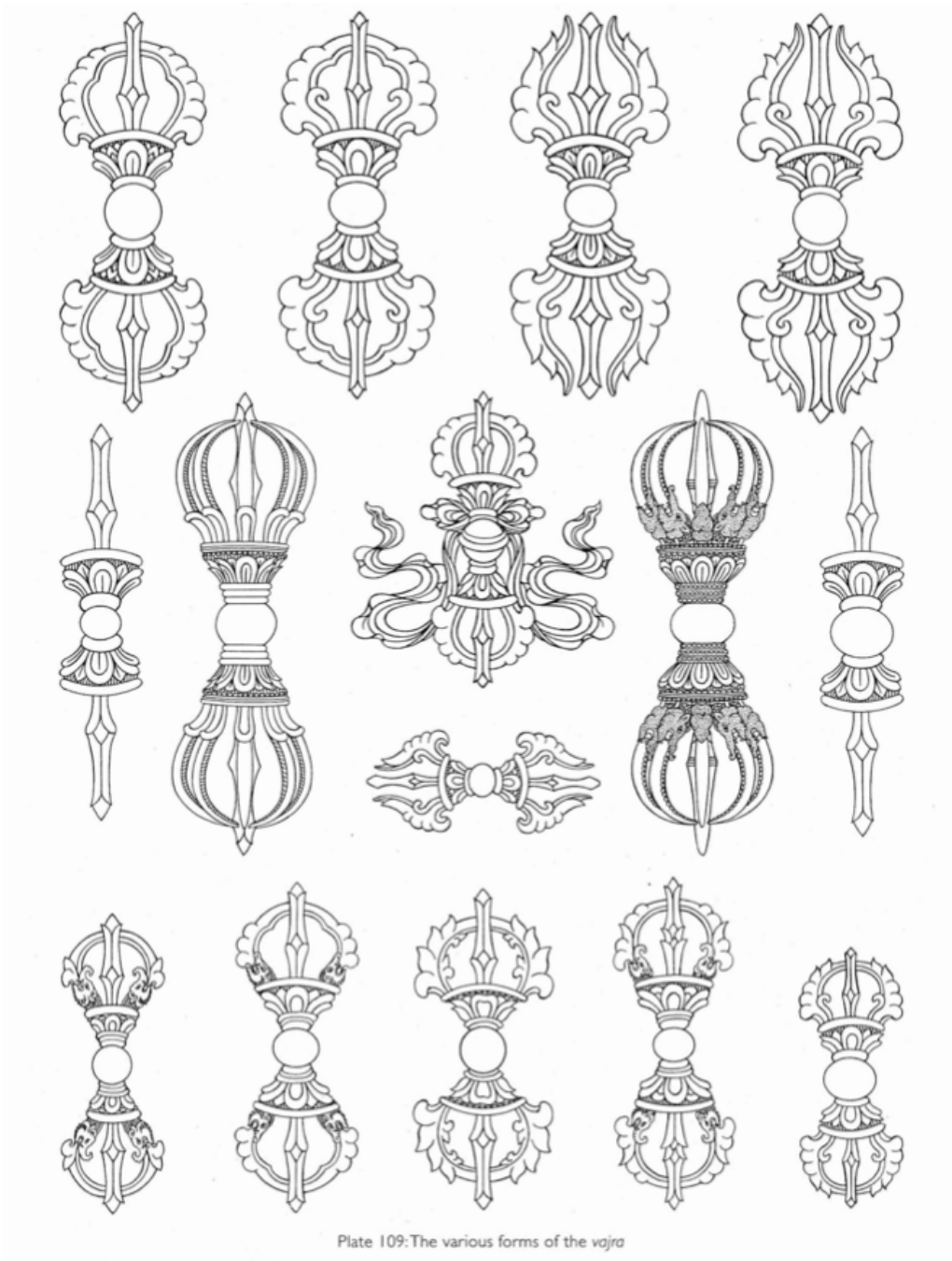
Bell (ghaṇṭā) (Wiki)

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Usage of Bell (ghaṇṭā) (Wiki)

The bell is the most commonly used of all musical instruments in tantric Buddhist ritual. The sound made by the bells is regarded as very auspicious and is believed to drive out evil spirits from where the ritual is being performed. When the bell is being used with the dorje its use is varied depending on the ritual or the mantras being chanted. During meditation ringing the bell represents the sound of Buddha teaching the dharma and symbolizes the attainment of wisdom and the understanding of emptiness. During the chanting of the mantras the Bell and Dorje are used together in a variety of different ritualistic ways to represent the union of the male and female principles.

