

Phil Treloar *Feeling to Thought*

Sudhana Cycle No. 35

PRASHANTARUTASAGARAVATI

~ *Possessed of an Ocean of Tranquil Sound* ~

Trio for Tenor Saxophone
Acoustic Bass, & Drum-set

Your body contains the body of truth,
Your mind is made of knowledge, unhindered.
Illumined by universal light,
You produce endless light in the world.

Sudhana: a gāthā in praise of *Prshantarutasagaravati*

All fixation on the truth of remedial
eliminations
turns into illusion that is genuine and unreal.
Since this subdues the difficult-to-tame
afflictive states,
[the fifth ground] is called “Difficult to
Overcome.”

Niguma: *Stages in the Path of Illusion*, verse 151
(Sarah Harding, trans. *NIGUMA – Lady of Illusion*)

At the same enlightenment site as that occupied by *Samantasattvatranojahshri*, his previous spiritual friend, Sudhana went to the night-goddess *Prshantarutasagaravati* and, through her benefaction, he realized the stage difficult to conquer. In this stage one applies themselves to meditative concentration (*samādhi*: where the consciousness of the experiencing ‘subject’ becomes one with the experienced ‘object’) on all truths (*satya*: “truth”; “reality”) and in so doing, cultivate worldly arts and crafts.

The seeming and the ultimate—
These are asserted as the two realities.
The ultimate is not the sphere of cognition.
It is said that cognition is the seeming.

Śāntideva, *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, verse IX.2.

Prshantarutasagaravati told Sudhana she’d attained the enlightening liberation, ‘a supernal manifestation of a moment of consciousness producing floods of immense joy.’ She told him that through the teaching of the true nature intrinsic to all things, she was intent on stopping all the suffering of beings that stems from delusion arising from their relation to objects, and as well, to those who take pleasure in music, song, and dance, she taught the way to enjoy spiritual pleasures. With the advantage of great skill in means (*upāya-kauśalya*) she was able to give countless teachings that lead beings to omniscience. Through multiple visions of Vairocana

Buddha ('He Who Is Like the Sun') she experienced great floods of joy of cosmic dimensions concomitant with all-knowledge – All things are to be completely known by the nature of things as being one characteristic at all times, while yet manifest in an endless variety as all things.

The nature of things is fundamentally
empty and null,
With no grasping and no vision.
The emptiness of inherent nature is
Buddha;
It cannot be assessed in thought.
If one knows the inherent nature
Of all things is like this,
This person will not be affected
By any affliction.

Avatamsaka-sūtra: Book Fourteen – Eulogies on Mount
Sumeru

Prshantarutasagaravati spoke to Sudhana, saying:

“Perceiving the inconceivable purity of the form-body of
Vairocana Buddha, adorned by the marks of greatness, I
experienced exulted joy and serenity. Observing his array of
lights, vast as the cosmos, moment to moment manifesting an
infinitely varied ocean of colors, in each moment of
consciousness I experienced floods of great joy.”

One night when Dongpo visited Mount Lu, he was
enlightened by hearing the sound of the valley stream. He
composed the following verse, which he presented to
Changzong:

Valley sounds are the long, broad
tongue.
Mountain colors are no other than
the
unconditioned body.
Eighty-four thousand verses are
heard through the night.
What can I say about the future?

Seeing this verse, Changzong approved his
understanding.

From Zen Master Dogen's *Shobo Genzo*, 'Keisei
Sanshoku'
(Valley Sounds, Mountain Colors)
[Changzong – Zen Master
Zhaojiao: 1025~1091]

When asked by Sudhana how she managed to attain such Liberation, the night
goddess, *Prshantarutasagaravati*, replied:

“There are ten great provisions of enlightening beings. What
are the ten? Enlightening beings' great encompassing practice of
giving; their great encompassing practice of appropriate conduct;
their practice of forbearance; of vigor, meditation, wisdom, of
skill in means, of vows, power, and their great encompassing
practice of knowledge. I see Vairocana Buddha at the pinnacle of
enlightenment manifesting the miracle of perfect enlightenment
in each moment of consciousness, pervading the oceans of
structures in all reality realms. I product momentum in
attainment of oceans of concentration in the momentum through
all stages.”

You've entered into my enlightenment practices,
The ocean of means I employed in the past;
That which my practices purified,
This sublime action, you understand.

Avatamsaka-sūtra: Book Six – 'Vairocana' : a gāthā by the
Buddha, King of Adornments of the Good Eye of Transcendent Ways

In his commentary to the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*, Thomas Cleary – the translator of the entire *Avatamsaka-sūtra* – draws our attention to this stage on Sudhana's journey being one of attaining unwavering attention, becoming familiar with both conventional and ultimate truths. As they meditate on all truths, practitioners also develop skills in practical arts and sciences, according to the needs of the people of the time – *upāya-kauśalya* – with this aimed at guiding sentient beings towards liberation.

Insatiable perseverance
in the quest for virtuous factors is diligence.
Possessing an unregretful mind for the
actualization
of omniscient timeless awareness is meditative
stability.

Niguma: *Stages in the Path of Illusion*, verse 162
(Sarah Harding, trans. *NIGUMA – Lady of Illusion*)

Stilling the intense pains of the mundane world,
Producing all happiness in sentient beings,
Producing the ultimate bliss of the enlightened,
For endless eons—this is my vow.

Prshantarutasagaravati: a gāthā by the 'night goddess'

Sudhana Cycle No. 35 Prshantarutasagaravati
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