1ˢᵗ Page Excerpt from

Tsung-mi's Analysis of Mind

"Indian Masters always held to three sources of knowledge.
Of the three, most Chan lineages have direct perception and inference.
They must seal them with the third source, the sutras."[i]
Zen Master Kuei-feng Tsung-mi

INTRODUCTION

Kuei-feng Tsung-mi [Guifeng Zong-mi], an eminent ninth century Hua-yan and Zen Master asserts, "Indian masters have always held to the three sources of knowledge." In their understanding of the principles of the Dharma, the Indian Masters considered the three sources of knowledge to be:

- Buddha's definitions of the process of awakening found in the sutras
- Inferential introspection that provides the link between the conceptual teachings of the sutras and the experiential mind of meditation
- The direct perception of the truth of the sutras found in meditation

Zen lineages generally teach some form of inferential introspection and direct perception, but often lack the anchoring experience of the sutras. This situation is commonplace in Western Zen training facilities. Practitioners receive instruction in meditation techniques, but their efforts are often left ungrounded from the basic principles contained in the sutras. The three sources of knowledge must act in concordant support in order for experience to be whole and complete. In other words, inferential introspection and direct perception must be validated using the recognized standards of the sutras. Then certainty arises becoming the foundation for subsequent insights by reducing the chance of erroneous conclusions.

The many schools of Buddhism each emphasize a particular portion of Buddha's teachings. Their adherents develop skillful means to guide its practice. We have done that as well, formulating our understanding of the three sources of knowledge in our book *Tending the Fire: An Introspective Guide to Zen Awakening* and other efforts. The process of awakening, developed and described therein, is rooted in the three sources of knowledge, yet offers freedom of expression and application that responds to idiosyncratic needs.

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[i] Jeffrey Lyle Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, [New York, Columbia University Press, 2009, p. 113]