Vajra



From: Robert Beer, *The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols*, Shambala Publications, 1999, p. 237

Vajra (From Tibetanbuddhistaltar)

Vajra, the Sanskrit word, means the hard or mighty one, diamond-like. Its brilliance illuminates ignorance and reveals Truth, destroying the delusion that causes suffering. Once the cause of suffering is revealed to us, we are empowered to create the causes of happiness. Ultimately we will attain the egoless state, which is free from all suffering. From the Vajrayana perspective, the motivation for attaining this state is to relieve all beings from their suffering.

The physical appearance of the dorje is rich in meaning. At the very center is a sphere representing the **dharmata**, the sphere of reality itself, the ultimate truth. Surrounding the sphere on either side are one or three 'strands of pearls', depending on the size of 1/4 the dorje. These represent the **three doors of liberation**. The first door is the transcendental concentration of **signlessness**, in which words and concepts fall away and there is nothing to grasp. The second is the transcendental concentration on **directionlessness**, the state of perfect equanimity—spiritual stability and balance. The third is the transcendental concentration on **emptiness**.

Next to the pearls on either side of the sphere are eight-petaled lotuses. The petals on one side represent the eight great Bodhisattvas; the petals on the other represent their consorts. * The next display on the vajra is a **moon disc**. This is the seat of the Bodhisattvas symbolizing the full realization of **Bodhicitta**, the Great Compassion.

There are six more rings after the moon disc. These symbolize the six perfections: generosity, moral conduct, patience, joyful effort, concentration, and wisdom. The accomplishment of these six is the foundation of the Mahayana, the Great Vehicle of Buddhist study and practice. They are the hallmark of the Bodhisattva path. When one has accomplished these, one can truly be of benefit to others. The next thing we see on the dorje are the makaras. A makara [Varunas animal vehicle] is a composite animal with jaws like a crocodile which symbolizes effort and persistence in Dharma practice.

A vajra may have one, two, three, four, five, six, or nine prongs. The most common is the five-pronged vajra. They look like points that protrude from the curved ends, one on each curve and one at each end. These five prongs symbolize the five Buddhas of the five Buddha families and their consorts.

Vajra (From Bodo's Works)

The adamantine 'diamond sceptre' of Indra, the Hindu God of the Air. In Buddhism it symbolises the indestructible reality of Buddhahood, imperishable, indivisible (non-dual) immutable power, the synthesis of the qualities of the five alchemical Elements. The Dorje therefore is five-spoked (but can also be symbolised by the three pronged trident). He who holds it in consciousness has obtained the highest Wisdom—that which is the synthesis of the attributes of the five Dhyāni Buddhas. Indeed, such a one is master of all of space and time, ruler of the phenomenal realms. Thus it becomes the rod of power of all yogis, a symbol of their yogic prowess.

(Vol. 4, p. 20)

It should be noted that the Dhyāni Buddhas embody the adamantine power of a vajra (Tib.: Dorje). The vajra projects the energies of enlightenment outwards into four directions of space (*ākāśa*). This

emanation does not actually move of itself, as it is consistent with *śūnyatā*, which is its base support. The Buddhas remain quiescent in dynamic rapturous dhyāna. What moves the energies of the Buddhas, (channelling of their qualities with respect to the variances needed in saṃsāra) are the swastikas embodied by the Mahābodhisattvas and their Consorts. The vajras (or rather viśvavajras) organise space according to the 'five-ness' of the Jinas that they bear. The *dharmakāya* therefore is the base of their potency, and the Flowers (chakras) of conscious expansive meditative experience are their mechanism of expression. For this reason Buddhas and Mahābodhisattvas are depicted seated upon their petals.

(Vol. 4, p. 365)

Above the Makara is a vajra, here an emanation of the higher mental plane, signifying that the mind must be completely mastered to conquer the Makara, and also to emanate the powers of the wisdoms of the Dhyāni Buddhas. The power of their united wisdom must thereby dominate the sum of saṃsāra.

(Vol. 5 a, pp. 329-330)

Sun and Moon Disc (Rigpawiki)

In tantric iconography the sun disc and moon disc are the customary seats for both buddhas and yidams. The sun symbolizes jnana, or wisdom, while the moon is a symbol of bodhicitta, or compassion.

