

Comments on the Karikas

Nagarjuna — DIALECTICAL · Nagarjuna

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Comments on
Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyamakakarikas
"Fundamental of the Middle Way"

(Note: This is a copy of a working document;
I reserve the right to change my mind anytime about any of this.)

VERSES FROM :
Frederick J. Streng,
Emptiness - A Study in Religious Meaning
(Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1967);
Appendix A & B; pp. 183-227

L1: [Contents]

L1: [CONTENTS]

L1: [INTRODUCTION TO THE APPENDIX A]

L1: [INTRODUCTORY VERSES]

L1: [IS THERE ANYTHING THAT IS THE CAUSE OF SAMSAARA AND THAT WE CAN CONTROL: A
PATH]

L2: [SECTION 1 - AN ANALYSIS OF CONDITIONING CAUSES (PRATYAYA) (CONDITIONS) – 14
VERSES –

[CAUSALITY, DEPENDENT ORIGINATION, DETERMINISM, CONTROL]

L3: [No real / inherent causes, but not completely non-existent either]

L4: [No absolute cause anywhere, but nothing is without a cause]

L4: [Nothing exist and change: A cause cannot remain the same, nor change into something
different / other-existence, nor become completely non-existent]

L4: [No effect with or without a cause. No cause with or without an effect. – using the
case of motive.]

L4: [Causes are conventional truths, but never absolute]

L4: [No cause for anything real, non-real, both, or neither]

L4: [Preview of the cases of perception and consciousness moments: conceptual
interdependence & non-duality]

L3: [No real / inherent effects or products, but not completely non-existent either]

L4: [Empty causes can result only in an empty product]

L4: [The product is not inside, nor outside of the aggregate]

L4: [Products are not completely non-existent or useless either, they are just never absolute]

L3: [No real / inherent causality, but not completely non-existent either]

L4: [No absolute causality / determinism from empty causes]

L4: [Causal relations are not completely non-existent or useless either, they are just never absolute]

L3: [LINEAR RÉSUMÉ OF SECTION 1 – ON CONDITIONS]

L4: [No inherent causes, but not completely non-existent]

L4: [No inherent products, but not completely non-existent]

L4: [No inherent causality, but not completely non-existent]

L3: [THEMATIC RÉSUMÉ OF SECTION 1]

L3: [ABOUT LINES & CYCLES OF CAUSALITY]

L2: [SECTION 2 - AN ANALYSIS OF "GOING TO" (CHANGE OR MOVEMENT) – 25 VERSES – [THE ILLUSION OF CONTINUITY THROUGH CHANGE OR MOVEMENT]]

L3: [The two arguments]

L4: [No permanent goer, no different goers, no real going]

L4: [Opponent: The goer is changed by the going and this is visible by his activity & displacement]

L3: [Arguments against a goer that change with its activity]

L4: [The emptiness of “visible activity and displacement”]

L5: [The beginning of this activity or displacement cannot be found]

L5: [The problems with inherent independent activity and displacement]

L6: [There would be a going process without a goer]

L6: [There would be two kinds of activity and displacement]

L6: [There would be two goers]

L4: [The emptiness of the goer: not existent, not non-existent]

L5: [The goer (going) is not inherently existing]

L5: [The goer (going) is not completely non-existing either]

L4: [The emptiness of the going]

L5: [There is no real / inherent going]

L5: [The problems with an inherent going]

L6: [There would be a goer without a going]

L6: [There would be two kinds of activity & displacement]

L4: [The emptiness of the origination and cessation of the going]

L5: [The origination of the going cannot be found]

L5: [The three states of the goer relative to the limits of the going are not real; they cannot be found]

L5: [They are mere co-dependently arisen concepts, never absolute]

L4: [The emptiness of the three times relative to the going]

L5: [The goer (not-going-yet) is not inherently existing, not completely non-existing either]

L5: [The goer (continuing-the-going) is not inherently existing]

L5: [The goer (not-going-anymore) is not inherently existing]

L5: [There is no permanent goer coming from any of the three times]

L4: [The goer and going are not the same, not different / separate]

L5: [If the goer and the activity were the same]

L5: [If the goer and the going/action were separate / different]

L3: [What are they then ?]

L4: [Non-duality: not one, not two]

L4: [Conceptual interdependence; not existent, not non-existent]

L4: [This applies to the three, including the destination]

L3: [Conclusions]

L4: [The reality: not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither]

L4: [Emptiness of the three: no continuity, no discontinuity]

L3: [RÉSUMÉ OF SECTION 2 – ON CHANGE / MOVEMENT]

L4: [The emptiness of activity and movement, goer, going]

L4: [No origination & cessation of going, no real change in the goer]

L4: [The relation between the goer, the going, and the destination]

L4: [Conclusions: non-duality -- emptiness and interdependence]

L3: [Initial-goer(i)/motive -- > goer going(ii) -- > resulting-goer(iii)]

L3: [The illusion of continuity through change or movement]

L1: [THE ELEMENTARY COMPONENTS OF REALITY (AYATANAS, SKANDHAS, DHATUS, CETASIKA), AND THE THREE STAGES OF BECOMING OF ALL PRODUCTS AND MOMENTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS]

L2: [SECTION 3 - AN ANALYSIS OF "VISION" AND OTHER SENSE-FACULTIES (THE SENSE-FIELDS) -- 9 -- [THE SIX SENSES, DIRECT PERCEPTION, THE SIX OBJECTS / WORLD]]

L3: [The traditional understanding]

L3: [Nagarjuna maintains: same conclusions as section 2]

L3: [Consequences on Dependent Origination]

L3: [RÉSUMÉ OF SECTION 3 – ON OBJECTS OF SENSATIONS]

L4: [The emptiness of perception, seer, seeing]

L4: [No origination & cessation of seeing, no real change in the seer]

L4: [The relation between the seer, the seeing, and the objects]

L4: [Conclusions: non-duality -- emptiness and interdependence]

L3: [Initial-seer(i)/ sense-organ -- > seer seeing(ii) -- > resulting-seer(iii) with knowledge]

L3: [The illusion of a self acquiring knowledge]

L2: [SECTION 4 - AN ANALYSIS OF THE "GROUPS OF UNIVERSAL ELEMENTS" (SKANDHAS) (THE AGGREGATES) - 9 -- [THE FIVE AGGREGATES, EXPLAINED/CAUSED BY THEIR BASIC UNDERLYING CAUSES; EMPTINESS OF EMPTINESS]]

L3: [Emptiness of "visible form" vs. "elements" because interdependent]

L3: [No absolute, no discontinuity]

L3: [Non-duality of "visible form" vs. "elements"]

L3: [Generalization to all composites (skandhas)]

L3: [Even emptiness is not the "primal cause" either]

L2: [SECTION 5 - AN ANALYSIS OF THE "IRREDUCIBLE ELEMENTS" (DHATUS) (THE ELEMENTS) – 8 – [THE IRREDUCIBLE ELEMENTS DEFINED BY THEIR BASIC CHARACTERISTICS]]

L3: [Interdependence of the trio: the characteristic defines a characterized]

L3: [Their conventional existence]

L3: [The real nature of Nirvana, not an ordinary cessation]

L2: [SECTION 6 - AN ANALYSIS OF DESIRE (RAGA) AND ONE WHO DESIRES (RAKTA) [IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR SEPARATENESS AND CONCOMITANCE] (AFFECTION AND THE PERSON AFFECTED) –

[CONCOMITANCE, A PERSON AND HIS ACQUIRED STRONG HABITS, THE CONCOMITANT FACTORS OF CONSCIOUSNESS]]

L3: [Interdependence of the subject-having-dispositions and the complement/dispositions]

L3: [The case of the verb-having / concomitance / being one]

L3: [The duality: being one (same) or two (separate / different)]

L3: [Non-duality of everything, of samsara and Nirvana]

L2: [SECTION 7 - AN ANALYSIS OF COMPOSITE PRODUCTS (SAMSKRITA) (ORIGINATION, DURATION, AND

DECAY) – 34 – [THE THREE STAGES OF BECOMING: ORIGINATION, DURATION / TRANSFORMATION,

CESSATION; IMPERMANENCE OF ALL PRODUCTS AND MOMENTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS]]

L3: [Case 1: Origination ... cannot be basic characteristics.]

