

## Comparative study of zen, *prabhā dṛṣṭi* and yoga meditation

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### Introduction

Relaxation, most people think, means sleep or rest, lying down reading a book or going to cinema. However, relaxation is actually none of these things. Every man has certain amount of tension within his body and mind.

According to psychologists there are three types of tensions in a man. These are physical, mental and emotional. The only way to relax and to be free from tension is to disconnect the mind and senses from the environment.

This occurs in process of meditation; Meditation is continual process of awareness. The meditation is process of relaxation but with awareness. Meditation is an exercise of mental discipline. Because of this discipline mind is directed towards desired end. It is way to control vagaries of the mind.

The word meditation is used to describe from contemplation and concentration to devotion and chanting.

Know thy-self is the message of all saints and sages. There are different goals in philosophical systems. *Satori* is in zen,, moksa in Jain and *kaivalya* in yoga system. To achieve such goal meditation is one of the essential tools. Man is not only a rational animal but spiritual one. Life without meditation is like a horse without reins or a boat without rudder. Thought is the sickness of the human mind.<sup>1</sup> Meditation is the gate that opens infinite joy to us.

### Buddhism, Jainism and Yoga

Buddhism, Jainism and Yoga flourished in India and gave equal importance to theory and practice. Ignorance is the root cause of suffering and purpose is enlightenment. In the beginning they are pessimistic because of teaching of *sarvaṃ dukkhaṃ* but in the end optimistic because we find path freedom from suffering. Wisdom is inseparable from meditation. For Buddhism (*paññā*) Jainism (*prañā*) and for Yoga *ṛtambharā prajñā*).

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<sup>1</sup> Kalpau (1980) p 32

Due to common characteristics between them there is ample scope for comparison. This paper focuses similarities and differences between zen meditation, prabha *dṛṣṭi* and yoga meditation.

## Yoga Meditation

The word yoga is derived from Sanskrit root 'yuj' which means to join. The purpose of yoga is union of Individual self (*Ātmana*) with Universal self (*Brahmana*).

Patañjali defines yoga as yoga is cessation of mental modifications.<sup>2</sup>

*Yama*(curb), *niyama*(observance), *āsana* (postures), *prāṇāyāma* (control of breath), *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of senses from their sensual objects), *dhāraṇā* (concentration of mind), *dhyāna* (meditation) and *samādhi* (intense contemplation) are the eight limbs of Yoga. *Yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra* are the external limbs.<sup>3</sup>

Mind's fixity on particular region is called *dhāraṇā*<sup>4</sup>

*Dhyāna* is continuous flow of mind towards that object.<sup>5</sup>

## Zen Meditation

Zen the word itself is simply a Japanese version of Indian word for meditation (*dhyāna*). Zen meditation means to cut off at the root the mind which thinks. The essential thing is that the whole body and mind should be taken up with *koan* and no other thought should be able to arise. The root of Zen is the Buddhist concept of *Shunyatā*, nothing ness, void. The main point is not to think of things, good and bad and let the mind moves on as it is in itself and performs its inexhaustible function. The method of Zen uses is that of *koan* or question. Zen Buddhism is major religion of China and Japan. Zen is one branch of Mahayana school of Buddhism. Zazen is not sitting with a blank mind which excludes all the impressions of the inner and outer senses. It is not concentration in usual sense of restricting the attention to a single sense object such as a point of light or tip of one's nose. Outwardly to be in the world of good and evil yet with no thought arising in the mind, this is sitting (*za*) inwardly to see one's own nature and not move from it this is mediation (*zen*). Every man is capable of Buddha. The ultimate aim of zen meditation is satori.

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<sup>2</sup> *yogaścittavṛttinirodhaḥ* YS. I.2

<sup>3</sup> *Yamaniyamāsanapraṇāyāmapratyāhāradhāraṇādhyānasamādhayo'sṭāvaṅgāni* YS II.28

<sup>4</sup> *Deśabandhaścittasya dhāraṇā* YS III.1

<sup>5</sup> *tatra pratyayaikatānatā dhyānam* YS III.2

## **Prabhā dṛṣṭi-**

*Haribhadrāsuri* was a sage from *śvetāmbara* sect. His father was *Śaṅkara- Bhatta* and mother *Gaṅgā*. From the title *bhaṭṭa* we can infer that he was a *Brahmin*.