Detailed Explanation of Buddhist Sanskrit Terminology (From Bodo's Works)

Adi Buddha, Deities, Male, Female (From Bodo's Works)

There is no proper equivalent from the Buddhist perspective for Sanat Kumāra. Perhaps the best term that depicts the attributes of this great one is the Ādi Buddha, Samantabhadra (kuntu bzang po). The term means the one who is all good, ever perfect, manifesting universal goodness or joy. It is a synonym for the *dharmakāya*, manifest in the form of a primordial Buddha, as recognised by the Nyingma tradition. Samantabhadra can be viewed in terms of the natural or spontaneous compassionate luminosity that is an attribute of *dharmakāya*, manifest in the form of a primordial Buddha, as recognised by the Nyingma tradition. Samantabhadra can be viewed in terms of the natural or spontaneous compassionate luminosity that is an attribute of *dharmakāya* conceived of as masculine, integrated with his Consort (Samantabhadrī), which represents emptiness (*śūnyatā*). We thus have the non-dual attribute (*yab-yum*) that unite the appearances of *saṃsāra* with emptiness. Esoterically however, the 'appearance of phenomena' is embodied by the feminine deva kingdom, and the

emptiness derived from it, and which is the base for compassionate wisdom, hence is masculine. Samantabhadra can be conceived of as the compassionate driving force that produces emptiness out of phenomena in terms of spontaneous wisdom. Such a force is also equated with bodhicitta, which Samantabhadra is then the regulatory body of expression for our planetary system. Consequently he is also one of the eight great Bodhisattvas. In this fusion of the qualities of primordial Buddha and an eternally manifest Mahābodhisattva we observe the basic quality of Sanat Kumāra. Another term utilised for the Ādi Buddha is Vajrasattva.

(Vol. 7 A pp. 34-35)

Dhyāni Buddhas and Consorts (From Bodo's Works)

For the complete picture of what 'truth' is to emerge both keys thereto must be fully turned, as they provide complementary information. The integration of both forms of investigation awakens the enlightenment path by means of the Dharmakāya Way. The interrelatedness of these two modes of obtaining truth are symbolised by the images depicting the highest states of bliss obtained by Buddhas in sexual union with their divine Consort. The Buddha, or the penetrative mechanism, represents the inwards contemplative method, where the seed capable of producing the child of compassion goes inwards into the womb of being/non-being. The female Consort represents the outwards explorative method, of the conventional reality that provides added substance that envelops the inward method, and gives birth to the fruit of their combined union. It envelops śūnyatā, whereby śūnyatā acts as a seed for further growth. The phenomenal world, the Consort, plays the active role in the love making, whilst the Dhyāni Buddha is the stable base playing the passive role. Together they produce all that is and is not. The Consort represents the dynamic active interrelationship between the forces of karma inherent in the external universe and the stable divinity within. It allows for the projection of the qualities of the divine into manifestation.

The Dhyāni Buddha (the absolute reality) is the inherent quiescent Power that sustains the drive to evolutionary fulfilment and projects the seed (*śūnyatā*) as the foundation of every creative act. This 'seed' sprouts in the fertile ground of saṃsāra, clothed in the paraphernalia of conventional truth. As it grows out from the soil of the material domain and sloughs off (by transformation into wisdom attributes) the ephemera of empirical considerations, then the luminosity of the sun of the ultimate experience remains. There can be no expressed bliss, or the sounds, colours and the laws of Nature without this union between the Buddha and his Consort. The way to Buddhahood can thus be via the Consort, the complete affiliation with the laws of Nature that are a result of the union, or it can be directly through obtaining the absolute quiescence of the Dhyāni Buddha.

Treading the Bodhisattva path concerns travelling within the consciousness-space representing the womb of the Consort, with Buddhahood being obtained when one has progressed outside of that earthly womb of space-time and its evolutionary process. This means that to travel the Bodhisattva way one needs to master both methods of revelation, necessitating finding a means to unite them into unity, a fusion, a mahāmudrā of dynamic expansive love and wisdom.

