

The Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness

Meditation on Stages I-IV

REALLY LOOKING



Online Program, September 2021

Teachings by Jim Scott

REALLY LOOKING

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THE SONGS

Step 1

1. Light Offering

May the shining light of this candle flame we offer
To the ten directions' Victors and their Heirs
Remove the darkness of all beings' ignorance;
May the shining light of knowledge and wisdom blaze!

Spoken by Khenchen Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, translated and arranged by Jim Scott

2. An excerpt from Eight Flashing Lances

Self-concern's ambitions are exhausted
Uplifting waves of love without contention
Tireless, relentless, not self-seeking
These are three which make compassion fully free
Like a lance that flashes free in the open sky

*Composed by the lord Götsangpa
Under the guidance of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, translated and arranged by Jim Scott, Kamalashila, Schloss Wachendorf, Germany, 7 Aug. 1996*

3. The Importance of View

A practitioner who meditates without the view,
What could a meditator like this be likened to?
To someone who's been blind from the instant of their birth,
Who is wandering around in a trackless wilderness

Verse from the Song of Lodro Thaye Translated and arranged by Jim Scott, Pullahari, Nepal, 2002

4. The Problem with Self

Wherever there is self, there's a sense of other too;
With self and other, anger and attachment follow too.
And, through complete involvement in everything like this,
All the problematic states in all their guises manifest.

Verse from the Commentary on Valid Cognition by Dharmakirti Translated and arranged by Jim Scott, Karme Choling, November 2002

5. Words of Dakini Niguma

What throws you down into samsara's deep ocean
Are these thoughts of attachment and anger.
But realize they don't truly exist,
And all is an island of gold!

The Wisdom Dakini Niguma

6. Prayer of Solemn Commitment

Lord Naropa's lineage son of the freedom path
Please bless this beggar to stay in mountain retreats

With the demon of worldly distraction not distracting
May meditative concentration grow

Without getting caught in attachment to shamatha's pool
May vipashyana's flowers burst into open bloom

With elaboration's stress and strain not stirring
May the foliage of simplicity spread its leaves

With no germ of double mind in my retreat
May the fruit—experience and realization—mature

With the demon family powerless to obstruct
May I gain final certainty understanding my mind

On the path of skillful means, uncurbed by doubts
May the son find a way to follow in his father's footsteps

Compassionate master, the essence of Akshobhya
Please bless this beggar to stay in mountain retreats

Translated and arranged by Jim Scott, Tibetan page 149

Songs for Step 2

7. Arousing Bodhicitta

An excerpt from the *Thirty Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva*

From beginning-less time, my mothers have cherished me.
What's the point of my happiness, if they are left suffering?
So, in order to liberate the countless numbers of sentient beings,
To arouse bodhicitta is a bodhisattva's practice.

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8. Excerpt from *The Essence of Clear Light Sunshine:* *A Commentary on The Three Nails*

Namo Guru Hasa Vajra Ye!
All appearances are mind—what's the point of this nail?
Confused appearances come from one's habits of mind,
And all appearances: the energy and play of clear light,
So these are all mind and that's the deep point of this nail.

Mind itself is clear light—the point of this nail's hard to get:
Mind's true way of being can't be known through elaboration;
And its essence: completely pure from the very start—
This, the point so profound—clear light, inexpressible.

Composed by Khenchen Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche. Trans. and arranged by Jim Scott, March 12, 2021

9. Six Questions

Mind has even more projections than there are dust motes in the sun;
Is there an accomplished yogi here or a yogini
Who sees the appearance of things laid bare in the very bed where it lies?

The basic nature of things is not produced by cause or condition;
Is there an accomplished yogi here or a yogini
Who gets to the very bottom of tis, cuts down to its very root?

Mind's impulse to sudden thought cannot be stopped by hundreds with spears;
Is there an accomplished yogi here or a yogini
Who sees that attachment can dissolve, be freed in and of itself?

The movement of thinking mind cannot be locked in an iron box;
Is there an accomplished yogi here or a yogini
Who sees that discursive mind itself is empty in itself?

The sensory enjoyments even wisdom deities do not shun;
Is there an accomplished yogi here or a yogini
Who's able to see through the transparency of the process of consciousness?

