

In Praise of the Dharmadhatu

Nagarjuna — HYMS · Nagarjuna

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In Praise of the Dharmadhatu
(Dharmadhatustotra)
by Nagarjuna

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These can be used to regenerate the structure using a Word Processor.

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L2: [A. Homage and short description of the Dharmadhatu. (1-2)]

\ #1.
 \ There is something which as long as left unknown
 \ Results in life's three planes of vicious circle.
 \ Beyond all doubt, it dwells in every being.
 \ To the Dharmadhatu I devoutly bow.
 \ #2.
 \ When that which forms the cause for all samsara
 \ Is purified along the stages of the path,
 \ This purity itself is nirvana;
 \ Precisely this, the Dharmakaya, too.

L2: [B. Dharmadhatu described as radiant clarity. (3-11)]

L3: [B.1. The analogy of butter and milk. (3,4)]

\ #3.
\ As butter, though inherent in the milk, (i.e. Analogy #1)
\ Is mixed with it and hence does not appear,
\ Just so the Dharmadhatu is not seen
\ As long as it is mixed together with afflictions.

\ #4.
\ And just as the inherent butter essence
\ When the milk is purified is no more disguised,
\ When afflictions have been completely purified,
\ The Dharmadhatu will be without any stain at all.

L3: [B.2. The analogy of the butter lamp. (5-7)]

\ #5.
\ As a butter lamp that burns inside a vase (i.e. Analogy #2)
\ Would not even be slightly visible,
\ As long as left inside afflictions' vase,
\ The Dharmadhatu is not visible.

\ #6.
\ If one perforates the surface of the vase,
\ Whatever holes are made in whichever directions,
\ Through those and in precisely those directions
\ Light will shine, as is its nature to.

\ #7.
\ At the moment when the vajra-like samadhi
\ Is able to obliterate the vase,
\ At that very moment the light burning inside
\ Will shine throughout the reaches of all space.

\ #8.
\ The Dharmadhatu was never born,
\ Nor will it ever cease.
\ At all times it is free of all afflictions;
\ At the beginning, middle, and end, free from stain.

L3: [B.3. The analogy of the sapphire in the stone. (9,10)]

\ #9.
\ As sapphire, the precious gem, (i.e. Analogy #3)
\ Shines with brilliant light all the time,
\ But when confined within a grosser stone,
\ We do not see its bright light shine,

\ #10.
\ Just so, although obscured behind afflictions,
\ The Dharmadhatu has no trace of flaw.
\ While samsara blocks its light, it does not illuminate;
\ Nirvana gained, its light will brilliantly shine.

L3: [B.4. The analogy of pure gold. (11)]

\ #11.
\ If the fundamental element is present,
\ Work will yield the sight of purest gold; (i.e. Analogy #4)
\ If the fundamental element were lacking,
\ The labor would produce no fruit but woe.

L2: [C. Answers to arguments raised in debate. (12-25)]

L3: [C.1. If the Dharmadhatu were present, beings would be Buddhas.]

L4: [Refuted by means of the rice example. (12,13)]

\ #12.
\ As kernels are not considered to be rice
\ As long as they are enveloped in their husks,
\ Just so the name of “Buddha” is not given
\ To all of those whom afflictions still enfold.

\ #13.
\ And just as when loosened from the husk,
\ The rice itself is what appears,
\ Just so the Dharmakaya itself,
\ When loosened from afflictions, freely shines.

L3: [C.2. If the Dharmadhatu were present, beings would have the essence of Buddhahood.]

L4: [Refuted by means of the banana tree example. (14-17)]

\ #14.
\ It is said, “Banana trees are void of pith.”
\ One uses this example in the world.
\ But the fruit of such a tree has pith indeed;
\ When eaten, it is sweet upon the tongue.

\ #15.
\ Just so, samsara has no pith,
\ And if beings can remove affliction’s peel,
\ The fruit within is Buddhahood itself,
\ The nectar for all corporal beings to taste.

