

# **PRACTICE OF EMPTINESS**

**The Perfection of Wisdom Chapter of the Fifth Dalai Lama's  
"Sacred Word of Mañjuśri"**

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with instruction from Geshe Rapden**

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## Sacred Word of Mañjuśrī

### The Perfection of Wisdom

A consciousness that realizes the meaning of reality is a wisdom cognizing the ultimate (emptiness). A consciousness skilled in any of the five topics of knowledge (art, medicine, grammar, reasoning, and inner or Buddhist sciences) is an instance of the wisdom cognizing conventionalities. There also is a wisdom that knows the impeccable ways of achieving the welfare of sentient beings in this and future lives. When training in these wisdom consciousnesses is complete, the perfection of wisdom is fulfilled.

Nāgārjuna's Hundred Stanzas on Wisdom (Prajñāśataka) says,

*"The root of all seen and unseen virtues is wisdom. Because it thus brings about both (seen and unseen virtues), wisdom should be thoroughly comprehended."*

The fulfillment of the first five perfections (giving, ethics, patience, effort, and concentration) depends on wisdom - as in the case of giving even one's own flesh without pride and without shrinking, as if one were taking medicine from a medicinal tree. Also, in dependence on wisdom, a Bodhisattva who is a universal emperor does not go under the influence of the desirous attributes (which are at his command). In brief, all mundane and supra-mundane virtues arise in dependence on wisdom; therefore, wisdom should be sought.

Among the many types of wisdom that are to be sought, it is important to cultivate the special insight (vipaśyanā) that extinguishes the coarse and subtle afflictions. There is a worldly special insight into the gross and peaceful (attributes of the realms in the transient world) that suppresses manifest afflictions, and you might wonder whether this is to be sought. Aśvaghōṣa's Praise of the Praiseworthy says,

*"Though beings blinded by ignorance,  
who do not approach your (Buddha's) doctrine,  
reach to the peak of cyclic existence (the highest formless realm),  
they will again undergo suffering in cyclic existence."*

Non-Buddhists can forsake all the manifest afflictions which are involved in the realm of "nothingness" (the next to highest formless realm) and the lower realms and attain the consciousness of the peak of cyclic existence. However, they cannot free themselves from cyclic existence.

The King of Meditations Sutra (Samādhirāja-sūtra) says,

*"Though they cultivate those concentrations (of the peak of cyclic existence and so forth), they do not destroy the discrimination of self.  
Therefore, the afflictions return, and they are thoroughly disturbed -  
as in the case of the cultivation of the concentrations by Udraka Rāmaputra."*

Through the force of not having abandoned the conception of inherent existence, they are disturbed again by the afflictions, as in the case of the Forder (Tīrthika) Udraka Rāmaputra. They again fall into a consciousness of lower states. Therefore, how could it be that trainees who are beings of greatest capacity would seek worldly special insight which only suppresses manifest afflictions?

**Question:** Then is the calm abiding (śamatha) (which was taught previously in this book and) which was earlier cultivated with effort senseless?

**Answer:** (Aśvaghōṣa's Praise of the Praiseworthy says)

*"Though followers of your teaching might not have attained the actual  
(first concentration), they can cease cyclic existence with the devils staring at them."*

*After attaining the preparation for the first concentration, one can set aside making effort to achieve the actual first concentration. Through meditating on the meaning of emptiness, which is the object of the supra-mundane special insight, one can attain liberation from cyclic existence.*

**Qualm:** If omniscience is not attained through the practice of the perfection of wisdom, a being of great capacity would not have any attributes which surpass those of beings of middling capacity (since both practice the same form of wisdom).

**Answer:** The arising of such a mistaken thought is a case of being stricken by the fault of seeing only a portion of the teaching the way a yak blind in one eye eats grass. Earlier this book has extensively explained the modes of training in the aspiration to highest enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings as well as the Bodhisattva deeds, both of which differentiate beings of greatest capacity from beings of middling capacity. (Thus, though it is true beings of middling capacity meditate on the same emptiness as beings of great capacity, they are by no means equal to those of great capacity.)

The master lama Tsong-ka-pa says in his Three Principal Aspects of the Path:

*If you do not have the wisdom Realizing the way things are,  
Even though you have developed the thought Definitely to leave cyclic existence and  
The altruistic aspiration to highest enlightenment, The root of cyclic existence cannot be cut.  
Therefore make effort to the means Of realizing dependent-arising.*

A being of great capacity not only has an altruistic aspiration to highest enlightenment but also cultivates the path of special wisdom in conjunction with his altruistic aspiration. The practices of a being of great capacity are not a partial path like those of a being of middling or small capacity.

**Question:** Calm abiding and special insight are also included in the practice of the trainings in concentration and wisdom on the stage of a being of middling capacity. Thus, what need is there to conjoin them with the Bodhisattva deeds?

**Answer:** Nāgārjuna's Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning (Yuktiṣaṣṭikā) says,

*"Through the virtue (of my effort in writing this book),  
may all beings complete the collections of merit and wisdom  
and attain the two supreme (bodies, a Form Body and a Truth Body)  
which arise from merit and wisdom."*

In order to achieve Buddhahood it is necessary to attain both a Form Body and a Truth Body. (Without conjoining meditation on emptiness with an aspiration to highest enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings and its attendant practices, Buddhahood cannot be attained.)