What about the appearance of the six kinds of objects that go with the consciousnesses—
Not even the hands of Victorious Ones can put a stop to that;
Is there an accomplished yogi here or a yogini
Who can see there is no object there behind the appearances?

Translated and arranged by Jim Scott, Tibetan page 270

10. Excerpt from *Twenty-Seven Cases of Dissolution*

Objects seeming outside, a delusion of your mind
And through examination of appearances' traits
Appearance and its emptiness you realize are not two

A view involving dualism forms delusion's base
There is no view or theory in reality itself
And all of these examples show the character of mind

Consider well examples illustrating space's traits
Their point will be quite clear to you, pure being's reality
Then view for you is look into what's real, past thinking mind

In the depths of meditation, without wandering, just rest
Keep a flow of natural conduct flowing, don't let it get lost
For fruition toss all terms away, along with hope and fear

A Song of Dharma's Definitive Meaning Sung to a Female Spirit Translated and arranged by Jim Scott. Tibetan page 240

Songs for Steps 3 and 4

11. Giving Rise to Bodhicitta

The precious supreme bodhicitta
Where it has not arisen, may it arise
And where it has arisen, may it never decline
But continue increasing further, further and beyond

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12. Excerpt from *The Profound Definitive Meaning*

SUNG ON THE SNOWY RANGE

For the mind that masters view, the emptiness dawns
In the content seen, not even an atom exists
A seer and seen, refined until they're gone
This way of realizing view, it works quite well

Under the guidance of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, translated and arranged by Jim Scott. Tibetan text at page 222.

13. Listening, Reflecting, And Meditating—An Aspiration

At the beginning, when by listening we cut through our superimpositions,
May we not be deceived by biased thoughts about friends and enemies;
May we not follow others blindly, nor speak without a basis for our words;
And may our knowledge of the true nature of reality increase.

And in between, at the time of gaining certainty through reflection,
May we not be deceived by thoughts that any object appearing and the label are the same;
May our own analyses not bind our own mindstream,
And may we gain certainty in the true nature, which is equality.

At the conclusion, when we're turning all this into experience, in meditation,
May we not be deceived by outer distractions of perceiver and perceived;
On the inside, may we not get bound up in thoughts of proofs and refutations,
But may we rest right within the native state, relaxing naturally.

Composed by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche. Trans. and arranged for song by Jim Scott. Copyright 2021, Jim Scott

14. Excerpt from Shantideva's *Prasangika Song* with Concluding Verse by Khenchen Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche

To get into the habit of emptiness
Is the way to break the habit, substantial things,
But the habit developed of thinking of it as nothing
Must sooner or later be given up as well.

At the point when there is neither thing nor non-thing
To occupy a place before the mind,
At that point there is no projected image—
This lack of reference point is perfect peace.

Whatever consciousnesses see or hear
Is not at this point something to be stopped.
Here, it is what causes beings to suffer,
The thought of true existence, to be dropped.

May the rain of my contentment's falling raindrops,
Descending mercifully from merit's cloud,
Pacify some day their aching torment
And cool the burning fires of their pain.

May the merit gathered here with so much care,
In a way that's free of focal referent,
Someday bring me to teach the emptiness
To all those lost in what they focus on.

*Because they are not real, they are not empty;
Because there is no thing, there is no non-thing;
Free of speculation in pure being,
Just rest relaxed without a reference point.*

From Shantideva's *Bodhicaryavatara* (Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life), with concluding verse by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche.
Translated and arranged by Jim Scott, Halscheid, Germany, 1992

TWO VERSES ON THE SAMADHI OF ILLUSION FROM *THE JEWEL ORNAMENT OF LIBERATION*

15. From *The Sutra of the Noble Collection*

Know the five skandhas are like an illusion
Don't separate the illusion from the skandhas
Free of thinking that anything is real —
This is perfect wisdom's conduct at its best!

16. From *The King of Samadhi Sutra*

All the images conjured up by a magician
The horses, elephants and chariots in his illusions
Whatever may appear there, know that none of it is real
And it's just like that with everything there is!