L3: [Case 2: Origination ... cannot be acquired secondary characteristics.]

L4: [2.1 Origination ... cannot be caused by another cause without creating infinite regress.]

L4: [2.2 Origination ... cannot be caused by the product.]

L4: [2.3 Origination ... cannot be self-caused and causing the origination ... of the product.]

L5: [The false simile of the light illuminating itself and other.]

L6: [Light and darkness cannot be the same, or different.]

L6: [Light and darkness cannot be the simultaneous, or separate in time.]

L6: [So self-caused origination ... cannot be justified with this simile.]

L5: [Searching for this self-caused origination also causing the beginning of the product.]

L6: [The exact time of the beginning of this self-caused origination cannot be found]

L6: [The exact time of the beginning of the originating/origination cannot be found ? emptiness of the action/origination]

L4: [The emptiness of the three characteristics]

L5: [No inherent origination]

L5: [No inherent duration]

L5: [About the duration of causality]

L5: [No cessation of anything real, non-real, both, or neither]

L3: [Conclusion – emptiness of all products because there is no real origination, duration and cessation – but they exist conventionally]

L1: [ABOUT THE AGENT]

L2: [SECTION 8 - AN ANALYSIS OF THE PRODUCT (KARMA) AND THE PRODUCER (KARAKA) (ACTION AND

AGENT) – 13 – [TETRALEMMA, CYCLE OF SAMSAARA, AND LIBERATION]]

L3: [Reality cannot be existent, non-existent, both, neither.]

L4: [Analyzing the cases where everything is either inherently existent or completely non-existent]

L4: [Analyzing the cases of a reality that is both existent and non-existent together.]

L4: [Analyzing the cases of a reality that is neither existent nor non-existent.]

L3: [Interdependence: the cycle producer ? product ? producer.]

L3: [The samsaric cycle being-in-samsara ? karma ? being-in-samsara, a cycle without anything inherently existing in it.]

L2: [SECTION 9 - AN ANALYSIS OF "THE PRE-EXISTENT REALITY" (PURVA) (GRASPER AND GRASPING) –

12 – [NO PERMANENT OWNER OF THE SIX SENSES, PERCEIVER BEFORE PERCEPTION]]

L3: [The affirmation of a preexisting owner ...]

L3: [Owner and senses are both empty because interdependent]

L3: [There is no owner of each senses]

L3: [No owner in the basic parts either]

L3: [No owner, no possessions: six senses]

L3: [The real non-dual nature of the owner]

L2: [SECTION 10 - AN ANALYSIS OF FIRE AND KINDLING (FIRE AND FUEL) – 16 – [NON-DUALITY OF SELF & THE FIVE AGGREGATES OF CLINGING; NON-DUALITY OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION AND EMPTINESS]]

L3: [Fire and kindling are not the same, not different]

L3: [Fire and kindling are interdependent]

L3: [It is inherent existence that would make extinguishing / liberation impossible]

L3: [They cannot exist separately and be united later]

L3: [Dependence of the illusory-self cannot be used to prove inherent existence of the five aggregates]

L3: [There is no real dependent origination, but it is not completely non-existent either]

L3: [Non-duality of fire and kindling, of the self and the five aggregates]

L3: [Non-duality of dependent origination and emptiness]

L2: [SECTION 11 - AN ANALYSIS OF THE PAST (PURVA) AND FUTURE LIMITS (APARAKITI) [OF EXISTENCE] (SAMSARA) – 8 – [EXPLAINING SAMSARA AND “NO-SELF” WITHOUT USING ANY INHERENT DHARMA.]]

L3: [No inherent birth, life, death, rebirth]

L3: [Birth and death are not separate / different, not simultaneous / the same.]

L3: [Nothing exist and is impermanent]

L1: [THE REAL NATURE OF DUKKHA (NEXT 3 CHAPTERS)]

L2: [SECTION 12 - AN ANALYSIS OF SORROW (DUKKHA) (SUFFERING) – 10 – [DUKKHA CANNOT BE CAUSED BY A PERSONALITY, INTERNAL, EXTERNAL, BOTH OR NEITHER]]

L3: [Dukkha is not produced by a personality (internal, external, both, neither)]

L4: [Dukkha is not caused by our own personality]

L4: [Dukkha is not caused by another personality]

L4: [Dukkha is not caused by both self and other personality]

L3: [External things are not produced by a personality (internal, external, both, neither)]

L2: [SECTION 13 - AN ANALYSIS OF CONDITIONED ELEMENTS (SAMSKARA) (THE REAL) – 8 – [DUKKHA IS NOT DUE TO THINGS THAT EXIST AND ARE IMPERMANENT]]

L3: [The essential dukkha nature of all things – because impermanent]

L3: [Inherent existence would make impermanence impossible]

L3: [A changed thing is not the same thing, nor a different thing]

L3: [Nothing exists and change, exists and is impermanent]

L3: [Nothing exists and is empty either – emptiness of emptiness]

L3: [Emptiness is not the absolute nature of everything]

L2: [SECTION 14 - AN ANALYSIS OF UNIFICATION (SAMSARGA) (COMBINATION) – 8 – [THE INSEPARABILITY OF THE THREE REALMS; OR OF BODY, SPEECH AND MIND]]

L3: [All trio ‘subject, verb-action, complement’ are interdependent, inseparable, non-dual]

L3: [Differentness, then unification are impossible]

L1: [ABOUT ANY SELF-NATURE -- THAT WOULD TRANSMIGRATE]

L2: [SECTION 15 - AN ANALYSIS OF A SELF-EXISTENT THING (SVABHAVA) (BEING AND

NON-BEING) – 11

– [THE PROVISIONAL AND DEFINITIVE TEACHINGS; A CHANGING THING OR BEING IS NOT THE SAME, NOR DIFFERENT]]

L3: [No possible three stages of becoming of an inherent thing (origination, duration and transformation, cessation)]

L3: [“Those sutras that are definitive and those requiring further interpretation” (HHDL)]

L3: [A changing thing or being is not the same, nor different]

L3: [Incompatibility of inherent existence and dependent origination]

L3: [The Middle Way between the two extremes of existence and non-existence of things and beings]

L2: [SECTION 16 - AN ANALYSIS OF BEING BOUND (BANDHANA) AND RELEASE (MOKSA) (BONDAGE AND

RELEASE) – 10 – [NO PERSONAL REBIRTHS OR LIBERATION]]

L3: [Nothing permanent in any dharma that could support real rebirths, and individual Liberation]

L4: [The acquisitions / conditioning, causes of conditioned rebirths, are not inherently existing, nor completely non-existing]

L4: [No permanent dharma that could explain real rebirths]

L4: [But rebirths are not completely non-existent either]

L4: [There is no real binding, purification, Liberation]

L3: [The analysis of “acquisitions binding the self like “goer going to the destination”]

L3: [There is no personal Liberation or purification]

L2: [SECTION 17 - AN ANALYSIS OF ACTION (KARMA) AND ITS PRODUCT (PHALA) (ACTION AND ITS

RESULTS) – 33 – [THE WHOLE CHAIN OF KARMA FORMATION AND ITS FRUITS IS EMPTY, LIKE A MAGIC

TRICK]]

L3: [The opponents theories]

L4: [An opponent presents the traditional causal theory of action:]

L4: [Another opponent argues by the imagery of a process:]

L4: [A third opponent argues for an imperishable element:]

L3: [Nagarjuna’s answers]

L4: [Inherent actions would imply no utility for any morality]

L4: [No absolute wholesome or unwholesome actions and their fruits]

L4: [Emptiness of the whole chain of karma and its fruits]

