The Sun Illuminating the Profound Meaning of the Heart Sutra



A Clear and Concise Commentary Discerning Every Part of the Heart Sutra with Laserlike Precision

Chone Dragpa Shedrub

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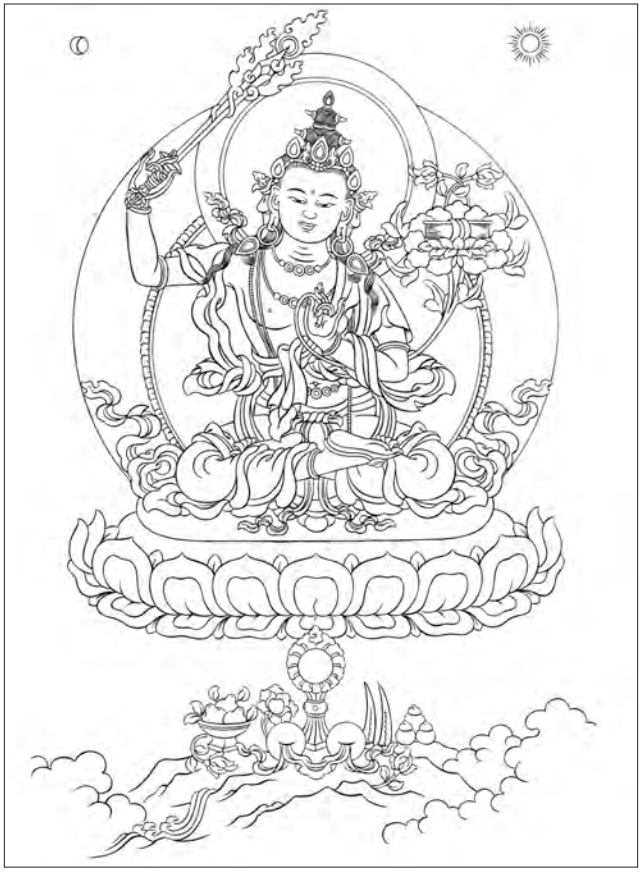
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Mañjughoṣa
The Beautifully Melodious One



ཨོཾ་ཨ་ར་པ་ཙ་ན་དྷཱིཿ།

Om A Ra Pa Tsa Na Dhi

Preface

I prostrate to Mañjughoṣa.

Chone Lama Dragpa Shedrub was an 18th century scholar from the Great Monastery of Chone called The Joyful Place of Explanation and Realization. His commentary on the *Heart Sutra* called *The Sun Illuminating the Profound Meaning of Emptiness* explains the meaning of every phrase of the *Heart Sutra* from the beginning to the end.

At least in Tibetan the commentary is compelling in both its simplicity and clarity as well as its completeness, both the explanation of the Heart Sutra, as well as the additional short explanation of how to meditate on emptiness.

I hope that my translation is at least a reflection of these qualities found in the Tibetan version. Very occasionally I took some liberties by changing the arrangement of outlines, adding an outline, or changing the sequence of a few phrases, to make it more comfortable for the Western reader.

The changes are referred to in the notes and the original outline is added to the appendix.

Occasionally I inserted comments or quotes not found in the original commentary, to aid with the understanding of the text. These are made discernable by being in brackets.

May all sentient beings be happy



Dhi

Mañjughoṣa's essence

Short Biography of Chone Dragpa Shedrub

Chone Lama Dragpa Shedrub was born on the morning of the eighth day of the first month of the wood rabbit year, 1675, in Chone, Amdo. His father was Sung-gyab Bum, a local Bonpo who practiced secret mantra and magic and was known for his writing and reciting skills. His mother's name was Kalsang Men, who, from an early age, was in the habit of reciting the Tara Praises and the White Umbrella Deity prayer continuously.

At the age of five he learned the alphabet and memorized certain texts just by listening to monks reciting these texts at his house. At age seven he could read, write and memorize texts without difficulty. When he was nine he took the initial monastic vows from the throne holder Gedun Dragpa in the Great Monastery of Chone in the tenth month of the year of the pig, i.e., 1683.

From then up to the age of fifteen he memorized the practices of Kun-rig, Amitabha, Yamantaka, different dharma protectors and prayers and fire pujas done at his monastery. At the ages of sixteen and seventeen he memorized sadhanas and ritual texts relating to Guhyasamaja and Medicine Buddha. After this he memorized the *Expression of the Names of Mañjuśrī*[1] and sadhanas relating to Chakrasamvara. Due to having other responsibilities at his home he could not memorize more prayers during that time.

He planned to travel to Central Tibet and study in

[1] Manjushri

Sera Monastic college, and set out on the 4th of the first month of the year of the bird, 1693, at the age of 19 for Tsho-kha. He had to stay there for two and half years because he did not have an opportunity to continue to Lhasa. During this time he studied Tibetan medicine with Tagri Gelong, an expert. Having become reasonably proficient in the general aspects of Tibetan medicine he memorized the *Nerve Sutra* and the *Water Sutra* and also had to examine a few people.

According to his own words: “Just to know medicine is easy I think, but to identify the hot and cold channels I see as immensely more difficult.” During this time he also memorized a text on Vinaya by the earlier Panchen Lama and every verse in forty pages of songs by Milarepa. He said, “Reciting it brought something that looked like renunciation to my mind.”

Then, in the autumn of the year of the pig, 1695, he found a group heading for Lhasa and joined them. Unfortunately, upon arriving in Nagchuka they contracted a sickness and two people died. He also became sick and reflected on impermanence: “If I were to die in this place it would be really unsuitable. I have to make it to Lhasa and pay homage to Jowo. Then I can die without regrets.” When he finally arrived in Sera Me in the eleventh month his sickness cleared away and he started his studies.

He said, “I started to memorize the *Ornament of Clear Realization* and the *Introduction to the Middle Way* on the 20th of that month and by the 20th of the

twelfth month I had memorized both. I did not think of this as special, but others complimented me on it."

Then, from the first month of the year of the rat he formally entered the debating courtyard and also started to memorize a *Collected Topics* text on *Greater Cause and Effect*, but found this a little difficult. His teacher Trashi Pelsang remarked, "You had no difficulty in memorizing the *Ornament* and *Introduction*, but here with this easy text you have difficulty?" Dragpa Shedrub thought it was perhaps due to a lack of previous familiarity with the genre. He memorized subsequently a variety of *Collected Topic* texts, but particularly mentioned a text by Lobon Tsenpo.

He said, "I repeated those forty pages over and over until I could recite them without difficulty." For that month he immersed himself in the study of the *Collected Topics* and became proficient in this subject.

In his own words: "During this time I would engage in memorizing and recitation of texts with great enthusiastic effort and I would regard having to eat or drink as an interruption keeping me from the texts. During this time I was able to recite between two-hundred and three-hundred pages of *Collected Topic* texts."

Over the next ten years he proceeded to memorize a vast amount of commentaries on the *Ornament of Clear Realization,* the *Middle Way, Abhidharmakosha* and Vinaya, more than some ordinary practitioners would read in one lifetime. For example, in his sixth

year he had memorized the complete set of commentaries on the *Ornament of Clear Realization,* both the general and the specific explanations, including the auxiliary commentaries, as well as the specific commentary on Madhyamika, and would now recite them related to each other.

In year seven he memorized the *General Commentary on Madhyamika* and in year eight the *Abhidharmakosha* and the complete Vinaya. In that year he recited also 10,000 Tara praises and 10,000 times the dharani of Namgyalma. In year nine he memorized the commentaries on Abhidharma by the fifth Dalai Lama.

He was scheduled to take his Lharampa exam in the year of the bird, 1705, but could not do so because of the death of the prime minister Sangye Gyatso. The Tibetan government ordered twenty to thirty thousand monks to assemble for prayers in Lhasa for the deceased regent, and suspended the awarding of geshe degrees during that time. On the advice of his teacher Tsultrim Rinchen however, he could attend a separate examination inside Sera, where he did very well. He was not contradicted even once in two days of debate, which was a singular event as even the great scholars usually get contradicted at least once or twice.

The following year he went to Tsang, where he took full monastic ordination from the second Panchen Lama. In the autumn of the year of the dog he entered Gyuto Monastery, where he sat for three de-

bates. He also sat for debates in Gaden and Drepung when the Gyuto monks went there. In Drepung many scholars from the Gomang College debated with him and it became an amazing event. Despite the success in all his debates he did not praise himself.

His plan was to stay in the tantric college for another two to three years to take further teachings, but his turn to become the disciplinarian of his house group came up. The only excuse acceptable to the monastery was to return to one's home country, and so in his own words, "As I did not have the slightest wish to become the disciplinarian, the thought of returning home started to arise in me."

In the spring of the year of the pig of the thirteenth circle, 1707, he joined a party of traders and arrived on the 15th of the fourth month in Tsho-kha, where he stayed for six months. Upon his return to Chone later that year he found a hermitage close to his mother, who had requested him not to go into isolation. He stayed there until the year of the horse, 1714, when he was requested by the king, by the head lama of Chone and other great lamas to start a philosophy college at the monastery.

On the seventh day of sakadawa of that year, having had an auspicious dream the night before, he accepted the request without further ado and stayed as teacher until the year of the tiger, 1722. During those years he built up the program, starting with three years of *Collected Topics,* which he taught mostly from memory.

He remarked, “Because of having trained and clarified the Collected Topics a lot and understood their meaning well, their words and meaning appear as if written in my mind.”

In year three he started to teach the perfections. In 1722 he offered his resignation as principal, which was accepted with regret.

He devoted the following years to composing and publishing commentaries and to his meditation practice, until, in 1727, the year of the sheep, he was again asked to become the principal. In the year of the bird, 1729, the new tantric college was completed and he was requested to become the teacher there. He served then both as teacher and abbot of the tantric college. During that time he bestowed the initiations of Chakrasamvara and Guhyasamaja, and did compositions on the generation and completion stages of Guhyasamaja, Chakrasamvara and Yamantaka.

He also travelled to other places and increased through his teachings the explaining and listening of tantra there like the waxing moon.

He gave most of the offerings he received during his years teaching to the monastery. Some of it he sent to central Tibet for offerings at the monasteries there, to the Dalai Lama and other high lamas.

Despite having studied in Sera more texts than others study in many lifetimes and having excelled in the final debates there, he continued his study while back in Chone.

In his own words, "Having returned from central Tibet I did not stay idle but gave the transmission of the Kang-gyur once. I also repeatedly studied the sixteen volumes of texts that I had brought with me and my understanding of them increased. Especially while serving as teacher my discerning wisdom increased like the waxing moon, as I read repeatedly the great commentaries on Madhyamika, the Perfections, Vinaya, Abhidharma and Prime Cognition as well several commentaries on the Root Wisdom and individual part of the Kang-gyur, Ten-gyur and Lama Tsong Khapa's Works that I felt like studying.

I had read the *Great Treatise on the Root Wisdom* and the *Great Treatise on Prime Cognition* several times while in Central Tibet, but only understood one-third of the meaning. By reading them here again repeatedly in a summarized, extensive and complete manner, their meaning appears to me in the blink of an eye. It is without question difficult to have a complete realization of the meaning of both of them at one time, and to even have a mere understanding is rare even in Ü-tsang. Here one is satisfied with even the thought of having a mere understanding. Having seen an ocean of scriptures, my joy and despondence compete with each other, but I do see that as the main achievement of my life."

