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The Connection Between Literary Images and Visual Perception in Meditative Practice

Abstract: The study of practice based on visualization and the role of visualization in shaping the outcomes of contemplative practice is an overlooked research niche. The aim of this article is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the process that connects literary images and visual perception in relevant meditative practices. The key question is which elements contribute to forming this connection in contemplative practices like meditation. To gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved, the study employed a mix of primary and secondary data sources, along with analytical, descriptive, and phenomenological methods, drawing from an interdisciplinary approach that includes psychology, neuroscience, and literature.

The following meditation practices were selected: contemplative meditation, creative visualization, koan meditation, imaginative meditation, creative workshops with haiku poetry as an outcome, and meditative storytelling. The identified elements in the connection between literary depictions and visual perception include mental imagery and visualization, cognitive processes, sensory processes, and emotional processes. The importance of literary techniques is particularly highlighted – using descriptive language with metaphors, similes, allegories, and other stylistic figures that create strong visual images. This connection has a neurological basis – neuroscience studies show that reading/listening to texts describing visual experiences activates brain areas involved in actual visual perception. This overlap suggests that the brain processes literary descriptions similarly to how it processes real visual stimuli. The connection between literary depictions and visual perception significantly enhances the quality of meditative practice and promotes deeper understanding and emotional-volitional engagement with the text and personal development of the meditators. Both secondary and primary data sources were used in the paper.

Keywords: literary images; visual perception; meditation; mental processes; interdisciplinary approach.

Introduction

The American Psychological Association (APA) and the prominent psychologist, meditation researcher, and meditator, Dean Shapiro,¹ define meditation as a set of techniques whose common denominator is a conscious attempt to focus attention in a non-analytical manner and to remain neutral, meaning that the meditator does

¹ Diane Shapiro, “Overview: Clinical and Physiological Comparison of Temporal Uncertainty and Filter Strategies,” *Am J Psychiatry* 139, 3 (March 1982): 267–74.

not engage in discursive thoughts or rumination.² Walsh and Shapiro³ view meditation as part of a set of self-regulation practices designed to train attention and awareness, ultimately improving mental well-being and fostering a higher degree of voluntary control over mental processes. These practices also promote the development of specific abilities and states, including peace, clarity, and concentration.

Do-Hyung Kang⁴ believes that meditation can be conceptualized as a family of complex practices for training the regulation of both attention and emotions; practices developed with various goals. According to Ornstein⁵, meditation denotes a mental activity aimed at achieving a specific goal, such as attaining “emptiness” or “Nirvana”, that is the “state of empty consciousness” – *Nicht-Geistes*.

Up to this point, the concept of meditation has not been precisely defined, and there is no consensus among those who practice or research meditation regarding its content. Milenko Vlajkov, a Serbian-German psychologist, researcher, and meditation master, emphasizes that definitions often omit one characteristic that is also a determinant of meditative practice, which every meditation master will point out: meditation is a “conscious perceptual-cognitive activity where the person fully focuses on and becomes one with the subject of focus.”⁶

Scientific research on meditation has explored physiological and behavioral aspects, including its impact on creativity. There are two main research streams: one focuses on evaluating the effects and healing potentials of meditation, while the other examines the psychological and neuropsychological processes underlying meditation.⁷ The majority of studies concentrate on the effects, with significantly less attention given to the processes.

Most scientific papers on meditative practices describe two processes: focused attention and open monitoring. Even the simplest forms of meditation training encompass both processes (Ibid.).

Although visualization has always been recognized as a powerful emotional incentive in contemplative practices, the dynamics of the visualization process in meditative practice are insufficiently researched. Visualization is a term that refers to the creation of mental images using visual or verbal stimuli, as well as through the senses of

² There are multiple definitions of rumination, but what they have in common is the presence of recurring, intrusive, and negative cognitions. An individual with a deficit in the ability to direct attention can easily become stuck in repetitive ruminations that are always of the same content. If individuals become trapped in this vicious cycle, rumination becomes a habitual way of thinking, a mental habit that reduces the quality of thinking and lowers the level of constructive thinking.

³ Roger Walsh, and Shauna L. Shapiro, “The Meeting of Meditative Disciplines and Western Psychology: A Mutually Enriching Dialogue,” *American Psychologist* 61, 3 (April 2006): 227.