L4: [The whole chain is like a magical trick]

L2: [SECTION 18 - AN ANALYSIS OF THE INDIVIDUAL SELF (ATMA) (THE SELF AND PHENOMENA) – 12 –

[NIRVANA IS REALIZING THE NON-DUAL NATURE OF THE SELF AND EVERYTHING, BEYOND CAUSALITY,

PRODUCTION, CONCEPTUALIZATION, OR THE FOUR EXTREMES]]

L3: [The real nature of the self]

L3: [The result of seeing the real non-dual nature of self and everything]

L3: [Provisional and definitive teachings about the self]

L4: [Beyond the two extremes]

L4: [Beyond conceptualization]

L4: [Beyond accepting or rejecting the four extremes]

L4: [The union of dependent origination and emptiness]

L1: [ELEMENTS OF A DISCRETE MODEL]

L2: [SECTION 19 - AN ANALYSIS OF TIME (KALA) (TIME) – 6 – [NO REAL SPACE-TIME LIMITS OF ANYTHING, NO REAL SPACE OR TIME]]

L3: [Emptiness of the 3 times because of interdependence]

L3: [Emptiness of any space-time limits]

L3: [No absolute space-time or space-time interval]

L2: [SECTION 20 - AN ANALYSIS OF THE AGGREGATE (SAMAGRI) OF CAUSES AND CONDITIONS (CAUSE AND EFFECT) - 24]

L3: [A real product (self) cannot emerge from its aggregate of causes and conditions, nor from another]

L3: [A cause and the product cannot be simultaneous, nor separate in time]

L3: [The aggregate and the product cannot be simultaneous, nor separate in time]

L3: [A cause doesn't stay the same, nor change into something different]

L3: [The product is not caused by its parts or by other parts]

L3: [There is no real origination, nor cessation of a product]

L3: [Non-duality]

L3: [The Middle Way between existence and non-existence of the three: cause (aggregate), production, product]

L2: [SECTION 21 - AN ANALYSIS OF ORIGINATION (SAMBHAVA) AND DISAPPEARANCE (VIBHAVA) (COMING TO BE AND PASSING AWAY) - 21]

L3: [Two consecutive moments cannot be simultaneous or separate in time]

L4: [Cessation of the cause and origination of the effect cannot be simultaneous or separate in time]

L4: [There is no real origination and cessation]

L4: [There cannot be any real origination and cessation of anything existent, non-existent, both, neither]

L4: [There is no self-origination, other-origination, both, neither]

L3: [Emptiness doesn't deny the continuity, dependent origination, and the possible Liberation]

L3: [Emptiness of the chain of existence / rebirths]

L1: [ABOUT THE GOAL & ULTIMATE REALITY]

L2: [SECTION 22 - AN ANALYSIS OF THE "FULLY COMPLETED" (TATHAGATA) (THE BUDDHA) - 16]

L3: [A. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE TATHAGATA ? CAN WE USE DEPENDENT ORIGINATION TO EXPRESS THE TATHAGATA ?]

L3: [B. CAN WE USE "EMPTINESS" TO EXPRESS THE TATHAGATA ?]

L3: [C. WHAT CAN WE USE TO EXPRESS THE TATHAGATA ?]

L2: [SECTION 23 - AN ANALYSIS OF ERRORS (VIPARYASA) (THE PERVERTED VIEWS) - 25]

L2: [SECTION 24 - AN ANALYSIS OF THE HOLY TRUTHS (ARYASATYA) (THE NOBLE TRUTHS) - 40]

L3: [An opponent claims:]

L3: [Nagarjuna replies:]

L3: [(B - Self-existence -- of emptiness -- do not permit the flow / D.O.)]

L3: [(A - Emptiness -- of emptiness -- recognizes the flow, D.O., the Path)]

L3: [(B - Self-existence -- of emptiness -- do not permit the flow / D.O.)]

L2: [SECTION 25 - AN ANALYSIS OF NIRVANA (NIRVANA) - 24]
 L3: [WHAT IS NIRVANA?]
 L4: [An opponent says:]
 L4: [Nagarjuna replies:]
 L5: [CASE 1 - an ordinary thing]
 L5: [CASE 2 - a non existent anymore - the negation of the first]
 L5: [CASE 3 - it is both]
 L5: [CASE 4 - it is neither - the negation of both]
 L4: [WHAT CHANGES FROM SAMSAARA TO NIRVANA? IS BEING DIFFERENT?]
 L4: [NOT THE SAME, NOT DIFFERENT -- THEN WHAT CHANGES?]
 L2: [SECTION 26 - AN ANALYSIS OF THE TWELVE COMPONENTS (DVADASANGA) (THE TWELVE SPOKES) - 12]
 L3: [(THE CASE OF SAMSAARA :)]
 L3: [(THE CASE OF NIRVANA :)]
 L2: [SECTION 27 - AN ANALYSIS OF THE VIEWS (DRSTI) ABOUT REALITY (DOGMAS) - 30]
 L3: [(A. SEARCHING FOR A BEING IN THE CYCLE OF SAMSAARA)]
 L4: [(ABOUT THE DUALITY "SELF" vs. "ACQUISITION":)]
 L3: [(B. SEARCHING FOR A "DIVINE SOUL" IN A TEMPORARY "BODY")]
 L3: [(C. CONCLUSION ABOUT A SELF IN SAMSAARA)]
 L3: [(D. SEARCHING FOR THE CYCLE OF SAMSAARA ITSELF

L1: [Introduction to the Appendix A]

\ A translation of MulamadhyamakaKarikas by Nagarjuna, as preserved in Candrakirti's Prasannapada. The Sanskrit text used for this translation is found in MulamadhyamakaKarikas (mabhyamikasutra) de Nagariuna aver la Prasannapada, Commentaire de Candrakirti, Louis de La Vallée Poussin, ed. (St Petersburg, 1913).

The Fundamental of the Middle Way (MulamadhyamakaKarikas) is a series of about 450 mnemonic verses. In the famous commentary Prasannapada of Candrakirti, it is divided into twenty-seven chapters of unequal length. There is a development of thought from the first through the twenty-fifth chapter (which may originally have been the final chapter). It is the movement from a rather formal and stylized analysis to an almost impassioned expression of the highest truth. Chapter 1 inaugurates the critical method which Nagarjuna will use: prasanga, a logical method of necessary consequence. With this method Nagarjuna demolishes the theories of elements (dharmas) and of cause until in chaps. xxii (on the Tathagata), xxiv (on the Four Holy Truths), and xxv (on nirvana) there appears a reinterpretation of the most important notions in Buddhism. The logical critique of "cause" in Chapter 1 is a direct expression of the insight into the emptiness of reality which is emphasized again in Chapter xxv with the declaration that there is no difference between nirvana and samsara. However, one can note a difference in the handling of this perspective. What is dealt with in logical terms in Chapter i is handled in a way that is practical for attaining release in Chapter xxv.

The different chapters represent the analyses of different elements or "categories" by which much of past Buddhism had understood reality. For instance, Chapters iii-v analyze the

traditional classifications of dharmas: skandhas, ayatanas, and dhatus. In subsequent chapters there is a similar analysis of such notions as "passion," the "past" (purva), "turmoil" (dukkha), "impulses of transient existences (samskara), "action" (karma), and the "self" (atman). Certain topics of special significance, such as "action" and "evil" (klesa), are treated in two considerations. The first is a short formal consideration in which the notion is shown to be logically false when considered as a self-existent reality; secondly, there is a more fully developed discussion showing the practical implications for spiritual insight. Special note should also be taken of Chapter ii which is a logical critique of "motion." The method of analysis appears to be rather arid and often simply a play on words, while expressing a minute and systematic rigor. Nevertheless, this method is used as a model of demonstration in other chapters of the Karikas , so it cannot be disregarded. The facetious appearance of the argument is instructive since it seeks to point out the vulnerability of the effort in the Abhidharma which took so seriously the task of classifying and defining the elements of existence.