He was not only a consummate student but also an enthusiastic and prolific commentator and writer. At the end of his life his writings consisted of eleven volumes and contained commentaries on the *Middle Way,* the *Ornament of Clear Realization,* Vinaya, Ab-

hidharma, Prime Cognition, as well as on many practices belonging to the four classes of tantra.

He also composed writings on Bon, but it is unclear whether these were ever carved into printing blocks. An exhaustive list of the individual commentaries would go beyond the scope of this biography.

In his own words, “When I retired to my room to compose a text useful for sentient beings I would receive auspicious omens. During that time I would also have many auspicious dreams. In one particular dream I am fairly certain I got blessed by Nagarjuna, but as it is impossible not to dream in a dream, I do have a certain measure of doubt.”

He also said, “In short, whatever of actions of body, speech and mind of a buddha one shows, that becomes one’s biography, and out of those three, the action of speech makes for the supreme biography. As it is stated:

All actions are the path; the action of speech is supreme.

Some may think, ‘Well, if his purpose of composing was such, what practices did he do?’

In general it is difficult to find the practice and purpose of the earlier great beings on a person of this age. Although I am mistakenly perceived as having good effort, as one can see some with little hearing and intelligence that engage in enthusiastic effort, I do not think of myself as possessing particularly great enthusiastic effort.

I engaged in few distracting and meaningless activi-

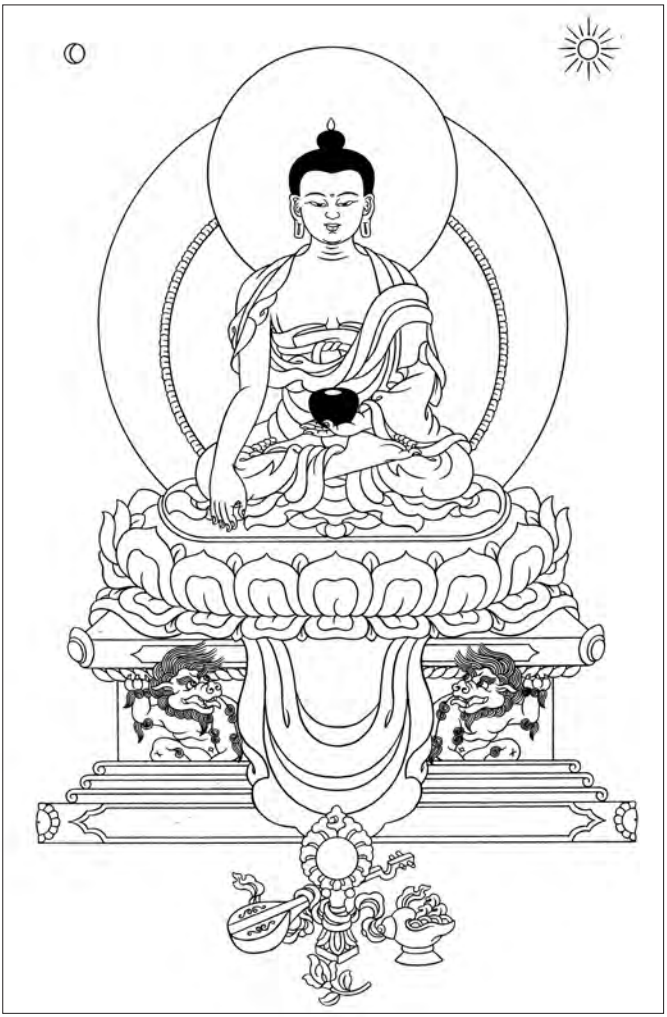
ties as I did little that was not one of the three: continually doing prayers, reading scriptures or composing.

I completed some approximation retreats, and regarding prayers I did those of Guhyasamaja, Chakrasamvara and Yamantaka and others, as well as their guru yogas, and the yogas of some other deities. I would recite the tantras of Chakrasamvara and Guhyasamaja, the *Condensed Wisdom Sutra* and the *Expression of Names.*

I recite many secret mantras and the names of many buddhas and bodhisattvas including requests to them. On a daily basis I am striving as much as possible in the heart points of the lam-rim, i.e., love and compassion, superior intention and bodhicitta, and the view. I do not want to go into greater detail."

He was also responsible for ten statues being erected during his lifetime. He passed on in 1748, the year of the earth dragon.

Śākyamuni Buddha



The Sun Illuminating the Profound Meaning of Emptiness

Namo Guru Mañjughoṣa.

To the one who, having seen profound dependent arising,
Showed it to migrators the way he had seen it,
Who became unequalled transcendental wisdom and teacher,
To the Able One, the sun of speech, I prostrate.[2]

To the one who, upon combining the compassion of all conquerors,
Works to achieve the actions of the conquerors,
Here in the three worlds with the dance of Mañjuśrī,
To Avalokiteśvara, the senior child of the conqueror,
I prostrate.[3]

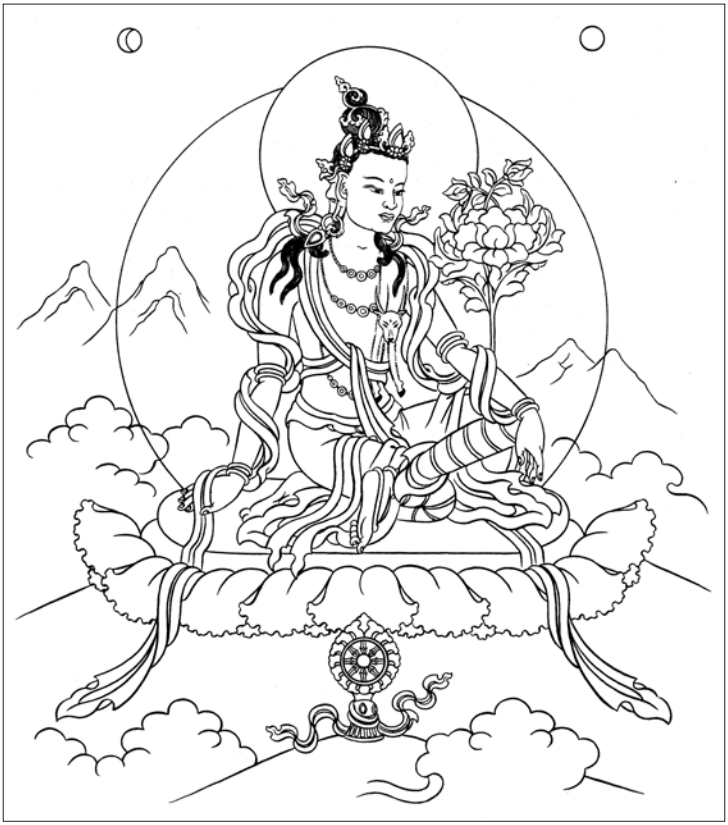
To Sharibu, the supreme of the great wisdom,
To Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti, who explain the profound meaning,
Having paid homage to the second conqueror and his son,
I shall write this explanation of the *Essential Wisdom.*[4]

[2] This is the author's homage to the Buddha.

[3] This is the author's homage to Avalokiteshvara, as bodhisattva, one of the main protagonists of the sutra. It identifies him as a main student of the Buddha, and also shows that he is one with Manjushri.

[4] Shariputra was known for his expertise in wisdom, and is another main protagonist of the sutra. Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti were respectively, the pioneers of the Madhyamaka school and the Prasangika school.

Bodhisattva Mahasattva Avalokiteśvara



Avalokiteśvara is in actuality a buddha, but during the *Perfection of Wisdom* teachings his general appearance was that of a bodhisattva. There can be big differences between the general und uncommon appearances of a buddha.[1]

The General Reason for the Need to Understand Emptiness

Beings who desire liberation should immerse themselves in the Buddha's teachings, which are the basis. Out of these again, they need to specifically strive in the view that realizes emptiness, because this view is the essence and the most critical of all realized dharmas, and the texts showing it are the essence and most critical of all scriptural dharmas.

Therefore, the revelation of the suchness of profound dependent arising is, out of all the teachings, the supreme revelation, and the knowledge of the suchness of profound dependent arising is the most supreme of all dharma knowledge.

Lama Tsong Khapa states in his *Praise to Dependent Arising:*

Emptiness, the essence of the dharma;

And:

Out of teachings, only the teaching on dependent arising,
Out of wisdom, only the understanding of dependent arising,
Like a powerful king in the world,
Supreme goodness is understood well by you and nobody else.

The view realizing emptiness is an indispensable factor to attain liberation. From the *King of Concentration Sutra:*

If one investigates the dharma of selflessness,
If one analyzes it and meditates on it,
This is the cause of the result of attaining liberation,

Through any other cause one will not be pacified.

Also, Nagarjuna:

Those who do not know emptiness
Are not a basis for liberation.
These obscured ones circle
In the prison of the existences of the six migrators.

This important point comes about because one circles in cyclic existence due to grasping at the self and mine as inherently existent, and one becomes liberated from cyclic existence if one realizes their lack of inherent existence.

From the *Summary:*

In accordance with how the childish accept self and mine,
The incorrect thought recognizing this self is generated and disintegrates.
Just as the completely afflicted is taught to be this grasping,
It is taught that the non-perception of self and mine is the completely pure.

Therefore, all the teachings of the Buddha strive to show the emptiness of profound dependent arising either directly or indirectly.

From the *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Actions:*

All these parts
The Able One taught for the purpose of wisdom.

Also, Lama Tsong Khapa:

Whatever you advised
Was done on the basis of dependent arising.

Benefits of Listening to, Teaching and Realizing Profound Emptiness

The benefits of listening, teaching and realizing profound emptiness are taught many times in both sutra and tantra. Specifically, the *Three-hundred Verse Perfection of Wisdom* known as *Vajra Cutter,* says:

Subhuti, having taken merely a verse of four lines from this enumeration of dharma and then teaching it perfectly to others, showing it perfectly and clearly to others, merely this generates more merit-dharma, boundless and beyond renown, than offering all the realms of the worlds found, filled with the seven precious jewels, to the perfectly enlightened buddhas thus gone foe destroyers.

Also, from the *Sutra offered by the Precious Youth:*

Jampel, if listening to this enumeration of dharma with doubt generates more merit than a bodhisattva lacking skillful means practicing the six perfections for one hundred thousand eons, what need is there to mention listening without doubt? What need is there to also mention writing, transmitting verbally, explaining and showing it to others in an extensive manner?

This shows that out of listening to, showing it to others, and so forth, the later actions are of greater benefit than the earlier ones. Although one may not have realized emptiness, merely generating the doubt tending towards the truth will tear existence apart and plant the seed for liberation. This is established by the earlier sutras and also stated by Aryadeva when

he says:

At a time of small merit, concerning this dharma,
One does not generate profound doubt.
Even though, merely generating doubt,
Will tear apart existence.

The perfect benefits mentioned in the *Vajra Cutter* are thought to come about from its subject, actual emptiness, and not from merely reading the text.