**Question:** Based on what are the two bodies achieved?

**Answer:** The glorious Candrakīrti says in his Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) Treatise on the Middle Way" (Madhyamakāvatāra. VI. 80),

*"Conventional truths are the means, and ultimate truths arise from the means.  
Those who do not know the differentiation of these two abide on a bad path of wrong thought."  
Implicitly then, "Those who know well the differentiation of conventional truths and ultimate truths abide on the correct good path."*

You should know correctly the two facets of the Mādhyamika view:

1. The view of objects, conventional truths, appearances. This is the view of dependent-arising which is the conventional existence of all phenomena and their arising without a disordering of cause and effect.

2. The view of ultimate truths, emptinesses. This is the understanding of the nature of all phenomena in the sense that phenomena do not in the least have inherent existence. When you know these two without error, you amass the collections of merit while practicing on the path through the great force of the deeds of giving and so forth. Also, you practice these deeds in conjunction with the profound view of emptiness. Thereby, you attain the two bodies, a Form Body and a Truth Body which are the final objects of attainment by beings of great capacity. Therefore, you should first take instruction on practicing the ways of amassing the collections of merit which are the means of attaining a Form Body. Then you should train in the stages of practice for accumulating the collections of wisdom which are the means of attaining a Truth Body.

In general there are four different systems of Buddhist tenets in the Superior country of India (Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Cittamātra and Mādhyamika). There are disagreements' in view among them, but the Mādhyamika and Cittamātra systems are widely renowned to be the main systems. Nāgārjuna's Precious Garland (Ratnāvalī, verse 118) says,

*"Buddha knew that because of its profundity this doctrine was difficult for beings to realize; therefore, Buddha, the Subduer, turned away from teaching doctrine."*

It was difficult for others to comprehend this essential of knowing how to present emptiness and cause and effect without contradiction. Therefore, Buddha (initially) pretended that it was difficult, very difficult, for him to assume the task of turning the wheel of doctrine.

The teacher of this difficult essential without error is the glorious protector, the Superior Nāgārjuna who was prophesied by the Conqueror Buddha in the Descent into Lanka Sutra (Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra). Though there are many who claim to follow Nāgārjuna, there is no chance of attaining even liberation from cyclic existence even by means of the view (of the Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas who) assert that (conventionally) all phenomena exist inherently. Therefore, the glorious Candrakīrti says in his Supplement (VI.79),

*"For those who are outside the path of the honorable teacher Nāgārjuna there is no means of extinguishing (suffering). They have fallen from conventional truths and from ultimate truths. Because of falling from these they do not achieve liberation."*

Hence, it is necessary to comprehend without error the thought of the protector Nāgārjuna.

**Question:** What commentator of Nāgārjuna should be followed?

**Answer:** The great Elder Atīsha says,

*"Through whom is emptiness realized? Through Candrakīrti, a student of the prophesied Nāgārjuna who saw the truth, the nature of phenomena. Through the precepts transmitted from Candrakīrti the truth, the nature of phenomena, will be realized."*

You should practice in accordance with the commentaries of the glorious Candrakīrti.

Candrakīrti's Commentary on (Āryadeva's) "Four Hundred Stanzas on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas" (Bodhisattvayogacaryacatuḥśatakaṭīkā) says,

*"Here 'self (in the theory of selflessness) is a nature or entity of things which does not depend on another. Its non-existence is selflessness. Selflessness is realized as two-fold through a division into persons and other phenomena, a selflessness of persons and a selflessness of other phenomena."*

**Question:** What are the stages in the realization of the two types of emptiness?

**Answer:** Āryadeva's Four Hundred (Catuḥśataka) says,

*"Initially the non-meritorious is overcome. In the middle, self is overcome, and finally all views are overcome. Whoever knows this is wise."*

Bad views of no cause and effect and so forth were overcome (through the practices explained) earlier in the sections on beings of small and middling capacity. Therefore, it is said, *"The source of all evil, nihilism, has been thoroughly overcome."*

Then, in the middle, a self of persons and finally, a self of other phenomena should be overcome. This order wherein the selflessness of persons is cultivated before the selflessness of other phenomena is devised in accordance with the precepts of practice whereas in the great books on the selflessness of other phenomena appears first. This non-mistaken order, which — being for practice — is an exception to the general rule, is an excellent essential. A view of selflessness cannot be generated in the continuum of a person who does not believe in cause and effect, and if the conception of a self of persons is not overcome, the conception of a self of other phenomena cannot be overcome.