⁴ Do-Hyung Kang, Hang Joon Jo, Wi Hoon Jung, Sun Hyung Kim, and Ye-Ha Jung, “The Effect of Meditation on Brain Structure: Cortical Thickness Mapping and Diffusion Tensor Imaging,” *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* 8, 1 (January 2013): 27–33.

⁵ Stanley I. Ornstein, “The Advertising-Concentration Controversy,” *Southern Economic Journal* 43, 1 (July 1976): 892–902.

⁶ Milenko Vlajkov, *Na sopstvenom tragu: relaksacija i meditacija* (Bački Petrovac: Kultura, 1990), 170.

⁷ Peter Malinowski, “Neural Mechanisms of Attentional Control in Mindfulness Meditation,” *Frontiers in neuroscience* 7 (2013): 35772.

hearing, smell, taste, and touch. The senses are involved in creating mental images, but it has been confirmed that the focus is mainly on visualization,⁸ except for people who are blind or have a high degree of visual impairment. The latest research on the phenomenon of mental images in cognitive psychology (Ibid.) confirms the important role of visualization in perception, cognition, and maintaining mental health. However, only a few meditation studies have explicitly dealt with practice based on visualization and the role of visualization in shaping the outcomes of contemplative practice.⁹

Literature on meditation¹⁰ as a contemplative practice primarily focuses on describing various visualization techniques without delving into the dynamic's literary descriptions and visual perception – specifically how visualizations may serve as less intense forms of perception.¹¹ It also tends to focus on the effects of visualization in meditation. In this context, the purpose of this article is to promote the neglected research niche, and the aim is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the process that connects literary images and visual perception in relevant meditative practices. It is known that this connection arises from the descriptive language to convey mental images that simulate visual experiences, including processes similar to those involved in actual vision. This enhances both engagement with and understanding of the text. The question is, which elements participate in creating this connection in contemplative practice, such as meditation?

To offer a more comprehensive response to this question, a multidisciplinary approach was adopted, incorporating perspectives from neuroscience, psychology, and literature. This included the use of descriptive and analytical methods for analyzing secondary data, as well as phenomenological methods for engaging with primary data. The concepts of meditation, literary images, visual perception, and visualization were defined. Selected meditative practices that utilize the process of visualization were described, and the dynamics of the connection between literary images and visual perception were analyzed in both directions – from literary images to visualization and contemplation, as well as in the reverse direction, using the example of a creative workshop.

Literary images and visual perception

Literary images refer to the way in which readers or listeners visualize scenes, characters, objects, or events based on verbal descriptions in the text. The study of literary images in literature explores how words provoke the formation of images in

⁸ Joel Pearson et al., “Mental Imagery: Functional Mechanisms and Clinical Applications,” *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 19 (2015): 590–602.

⁹ Michael Lifshitz, Joshua Brahinsky, and T. M. Luhrmann, “The Understudied Side of Contemplation: Words, Images, and Intentions in a Syncretic Spiritual Practice,” *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis* 68 (2020): 183–99.

¹⁰ Chris Hatchell, “Buddhist Visual Worlds II: Practices of Visualization and Vision,” *Religion Compass* 7 (2013): 349–60.

¹¹ Indrani Margolin, Joanna Pierce, and Aislinn Wiley, “Wellness through a Creative Lens: Mediation and Visualization,” *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought* 30 (2011): 234–52.

the reader's mind, including analyses of the use of figurative language and stylistic figures such as personification, comparisons, or metaphors.¹² Literary images represent a literary device that activates our senses and encourages them to react to what is presented in the literary text, enhancing the reader's power of perception by motivating their interest.¹³

Literary imagery can involve any of the five senses and is used to enhance the reader's connection with the text, which in meditation contributes to achieving the goals of meditation (Table 1).

Meditation has its neurological aspect, meaning that meditation directly stimulates the cerebral cortex. Cortex, from Latin cortex, is the Latin word for 'bark,' in this case referring to the cerebral cortex.¹⁴ Depending on the meditative task, whether it involves visualization, repeating a mantra, or observing the contents of consciousness, different cortical areas are activated.

Visualization is a cognitive process that involves generating vivid mental images in the absence of external visual input, which then activates the prefrontal, parietal, and inferotemporal regions, as well as the retinotopically organized areas traditionally associated with visual perception. Visualization activates not only visual but also cognitive regions of the brain. The beneficial side effects of visual mental imagery on various cognitive processes, such as memory and problem-solving,¹⁵ are well documented, confirming that visual mental imagery significantly impacts cognitive processes by engaging a network of brain regions responsible for various cognitive functions.