\ #16.
\ And just as from a given kind of seed
\ A fruit results resembling its cause,
\ Who with common sense would seek to prove
\ A fruit exists without its specific seed as cause?

\ #17.
\ The basic element which serves as seed
\ Is seen as the support of all great qualities.
\ Through gradual refinement, step by step,

\ The stage of Buddhahood will be attained.

L3: [C.3 Any antidote that clears obstructions to realizing the Dharmadhatu would also clear away the Dharmadhatu. Refuted in three parts:

L4: [a. How the Dharmadhatu and obstructions can coexist.]

L5: [The example of the clouds which obstruct the sun and moon. (18,19)]

\ #18.

\ Although the sun and moon are unstained,
\ Five veils exist which manage to obscure them.
\ These consist of clouds and fog and smoke,
\ The face of Rahu and dust as well.

\ #19.

\ And so it is, as well, for mind's clear light.
\ Five obscurations manage to obscure it:
\ Desire, laziness, and ill intent,
\ And agitation too, as well as doubt.

L4: [b. Why the Dharmadhatu would not be cleared away by clearing obstructions.]

L5: [The example of fire cleaning soiled cloth. (20-21)]

L5: [The example of teaching emptiness. (22)]

\ #20.

\ And just as fire can clean a soiled cloth
\ Miscolored with various marks and stains,
\ And just as when submerged within the fire
\ The marks are burnt away but not the cloth,

\ #21.

\ In just this way the mind, which is radiant clarity,
\ Is soiled by desire and the other stains,
\ But the fire of primordial awareness burns up these afflictions,
\ Without, however, burning away the radiant clarity.

\ #22.

\ In the sutras of the Teacher, (i.e. The Prajnaparamita Sutra)
\ In whatever ways the Victor described emptiness,
\ All of these ways can rectify afflictions;
\ None can diminish the potential.

\ #23.

\ Just as water deep inside the earth
\ Lies untouched and perfectly clean,
\ Just so can primordial awareness rest within affliction
\ And remain completely free of any flaw.

L4: [c. Why the Dharmadhatu is not the same as self.]

L5: [The example of the Dharmadhatu not being male or female. (24,25)]

\ #24.

\ The Dharmadhatu is not the self.
\ It is neither man nor woman either;

\ And being beyond everything perceivable,
\ Just how could it be thought of as oneself?

\ #25.
\ Within phenomena, all free of passion,
\ Male and female cannot be seen.
\ For the sake of taming those that desire blinds,
\ Terms like male and female are taught.

L2: [D. The Remedy that removes obstructions. (26-35)
L3: [D.1 The wisdom that realizes the selflessness of the individual. (26)]
L3: [D.2. The wisdom that realizes the emptiness of phenomena. (26)]
L3: [D.3. Realization of the emptiness of phenomena. (26)]

\ #26.
\ “Impermanent” and “suffering” and “empty”:
\ Three designations purifying mind;
\ But what refines the mind unto its utmost
\ Is the teaching that nothing has any self-nature.

L4: [a. The reason that it is necessary to understand that phenomena are empty.]
L5: [Why kleshas must be cleared away. (27)
L5: [Why thoughts must be cleared away. (27)]

\ #27.
\ As a child in a pregnant woman’s womb
\ Is there and yet is not yet visible,
\ Likewise when covered by afflictions,
\ The Dharmadhatu is not visible.

L4: [b. The reason that it is possible to understand that phenomena are empty.]
L5: [i. An explanation of how it is possible to understand that thoughts of samsara are empty. (28)]

\ #28.
\ From thinking “I” and “mine,”
\ And from thinking of names and grounds for these,
\ Four conceptual patterns come to be—
\ Due to elements and compounds too.

L5: [ii. An explanation of how it is possible to understand that thoughts of nirvana are empty. (29)]

\ #29.
\ The Buddhas do not perceive
\ Any characteristics of their aspiration prayers,
\ Because the Buddhas are of the nature of self-awareness
\ And have their own permanently pure being.