Through practices explained earlier in this book (but not translated here) the antidotes of the diverse afflictions, such as desire, have caused their corresponding faults to be eliminated (in the sense of being suppressed). However, all faults were not eliminated, and this is due to not having eliminated the root of all faults, ignorance. Āryadeva's Four Hundred says,

*"Just as the body sense (abides throughout) the body (which is also the locus of the other senses), so ignorance abides in all (afflictions). Thus through conquering ignorance all afflictions are conquered. If dependent-arising is seen, ignorance does not arise. Therefore, here with all one's effort just this conversation (on dependent-arising) should be heard."*

It is said that just as when a tree is cut from its roots, all its branches and flowers wither, so when the conception of inherent existence is extirpated, all afflictions are extinguished. Chandrakirti's Supplement (VI. 120) says,

*"Having seen with the mind that all the faults of the afflictions arise from the view of the transitory collection (as a real self) and having realized that the (nominally existent) I is its object, a yogi ceases the self (the sense of an inherently existent person)."*

Also, Nāgārjuna's Precious Garland (verse 35) says,

*"As long as there is a conception of the mental and physical aggregates (as inherently existent), just so long is there a conception of an I' (as inherently existent). When the conception of an I exists, there is (contaminated) action. From (contaminated) action also there is birth."*

The king of doctrine, Tsong-ka-pa, petitioned Mañjuśrī for teaching, and in just the way that Mañjuśrī taught him, Tsong-ka-pa actualized in his mental continuum the means of generating the correct view of emptiness. In the transmissions of his instructions to his students the ascertainment of the two selflessnesses appears in diverse forms. In the transmission from Kay-drup-gay-lek pel-sang (mKhas-grub-dge-legs-dpal-bzang) the instructions are given from the point of view of preparation and actual meditation on emptiness. In the transmission from Kay-drup-shay-rap-seng-gay (mKhas-grub-shes-rab-seng-ge) the instructions are given from the point of view of having the four mindfulnesses (of the guru, of aspiring to highest enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, of one's own body as a deity's body, and of the view of emptiness). No matter which of these is performed, there is no difference. Here since this is an occasion of instructions for practicing the perfection of wisdom in the stages of the path to highest enlightenment, the preparatory practices have appeared in the series of practices discussed earlier. Therefore, they are dispensed with now.

The actual practice of the perfection of wisdom has two parts, the practice of the selflessness of persons and the practice of the selflessness of other phenomena. With respect to the first, there are many forms; for instance, the reasoning of dependent-arising has three essentials, and the seven-fold reasoning has nine essentials, and so forth. They are explained extensively in the scriptures of the great being, the master Tsong-ka-pa, in his Great Exposition of Special Insight and Small Exposition of Special Insight. In the instructions for practice transmitting from

mouth to mouth the experience of the omniscient bearer of the chariot of this system, Nor-sang-gya-tso (Nor-bzang-rgya-mtsho) and his sons, we find an analysis based on four essentials.

The first essential is to ascertain the way an innate conceiver of "I" conceives "I".  
Buddhapālita says,

*"All phenomena are selfless".*

(When analyzing the selflessness of the person) if both the self (that is the validly existent person) and the self that is the non-existent object negated are not intimately identified, it is like dispatching an army without knowing where the enemy is and like shooting an arrow without having sought out the target. Śāntideva's Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds (Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra) says,

*"Without contacting the imputed existent, its non-existence cannot be apprehended".*

If an image of the object negated does not appear well to the mind, the meaning of the selflessness that negates it cannot be ascertained.

Therefore, (when a "selflessness of persons" is presented) the word "persons" refers to (nominally and validly existent) persons, that is, common beings and Superiors within the six types of migrators and the three vehicles (Hearer, Solitary Realizer, and Bodhisattva). The person's mode of abiding as if able to establish itself in its own right without being imputed by thought is called "self" or inherent existence.

Further, the innate conceiver of "I" which conceives of "I" based on the (nominally existent) person is of three types.

1. The intellect which (correctly) conceives "I" and which exists in a person who has generated the Mādhyamika view in his mental continuum. This consciousness (correctly) conceives the "I" to be only designated to its basis of designation (mind and body).

2. The innate misconceiver of an "I" which is qualified by being inherently existent. This consciousness is to be overcome through its antidote here on this occasion (of the path of wisdom).

3. The conventional valid cognizer which establishes the existence of "I". This consciousness exists (for example) in the continuums of those common beings whose mental continuums are not affected by systems of tenets and who thus do not differentiate nominal imputation and inherent existence. In this case, the "I" is not qualified with being nominally imputed or inherently existent. (Though uneducated common beings do not propound inherent existence or nominal imputation, the "I" does appear to them to be inherently existent, and because they sometimes assent to that appearance-though without reasoning-they also have a conception of an inherently existent "I", type 2. They, like all other beings, even including those who have been educated in wrong systems of tenets, have consciousnesses that do not engage in conceptions of inherent existence. Therefore, it is not being said that all the conceivers of "I" in the continuum of a falsely educated person are wrong or that all conceivers of "I" in the continuum of uneducated persons are right. Rather, both the uneducated and the falsely educated have both the second and the third types. Also, the falsely educated and the uneducated occasionally have the third type of consciousness conceiving of an "I" which is not qualified by being either nominally imputed or inherently existent. However, neither the falsely educated nor the uneducated can distinguish between an imputedly existent "I" and an inherently existent "I", Both must become educated in the Mādhyamika view of non-inherent existence and imputed existence to overcome their innate tendency to assent to the false appearance of the "I" as if inherently existent or covering its basis of designation).

Further, a tight firm mind thinking of "I" exists in our mental continuums on all occasions of sleep and waking. However, like a mirror and an image of your face (in that the presence of the

mirror yields a clear image of the face), when you meet with conditions of happiness and suffering, the mind thinking "I" manifests very strongly. Also, on occasions when such conditions are not encountered, it is a little unclear. Most instructors on the view nowadays have not analyzed whether such is manifest or not. They speak about practice relying on impoverished words such as just saying, "The way that the innate conceiver of an I conceives the "I." Such instruction does not at all concord with the essentials — like pointing an accusing finger at someone whose face is not well seen and saying, "This is yesterday's thief so and so.

