

Deep Thought as the Functioning of Awakening

— *tāthāgataṃ dhyānam* —

Gishin Tokiwa

I

What will deep composure (*samādhiḥ*) or deep thought (*dhyānam*) be in its ultimate manner? I would like to investigate this question by taking up the four kinds of deep thought (*caturvidhaṃ dhyānam*) of the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtram* (mainly dealt with in its second and sixth chapters).

What is called deep composure or deep thought in its ultimate manner cannot be any particular condition or way of being of us humans. Instead, it is our original way of being in which we are not anything at all; it is what we consider to be our ordinary way of being that is in some particular condition. It seems to me that ultimate, deep composure or deep thought means the presence of Awakening of our-not-being-anything, as emancipation from those particularities.

Our ordinary way of being, or ordinariness, presupposes the particularity of all things, and takes the direction of seeking a common ground among those particularities; basically it is characterized as particularization. It is the direction of differentiation through analysis. In this direction we seek composure by confirming a common ground, which presupposes particularization. But we know that composure sought after in this direction is far from lasting. In the direction of analysis toward particularization, composure or stability is looked for always in the future.

Abandoning the direction of particularization through analysis and, instead, taking up the direction of simplification, in other words, turning our back on the development of history to seek non-differentiation in the direction of the beginning of history—this will be a feasible choice. However, it cannot be a direction in which one can find radical solution to the uncanny anxiety that at

once hides and reveals itself through the development of history.

History, through criticizing the preceding stage, proceeds from the past to the present and from the present to the future, whereas by doing so history deepens its own affliction instead of solving it. This is the antinomy of history, emancipation from which could not emerge merely from returning to the past. Concerning the solution of this problem inherent in history, it is my understanding that it could not be found except in the direction in which the subject of history realizes its antinomy as his own, gets radically emancipated from the anxiety of antinomy, and forms the future.

Ultimate deep composure is far from being an individual one; it is deep composure of the subject of history or that of history itself. It is Awakening of the original way of being of history through radical self-criticism. It becomes the deep thought of the subject of history that arouses the desire to have unawakened subjects of history awakened to their original way of being. The deep composure of the subjects of history becoming their deep thought that works as the desire for emancipation must be the true meaning of religion. One should not reduce our understanding of the term religion to that of merely acquiring individual comfort.

It is in order to get a clue to the problem of composure of the subject of history that I take up the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtram* for consideration. I do so because this scripture in advocating deep thought as the functioning of Awakening radically criticizes the four gradual steps of deep thought, the so-called “*catur-dhyānam*”, which in the traditional forms of religion in India outside the *buddhaśāsana* culminates in the temporal extinction of perception and consciousness, the so-called “trance”.

It is quite natural that in China this scripture was regarded as an important guide for Chan practitioners, for it mentions that the Awakened one in ultimate deep thought directly points to the ordinary human being who suffers from illusion as “mother of the Awakened one” (*tathāgata-garbhaḥ*). Here we see its close connection with the well-known passage of the *Avataṃsaka sūtram*, Chapter 32: The Arising of Forms in Truth (*Taishō Tripiṭaka* 9, No. 278, 624a):¹⁾

Marvelous! How marvelous! The wisdom with which the Awakened one is equipped

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is in themselves while they do not realize it ! I shall by all means have these sentient beings get awakened to the Honored Way and have them eternally freed from delusion and defilement.

II

According to my understanding, the scriptural explanation of the four kinds of deep thought in the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtram* goes like this (2 *Sarvadharmasamuccaya*, Nanjo 97-98) : —

1) Deep thought practised by the unawakened (*bāla-upacārikaṃ dhyānam*) :

This is the first stage of practice to get deeply composed. At this stage practitioners (*yogin*), who should try realizing that each individual is in the manner of being which is neither individual nor non-individual (*pudgala-nairātmyam*), are attached to the characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and contamination of all things in their speciality and generality. This makes them remain to be either believers (*śrāvaka*) or solitary practitioners (*pratyekabuddha*), who do not realize that solution of one's own existential problems is not separate from that of others. Their realization of no-self has not become that of the subject of history. The ultimate of practice at this stage is what is called extinction of perception (*saṃjñā-nirodha*). Practitioners here do not penetrate the bottom of reality, or, rather, the bottomlessness or groundlessness of the reality of history, which is thoroughly open ; they remain in the quietude which is individualistic and closed in nature.²⁾

2) Deep thought in which the true meaning of reality is investigated (*arthapravicayaṃ dhyānam*) :

At the second stage of practice of deep thought practitioners investigate the original formlessness of the self (*pudgala-nairātmyam*) that people of other religions grasp as something substantial either in the form of individuals or of mass, and, secondly, investigate the formlessness of anything that has its own characteristics (*dharma-nairātmyam*), that is, that not only the so-called self but everything else is free from being grasped as something. That the two kinds of selflessness are not anything separate but one deep thought is realized at the third stage.³⁾

3) Deep thought that rests on the true mode of being of reality (*tathatā-ālam-*

banam dhyānam):