Also, all the recitations of the *Heart Wisdom* merely to eliminate obstacles, as done by some, have missed the main point. The Tatagata taught every *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* to generate in one's continuum the view realizing selflessness, which is the main method to attain liberation and omniscience. He did not teach them merely to eliminate common harms. The present custom of reciting it to eliminate harm has come about because previously Lha'i Wang-po overcame demons as he meditated on and recited the *Perfection of Wisdom,* but this is not the main purpose.

The main purpose is to generate the wisdom realizing selflessness to attain liberation and omniscience, to become liberated from cyclic existence and the lower realms, and to purify karma and obscurations. The recitation needs to be for those purposes. Then, as an auxiliary purpose, they can be recited to pacify the harms of self and others if the necessity arises.

In any case, if the motivation is extensive, then the benefit is great, and if the motivation is small, then the result is also correspondingly small. Therefore, it

is important to clarify one's motivation.

In short, as it is said that listening to and contemplating the meaning of texts like the *Vajra Cutter* have extremely great benefits, one should strive to understand the meaning of the extremely beneficial profound perfection of wisdom.

Explaining the Meaning of the Actual Text

The Meaning of the Title

Out of the four languages of India, in Sanskrit this text is called *Bhagawati Pracnya-paramita-hritaya.* When this is translated into English:

Bhagawati means destroyeress with qualities gone beyond;
Pracnya is wisdom;
Paramita means gone to the other side;
Hritaya is essence.

Hence: Destroyeress with qualities gone beyond, the essence of the wisdom gone beyond.

What is the reason for using "gone to the other side"? To say "wisdom gone to the other side" means gone to the other side of the ocean of cyclic existence. This can be related to the actual going or the having gone. In the first case it relates to the action of going, and shows an actual perfection of wisdom on the learner's path as well. In the second case, it relates to having gone and should be related only to the ground of a buddha.

The subject of the text, the actual wisdom gone be-

yond, is a wisdom realizing emptiness. Nevertheless, it and the mother have a nominal fourfold division into:

1. The natural perfection of wisdom: synonymous with emptiness
2. The textual perfection of wisdom: Mahayana sutras showing emptiness
3. The path perfection of wisdom: transcendental wisdom of bodhisattvas
4. The resultant perfection of wisdom: omniscient wisdom

Translator's Homage

I prostrate to the Bhagawati, the wisdom.

Here, *Bhagawati* relates only to the perfection of wisdom and not to a person.[5]

(Gyaltsab Je:

By expressing the qualities of special objects and going for refuge, one comes to be understood as a holy being, and the obstacles to the composition of the treatise are pacified. In the end, one attains definite goodness and other disciples will also follow this example. As a result, they too will achieve all accumulations of goodness.)

[5] This is the homage done by the Tibetan translator of the *Heart Sutra,* which is customary. One purpose of the translator's prostration is to pacify the obstacles to the translation, and another to conform to the actions of holy beings.

Prajñāpāramitā



ཨོཾ་ཨཱཿཧཱུྃ་ཧཱུྃ་སྭཱ་ཧཱ།

The general introduction from the *Heart Sutra:*

These words I heard at one time: The Bhagavan was dwelling on Vulture's peak mountain in Rajagriha together with a great community of monks and a great community of bodhisattvas.

The General Introduction

(This part of the text is called "general" introduction because it is an introduction that is also found in other sutras, and it states the time, teacher, place and audience of the teaching.)

1. Perfect time: *These words I heard at one time:*

These words refer to the sutra that is about to be recited; *I heard* shows that the teaching was personally listened to and that one did not hear it via a third person; *at one time* shows that, while the arhat reciting it had heard other teachings several times, this teaching he had heard only once; i.e., it is difficult to receive this teaching. It also indicates sharp wisdom since the teaching was given only once.

2. The perfect teacher: *the bhagavan*

Bhagavan means *destroyer with qualities gone beyond,* which can be related both to fortune and endowment. From the first point of view, destroyer with qualities means having destroyed afflictions as well as karma and through that also birth, afflictive knowledge and, likewise, other obscuring dharmas. That is why he is called *destroyer with qualities gone beyond.*

From the second point of view, it is as it is said in the *Sambudhi:*

Powerful and pure form,
Glory, renown and transcendental wisdom,
Perfect enthusiasm:
These six are called fortune.

The first point of view can also be related to destroyer and the second to endowed with qualities. In the word *bhagavan*, "gone beyond" is not explicitly mentioned, but it is there in meaning and was added to exalt: He is beyond the two extremes of existence and peace[6] and he is superior to worldly gods.

3. The perfect place: *Vulture's peak mountain in Rajagriha*

Rajagriha, since it was the palace where the king lived; *Vulture's peak,* because to the east there is a mountain that looks like the body of a vulture; *Vulture's peak mountain* because at the top is the precious cave as the head of the vulture, and that is where he resided. It is said this mountain will not disintegrate even during the great fire at the end of the eon.

4. The perfect entourage: *together with a great community of monks and a great community of bodhisattvas.*

A great community of monks refers to hearers and *a great community of bodhisattvas* is just as it says. The meaning of *gelong,* i.e., a fully ordained one,[7] is one acting to move closer to being beyond misery.

The word *bodhisattva*[8] is used because of thinking

[6] A buddha has attained the non-abiding nirvana that is free from the extreme of cyclic existence through wisdom, and that is free from the extreme of the peace of personal liberation through compassion.

[7] Tib. *bsyen par rdzogs pa,* lit. having perfect closeness, having completed the approach.

[8] *Bodhi* means enlightenment and *bodhisattva* refers to a person with *bodhicitta,* the mind of enlightenment that is aspiring to complete en-

about attaining great enlightenment.

The meaning of *community,*[9] i.e. *sangha,* means not swayed by obstacles. The first *great* has the meaning of attaining the great qualities of attainment and abandonment, the later *great* has seven meanings and *together with* means at the same time.

Regarding the seven meanings, from the *Ornament of Mahayana Sutras:*

Greater object, two accomplishments, transcendental wisdom, enthusiasm, skillful means, accomplishment and great enlightened activity.

lightenment.

[9] Tib. *dge 'dun,* lit. those aspiring to virtue.

The specific introduction from the *Heart Sutra:*

At that time the Bhagavan was absorbed in the concentration on the categories of phenomena called Profound Appearance. Also, at that time, the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord, looked singularly upon the profound practice of the perfection of wisdom and viewed the five aggregates also as empty of inherent nature. Then, through the power of the Buddha, the venerable Shariputra said this to the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord: "How should any child of the lineage train that wishes to engage in the practice of the profound perfection of wisdom?" He said that, ...

The Specific Introduction

(This part of the sutra is called the "specific" introduction because it is the introduction that is specific to the *Heart Sutra,* and cannot be found in another sutra. The *Heart Sutra* is what is called "an inspired sutra," because it came about through the blessing of the Buddha, and it is therefore regarded as word of the Buddha even though the majority of the words are not spoken by the Buddha personally. Essentially the *Heart Sutra* is a dialogue between Shariputra and Avalokiteśvara, which was initiated by the Buddha through a blessing, and then confirmed by him at the end as being correct. The main part of the *Heart Sutra* is the answer by Avalokiteśvara to Shariputra's question on how bodhisattvas should meditate on emptiness. The specific introduction explains how this exchange was initiated.)

1. The concentration that blesses: *At that time the Bhagavan was absorbed in the concentration on the categories of phenomena called Profound Appearance.*

At that time shows the characteristics of time; *the Bhagavan* shows the characteristic of the teacher; profound shows the characteristic of the object – emptiness; *concentration of Profound Appearance* shows the characteristic of the object possessor; being absorbed in such a concentration that realizes the profound is to be in meditative equipoise.

Generally, the Buddha Bhagavan remains in medita-

tive equipoise on suchness without arising from it, and so the Buddha did not enter the concentration called *Profound Appearance* newly. This does not preclude however, showing the appearance of entering this meditative equipoise.

2. The person who is blessed: The Teacher, after having entered the concentration, inspires Shariputra to inquire about the profound meaning.

3. The way of blessing:

The cause for the question: *Also, at that time, the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord, looked singularly upon the profound practice of the perfection of wisdom and viewed the five aggregates also as empty of inherent nature.*

Also indicates that not only the Buddha entered meditative equipoise on the concentration *Profound Appearance; bodhisattva* because, at that time, he aspired to the enlightenment of a buddha to fulfill his own purpose; *mahasattva* because he wanted to attain it for the purpose of others; *superior* because he has gone beyond the level of an ordinary being and because he has gone far beyond non-virtue; *Avalokiteśvara* because he views the five types of migrators at all six times with compassion; *lord* because he is the lord of dharma; *singularly* because similar to the Buddha, he looked with wisdom only at the profound practice of the perfection of wisdom, and he views with wisdom also the five aggregates of form

and so forth as empty of inherent existence.

With regard to *ta-o,* if it is translated as it is offered, then it should be the imperative. Although this is a little uncomfortable, since it is mostly like this, it needs to be investigated.

In general, there are the practices of six perfections, but here it refers to meditating on the wisdom that realizes the profound meaning, as the practice of the profound. This was done with the thought that generally view and practice do not exclude each other.

The question and the way of answering: *Then, through the power of the Buddha, the venerable Shariputra said this to the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord: "How should any child of the lineage train that wishes to engage in the practice of the profound perfection of wisdom?" He said that, ...*

Then is the transition from the earlier to the later and shows the time; *through the power of the Buddha* shows that Shariputra did not ask the question merely through his own volition but through the power of the Buddha – it shows the cause; the Tibetan word *tse-dang den-pa* usually means "to be alive," but here it is meant as a praise, as an honorific; the questioner is called Sharibu because his mother's name was Sharika.

Sharibu is not actually an arhat, since it is said in the *Clear Lamp* that he is an emanation of Drip-sel. *Bodhisattva mahasattva,* etc. is as explained before; *said this* indicates the verbal action.

The actual question: *How should any child of the lineage train who wishes to engage in the practice of the profound perfection of wisdom?*

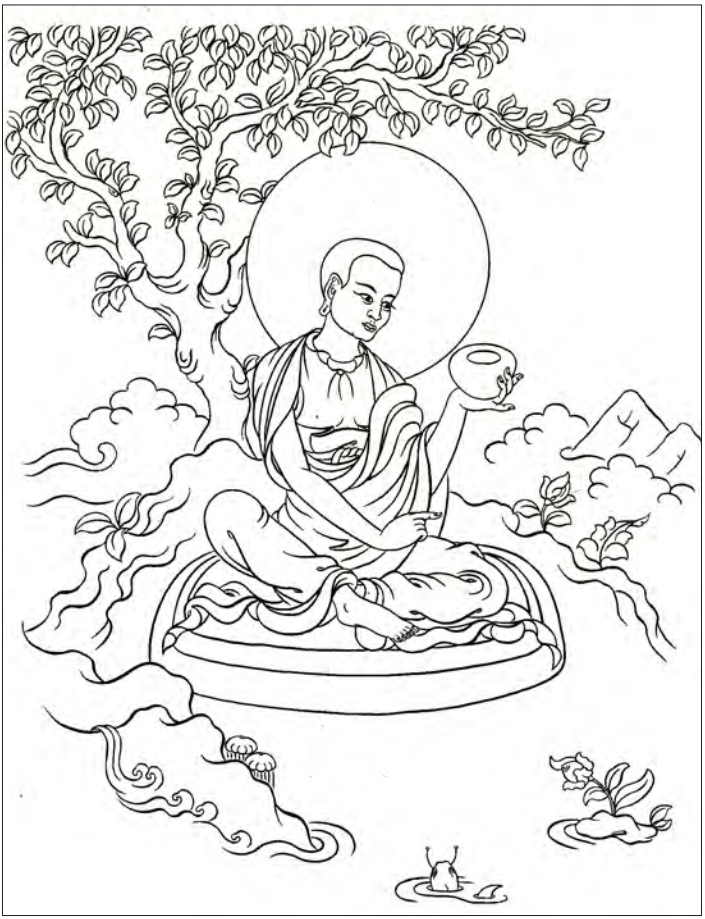
Child of the lineage means to be born in the dharma or enlightenment family.

