

Tree of Enlightenment - Part Two

Craig's notes on Part Two: The Mahayana

Presentation Intro

- Reviewing part two of of Santina's Tree of Enlightenment - The Mahayana or "Great Vehicle"
- Qui docet discit (kee do cet disk et) - He who teaches learns.
 - I was glad that this section was available to pick this topic since the difference between the branches of Buddhism has always confused me.
- My comments are mostly based on the assigned book, but do have a large sprinkling of other sources, quite possibly including a lot of my own preconceived thoughts. My apologies if I say things that are untrue or misleading.
- I'll discuss it in a slightly different order, putting the sutras after the philosophical underpinnings
- There are many things in Mahayana Buddhism, and Buddhism in general, that are difficult to grasp and things that are seemingly at odds with each other. A 7th century Zen poem by Seng-ts'an (Seng san) offers good advice:

'Treatise on Faith in the Mind'

*"The perfect Tao is without difficulty
Save that it avoids picking and choosing.
Follow your nature and accord with the Tao;
Saunter along and stop worrying.
If your thoughts are tied you spoil what is genuine
Don't be antagonistic to the world of the senses,
For when you are not antagonistic to it,
It turns out to be the same as complete Awakening.
The wise person does not strive (wu-wei)
The ignorant man ties himself up ...
If you work on your mind with your mind,
How can you avoid an immense confusion?"*

Chapter Fourteen The Origins of the Mahayana Tradition

Siddhārtha Gautama lived in the 6th and 5th centuries BCE. He achieved enlightenment on his own at age 35 and then taught for 45 years. After enlightenment he was called Gautama Buddha or Shakyamuni Buddha ("The sage of the Shakya clan") and taught in northern India and Nepal for the remainder of his life. Over the two hundred years after his death, his teachings were embraced. During this period there were several councils convened, but there still started to be significant splintering of interpretations and practices. During the 3rd Council, around the 3rd century BCE, there were at least eighteen schools. One of the dominant schools was backed by the council and greatly unified the teachings. Later (2nd century BCE) those views were carried

to Sri Lanka where it became known as the Theravada (the "school of the elder monks"). In the late 1st century BCE the Theravadans committed the collected works of the historic Buddha to written form which became known as known as the Pali Canon or Tripiṭaka, (Three Baskets) (trih-pit-uh-kuh). Prior to this time the teachings had only been transmitted orally,

In the 1st century BCE, the name Mahayana began to be used to describe new, or reinterpreted teachings, that placed more emphasis on the enlightenment of all beings (Bodhisattva) rather than individual enlightenment (Arhatship). Mahayana means the "great vehicle. Originally it was an honorary synonym for Bodhisattvayāna ("Bodhisattva Vehicle") - the vehicle of a bodhisattva seeking buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings. Over the next 100 years the Buddha's teachings and many of the teachings that had been developed since his time were committed to written form by the Mahayanas.

A number of Shakyamuni's teachings were used by the Mahayanans to support their new or reinterpreted sutras. Some were:

- That his followers should adapt his teaching to their own abilities and aspirations without abandoning the cardinal virtues of morality and wisdom.
- Engage in free inquiry
- That one should test the truth of assertions in the light of the criteria of observation, reasoning, and self-consistency.
- Disciples should be to be lamps unto themselves, to light their own way with their own reasoning.
- In his last words he said, 'Subject to change are all compounded things; work out your liberation with diligence.'

An explanation for the apparent contradiction of authentic teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha not becoming known until several hundred of year after his death are that the Mahayana sutras contain teachings that would not have been appropriate for the earlier time and their introduction then would have led to nihilistic conclusions. (In philosophy, nihilism means "extreme skepticism maintaining that nothing in the world has a real existence.", but it also can be taken to mean "the rejection of all religious and moral principles, often in the belief that life is meaningless."