These findings underscore that the beneficial impact of mental imagery largely depends on its quality and vividness, which are associated with specific changes in the brain's functional connectivity. This has been particularly significant for patients with the Parkinson's disease, as the content of mental imagery has indicated a crucial impact on disease severity and brain function.¹⁶ The vividness and strength of mental imagery can range from completely absent (aphantasia) to photographic-like (hyperphantasia). Individual differences in the ability to visualize and the vividness of mental imagery alter its impact on conscious perception and cognitive performance, emphasizing the variability in mental imagery capabilities among individuals.¹⁷

¹² Study Smarter, "Imagery," English Literature, Literary Devices, <https://www.studysmarter.co.uk/explanations/english-literature/literary-devices/imagery/>, acc. on September 5, 2024

¹³ Homa Nath Sharma Paudyal, "The Use of Imagery and Its Significance in Literary Studies," *The Outlook: Journal of English Studies* 14 (2023): 114–27.

¹⁴ Merriam – Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cortex>, acc. on October 2, 2024.

¹⁵ Joel Pearson, "The Human Imagination: The Cognitive Neuroscience of Visual Mental Imagery," *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 20, 10 (October 2019): 624–34.

¹⁶ Jared Cherry, Serageldin Kamel, Mohamed Elfil, Aravala S. Sai, Ahmed Bayoumi, Amar Patel, Rajita Sinha, and Sule Tinaz, "Mental Imagery Content is Associated with Disease Severity and Specific Brain Functional Connectivity Changes in Patients with Parkinson's Disease," *Brain Imaging and Behavior* 17 (April 2023), 161–71.

¹⁷ Nadine Dijkstra, Max Hinne, Sander Erik Bosch, and Marcel van Garven, "Between-Subject Variability in the Influence of Mental Imagery on Conscious Perception," *Scientific Reports*, 9 (October 2019): 15658.

Similarly to the previously described influence of mental imagery involving motor activities and visual representations, it has been demonstrated that the activation of other sensory cortical regions occurs following mental imagery (recollection) of specific sensory modalities such as taste, smell, sound, and touch.¹⁸ Furthermore, it has been established that an interconnected system of cortical networks is active during the engagement of each sensory modality, irrespective of the task at hand. These findings bear significant implications for the investigation of mental imagery and theories of cognitive processes.

Contemplative meditations, creative visualizations, koan meditations, and imaginative meditations

Contemplative meditations, creative visualizations, koan meditations, and imaginative meditations are practices in which the visual cortex is particularly stimulated through meditative tasks.

In contemplative meditations, the practitioner focuses on mentally observing specific conceptual content, such as values (like justice and kindness), will, emotions (such as sadness and anger), and behaviors (including impulsivity and aggression). The meditator reflects on the given concept and neutrally observes the images that spontaneously emerge in the consciousness. During this process, they are actively present and fully awake. Contemplation leads to insights that can be applied to enhance the quality of everyday life. In Christian contemplative meditations, the focus is on the life and suffering of Jesus Christ. The meditator actively imagines individual scenes from Christ's life to experience them and identify with God, empathizing with Him. The ancient Greek philosopher Plotinus,¹⁹ who had a keen interest in Eastern religions and mysticism, particularly the philosophies of the Persians and Indians, described in his *Enneads* contemplative meditations that lead to an ecstatic experience of awareness free from thoughts and duality, ultimately resulting in unity with the One. According to him, these mystical experiences the highest form of human knowledge that surpasses rational knowledge and conceptual thinking.

Creative visualizations are a meditative technique that involves focusing attention on engaging the imagination and actively creating images in our mind, with the only limitation being what one can envision. Visualization refers to the process of creating mental images through visual or verbal stimuli, as well as through the senses of hearing, smell, taste, and touch. The formation of mental imagery engages various sensory modalities. However, research has confirmed that the primary focus is on visualization,²⁰ except for blind or significantly visually impaired individuals. Recent

¹⁸ Chris McNorgan, "A Meta-Analytic Review of Multisensory Imagery Identifies the Neural Correlates of Modality-Specific and Modality-General Imagery," *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 17 (October 2012): 285.