A learned opponent says, “It is incorrect to have at this point a daughter of good family.” If this view is looked at, then the “son of good family” must refer here to Chenrezig. If the view of another opponent, that the Indian text at this point also says, “daughter of good family,” is looked at, then the words refer collectively to all men and women who wish to train in the perfection of wisdom. In any case, the *any* indicates any men or women or any son of good family and daughter of good family.

The question is asking how a person who wants to train with effort in the profound practice of the perfection of wisdom, who wants to achieve the perfection of wisdom, should train on the paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing and meditation.

He said that is again a transition between the earlier and the later.

Śāriputra



He was one of the two arhat main disciples of the Buddha, and excelled in the practice of wisdom. The other arhat was Maugalyana, who excelled in the practice of emanation.

The way of training on the paths of accumulation and preparation, from the *Heart Sutra:*

... and the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord, said this to the venerable Shariputra: "Shariputra, every son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage, that wishes to engage in the practice of the profound perfection of wisdom, should look upon it thus: To view also all five aggregates intensely and correctly as empty of inherent nature.

Form is empty. Emptiness is form. Emptiness is nothing else than form and form is also nothing else than emptiness. Likewise, feeling, recognition, compositional factors and primary consciousness are empty.

Training on the Paths of Accumulation and Preparation

Transition, as answer to the question above:

... the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord, said this to the venerable Shariputra: "Shariputra, every son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage that wishes to engage in the practice of the profound perfection of wisdom should look upon it thus,"

Most is clear here. *Thus* refers to the mode of training to be explained. Although opponents relate it only to the mode of practice on the path of accumulation and preparation, it relates to the mode of training in all the practices to be explained.

The actual explanation, in brief and detailed:

In Brief

To view also all five aggregates intensely and correctly as empty of inherent nature.

All phenomena of the five aggregates and so forth are posited nominally, when the imputed meaning is not looked for by a prime cognition engaging in ultimate analysis. When the imputed meaning is looked for, it cannot bear analysis.

Hence, one should view not only the five aggregates of form and so forth individually, but also the five aggregates together correctly, i.e., undistortedly, as existing in the nature of being empty of inherent existence. This shows in short the way of training in emptiness. It also shows that emptiness is realized on the paths of accumulation and preparation with

the help of a mental image, on the path of seeing directly, and that on the path of meditation one needs to meditate strongly on what one realized directly before.

Detailed

This part of the text relates the four profound points first to the aggregate of form and then to the other aggregates.

Relating the four profound points to the aggregate of form:

Form is empty. Emptiness is form. Emptiness is nothing else than form and form is also nothing else than emptiness.

This is the way of viewing the aggregate of form as empty of inherent existence. The aggregate of form of the person is only an appearance to the non-investigating non-analyzing nominal consciousness. Because the imputed meaning is not found when analyzed and investigated with ultimate analysis, it is empty of existing from its own side or empty of inherent existence.

For example, like:

- the moon in the pond
- the face in the mirror
- the water of the mirage
- the person in a dream
- the illusory horses and elephants

All of these are only appearances to the nominal consciousness and do not exist as moon and so forth,

from the very moment they appear. The way of looking for the imputed meaning is explained below.

Q: If something does not exist inherently, does it then not become non-existent?

A: It does not become non-existent. While in nature empty of inherent existence, it appears nominally as form, e.g., it is not contradictory for the reflection of the moon to appear as moon while not being the moon at all.

Q: Then, does this mean that, similarly to the reflection of the moon not being the moon, form also does not exist as form? If it is not like this, then what does the example refer to?

A: Although this doubt pertains to a very important point and needs to be explained in some length, I suspect it would be too much at this time and should be understood from the extensive scriptures of Lama Tsong Khapa and his sons. If we explain it in brief however, then it is like this: The way the example and the meaning have to be linked is that, in the same way as the reflection does not exist as the form, so form does not exist inherently.

Further, since phenomena like the reflection of form in the mirror can be understood by ordinary worldly beings trained and experienced in worldly conventions and signs as not existing as form, the reflection is commonly known in the world to be false. Although form does not exist inherently, that it does not exist in this manner cannot be understood by ordinary

worldly beings, and therefore it appears to the consciousness of ordinary beings as existing truly.

Nevertheless, because it can be realized as not existing the way it appears with the reasoning of the Middle Way, it is known as false among Madhyamikas.

Therefore, something that is not known to be false in worldly terms, is established as not existing out of its own nature, although appearing so, by taking as an example something that is known to be false in worldly terms.

Then: It can be established with nominal prime cognition that form, while not existing inherently, does exist as form, similarly to the reflection of the face existing as reflection while not being the face. It can be related to the other examples in the same way.

Q: The illusory conventional nature of form is compounded and the non-inherent existence of form is an ultimate non-compounded phenomenon. Do the two, therefore, exist as being of different nature?

A: No, they do not, because the emptiness that is the nature of the form aggregate is not of another or different nature from the form aggregate. They are both of one nature.

For example, the appearance of the reflection as the moon and its non-existence as the moon are of one nature and not of different natures. That the appearance of the reflection as the moon and its non-existence as moon exist simultaneously on one basis is established directly by worldly prime cognition.

That form and its nature of emptiness are not of a different nature, ordinary worldly beings do not realize, but those that know the Madhyamika reasoning can. If we look at that, then not only is the emptiness that is the nature of form not of a different nature from form, but also form is not of a different nature from the emptiness that is its nature, e.g., like the reflection not being of a different nature from its non-existence as the form it appears to be.

In brief, forms and so forth are of one nature, but of a different isolate, with their nature of emptiness, e.g., like produced[10] and its impermanence being of one nature but of a different isolate.

Nagarjuna, in his *Commentary on Bodhicitta:*

It is not observed separately
From the illusory, because
The illusory is said to be emptiness
And only emptiness is the illusory.
One can never exist without the other,
Like produced and impermanence.

Although it explains in the *Elucidation of the Thought* four reasons why form and its lack of inherent existence are not one, and not of different nature, if we summarize, form and its lack of inherent existence are of one nature but are not completely one, because form is illusory truth and its lack of inherent ex-

[10] *Produced* here does not refer to the object that was produced, but to the self-isolate of the quality. The quality "produced "is being taken as the object, and it in turn is impermanent. The qualities of impermanence and produced are mutualy inclusive.

istence is ultimate truth.

They are not of a different nature because if they were, then they would be unrelated, and it would follow that form would not lack inherent existence. In that way, because all phenomena are dependent arising, there is no phenomenon that does not exist interdependently. Because that does not exist, there is no phenomenon that does not lack inherent existence.

From the *Praise to Dependent Arising:*

Therefore, since there are only phenomena
That arise interdependently,
That is why it is taught that
Only phenomena that lack inherent existence exist.

Relating this reasoning also to the other four aggregates:

Likewise, feeling, recognition, compositional factors and primary consciousness are empty.

In accordance with how the meaning of the example was explained in relation to the form aggregate, also the other four aggregates of feeling and so forth are empty of inherent existence. Although feeling and so forth are empty of inherent existence, they nominally appear as feelings and so forth.

The emptinesses that are the nature of feeling and so forth are not of a different nature from feeling and so forth, and feeling and so forth are not of a different nature than their emptiness, because they are of one nature. This is how these points should be related.

Lama Tsong Khapa in the Three Primary Aspects of the Path:

They who see cause and effect of all phenomena
Of samsara and nirvana as totally infallible,
And who fully destroy any focal object,
Have entered the path that pleases the buddhas.

Interdependet appearances are infallible and empty;
The two understandings accepting this,
For as long as they appear separately,
One has not realized the Able One's intent.

Once they are not separate but simultaneaus
And merely by seeing interdependency as infallible,
Ascertainment destroys any apprehending of the object, then the analysis of the view is complete.

Training on the path of seeing, from the *Heart Sutra:*

Shariputra, likewise, all phenomena are emptiness, without characteristic, unborn; not ceasing, stainless, not without stains, lack reduction and are not fulfilled.

Training on the Path of Seeing

Shariputra, likewise, all phenomena are emptiness, without characteristic, unborn; not ceasing, stainless, not without stains, lack reduction and are not fulfilled.

This shows the mode of training on the path of seeing in the context of the eight profound characteristics, which are contained in the three doors of liberation.

Emptiness

Starting from *Shariputra,* it is saying that just as the five aggregates lack inherent existence, so are also all the phenomena of the twelve sources and eighteen spheres completely empty of inherent existence, and although they are empty of inherent existence, they appear nominally as the respective objects. The emptinesses that are the nature of these phenomena are not of a different nature from these phenomena and the phenomena are not of a different nature from the emptiness that is their nature. One should relate it in this way, which shows the first door to liberation, emptiness.

Signlessness

The specific characteristics of all phenomena, such as suitable to be form and so forth, and the general characteristics, such as impermanence and selflessness, are also empty of inherent existence. Compounded phenomena like forms and so forth, though merely generated nominally, are not generated inher-

ently.

Although they cease at the end of their generation, they only cease nominally, and they do not cease inherently. The stains to be abandoned by those who wish to attain liberation, cyclic existence and its causes, do not exist inherently. Liberation, that without stains, which is to be attained by those wishing to attain liberation, also does not exist inherently. These points show the second door of liberation, signlessness.

Wishlessness

The reduction, i.e., extinction, of the completely afflicted side also does not exist inherently and the fulfillment, i.e., the completing and increasing, of the completely pure side also does not exist inherently. This shows the third door to liberation, wishlessness.

This explanation is in accordance with what is taught in many scriptures, like the *Mother Sutra:*

Form did not come from anywhere
It does not go anywhere
And it does not abide anywhere.

Also from the *Sutra requested by the Superior Elder Woman:*

The birth of the sister did not come from anywhere.

If one understands at this point how all phenomena exist non-inherently in general, then one understands in particular how all compounded phenomena were not generated inherently from the beginning. If one

understands how they are not generated inherently, then one can also understand how they do not abide inherently in the middle or cease inherently in the end.

If one knows this, one can understand the way the whole presentation of what has to be accepted and what has to be abandoned also exists only nominally and not ultimately.