L5: [iii -- Abstract thoughts are all imaginary. (30)]

\ #30.
\ Just as the horns on rabbits' heads
\ Do not exist except in the imagination,
\ Phenomena are all precisely like that,
\ Merely imagined, having no existence.

L5: [iv -- Uniquely characterized phenomena do not exist. (31)]

\ #31.
\ Because they are not made of solid atoms
\ The horns of oxen cannot be seen, either.
\ Since not even tiny atoms exist,
\ How could one imagine that something made of atoms exists?

L5: [v -- Why sentient beings are confused. (32)]

\ #32.
\ Since arising is a dependent occurrence
\ And cessation is a dependent occurrence,
\ There is not one single thing that exists—
\ How could the naive believe that there is?

L5: [vi -- The Buddha teaches the nature of phenomena to be freedom from extremes. (33)]

\ #33.
\ Using examples like rabbits' and oxen's horns,
\ The Thus Gone One has proven
\ That all phenomena are nothing other than the Middle Way.

L5: [vii -- It is impossible to describe this freedom. (34-35)]

\ #34.
\ Just as one sees
\ The forms of the sun, moon, and stars
\ Reflected in vessels of perfectly clear water,
\ So is the consummation of signs and characteristics.

\ #35.
\ That which is virtuous in the beginning, middle, and end (i.e. the Dharmadhatu;
see verse 8)
\ Is undeceiving and is marked by constancy,
\ And is free from self in this very way.
\ How could that be thought of as "I" or "mine"?

L2: [E. Dharmadhatu called by different names. (36-43)]

\ #36.
\ Just as water, during the summertime,
\ Is spoken of as being something warm,
\ And the very same water, throughout the winter season,

\ Is spoken of as being something cold, (i.e. No permanent characteristics. So no absolute discrimination or labeling.)

\ #37.

\ Those ensnared in the net of the afflictions
\ Are referred to by the label, “sentient beings”;
\ The very same when freed of states afflicted
\ As “Buddhas” are revered.

\ #38.

\ When eye and form assume their right relation,
\ Appearances appear without a blur.
\ Since these neither arise nor cease,
\ They are the Dharmadhatu, though they are imagined to be otherwise.

\ #39.

\ When sound and ear assume their right relation,
\ A consciousness free of thought occurs.
\ These three are in essence the Dharmadhatu, free of other characteristics,
\ But they become “hearing” when thought of conceptually.

\ #40.

\ Dependent upon the nose and an odor, one smells.
\ And as with the example of form there is neither arising nor cessation,
\ But in dependence upon the nose-consciousness’s experience,
\ The Dharmadhatu is thought to be smell.

\ #41.

\ The tongue’s nature is emptiness.
\ The sphere of taste is voidness as well.
\ These are in essence the Dharmadhatu
\ And are not the causes of the taste consciousness.(i.e. Purification of the perceptions)

\ #42.

\ The pure body’s essence,
\ The characteristics of the object touched,
\ The tactile consciousness free of conditions—
\ These are called the Dharmadhatu. (i.e. Purification of the perceptions)

\ #43.

\ The phenomena that appear to the mental consciousness, the chief of them all,
\ Are conceptualized and then superimposed.
\ When this activity is abandoned, phenomena’s lack of self-essence is known.
\ Knowing this, meditate on the Dharmadhatu.

\ #44.

\ And so is all that is seen or heard or smelled,
\ Tasted, touched, and imagined,
\ When yogis [and yoginis]
\ understand these in this manner,
\ All their wonderful qualities are brought to consummation.

\ #45.
\ Perception's doors in eyes and ears and nose,
\ In tongue and body and the mental gate—
\ All these six are utterly pure.
\ These consciousnesses' purity itself is suchness' defining characteristic.

L3: [Self-Awareness is the cause and the result of the liberating wisdom.]