¹⁹ At the age of 39, Plotinus joined the army of Emperor Gordian III when he set out on a campaign against the Persians. The reason was his desire to learn the wisdom of the *gymnosophists*, as the Greeks referred to Indian yogis

²⁰ Pearson, et al., "Mental Imagery".

studies on mental imagery phenomena in cognitive psychology²¹ corroborate the critical role of visualization in perception, cognition, and the maintenance of mental health. To achieve a high degree of creativity, it is necessary to introduce stimulation based on visualization and imaginative processes, with simultaneous utilization of verbal and visual elements being crucial.

Here is a concrete visual meditation:

Envision yourself on a snow-covered mountain path. In the distance ahead you perceive a trail ascending upwards. As you traverse this path for several kilometers, you arrive, utterly exhausted, at an illuminated log cabin. Night has fallen. Through the cabin windows, you observe a single large room with a fireplace at its center. Upon entering the cabin, you remove your coat and position yourself in front of the fireplace to warm up. A bearskin rug lies on the wooden floor in front of the fireplace. Overcome by fatigue and the warmth of the fire, you lie down on the soft fur. You close your eyes and allow your imagination wander. Images cascade through your mind like within a film...²²

This example demonstrates the use of descriptive language that activates visual, tactile, and thermal sensory modalities. Through these literary descriptions, visual content is induced in the meditator, and attention is maintained through the emotionalization of the narrative, thereby enhancing the focus required for meditation.

In koan meditations, the student is presented with a question that has no logical answer. Koans can be sayings, stories, or statements that are paradoxical or confusing, urging the meditator to move beyond conventional modes of thinking and perception. For example: “If you come across someone on the street who has attained the truth, you cannot simply walk by in silence, nor can you speak to him directly. How will you approach him?” The student first repeats the question to themselves in order to fully concentrate on the literary image contained in the question. All their learned and logical answers are rejected in favor of directly and intuitively experiencing reality. At the moment of realizing reality, the meditator gains insight into its true nature, the essence of phenomena, and their interconnections. In dialogue with the meditation master, the quality of the response is assessed to determine whether it reflects genuine insight. The master confirms the student’s experience of insight and guides them towards further mental development and liberation from all learned patterns.

The koan “Every morning is dawn. What is the meaning of the sun rising from the sea?” aims for the meditator to explore the cyclical nature of existence and renewal through the literary image of the sun rising from the sea. One of the most famous koans, *The Sound of One Hand*, where the teacher asks the meditator: “What is the sound of one hand clapping?”, aims to move the meditator beyond dualistic thinking (sound/no sound) and explore deeper reality and in this case auditory perceptions.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ksenija Popadić, “Meditacija i kreativnost,” *AM Časopis za studije umetnosti i medija* 11 (Novembar 2016): 131–40.

The next type of meditative practice that involves the connection between literary images and visual perception is visualization meditation. In this practice one actively imagines a specific story, object, symbol, or color fully immersing oneself in the visual and other sensory experiences that emerge during the process of imagination. Among visualization meditations, I highlight visual meditation in which the meditation teacher first tells a story, and then the meditator imagines that story: a storm at sea or walking on a snowy path to a cabin where a fire crackles, inhaling energy, light, and health that spread throughout the body while exhaling disease, toxins, even unhealthy feelings...

In Buddhism, there are compassion meditations in which one imagines receiving and giving compassion, kindness, affection, and understanding. These meditations sometimes include imagining of how these healthy feelings radiate from the heart and are directed toward oneself, others, and the world. Various symbols can be envisioned, such as the *yantra* - a diagram, represents the cosmos. The focus of imagination can be an image of the teacher or simply colors, with white, red, green, and black being the most commonly visualized in meditative traditions.

Visualization meditations activate visual zones in the cortex, but they also have a harmonizing effect, they relieve stress, and thus improve the healing process. They require concentration on the content being visualized, thereby they improve concentration. Mental engagement with images alleviates emotional reactions that may be associated with them. Focusing on images reduces amygdala activity.²³ In the case of surrendering to visual content that is spontaneously produced in consciousness, creativity is increased and when imagining a specific, usually burdensome feeling, it is accepted, experienced, and understood. The observed feeling fades over time and gradually disappears. This leads to emotional stabilization and better emotional control in everyday life.

Creative meditative workshops

The process in which literary images stimulate visualization and influence emotional processes is not one-sided; the reverse influence is also possible, whereby emotional processes stimulate visualizations that result in literary images. This effect has been noted in creative meditative workshops in which I have personally participated, utilizing the phenomenological method for their description. Such creative workshops were developed by Milenko Vlajkov²⁴ as a group activity that significantly improves the expressed creativity of the meditative students or general participants.