The main argument for non-inherent generation is from the point of view of having been generated in dependence on causes and conditions.

From the *Sutra requested by the Naga King Anavatapta:*

That which is generated through conditions is not generated.

Also, Nagarjuna, in his *Sixty Stanzas:*

Generation in dependence is not generated,
This was taught by the Supreme Knowledge.

Also, by Chandrakirti, in his *Introduction to the Middle Way:*

Because of being generated in dependence on functionalities;

Also, Lama Tsong Khapa:

Whatever is dependent on conditions,
This is empty of self-nature.

Because this is, however, very subtle, those with a small mind cannot comprehend it.

Training in the path of meditation, from the *Heart Sutra:*

Shariputra, therefore, in emptiness there is no form, no feeling, no recognition, no compositional factors, no primary consciousness, no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind, no form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no tactile object and no phenomenon. There is no sphere of the eye up to no sphere of mind and up to no sphere of mental primary consciousness.

There is no ignorance and no extinction of ignorance up to no aging and death, and no extinction of aging and death. There is no suffering, origin, cessation or path; there is no transcendental wisdom, no attainment and also no non-attainment.

Training on the Path of Meditation

Non-inherent existence of the twelve sources:

Shariputra, therefore, in emptiness there is no form, no feeling, no recognition, no compositional factors, no primary consciousness, no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind, no form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no tactile object and no phenomenon.

Non-inherent existence of the eighteen spheres:

There is no sphere of the eye up to no sphere of mind and up to no sphere of mental primary consciousness.

This shows the non-inherent existence of the eighteen spheres, by showing explicitly that the six spheres of the sense powers and the six primary consciousnesses that depend on them do not exist inherently. If one adds up these two, then the six spheres that are the objects, are also shown as lacking inherent existence.

Starting from *Shariputra,* it is saying that for the above mentioned reasons, within the face of the appearance of emptiness to the transcendental wisdom of the meditative equipoise realizing emptiness directly, there is no form, no feeling, no recognition, no compositional factors, no primary consciousness. This shows the absence of the dualistic appearance of the five aggregates to that wisdom.

Within the face of that appearance is also no eye source, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body and no

mental source, i.e., the dualistic appearance of the six object-possessing sources is also absent. Likewise, there is no form, sound, smell, taste, touch or phenomenon, i.e., there is no dualistic appearance of the six object sources.

Twelve pure links of dependent arising do not exist in the perception of emptiness:

There is no ignorance and extinction of ignorance up to no aging and death.

The first *up to* includes the other four spheres of the ears, nose, tongue and body, so it refers to the six spheres of the sense powers. The second *up to* includes the six object spheres of form, sound, smell, taste, touch and phenomena, as well as the five spheres of the primary eye, ear, nose, tongue and body consciousness. Altogether it negates the dualistic appearance of the eighteen spheres.

Here one has the statement: The five aggregates, twelve sources and eighteen spheres do not exist within the face of the appearance of emptiness to the meditative equipoise that meditates on emptiness like water into water.

This is the same as saying they lack inherent existence, cannot bear the analysis of ultimate investigation or saying the imputed meaning cannot be found at the time of analysis.

Although it is here not explicitly related to the object of negation, it is thought to be understood in this way, because it explicitly related it to the object of negation

above, when it said, “To view also all five aggregates intensely and correctly as empty of inherent nature.” But, one can also understand the meaning from the words: “in emptiness there is no …”

Further: *There is no ignorance and no extinction of ignorance up to no aging and death, and no extinction of aging and death* shows that the perception of emptiness is also not mixed with the dualistic appearance of the sequential and reverse links of dependent arising.

The *there is no ignorance ... up to no aging and death* includes the remaining of the twelve links of the afflicted side: composition, primary consciousness, name and form, sources, contact, feeling, craving, grasping, existence, birth and then aging and death.

There is no ….. extinction of ignorance ….. and no extinction of aging and death includes the remaining of the twelve pure links of dependent arising: extinction of composition, extinction of primary consciousness, extinction of name and form, extinction of sources, extinction of contact, extinction of feeling, extinction of craving, extinction of grasping, extinction of existence, extinction of birth, and extinction of aging and death.

It shows that the grasping at the reality of the twelve pure dependent links is reversed within the perception of emptiness.

The four noble truths do not exist in the perception of emptiness by that wisdom:

There is no suffering, origin, cessation or path; there is no transcendental wisdom, no attainment and also no non-attainment.

This shows that within the perception of the meditative equipoise is no grasping at the reality of the four noble truths. There is also no dualistic appearance of the object possessors of path and transcendental wisdom. There is also no phenomenon to be attained, no phenomenon that will be attained, and also no non-attainment of phenomena not to be attained. This shows that, in that perception, there is also no elaboration of that to be practiced and that to be attained.

According to Rongtripa, "there is ... also no non-attainment" means that there is a conventional attainment, but I do not see that meaning here. In short, the meaning is that within the perception of the ultimate by the transcendental wisdom meditative equipoise on emptiness of a learner superior,[11] all dualistic elaborations have ceased.

From the *Condensed Wisdom Sutra:*

Form is unseen, likewise feelings are unseen, recognitions are not seen and intent is also not seen. There is no seeing of primary consciousness, mind and mentality. This is seeing dharma, said the Buddha.

[11] To be a *superior* means to have realized emptiness directly, and to be a *learner* means to be on one of the four learner paths, i.e., from the path of accumulation to the path of meditation. The combination of the two means to be either on the path of seeing or meditation.

Also, from the same sutra:

There is no elaboration of the non-compounded because it is the practice of the supreme perfection of wisdom.

From the *Ornament of Clear Realization:*

Because of not knowing forms and so forth,
It is asserted to be beyond comprehension.

Nagarjuna, in his *Root Wisdom:*

Whatever exists in dependence and relation
Has no cessation and no generation.

Shantideva, in his *Introduction to the Bodhisattva Actions:*

When functionalities and non-functionalities
Do not abide before the mind,
Because there is no other appearance,
It is thoroughly pacified within non-object.

All these quotes have the same meaning. There is a reason why the perception of the direct realization of emptiness by the non-conceptual transcendental wisdom meditative equipoise of a superior is unmixed with the illusory appearances of form and so forth. When this wisdom realizes emptiness directly, it does so by seeing emptiness without any dualistic appearance, by having negated all dualistic appearances. When illusory phenomena appear to the mind, they always do so in a dualistic manner.

However, when ultimate phenomena are realized, they are realized through negating the object of negation, the dualistic elaborations of true existence and

so forth, and they abide without discrepancy between their mode of appearance and their mode of abiding. They are seen the way they abide. Illusory phenomena on the other hand, have diverse dualistic elaborations and are not seen the way they abide.

In general, there are many dualistic elaborations, such as the appearance that sound and conceptual thought are different, the appearance of subject and object, the appearance of true existence and true appearance, or illusory appearances. Here however, if one possesses understanding, then one can see they do not cancel each other out.

There are different objects of negation, such as the object of negation of the reason, the object of negation of logic and the object of negation of the path.

But the final object of negation of a valid reason is: inherent existence, existence from its own side, true existence, ultimate existence, absolute existence, or independent existence. When one says “empty of inherent existence” or “not existing inherently,” then this can also be related to all the other expressions, since they are a mere list of synonyms.

Lama Tsong Khapa in the Three Primary Aspects of the Path:

Further, when appearance eliminates the extreme of existence,
And being empty eliminates the extreme of nihilism,
And one understand the way emptiness appears as cause and effect, one will not be robbed by extreme views.

Attaining enlightenment in dependence on the path of meditation, from the *Heart Sutra:*

Therefore Shariputra, because there is no attainment, bodhisattvas rely and abide on the perfection of wisdom, the mind without obscurations and without fear. Having passed completely beyond distortion they reach the end, nirvana. All the buddhas who dwell in the three times also manifestly, completely awaken to unsurpassable, perfect, complete enlightenment in reliance on the perfection of wisdom.

Attaining Enlightenment in Dependence on the Path of Meditation

The Ability

Therefore Shariputra, because there is no attainment, bodhisattvas rely and abide on the perfection of wisdom, ...

In accordance with the way of training on the paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing and meditation as explained above, starting with form, and up to attainment and non-attainment, there is nothing inherently existing within the perception of the meditative transcendental wisdom equipoise of the great bodhisattvas. The direct realization of this is regarded as the practice of the profound perfection of wisdom and they rely on and abide on it. Through the force of this, the result can be attained in accordance with the explanation.

This is according to one explanation. It is also possible to relate the part before and including "the mind without obscurations and without fear. Having passed completely beyond distortion, they reach the end, nirvana" to the bodhisattva having reached the final continuum. However, I think it to be appropriate to relate this part as a summary of the earlier text.

The Way of Finally Attaining Enlightenment

... the mind without obscurations and without fear. Having passed completely beyond distortion, they reach the end, nirvana.

This part is explained by the dharma lords Rongtripa

and Gungru Gyaltsen Sangpo as, “If one realizes and meditates on the meaning of emptiness, there will be no obscurations of true-grasping in the mind and hence no fear of emptiness. Passing completely beyond the distortion of true-grasping, they go to the level of a buddha, the end that is the Mahayana nirvana.”

This is described by Jamyang Galo as planting the seed of the senseless. He says, “After having abandoned sequentially the two obscurations that are the specific abandonments of the ten grounds, they are free from the fears of the four distortions and attain the non-abiding nirvana.”

The four distortions are the four types of grasping at purity, happiness, permanence and self. This is in accordance with how it is also explained elsewhere. From my point of view, both explanations are acceptable, but I feel more comfortable with the first. It explains the grasping at the selfless as having a self, to be distorted. Therefore one needs to posit self-grasping or true-grasping as distorted, but there is no need of having to relate the distorted to the four distortions.

Some say, “gone beyond,” and some say, “having gone beyond.” I feel more comfortable with the first. It means one has gone to the “having gone beyond on the buddha level,” or one is going to attain that.

In general, some actions at the time of death are called “gone beyond misery,” but here the label of “gone beyond misery” or “having gone beyond misery” is applied to liberation and not as in the earlier

example. Misery refers to the truth of suffering and the truth of the origin, and to have gone beyond means to have abandoned it. In this case, the attainment of nirvana means to have abandoned the truth of suffering, but not necessarily to have abandoned also the truth of origin.

The way all buddhas, who do not learn anymore, have attained enlightenment in dependence on the perfection of wisdom:

All the buddhas who dwell in the three times also manifestly, completely awaken to unsurpassable, perfect, complete enlightenment in reliance on the perfection of wisdom.

The buddhas of the past, present and future, who became enlightened during their own time, all attained perfect complete enlightened buddhahood by depending specifically on the meditation on the perfection of wisdom.

Also shows that it refers not only to two or three buddhas. How can it be understood when it says that buddhas dwell in the past or in the future? There is no fault, because it refers to them abiding in their own time. Perfection of wisdom refers here not to the scriptural perfection of wisdom but to the transcendental wisdom realizing emptiness directly that is a path perfection of wisdom. Such a wisdom arises from the mother, i.e., the *Extensive, Middling* and *Small Perfection of Wisdom.*

Regarding that, from the *Condensed:*

The buddhas gone and not yet come, wherever they reside in the ten directions, the path of all of them is the perfection of wisdom, no other.

