



EMPTINESS, WEEK 10 MEDITATION ON THE SEVEN POINT ANALYSIS

FIRST FEW MINUTES

Touch in with your motivation for this meditation. Begin by connecting with your actual motivation. Then, see if you can expand from that motivation to include a longer view, and expand the scope.

PREPARATION FOR ANALYSIS

Why examine to see if the chariot or the self exists in these seven ways?

Imagine, as Guy Newland suggests, that a friend believed there was an elephant in the building and was suffering from all the problems such a delusion might bring.

To help our friend, we would first have to make sure that our friend was correctly identifying “elephant”. We have already taken this step in our meditations on identifying the object of negation.

Next we could limit the alternatives of where the elephant might be, by making a comprehensive list of all the spaces in the building that could conceivably contain an elephant. Our friend would need to gain a certainty that if there was an elephant in the building, it would have to be in one of those spaces. Visiting each space in turn, the sense that there is nowhere else for an elephant to be would become a realisation that there is in fact no elephant in the building at all.

This is our next task, then, to gain certainty that if there were an intrinsically existent self, it would have to be here or there in the mind and body, there is nowhere else it could be. If it is not found in these clearly identified places existing in this way, it simply cannot exist at all.

Lama Tsongkhapa uses the principle of the excluded middle, of something either being X or Not-X, one or many, same or different, to limit the alternatives of where this intrinsically existent self could be.

“When you determine in the general case that anything must be either one or not one, then you will also determine that for the particular case of something that exists essentially, it must be either essentially one or essentially different.”

Lama Tsongkhapa in Guy Newland’s *Introduction to Emptiness* p.90

If either a chariot or a self were to have an intrinsic or essential nature, then it would have to be intrinsically one or intrinsically many, intrinsically identical to its parts or intrinsically different from them.



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NEXT 20-25 MINUTES

THE SEVEN POINT ANALYSIS

1. Is the chariot the same as the parts?

If so, then just as the parts are many and diverse, the chariot must also be many and diverse. Just as the chariot is singular, so there can only be one part.

Is the “self” the same as the parts of the mind and body?

If that were the case, these are some of the logical consequences:

- i. If the aggregates of the mind and body were exactly identical to the essential self, it would be redundant to speak of a self, as the aggregates would be that self. Yet in speech we use expressions like “my body”, or “my feelings”. How can the “me” that we think of as possessing these various and changing feelings be precisely the feelings themselves?
- ii. If the aggregates of the mind and body and their many parts were exactly identical to the essential self, then they would have to have all of the same qualities and attributes. Numerically, for example, just as the self is singular, so there would be only one aggregate or part. Just as the parts of the mind and body are many and diverse, the self would also be many and diverse. Do you experience many and diverse selves existing at the same time?
- iii. If an intrinsically existing self were identical to the mind and body, then it would have to change moment by moment. It would be essentially different moment to moment. Consider then the following: “If the “me” of past moments were a different essence from the “me” of the present moment, then how could I remember things that the earlier person experienced?” Consider also: if these essentially different “persons” could in fact remember each other’s experiences, then any person in the world should be able to remember the experiences of any other person.
- iv. If the intrinsic self were identical to the mind and body, then, when we say, “my body”, the possessing agent would be identical to the possessed object. Consider that if an agent and object could be identical in this way, then fire and fuel could just as easily be identical. Putting a log in a cold fireplace should warm up the room.

2. Is the chariot essentially separate from its parts?

If so, then we would see cases of chariots appearing without any chariot parts, just as horses and cows can appear separately in different places at different times, being separate.

Is the essentially existing self intrinsically separate to, or different from, the mind and body?

Consider that in that case, you could find and identify your “self” in one place and time, and your mind and body parts somewhere else altogether. In addition, changes to your body and mind would make no difference whatsoever to your sense of self. Is this the case?



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3. Are the parts of the chariot an intrinsic base for the chariot?

In that case, they would be seen as separate and different, like a bowl that holds yogurt.

