

Catuhstava

Nagarjuna — HYMS · Nagarjuna

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Catuhstava

By Nagarjuna

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L1 : [Paramartha stavah - Hymn to the Absolute Reality]

\ #1.

\ Lord! Since you are non-originated, residing in no place, transcending any worldly similes, indescribable through the path of words, how can I praise you?

\ #2.

\ Although you cannot be praised thus, yet I with great devotion shall praise you in behavioral pattern concerning ultimate truth.

\ #3.

\ Since you have the nature of non-originated, for you there is no-origin, no coming, no going,

\ (In other words you have no coming and going in this samsara.) obeisance to you who unborn nature!

\ #4.

\ You are neither existent nor non-existent, neither eternal nor non-eternal, neither permanent nor impermanent. Obeisance to you who are beyond any dualism!

\ #5.

\ No color is found in you, neither green nor red nor scarlet, neither yellow nor black nor white. Obeisance to you who have the nature of colorlessness!

\ #6.

\ You are neither big, nor small, neither long nor spherical. You have reached the stage of immesuarability. Obeisance to you who has the nature of immeasurability.

\ #7.

\ You are neither far away nor near, neither in space nor on the earth, neither in Samsara nor in Nirvana. Obeisance to you who resides nowhere!

\ #8.

\ You do not stay on any dharma but are gone into the stage of Dharmadhatu. You have reached the stage of supreme deepness.

\ Obeisance to you who are the nature of unfathomableness!

\ #9.

\ Thus praised let you be praised, or is He praised? When all dharmas are without essence, who is praised or by whom can He be praised?

\ #10.

\ Who can praise you are devoid origination and decay and for you who there is neither end nor middle, neither perception nor perceived?

\ #11.

\ Thus praising the Sugat who is neither gone nor come and is devoid of any going, through the merits thus acquired may this world practice the path of Sugata!

Translated by M. B. Shakya

L1 : [Niraupamyastavah]

\ #1.

\ O incomparable One! Obeisance to you who knows the insubstantiality of all things. You make efforts for the benefit of this world is devoid of pure views.

\ #2.

\ Through your enlightenment eye no thing is seen by you, Lord! sublime is your view which perceives ultimate reality!

\ #3.

\ Ultimate there is neither knower nor thing to be known. Oh! You (Lord Buddha) know the dharmata which is very difficult to comprehend.

\ #4.

\ You have neither created any dharma nor destroyed any, but you attained Great Enlightenment seeing them with equanimity.

\ #5.

\ You did not desire for Nirvana seeing the faults of Samsara, O Lord! you attained Peace (Nirvana) without getting rid of Samsara.

\ #6.

\ You have realized that affliction and since no discrimination is possible in (dharmadhatu of affliction and dharmadhatu of cessation) so you are completely pure.

\ #7.

\ O Master! You have uttered not a syllable, yet you satisfied the trainees by raining down the nectar of profound teaching.

\ #8.

\ You have no attachment in the Aggregates, Sense spheres and Elements of Existence, You whose mind is the nature of space do not dwell in any dharmas.

\ #9.

\ O Lord! you have no notion of being at all, but you have infinite compassion towards miserable sentient beings.

\ #10.

\ O Lord! Your intellect mind does not adhere to various dualistic imagination as regards pleasure and pain, soul and no-soul, permanent and impermanent things.

\ #11.

\ You held the view that there is no coming or going of the things neither are there anything deposited somewhere else ultimately.

\ #12.

\ Although you prevail everywhere yet you are born nowhere. Although you manifested birth (in Lumbini) yet your body is the nature of dharmakaya.

\ O Lord of the Stages! It is indeed inconceivable.

\ #13.

\ You, the irreproachable one, preached that in this world there is neither creation nor destruction just as sound and echo are neither the same nor different, neither there is one nor many.

\ #14.

\ O Lord! you have realized that this world is just like dream or magic play neither having eternal nor impermanent neither having Signs nor without Signs.

\ #15.

\ You have gained complete victory over the river of afflictions from its roots. But you earned the nectar of (Nirvana) by knowing the very nature of afflictions.

\ #16.

\ O Courageous one! you who are of the nature of signless free from as 'no-from'. But your dazzling body has appeared to us endowed with Thirty two Auspicious marks.

\ #17.

\ Even if one sees the form it is not the "seeing". If one sees the dharma dharma it is then well-seen but dharmata cannot be seen.

\ #18.

\ Your body is neither hollow nor have any bone, flesh and blood (as mortal beings have) Still you have manifested a body just as the rainbow in the sky.

\ #19.

\ It is not possible that you have hunger, thirst, impurity and disease in your body but you showed as worldly activities according to worldly convention.

\ #20.

\ O Sinless one! you do not have even the slightest obstruction of Karma still out of great compassion you showed the world the law of cause and effect as infallible.