\ #46.
\ See how the mind has two aspects:
\ It can be worldly, it can transcend the world.
\ From clinging to a self comes samsara;
\ When there is self-awareness, there is suchness.

\ #47.
\ The ceasing of desire is nirvana,
\ As is stupidity's and anger's end.
\ For these to cease is Buddhahood itself,
\ The refuge of ennobled beings.

L3: [It is a matter of seeing, or not]

\ #48.
\ One either proceeds with knowledge or proceeds without—
\ Samsara and nirvana both have their source in the body.
\ Either you are bound by your own thinking,
\ Or, if you know the true nature, you are free.

\ #49.
\ Enlightenment is neither near nor far.
\ It does not go away nor come to you.
\ Right there within the cage of your afflictions,
\ Either you will see it or you will not.

L3: [To be able to "see" one needs to accumulate enough of both merit and wisdom.]

\ #50.
\ Abiding in the lamp of prajna
\ Will lead to peace, the most sublime there is;
\ Examining for self is the way to abide.
\ This is taught in scores of sutra texts.

\ #51.
\ The strengths, all ten, assist the immature
\ With a blessing force like that of the full moon.
\ But as long as they are caught up in afflictions,
\ Beings will fail to see the Thus Gone Ones.

\ #52.
\ Just as those in hungry spirit realms
\ See the sea as dry before their eyes,
\ Just so with those in ignorance's grip
\ Who think the Buddhas don't exist. (i.e. Those who do not see.)

\ #53.
\ For lesser beings and those with lesser merit,
\ No matter what transcendent conquerors do,
\ It is like placing a precious jewel
\ In the hands of someone never known to see. (i.e. Those who do not see.)

\ #54.
\ For beings who have amassed sufficient merit
\ The signs are radiant with shining light.
\ All thirty-two ablaze with brilliant glory—
\ Beings like these in Buddhas' presence dwell.

\ #55.
\ The protectors inhabit forms of bodily dimension
\ For many kalpas, and many yet to come;
\ However, in order to tame disciples
\ They demonstrate different activities in the expanse that tames.
\ (i.e. For those who do see, the signs and teachings are right there to see.)

\ #56.
\ On definitely targeting its goal
\ Consciousness engages in its object,
\ Within the purity of self-awareness
\ The bodhisattvas' grounds all inherently abide.

\ #57.
\ The mighty lords' magnificent abode,
\ The beautiful domain of Akanistha,
\ And consciousness, the three of these together
\ Can be blended into one, I dare to say.

\ #58.
\ For the immature it renders total knowledge,
\ For noble ones affords variety,
\ To the mighty gods it grants long life,
\ It is the cause for life spanning kalpas' long march.

\ #59.
\ It is that which guards the outer realm of beings,
\ And preserves their lives as well through countless kalpas,
\ It is that which makes it possible for life
\ To persevere within all living beings;

\ #60.
\ This the very cause that knows no end;
\ The results of such a cause are endless too;
\ When imperceptibility is realized,
\ Prajna becomes the condition for nirvana's dawning.

L3: [Transmutation : awareness transforms the causes of suffering into purity, into nirvana]

\ #61.
\ Enlightenment should not be thought far off

\ Nor should it be considered close at hand;
\ When objects, six in kind, do not appear,
\ The genuine is known just as it is.

\ #62.
\ Just as milk and water mixed together
\ Are present in the very same container
\ But a crane would drink the milk and not the water,
\ The case of transformation is like this:

L3: [The gradual path : turning inward, purifying the mind, seeking the true nature of the mind and of everything, the two accumulations, the six paramitas, the two bodhicitta, the ten bhumis]

\ #63.
\ There is primordial awareness, there are covering afflictions,
\ Where both are found together in one body.
\ But the primordial awareness is what yogis [and yoginis]
\ choose to take
\ And leave the ignorance behind.