Are the parts of your body and mind the intrinsic base for your essential self?

Is it possible your aggregates act as the basis for your labelled 'I'?

Is it possible they act as the intrinsic basis?

If so, they would be separate or different, like a bowl holding yogurt, and would be seen that way. The reasonings in point two would also then apply.

4. Does the chariot exist intrinsically dependent on its parts?

A chariot depends on its parts, but an intrinsic chariot with intrinsic parts would have to be totally separate and different, as in point two. How could something intrinsically separate and different, also be intrinsically dependent?

Does your essential "I" exist intrinsically dependent on your mind and body aggregates?

Your intrinsic self with intrinsic parts would have to be totally separate and different, as in point two. Could they still be dependent on each other, intrinsically? Perhaps this would be like a person staying in a tent, dependent on the tent to keep off the rain, but totally separate to and different from the tent, fully able to walk away. Can you walk away from your mind and body?

5. Does the intrinsic chariot possess its parts in the same way someone might own a bicycle?

In order for the intrinsic chariot to own its parts in this way, it would need to be totally separate and different from them, like the owner of a bicycle and the bicycle. Just as we can leave a bicycle anywhere and get on with our lives, we would then see cases of chariots appearing without any chariot parts.

Does your essential "I" intrinsically possess your mind and body aggregates?

Your intrinsic self with intrinsic parts would have to be totally separate and different, like a person possessing sheep. Consider that if your intrinsic self possessed your intrinsic aggregates in this way, you could easily appear without any or all of your mind and body parts, like a farmer without his sheep.

6. Is the intrinsic chariot the same as the whole collection of parts together?

Isn't it the case, though, that the whole collection of chariot parts could be strewn around or heaped up randomly? Would you then see the intrinsic chariot?

Is the intrinsic "I" identical to the whole collection of mind and body parts together?

Similar to point one, if the intrinsic self were identical to the mind and body collection, then, when you say, "my aggregates", the possessing agent would be identical to the possessed object. Your intrinsic "self" would be identical to your intrinsic collection of aggregates, forever fixed in time. Consider that if an agent and object could be identical in this way, then fire and fuel could just as easily be identical. As before, putting a log in a cold fireplace should warm up the room.



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7. Is the intrinsic chariot its shape?

If so, then if we can have the exact same chariot shape made up as a model, would it then be the intrinsic chariot?

Is the shape or configuration of the aggregates the intrinsic self?

If a particular shape or configuration of the aggregates is intrinsically the self, then each of the aggregates are the wrong shape to be the self, they are intrinsically “not-self” through and through. If there is no self in any of the intrinsic aggregate parts, how could they ever change and become intrinsically self once together?

If there is no chocolate in any of the pieces that go into a box, how can they come together to make a box of chocolates?

SUMMARY

This chariot is not [essentially] established in the seven ways

Either in reality or for the world.

Yet without analysis, just for the world

It is imputed in dependence upon its parts.

Master Chandrakirti, Lam Rim Chenmo vol 3 (Cutler Ed.) p.283

Having analysed the chariot in this way, have you denied the existence of anything that might prevent the chariot from working properly? Will the chariot still function if it is not an essentially existing, objectively real “chariot”?

Is your self any different? In the light of your analysis, have you denied the existence of anything that would prevent you from living fully in the world?

POSTSCRIPT

When you engage in this meditation, you might well find your mind cheating, and sliding away from an intrinsically existent self and parts to an interdependent self and parts.

Guard against this by being clear that you are searching for an intrinsic self or chariot, with intrinsic parts, and intrinsic sameness or difference between the two. These are the rules of this analysis, if you like.

Remember, we have first established that we see or experience our self as intrinsically existent. It is the possibility of our “self” existing in this way, that we our analysing.

DEDICATION

In conclusion generate a determination to gain a greater experiential understanding into the nature of reality, and to experience the longer term benefits from this. As much as possible try expanding these benefits to others around you, widening the circle of your care and concern.