

# Models Of The Mind (The Lankavatara Sutra)

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*The following is from 1) what I've been able to glean from D. T. Suzuki's translation of the Lankavatara Sutra that I've read so far (through to section LVII); and 2) my own meditation, contemplation, and reflection. It may be accurate or not, yet still be helpful. The student will want to verify and validate this. I'll update it over time. I also have to contemplate and work with this specific model more deeply; this is my own interpretation, and I've begun to fill in some material. Non-discriminating mind and the nondual have already become profound domains for me.*

*All this is: how dynamic, interpretive, and still! Perhaps it is the tranquil, active mind, and is a reality worked with in Buddhism. Note 2020 June 26: It is, indeed, thus!*

## The Model

There are several components to the mind, that each are set in relation to the other. It starts with the manas, the vijnana is the projection of this, and the alaya-vijnana provides an interface or transfer to the alaya, which synthesizes, reasons, and experiences.

Manas: that which sees things and objects, and represents them; from sensation.

Mano-vijnanas: that which interprets according to reified objectified view and apperception – as and in terms of hard edges of perceived individual, distinct reality. The Buddha says that this evaporates with the right view and realization; and then the entire Vijnana system dissolves. (I have to understand the entire Vijnana System that he and Mahamati so indicate, exactly how he postulated it functions.)

Vijnana: the projection of this (manas) and its representation. It may be the beginning of perception-cognition – and that reaches fruition in the alaya-vijnana.

Alaya-vijnana: the interface between the alaya and the vijnana, sort of a layer (with no hard boundaries or edge). It may be here that much interplay takes place; and I wonder if the space of the unfolding interplay of the subjective-objective occurs here – to be manifest in the vijnana thru to the manas (projecting out) and appertained in the alaya (to be worked with and experienced). This direct experience-of and interplay may be a profound interpretation.

Alaya: the 'reasoning' or 'understanding' part of the mind, and synthesis. That part of the mind that works out what is represented and what it means. But it's more than that, as I can tell from the text. My own experience describes it (or some such actuality) as that which is just this very world, that works with the nondual, nondiscriminating that is just this very world. So this is the part that is

universal – and from which particular recognition, insight, awareness, concentration, and apperception can, in the realized state, occurs. It is to see, as Being-Time (to quote Dogen's essay in Shobogenzo), as neither being nor non-being, as the universe is an unfolding catenation, this very world and to be this very world, wake-stated and participant "it".

So when the mano-vijnana, evaporated, sees with non-discrimination, and the alaya is in quietude, tranquility, the sublime, all-functions, participant, able to be active, a different space realized.

Note that the entire 'set' is involved with apperception and awareness, and the alaya with reasoning or meaning-aware about what is perceived (although in a very real sense even to perceive things and objects as discriminated or not in the manas is itself also meaning-aware: it simply may be difficulty, or delusion, or only partly satisfactory). This becomes fundamental.

### **Non-discrimination**

Discriminating mind is to see things as strictly individual and distinct. Dualistic mind (or the dualistic view) is to see things as separable. Non-discriminating, nondual mind is to see with a view that is the relational, and sees things as interconnected and with no hard boundaries of being and non-being; but rather in the manner of neither being nor non-being. This is also interpenetration and dependent arising. With discriminating mind, there is grasped and grasping; with non-discriminating mind there is the ability to work with distinctions, yet to penetrate reality as it is, undifferentiated. The nondual mind allows us to see that this is all one space, even though distinct things are happening; and they are interconnected – always.

An extreme instance of dualistic mind is to see various things in binary terms, the poles unrelated one to the other, or as strict, non-relational, independent being. This might be problematic for some, especially in modern American society.

It is possible to work with shades of the nondual, and to gradually recognize aspects of non-discriminating mind, and to suddenly realize it. It is striking, yet so subtle and profound!

So effort, diligence, study, contemplation, and reflection may yield fruitful results: and this should be pursued. In the Lankavatara Sutra the Buddha recommends solitude, and to reflect on this and similar types of things – the bodhisattva standpoint – and to realize it for himself or herself in mind, in actual fact. But this discourse itself is set in dialogue between the Buddha and Mahamati, and thus dialogue may be important to your unfolding of this very awareness and actuality. Reality is penetrated thusly – and there are so many aspects to reality – just this actual world and experience.

Being participant in the world then becomes a delight; and problems more deeply penetrated.