In Japanese culture, the haiku poetic expression has been cultivated for over 400 years. This poetic form captures external phenomena, without the mediation of ego, emerging from a focused attention on the external world – a moment of direct

²³ The amygdala is part of the brain's limbic system. Along with the hippocampus, it regulates emotions and plays a crucial role in the development of fear and anxiety.

²⁴ Milenko Vlajkov, *Auf dem Weg zum Glänzenden Geist* (Berlin: ProBusiness medialis Offsetdruck GmbH, 2020).

experience of reality. Haiku serves as both a mental training exercise and an activation of the senses, particularly vision. Explicitness, logic, and rationality are less valued in Japanese aesthetics because they reflect a Zen-Buddhist appreciation for allusions, intuition, and ambiguity. In haiku poetry, words that typically evoke scenes of nature serves as triggers to stimulate emotions that are not expressed directly, encouraging the readers' intuition.²⁵

The creative workshop begins with the assignment of a topic. When the group consists of meditators, the focus shifts to the meditative path of personal development. During a workshop I attended in June 2024, the topic was *controlled folly*.²⁶

Initially, the workshop facilitator (or meditation master) familiarized participants with the concept's meaning. *Controlled folly* is a controlled surrender to intense experience, an experience of happiness limited within a certain period. One should not renounce pleasure in life but control it to avoid dependency. Conversely, most individuals are unable to terminate an experience of happiness or great pleasure at the moment of immersion.

In the next step, the group is tasked with describing the concept of *controlled folly* by collaboratively creating all group members agreed upon. My group agreed on a story from our adolescence, a time when we were all emotionally hypersensitive and struggled to cope. We sometimes walked for days while consuming only water or black tea, a practice that brought us sense of calm. We detailed this experience in a story that we felt we collectively shared.

In the subsequent step, we analyzed the story and distilled it into three fundamental, interconnected concepts: painful sensitivity, walking meditation, and clarity. These concepts lead to the final insight. In conclusion, we expressed each concept in a haiku verse following the 5-7-5 syllable formula.

Haiku	Concept
Hurts under the skin	Painful sensitivity
Click-clack through hours and the fast.	Walking meditation
Behold – cotton bridge!	Clarity

Each participant had the impression that it was their personal solution expressed as “We did this.” The group became a single entity! The master could either accept our solution or reject it in which case he would provide guidance on how to proceed to reach an acceptable solution. In this instance, the master accepted the solution, and we all experienced cognitive and emotional insight!

²⁵ Ana Došen, “Viserocepcija: (japansko) telo koje misli i umetnost,” *AM Časopis za studije umetnosti i medija* 11 (2016): 123–30.

²⁶ Idries Shah, an Afghan writer and Sufi teacher, wrote about controlled folly. The term is known in Sufi tradition and in the Teachings of Don Juan (Yaqui Indians from Mexico) described by Carlos Castaneda. It refers to conscious and deliberate behavior that is free from the ego and social expectations. This behavior appears mad and unconventional from the outside, but for the person performing it, it is completely intentional, purposeful, and an expression of complete freedom.

The creative workshop example demonstrates the dynamic interaction of memory, thinking, emotions, visualization, and creativity, resulting in the linguistic production of a formally demanding haiku verse and the group creation of literary images in the haiku's content. Primary data sources were used in describing the creative workshop.

Meditative stories

Since ancient times, there has been a tradition of telling and retelling meditative stories that contain a moral lesson and use descriptive language.

These stories guide us on the path of spiritual development and indicate ways to develop awareness, free the mind from all forms of attachment, and ultimately achieve self-realization. The stories have the ability to transform the mind and enable self-knowledge to find one's true identity.

From time immemorial the meditative stories were passed from master to student, from one who knows the path of liberation to one seeking that knowledge. Masters employed literary images, parables, analogies, metaphors, and narratives, because it is challenging to conceptually define and verbally articulate reality beyond intellectual understanding. These tools help access higher functions of the mind that are lucid, direct, and profound.²⁷ Meditative stories express the master's need to stimulate the student to transcend binary thinking (pairs of opposites) and perceive reality beyond everyday understanding and knowledge. These stories expand visual perception and cognition beyond prejudices and dogmas and allow different levels of reflection – from literary to intuitive.