This refers to the practitioner in the ultimate mode of his being, free from discrimination, toward himself and everything else as they originally are, though discrimination does result where self and others are grasped as something substantial.⁴⁾

4) Deep thought as the functioning of Awakening (*tāthāgataṃ dhyānam*):

This refers to the ultimate realization of those who have been awakened to the true mode of being of reality (*tathatā*). Since the *tathāgata* means the one who has been awakened to *tathatā*, the third and the fourth stages cannot be divided as different ones. Difference will result only when the true mode of being of reality remains to represent some particular standpoint, for then it would fail to be the true mode of being of reality.⁵⁾

The third stage is at once the fourth when the true mode of reality does not exist apart from that of the practitioner, i. e., when it constitutes the practitioner's subject as the subject of history, and desiring emancipation of the unawakened is included as its essential functioning motive (*sarvabuddha-svaprañidhāna-adhiṣṭhāna-lakṣaṇam*, N 49).⁶⁾ Functioning of this desire is said to go beyond the understanding of the unawakened (*acintya-sattva-kṛtya-karaṇatā*, N 98). Without the desire for emancipation deep thought cannot be said to be in its ultimate stage; that is to say, it would remain in the third stage, resting on the true mode of being of reality.

III

As I have stated above, the first of the four kinds of deep thought expounded in the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtram* is characterized as deep thought practised by the unawakened. The same scripture includes the so-called four gradual steps of deep thought (*catur-dhyānam*) in this first stage which are practised by practitioners of traditional religions in India (6 *Kṣaṇikam*, N 221). In this deep thought, it is said, anxiety and restlessness vanish, and at the final step extinction of perception and consciousness takes place (*saṃjñā-vedita-nirodha-samāpattiḥ*).⁷⁾ The reason why it is still defined as deep thought practised by the un-awakened (*bāla*), according to the scripture, goes like this: —

Unless the ground of illusion for our consciousness (*ālayavijñānam*) ceases to be as

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such, the seven kinds of delusive perception which give rise to discrimination and suffering, will not cease. (N 221)⁸⁾

Our practice to seek for composure, needless to say, begins with this first stage of deep thought of the unawakened. While seeking after the original self that is neither self nor non-self, actually we close ourselves off individually and pursue the self that is substantialized ; then we cannot help coming to the deadlock of our being something, from where, through the realization of our ignorance in this grasp of ourselves as something, we proceed to the realization that not only an individual self but also all that has its own characteristics is the Self that is not anything. Here the realization of *dharma-nairātmyam* includes *pud-gala-nairātmyam* in itself.⁹⁾

When this investigation of *dharma-nairātmyam* is conducted concerning the eightfold *viññāna*, we have the truth of “mother of the Awakened one”. The text states : —

Being “mother of the Awakened one” is the original mode of our unawakened way of being. (6 N 222)¹⁰⁾

While “mother of the Awakened one” is.....free from discrimination between self and the object of self, it, nevertheless, necessarily first appears.....as the ground discrimination.....accompanied by the sevenfold discrimination that arises from ignorance. (6 N 220)¹¹⁾

The text has this expression, too : —

We unawakened beings are originally Formless Self. (2 N 43-44).¹²⁾

The reason why the term “mother of the Awakened one” has great significance is that sentient, unawakened beings give birth to Awakened ones, or *tathāgatas*. The term answers the question, “Where do Awakened ones come from ?” It tells us that they come from unawakened ones. The basic way of thinking we see here is that it is the original mode of *ālayaviññāna* that *ālayaviññāna* ceases to cause self-afflicting passions (*kleśa*) and contaminated acts (*karma*) and that, instead, it originates the Awakened ones’ functioning.

Ālayaviññāna originates *kleśa* and *karma* because it is not awakened to its original mode ; its being the source of delusion is far from its ultimate mode. This means that *ālayaviññāna* being as such is adventitious and temporary

(*āgantukleśa-upakliṣṭa*).¹³⁾ It is the practitioner of deep thought as the functioning of Awakening (*tāthāgataṃ dhyānam*) that sees as clearly as an *āmaraka* fruit in one's palm that the original mode of *ālayavijñāna* lies in its functioning as giving birth to the Awakened one (N 222).¹⁴⁾ Here *tāthāgataṃ dhyānam* is considered to be something in unity with the thought of *tāthāgata-garbhāḥ*.

In the *ālayavijñāna* which is the ground of delusion of the unawakened actuality of history, the Awakened one in deep composure and deep thought sees none other than the Awakened one as its original mode of being. This enables *ālayavijñāna* to have itself turned over. The *tāthāgata* who sees *tāthāgata-garbhā* in *ālayavijñāna* sees oneself working to have *ālayavijñāna* return to its original mode of being. Here, seeing is at once working of the turn-over. That which sees and works is not different from that which is seen and worked on. Here obtains deep thought as the functioning of Awakening.