Under the guidance of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, translated by Ari Goldfield, August 15, 1999. Translation copyright 2012, Ari Goldfield.

17. From Nagarjuna's *Knowledge Fundamental to the Middle Way*

Like a dream, like an illusion,
Like a city of gandharvas,
That's how birth, and that's how living,
That's how dying are taught to be.

18. Eight Kinds of Mastery

Not separating appearance and emptiness
This is view as mastered as it can be

Not seeing dreams and day as differing
This is as meditation as it can be

Not bliss and emptiness seen as differing
This is conduct as mastered as it can be

Not seeing the here and hereafter as differing
This is their nature as mastered as it can be

Not seeing mind and space as differing

This is as dharmakaya as it can be

When pleasure and pain are not two different things

This is instruction as mastered as it can be

Not seeing affliction and wisdom as differing

This is as full as realization can be

Not seeing your mind and buddha as differing

This is as full a fruition as it can be

Translated and arranged by Jim Scott, Tibetan page 391

Concluding Songs and Verses for all 4 steps

19. Nagarjuna's Dedication

May we excellently ride the horse of excellence

And guide it with the bridle of aspiration prayer

And by urging it along with the whip of diligence

May we travel to the land of liberation.

Under the guidance of Drubpon Khenpo Lodro Namgyal Translated and arranged by Jim Scott

20. Impartial Aspiration Prayer

All you sentient beings I have a good or bad connection with,

As soon as you have left this confused dimension,

May you be born in the West, in Sukhavati

And once you're born there, complete the bhumis and the paths.

Composed by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, August 29, 1999. Translated and arranged by Jim and Birgit Scott

21. Milarepa's Dedication

May we live long and be free of illness,

Enjoy freedom, great resources, and happiness.

Next life, may we meet in the pure realm,

May we always practice Dharma and benefit beings.

Sung by Milarepa. Under the guidance of Dechen Rangdrol (Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche), translated by Ari Goldfield, Guayrapa Asociación Cultural, Tarragona, Spain, May 3, 2003. Translation copyright 2012, Ari Goldfield.

22. *Lamp of Wisdom Concluding Verses*

All this virtue that effort has accumulated,
If not dedicated to perfect enlightenment,
Will be destroyed by anger and so forth.
So seal this virtue with non-referential dedication again and again.

Aspiration prayers follow the dedication:

“To benefit all sentient beings, including my enemies,
May I be born as animals, people, gods, demi-gods, and in other realms too—
In all sorts of bodies may I tame beings,” I pray.

By the power of completely perfecting the two accumulations in this way,
May all beings be filled with love for one another,
May they enjoy peaceful prosperity without strife,
And may auspiciousness light up the whole universe!

Composed extemporaneously at Kagyu Thubten Chöling, Wappingers Falls, New York, October 18, 1998, by the one only called “Khenpo”, Tsultrim Gyamtso. Translated by Ari Goldfield. Translation copyright 2012, Ari Goldfield.

23. *Self-Appearing Illusion*

All these forms, appearance emptiness
Like a rainbow with its shining glow
In the reaches of appearance emptiness
Just let go and go where no mind goes

Every sound is sound and emptiness
Like the sound of an echo's roll
In the reaches of sound and emptiness
Just let go and go where no mind goes

Every feeling is bliss and emptiness
Way beyond what words can show
In the reaches of bliss and emptiness
Just let go and go where no mind goes

All awareness, awareness emptiness
Way beyond what thought can know
In the reaches of awareness emptiness
Let awareness go, oh, where no mind goes

*Composed by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche in the Garden of Translation near the Boudha Stupa in Nepal.
Translated and arranged by Jim Scott, March 1998*

24. Long Life Supplication for Khenchen Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche

You who shine with the radiance of intelligent skillful play
You who are a fertile field of excellent qualities
You manifest an ocean of Dharma, with each point clear and distinct
In all ten directions the melodious sound of your song reverberates
You sing the songs of the deep meaning of the view and meditation
Genuine spiritual friend, may your feet continue their playful dance
We beg you to always remain