See commentary: Thinking in Buddhism: Nagarjuna's Middle Way

L1: [Introductory Verses

... This is echoed by Nagarjuna in the preface to his Muulamadhyamikakaarikaas, which uses eight negations to describe the true nature of things:

- \ 1. they do not die
- \ 2. and are not born,
- \ 3. they do not cease to be
- \ 4. and are not eternal,
- \ 5. they are not the same
- \ 6. and are not different,
- \ 7. they do not come
- \ 8. and do not go.

(Jonah Winters: Nagarjuna's religious piety and his trenchant philosophy are in no way contradictory. This harmony between his faith and his intellect is expressed by the two dedicatory verses with which he opens the Karikas :

- \ ###
- \ "I salute him, the fully-enlightened, the best of speakers,
- \ who preached the non-ceasing and the non-arising,
- \ the non-annihilation and the non-permanence,
- \ the non-identity and the non-difference,
- \ the non-appearance and the non-disappearance,
- \ the dependent arising,
- \ the appeasement of obsessions and the auspicious."

In actuality, their significance is great, for they summarize, in a mere eighteen words (in Sanskrit), the entirety of the Madhyamika philosophical approach. All of the philosophical aspects contained in these verses have been or will be discussed at length elsewhere in this thesis.)

L1: [IS THERE ANYTHING THAT IS THE CAUSE OF SAMSA AND THAT WE CAN CONTROL: A PATH]

L2: [Section 1 - An Analysis of Conditioning Causes (pratyaya) (conditions) – 14 verses – [Causality, dependent origination, determinism, control]

(RÉSUMÉ: Section 1 is mostly about showing that there is no cause that is not itself an effect, that doesn't have its own causes and conditions.

-- This means that there is no 100% sure cause; there are always an infinity of other variables that can come and change the outcome. The result is never exactly the same twice because of that.

-- So there cannot be any product, with its own absolute essence, that can come out of this very uncertain causal process dependent on causes and conditions that are not themselves (not 100% sure).

-- There is no inherent (or absolute) cause, no inherent effect, no inherent causal relation. But that doesn't mean that they are completely non-existent, that we should drop them all right now, that they are all useless concepts. We just need to understand their real nature, their conceptual interdependence, while using them.

-- This has consequences on our interpretation of the Law of Dependent Origination, of the Law of Karma, and on our understanding of the path and of Liberation.

-- Note: The causing is assumed instantaneous here; but the going is assumed longer and with visible motion in section 2. So there is no mention of the origination, duration and cessation of the causing here.)

L3: [No real / inherent causes, but not completely non-existent either]

L4: [No absolute cause anywhere, but nothing is without a cause]

\ ###
\ 1.
\ NEVER ARE ANY EXISTING THINGS FOUND TO ORIGINATE
\ FROM THEMSELVES, FROM SOMETHING ELSE, FROM BOTH, OR FROM NO CAUSE.

(EMPTINESS OF THE CAUSES: nothing is self-caused, other-caused, both, or neither / without any cause. -- Diamond Slivers: Note the quadruple negation without affirming anything. Nothing is without its own causes and conditions (without a cause); but there is no absolutely sure cause for that thing, not internal (self-causation: cause & effect being the same), not external (other-causation: cause & effect being the different), not both together. Meaning nothing, including all causes, exist without their own causes and conditions, no exception at all. No first cause that is not an effect. And since no cause is absolute, no aggregate of causes and conditions can ever be absolutely sure, then no causing can be absolute, and no effect can be absolutely sure. There is no essence of the product coming from the aggregate. There are always other causes and conditions that can change the outcome; the effect is never twice the same.

-- Many ways to say this: Causes are empty of inherent existence because of dependent on other causes and conditions. No absolute cause anywhere, but nothing is without a cause. Causes are not inherently existing, but not completely non-existing either. Nothing (effect or cause) with or without a cause. No first cause. Cause & effect cannot be the same/simultaneous, nor different/ separate...)

\ ###

\ 2.

\ There are four conditioning causes

\ A cause (hetu) (1), objects of sensations (2), "immediately preceding condition," (3) and of course the predominant influence (4) there is no fifth.

(THE FOUR USUAL CONVENTIONAL CONDITIONING CAUSES: So there is no absolute cause, but causes

are not completely non-existent either; there are useful conventional causes – conventional truths. In some texts there are much more types of causes, but they all come down to these four here. There is no need to examine other types of causes. Each one is briefly examined in this section, and analyzed in more details in other sections. Why Nagarjuna think there should be only four; that is a good question, and I don't know yet.

-- "Hetu, motive" is covered in section 2;

-- "Objects of sensations" is covered i sectio 3;

-- "Immediately preceding condition" is covered in sections 7 & 21;

-- "Predominant influence" is covered in section 1 & 6.)

L4: [Nothing exist and change: A cause cannot remain the same, nor change into something different / other-existence, nor become completely non-existent]

\ ###

\ 3.

\ Certainly there is no self-existence (svabhava) of existing things in conditioning causes, etc;

\ And if no self-existence exists, neither does "other-existence" (parabhava).

(IF THERE IS NO INHERENTLY EXISTENT CAUSE, THEN THERE IS NO OTHER-EXISTENCE, OR COMPLETELY

NON-EXISTENCE POSSIBLE: If there is no cause inherently existent, then there cannot be "other-existence", or "complete non-existence" of those causes either. Obviously, if something is not existent first, then it cannot change into something else, or cease completely. – Another way to look at this: a cause is not the same before, during and after the causing. It needs to be triggered to be come active, then later to be stopped. All of this is done through other causes and conditions that come and influence the so called cause. It is not the same thing that is about to cause, is causing, and has caused. – On the other hand, the cause is not completely different before, during and after the causing. The cause doesn't change into something else, or become a non-cause at the end. It is not a completely different thing that is about to cause, is causing, or has caused. This will be analyzed more in section 2.

-- There is no absolute continuity of identity of the cause. There is no complete discontinuity of identity. Nothing exist and change.

-- This will lead to the realization that there is no permanent self motivating and doing all actions; nor are the one doing the action and the one suffering its consequences totally different. No inherent self, not complete absence of self.)

L4: [No effect with or without a cause. No cause with or without an effect. – using the case of motive.]

\ ###

\ 4.

- \ The efficient cause (kriya – primary condition, root cause, motive) does not exist possessing a conditioning cause,
- \ Nor does the efficient cause exist without possessing a conditioning cause.
- \ Conditioning causes are not without efficient causes,
- \ Nor are there [conditioning causes] which possess efficient causes.

(NO PRIMARY CAUSE LIKE MOTIVE: So no cause (like motive) is without its own causes and conditions (no effect without a cause); but none of these causes, individually or together, are absolute / determining (no effect with a cause) because they have their own causes & conditions, ad infinitum. That doesn't mean that these causes are completely non-existent, completely imagined; they are not without any influence on the motive, without any effect (no cause without an effect); just that motive (the effect here) is never entirely determined by those causes (no cause with an effect) since there can always be other variables that can change the outcome. -- Here we are talking about "motive / hetu"(the first type of conditioning causes listed in verse 1:2) as the primary cause of all of our actions, and karma formation. It is also an effect, also dependent on its own causes and conditions, but not totally determined by those causes and conditions. Motive is not a primary cause. So there is no total free will, nor total determinism in our choices and actions. Meaning that our choices are also conditioned by our own accumulated karma, but that we can transcend this conditioning.

-- More on motive: section 2, especially verses 2:24-25)

L4: [Causes are conventional truths, but never absolute]

- \ ###
- \ 5.
- \ Certainly those things are called "conditioning causes" whereby something originates after having come upon them;
- \ As long as something has not originated, why are they not so long (i.e. during that time) "non-conditioning-causes" ?