The profound philosophy, universal compassion and abundant use of skillful means in the Mahayana belief system has made it the most widely practiced of the three main Buddhist belief structures. 53% of Buddhist are Mahayana vs. 36% Theravada, & 7% Vajrayana. (Buddhism itself is the 4th most practiced religion in the world (Christianity (31.5%), Islam (23.2%), Irreligion (16.3%), Hinduism (15.0%) Buddhism (7.1%), Folk religion (5.9%), Other religions (1%))

Chapter Eighteen The Philosophy of the Middle Way

Nagarjuna (na-gar-JUN-na or na-GAR-jun-na) was a prolific author who flourished around 150 C.E. He is considered to be among the primary founders of the Tibetan, and Ch'an, and Zen

Buddhist traditions and developed the philosophy known as the philosophy of the Middle Way, or Madhyamaka.

The term the Middle Way was used by the historical Buddha to describe the principles that should guide one's behavior. It referred to the path between the extremes of asceticism and sensual indulgence and was followed by living according to the Noble Eightfold Path. Nagarjuna reused this term to describe an ontological (nature of reality) position that fits between the extremes of belief in a permanent, separate soul, Eternalism (śāśvatavāda), and belief that nothing continues after one's death, Nihilism (ucchedavāda). This middle way view is that while one does not continue as not an independent, eternal thing, an aspect does persist in the causal connectedness of dependent arising

In the early formulations of Buddhist doctrine, known as Abhidharma (translated as "higher teachings", or "about the teaching" or even "meta-teaching") the Two Truths doctrine was put forward. In it satya , meaning truth, is explained as being of two types:

1. The Relative Truth - This is the conventional perception of reality as it exists on this Earth. So named because social conditions, human wisdom, lifestyles and human achievements are constantly in a state of flux. While conventionally true, growing an attachment to any Relative Truth is a cause of suffering.
2. The Ultimate Truth - This is the ultimate state of reality that is devoid of all ephemeral, temporal, transitional things that are found on this Earth. The categories of this truth can be called dharmas. The interaction among these dharma can explain all conventional reality.

A wave analogy is sometimes used to describe these. The ultimate truth is the ocean and on top of that, our dualistic views create the waves of relative truth.

The philosophical branch led by Nagarjuna disagreed with this and said that the entries in the category of ultimately existent things are not exempt from the rule that all things are dependently originated. Since there is nothing that is not dependently originated, there is nothing that is not empty. As such, they themselves are ultimately empty. This is the Mahayanan precept of Sunyata - that "all things are empty of intrinsic existence and nature".

Several problems are apparent with this idea:

1. If emptiness is taken to also mean non-existence, one could then say for instance, that the Four Noble Truths don't exist.
 1. The response is that only because everything is dependently originated that suffering can arise and can be caused to cease.
2. If nothing exists, how can you not arrive at nihilism (which encourages moral irresponsibility and hedonism)?
 1. The Madhyamakans counter that if there is no ultimate truth, then there is nothing more real than the relative or ordinary truth. Therefore we must regard ourselves as ethical agents operating in that reality.

3. Why isn't it self-contradictory to say that the Madhyamaka claim that the ultimate truth is that there is no ultimate truth? Possible responses are:
 1. No claim is actually being made. This concept of no ultimate truth is actually a therapeutic device used to undermine unhelpful discursive thought or prapañca (often translated as conceptual “proliferation”), similar to a koan.
 2. Emptiness (understood as the fact that things exist only interdependently) is a condition of the possibility of any existents and of any analysis thereof
 3. Stating that something is true is not a classification into the metaphysical categories of relative truth or absolute truth - It is simply stating that it is true.

The roots of the Madhyamaka philosophy are firmly rooted in Buddhism as shown by the Buddha's statements about the importance of emptiness (shunyata), in the concept of the 'fourteen (or 10) inexpressibles,' and in the Perfection of Wisdom literature.

(The inexpressibles, aka 'unanswered questions' or 'undeclared questions', were pairs of eternalist/nihilist questions regarding time, space, identity and death. Shakyamuni refused to answer them saying that they intellectual falsifications which only obscure and bifurcate (split into two) the real.)

Samsara and nirvana are the same thing seen from two different points of view: from the point of view of ignorance (of causality, identity and difference, existence and nonexistence), and from the point of view of insubstantiality, relativity, and emptiness.