Therefore, you first need a clear notion of happiness or suffering that was actually caused by someone else. If not, you should recall a former occurrence of such to the point where it appears clearly to the mind. For example, if someone (falsely) accused you of being a thief, the thought, "I robbed so and so," does not exist in your mind; nevertheless, thinking that he accused you of such a theft, you sometimes have strong hatred for the person. At that time, this "I", which is the object of the accusation of theft and which is held firmly and tightly in the centre of the heart, seems even as if it can be seen and grasped with the hand. Similarly, if another person caused you to achieve a desired aim, and you reflect that such and such help was rendered, the "I" which is the object helped appears forcefully from the centre of the heart.

In reliance on your cultivating either of these two modes, the manifest mind thinking "I" causes other coarse thoughts to become dormant, and you should allow the innate conceiver of "I" to increase in strength. At this point, the way that the mind conceives the "I" should be analyzed. It is extremely difficult within one consciousness to analyze both the conception of an "I" and the way it is conceived (the first being the recognition of the "I" and the second being the recognition of its qualities of self-sufficiency and so forth). If the force of the analytical consciousness is too strong, the strength of the conception of "I" is destroyed and becomes unclear.

**Question:** How should the analysis be done?

**Answer:** Through the force of having cultivated calm abiding, you have gained an ability to settle on any object of stabilizing meditation or analytical meditation. Thus in place of concentration on, for instance, the body of a Buddha, you should cause the manifest mind which thinks "I" to appear. While the general consciousness remains on the "I" with distinct force, a corner of the mind should watch its mode of apprehension and analyze the way in which the "I" is being conceived. For instance, when you are walking with someone on a path, your eyes are mainly looking at the path, but with a corner of your eye you are watching your companion.

Previously, the "I" of the thought "I" seemed to exist in the centre of the heart, but it was not ascertained in what terms the "I" existed. From now on, a corner of the intellect is to analyze it well. Sometimes it will seem to be related with the body. Sometimes it will seem to be related with the mind. Sometimes it will seem to be related with the other individual aggregates (feelings, discriminations, and factors of composition) and so forth. At the end of the arising of such a variety of modes of appearance, you will come to identify an "I" that exists in its own right, that exists inherently, that from the start is self-established, existing undifferentiatedly in relation to the mind and body which are also mixed like milk in water.

This is the first essential (in the cultivation of wisdom), ascertainment of the object which is negated in the theory of selflessness. You should analyze until deep experience of it arises. Having generated such in your mental continuum, you thereby crystallize an identification of the "I" conceived by the inborn conceiver of an "I" as self-established and as having a relation with your own aggregates like that of water put in water. If such an identification crystallizes, mere analysis will cause you to attain ascertainment (of the non-inherent existence of "I"). If you do not identify such an "I", analysis falls apart without ever getting started.



Candrakīrti's Clear Words (Prasannapadā) says,

*“Consider whether the object of a conceiver of a self is the same as the mental and physical aggregates or is something different from the aggregates. The “I” appears as if not distinguished from the mental and physical aggregates which themselves are not differentiated. However, though one thing such as a pot is not said to be separate or undifferentiable (from itself), here with respect to the “I” there arise the aspects of a basis of designation and a phenomenon designated, that is, “aggregates” and “I.”*”

(A pot can be considered as a phenomenon designated and the bottom, belly, and top of the pot as its basis of designation, but pot" alone is not considered under these aspects.)

It is to be analyzed whether the "I" which is inherently self-established in relation to the five aggregates has some other way of existing than a oneness with or separateness from the aggregates. Through taking another phenomenon as an example, in the end you will realize that there is no third category of existence. The decision that the “I” and the aggregates are either the same or different is the essential of ascertaining pervasion. (If the "I" exists, it is either one with or separate from the aggregates. Being either of those pervades, or occurs with every instance of, an existent “I.”)

Previously, the “I,” the phenomenon designated to the aggregates which are the basis of designation, seemed to exist as if self-established and indistinguishable from the aggregates. Through having practiced this second essential, the former consciousness ascertaining the appearance of “I” cannot remain as it is, and there arises a little doubt about whether the “I” is the same as or different from the aggregates.

It is not sufficient just to doubt whether the “I” and the aggregates are the same or different; a decision must be reached. Therefore, you should analyze thinking first that the “I” which is conceived by the inborn conception of true existence might be one with the body and the mind. In that case the "I" could not be anything else except either one with the body or one with the mind. If the “I” were one with the body, it would not be sensible to say “my body” from the point of view of affixing an attribute, "body," to a base, “I.” Also, you would have to say "my I" or “the body's body.” Generate ascertainment that it is the same also if the “I” were one with the mind.

If, having thought thus, (your attempt at understanding) is merely verbal, and you do not gain strong conviction, think the following. Nāgārjuna's Fundamental Text Called “Wisdom” (Prajñānāma-mūlamadhyamakakārikā, XXVII, 27) says,

*“When it is taken that there is no self except the appropriated (aggregates), the appropriated (aggregates) themselves are the self. If so, your self is non-existent.”*

Because the “I” and the aggregates would be inherently one, they would be one in all respects with utterly no division. Therefore, they would be none other than partless. You could not then present in relation to that partless one the two different things: the appropriator of the five aggregates and the five aggregates which are appropriated by it. Therefore, an assertion of “my body” or “my aggregates” would be senseless.