\ #21.

\ O Lord! From the point of view of wisdom there is no difference between various yanas. Yet you showed the Triple vehicles in order to lead sentient beings to the right path.

\ #22.

\ O peerless conqueror! Your dharma body is eternal, imperishable and auspicious yet you manifested the Great Pari Nirvana to the world for the sake of trainees.

\ #23.

\ In the countless world systems the devotees will behalf you again descending upon earth, taking birth, attaining Enlightenment, preaching the dharmacakra, and entering into Nirvana.

\ #24.

\ O Lord! you have neither thoughts, nor differentiation nor any intentions yet you are accomplishing in this world the duty of a Buddha
(for the welfare of sentient being) without attachment.

\ #Thus by offering the above mentioned flowers of prayer to the Buddha endowed with inconceivable and boundless virtues.

\ If any virtues are then by these merits may all then by these merits may all sentient beings be the vessels of the supreme and deep doctrines of Lord Buddha.

Translated by M. B. Shakya

L1 : [Lokatitastava - Hymn to [the Buddha] Transcending the World]

\ #1.

\ O You who are beyond the world! Obeisance to You versed in the knowledge of the void. Solely for the benefit of the world You have long shown untiring compassion!

\ #2.

\ You maintain that apart from the mere skandhas no living being exists, and yet, great sage, You have exhausted yourself for the sake of living beings!

\ #3.

\ You who are a sage! To the sages You have declared that the skandhas also are comparable to an illusion, a mirage, a city of gandharvas, and dreams!

\ #4.

\ [The skandhas] occur due to a cause and do not exist in the absence of such:

Because of this, have You not clearly maintained that they are like reflections?

\ #5.

\ The [four great] elements are imperceptible to the eye, so how can the 'visible' consist of them? Speaking thus of form You rejected the belief in form.

\ #6.

\ As it does not exist without an object to be felt, feeling is without self. And You maintain that the object of feeling does not exist by own-being either.

\ #7.

\ If a concept [= name: ming] and its object [= meaning: don] were not different, [the word] 'fire' would burn the mouth.

\ If [they] were different, there would be no comprehension [of anything]. Thus have You spoken as a speaker of truth.

\ #8.

\ That an agent is self-dependent and [his] action is also You have [only] expressed conventionally. Actually You maintain that both are established in mutual dependence.

\ #9.

\ [In the ultimate sense] no agent [of an action] exists and no experiencer either. Merit and demerit originate dependency.

\ You have declared, O Master of words, that what originates dependency is unoriginated!

\ #10.

\ [There is] no object of knowledge unless it is being known. But the knowing consciousness does not exist without [its object]!

\ Thus You have said that knowledge and the object of knowledge do not exist by own-being.

\ #11.

\ If a mark were different from the marked, the marked would exist [as such] without the mark!

\ And you have clearly demonstrated that if [mark and marked] are conceived of as not different, neither exists.

\ #12.

\ With your eye of knowledge You view as calm this world that is devoid of marked and mark and free from the utterances of words.

\ #13.

\ An existent thing does not arise, nor does a non-existent, nor an existent and non-existent: either from itself, [from something] else, or from both. [So] how can it be born [at all]?

\ #14.

\ It is not reasonable that an existent, [which must be] linked to duration, should be destroyed. [And] how can something nonexistent, like the horns of a horse, be extinguished?

\ #15.

\ Destruction is not different from the entity; nor can it be thought of as something not-different.

\ If it were different [from the entity to be destroyed, it] would be permanent. If it were not-different, it could not occur.

\ #16.

\ Certainly destruction is not reasonable if the thing is a unity; certainly destruction is not reasonable if the thing is manifold.

\ #17.

\ First of all, it is not logical that the effect should arise either from a cause that has been destroyed or from one that has not [yet] been destroyed.

\ [Therefore,] You maintain that origination is like a dream.

\ #18.

\ Neither from the destroyed nor the non-destroyed seed can the sprout possibly arise. You have stated that all arising is like the arising of an illusion.

\ #19.

\ Therefore You have fully understood that this world has arisen due to imagination. It is unreal, [and] not having originated it cannot be destroyed.

\ #20.

\ There is no permanent wandering in samsara; there is no impermanent wandering in samsara. You, the best among knowers of truth, have declared samsara to be like a dream.

\ #21.

\ Dialecticians maintain that suffering is created by itself, created by another, created by both, [or created] without a cause; but You have stated that it arises dependency.

\ #22.

\ What arises dependently is exactly what You regard as sunyata. O, your incomparable lion's roar is that no independent thing exists!

\ #23.

\ The ambrosial teaching of sunyata aims at abolishing all conceptions. But if someone believes in sunyata You [have declared that] he is lost!