The union or integration of both lovers, or modes of enquiry provides the complete picture of the bliss of the Buddha nature (*dharmatā*). The philosophy concerning the methodology of such integration is presented in this Treatise on Mind. What needs explaining therefore is the product of the union between Buddha and Consort, the child to be, which represents the third method of revelatory attainment, the nature of which is neither one or the other, but partakes of both within the womb of the Mother. When properly analysed, this exploratory path is the harbinger of much revelation of an entire developed universe of possibilities, yet to be explored ontologically and eschatologically. The term 'eschatologically' here does just not refer to the human afterlife, but also to the transcendental purpose of the planets, stars, galaxies and universes, of their modes of evolutionary attainment.

It is the nature of a third truth, of relativity, because born in a Tathātagata-Womb, it is the result of the fusion of Buddha and Consort, and therefore is neither one or the other. Full elucidation of this truth is an important heuristic tool or key needed to be used by Buddhists to unravel greater mysteries of being, of awakening into increasing degrees of absolute relative Truth. (Indeed there are levels of 'absolutes' to be considered in this multidimensional universe.)

Seven categories of views concerning the two truths will herein be discussed.

- The view of conventional thinkers.
- The three natures of the Yogācāra.
- The view of the extremist Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas.
- The Svātantrika Mādhyamika view.
- The Tsongkhapian Prāsaṅgika view.
- The Yogācāra Mādhyamika view of the Nyingmapa.
- The integrationist view of the Dharmakāya Way.

These differing schools of thought have valid rhetoric from one or other perspective, but incongruent aspects are successfully distilled out as we move from the first to the seventh view.

(Vol. 1 pp. 62-64)

Dharmatā (From Bodo's Works)

Dharmatā (Tib. chos nyid): actual reality, ultimate truth of phenomenon. Also, the natural force of things. Inherent nature, essence of existence.

Here the *dharmadhātu*, which Fuchs conflates with *dharmatā* and *tathatā*, is taken as the essence of the *tathāgatagarbha* ('in all beings'), which is compared to Space. Both remain undefiled, despite the pollution (manasic substance) that abounds in the world of the personal-I. The *dharmadhātu* is pristine cognition, the fundamental realm (*dhātu*³⁴) of the dharma, hence is almost synonymous with *dharmakāya*. Dharmakāya is the body (*kāya*) of the dharma, whilst *dharmadhātu* is the realm upon which it resides. Dharmatā then manifests as the force that projects this dharma into manifestation via the spaciousness of the abstracted Mind. Consequently *tathatā* becomes the mechanism of containment of that dharma in the form of the *tathāgatagarbha*.

(Vol.3, p. 385)

Bodhicitta (From Bodo's Works)

Note that I generally use the term *bodhicitta* in the manner utilised by the rDzogs chen philosophy, as Reynolds explains:

The Base of all existence is our own Primordial State, which is our inherent Buddha-nature. In the Dzogchen texts there exist many different designations for this Primordial State, but especially in the Dzogchen Semde Series,

it is called Bodhicitta, as pointed out above. Here Bodhicitta does not mean what it does in the Sutra system, that is to say, “the thought of enlightenment” or the resolute intention to attain Buddhahood for the sake of liberating all sentient beings. 13... In the Dzogchen context, the Sanskrit word bodhicitta is translated into Tibetan as byang-chub kyi sems. This Tibetan word is interpreted as follows: byang means “pure” from the very beginning, that is, kadag, or “primordially pure,” and chub means “perfected,” that is, lhun-grub or “spontaneously self-perfected.” Finally, sems means not “mind,” the conditioned thought process, but sems-nyid, “the nature of mind.” This primordial purity and this spontaneous perfection exist in inseparable unity (ka-dag lhun-grub dbyer-med) as the two aspects of a single Primordial State that is Buddhahood.14

The nature of the enigmatical bodhicitta being the ‘Base of all existence is our own Primordial State, which is our inherent Buddha-nature’ can be better understood when the *tathāgatagarbha* is explained in detail. Bodhicitta can be considered to be both evolved by the awakening personal-I who cleanses the *saṃskāras* of the afflictions of mind (in which case it can be defined as ‘the thought of enlightenment’), as well as being evoked from the inherent *tathāgatagarbha*, being a fundamental aspect thereof. (Then the meaning associated with the phrase ‘byang-chub kyi sems’ is applicable.) That part of it that is evolved concerns the development of wisdom. That part that is inherent is the principle of love. Hence we obtain the dual Ray of Love-Wisdom.