*This supplication for the long life of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso, the unequaled spiritual friend, I make out of my own devotion to this genuine master, and also in response to the repeated requests of many groups of his Eastern disciples, who possess the jewel of faith. On the topmost floor of the Gyuto Ramoche Temple in the noble land of India, the one fortunate to receive the healing nectar of his excellent teachings, Karmapa Orgyen Trinle Palden Wangi Dorje, makes this supplication with a clear mind, and may its aspiration be realized in precisely the way it has been made.
At the gracious bidding of Dzogchen Ponlob Rinpoche, Translated and arranged by Jim Scott, Warsaw, Poland, October 10, 2010*

25. Long Life Prayer of Amassed Blessing Clouds for Jim Scott

Great Amitayus, who leads us from samsara,
saving those suffering without protection,
Vanquisher of all untimely death,
we bow to the Buddha of Boundless Life.

Long mantra:

***Om namo bhagawate / aparamita ayurjana subinitsita tedzo radzaya / tathagataya / arhate
samyak sambudhaya / teyatha / Om punye punye mahapunye / aparimita punye / aparimita punye
jana sambharo patsite / Om sawa samskara parishuddha dharmate gagana samudgate sobhawa
bishuddhe mahanaya paiware svaha***

Brief mantra:

Om a mahrani dziwentiye svaha Recite as much as possible, then:

We supplicate to the Protector Amitayus,
who bestows the siddhi of longevity:
Please grant your blessings for Jim's good steady life,
master of two tongues, eyes bright with insight.

Giver of life, eyes wide with compassion, goddess White Tara,
wish-fulfilling wheel, we pray to you:
Grant a kalpa's worth of life to Lotsawa,
who propagates the teachings.

Wisdom goddess who bestows supreme life,
we pray at your feet, victorious Namgyalma:
Please bless the speaker of Dharma in two tongues,
source of benefit and joy, Vajra essence.

With faithful minds of longing, we supplicate
the refuge of the Three Jewels and Vast Three Roots:
We welcome treasure of Dharma like the dawn
and ask for Lotsawa to stay healthy and firm.

By the blessings of refuge, ocean of compassion,
by the power of unchanging truth of pure being,
and by the power of our pure motivation;
may these aspirations without fail be quickly fulfilled.

Upon request by the students of the Rigpe Dorje Institute to write a long-life prayer for the revered senior translator Jim Scott, these supplication prayers and words of aspiration adorning the three deities of longevity were composed with virtue on February 27, 2011 by Lodrö Namgyal, who bears the title Khenpo in name only.

THE MEDITATION PROCEDURE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE GUIDELINES FOR MEDITATION BASED MAINLY ON *THE STAGES OF SHAMATHA AND VIPASHYANA MEDITATION* PRESENTED IN CHAPTER EIGHT, PART ONE OF *TREASURY OF KNOWLEDGE* BY JAMGON KONGTRUL LODRO THAYE

The Brief Presentation

A: How Does One Practice Samadhi

B: Why Is it Necessary to Practice It?

A: One practices samadhi by focusing inwardly on what has been understood through the superior knowledge arising from listening and reflecting.

B: This is necessary because, no matter how deeply you study the teachings and reflect on them, if you do not also meditate, you will not be freed from bondage, just as a farmer needs to make use of his crop, since no matter how good it is, if the food produced is not eaten, it will not dispel hunger.

A Slightly More Detailed Explanation of The Samadhi's Two Main Ingredients, Shamatha and Vipashyana

Shamatha consists in mind resting one-pointedly on its focal object.

And vipashyana consists in thoroughly analyzing specific phenomena with superior knowledge, thus discovering their actual nature.

As Kamalashila states in his *Stages of Meditation (Bhavanakrama)*: “Having calmed distraction towards external objects, one abides in a state of mind which is supple and delights in focusing inwardly in a natural and uninterrupted way; this is called shamatha. While focused within this calm, stable mind, the analysis revealing its suchness is called vipashyana.”

The Etymology of These Two

Briefly stated, the Sanskrit “shama” means “calm” and “tha” means “abiding”. It is called this because distraction towards objects such as forms, etc., has been calmed and the mind abides one-pointedly in this peaceful state.

Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche emphasizes that joy is an important aspect of the meditation. He points out that “**calm**” also means **peaceful**, which carries with it a sense of **equanimity** (because, for the mind poised in the state of balance which is shamatha, there is nothing causing a disturbance) and **joy** (because there is no disturbance being caused).