\ #24.

\ O Protector! [Since they] are inactive, dependent, and empty, dependently arisen like an illusion, You have made it clear that all phenomena are without own-being.

\ #25.

\ You have put forward nothing and denied nothing. Now as then You are fully aware of Suchness.

\ #26.

\ Unless one resorts to the development practiced by the noble ones, consciousness will certainly never become signless here [in this world].

\ #27.

\ You have proclaimed that there is no liberation unless one resorts to the signless. Therefore You have demonstrated it comprehensively in the Mahayana.

\ #28.

\ By the merit which I have obtained by praising You, a fit vessel of praise, may the entire world become free from the bondage of signs.

Translated by Lindtner

L1 : [Acintyastava - Hymn to the Inconceivable [Buddha]]

\ #1.

\ I bow down to the inconceivable, incomparable [Buddha] whose knowledge is unequaled, who has declared that [all] dependency arising things lack own-being.

\ #2.

\ Just as You personally understood the selflessness of phenomena in the Mahayana, so, swayed by compassion, You have demonstrated it to the wise [Bodhisattvas].

\ #3.

\ You have stated that [whatever] arises from conditions is unoriginated. You have clearly shown that it is not born through own-being and thus is empty.

\ #4.

\ Just as here in this world an echo arises in dependence on a sound, so also [all] existence arises like an illusion or mirage.

\ #5.

\ If illusions, mirages, cities of gandharvas, and reflections are unborn, along with dreams, [then as to] them there can be no [real] vision or any other [forms of sense knowledge].

\ #6.

\ Just as [things] arising from causes and conditions are handed down as composite, O Protector, You have said that the entire conditionally born [world exists only] by convention.

\ #7.

\ It is a meaningless [statement] enticing the simple-minded [that] something created exists as a whole! It is a false statement, [delusive] like an empty fist.

\ #8.

\ If a composite thing is not born, how then can it be present? If a thing [i.e., the cause] has been destroyed, it is done with; how then can it relate to what is about to arise?

\ #9.

\ A thing is not born from itself, [something] else, or both, whether it be existent, non-existent, or existent and nonexistent. How then can anything arise?

\ #10.

\ The unborn has no own-being, [so] how could it arise from itself? Nor can it arise from [something] else, since it is definitely established that there is no own-being.

\ #11.

\ If there were own-being there would be other-being; if other-being, own-being [could be] maintained.

\ Establishment of those two has been stated [by You] to be correlative, like the far shore and the near.

\ #12.

\ When something is not related to anything, how then can that thing exist? For example, when it is not related to 'long', how can 'short' exist?

\ #13.

\ When there is existence there is non-existence, as there is short when there is long. Since there is existence when there is non-existence, each of the two does not exist.

\ #14.

\ Unity and multiplicity, past and future and the like, defilement and purification, true and false — how [can they exist] by themselves?

\ #15.

\ When an entity does not exist entirely by itself, it certainly cannot exist as an [independent] whole. What is called 'other' does not exist without its own own-being.

\ #16.

\ When there are no 'other' things, there are no things with self-nature. Then what [kind of] seizure of materialism is [the concept of an independent] dependent [nature]!

\ #17.

\ [Since all things] are from the beginning born the same and pass into nirvana by their own nature, You have said that phenomena are in reality unborn.

\ #18.

\ You have, O Sage, shown that form and [the remaining skandhas] lack own-being, like foam, bubbles, illusions, clouds, mirages, and plantains.

\ #19.

\ If that which is perceived with the senses were real, the simple-minded would already have knowledge of reality. What then would knowledge of reality be worth?

\ #20.

\ You have stated that the senses are dull, unreliable, imprecise, and [sources of] wrong understanding.

\ #21.

\ Having deeply understood that no one has access to the truth, You have stated that this is why the world is shrouded in ignorance.

\ #22.

\ 'Exists' is the dogma of eternalism. 'Exists not' is the dogma of annihilation. [But] You have revealed the Dharma [of dependent co-origination], free from the two extremes.

\ #23.

\ Therefore You have said that phenomena are beyond the four categories. They are not knowable to consciousness, much less within the sphere of words.

\ #24.

\ Like a dream, an illusion, [or] seeing two moons: Thus have You seen the world, as a creation not created as real.

\ #25.

\ Like a son who is born, established, and dies in a dream, the world, You have said, is not really born, does not endure, and is not destroyed.

\ #26.

\ In a dream, whatever arises is experienced as resulting from causality. You maintain that all things are like this, both in their origination and their dissolution.

\ #27.

\ You have proclaimed that suffering born from desire and the other [poisons], as well as the klesas, the suffering of samsara,
\ the completing of the [two] accumulations, and even liberation are like a dream.

\ #28.