Without relying on the conventional truth, the ultimate truth is not taught, and without arriving at the ultimate truth, nirvana is not achieved. This seemingly paradoxical statement is resolved by Nagajuna's statement 'The highest sense of the truth is not taught apart from practical behavior,'. Nagarjuna based this on Shakyamuni's statement in the Kaccayanagotta Sutta 'But when one sees the origination of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'non-existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one.'

Chapter Nineteen The Philosophy of Mind only

The Mind Only school, along with the Middle Way school are the philosophical backbone of the Mahayana tradition. It arose in 4th century C.E. and is known by multiple names, some being:

- Chittamatra (school affirming Mind Only)
- Vijnanavada (school affirming consciousness)
- Yogachara (school affirming the unity of meditation (yoga) and action or conduct (achara)).

Two Indian half-brothers, Asanga and Vasubandhu, were skillful authors, teachers, and debaters, and were key to the development of this school. Asanga attributed some of his work to teachings he received while meditating, from a future Buddha, Lord Maitreya.

The importance of mind has strong roots in early Buddhism, for example:

- The importance of mind as emphasized in the thirty-seven factors
- The early Buddhist school of Vaibhashika
 - Advocated the doctrine of the two natures of factors (dharmas)--the phenomenal nature and the eternal nature
- The early Buddhist school of Sautrantika school
 - Rejected the revisions to the Buddha's teachings contained in the Abhidharma.
 - Believed that we never really know external objects directly and that what we perceive is an inferred mental representation of that object.
 - Differed from the Vaibhashikas by rejecting some of the factors of independent reality that they accepted because they felt they were caused by discriminating thought.

The Mind Only school feels that consciousness is the ultimate existing reality. Several arguments were made to support this premise:

- Objects appear differently to different sentient beings because of the conditioned, subjective state of the mind. For example, a cup of milk appears to us as milk, but it would appear as nectar to the gods, as molten iron to hell beings, and as pus or blood to hungry ghosts.
- When dreaming, the mind creates and projects a world which it experiences as real. To the dreaming mind, this is as real as a waking experience.
- They logically deduced that matter is infinitely divisible. If that is the case then it's not unreasonable to say that matter doesn't actually exist.

Through these arguments rejecting the existence of material objects, Mind Only philosophers established the relativity of subject and object, the identity of the objects of consciousness with consciousness itself. They revealed what we might call the nonduality of the subject and object of consciousness--of consciousness and its contents.

A doctrine important to the Mind Only school, and which appears in the Lankavatara Sutra, is the doctrine of the three natures, or levels, of reality:

1. The illusory or imputed nature (parikalpita)
 1. Can be likened to the mistaken belief that water exists in a mirage
2. The dependent or relative nature (paratantra)
 1. Can be likened to the appearance itself of the mirage
3. The perfected or accomplished nature (parinishpanna).
 1. Can be likened to the empty nature of the mirage, inasmuch as it is conditioned, relative, and dependent on causes and conditions.

The dependent nature is synonymous with the storehouse consciousness. (This term, storehouse consciousness, or ālaya, is explained a bit more in the notes on the Lankavatara sutra. In short, it is what is transmitted in rebirth.) This consciousness, subjected to discriminating thought, results in samsara, but if freed from that, results in the liberation of nirvana.

These three natures correspond to the three dimensions of Buddhahood:

1. The illusory nature corresponds to the terrestrial dimension (Nirmanakaya), the dimension of Buddhahood to which all of us in our unenlightened condition have access, and which participates in the world of mundane phenomena.
2. The dependent nature to the celestial dimension (Sambhogakaya), an expression of the symbolic and archetypal dimension of Buddhahood accessible to the spiritually enlightened.
3. The perfected nature to the transcendental dimension (Dharmakaya), the ultimate level of enlightenment, which is beyond names and forms.

The philosophies of Mind Only and the Middle Way have a close correspondence.

- Middle Way - interdependent origination is the principle that unites conventional and ultimate truth.
- Mind Only - the perfected nature corresponds to emptiness and is the link between samsara and nirvana.