\ #64.
\ For as long as “I” and “mine” are held to exist
\ And the outside is imagined as well;
\ When both forms of selflessness are seen
\ The seed of existence is destroyed;

\ #65.
\ The Dharmadhatu is the ground
\ For Buddhahood, nirvana, purity, and permanence;
\ The immature impute the two kinds of self,
\ And yogis [and yoginis]
\ abide without these two.

\ #66.
\ In giving one endures a range of hardships,
\ And ethics gathers in the benefit of beings,
\ Through patience one performs the good of all,
\ These three will cause the potential to unfold.

\ #67.
\ Through being diligent in all the teachings
\ And steeping mind in meditative samadhi,
\ Through thorough reliance on prajna,
\ Enlightenment will grow and flourish.

\ #68.
\ Prajna endowed with skillful means,
\ Prayers of aspiration that purify,
\ The mastery of strengths, and thereby wisdom,
\ These four will cause the potential to unfold.

\ #69.

\ “Do not commit yourselves to Bodhicitta”;
\ There are some who speak such dire word.
\ But were there no bodhisattvas to develop,
\ The Dharmakaya would be out of reach.

\ #70.
\ One who throws away the seed of sugarcane
\ But wants to taste the sweetness its fruit yields
\ Will, without the seed,
\ Have no sugar at all.

\ #71.
\ When someone values seed from sugarcane,
\ Maintains them well, and works to make them grow,
\ A crop of sweetest sugar can be harvested.
\ And just as what has come about like this,

\ #72.
\ Through valuing the Bodhicitta fully, (i.e. Aspiring Bodhicitta)
\ Maintaining it, and working with it well,
\ The arhats and pratyeka-Buddhas arise
\ As so the perfectly enlightened Buddhas.

\ #73.
\ Just as seeds of rice and other plants
\ Are treated by the farmer with great care,
\ Aspirants who wish to make the greatest journey
\ Are treated by their guides with greatest care.

\ #74.
\ Just as on the fourteenth day of waning,
\ The moon is barely visible at all,
\ For aspirants who wish to make the greatest journey
\ The kayas are but barely visible.

\ #75.
\ Just as the moon when it is new
\ Visibly grows larger bit by bit,
\ Those who have reached the bhumis
\ See the Dharmakaya more and more.

\ #76.
\ Just as on the fifteenth day of waxing
\ The moon has reached completion and is full,
\ Just so for those who’ve reached the bhumis’ end point
\ The Dharmakaya shines complete and clear.

\ #77.
\ The Bodhicitta, perfectly engendered, (i.e. Engaging mind of Bodhicitta)
\ Through stable and consistent dedication
\ To the Buddha, to the dharma, and to the sangha
\ Does not decrease, and develops more and more.

\ #78.

\ When the four meaner deeds have been relinquished,
\ And the four better deeds have been embraced,
\ Just then is thatness definitely realized.
\ This is what “the joyful” thoroughly signifies.

\ #79.

\ “The stained” are those whom shifting patterns mark
\ With the constant stains of desire and the rest;
\ Whoever has grown free of flaw is pure,
\ And this is what “the stainless” signifies.

\ #80.

\ Once afflictions’ net is rent asunder,
\ A flawless wisdom shines, and with its light
\ Purifies all darkness past all limit,
\ Removing it, and hence “illuminates.”

\ #81.

\ It shines with light that is always pure;
\ Primordial awareness, which eliminates diversion,
\ Is steeped in light which shines on every side.
\ This bhumi hence is known as “radiant.”

\ #82.

\ Since awareness, feats, and crafts are mastered here,
\ The range of meditative concentrations themselves,
\ And kleshas difficult to purify completely have been vanquished,
\ So “difficult to overcome” is its name.

\ #83.

\ With enlightenment of all three types included,
\ And everything perfected and complete,
\ With birth no more, disintegration finished,
\ This level is “directly manifest.”

\ #84.