\ When [someone] understands [something] as born or unborn, present or gone, bound or liberated, he maintains duality [and consequently] does not know the truth.

\ #29.

\ How can what does not arise pass into nirvana? Since it is like an illusory elephant it is in truth originally at peace.

\ #30.

\ Just as [we] assert that an illusory elephant, though [apparently] born, is not born, thus everything [apparently] born is in reality unborn.

\ #31.

\ Countless world-protectors have [apparently] led innumerable beings one by one into nirvana, but [in reality] not one [being] has been liberated by them!

\ #32.

\ Have you not clearly stated, O great Sage, that when those beings who attain nirvana are [in fact] not born [at all, then] no one is liberated by anyone?

\ #33.

\ Just as the work of a magician is empty of substance, all the rest of the world — including a creator — has been said by You to be empty of substance.

\ #34.

\ A creator created by another [creator] cannot avoid being created [and so is impermanent]. But [to say he creates himself] implies that' the creator is the agent of the activity that affects him!

\ #35.

\ You have proclaimed everything merely a name. Nothing expressible is found apart from the expression.

\ #36.

\ Therefore You have declared that all phenomena are merely abstractions. Even the abstraction through which sunyata is conceived You have declared non-existent.

\ #37-39.

\ [That which] has transcended the duality of being and non-being, without however having transcended anything at all;

\ that which is not knowledge or knowable, not existent or non-existent, not one or many, not both or neither;

\ [that which is] without foundation, unmanifest, inconceivable, incomparable; that which arises not, disappears not, is not to be annihilated, and is not permanent

\ — that is [reality], like space, not within the range of words [or] knowledge.

\ #40.

\ Just that is dependent co-origination; just that is what You maintain to be sunyata. The true principle (saddharma) is of that kind, and the Tathagata is like that also.

\ #41.

\ It is also accepted as the truth, the ultimate meaning, suchness, and the real. It is the indisputable. Whoever awakens to this is called Buddha.

\ #42.

\ Therefore there is really no difference between the world of living beings and Buddhas. Hence You maintain the identity of yourself and others.

\ #43.

\ Sunyata is not different from things and there is no thing without it. Therefore You have declared that dependently arising things are empty.

\ #44.

\ The conventional arises from causes and conditions and is relative. Thus have [You] spoken of the relative. The ultimate meaning, however, is not fabricated.

\ #45.

\ It is also termed own-being, nature, truth, substance, the real, [and the] true. [Conventionally] an imagined thing does not exist but a relative is found [to exist].

\ #46.

\ You have stated that [affirmative] attribution is to say about an imaginary entity that it exists.

\ [You] have also declared that cutting off [i.e., negation] is to say that a compound [entity] does not exist, because it is annihilated.

\ #47.

\ According to cognition of truth, [however], You maintain that there is no annihilation or permanence. [You] assert that the entire world is empty of substance, like a mirage.

\ #48.

\ Just as a mirage is neither annihilated nor permanent, thus all existence is said to be neither annihilated nor permanent.

\ #49.

\ One to whom things present themselves has [the dogmas of] annihilation and [permanence] imposed upon him and accepts implicitly that the world is finite or infinite.

\ #50.

\ Just as there is the knowable when there is knowing, there is knowing when there is the knowable. When both are unborn/ what is [there to be] understood?

\ #51.

\ By thus teaching clearly through analogies — such as illusion and so forth — the Supreme Physician has taught the Holy Dharma, which cures all dogmas.

\ #52.

\ The ultimate truth is the teaching that things are without own-being. This is the unsurpassed medicine for those consumed by the fever of positivism.

\ #53.

\ Precisely therefore, O Offering-Priest of the Dharma, You have repeatedly made Dharma Offerings in the three worlds that are unsurpassed, unhindered, and unimpeded.

\ #54.

\ You have uttered this wonderful lion's roar of not-self, which cuts off the fear [caused by] belief in things [and] terrifies the [timid] deer — the tirthikas!

\ #55.

\ [You] have beaten the Dharma Drum [that resounds with the] deep truth of sunyata. [You] have blown the Dharma Conch, with its clear note of no own-being.

\ #56.

\ [You] have proclaimed the gift of Dharma: the nectar of the Buddha's teaching. The final meaning has been indicated — that is, of course, that phenomena are empty.

\ #57.

\ But the teaching regarding origination, cessation, and so forth; regarding the lives of sentient beings and the like, has meaning requiring interpretation.

\ O Protector, you have also called it convention.

\ #58.

\ One who has finally reached the far shore of the ocean of perfect wisdom dwells amidst the jewels of the virtues of merit, fully conversant with the ocean of your virtues.

\ #59.

\ By virtue of the merit I have obtained by thus praising [You], the inconceivable [and] incomparable Leader of beings, may beings become like You!

Translated by Lindtner

[End]