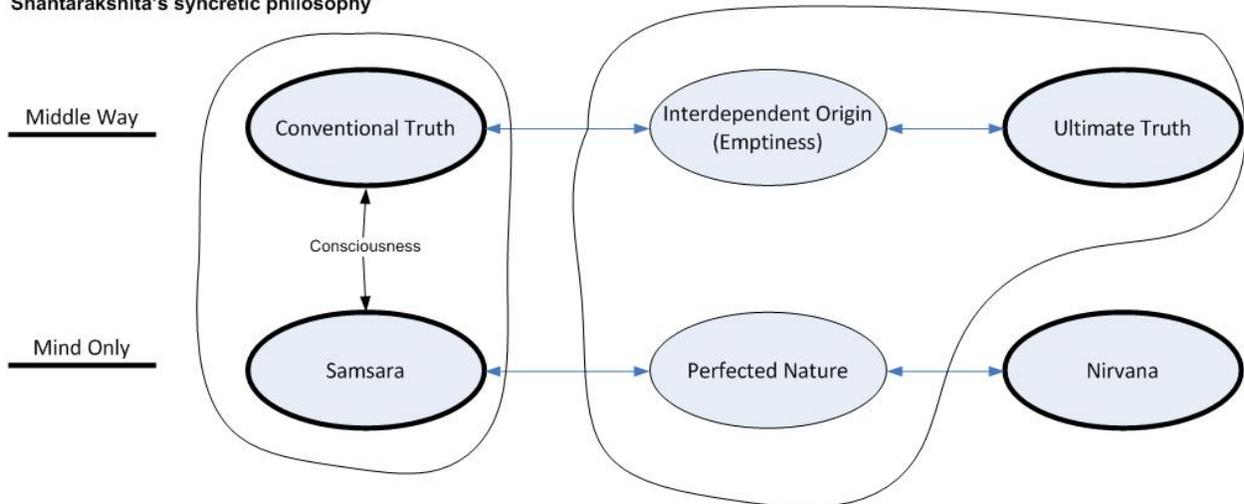
Chapter Twenty The Development of Mahayana Philosophy

While the foundations of the Mahayana were established in the first 4 centuries of the common era, the tradition continued to develop substantially over the next 800 years in India, its original home, as well as in Korea, Japan, Tibet, and Mongolia.

Following the establishment of the philosophy of emptiness by Nagarjuna, two Middle Way schools developed, the Prasaggika and the Svatantrika. Their defining difference was the rules of logic they used to defend the philosophy of emptiness: Arguments ad absurdum (demonstrates that an absurd result follows from the argument's denial) was used by the Prasangika school, and syllogism (proves truth by using a major and minor premise yielding a conclusion, e.g. All mortals die, All men are mortals, therefore all men die.) was used by the Svatantrika school. The result of these developments was a strong formalization of the philosophy of emptiness. During this time the Buddhist logicians Dinnaga and Dharmakirti were making significant contributions to the Mind Only school. They accepted the idea that consciousness exists, but rejected the previous idea that the objects of consciousness actually exist.

In the eighth century CE the Indian philosopher Shantarakshita founded the Yogācāra-Svatantrika-Mādhyamika school which combined these two schools of thought. (He also introduced Buddhism to Tibet). Shantarakshita established that emptiness is consistent with ultimate truth and the perfected nature, and that the creative nature of consciousness is consistent with the conventional truth and the illusory nature. He also both integrated their logical foundations and reconciled the role of mind in the origination and cessation of suffering. From this consolidated base the two current major Mahayana traditions of the Vajrayana (Tibet and Mongolia) and the Ch'an Zen tradition (China and Japan) rose.

Shantarakshita's syncretic philosophy



The ultimate realization in the Mahayana tradition is that reality is beyond existence and nonexistence, and is beyond empty and luminous. (The term luminous refers to the potential inherent in the real state of things - to the impure consciousness it manifests as samsara, but to the purified consciousness as the pure universe.) Reality is beyond existence because all existence is relative and dependent. It is beyond nonexistence because, despite its emptiness and transience, reality does appear and is experienced.