One must realize emptiness to attain enlightenment, but not only that, one must realize emptiness if one wants to attain any of the types of liberation of the three vehicles. This is why the view of emptiness is explained as the non-dual door to peace. It is as it is said in the earlier quoted *King of Concentration Sutra,* and also the great Nagarjuna said:

Hearers and self-liberators, and buddhas, the path to liberation definitely relied upon by them, is only you, it is certain others are not mentioned.

Regarding the actual perfection of wisdom, there are many presentations, which differ in whether it is synonymous with the transcendental wisdom realizing emptiness in the continuum of a Mahayana practitioner or whether it is synonymous with the transcendental wisdom realizing emptiness directly in the continuum of a Mahayana practitioner, but they all agree that one needs to realize emptiness. When it says in the *Vajra Cutter* sutra that all attainments starting from a stream-enterer up to a buddha are achieved in dependence on the perfection of wisdom, it means in dependence on the transcendental wisdom realizing emptiness.

This transcendental wisdom exists in the continuum of practitioners of the lower vehicle, but it does not become the perfection of wisdom, because it is not held by bodhicitta and a dedication for complete enlightenment. If that very transcendental wisdom is

held by bodhicitta and a dedication for complete enlightenment, then it becomes the perfection of wisdom.

If the first five perfections of generosity and so forth are not held by the transcendental wisdom realizing emptiness, then they are likened to a blind person, but if they are held by that wisdom, then they are like a guided blind person, or like someone with eyes.

From the *Condensed:*

How could the billions of blind people reach the village,
As they do not know even the path, and have no guide?
If there is no wisdom, then the five perfections without eyes,
Lacking a guide, cannot contact enlightenment.
When strongly held by wisdom,
At that time they find sight and attain that name.

Also from the *Vajra Cutter:*

For example, it is like this: like a person with eyes cannot see when they stay in the dark, in this way should one view a bodhisattva that perfectly practices generosity and has fallen into phenomena. Subhuti, for example, it is like this: like a person with eyes can see the various forms and so forth after it becomes day and the sun shines, in this way should one view a bodhisattva that perfectly practices generosity and has not fallen into phenomena.

Also, by Chandrakirti:

In the same way one person with eyes

Can easily lead all groups of blind people
To their desired destination, here awareness also
Takes the eyeless qualities to buddhahood alone.

To fall into phenomena means to not realize emptiness because of being bound by true-grasping; not to fall into phenomena means to realize non-true existence; generosity is exemplary for the other perfections.

Lama Ösel:

Do not believe all of your thoughts!

Condensed explanation based on the mantra, from the *Heart Sutra:*

Therefore, the mantra of the perfection of wisdom, the mantra of great knowledge, the unsurpassed mantra, the mantra equal to the unequalled, the mantra that thoroughly pacifies all suffering, because it is not false it should be know as the truth, the mantra of the perfection of wisdom is proclaimed:

Tadyatha Om Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha

Condensed Explanation Based on the Mantra

Showing the Greatness

Therefore, the mantra of the perfection of wisdom, the mantra of great knowledge, the unsurpassed mantra, the mantra equal to the unequalled, the mantra that thoroughly pacifies all suffering, because it is not false it should be known as the truth.

The perfection of wisdom is the basis practiced by all the conquerors of the three times. Hence, this path is the mantra of the perfection of wisdom, because it takes one to the other shore of the ocean of cyclic existence. It is the mantra of great knowledge because it destroys all the afflictions of ignorance and so forth; it is the unsurpassed mantra because there is no higher path leading to liberation; it is the mantra equal to the unequalled because it is equal to the unequalled buddhas; it is the mantra that thoroughly pacifies all suffering because it can pacify all suffering and its causes; it is the mantra that should be known as the truth because it is not false, since the perfection of wisdom sees suchness and is, therefore, true and undeceiving.

In the *Condensed* it states the summarized meaning arising from the extensive, middling and condensed mother, from “This perfection of wisdom of the conquerors is a great mantra” to “having practiced this mantra the skilled reach enlightenment.”

Since an instance of special method and wisdom is regarded as the definitive secret and magical mantra, it is not contradictory to posit the actual perfection of

wisdom in meaning as mantra. Here it does not refer to the difference between sutra and tantra. This mantra is a mantra of sutra and does not belong to any of the four classes of tantra.

The Actual Mantra

... the mantra of the perfection of wisdom is proclaimed: Tadyatha Om Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha.

Most scholars explain it like this:

Tadyatha — it is like this, this here;

Om[12] — the seven meanings of fortune, giving happiness, etc.;

Gate Gate — go go, the first, go to the path of accumulation; the second, go to the path of preparation;

Paragate — the *para* means other side; hence, go to the other side of that, i.e., the path of seeing;

Parasamgate — go perfectly to the other side of that; i.e. the path of meditation; *sam* means perfect;

Bodhi Svaha — let enlightenment take root; hence, go to enlightenment, the ground of a buddha.

An earlier Tibetan scholar explains the first *gate* as "go to the enlightenment of a hearer," the second *gate* as "go to the enlightenment of a self-liberator" and the third *gate* as "go to the enlightenment of a buddha." Our own system posits it like that as well.

[12] There are two versions of the mantra, with Om, and without the Om.

ཏྲྀ་ཐ་ཚོ་གཱ་ཏེ་གཱ་ཏེ་པ་ར་གཱ་ཏེ་པ་ར་ས་ཾ་གཱ་ཏེ་བོ་ཏྲི་སྭཱ་ཧཱ།།

Short exhortation and rejoicing, from the *Heart Sutra:*

Shariputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva should train in the profound perfection of wisdom like this.

Then the Bhagavan arose from that concentration and commended the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord, "Good, good, oh son of the lineage, it is like that, it is like that. As you have explained should the profound perfection of wisdom be practiced, and the Tatagatas will also rejoice." The Buddha having said this, the venerable Sharadvatiputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord, the complete entourage and worldly beings, including gods, humans, asuras and gandharvas, rejoiced and highly praised that spoken by the Bhagavan.

A Short Exhortation to Practice the Trainings

Shariputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva should train in the profound perfection of wisdom like this.

From *Shariputra*, it emphasizes that the bodhisattvas should train in the perfection of wisdom as it is explained above.

Rejoicing

Then the Bhagavan arose from that concentration and commended the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord, "Good, good, oh son of the lineage, it is like that, it is like that. As you have explained should the profound perfection of wisdom be practiced, and the Tatagatas will also rejoice." The Buddha having said this, the venerable Sharadvatiputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord, the complete entourage and worldly beings, including gods, humans, asuras and gandharvas, rejoiced and highly praised that spoken by the Bhagavan.

After Avalokiteśvara has finished his presentation, the Buddha shows the aspect of arising from the concentration called *Profound Appearance* and he commends the noble lord Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva mahasattva, on his presentation. That he says good twice indicates that it was very good and that he is happy. Another explanation is that it is for emphasis, in order to generate stronger faith.

That he says "oh son of the lineage, it is like that, it is like that" confirms that what was said is in accor-

dance with the dharma and was said to generate faith in the minds of the disciples: “As you have explained should the profound perfection of wisdom be practiced by the bodhisattvas and not only am I rejoicing in your presentation but also all the tatagatas of the ten directions are happy and rejoice.”

The Buddha having said this, the venerable Sharadvatiputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord, the complete entourage of bodhisattvas and hearers, and worldly beings, including gods, humans, asuras and gandharvas, are happy and rejoice and highly praised that spoken by the Bhagavan. This is the conclusion to generate faith and to praise.

One opponent: If we look at the history of *Sharadvatipu,* it means the son of the one endowed with a teacher; *Sharad* means teacher and *va-ti* means to have.

Q: Since most of the sutra is the direct speech of Avalokiteśvara, how does it become a teaching by the Buddha?

A: In general, there are three categories of the Buddha’s speech:

- Speech spoken by his mouth
- Inspired speech
- Permitted speech

The part of Shariputra questioning and Avalokiteśvara answering is inspired speech, and the commending and rejoicing by the Buddha is speech

spoken by the Buddha's own mouth. For it to be speech of the Buddha, there is no need for it to be speech spoken by the Buddha's own mouth. The White Umbrella Deity practice arose from the Buddha's crown protrusion. Not only that, but all the parts of a buddha's body, such as his treasure-hair, forehead, eyes, ears, nose and so forth, and even the trees and so forth he emanates, can show the dharma.

It is as it says in the *Oceans of Clouds of Praise:*

Crown protrusion, treasure-hair, forehead and so forth,
You teach thoroughly with every part of your body.

The conclusion of the *Heart Sutra:*

The bhagawati, the essence of the perfection of wisdom is completed.

The Meaning of the Conclusion

The bhagawati, the essence of the perfection of wisdom is completed.

Although, in general, bhagavan refers to a buddha, here the perfection of wisdom is referred to as such. The *ti* signifies emptiness and non-generation. It also means mother and so one arrives at the term "mother of the conquerors." This is because all buddhas are born in dependence on practicing the perfection of wisdom. It is not thought of as mother in the sense of a woman being a mother. The meaning of perfection of wisdom was already explained above in brief. *Essence* here means that this sutra condenses and shows the essence of the *Great, Middling* and *Short Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* and all the other *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras.*

The statement that some Kadampas meditated here on the great mother and recited her mantra appears to me as an object of investigation. If it means bestowing an initiation, as according to one opponent, that is a fabrication.

If it is to reverse obstacles, then it has spread in the style of reciting the power of truth at the end. The clapping of the hands is merely an auxiliary. An analysis of this has already been explained above.

Panchen Losang Chokyi Gyaltsen on *Wisdom Debating Ignorance:*

From the crown of the head down to the feet

The continuum of the collected aggregates is not you,
The collection is not and also none of them individually.
All of these are not you as well.
I investigate also with the reasoning of dependent arising,

Which has been established extensively elsewhere.
The collection of parts is also not you,
Nor are they individually and you are also not them.
The earlier and later moments of mind

Are not you and you are also not them.
Thus the earlier and later moments
And their earlier and later moments,
And lastly the earlier and later

Moments of the smallest moment of time, all of these
Are not you and you are not them.
So, when hair tips are split a hundred thousand ways,
And the nature of the mind

Does not exist inherently in any way,
Then your faults are revealed,
The mistaken self image is destroyed,
The root of the mind is cut,

The tree of poisons falls,
The lord of all the mental afflictions
Is put to rest in the burial ground,
The root of all afflictions is cut,

All phenomena of the afflictions and the like
Will never be generated.

Explaining in Brief How to Understand Emptiness with Reasoning

This explanation is according to the Prasangika system. Although they have many ways of reasoning, if one understands the way all phenomena are posited as merely labeled by conception, then the understanding of the lack of inherent existence comes easy.

Regarding the way of being posited by conception: if a rope has the same color pattern as a snake and is rolled up like a snake in a dark place, then the thought "this is a snake" is generated. At that time, neither the color, nor the shape, parts, accumulation or continuum are in reality any instance of snake. That the rope appeared as snake was only due to the labeling by conception.