Once any consciousness generates activity in *saṃsāra* then it must be grounded, contained in a form to do so, otherwise consciousness will be amorphous, acting upon nothing in particular and everything all at once. It must therefore manifest as an individuality (thus ‘ensouling’ something) in order to exert a particular will to effect or move form. (This is indicated by the space occupied where the two spheres of this figure interact.) This is specific for each individual human unit, and must be so, otherwise the incarnation process in a logical, continuous evolutionary purpose is not really possible. Scattered chaotic incarnations would exist instead.

But many would say that ‘karma sees to it’ (rebirth), but then cannot explain exactly how karma does this. They do not understand that karma similarly needs enlightened agencies, Lords of karma, mahābodhisattvas and *ḍākinīs*, to rightly direct this law and its general patterns on a vast scale. There are also lesser karmic units of consciousness¹⁵ to carry out the law to exactitude. If karma were not wisely directed it could not so inviolably correctly act as a universal law.

(Vol. 1 p. 280)

Compassion

Kliṣṭamanas [afflicted mind], plus the *ālayavijñāna*, (the portion of the *ālayavijñāna* containing *kliṣṭamanas*), is an important factor for the I-consciousness, because when downward focussed it seeds the ‘I’ or self concept for the purpose of gaining experience from *saṃsāric* interrelation via the principle of desire. An instrument is thereby produced in the phenomenal realms that can evolve the need to liberate all sentient beings. *Kliṣṭamanas* thereby becomes the mechanism for the development of bodhicitta. At the latter stages of human evolution *kliṣṭamanas* is transmuted into the ‘mind of enlightenment’ (*bodhicitta*), and in the process of its transmutation it has the capacity to not just cleanse and convert the emotional defilements, and ‘unentangled ignorance’,²¹ but also to untangle the ignorance evolved by the formation of appropriate *saṃskāras*. It achieves this through fostering aspiration to high ideals from out of the desire principle, and then love for all beings, thereby destroying the ‘self-concept’. The ‘transcendental wisdom of the sameness’ of the all is evoked instead. Whatever has the capability to seed something (e.g., the emotions) also has the capability to ‘unseed’ it, to abstract the originating causes back from whence they came.

It is therefore the desire or emotional attribute associated with *kliṣṭamānas* that expresses the defilement of mind, and the essence of the path to enlightenment concerns the conversion of these aspects (*saṃskāras*) into the attributes of the Heart centre that embodies the principle of love, and it is also wherein *sūnyatā* can be experienced. The desire at first produces attachment to the objects of perception, from which knowledge (*manas*) is obtained concerning the interrelatedness and characteristics of these objects. Without the foundation of desires such as sensuality, carnal love, attraction to the 'other', then what is known as *bodhicitta* could not evolve, because these attributes are the primary elements that lead to the development of selfless love. From such a foundation evolves the compassionate wisdom of a Bodhisattva.

Attachment to things, and desire for the 'other' become an expression of the manifesting personal 'I' via *kliṣṭamānas*. *Manovijñāna* alone will not produce such attachments, grasping, or clinging to anything; its nature manifests in a separative manner because of its categorising function. First we have desires for all attractive, pleasurable things, in relation to the needs and wants of an 'I'. Later, because of the pain associated with being attached to transience (as per the four Noble Truths), such desire gets transmuted, when wedded with logic, into the desire for liberation from pain. This then produces the revelation that the only way this can be is to renounce all attachments, even to the 'I', and so we have the basis to the Eightfold Path.

21 Ibid., 143. There it is stated: 'This ignorance always blocks direct witness to the meaning of selflessness, and is present whenever any virtuous, nonvirtuous or neutral state of mind arises. Now, since this [unentangled ignorance] is a mental factor (*caitta*) it must be associated with a single principle mind. But since it is a *kleśa* ('afflictive emotion') and lasts without a break in its continuum until the Ārya path, it could not be possessed by either the *ālaya-vijñāna* or by the set of six [consciousnesses]'.

I take this form of ignorance to be that inherent in Nature, and which also conditions the substance of the (concrete) mind, which entangles forms of ignorance through normal human activity. It must eventually be transformed, so as to act as a proper conduit for enlightenment upon the ārya (noble) path of right meditative activity.