Following is a practical contemplation of the progressive realization of the ultimate nature of things:

1. Be aware of the mind-dependent nature of all experience and regard all experience as similar to a dream.
2. Become aware that entities appear only when the right causes and conditions are present, and fail to appear when the right causes and conditions are absent. An analogy for this is how a holographic image is produced - the image appears when the correct combination of light fields are present but is absent when they are not.
3. Contemplate all experience as interdependent, as appearing relative to causes and conditions.
4. Recognize the inexpressibility of experience. Because of their interdependence, existence and nonexistence, identity and difference, etc, are not expressible. All things are inexpressible and ineffable (Too great or extreme to be expressed or described in words).

This is the Mahayana view of reality. Reality is empty, luminous, and beyond existence and nonexistence, identity and difference, and all the other dichotomies of discriminating thought.

Chapter Fifteen - Seventeen, Three significant Sutras

Starting after the Second Council (4th century BCE) and continuing through first century BCE Mahayana literature grew extensively. There are about one hundred definitive Mahayana sutras and are contained in the Chinese Buddhist canon, the Tibetan Buddhist canon and various Sanskrit manuscripts.

Three of these exemplify important themes and phases in the development of Mahayana Buddhism:

1. The Lotus Sutra (Saddharmapundarika Sutra)
2. The Heart Sutra (Prajnaparamita Hridaya Sutra)
3. The Lankavatara Sutra.

Chapter Fifteen The Lotus Sutra

- One of the most popular and influential Mahayana sutras. It is the foundation for several Buddhist schools.
- The literal translation of the name is *Sutra on the White Lotus of the Sublime Dharma*. The lotus symbolizes the bodhisattva who is rooted in the earthly mud and yet flowers above the water in the open air of enlightenment.
- It was one of the first sutras to use the term Mahāyāna, or "Great Vehicle"
- The Mahayana path was saved for those 'whose merit is well matured'.
- Gives instruction on the perfection of a Bodhisattva by employing skillful means.
- It explains that the "three vehicles" are the different ways to achieve the same end of becoming buddhas
 1. Pratyekabuddhas (a lone buddha) is a completely self-enlightened one (without help from another buddha, direct or indirect).
 2. Bodhisattva (in Mahayana) is an awakened, or awakening being who vows to remain in Samsara for the sake of others.
 1. An analogy is that of people living in their house without realizing that their house is on fire. The fire is the inevitability of death and the bodhisattva tries to help them.
 3. Arhat (in Mahayana) is person who has attained Peace (of enlightenment) for him or herself, but not willing to give it up for the sake of others. (A Theravadan view is that the ascended buddha remains accessible to the people in samsara, so they do help others)
- All beings have the potential to attain full Buddhahood (In this lifetime)
- The ultimate nature of reality has to be realized by oneself.
- The essence of Mahayana is compassion and is a central theme of this sutra.
- The historical Buddha, and all Buddhas, transcend ordinary reality and appear in countless forms to benefit all beings.
- Contradictions in the many teachings are not real because the teachings are appropriate for the given context. They should be treated like a raft employed to cross a river. There is no point in carrying the raft once the journey has been completed and its function fulfilled.

Chapter Sixteen The Heart Sutra

- The literal meaning of the title is "The Heart of the Perfection of Understanding".

- The term prajnaparamita ('praj na par a mit a) is best translated as 'penetrative wisdom or insight gone beyond the limit.' This emphasizes that the perfection of wisdom is not static or fixed, but a continuing process.
- This sutra, along with the diamond sutra and several others, are considered to be based on the Perfection of Wisdom discourses (Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras).
- It is foundational to the Middle Way, or Madhyamaka, school
- It is an explanation from the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara (avalokita + isvara or "lord who gazes down') and the disciple Shariputra. Avalokita states that interdependent origination and emptiness are synonymous and, in fact, emptiness is itself relative and devoid of independent existence.
- Understanding emptiness is best used as a temporary tool to help us past the belief in the independent existence of elements. This leads to the realization of the central Mahayana doctrine of the nonduality, or non-differentiation, of samsara and nirvana.
- It negates everything that we know and want to know, and leaves us to experience what it is to not grasp at anything - to feel the basic groundlessness of our experience.
- "Emptiness not only means the end of the world as we know it, but that this world never really existed in the first place."
- Despite the sound of it, emptiness (shunyata) is not a negative, but is a freedom allowed by the removal of separateness, limitation and boundary. As such, it is the necessary basis for true compassion.
- The perfection of wisdom is the complementing of analytical wisdom (aka reductionism) with relational wisdom (synthetic wisdom). The former understands things by breaking them into ever smaller components, the later by understanding what arises in the combination of phenomenon.
- The essence of the sutra is going beyond all limitations, dualities, and dogmas and is expressed in the ending mantra:

"Gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha"

Which is variously translated as:

- - "Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone completely beyond."
 - "Gone, gone, gone all the way over, everyone gone to the other shore. Enlightenment!"
 - "Going, going, going on beyond, always going on beyond, always becoming Buddha."
 - "Gone, gone, gone beyond altogether beyond, Awakening, fulfilled!"
 - "Gone, gone, gone to the Other Shore, attained the Other Shore having never left."

‘GATE, GATE,’ GATE means gone. Gone, gone.

‘PARAGATE’ means gone across, gone over. Crossed over to the other shore.

‘PARASAMGATE’, SAM means everyone. Everyone crossing over.

‘BODHI’ means enlightenment.

‘SVAHA’ is an exclamation. A shout of excitement, a cry of emotion.

Chapter Seventeen The Lankavatara Sutra

- A large work, written in the 4th century CE.
- It is foundational to the Mahayana schools variously known as the Yogachara (school affirming the unity of meditation and action), the Vijnanavada (school affirming consciousness), and the Chittamatra (school affirming Mind Only).
- Espouses the doctrine of Mind Only, which says we have three worlds, or spheres: the sphere of sense desire, of form, and the formless sphere. All three are merely manifestations of the mind. To free ourselves from the dualistic conceptions of subject and object is the key to enlightenment.
- Instead of the expected 6 types of consciousness - the 5 physical senses and the normal mind - we have 8. The additional 2 are the 'storehouse' mind (alaya consciousness) and the 'afflicted' mind, aka the ego. The storehouse interacts with the 6 consciousnesses and is simultaneously shaped by them. The afflicted mind (aka the ego or the 'mind of discrimination') is means of that interaction.
 - This concept is a difficult one to reconcile with the concept of "non-self" (anattā (Pali) or anātman (Sanskrit)). One explanation is that this storehouse consciousness is the 'causal stream' that transmigrates in reincarnation. It is analogous to the flame of a dying candle lighting up another.
 - The Tibetan translation implies that this storehouse mind has the seeds of both samsara and nirvana and when pure, i.e. empty, is Buddha nature.
- Describes the Mahayana doctrine of the three bodies, or dimensions, of Buddhahood
 1. The terrestrial or transformational dimension, (nirmanakaya) - Available to all. It is this terrestrial dimension that appears in countless forms in order to nurture and emancipate sentient beings
 2. The celestial dimension, (sambhogakaya) - an expression of the symbolic and archetypal dimension of Buddhahood, to which only the spiritually developed have access
 3. The transcendental dimension, (dharmakaya) - synonymous with the ultimate level of enlightenment, which is beyond names and forms;

Chapter Twenty-One Mahayana Buddhism in Practice

Bodhicitta is a spontaneous wish to attain enlightenment motivated by great compassion for all sentient beings, accompanied by a falling away of the attachment to the illusion of an inherently existing self. Bodhicitta is also the beginning of the Mahayana path. There are however some practices that precede the awakening of Bodhicitta.

Those five practices are:

1. The cultivation of faith, or confidence.
 1. Clear faith - Having a clear appreciation of the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha;
 2. Aspiring faith - Aspiring to achieve these qualities for oneself;
 3. Confident faith - Having an unshakable confidence in the Triple Gem

2. The taking of refuge. Making use of the guide, the path and participating in the community.
3. Understanding the rare and precious nature of the human form
 1. This opportunity is rare and fleeting - use it well.
 2. Nagarjuna said that one who uses a jewel-adorned golden vessel for vomit and spittle is surely foolish
4. Meditation on death and impermanence. This compliments the meditation on the rare and precious nature of the human form.
5. Careful consideration of the truth of the universality of suffering and contemplation on the law of karma.