The term “vipashyana” is a contraction of “vi-shesha-pashyana”, where “vishesha” means “special” or “superior” and “pashyana” means “seeing” or “observing”. So vipashyana means “superior seeing”. It is thus called because it is a seeing of what is superior, i.e. the nature of any phenomenon being observed. It sees this with the eye of wisdom.

As Jamgon Kongtrul states here, “Having calmed distraction, mind completely settles, and the superior nature is seen with the eye of wisdom.”

The Necessity of Both

Both are needed, because the true nature is realized by bringing both together. This is just as in the example of a candle flame unmoved by wind. If you are sitting in a room which is very dark except for the light of a single candle flame, the light is particularly bright and clear when the flame is unmoved by wind; but when that same light becomes disturbed by an agitation of the air, the flame flutters and, as a result, no longer illuminates as clearly and sharply.

The flame here is the example for vipashyana, and the undisturbed air corresponds to shamatha.

When there is both the superior knowledge which is certain and unmistakable concerning the way things actually are, as well as concentration which does not wander from that, the true nature is seen clearly.

However, if one has undistracted concentration but lacks the superior knowledge that realizes the true nature, it will not be possible to even **see** that nature.

Also, if one has the view which comprehends selflessness but lacks the samadhi in which the mind rests on that one-pointedly, it will not be possible to see what is actually there clearly and vividly.

That is exactly why these two must be combined, just as all the sutras and tantras state.

The progressive order

The progression from shamatha to vipashyana is such that the one depends on the other, like the oil and the flame of an oil lamp.

Shantideva’s *Bodhisattvacharyavatara* (*Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct*) says it like this: “Having understood that the afflictions are completely overcome by vipashyana that fully incorporates shamatha, one begins by practicing shamatha.”

Thus, having first gained some ability in maintaining shamatha, one proceeds to practice vipashyana.

Even though it is vipashyana that actually sees the nature of mind as it is by observing it through discriminating knowledge, that seeing can only occur when the mind has been made workable through shamatha. That is why the practice begins with shamatha.

The Basis for the Analytical and Resting Meditation: Step 1 — Selflessness

THE LAMP OF WISDOM: EXCERPTS FROM VERSES ON MEDITATING ON SELFLESSNESS

To the unequalled Teacher, the perfect Buddha,
To the Lord of perfect wisdom, the noble Manjushri, and all the others—
To the holders of definitive meaning's lineage, I prostrate.
Here I will briefly explain the stages of meditating on selflessness.

The five aggregates are not the individual's self:
There is no self that is the same as the aggregates
And there is no self that exists apart from the aggregates.
The self does not possess the five aggregates.
The aggregates do not rely on the self and the self does not rely on the aggregates.

Why is it necessary to meditate on the individual's selflessness?
Because the root of samsara is clinging to self,
And apart from its remedy, selflessness,
You will not find a single thing that can oppose it.

The Basis for the Analytical and Resting Meditation: Step 2

The Basics of Chittamatra

All phenomena are mind,
Because appearances are the confused appearance of habitual tendencies,
And because they are the natural display of mind, luminosity-emptiness.
The first is apparent reality, relative mind. The second is genuine reality, mind in its basic nature.

A) Regarding apparent reality

Confused appearances consist of all forms, sounds, smells, tastes and textures when these are thought to be objects existing separately from the perceiving mind.

If one does not understand how all phenomena are mind, i.e., mental in character, one has not yet understood what is meant by "habitual tendencies," and one has not yet understood what is meant by "confused appearances".

To clarify what is meant by "habitual tendencies," consider the following question: How is it possible for one observer to experience a pleasant object and another an unpleasant object when they are supposedly looking at "the same" object?

Here the analytical meditation can be employed as follows:

What is appearing is a set of habitual tendencies or patterns. The collection or base of these patterns is referred to in Chittamatra as "the all-base consciousness," *alayavijnyana*, the consciousness that is the base of all our experiences.