(THEY ARE CONVENTIONAL TRUTHS, NEVER ABSOLUTE CAUSE: So the causes are not inherently existing (self-existing), not completely non-existent; they are not absolute (determining), but not without any effect. So what are they ? They are conventional truths, hypothesis and imperfect theories of causality based on observed regularity in a limited context. And in that role they are very useful conventional truths even if never absolute. Causes are names given to things or phenomena after the apparent observed fact and regularity between them and something else. But we should be aware that nothing can be called a "sure cause" of something until it is done and conventionally accepted, because other causes and conditions can come and change the outcome any time, or it can be interpreted differently conventionally. They are never "sure cause" or "inherent cause"; but it is useful to conventionally call them causes, effects, and causal relations, in order to be able to use this regularity in a limited way. – In science it is useful to describe regularity in a limited context with equations involving the most important parameters; but there can always be other variables that can come and change the results. There is never a perfectly controlled experience.)

L4: [No cause for anything real, non-real, both, or neither]

- \ ###

- \ 6.
- \ There can be a conditioning cause neither of a non-real thing (1) nor of a real thing (2).
- \ Of what non-real thing is there a conditioning cause? And if it is [already] real, what use is a cause?
- \ 7.
- \ If an element (dharma) occurs which is neither real nor non-real (4) nor both real- and-non- real (3),
- \ How can there be a cause which is effective in this situation?

(THERE IS NO NEED FOR A CAUSE OF AN EFFECT THAT IS REAL, NON-REAL, BOTH, OR NEITHER: There

are only four possibilities of existence for a thing real, non-real, both, or neither. A non-real effect doesn't need a cause since it is not real; a real effect doesn't need a cause since it is self-caused. And no cause can be effective in the cases of something that is both real and non-real, or neither real nor non-real. So in the context of inherently existent causes and effects, nothing works. Inherent existence would make dependent origination impossible, and as we will see later, it would also make Liberation impossible. -- Other possible meanings: No cause for anything existent, or non-existent; no cause for the origination, transformation, or cessation of anything; for the birth, evolution, or death of any being; for something inherently existing or empty of inherent existence.)

L4: [Preview of the cases of perception and consciousness moments: conceptual interdependence & non-duality]

- \ ###
- \ 8.
- \ Just that which is without an object of sensation is accepted as a real element;
- \ Then if there is an element having no object of sensation, how is it possible to have an object of sensation?

(CONCEPTUAL INTERDEPENDENCE OF CAUSE & EFFECT – THE EXAMPLE OF THE AYATANAS: Here we are

talking about “objects of sensations / the 6 senses organs and the six types of objects of the senses”(the second type of conditioning causes listed in verse 1:2) as the primary causes of all of our perceptions and acquired knowledge. It is thought that real independent objects of the world are directly perceived by real objective senses. So the twelve of them are thought to be independent causes, and their effect, in combination with the six consciousnesses, is true direct perception of an independent reality. But, as stated in verse 1:1, the senses organs and the objects of the senses cannot exist on their own, they cannot be self-caused, independent of everything else. They should not be considered as primary causes.

– Also, even in the case of perception, the senses organs are called this way only conventionally. Until there is perception, there is no reason to call something an organ of the senses. And if it would exist inherently independently of any object of the senses, then it would not be influenced by an object of the senses (a self-existing thing is independent, and uninfluenced by other things), and there would be no perception at all. -- More on the ayatanas in section 3.)

\ ###

\ 9.
\ When no elements have originated, [their] disappearance is not possible.
\ Therefore it is not proper to speak of an "immediately preceding condition"; for if something has already ceased, what cause is there for it.

(NON SIMULTANEITY, NON DIFFERENCE – THE EXAMPLE OF THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING CONDITION:

Here we are talking about “immediately preceding condition”(the third type of conditioning causes listed in verse 1:2) as the necessary real cause for the next moment of consciousness. In a complex Abhidharma model of the way the continuity of the mind is assumed (necessary to explain the continuity of karma), there is a succession of infinitesimal moments of consciousness for which the preceding moment is one of the necessary causes. It is thought that without a preceding moment of consciousness there is no possible next consciousness; because consciousness cannot arise from nothing, or from material conditions only. These successive moments of consciousness are thought to be real, inherently existing. The stream of consciousness is thought to be a series of discrete moments. The problem is that the junction between two consecutive moments, acting as cause and effect, cannot be explained: cause & effect cannot be simultaneous (or overlapping), nor can they be in sequence (separate in time). If they were simultaneous, then there would be no need to cause the effect anymore. If they were separate in time, then there would be no direct link between cause and effect, and if that could happen, then anything could cause anything else. So those moments of consciousness cannot really exist as real causes and real effects. And they cannot be directly observed by a Yogi in deep meditation.

-- More on the immediately preceding condition: sections 7 and 21.)

L3: [No real / inherent effects or products, but not completely non-existent either]

L4: [Empty causes can result only in an empty product]

\ ###
\ 10.
\ Since existing things which have no self-existence are not real,
\ It is not possible at all that: "This thing 'becomes' upon the existence of that other one."

(EMPTY (UNSURE) CAUSES CAN RESULT ONLY IN AN EMPTY (UNSURE) EFFECTS. The convergence of an

infinity of causes and conditions that are not self-existing, not inherently existing, never absolute, because depending on their own causes and conditions, can certainly never cause a “sure effect”, a so-called real effect, or produce a “sure precise product”. NO ABSOLUTE, PERMANENT, ESSENCE OF A PRODUCT CAN COME OUT OF THIS. Because of the number of variables we

can never produce the same product twice in a billion eons. In fact there is no individual product coming out of this at all. There is just the continuity of the endless flow without any individuality in it.

\ ###
\ -- There is no inherently existing product because there is no beginning to its causes and conditions; and no end to its effects.

L4: [The product is not inside, nor outside of the aggregate]

\ ###

\ 11.

\ The product does not reside in the conditioning causes, individually or collectively,

\ So how can that which does not reside in the conditioning cause result from conditioning causes?

(AN INHERENT/REAL EFFECT CANNOT COME OUT OF ITS EMPTY AGGREGATE OF CAUSES AND CONDITIONS:

The essence of the product cannot come from its causes and conditions individually or together (aggregate), since they themselves are not self-existing. Since all participating causes (the aggregate of causes and conditions) are empty of inherent existence, never absolute, never sure to produce a particular effect individually, or a particular product together, because they are all depending on their own causes and conditions, ad infinitum, then there cannot be any essence of the product in the aggregate of those causes and conditions (not before, not during, not after). Anyway we look at this, the resulting product is never sure to be this or that; the number of variables is infinite. An empty aggregate can cause only an empty product. It is called this effect or that effect only conventionally. It is like giving a name to a small swirl in the middle of the ocean, and watching it "live", interact and evolve, and getting attached to it, and suffering because it eventually dies. — The case of the aggregate of causes and conditions will be analyzed in more details in section 20.

An effect cannot not come out of its empty aggregate of causes and conditions either: It cannot come out of a different aggregate either. Otherwise anything would cause anything else.)

L4: [Products are not completely non-existent or useless either, they are just never absolute]

\ ###

\ 12.

\ Then the "non-real" would result from those conditioning-causes.

\ Why then would a product not proceed also from non-causes?

(BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT THERE IS NO EFFECT OR PRODUCT AT ALL: It is not because the

product is empty of inherent existence because depending on empty causes and conditions (or empty aggregate) that it is completely non-existent, useless, meaningless, or from the mind only. We cannot deny the observed regularity, the observed dependent origination. Otherwise that would mean that anything could come out of anything else without any causality at all. That would be total chaos. But that is not what is observed; there is regularity; there is apparent dependent origination. It is just that this should be understood without the need for any inherently existing causes and effect.)

L3: [No real / inherent causality, but not completely non-existent either]

L4: [No absolute causality / determinism from empty causes]

\ ###

\ 13.

\ On the one hand, the product [consists in its] conditioning causes;

\ on the other hand, the causes do not consist of themselves.

\ How can a product [resulting] from [conditioning causes] not consisting of

themselves be consisting of those causes?