He was a great scholar of Jainism and contributed a lot in Indian Philosophy. He had special interest in Poetry and philosophy. He has written a commentary on *Diṇṇag*'s *Nyāyaśāstra*.

From this we can infer about his tremendous insight in Buddhism.

As an initiated *Brahmin*, he has a deep understanding of *Sanskrit* language. He learnt *vyākaraṇa*, *darśana*, *sāhitya* and *dharmaśāstra*.

One day he listened to a verse and could not understand its meaning. A Jain nun *Yaṣkiṇi Mahattarā* said she will explain the meaning of that verse if he accepted to become Jain monk. He accepted the condition and became a monk. He called himself 'spiritual son of *Yaṣkiṇi Mahattarā*'. He blessed his devotees with words 'Exert yourself for the dissociation of mundane life'. As a result, people called him *Bhavavirahasūri*.

Before right knowledge, man is ignorant. That ignorance has different names in Jainism viz., *mithyādarśana*, *darśanamohaniya*, *mithyathva* or *avidyā*. Understanding of ordinary man is full of wrong notions; so, it is called *ogha dṛṣṭi*. Because of lack of discrimination and knowledge, a person with *ogha dṛṣṭi* experiences the cycle of birth and death.

*Haribhadrāsūri* divided knowledge according to karma. With the demolition of *Karmamala* the soul becomes more and more pure and as a result the vision of spiritual aspirant becomes pure. In every *dṛṣṭi* ignorance gets destroyed and the level of knowledge increases. The aspirant sees clearly and his enthusiasm also increases; and ultimately, he becomes omniscient.

In *Yogadṛṣṭisamuccaya*, *Haribhadrāsuri* explains the spiritual stages through the concept of *dṛṣṭi*. *Dṛṣṭi* means knowledge with faith towards ultimate truth. This knowledge leads the spiritual aspirant from untruth to truth. Every stage gives him new vision; it is because of this *Haribhadrāsūri* uses the word *dṛṣṭi*.

According to *Haribhadrāsuri*, *yogadṛṣṭis* are eight in number and these are as follows:

*Mitrā*, *Tārā*, *Balā*, *Sthīrā*, *Dīpā*, *Kantā*, *Prabhā* and *Parā*.

*Haribhadrāsuri* compares these eight *dṛṣṭis* respectively with i) light of grass, ii) light of *kaṇḍa*, iii) light of stone, iv) light of flame, v) light of jewel, vi) light of *nakṣatra*, vii) light of moon and viii) light of sun.<sup>i</sup>

In *prabhā dṛṣṭi* mind is purer; and realization is as clear as light of the Sun, which is the main purpose of meditation.

### Similarities between Zen and Yoga

By practice of zen and yoga meditation wisdom supposed to be developed. For zen *paññā* and for yoga (*ṛtambharā prajñā*).

Enlightenment is the result of zen and yoga meditation. By zen satori is said to be attained and in yoga system it known as *kaivalya*.

Destruction of ignorance takes place in zen meditation. Yoga meditation destroys ignorance.

One can see one's own nature with help of zen and yoga meditation.<sup>6</sup>

Cycle of birth and death ceases by practice of zen and yoga meditation.

Bondage and freedom are not real. According to zen there is no difference between *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* as well as things are neither produced nor annihilated.<sup>7</sup>

*Puruṣa* is always free but due to ignorance he identifies with body, mind and intellect and experiences suffering. Bondage is imaginary in yoga also.

After attainment of *kaivalya* world ceases for him but for other continues.<sup>8</sup> After satori the change is not in the world outside, it is in the person who has satori. He looks at the world from different point of view.<sup>9</sup>

One can experience state free from thought waves in zen meditation. And purpose of yoga is cessation of mental modification.

### Similarities zen between prabhā dṛṣṭi

By practice of zen and *prabha dṛṣṭi* wisdom is supposed to develop.