If this also does not get to the heart of the matter, think that because the “I” and the body are one, after death when the body is burned, the “I” would also be burned. Or, just as the “I” transmigrates to the next birth, so the body also would have to transmigrate. Or, just as the body does not transmigrate, so the “I” also would not transmigrate. Consider the application of such fallacies.

Through having meditated thus, you come to think, “The “I” is probably not the same as the body.” Then, if you think “The “I” is probably one with the mind,” think about the following faults. The suffering of cold arises when the "I" is without clothes, and the sufferings of hunger

and thirst arise when the "I" lacks food and drink. Therefore, if after death the mind were born in a formless realm, then because the mind would be one with the "I," it would then still have to make use of gross forms such as food and clothing.

The above modes of reasoning are suitable and easy to develop for beginners. However, if you have been disciplined through discriminating wisdom, a little more elaboration will decide the matter. Therefore, think of the fallacies of the selves becoming many.

Candrakīrti's Supplement (VI. 127ab) says,

*"If the self were the aggregates, then because they are many, those selves would also be many."*

Just as the aggregates are five, so the "I" would also become five. Or, just as the "I" is no more than one, so the aggregates could not be five.

Similarly, Nāgārjuna's Fundamental Wisdom (Prajñā-mūla, XVIII.1) says,

*"If the self were the aggregates, it would have production and disintegration."*

Because the five aggregates would be inherently produced and would inherently disintegrate, you would have to assert that the "I" also is produced and disintegrates.

The "I" of the former birth and the "I" of this life can only be either the same or different. If the same, through the force of their being inherently one, the sufferings in the former life as an animal - such as stupidity and enslavement for others' use - would also be experienced on the occasion of the "I's" being a human in this birth. Also the human pleasures of this life would have been experienced as an animal in the former life. Think of such absurdities.

Similarly, Candrakīrti's Supplement (VI. 61 cd) says,

*"Whatever are inherently separate are not suitable to be included in one continuum."*

If the "I" of the former birth and the "I" of the next birth are inherently different, they would be totally unrelatly different. Therefore it would be impossible to remember, "I was born in a former birth as such and such," just as Devadatta does not remember that he was born in a former birth as (his contemporary) Yajña.

Furthermore, the self's accumulating actions for birth in a happy migration would be wasted because another would enjoy the fructification of the effects in a life of high status, and you yourself would not experience it. Why? The agent of the actions and the experiencer of the effects would not be included into the one base of a mere "I" (a nominally existent "I") and would be unrelated.

Therefore, if an action accumulated in a former life brought help or harm in this life, you would be meeting with (the effects of) actions not done (by yourself). If help and harm did not arise (from deeds done), there would be no sense in abandoning sins and engaging in virtues in this life because their effects would not ripen for the future "I."

Through thinking such, you will find ascertainment with respect to the third essential: ascertaining a lack of true oneness of the self and the aggregates. Now, you might think that the "I" and the five aggregates cannot be anything but different.

Candrakīrti's Supplement (VI. 120ab) says,

*"There is no self other than the aggregates because, apart from the aggregates, its conception does not exist."*

The inherently different must be non-related. Therefore, just as within the aggregates you can identify each individually, This is the aggregate of form," and so forth, so after clearing away

the five aggregates you would have to identify the "I," This is the "I." However, no matter how finely you analyze, such an "I is not at all to be found,

It is not sufficient that the mode of non-finding be just a repetition of the impoverished phrase, "not found." For example, when an ox is lost, one does not take as true the mere phrase, "It is not in such and such an area." Rather, through searching for it in the highland, midland, and lowland of the area, one firmly decides that it cannot be found. Here also, through meditating until a decision is reached, you gain conviction.

Candrakīrti's Supplement (VI. 165) says,

*"Because there is no object which does not have an agent, there is no mine (owned) without a self (owner). Through the view of emptiness of "I" and mine, ' a yogi is liberated.'"*

When the "I," which previous to now seemed to be perceivable by the eye and graspable by the hand as a true existent, is not found and is just vacuous, this is said to be the initial finding of the Mādhyamika view.

Further, as was explained before on the occasion of calm abiding, you should practice — with the wisdom arising from thought - what was found initially by the wisdom arising from hearing, and eventually you will attain the wisdom arising from meditation. Therefore, this initial generation of the Mādhyamika view is not actual special insight; however, like a moon on the second day of the month it is a small finding of the view. At that time, if you have no predispositions for emptiness from a former life, it appears that a thing which was in the hand has suddenly been lost. If you have predispositions, it appears that a lost jewel which was in the hand has suddenly been found.

After having thus ascertained the view of selflessness, the way of sustaining it is — as was explained earlier on the occasion of calm abiding - the performance of the six practices of preparation, the ways of physical posture, mindfulness and awareness. With respect to the way of practicing them here in meditation on emptiness, some say that having once done the analysis of the view you should sustain reality (in meditation) without applying the mind to anything. Some say that you should perform stabilizing meditation (without further analysis) merely calling to mind the view which was analyzed earlier. Though many such forms (of "insight" meditation) have appeared, no special object beyond the mode of sustaining calm abiding is apparent.