(THERE IS NO REAL CAUSALITY: A product cannot be determined by causes and conditions that are themselves not absolute or inherent because depending on their own causes and conditions, ad infinitum. There is never a sure causal link between any aggregate of causes and conditions and a product because there are always other causes and conditions that can come and change the outcome.)

L4: [Causal relations are not completely non-existent or useless either, they are just never absolute]

\ ###

\ 14A.

\ Therefore, that product does not consist in those causes; [yet] it is agreed that a product does not consist of non-causes.

\ How [can there be] a conditioning cause or non-cause when a product is not produced?

(BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT THERE IS NO CAUSALITY AT ALL: So there is no absolute / inherent

causality, no sure causality, because there are always other causes and conditions, ad infinitum, because all causes and conditions are empty of inherent existence, and because the effects are also empty of inherent existence. But that doesn't mean that there is no causal relations at all, that all causality is meaningless, useless, from the mind only, and that we should drop everything right now. All causes, effects, causal relations, are merely imputed by the mind, conventional truths, but being that they are very useful and quite efficient in most cases; the results of sciences and technologies all around us is a proof of that, the efficiency of the Buddhist paths is another proof.

-- So there is no absolute causality, no total absence of causality.)

L3: [LINEAR RÉSUMÉ OF SECTION 1 – ON CONDITIONS]

L4: [No inherent causes, but not completely non-existent]

-- 1. Assumed: All effects are causes, no last effect (everything is produced for its own effects, otherwise it is as good as non-existent).

-- 2. EMPTINESS OF CAUSES BECAUSE DEPENDENT THEIR OWN CAUSES: (1:1)

Nothing is without its own causes and conditions, or uncaused;

no effect (or cause) without a cause, all causes are effects, no first,

but there is no absolute cause, not internal, not external, not both.

no effect with a cause, that is with an absolute / sure cause.

NOT THE SAME, NOT DIFFERENT : Cause & effect cannot be the same (self-caused, internal), different (other-caused, external), both, or neither.

-- 3. There are four conventional types of conditioning causes only. (1:2)

-- 4. A CAUSE DOESN'T REMAIN THE SAME / CHANGE / CEASE COMPLETELY.(1:3)

A cause cannot remain the same, nor change into something different / other-existence, nor become non-existent.

Nothing remains the same, or change, in a line or cycle of causality. No continuity / discontinuity.

No absolute ownership / responsibility, no total absence of ownership.

-- 5. Non-duality of the 3: on the edge between determinism and chaos.

No effect/cause with or without its own cause.... (and/or causing)

No primary cause/free will that is not an effect, no total determinism,

No cause/effect with or without its own effect.... (and/or causing)

No absolutely sure cause, no cause without some regular influence.

(also: no causing with or without its own cause and/or condition....)

The case of motive: No free will, no absolute conditioning, but some of both. So there is samsara, and Liberation is possible. (1:4)

-- 6. THE MIDDLE WAY: (between existence and non-existence) Causes are not completely non-existent either, they exist conventionally. (1:5)

-- 7. NO REAL CAUSE TO CREATE OR DESTROY: There is no cause of a real, non-real effect, or both, or neither. No cause for anything existent, or non-existent; for the origination, transformation or cessation of anything; for the birth, evolution, or death of any being; for something inherently existing or empty of inherent existence. (1:6-7)

-- 8. INSEPARABILITY, CONCEPTUAL INTERDEPENDENCE OF CAUSE & EFFECT.

The case of ... the senses and their objects are interdependent conceptually, inseparable, one cannot exist without the other. (1:8)

-- 9. NOT SIMULTANEOUS, NOT SEPARATE (non-duality): cause & effect cannot be simultaneous (or overlapping), nor in sequence (separate in time).

The case of the preceding consciousness moment. (1:9)

L4: [No inherent products, but not completely non-existent]

-- 1. EMPTINESS OF PRODUCTS: (1:10) Empty (unsure) causes can result only in a mist of empty (fuzzy) effects, never the same twice (no essence).

-- 2. NOT THE SAME, NOT DIFFERENT: (Non-duality: not two, not one) (1:11)

The product does not reside in the causes individually or collectively, nor outside of the aggregate.

-- 3. THE MIDDLE WAY: Effects and products are not completely non-existent or useless either, they are just conventional entities. (1:12)

L4: [No inherent causality, but not completely non-existent]

-- 1. EMPTINESS OF CAUSAL RELATIONS / CAUSALITY: (1:13)

No absolute causality / determinism from empty (unsure) causes.

-- 2. THE MIDDLE WAY: Causal relations are not completely non-existent or useless either, they are just never absolute. (1:14)

THE THREE (CAUSE, EFFECT, CAUSING RELATION) are empty because dependent, because conceptually interdependent; not inherently existent, not completely non-existent, not both, not neither. They are inseparable; not the same nor different, not simultaneous nor separate, non-dual: not one, not two, not three. Everything is caused & causing, has an infinity of causes & conditions, has influence on an infinity of other things, and is related to everything. We imagine a network of individual causes, effects, causalities, lines/cycles of causality, only through habituation and ignorance, but there is only the

flow. Nothing is produced, exists & changes while remaining the same, changes into something else different, or completely ceases. No absolute continuity or discontinuity. Nothing is permanent or impermanent. Everything is on the edge between determinism and chaos, between existence and non-existence. No absolute control possible, no total absence of control either. The laws, sciences and paths are never absolute, nor completely useless either if used with the wisdom seeing their real nature.

L3: [THEMATIC RÉSUMÉ OF SECTION 1]

-- 1. EMPTINESS OF CAUSES: All causes are empty because dependent on their own causes and conditions; no inherent, absolute (100% sure), permanent, independent, or primary cause; no possible essence of the effect residing in the cause. No pure motive, free will, objective senses, independent world, stream of discrete moments of consciousness ... elementary dharmas and relations.

-- 2. CAUSES ARE NOT NON-EXISTENT EITHER: Even if never absolute, they are not completely non-existent, or without any influence, or unrelated to their effect in similarity, space and time. There is the observed regularity, even if imperfect. There is nothing, no effect without a cause.

-- 3. BOUNDLESS CHAIN OF CAUSALITY: All causes are/were effects; all effects are/will-be causes. There is no first cause, no final effect. All effect has/had an infinity of causes; all cause has/will-have an infinity of effect.—See also next page on this.

-- 4. EMPTINESS OF THE CAUSING, AND OF THE EFFECT: If there is no absolute causes (because of their own causes and conditions, ad infinitum), then there cannot be any absolute causing, or effect. All effects and causing (causal relations) are empty because dependent on empty causes.

-- 5. EFFECTS AND CAUSING ARE NOT NON-EXISTENT EITHER: The effect (and causing), even if never absolute, is not completely non-existent, or unrelated to its cause in similarity, space and time. There is the observed regularity even if imperfect. There is nothing, no cause without an effect.

-- 6. EMPTY AGGREGATE: If no cause is absolute, then no aggregate of causes and conditions can be absolute either. The product does not reside in the causes individually or collectively, nor is it outside of the aggregate.

-- 7. EMPTINESS OF DESTROYING: There is no positive causing (making something new to appear), and no negative causing (making something to disappear, or not appear, or causing something not-real).

-- 8. CONCEPTUAL INTERDEPENDENCE: All trio - cause, causing and effect - are empty because conceptually interdependent. One cannot exist without the other and then join with the other. No cause with or without effect; no effect with or without a cause ... Same between the verb/causing and the other two.

-- 9. NOT THE SAME, NOT DIFFERENT – NON-DUAL: The cause & effect (& causing) cannot be the same (self-causation, internal), nor different (other-causation, external), nor both together, nor neither (no cause at all).

-- 10. NOT SIMULTANEOUS, NOT SEPARATE – NON-DUAL: The cause & effect cannot be the simultaneous (overlapping at the junction), nor separate (with a gap between them), nor both, nor neither. Here causing is assumed instantaneous.