These preliminary practices will prepare you for the Mahayana path by:

- Generating enthusiasm for the elevated and exalted goal of Buddhahood
- Encourage disengagement from, or renunciation of, all attachment to the things of this life and to the cycle of samsara.

The Mahayana path is awakened through cultivation of great love and great compassion. These follow from understanding the equality of all sentient beings and their universal desire of wanting happiness and fearing suffering. We cannot fully help them unless we ourselves have achieved perfect enlightenment. This is what generates Bodhicitta in us.

Bodhicitta, or consciousness of enlightenment, is divided into two categories:

1. The relative, or conventional, enlightenment thought
 1. In this thought we still perceive the dualities of subject and object, samsara and nirvana, ignorance and enlightenment.
 2. It is of two types:
 1. Aspiring enlightenment thought - A wish to attain enlightenment
 2. Applied enlightenment thought - The implementation of the means of achieving Buddhahood through the practice of the Six Perfections.
2. The ultimate enlightenment consciousness.
 1. This is 'the Buddha mind,' and is a state in which dualities no longer have any meaning.

Accompanying enlightenment is the appearance of 'the four secondary perfections of the enlightened ones' which are directed toward the liberation of all sentient beings. (Sometimes all the perfections are grouped together in the '10 Perfections'). Those perfections are:

1. The skill to teach (The perfection of skillful means which enables them to implement countless devices for the liberation of living beings.)
2. The will to teach (The perfection of resolution enables them to shape the particular forms of the activities they employ.)
3. The strength to teach (The perfection of power enables the enlightened ones to work spontaneously and effectively for the benefit of others.)

4. The knowledge of what to teach (The perfection of knowledge provides them with all that knowledge of the conditions and attitudes of sentient beings which is necessary to effect their liberation.)

Buddhahood is achieved through the practice of the six basic perfections (Pāramitās):

- Generosity, morality, and patience result in the accumulation of merit which contribute to the form dimension of Buddhahood. The form dimension can be divided into:
 - The terrestrial body (available to everyone)
 - The celestial body (available to the spiritually advanced)
- Meditation and wisdom result in the accumulation of knowledge which contribute to the truth or transcendental dimension of Buddhahood
- The perfection of energy is necessary for all.

It is vital to remember that there is no meditation without wisdom and no wisdom without meditation. Wisdom is the crown of the Six Perfections and transforms the other practices into perfections by allowing us to see past the duality of subject and object. Our efforts can shine a strong light on a subject, our wisdom lets us choosing the subject wisely.

Conclusion

I'll end with two quotes that seem to fit with the subject:

*To study the Buddha's way is to study oneself,
 To study oneself is to forget oneself,
 To forget oneself is to be enlightened by all things.*

Japanese Zen Master Dogen in the Genjokoan

“Do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the men of old; seek what they sought.”

Matsuo Bashō - 17th century Japanese poet

Some of the resources used

Subject	Link
The Tree of Enlightenment	http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/tree-enlightenment.pdf http://www.chuadieuphap.us/English_Section/general/santina_tree_TOC.asp

Links to sutras	http://www.nichirenlibrary.org/en/lsoc/toc/ http://plumvillage.org/news/thich-nhat-hanh-new-heart-sutra-translation/ http://www.dharmanet.org/lcsutrasmahayana.htm
Lion's Roar article on the Heart Sutra	http://www.lionsroar.com/the-heart-sutra-will-change-you-forever/
Wikipedia's Buddhism portal	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Buddhism
Theravada - Mahayana differences	http://www.urbandharma.org/udharma3/theramaya.html
Middle Way school articles	http://www.iep.utm.edu/b-madhya/ http://bahai-library.com/winters_nagarjuna
Two Truths thread	http://www.urbandharma.org/udnl2/nl031604.html
Kaccayanagotta Sutta	http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn12/sn12.015.than.html
Kaccayanagotta Sutta - Used by Nagarjuna to support his refutation of the Two Truths doctrine	http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn12/sn12.015.than.html