Po-to-wa's (Po-to-ba) Small Vessel says,

*"Some say that at the time of hearing and thinking you ascertain non-inherent existence through reasoning, but at the time of meditation you meditate only on the non-conceptual. Because they thus meditate wrongly on a senseless emptiness, it does not serve as an antidote (to conceiving inherent existence). Therefore, even during meditation you should engage in individual analysis through whatever reasoning you have cultivated—such as the lack of being one and many or dependent-arising - and also abide a little in the non-conceptual. Such meditation is an antidote of the afflictions. This is how wisdom should be cultivated by those who wish to follow the god (Atīsha) and who wish to practice the system of the perfections. Further, through gaining familiarity with the emptiness of the person, you then will enter into such (non-conceptuality)."*

Many who claim to be great meditators say that you ascertain the view of emptiness through reasoned analysis and then during meditation meditate on only the non-conceptual. This is no different from saying that while staying at home, you should feed your horse well, but when going out you should go on foot. Such talk is only the ugly innards of those who have not understood in the least the essentials of the way to achieve special insight in dependence on calm abiding.

It indeed is said that on the occasion of calm abiding non-conceptuality is needed and that the intellect should be stopped. These statements mean that the mind should not spread to thought other than the object of meditative awareness, such as the body of a Buddha. If (in calm abiding) it were necessary to stop all conceptuality, then, since the contemplation of an image of a Tathāgata's body is conceptual, such contemplation would also have to cease, and in that case you would lose your object of awareness.

Still, influenced by a wrong idea based on mistaking the meaning of non-conceptuality, some think that because all analysis on the meaning of selflessness is conceptual, analysis should not be performed during meditation. This is a sign of not having understood the meaning of calm abiding. The analytical meditation to be practiced is based on analysis through wisdom conjoined with the force of calm abiding. Thereby, you can attain great clarity without the mind's spreading to other thoughts, such as the afflictions of desire.

By way of a stable calm abiding, the wisdom of special insight becomes very strong. If you alternately engage in stabilizing and analytical meditation before achieving calm abiding, it is an obstacle to calm abiding. (After achieving calm abiding, you should do analytical meditation and stabilizing meditation alternately.) After having achieved calm abiding, (prolonged) strong analysis may harm your stabilization, and at that time you should alternate to stabilizing meditation. Also, if through too much stabilizing meditation you are not inclined to analyze, you should alternate to analytical meditation.

It does not suffice to meditate on the meaning of emptiness at the time of analysis and then at the time of stabilization to set the mind on whatever you remember, such as impermanence or a deity's body. The meaning of emptiness, considered during analytical meditation, should be the object on which the mind is set one-pointedly in equipoise during stabilizing meditation. At that time you should not think of anything else except that the self does not inherently exist; just any non-conceptuality is not sufficient.

Kamalaśīla's last Stages of Meditation (Bhāvanākrama) says,

*"Therefore, in (Buddha's) excellent doctrine 'non-mindfulness' and 'non-contemplation' should be viewed as preceded by correct individual analysis, For, nothing else except correct individual analysis can cause non-mindfulness and non-contemplation (on objects other than emptiness)."*

The followers of Kay-drup-gay-lek-pel-sang-po explain that when the non-existence of the "I" is distinctly ascertained through analysis of the four essentials, the continuum of just that realization should be prolonged and the analysis of the four essentials should be just called to mind again and again. They say, however, that meditation thinking, The "I" does not exist as perceived," or "Nothing exists in accord with the mode of appearance (of the I)," are wrong. However, some who bear the lineage of Kay-drup-shay-rap-seng-gay say that having developed ascertainment of selflessness, you should meditate thinking, "Nothing exists in accord with the mode of appearance (of I)." Many systems have arisen, and let us reduce them to their essence. After having settled the analysis of the four essentials through hearing and thinking, ascertainment arises distinctly during meditation that apprehended by the intellect that conceives of the "I" tightly, so tightly, in the center of the heart-does not inherently exist in relation to the mental and physical aggregates. When ascertainment has arisen, the non-inherent existence of the "I" is the actual object of meditation. Therefore retaining mindfulness of the non-inherent existence of "I," you should not forget it. Also, through awareness you should distinguish whether the intellect that conceives an inherently existent "I" is breaking in (on your understanding) or not. If it becomes necessary to revivify the mode of non-inherent existence of the "I," then by means of a little analysis you should set yourself again in equipoise, thinking, "Such a mode (of "I") does not exist."

At that time, due to the force of past great familiarity with the intellect that conceives inherent existence, the intellect that conceives an inherently existent "I" is stronger and more frequent

(than the realization of selflessness) even though you forcibly practice in accordance with the nine states of mind of calm abiding. Therefore, the thought that the "I" does not inherently exist comes only at intervals. Then, when you gradually become familiar with selflessness, the conception of inherent existence occasionally interrupts the consciousness of the view that the "I" does not inherently exist. Then, just after the generation of a thought conceiving inherent existence, it is stopped through just a little mindfulness. Thereby, the realization of selflessness becomes uninterrupted. Then in accordance with the ninth state of mind of calm abiding you no longer rely on any application and relax your effort, and your meditation becomes a similitude — or small portion - of a union of calm abiding and special insight.