-- 11. EMPTINESS OF THE TIME OF THE CAUSING: So the exact time of the causing cannot be found. The exact time of the beginning of the effect, its origination, cannot be found. And if there is no real origination of the effect, then there is no possible cessation, and no possible duration of the effect. As for the origination, duration and cessation of a "longer" causing, see section 2.

-- 12. EMPTINESS OF THE THREE TIMES: So there is no real before (i), during (ii) and after (iii) the causing, or origination of the effect, since this point in time does not really exist. And if this point is empty, how could there be cause before, causing during, and effect after? Or even cause before, during and after? What we call cause, effect and causing are established conventionally after the fact.

-- 13. NO CONTINUITY, NO DISCONTINUITY: No thing (cause) remain the same by going through the causing process (inherent existence), nor change into something completely different (other existence), nor cease completely (non-existence). The cause before (i), during (ii) and after (iii) the causing is not the same, nor different. (The same for the effect and the causing.)

-- 14. THE MIDDLE WAY: So we should stay away from the four extreme philosophical positions in regard to causes, effects, causal relations, causal lines or cycles, causality and dependent origination in general.

L3: [ABOUT LINES & CYCLES OF CAUSALITY]

-- 1. BOUNDLESS CHAIN OF CAUSALITY: All causes are/were effects; all effects are/will-be causes. There is no first cause, no final effect. All effect has/had an infinity of causes; all cause has/will-have an infinity of effect.

-- 2. A NETWORK OF MANY TO MANY EACH TIME: Each time ...

-- -- a. BACK: Each effect is immediately depending on an infinity of causes and conditions. But we conventionally designate one cause "the primary cause".

-- -- b. FORWARD: Each cause is immediately influencing an infinity of other things simultaneously. But we conventionally designate one "the primary effect".

-- -- c. So anytime anything is at the convergence of an infinity of causes and conditions, and the starting point of an infinity of influences. But we usually concentrate on one cause before, one effect after, and call the rest "other conditions" and "side effects".

-- -- d. More so, this network of infinite causes converging on one thing, and the fanning out of the network of discrete influences on other things are just like an illusion. There is causality and influence but nothing discrete, no individual things (cause, effect or relation) in it. We are the ones who are giving names to small swirls in the middle of an ocean.

-- 3. THE IDEA OF LINES AND CYCLES OF CAUSES & EFFECTS:

-- -- a. LINES OF CAUSALITY:

-- -- -- i. BACK: The effect has a cause; this cause had its cause; this cause had its cause; ... ad infinitum. Each effect is the result of an infinity of causes successively in line. We might call this the line of past causality, or of past causes. All of this assuming that we can use one to one causality.

-- -- -- ii. FORWARD: The cause has its effect; this effect will have its effect; this effect will have its effect;... ad infinitum. Each cause will result in an infinity of effects successively in line. All of this assuming that we can use one to one causality.

-- -- -- iii. So we usually concentrate on a one-to-one-causality along this linear

sequence of events: one cause before, one effect after, and call the rest “other minor conditions” and “side effects”; then we go to the next step.

-- -- -- iv. But we have no valid absolute basis to concentrate on only one cause and one effect at each step, or to concentrate on only one line of causality, because each step is at best a many to many point; or a mist of causes producing a mist of effects, or even just an apparent thing in the middle of an empty luminous space ...

-- -- b. EXAMPLES:

-- -- -- i. It is the same thing with cycles of causes and effects like with the 12 steps on the Wheel of Life. We concentrate on one cause, one effect at a time, even if each point is the convergence of an infinity of causes and conditions, and the point of origin of an infinity of influence. More so, the whole cycle is thought as being something real.

-- -- -- ii. And if the cycle can go one way, why would it not go the other way around. One might think that if he could control one part of the cycle, then one would be able to control the whole cycle, or reverse it, or to make it stop. But that is just an illusion based on the idea of inherent causes, effects, and causal links.

-- -- -- iii. It is the same thing with the stream of consciousness: some think there is a series of discrete moments of consciousness forming a continuous line of causes and effects, and that the rest are just other conditions or side effects. More so, the whole line of causality (stream of consciousness) is thought as being something real by itself, something to “purify” or “Liberate”.

-- -- -- iv. The self is also like that. We think there is a continuity; either a permanent cause, or a permanent individual stream.

-- 4. GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE:

-- -- a. Each effect is dependent on everything else; each cause has influence on everything else.

-- -- b. Everything is interdependent with everything else.

-- -- c. There is no ownership, no real network of discrete relations, no real lines or streams, no real cycle of causes and effects.

L2: [Section 2 - An Analysis of "Going to" (change or movement) – 25 verses – [The illusion of continuity through change or movement]]

(RÉSUMÉ: Section 2: The illusion of continuity through change or movement.

-- Section 2 is about the “hetu” or motive, the second conditioning cause listed in the verse 1:2.

-- Section 2 is mainly about the verb, while section 1 is about the subject, and section 3 about the object. But all three sections cover the three.

-- While section 1 concentrated on the emptiness of the subjects, the causes (like motive ...), this section 2 concentrates on the emptiness of the verbs (like the motivated actions), its non-origination, and on how this subject is changed by motivating and doing the action (no continuity, no discontinuity). But both sections covered the interdependence of the three: subject, verb, object / complement. Both techniques can be applied to any trio, to any sentence; they are complementary.

-- The opponent needs to believe in “real inherent actions” because his whole understanding of karma is based on the real existence of absolute actions that are either wholesome, unwholesome or neutral. He also needs to believe in something permanent in a self that is

changed by the actions, like planting a karma seed, and will suffer the consequences of his actions in other rebirths. For him there is a very subtle permanent consciousness to which karma seeds are added until they mature. He also think the origination and cessation of those real actions are directly observable.

-- Nagarjuna demonstrates that the goer before, during and after the action is not the same, nor completely different; that there is no real actions, nothing added to the goer with the actions; that the origination, duration and cessation of the action cannot be directly observable, or logically proven.

-- When generalized to the person and its actions: There is no permanent person that is the same before, during and after motivating and doing an action; but it is not a completely different person either that is suffering the consequences of the first. There is no real absolute wholesome, unwholesome or neutral actions that are motivated by a real inherent self; but these could be useful moral concepts since they are not completely non-existent either. An unwholesome action will always bring bad results to the doer.

-- Note: The causing is assumed instantaneous in section 1; but, in section 2, the verb/going is assumed to last and is with visible activity and displacement. So there is discussion about the origination, duration and cessation of the going / action here.)

L3: [The two arguments]

L4: [No permanent goer, no different goers, no real going]

\ ###

\ 1.

\ [Nagarjuna:] That which is already gone to (gatam – goer after the going - iii)

\ is not that which is "being gone to" (gamyate);

\ more so, "that which is not yet gone to" (agatam – goer before the going - i)

\ is certainly not that "being gone to." (gamyate)

\ Also, the "present going to" (gamyamana – actual goer - ii)

\ without "that which is already gone to" and "that which is not yet gone to"

\ is not "being gone to".

(THERE IS NO INHERENT GOING – ACTION OF GOING – AND NO REAL CHANGE IN THE GOER: The goer

after the going (iii) is not “going” anymore; not the same as the goer actually-going (ii).

The goer before going (i) is not “going” yet; not the same as the goer actually-going (ii).

But the goer actually-going (ii) is not completely different than (or unrelated to) the goer

after the going (iii) and the goer before going (i). So the goer is not the same nor

different before, during and after the action. Also, there is no real going The “going” is

either already done (iii) or not at all (i); there cannot be a “during a going”, or an “half done going”. “Going” is a concept attributed after the fact, or conventionally imagined.

-- Cause, causing and effect are not the same/one, not different/two; the initial goer (i), the goer going (ii), and the resulting goer (iii) are not the same, not different.)

L4: [Opponent: The goer is changed by the going and this is visible by his activity & displacement]

\ ###

\ 2.