When, just as in the example, in dependence on the aggregates the consciousness thinking "I" is generated, then neither the color of the aggregates, the shape, individual moments, limbs, parts, accumulation of earlier and later moments or the continuum can be posited as an instance of that "I." It would be contrary to reasoning. Additionally, there is no other phenomenon of a different nature from the aggregates that can be posited as that "I."

The label of "I" is applied at the time of non-analysis and non-investigation. If one investigates with reasoning, thinking, "what is the basis for the label 'I'?," then one does not find anything. At that time, the "I" is revealed as being merely labeled by conception.

Likewise, the form aggregate is posited in dependence on the five limbs of the head and so forth, but none of the five limbs is the form aggregate and there is also no general form aggregate of a different nature from the five limbs. The same reasoning is applied to the other aggregates of feeling and so forth. It is also applied to all other phenomena such as an army, vases, pillars, houses, daily life objects and so forth.

The parts, accumulation and so forth, of vase and pillar cannot be posited as an instance of vase, and there is also no instance of vase that is of a different nature from these. The reasoning is exactly the same.

However, the conceptual thought imputing snake on the rope is a wrong consciousness. The conceptual thoughts imputing person, aggregates, vases, pillars and so forth are nominally concordant conceptual thoughts at the time of non-analysis and non-investigation. The difference will be explained in short below.

This reasoning establishes all phenomena as merely labeled by conception. Hence, the grasping at independent existence, at not being merely labeled, is true-grasping, and if something were to exist in the way it is apprehended by them, then it would be inherently existent, truly existent and so forth.

The reasoning that refutes this object of negation is explained extensively by Nagarjuna in his *Root Wisdom.*

From the *Precious Garland:*

The being is not earth, not water
Not fire, not wind, not space,
Not consciousness. If it is not any,
Where is a person apart from that?

Because the being combines the six elements
It is not absolute, similarly,
Likewise, the individual spheres
Because they combine, they do not exist absolutely.

This shows that the "I" exists only as merely labeled in dependence on the aggregates and that it does not exist inherently.

Being means person or "I"; from *not earth* to *not consciousness* refutes that the person is any of the six elements of the person individually; *not any* refutes that the group of the six elements is the person; *where is a person apart from that* refutes that there is a person of different nature from the aggregates and elements; *because the being combines the six elements* shows that the "I" is posited in dependence on the combination of the six elements and that, because of that, the person or the "I" does not exist inherently is shown by it is not absolute; that, as in the example, the six elements also have no absolute or true existence, due to being posited in dependence on the collection of their individual parts, is shown by

"similarly,

Likewise the individual spheres,

Because they combine, they do not exist absolutely."

From the *Root Wisdom:*

If the aggregates are the self,
Then they will have generation and disintegration;
If it is another from the aggregates,
The definition of the aggregates will disappear;

This also refutes both possibilities of being of one nature with or of a different nature from the aggregates. It is explained in this way in the *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Practices* as well. That it needs to be related in the same way to other phenomena such as pillars and vases is shown in the *King of Concentration Sutra:*

Your understanding of the recognition of self
Needs to be applied to other phenomena in the same way;

Also, from the *Condensed:*

Understand all sentient beings in the same way as the self,
Understand all phenomena in the same way as all sentient beings.
No concept of non-generation or generation —
This is the practice of the supreme perfection of wisdom;

If we explain clearly the way of applying this to objects like a vase:

The vase is posited through the power of the label or conceptual thought. Why? That vase exists needs to be accepted, but the awareness that thinks of that which is bulbous as "this is vase," comes only in reliance on the name "this is vase." In this way, one can

see vase and engage or reject it, which makes the illusory non-deceptive, and the presentation of action and activity correct. When it is analyzed whether the vase, that is sufficient as such, is its water, belly, bottom or neck, then, because the vase cannot be found, the presentation of action and activity becomes invalid.

Similarly, when one wants to meet or see any person, one only sees them in reliance on the name, after it has been pointed out that "this is such and such." After this, when one looks and sees a part of the person's form, then one can say that person has been seen.

If one is then not satisfied with this alone and still investigates whether the person is any of the limbs, such as the head, or any of the parts, or of a different nature from them, then that which is called "being" is not found.

Therefore, all phenomena are established as existing as merely labeled by name and sign, as merely imputed by conception.

From the *Mother Sutra:*

In this way, what is called form is just mere name.

From the *Condensed:*

These phenomena are renowned to exist in mere name.

From the *Precious Garland of the Middle Ways:*

Since the functionality of form is mere name,
Space is also mere name.

When one says “in mere name,” then it does not negate the existence of the meaning of the label, but it does negate that it exists ultimately.

Although it does not mean that the nominal meaning cannot be engaged by nominal analysis, it does mean that it cannot be engaged by ultimate analysis. That is because when the nominal meaning is analyzed by ultimate analysis, then the conclusion of the analysis is that nothing can be found, as was explained earlier.

With this in mind, Chandrakirti said:

Nominal truth should not be investigated.

The unfindability of a vase, etc. at the time when it is looked for with ultimate reasoning, becomes the meaning of the lack of ultimate existence or of the lack of inherent existence of vase. It does not mean that vase is non-existent in general. At that time, one finds that vase does not exist inherently and one does not find that vase is non-existent.

Q: Then, if vases and so forth do not exist inherently, does that not open the door for their non-existence?

A: Although its nominal existence opens the door for its existence, its lack of inherent existence does not open the door to its non-existence, because whether something exists or not is decided on a nominal basis.

Because it is taught in the teachings that phenomena do not exist, are not non-existent, are not both, are not either, then some earlier scholars, following the

literal meaning of this, asserted that phenomena do not exist, are not non-existent and so forth.

Lama Tsong Khapa, in his *Praise to Dependent Arising:*

They are not completely non-existent
Nor do they exist inherently,
This would be independent, like the sky flower;
Then: independence does not exist.

The first line shows that all phenomena are not completely non-existent and the second line shows that they do not exist inherently, because the first shows they exist nominally and the second shows they do not exist truly.

With the earlier, the Buddha eliminated the extreme of nihilism and with the second, he eliminated the extreme of eternalism, and in this way, eliminated the two extremes.

The main reason for being free from the two extremes is because it is dependent arising. Because the meaning of being a dependent arising is to depend on one's parts and so forth, therefore, all phenomena depend on their parts and so forth. Something that does not depend on parts is non-existent, like the flowers in the sky. This is the intended meaning of what was said. Although there are many ways of reasoning to refute the two extremes, the main one is the reasoning of dependent arising.

The glorious Chandrakirti said:

Therefore, through this reasoning of dependent arising,

All nets of bad views are cut.

Lama Tsong Khapa himself:

Through the reasoning of dependent arising,
Do not rely on extreme views it is said.
Protector, this teaching is the cause
For your words to be supreme.

The reasoning of dependent arising is able to negate the two extreme views simultaneously.

The meaning of dependent arising is to exist dependently, to be posited dependently or to depend. Saying "it exists dependently," negates directly the extreme view of nihilism, because when one understands that something exists or is posited dependently, then the extreme of complete non-existence has been negated directly through this.

By negating explicitly the extreme view of nihilism, one negates implicitly the extreme of eternalism. When one is able to understand that to exist dependently or being posited dependently means to not exist inherently, then the extreme view of eternalism is negated.

If one is able to generate the view that negates the two extremes on one phenomenon, then one is able to generate this view also on other phenomena.

Aryadeva:

He who sees one
Is said to behold all.
What is the emptiness of one
Is the emptiness of all.

Also:

That which sees one functionality as suchness,
Sees all functionalities as suchness.

The understanding of all phenomena as merely labeled by conception is also able to refute the two extremes. If it exists as merely labeled, then this eliminates the extreme of nihilism, because one understands the object to exist nominally. If it exists nominally, then one understands that it lacks inherent existence, which eliminates the extreme of eternalism. This is from the point of view of eliminating the two extremes of the object, but it also eliminates the views of eternalism and nihilism on the object possessor.

In general the two extremes do not exist, yet there is a way of falling into the two extremes. In worldly terms one receives a loss if one falls down a cliff. Similarly, if a person holds any of the two extremes, then that person will receive a loss. Hence one refers to that as “falling” into two extremes. However, just by the existence of an awareness grasping at inherent existence, one does not say that the person has fallen into the extreme of eternalism, because an awareness grasping at inherent existence can also be present in the continuum of a Mahayana superior.

How then is it posited? When a person is bound by true-grasping, then one says that the person has fallen into the extreme of eternalism. The meaning of being bound is that, when the person thinks about whether the object exists truly or not, the person does

not go beyond the border of grasping at true-existence and also cannot do so. In this case, one says that the person is bound by true-grasping. Once one has realized non-true existence, one is not bound by true-grasping.

Falling into the extreme of nihilism is also not defined by grasping at the non-existence of something that exists. Aside from a buddha, there is nobody, certainly no ordinary individual, but also no superior trainee, who does not investigate nominal phenomena and has no doubt about the subtle and very subtle phenomena.

In general, if one holds phenomena such as cause and effect, the Three Jewels and the like as non-existent, then one has fallen into the extreme of nihilism. The same applies also to holding the coarse phenomena of suchness and multiplicity, the coarse four noble truths and so forth as non-existent.

To hold some subtle phenomena of cause and effect, or of the world of suchness and multiplicity, as non-existent because of not knowing of their existence, is a fault. Yet, to say that all of these persons have fallen into the extreme of nihilism makes me uncomfortable. But investigate!

The view of an opponent that merely by holding something as existent one has fallen into the extreme of eternalism, and that merely through holding something as non-existent one has fallen into the extreme of nihilism is a great misunderstanding. How could one fall into the two extremes merely by holding that

the Buddha has completed all qualities and has eliminated all faults?

If it exists in the perception of some conception grasping at it, then it does not need to exist in general; truly existent vase does exist for the perception of true-grasping, but it does not exist in general. Similarly, that the rope is a snake exists for the perception of the thought grasping at it as such, but it is not a snake in general.

Q: If the way of relating the meaning to the example as explained above is correct, then similar to the snake not existing on the rope, all phenomena become non-existent.

A: This is an important point and needs to be understood, but I cannot explain it at length here. There is however no fault if I explain it in brief.

While the snake does not exist on the rope, it appears as existing on the rope. Similarly, the “I” and other phenomena do not exist on their basis of imputation from their own side, but they appear to do so. This is relating the meaning to the example.

One does not relate the nominal existence or non-existence of the “I” on the basis of imputation, to the non-existence of the snake on the rope. There is a difference between the two in their nominal existence and non-existence, which is ascertained by nominal prime cognition.

That a snake exists on the rope is harmed by nominal prime cognition and that the “I” and other phenomena exist on their respective basis of imputation, such as

the aggregates and the like, is not harmed by nominal prime cognition. The first does not exist in accordance with worldly nominal existence or worldly convention. The existence of the second is renowned according to worldly convention.

Although there is also no necessity for something to exist because the world accepts that it exists, or for something to not exist, if the world does not accept that it exists, existence or non-existence are posited in accordance with factual worldly labels and renown.

Nagarjuna:

The Buddha taught in accordance with worldly convention,
Not from the point of view of the absolute.