(Vol 1, p. 169)

Compassion (love) is the active expression of wisdom if it is to be truly efficacious [effective], hence explained in terms of the skilful means of a Bodhisattva. Compassion generally relates to relieving sources of emotional pain or suffering, and wisdom relates to the right application of consciousness. Compassion arises spontaneously from the heart, whereas wisdom is derived from the mind when directed compassionately. From this Bodhisattvic perspective the assignment of compassion to the masculine gender is correct. Our concern here is literally an analysis of the dual Ray of Love-Wisdom. From another perspective the utilisation of correct analogy is assisted by the biological role of woman, which is to give birth to the child (the formed realm, *prakṛti*) and then to compassionately guide the child through its formative years (i.e., the demonstration of 'method'). The feminine nurtures the developing form, whilst the masculine principle should provide the right educative direction (i.e., 'wisdom') for the child's upbringing. This however, is the opposite to what is presented in orthodox Buddhism. When applying gender to any symbolic consideration one should always observe the different types of energy qualification. The more spacious and unfettering than 'masculine', the more receptive to and embracing of attributes of the form than 'feminine'. The nature of the 'view' however is the determinant factor, whether from above-down (e.g., with respect to the Bodhisattva attitude) or from below-up, as is the case with the feminine biological role.

Whatever the case may be for wisdom and compassion, the correct assignment for the *nāḍīs* is: the left (*iḍā*)—lunar, Earthy-Fiery, female, intelligence, activity; and the right (*piṅgalā*)—solar, Watery-Airy, male, consciousness, contemplation. Note that the Watery Element is sometimes assigned to the feminine because of its fluid changeability. The correct feminine assignment however is to the ubiquitous fusion of Water with Fire, producing the desire or emotional-mind (*kāma-manas*).

(Vol 1, p. 26)

The Five Elements (From Bodo's Works)

The subject of the 'elements' is complicated in Buddhism. The Abhidharma states that there are eighteen 'experiential elements', 7 of which the five senses, plus the intellect are seen as the basis, and from which we get the six types of consciousness and their six modes of expression (which are the basis of production). In other lists we get 4 or 8 'elements'. Yogic philosophy, with its doctrine of the naḍīs will allow five, which are concomitant upon the development of the wisdoms of the Dhyāni Buddhas. This is the system I use. These five are termed Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Aether (Space).

The sixth 'element' given above: intellect (mentality), is really an aspect of the Fire Element. In my book on karma I present a critique of Kalu Rinpoche's explanation of the 'elements' in his book 'The Dharma', to which the reader is directed for further information. The naturally occurring elements described by materialistic science are aspects of this Earth Element, as explained in my book. Each of the five Elements have five subdivisions to them.

(Vol. 1 p. 185)

Three Doors of Liberation (Emails between Bodo and his Students)

The attainment of 'emptiness, signlessness, aimlessness' lies at the heart of this Zen enquiry, but how to get there is another matter, and at any case there is more, much more to enlightenment than that. These three are but stepping stones to the Dharmakāya Way. The three attributes above (which of course relate to *śūnyatā*), and *śūnyatā* itself, if fully realised means more than just 'empty mind'. It is but the harbinger of the fourth Initiation. *Śūnyatā* and *saṃsāra* then being identical, yes, but what does this really mean in terms of the enlightened state of mind, is what an 'empty' one is quizzed on in the Zen tradition, and the spontaneity of the answer must instantaneously express the inner meaning of what is being quizzed. For example in the answering of the Koan, not just one's particular one, but the meaning all are then known. Knowledge of universal symbolism is the mode of the meditation-Mind. The three qualities above describe the condition of being a mirror – but That which is reflected in the mirror is not 'signless', it is replete with meaning and esoteric direction, is not 'aimless', it is complete knowledge of higher purpose and the Bodhisattva Mind, is not 'empty', because it is aware of all of the vicissitudes of *saṃsāra* and of how to govern the karma of its activities. The properly awakened Mind resides in *dharmatā* – the resplendence of the ever-present dharma, the body (*kāya*) of which is spontaneously expressed whenever there is a need. Proper comprehension of the body of that dharma is the higher way.

'Aimlessness' relates to the mastery of physical plane pursuits,

'signlessness' relates to overcoming the image-forming tendencies of the emotional-mind.

'Emptiness' relates to stilling all of the peregrinations [wanderings] of the mind, so that no empirical thought arises of itself. *Dharmatā* is that which spontaneously arises in its place, which is the body (*kāya*) of the Minds of all the 'thus gone' ones that have preceded you, and the dharma is the expression of their collected Wisdom as active compassionate activity, wherein you play your rightful part.