Enlightenment is the result of *zen* and *prabhā dṛṣṭi*. By *zen* satori is said to be attained, and *prabhā dṛṣṭi* its objective is known as *mokṣa*.

Generally, mind takes delight in evil. But by practice of *zen* and *prabhā dṛṣṭi* flow of mind towards good.

By practice of *zen* and *prabhā dṛṣṭi* one can experience bliss.

Spiritual teacher is necessary to learn *zen* and *prabhā dṛṣṭi*.

No imagination is involved in *zen* and *prabhā dṛṣṭi*

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<sup>6</sup> tadā draṣṭuḥ svarupe'vasthānam I.3

<sup>7</sup> Kalpakam (1996) p 213

<sup>8</sup> kṛtārtham prati naṣṭamapyanaṣṭam tadanyasādhāraṇatvāt II.22

<sup>9</sup> Kalpakam (1996) p 213

zen and *prabhā dṛṣṭi* destroy ignorance.

### Differences between Zen and Yoga

*Āsana* (posture) is prerequisite to learn yoga meditation. But to learn zen meditation posture is not necessary condition. One can use chair if posture is uncomfortable. <sup>10</sup>

One can teach zen meditation but no one will teach yoga meditation because it happens.

The purpose of yoga meditation is realization of self. But purpose of zen meditation is to realize emptiness of self.

One can attain *kaivalya* with help of God, <sup>11</sup> but in zen there is no place for God.

Position of eye in yoga meditation is closed but in zen meditation one can practice meditation with open eyes<sup>12</sup>

There is no place for imagination in Zen meditation but in yoga meditation some imagination is involved.

*Japa and svadhya* are prohibited in zen meditation but in yoga system they are accepted.

With help of zen one will get knowledge of impermanence but by practice of yoga meditation one will get knowledge of permanence.

One can experience supernormal powers with help of yoga meditation. But zen meditation is not for supernormal powers.

Noble silence plays important role in zen meditation. <sup>13</sup>But to learn yoga meditation noble silence is not prerequisite.

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<sup>10</sup> Kapleau (1980) p34

<sup>11</sup> *īśvarapraṇidhānād vā* I.23

<sup>12</sup> Kapleau (1980) p34

<sup>13</sup> *Guro'stu maunam ākhyātāṁśiṣyaḥchhinnasatṁśayaḥ* Khin (1939) p 212

### Differences between zen and prabhā dṛṣṭi

The purpose of *zen* is to realize emptiness of self, but the purpose of *prabhā dṛṣṭi* is realization of the self.

In *zen* there is no place for *anuprekṣā*. But in Jainism *anuprekṣā* has importance.

*zen* meditation is not for any supernormal powers. But by practice of *dhyāna* we do get supernormal powers, as per the Jain tradition.

### Conclusion

Zen, *prabhā dṛṣṭi* and yoga meditations are very important in stressful condition. They are popular in India and abroad. Though we find apparent similarities between them there are important differences which can't neglect.

Satori, moksa and *kaivalya* are entirely different goals so meditation techniques do differ. Any meditation is useful for spiritual progress though path is different.

But The path of yoga is difficult to practice. If there is a mistake in the practice, then there could be an adverse effect on the health. *Ayukta- abhyāsa- yogena- sarva- roga- samudbhvaḥ*

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As consumed fatal poison, weapon held inverted and uncontrolled evil spirit (*vetāla*) are devastating; in the same way religion contaminated with sensuality and perversion is devastating for an aspirant.<sup>15</sup>

But *zen* is easily practiced compared to *prabhā dṛṣṭi* and yoga meditation Because no adverse effect on health during or after zen meditation.

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<sup>14</sup> *Ayukta- abhyāsa- yogena- sarva- roga- samudbhvaḥ* 4/24

<sup>15</sup> Acharya Tulsi (1967) Uttaradhyayana Sutra Verse 20.44

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               *eṣa eva dharmo viṣayopapannaḥ;*  
  
               *hanti vetāla dūvavipannaḥ*    Acarya Tulasi (1967) **Uttaradhyayana sutra** Jain Vishavabharti Ladnun Verse 20.44