We have ourselves collected these patterns by previously taking dualistic appearances to be truly existent. For this reason, they are individual. No one else has the identically same set, so no two sentient beings experience exactly and completely the same “objects,” i.e., appearances.

Even though no two sentient beings have the same set of tendencies, there are many who share a **similar** set. This accounts for the different realms of samsara. It also accounts for “common experience,” or what seems to be “appearances experienced in common” in the human realm or any of the other 5.

In the context of “appearances experienced in common,” we tend to think everybody is experiencing the same thing. But here “similar” is being confused with “same”. Although many can experience similar appearances, none experience exactly the same “objects” or appearances. It is not actually the same object being interpreted in different ways. It’s different objects being thought to be the same object. But they’re not. A pleasant object is not the same as an unpleasant one. They are not only different objects, they are opposite kinds of objects.

The appearances themselves are the perceptions of the 6 main consciousnesses. Between the all-base and these 6 is the 7th consciousness, which is called “klesha mind” or “the afflicted mentality,” so called because its main focus is the all-base consciousness, which it interprets as being a self. This corrupts the experience of the habitual patterns, which are projected as the appearances experienced. Thinking these mental patterns have self-identity means that, when they are projected outward, they are seen as having inherent identity. In other words, they are seen as objects existing in their own right, separate from mind.

A brief definition of **Confused Appearances** (also called **phenomena**):

Any experience where perceived and perceiver are thought to be two,
Plus the assumption that anything appearing in such a way actually exists in that way,
Plus labelling where the name and what it refers to are confused with each other.

There are 3 levels of confusion here:

The appearance itself, which is seen as an object
The assumption that it exists as it appears, i.e., the belief that it is a “thing”
The label, which gets so fully identified with the thing that it is thought to be the thing

Looking carefully at these 3, we see that all three are mind. The appearance is mental. The assumption that the appearance is a thing is mental. Also mental are the label and thinking the label is the thing referred to by that label.

On the level of apparent reality, this is what is meant by saying, “All phenomena are mind only”.

B) Regarding the second, genuine reality

Through the above analysis of the “object” experienced on the relative level, one can come to understand with certainty that the “object” is actually an appearance. Through resting meditation, one comes to know that the appearance is actually the natural display of the luminous nature.

Through the analytical meditation, mind is now ready to enter the realm of resting meditation. Here mind is resting in its own nature, non-dual awareness. Not analyzing it, resting in it.

Is the meditator still trying to understand the nature of mind? No. Not at this point. Then it would still be analytical meditation. In that case, one needs to continue analytical meditation until some degree of certainty in non-duality has been reached, in which case mind is able to rest for some time. **The practice consists in alternating between these two until there is no further doubt.** How long this takes depends on the practitioner.

But, as a beginner, one needs to know that the nature of mind cannot be understood, experienced or described by conceptual mind. Mind's nature can only be known in Resting Meditation.

Here, mind is simply resting evenly in its own luminous awareness, which is non-dual, i.e., empty of any differentiation between the awareness and what it is aware of. There is not one thing being meditated on and another meditating. It is awareness resting in its own inexpressible clarity empty of duality.

Pause here to meditate as instructed.

Supporting examples to illustrate the point

To exemplify the Chittamatra view of apparent reality:

What is thought of as an object can be seen to be like the imprints on a strip of film being run past the bright light of a projector such that they are projected onto a screen and appear to be trees, cars, figures, and so on in front of the onlookers.

The variety of appearances can be compared to light, which has no color, being deflected by a prism so it appears in multiple colors.

Another example: dream appearances, where mind's own content is mistakenly thought to be objects outside.

The Basis for the Analytical and Resting Meditation: Steps 3 and 4

1) The Autonomy Middle Way

Relatively, phenomena are asserted here to exist substantially by virtue of their defining characteristics.

By examining phenomena through the reasoning employed in analytical meditation, they establish that phenomena are empty of being one or many, and therefore ultimately are empty of substantial existence, like space.

As a result, the meditator rests in space-like samadhi that is free of all conceptuality.

2) The Consequence Middle Way

Through the analysis, phenomena are found relatively to be A) devoid of arising and B) dependently existent and ultimately to be empty of all conceptual elaboration.

One rests in complete simplicity free from all conceptual complexity.