Now you have one-pointed uninterrupted meditative equipoise on a non-affirming negative, a clear vacuity that is the negative of inherent existence - the object negated (in the theory of selflessness). For example, "space" is assigned as simply the absence of its object negated which is obstructing contact in relation to the clear appearance between things. This meditative equipoise on the negative of inherent existence is the actual way to sustain a space-like equipoise. Just this equipoise is identified as the "non-mindfulness" or "non-conceptuality" that occurs when calm abiding is induced by the strength of analysis itself.

**Question:** Analysis and diffusion into varieties of thoughts cannot serve as a cause of non-conceptuality, can it?

**Answer:** The Kāśyapa Chapter (Kāśyapa-parivarta) says,

*“Kāśyapa, it is thus: For example, fire arises when the wind rubs two branches together. Once the fire has arisen, the two branches are burned. Just so Kāśyapa, if you have the correct analytical intellect, a Superior's faculty of wisdom is generated. Through its generation, the correct analytical intellect is consumed.”*

Through analyzing by various intellectual consciousnesses-like rubbing together pieces of wood — a view of emptiness-like a fire - is generated. Then all the fuel of the intellect is burned; just as the wood becomes non-existent, so it is said (that your realization becomes) non-conceptual.

(During the eighth state of calm abiding) at the point of non-application (when it no longer is necessary to apply the antidotes to lethargy and excitement), a similitude of special insight is attained. Through meditating and sustaining its continuum you attain a superior pliancy, a serviceability of body and mind that is induced by analytical meditation. It greatly exceeds the bliss of physical pliancy induced earlier at the time of calm abiding through the power of equipoise. When this superior pliancy is attained, actual special insight is attained, and thus you have attained a path consciousness that is an actual union of calm abiding and special insight.

Raising my neck, I (the Fifth Dalai Lama) say that this is the assertion of the scholars who bear the pure systems without confusing fish and turnips. Many scholars and fools, such as some Sa (Sa-skya) and Dak (Dvags), say that when there is thought, the Mādhyamika view is absent. They say that to have meditation on the view there must be no diffusion or collection of the intellect. Some Ge-luk-pas (wrongly) refute this saying that the leaping up of the small fish of special insight is not possible in the unmoving water of calm abiding. Also, many followers of our own (Ge-luk-pa) party proclaim with a loud voice that the initial position (of Sa and Dak scholars and fools) is a final essential of the path.

However, until you gain an actual view of the space-like equipoise, you must — without losing the force of calm abiding - perform an analysis which is a similitude of special insight. If analysis is not done, your meditation will mostly be a path of mere calm abiding, lacking special insight, and you will not make much progress on the stages of the path. (Nevertheless,

discursive analysis is not required at all points on the path; for) it is not asserted in our own system that after the beginning of the union of calm abiding and special insight which no longer depends on effort, the small fish of special insight runs about in the undisturbed water of calm abiding. Therefore, this position goes as an example of flashing the sun of refutation and proof before seeing the sky of the initial position. Their followers, without finding the thought of Tsong-ka-pa's great and small Stages of the Path, are only fooled by the rabbit (who heard a branch hit the water and mistaking it for an imminent disaster told another animal who told another, and so forth, and mistakenly they all went and hid from the disaster). They do not differentiate the fine distinctions of the modes of practice and of appearance to a meditator's mental continuum at the beginning, middle, and end of cultivating the path. Conceiving of these periods as one is like saying that there is no difference in terms of physical youth and frailty in a baby just born and a hundred year old. Therefore, take good heed.

**Question:** Through having performed the practice of a space-like equipoise, what occurs after equipoise?

**Answer:** The King of Meditations Sutra says,

*"Just as mirages, ethereal cities, magical illusions, dreams and meditation on signs are empty of inherent existence, so all phenomena are to be known likewise."*

After equipoise, the appearance of the mere nominality of an "I" in place of the negated object of negation (an inherently existent "I") should be like a magician's illusion. Its mode of appearance in this system is not the realization of the non-truth of illusory horses and elephants or of appearances in dreams. If that were the case, magicians and mature learned people would know the Mādhyamika mode of illusory appearance. Also, the illusions referred to on this occasion do not mean that you — through having practiced analysis of the view — should not identify the various appearances as being this or as not being that.

**Question:** Then what are the illusory appearances?

**Answer:** Realizing that horses and elephants manifested by a magician are not horses and elephants does not contradict the inherent existence of horses and elephants. The glorious Dharmakīrti says in his Commentary on (Dignāga's) "Valid Cognition" (Pramāṇavarttika),

*"Without refuting their objects, they cannot be abandoned. Desire, hatred, and so forth which are related to (perception of) good qualities and defects are abandoned by way of not seeing those in the object, not by an external means."*

(To overcome an affliction) it is not sufficient to pull it out like a thorn; the misconceived object must be refuted. It is undeniable that illusory horses and elephants are seen by an eye consciousness due to its being affected by a temporary or immediate cause of error (a magician's spell). However, even old worldly beings know that illusory horses and elephants do not exist as perceived. Just so, horses and elephants also undeniably appear to a conventional consciousness (to exist inherently) due to innate causes of error, but you must know that from the point of view of their own entities they are empty of inherent existence, like illusions.