Meditative stories require analysis and interpretation of symbols that develop abstract thinking. They can be interpreted in multiple ways, and different levels of understanding can be achieved based on the listeners. Meditative stories are often accompanied by emotions as well as compassion for oneself and others. They also point to true life values and demonstrate how one can live with the virtues of courage, patience, justice, moderation, compassion, wisdom, loyalty, responsibility, honesty, and generosity. The stories calm the mind, change consciousness, and lead to the maturation of personality; they inspire and activate the creative potential of the person exposed to the story.

Let's take the Story of the Four Monk as an example: Four monks decided to meditate silently without speaking for two weeks. By nightfall on the first day, the candle began to flicker and then went out. The first monk said, "Oh, no! The candle is out." The second monk said, "Aren't we supposed to abstain from speaking?" The third monk said, "Why must you two break the silence?" The fourth monk laughed and said, "Ha! I'm the only one who didn't speak."²⁸ This story is an allegory that leads to the insight that we all have a mind similar to that of a monkey jumping from branch

²⁷ Ramiro Calle, *Cuentos de los grandes maestros espirituales* (Madrid: Oberon, 2005).

²⁸ Dhamma Tapasa, "Transform Your Thinking Transform Your Life – Mental Health and Positive Well-Being," <https://4enlightenment.com/2019/10/07/the-four-monks/>, acc. on June 30, 2024

to branch and always moving. In Buddhism, this is known as the Monkey Mind. The underlying meaning is that only by learning to listen and perceive neutrally - free from impulsive reactions, judgment, anger, or pride – we can truly understand the essence of silence. The structural elements of this story include symbolism and allegory used to convey deeper meaning and allow for multi-layered interpretations, as well as minimalist action focusing on the volitional and emotional mental processes of the characters.

Meditative stories are characterized by prominent use of descriptive language that features rich literary imagery, effectively engaging readers' mental processes and stimulating their cognitive faculties.

Conclusion

There are numerous definitions of meditation and various meditative practices. Here I highlight Milenko Vlajkov's insightful definition of meditation, which states that it is a conscious perceptual-cognitive activity where the person fully focuses on and becomes one with the subject of focus.

Drawing from a review of the literature and my own extensive meditative experience, I have identified several practices that effectively utilize the connection between literary descriptions and visual perception to achieve meditation goals. These include contemplative meditations, creative visualizations, koan meditations, visualization meditations, creative meditative workshops, and meditative stories.

The overview of relevant practices indicates that the connection between literary images and visual perception, i.e., visualization as an internal representation functioning as a weak form of visual perception, is a multifaceted interaction involving cognitive and sensory processes through which meditators interpret and visualize the initial text or, as in the case of creative workshops, create poetic haiku text as their final result. The interacting elements are mental images and visualization, with the mental images enabling meditators to 'see' scenes, characters, and actions described in the text. Cognitive processes are at play, as meditators rely on their existing knowledge and experiences to form a coherent visual representation of the narration and draw conclusions related to meditative goals, though not necessarily via conventional thinking. Sensory engagement encompasses literary descriptions that encourage the involvement of the senses to make scenes more vivid. Emotional processes also participate in the interaction. The way scenes are described evokes specific feelings and encourages certain moods. Literary techniques are also an element of connection using descriptive language with metaphors, similes, allegories, and other stylistic figures that create powerful visual images by comparing one thing to another in a way that emphasizes similarities and differences. Finally, the connection has a neurological basis as well. Neuroscientific studies show that reading or listening to text describing visual experiences activates brain areas involved in actual visual perception. This overlap suggests that the brain processes literary descriptions in a manner similar to how it processes real visual stimuli.

It can be concluded that the connection between literary images and visual perception in meditative practice encompasses a complex dynamic of mutual influence of cognitive processes, sensory engagement, literary techniques, and neurological activity. It strongly contributes to the quality of meditative practice and promotes deeper understanding and emotional-volitional engagement with the source text. It also promotes personal development and activates and enhances the creative potentials of meditators.

Table 1. Literary images and the senses they involve

Literary Imagery	Sense
The floor is wooden, and a bear fur rug is spread out on it.	Sight
Overwhelmed by fatigue and the heat from the fireplace, you lie down on the soft fur.	Touch
The thunder rumbled in the distance, a deep growl that shook the windows.	Hearing
The scent of roses was intoxicating, mingling with the earthy smell of the garden.	Smell
The sweet, juicy peach burst in her mouth, its nectar dripping down her chin.	Taste

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