## **Some Questions**

Are past, present, and future times represented in each of the manas, vijnana, alaya-vijnana, and alaya? An unfolding world, in yet another way!

I'm wondering what happens when the alaya is active, yet the manas see with non-discrimination. Are both the quietude state and the active state accounted for?

I wonder where wisdom applies.

How/where does intention meet the alaya? How/where does intention meet the alaya-vijnana? Then project out to the vijnana and perhaps to the manas (realm) – thru to the external world (now not strictly separable, which it never was in the first place), with the external world present continually, and manifest (to again perceive, and perhaps continually)? Remember, we are one space in and with the world – it is we-and-the-world, one space, we-and-the-world continually, infinitesimally, infinitely unfolding (and this includes both the integers and the real numbers).

## **Some Statements**

You should be able to turn the manas into a no-thing space; or, the non-discriminating mind (along with the rest).

[This is indeed the case: the mano-vijnanas evaporate, and leave a no-thing space, nonobjectifiable entityness that is not rigid distinct reality-perception. Then one can penetrate this or that further, and realize all sorts of things.]

## **Further Observations And Clarification**

My subsequent observation and development.

I just now re-read the above. I had just worked with non-discriminating mind for a while when I wrote this, yet I now realize it as a matter of moreso routine, and much better: so I can update the essay, and explain even better. [I've now updated it to better reflect my current working-with. And I clarify and deepen some of this now....]

Such as...

The discriminating-objectified mind and its action just, over time, evaporates – one still sees things and recognizes them, but it's nondual, nondiscriminating, and the mind sees Mind – this world – itself (at-once, present-moment, neither being nor nonbeing, dependent-arising, etc). This world has its concrete and abstract manifestation, really a fusion of the two (the fusion of the abstract and the concrete). So there is the concrete fact or actuality (a spark, event, stick, phrase, or sound) – but what is it that

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occurs? And so one begins to work with what is actually unfolding, in this world. Then – one sees the suffering and the potential in the world, the sublime state in things, as well as dynamic, total-function activity.

We each see some of this already, some more than others; but if we get stuck in a hard-edged, objectified, discriminating, grasped and grasping view, apperception, and working, then we might end up chasing a lot of ‘mirage’ or sequence of imagined-only aspects – and this can lead to dissatisfaction, implied or expressed futility, or dilemma. I’ve been there in my life during even college, or my 20s and early 30s. So since 2017 and especially the past year, has been such a delight – an inexpressible, multidimensional place to step to, that one can sometimes verbalize, other times relies on silence! But it is experiential, and body-breath-mind-truth-actuality-and-world-space; this is what is also conveyed.

It may take time and contemplation to get this, or one can get it right away; but one can reflect on it quite well, I found. The Buddha recommends solitude, and to allow Transcendental Innermost Wisdom to manifest.

### **The Fusion Of The Abstract And The Concrete**

I also found that working with the fusion of the abstract and the concrete as being this real world (from Nagarjuna) was very helpful. Example: the window one might look out of is a fusion of the abstract (the geometric, abstract, mathematical rectangle or plane that can be perceived in mind only) and the concrete (the physical, material wood or steel or glass) – at-once and present-moment. And this yields all functions of looking out the window and allowing light to enter the room, and what those enable. Or opening the window and feeling the air or breeze. Contingency indicates that one might close the window if it’s raining.

In another way to view this entire world-space, it’s pratiyasamutpada (dependent arising). Work with this, and maybe refer to Namgyel.

The planet orbits the star. The star is there. The planet’s orbit (and fact of this) is the fusion of the abstract (the mathematics of the orbital trajectory, the invisible traversal path) and the concrete (the material, physical matter that is the planet – and its mass – and its mass is also mathematical).

Then there’s the interplay of the subjective and the objective. The sun is (objectively) there, as a subject (subjectively), and the planet orbits the star (again as a subject, objectively orbiting the star). An ant walks across the ground (support and path, the ant subjectively as a subject notices and relies on this) and encounters a tree (an objective presence, subjectively presented, of- the tree), and the ant has to walk around it.

Resources for this:

*Fundamental Wisdom Of The Middle Way* by Nagarjuna translated by Nishijima.

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*The Logic Of Faith: A Buddhist Approach To Finding Certainty Beyond Belief And Doubt* by Elizabeth Mattis Namgyel.

*The Gateless Barrier: Zen Comments On The Mumonkan* by Zenkei Shibayama.

Zazen (or another Buddhist meditation, or reflection).

Observation-participant.

This world.