Also, it is known that a lion manifested by a magician does not exist in fact, but through having manifestly seen an illusory lion kill an illusory elephant, utter certainty that an illusory lion killed an illusory elephant is induced. Just so, a non-inherently existent person, appearing (to exist inherently) like an illusion, accumulates white and black actions and experiences their fructification. My lama said that inducement of deep conviction about this is a distinguishing feature of the Mādhyamika doctrine.

Inherently existent horses and elephants are refuted by reasoning, and subsequently for a conventional consciousness the apprehension of horses and elephants as really existent is mistaken, like apprehending illusory horses and elephants as real. However, from the point of

view of a worldly consciousness, a consciousness that apprehends horses and elephants as really existent is non-mistaken, and a consciousness that apprehends illusory horses and elephants is a mistaken consciousness. It is with such fine distinctions that the example of a magician's illusions is drawn.

If, having thought that horses and elephants are not inherently existent, you take horses and elephants and illusory horses and elephants as similar conventionally, then you would contradict the meaning of Candrakīrti's Supplement (VI, 25abc),

*"Those objects, which are apprehended by the world with the six faultless senses are truths just for the world."*

You would be denying conventionalities.

Mañjuśrī told the master lama Tsong-ka-pa that it was necessary to value the varieties of appearances. His thought was based on a qualm that, in the future, trainees who did not understand such an essential would fall into a view of nihilism. Thus there are many modes of establishing the existence of appearances in Tsong-ka-pa's large and small Stages of the Path and in his commentaries on Nāgārjuna's Fundamental Wisdom and on Candrakīrti's Supplement. However, the lion of proponents, the translator Tak-tsang (sTag-tshang), (accused Tsong-ka-pa) saying, "He asserts that impure mistaken appearances are validly established through many forms of reasoning." This criticism is seen to arise from the same source of error.

The second part of the practice of the perfection of wisdom is the mode of meditation on the selflessness of phenomena (other than persons). For example, related with all five limbs from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, a "body" appears as if established from its own side without being nominally imputed. (Identifying) this body is the essential of identifying the object negated in the theory of selflessness. Deciding that such a body is either one with or different from the upper and lower portions of the body, or the limbs and so forth, is the essential of ascertaining pervasion.

First, let us consider the position that the body and its basis of designation are one. It is definite that the bases of the designation "body"--head, feet, flesh, bone, and skin--and the imputed phenomenon--body--are different. (Otherwise, the bodies would be many, or the parts would be one.) This is the essential of ascertaining the lack of true oneness (of "body" with its bases of designation).

Then let us consider the position that they are different. After mentally clearing away individually the parts of the body from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, it is impossible to identify a "body." Therefore, aside from a body imputed there by thought in relation to the body of all five limbs, there is no body established from its own side. This is the essential of ascertaining the lack of true difference (of "body" from its bases of designation).

When ascertainment (of the selflessness of the body) appears distinctly, you for the first time attain (a cognition of) the selflessness of phenomena. If there were an inherently existent body related with the form of all five limbs without depending on imputation by thought, (the absurd consequences would be many. Take, for example, an inherently existent pillar.) The mind thinking, "This is a pillar," would have to appear both with respect to a tree with its branches and leaves when still in the forest and with respect to its state after a carpenter had fashioned it. Just so, even though last month's nameless baby is called Lucky this month, the thought "Lucky" would have to have appeared at both of these times when the baby was seen, but it is not so.

Furthermore, "mind" is designated in relation to a composite of many parts, yesterday's consciousness, today's consciousness, and so forth, which are its basis of designation. Also, time is established in relation to a composite of years, months, days, and so on. Also, if the

non-product space is illustrated through many thousands of holes, because each hole has a part of space, "space" is established in relation to their composite. Through the approach of the four essentials the Mādhyamika view can be ascertained with respect to any phenomenon.

Just as Candrakīrti offers in his Clear Words the example that when a chariot is burned, its parts are burned, so, if the self is realized as non-inherently existent, the conception of inherent existence of the five aggregates, which are its basis of designation, disappears. Thereby, the selflessness of phenomena is cognized. Through the force of having ascertained and practiced well the selflessness of the person, it is not difficult to ascertain the selflessness of phenomena.

About the selflessness of phenomena, Āryadeva's Four Hundred says,

*"The view of one phenomenon is explained as the view of all. The emptiness of one is the emptiness of all."*

Also Āryadeva says,

*"He who sees one phenomenon as reality sees all phenomena as reality."*

If one phenomenon is cognized as emptiness (empty of inherent existence), the others are also capable of being so cognized. Therefore, you should practice selflessness with respect to, for example, a form in accordance with the practice of the selflessness of persons, and thereby all phenomena ranging from forms through to omniscient consciousnesses will appear non-inherently existent.

In the practice of the high teachers, several examples are given, but if it were necessary to meditate on all phenomena one by one, the meditator would first have to achieve the knowledge-fund of life without death. If you insist that, at the time of hearing and thinking, making several examples is not sufficient, please forsake the distractions of pointing a finger at your hopes and qualms and sit still in the tight-lipped "meditative stabilization" wherein one is like a hunk of matter.