

NĀGĀRJUNA

“I prostrate to the Perfect Buddha, the best of teachers, who taught that whatever is dependently arisen is unceasing, unborn, unannihilated, not permanent, not coming, not going, without distinction, without identity, and free from conceptual construction.” – Dedication to *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (*Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way*)

“When emptiness is possible, everything is possible.” - Nāgārjuna

Neither from itself nor from another, Nor from both, Nor without a cause, Does anything whatever, anywhere arise.	Nothing comes from itself Or something else Or both together Or without a cause.
What has been moved is not moving. What has not been moved is not moving. Apart from what has been moved and what has not been moved, Movement cannot be conceived.	I do not walk between The step already taken And the one I’m yet to take, Which both are motionless.
Seeing, hearing, smelling, Tasting, touching, and mind Are the six sense faculties. Their spheres are the visible objects, etc....	If my eyes cannot see themselves, How can they see something else? Were there no trace of something seen, How could I see at all?
The Victorious Conqueror has said that whatever Is deceptive is false. Compounded phenomena are all deceptive. Therefore they are all false.	If something has an essence— How can it ever change into anything else? ...If something changed into something else, Milk would be butter Or butter would not be milk.
Essence arising from Causes and conditions makes no sense. If essence came from causes and conditions, Then it would be fabricated.	If my essence came From causes and conditions, It would have been constructed— Essences are neither contingent nor contrived.
If the self were the aggregates, It would have been arising and ceasing. If it were different from the aggregates, It would not have the characteristics of the aggregates.	Were mind and matter me, I would come and go like them. If I were something else, They would say nothing about me.

*Whatever is dependently co-arisen
That is explained to be emptiness.
That, being a dependent designation,
Is itself the middle way. – Chapter 24, verse 18*

SHIH-KUNG: Can you grasp emptiness?
HSI-T'ANG: Yes.
SHIH-KUNG: How do you do it?
Hsi-T'ang closes his fist.
SHIH-KUNG: You don't know how to grasp emptiness.
HSI-T'ANG: How do you do it then?
Shih-kung grabs Hsi-T'ang's nose and pulls it.
HSI-T'ANG: Ow! You're pulling my nose!
SHIH-KUNG: That is how you grasp emptiness.

Hui-neng:

"Do not sit with a mind fixed on emptiness. If you do, you will fall into a neutral kind of emptiness. Emptiness includes the sun, moon, stars and planets, the great earth, mountains and rivers, all trees and grasses, bad men and good men, bad things and good things, heaven and hell; they are all in the midst of emptiness."

Dogen:

"You must surely know emptiness is a perfect grass. This emptiness is bound to bloom, like hundreds of grasses blossoming."

"To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be awakened by all things. To be awakened by all things is to let the body and mind of self and others fall away. Even the traces of awakening fall away and this traceless awakening continues endlessly."

Shantideva:

"Just as these arms and legs are seen as the limbs of a body, why are embodied creatures not seen as limbs of life?"

Jay L. Garfield:

"Change would seem to have to be change of something. We imagine one thing retaining its identity but changing its properties. To the extent that a thing changes, it becomes, strictly speaking, a different thing. But the relation between two things is not the change of a thing—it is simply the difference between two nonchanging entities. A young man does not grow old. When he is old he is no longer a young man. Emptiness is important because it is the only way that things can exist."

David Ross Komito:

"Distorted cognitions are the source of all our troubles. Samsāra becomes nirvana as objects are perceived for what they actually are. The ultimate truth about phenomena is that they are mere appearances which are empty of the characteristics we attribute to them, while the conventional truth about phenomena is the fact of their erroneous appearance to ordinary beings."

Geshe Sonam Rinpoche:

"The Buddha has abandoned both the obscurations which prevent liberation and the obscurations which prevent omniscience. Thus he can perceive in a single instant both the absolute truth about phenomena and the conventional truth of how phenomena appear to ordinary people. Although Nāgārjuna himself outwardly appear to ordinary people to be a first stage Bodhisattva, inwardly he was actually a Buddha."