Thus *tāthāgataṃ dhyānam* in the modern world, as the authentic subject of history, sees sexes, races, nations, and classes as well as individuals that are originally free from their distinctions actually bind themselves and others by confining themselves and others in those distinctions, and works to have them return to their original, ultimately free and open mode of being to actualize self-emancipation of all human beings.

- 1) [如来智慧無相智慧無礙智慧具足在於衆生身中。但愚癡衆生顛倒想覆不知不見不生信心。爾時如来以無障礙清淨天眼觀察一切衆生。觀已作如是言。] 奇哉奇哉。云何如来具足智慧在於身中而不知身。我当教彼衆生覺悟聖道悉令永離妄想顛倒垢縛。[具見如来智慧在其身内与仏無異。]『大方広仏華嚴經』如来性起品。
- 2) śrāvaka-pratyekabuddha-yoga-yoginām pudgala-nairātmya-bhāva-sva-sāmānyabimba-saṃkāra-anitya-aśubha-lakṣaṇa-abhiniveśa-pūrvakam-evam-idam lakṣaṇam na-anyathā-iti paśyataḥ pūrva-uttara-uttarata āsaṃjñā-nirodhād-bāla-upacārikam [dhyānam] bhavati. (N 97, 8-11)
- 3) pudgala-nairātmya-sva-sāmānyalakṣaṇa-bāhya-tīrthakara-sva-para-ubhaya-abhāvam kṛtvā dharma-nairātmya-bhūmi-lakṣaṇa-arthaṃ pravacaya-anupūrvakam-artaha-pravicaya-dhyānam bhavati. (N 97, 12-15)
- 4) parikalpita-nairātmya-dvaya-vikalpa-yathā-bhūta-avasthānād-apravṛtter-vikalpasya tathatā-ālambanam-iti vadāmi. (N 97, 16-17)
- 5) tāthāgata-bhūmy-ākāra-praveśam pratyātma-ārya-jñāna-lakṣaṇa-traya-sukha-vihāra-acintya-sattva-kṛtya-karaṇatayā tāthāgataṃ dhyānam-iti vadāmi. (N 98, 1-3)

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- 6) tatra upariṣṭhād ārya-jñāna-lakṣaṇa-trayaṃ.....katamad-yad-uta nirābhāsa-lakṣaṇaṃ sarva-buddha-sva-praṇidhāna-adhiṣṭhāna-lakṣaṇaṃ pratyātma-ārya-jñāna-gati-lakṣaṇaṃ ca. (2 N 49, 15-17)
- 7) tathāgata-garbho.....ālayavijñāna-saṃśabdito — ātma-veda-viniṣṭto'tyanta-prakṛti-pariśuddhiḥ, tad-anyāni vijñānāny-utpanna-apavargāni mano-manovijñāna-prabhṛtini kṣaṇikāni sapta.....sukha-duḥkha-apratisaṃvedakāni amokṣa-kāraṇāni....., teṣāṃ ca-upāttānām indriya-ākhyānām parikṣaya-nirodhe samanantara-anutpatter anyeṣāṃ sva-mati-vikalpa-sukha-duḥkha-apratisaṃvedinām saṃjñā-vedita-nirodha-samāpatti-samāpannānām catur-dhyāna-satya-vimokṣa-kuśalānām yoginām vimokṣa-buddhi-bhavaty-apravṛtteḥ. (N 220, 9-16, N 221, 1-11)
- 8) apravṛtte ca tathāgata-garbha-śabda-saṃśabdita ālayavijñāne na-asti saptānām pravṛtti-vijñānānām nirodhaḥ. (N 221, 12-13)
- 9) aṇiṣayāc-ca sarva-śrāvaka-pratyekabuddha-tīrthya-yoga-yoginām sva-pudgalanairātmya-avabodhāt-sva-sāmānya-lakṣaṇa-parigrahāt-skandhe-dhātv-āyatanānām pravartate tathāgata-garbhaḥ pañca-dharma-svabhāva-dharma-nairātmya-darśanān-nivartate bhūmi-krama-anusamdhī-parāvṛtṭyā na-anyatīrthya-mārga-dṛṣṭībhirvicārayitum śakyate. (N 221, 14-19)
- 10) tathāgata-garbha-ālayavijñāna-gocaraḥ. (N 222, 14-15)
- 11) tathāgata-garbho ātma-ātmīya-varjitas ālayavijñāna-saṃśadbīto 'vidyā-vāsana-bhūmijaiḥ saptabhir-vijñānaiḥ saha.....pravartate. (N 220, 9-16)
- 12) ālayavijñāna-gocaraṃ dharma-kāyam. (N 43, 18, N 44, 1)
- 13) ayaṃ tathāgata-garbha-ālayavijñāna-gocaraḥ sarva-śrāvaka-pratyekabuddha-tīrthya-vitarka-darśanānām prakṛti-pariśuddho'pi sann-aśuddha-iva-āgantukleśa-upalīkṣṭatayā teṣāṃ-ābhāti na tu tathāgatānām. (N 222, 14-17)
- 14) tathāgatānām.....karatala-āmalaka-vat-pratyakṣa-gocaro bhavati. (*Ibid.*)
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