Chandrakirti also:

Just like it exists in worldly convention,

The Buddha gave his presentation or terms in accordance with worldly convention, but worldly beings assert them to exist inherently, and so the Buddha has to debate them on that inherent existence.

From the *Condensed:*

Sentient beings like remaining, and they desire objects,
They abide grasping and are like an unskilled foolish mentally dark deluded being,
The objects to be attained have no abiding and no grasping,
So I debate with worldly beings.

From the *Stacked Jewels:*

Oesung, I do not debate with the world, but the world debates with me;

To be in accordance with worldly convention does not mean to be in accordance with the mere labels of an ordinary individual, but to be in accordance with the nominal prime cognition of ordinary and superior beings.

In brief, from a Sutra:

Similarly to positing the chariot
In dependence on the accumulation of parts,
One talks about illusory conventional sentient beings
In dependence on the aggregates.

None of the parts individually, or as a group, are the chariot, yet in dependence on the parts, the chariot is posited. Similarly, none of the aggregates individually or as a group are the "I," yet in dependence on the aggregates, the "I" exists in a valid way.

This is established with reasoning. Applying this to all phenomena, one should strive to gain a stable understanding of the strong validity of the presentation of action and activity on the lack of inherent existence. This is taught in the sutras as the supreme and highest way, and also in tantra it is taught as such.

From the 15th Chapter of the *Root Tantra of Guhyasamaja:*

Tatagata, how does it exist?
To phenomena's lack of nature
All the suchnesses of phenomena are ascribed.

Arising from the perfection of *Ema*
Meditate on space like space.

The protector Nagarjuna, from the *Commentary on Bodhicitta,*

To depend on karma and results
Upon having understood the emptiness of phenomena,
Is more amazing than amazing,
It is more marvelous than marvelous.

Also, from the *Praise to Dependent Arising:*

That all of these are empty from their own nature
And that this result arises from that,
These two ascertainments do not
Contradict each other but give support.
What could be more amazing than this,
What could be more marvelous than this?

Colophon

Condensing all the important points
Of the conqueror's mother, the wisdom gone beyond,
That known as the essence of the wisdom gone beyond,
The sun shines, illuminating all its intent.

Being in possession of its analysis
Clears the darkness of the views grasping at extremes.
It is also the second sun of good speech
Explaining the profound suchness.
It adheres to the pure school

Of the superior Nagarjuna.

It explains condensed the important points
Of the intent of the second conqueror, Losang.
Whatever white virtue I have accumulated
By striving in this pure method
May all, upon realizing the profound meaning
Attain the state of a conqueror.

In dependence on the strong exhortation of the elder Dragpa Peljor, who is endowed with faith and discernment, the buddhist monk Dragpa Shedrub, who remains with the blessing of the Lamas who combine sutra and tantra in Chone, but who is exaggerated as a Madhyamika logician, by thinking about the highness and benefit the person who exhorts me, I taught this in my room in the year of the iron pig. It was written down by the elder who has faith and power, Kunga Rinchen.

May all be auspicious and virtuous

By the merits of translating this commentary may all our teachers such as His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Lama Ösel Rinpoche, Lama Lhundrub and so forth, remain immutable with us like a vajra, brimming with health, and continually turn the wheel of Dharma of Sutra and Tantra, especially Lama Tsong Khapa's teachings.

The qualities of the Buddha are inconceivable
The qualities of the Dharma are inconceivable
The qualities of the Sangha are inconceivable
The ripening result, brought about through
Faith in the inconceivable, is also inconceivable.

May all sentient beings immediately
Attain the supreme state of enlightenment.

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The Essence of the Perfection of Wisdom
Sanskrit: Bhagavati Pracnya Paramita Hritaya

Tibetan: Chom-den-dema Sherab gi Parol-du-jinpa'i Ning-po

These words I heard at one time: The Bhagavan was dwelling on Vulture's peak mountain in Rajagriha together with a great community of monks and a great community of bodhisattvas. At that time the Bhagavan was absorbed in the concentration on the categories of phenomena called Profound Appearance. Also, at that time, the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord, looked singularly upon the profound practice of the perfection of wisdom and viewed the five aggregates also as empty of inherent nature.

Then, through the power of the Buddha, the venerable Shariputra said this to the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord: “How should any child of the lineage train that wishes to engage in the practice of the profound perfection of wisdom?” He said that, and the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord, said this to the venerable Shariputra: “Shariputra, every son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage, that wishes to engage in the practice of the profound perfection of wisdom, should look upon it thus: To view also all five aggregates intensely and correctly as empty of inherent nature.

Form is empty. Emptiness is form. Emptiness is nothing else than form and form is also nothing else than emptiness. Likewise, feeling, recognition, compositional factors and primary

consciousness are empty.

Shariputra, likewise, all phenomena are emptiness, without characteristic, unborn, not ceasing, stainless, not without stains, lack reduction and are not fulfilled.

Shariputra, therefore, in emptiness there is no form, no feeling, no recognition, no compositional factors, no primary consciousness, no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind, no form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no tactile object and no phenomenon. There is no sphere of the eye up to no sphere of mind and up to no sphere of mental primary consciousness.

There is no ignorance and no extinction of ignorance up to no aging and death, and no extinction of aging and death. There is no suffering, origin, cessation or path; there is no transcendental wisdom, no attainment and also no non-attainment.

Therefore Shariputra, because there is no attainment, bodhisattvas rely and abide on the perfection of wisdom, the mind without obscurations and without fear. Having passed completely beyond distortion they reach the end, nirvana. All the buddhas who dwell in the three times also manifestly, completely awaken to unsurpassable, perfect, complete enlightenment in reliance on the perfection of wisdom.

Therefore, the mantra of the perfection of wisdom, the mantra of great knowledge, the unsurpassed mantra, the mantra equal to the unequalled, the mantra that thoroughly pacifies all suffering, because it is not false it should be know as the truth, the mantra of the perfection of wisdom is proclaimed:

Tadyatha Om Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha

Shariputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva should train in the profound perfection of wisdom like this!"

Then the Bhagavan arose from that concentration and commended the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord: "Good, good, oh son of the lineage, it is like that, it is like that. As you have explained should the profound perfection of wisdom be practiced, and the Tatagatas will also rejoice."

The Buddha having said this, the venerable Sharadvatiputra,

the bodhisattva mahasattva superior Avalokiteśvara, the lord, the complete entourage and worldly beings, including gods, humans, asuras and gandharvas, rejoiced and highly praised that spoken by the Bhagavan.

The bhagawati, the essence of the perfection of wisdom is completed.

Translated by the inept Fedor Stracke

Prayer By Rahula To His Mother[13]

The wisdom gone beyond, inexpressible through words or thought,
Does not generate and does not cease. Its space-like nature
Is the object known exclusively by individual transcendental wisdom —
I prostrate to the mother of the three time conquerors.

Meaning

The wisdom gone beyond, i.e., transcendental wisdom directly realizing objectless emptiness, is inexpressible through spoken words or conceptual thought, and takes one beyond samsara, makes one arrive on the other side, i.e., nirvana, and stay there.

It does not generate out of its nature and therefore does not cease out of its nature, and its essential space-like nature, its lack of existence from its own side, is the object known exclusively by transcendental wisdom in individual meditative equipoise.

I prostrate to the transcendental wisdom directly realizing emptiness, the mother that generates all the conquerors of the three times.

Colophon

This prayer was translated from the Tibetan by the inept Fedor Stracke, who also attempted to write a bit of commentary to the lines.

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[13] This prayer is recited by the monks in the three great monasteries of Sera, Drepung and Ganden before sutra recitation.

[1] Panchen Losang Chokyi Gyaltsen:

Compassionate prayers and the wishes
Of those to be subdued — due to this collection of causes,
The truth body, enjoyment body, emanation body,
As well as the grounds, paths, qualities, activities and so forth,
Exist, but only in mere appearance.
They are not seen as existing in reality.
Hence, that a self exists in reality
Is even more mistaken than mistaken.
Therefore, from now on, at all times,
I shall abandon you, the mistaken self-grasping.
Without generating any aversion,
Go wherever you have to go to.

Venerable Choden Rinpoche:

Wisdom replies, “The *dharma kaya* that never arises from emptiness is the transcendental wisdom of bliss and void in single pointed equipoise on emptiness. Due to the compassion of Shakyamuni Buddha and the prayers of the disciples it arises as a physical body in accordance with the wishes of the disciples.

Due to the presence of these three conditions of compassion, the disciple’s prayers and wishes, it arises in the aspect of the emanation body, enjoyment body, the twenty-seven enlightened activities and so forth. Due to the wishes of the disciples to some it appears in the aspect of Yamantaka, for others again in the aspect of a bikkhu as Shakyamuni Buddha. To yet others, to which he cannot appear like this, he appears as the virtuous friend.

From Shakyamuni Buddha's own side exists absolutely no thought of “I shall appear like this to this person,” or “it is unsuitable to appear to that person like that.” For example, when the moon shines in the sky, it appears different in different bodies of water. The moon appears in different grades of clarity according to the different purities of the water. But the moon from his side has no thought of “Here I shall appear clearer and here not,” but relative to the clarity of the water the moon appears in some bodies of water clearer as in others. Similarly, also Shakyamuni Buddha appears different to different disciples according to their minds and dispositions.

The qualities of the grounds and paths, i.e., the ten grounds and five paths contained in the disciples' continuums, and the enlightened activities and so forth, do not at all exist from their own side but are a mere appearance to conceptual thought, a mere imputation by name. They are not seen as existing in meaning. Any virtue that is generated in the disciples' continuums is regarded as enlightened activity of the buddhas.

All phenomena, starting from the dharmas on the level of enlightenment down to the phenomena contained in cyclic existence, they all do not exist truly, they do not have a self, they do not exist from their own side. If one asks how they exist, they exist as mere appearances to thought, as mere imputations by name, and in no other way."

Because our mind is habituated to grasping at a self since beginningless time, it is in the moment difficult to imagine this, and one should make prayers to realize it as soon as possible.

The wisdom realizing selflessness says to the self-grasping: "Hence, as all phenomena lack existence from their own side and exist only as appearances to conceptual thought, as mere imputations by name, the grasping at a real self by you, the self-grasping, is so mistaken that it is mistaken beyond mistaken.

Therefore, from now on, as I have identified you as mistaken, I shall abandon you at all times. Therefore leave and go wherever you have to go to, without generating any aversion to me."

Form is empty, emptiness is form, ...

Chone Lama Dragpa Shedrub was an 18th century scholar and yogi from the Great Monastery of Chone called The Joyful Place of Explanation and Realization.

His commentary on the Heart Sutra called The Sun Illuminating the Profound Meaning of Emptiness explains the meaning of every phrase of the Heart Sutra, from the beginning to the end.

The commentary is compelling in both its simplicity and clarity as well as its completeness, both the explanation of the Heart Sutra, as well as the additional short explanation of how to meditate on emptiness. One could almost call this book Heart Sutra Made Easy, were it not for the profound subject matter.



... emptiness is nothing else than form, ...

... and form is nothing else than emptiness.

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Translated by Ven Fedor Stracke