\ Since the bodhisattvas’ web of brilliant light with its display
\ Reaches every point in their surroundings,
\ And since they have crossed samsara’s swampy ocean,
\ They are called “the ones who reach far.”

\ #85.

\ Definitively guided by the Buddhas,
\ In contact with primordial awareness’s sea,
\ Spontaneous and free of any effort,
\ “Unshaken” by the maras’ echelons.

\ #86.

\ Since yogis [and yoginis]
\ at this level have perfected
\ The dialectics used to teach all points

\ Connected with precise correct awareness,
\ It takes the name, “select intelligence.”

\ #87.
\ The body at this point is made of primordial awareness,
\ Is equal to an unpolluted sky;
\ The vigilance afforded by the Buddhas
\ Forms the “cloud of dharma” everywhere.

\ #88.
\ The ground of the qualities of Buddhas,
\ The fruits of training fully held in hand,
\ The transformation, when perfectly completed,
\ Is given “Dharmakaya” as its name.

L3: [This simple awareness gives inconceivable results, transcendence of all : subject and objects]

\ #89.
\ Samsara’s tendencies are ponderable,
\ Freedom from tendencies is not;
\ You are completely inconceivable.
\ Who could ever have the power to know you?

\ #90.
\ Beyond the pale of speech entirely,
\ And not an object senses’ powers grasp,
\ Realizing you takes the mind’s awareness.
\ I bow in praise of all that you embrace.

\ #91.
\ The illustrious heirs of the Buddhas,
\ By following the path step by step,
\ With the primordial awareness that attends the “cloud of dharma,” (i.e. The tenth bhumi.)
\ Can see emptiness, the pure mode of being.

L3: [Result: Buddhahood -- pure being, seeing everything completely pure, inconceivable powers, helping all sentient beings with adapted skilful means out of the great compassion]

\ #92.
\ As soon as mind has utterly been cleansed,
\ Samsara’s caged confinement broken through,
\ These will then assume their rightful place,
\ Upon a wondrous lotus flower seat,

\ #93.
\ Utterly surrounded on all sides
\ By lotus flowers, many tens of millions,
\ Each endowed with tantalizing anthers,
\ Their leaves alight with many precious gems.

\ #94.

\ The Buddhas with ten powers are replete.
 \ Their fearlessness sets others' minds at ease.
 \ Their qualities are inconceivable.
 \ From simplicity's domain they never fall.

 \ #95.
 \ Through excellently practicing all paths,
 \ They've gathered merit, garnered wisdom full.
 \ So they are like the harvest moon on high
 \ Surrounded by its court, the clustered stars.

 \ #96.
 \ With a hand like the sun,
 \ Buddha holds a flawless gem with light ablaze.
 \ With this the Enlightened One empowers the most senior heirs,
 \ This abhisheka greatest of them all.

 \ #97.
 \ The mighty yogis [and yoginis]
 \ living on this plane
 \ Look with god-like eyes on worldly beings,
 \ Inferior because of mental blindness,
 \ Whom suffering can frighten and distract.

 \ #98.
 \ And having seen them, light rays from their bodies
 \ Shine, without the slightest strain at all,
 \ And open up what gates there are for all
 \ Who wander in their own confusion's dark.

L3: [Superiority of this vehicle]

\ #99.
 \ Those who have reached nirvana with remainder
 \ Believe they have reached nirvana that's without;
 \ The nirvana that is reached in this tradition
 \ Is a freeing of the mind of any flaw.

 \ #100.
 \ Sentient beings' essence free of substance
 \ Is the sphere that is encountered on this plane.
 \ Seeing this is the royal Bodhicitta,
 \ The Dharmakaya free of every flaw.

 \ #101.
 \ When the Dharmakaya is seen in all its purity
 \ This is transformation, wisdom's sea,
 \ And from its depths a wealth of precious jewels
 \ Fulfill beings' needs as they have always wished.

 \ In Praise of the Dharmadhatu composed by the great Acharya Nagarjuna is hereby completed.

[End]

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