Dharmatā is the force that projects the dharmakāya into manifestation via the spaciousness of the abstract Mind. The mode of attainment of that collective Mind is the Dharmakāya Way.

(Email, Bodo)

Nirvāṇa (From Bodo's Works)

Nirvāṇa, 'extinguished'. State beyond sorrow, therefore ultimate sphere of emptiness (*śūnyatā*). All defilements are extinguished, producing perfect calm, thus the state of residing in *śūnyatā*. From the Sanskrit roots nir, nis, meaning out, forth, away from, and va, meaning to blow, as the wind, to move, to be agitated. The 'final' attainment of the evolutionary process with respect to the form. It thus concerns complete liberation from all forms of taintedness or identification with the realms of illusion. It concerns the liberation of consciousness into a state of 'Be-ness', into spaciousness, that which is neither being nor non-being.

I have used the terms *saṃsāra-śūnyatā* and *śūnyatā-saṃsāra* (which shall be used throughout this series) here because nirvāṇa has the connotation of the final liberation of a Buddha, whereas *śūnyatā* relates to the state of emptiness that exists in lieu of saṃsāra. The term *śūnyatā* is hence more technically correct for general considerations.

(Vol. 1 pp. 15-16)

Detailed Explanation of Buddhist Sanskrit Terminology (From the Internet)

Prajnaparamita (Rigpawiki)

Means 'Perfection of Wisdom', or more literally, 'transcendent wisdom'. It refers to:

1. the sixth of the paramitas: perfect non-conceptual wisdom.
2. the class of Buddhist literature that was mainly discovered by Nagarjuna in the second century. Its central topic is emptiness.
3. the female deity who is the embodiment of transcendent wisdom.

Prajñāpāramitā means "the Perfection of (Transcendent) Wisdom" in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Prajñāpāramitā refers to this perfected way of seeing the nature of reality, as well as to a particular body of sutras and to the personification of the concept in the Bodhisattva known as the "Great Mother" (Tibetan: Yum Chenmo). The word Prajñāpāramitā combines the Sanskrit words prajñā "wisdom" with

pāramitā "perfection". Prajñāpāramitā is a central concept in Mahāyāna Buddhism and is generally associated with the doctrine of emptiness (Shunyata) or 'lack of Svabhava' (essence) and the works of Nagarjuna. Its practice and understanding are taken to be indispensable elements of the Bodhisattva path.

Skillful Means (upāya)

“upāya. (T. thabs). In Sanskrit and Pāli, “stratagem,” “method”; term with at least four important denotations: (1) as a synonym for “skillful means” (UPĀYAKAUŚALYA); (2) as a general term for the activities necessary for the attainment of buddha” hood; and (3) as one of the two essential components of the path, along with “wisdom” (PRAJÑĀ). In this latter sense, method refers to the actions a BODHISATTVA takes on behalf of all sentient beings. In this formulation, the various deeds that fall under the rubric of upāya are said to fructify as the RŪPAKĀYA of a buddha, while the bodhisattva’s development of prajñā is said to fructify as his DHARMAKĀYA. (4) In Buddhist tantra, the superiority of the esoteric path of the VAJRAYĀNA over the exoteric path in bringing about buddhahood is often attributed to the superior stratagems or methods set forth in the TANTRAS, compared to those found in the sūtras. In tantra, upāya is associated with the male and prajñā with the female.”

Excerpt From: Lopez, Donald S., Jr., Buswell, Robert E., Jr. “The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism”. Apple Books.

The six/ten pāramitās (From the Internet)

Pāra in Sanskrit literally means the 'other shore.' Here it means going beyond our own notion of the self. From the Buddhist point of view in general, and from the Mahayana point of view in particular, if we want to progress properly on the path, we need to go beyond our conventional understanding of the self. So when we say that pāramitā means 'transcendental action,' we mean it in the sense that actions or attitudes are performed in a non-egocentric manner. 'Transcendental' does not refer to some external reality, but rather to the way in which we conduct our lives and perceive the world—either in an egocentric or a non-egocentric way. The six paramitas are concerned with the effort to step out of the egocentric mentality.”

The six are generally translated as generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, meditative concentration, and wisdom. Some lists enumerate ten paramitas, the last four of which are aspects of the wisdom paramita and are skillful means, strength, aspiration, and primordial wisdom. These align with the ten stages of the bodhisattva path.