\ [An opponent objects:]

\ Where there is activity (cesta - visible activity) there is a "process of going" (gatis – real going process),

\ and that activity (visible activity) is in the "present going to" (gamyamane - ii).

\ Then "process of going" (gatis - real going process) is inherent in the "present going to" (gamyamane - ii)

\ [since] the activity (visible activity) is not in "that which is already gone to" (iii) nor in "that which is not yet gone to." (i)

(THE OPPONENT : the goer is changed by a real action/going directly visible by the activity and displacement of the goer going. There is a real going process when there is visible activity & displacement, and a goer actually-going (ii) has this visible activity, but not the goer before going (i) nor the goer after the going (iii). So this real going process is characteristic of the goer actually-going (ii) only.

-- So the opponent is using the concept of visible activity to try to prove the inherent existence of a real going process or "real action". And he thinks that the goer before, during and after is different, because only the middle one has this added real going process discernable by its visible activity. In this there are two problems: the problem of the real going process discernable by its visible activity in a goer actually-going (ii), and the problem of the subject being different before (i), during (ii) and after (iii) the going. Hidden in this is also the problem of the origination and cessation of this activity, or of this real going process, used as an absolute reference points in time; the definition of time is depending on it.)

L3: [Arguments against a goer that change with its activity]

L4: [The emptiness of "visible activity and displacement"]

L5: [The beginning of this activity or displacement cannot be found]

\ ###

\ 3.

\ [Nagarjuna answers:]

\ How will the "act of going" (gamanam - visible activity & displacement) of "present going to" (gamyamana - ii) be produced,

\ Since both kinds of the "act of going" (visible activity & displacement)

\ [as applied to an active process and to the activity of going through space]

\ simply are not produced (i.e. originating) in the "present going to" (ii)?

(THE PROBLEM WITH THE BEGINNING OF THE ACTIVITY OR DISPLACEMENT: You say the real going

process is directly visible by its visible activity & displacement, but when does this activity start ? It doesn't start in the goer actually-going (ii) since he is obviously already going -- the visible activity, and the visible displacement are already in progress.

And it doesn't start in the goer before going (i), nor in the goer after the going (iii). So we cannot find the beginning of the visible activity & displacement in any of the three times of the goer. So how do we know when the goer is actually going? Where is the proof of real activity & displacement, real going process, real actions.)

L5: [The problems with inherent independent activity and displacement]

L6: [There would be a going process without a goer]

\ ###

\ 4.

\ Having the "act of going" (gamanam - visible activity & displacement) of "present

going to" (gamyamanasya - ii)

\ has necessarily resulted in a lack of "the present going to" (ii) of the "process of going" (gati - real going process),

\ For the "present going to" (gamyamana - ii) is the "being gone to" (gamyate).

(THE PROBLEM WITH A REAL INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY: If we assume that the visible activity & displacement and the goer actually-going (ii) are two different separate inherent things, then there would be a real going process without a goer actually-going (ii). But that obviously doesn't make sense. So they cannot be two separate inherent things. One is depending on the other.)

L6: [There would be two kinds of activity and displacement]

\ ###

\ 5.

\ [Recognizing] the "act of going" (visible activity & displacement) of "present going to" (ii)

\ results in two [kinds of] "acts of going" (gamanadvaya - visible activity & displacement):

\ One by which there is "present going to" (gamyamana - ii), the other which is the "act of going"

\ (gamana - visible activity & displacement).

(MORE PROBLEM WITH A REAL INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY: Again, if we assume the visible activity & displacement and the goer actually-going (ii) are two different separate inherent things, then there would be two kinds of visible activity & displacement; one with the goer actually-going (ii), one with the inherent visible activity & displacement. But that obviously doesn't make sense. So they cannot be two separate inherent things. One is depending on the other.)

L6: [There would be two goers]

\ ###

\ 6.

\ Two "goers" (gantarau) would fallaciously follow as a consequence of two "acts of going," (visible activity & displacement)

\ Since certainly the "act of going" (visible activity & displacement) is not produced without a "goer".

(MORE PROBLEM WITH A REAL INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY: And if there is two kinds of visible activity & displacement, then there would be two goers, one for each kind of visible activity & displacement. An activity cannot exist without a somebody going through the visible activity & displacement. But that obviously doesn't make sense.

-- So the concept of real visible activity & displacement directly visible in a real goer actually-going (ii) is flawed. This cannot be used to prove the existence of a real going process or "real action", nor to prove that the goer before, during and after are different, is changed by a real action.)

L4: [The emptiness of the goer: not existent, not non-existent]

L5: [The goer (going) is not inherently existing]

\ ###

\ 7.
\ If there is no going (gamana) (i.e. gamana = "act of going") without a "goer"
(gantara),
\ How will the "goer" (ganta / self-existing subject) come into being when there is
no "going" (gamana)
\ (i.e. gamana = "act of going")?

(NO GOER WITH OR WITHOUT A GOING – THE GOER IS NOT INHERENTLY EXISTING: You talk
about a
goer actually-going (ii). But since there is no goer without a going, how could a goer exist
and then be going. So a “goer” does not go.
-- It also means that the going is not completely non-existent.)

L5: [The goer (going) is not completely non-existing either]

\ ###
\ 8.
\ The "goer" does not go (move);
\ consequently a "non-goer" certainly does not go (move).
\ What third [possibility] goes (moves) other than the "goer" and "non-goer"?

(NO GOING WITH OR WITHOUT A GOER – THE GOER IS NOT COMPLETELY NON-EXISTENT
EITHER: From the
preceding verse we know that a “goer” does not go. But that doesn’t mean that there is
nobody going at all; it just means that he cannot be a goer before going and then be going.
So the individual going is not an absolute permanent goer, not a completely non-existent
goer either. We need to stay away from these two extremes: inherent /absolute goer, and
completely non-existent goer. He is not both, or something else either.
-- It also means that the going is not inherently existing.)

L4: [The emptiness of the going]

L5: [There is no real / inherent going]

\ ###
\ 9.
\ It is said: "The 'goer' goes" (moves) How is that possible,
\ When without the "act of going" (gamana - visible movement) no "goer" is
produced?

(NO GOING WITH OR WITHOUT A GOER – NO INHERENT GOING: In “the goer goes” both are
assumed
inherently existing. But we know that a goer without the going is not a goer. So, if there
is no real independent goer, how could there be real independent going. An empty subject can
only motivate an empty action.)

L5: [The problems with an inherent going]

L6: [There would be a goer without a going]

\ ###
\ 10.
\ Those who hold the view that the "goer" "goes" (moves) must [falsely] conclude
\ That there is a "goer" without the "act of going" (visible activity &
displacement)

\ since the "act of going" (visible activity & displacement) is obtained (icchata)
by a "goer."

(PROBLEM WITH A REAL INDEPENDENT GOING: If there were a real goer actually-going (ii) having real visible activity & displacement, that would mean that those two are independent of each other, and that they could be a goer actually-going (ii) without any visible activity & displacement, and a real visible activity & displacement without any goer actually-going (ii).)

L6: [There would be two kinds of activity & displacement]

\ ###

\ 11.

\ If the "goer" "goes" (moves), then two acts of going (visible activity & displacement) [erroneously] follow;

\ [One is] that by which the "going on" (ganta) is designated,

\ and [the second is] the real "goer" (ganta / self-existing subject) who "goes"(moves).

(MORE PROBLEM WITH A REAL INHERENT GOER HAVING REAL ACTIVITY / MOVEMENT: If there could

exist a goer actually-going (ii) without any visible activity & displacement, that would mean that there are two kinds of visible activity & displacement: one from the inherent a goer actually-going (ii), and one from the added visible activity & displacement. But that obviously doesn't make sense. So the concept of a real goer actually-going (ii), directly visible by its visible activity & displacement is flawed. This cannot be used to prove the existence of a real goer", nor to prove that the goer before, during and after are different, is changed by a real action.)

L4: [The emptiness of the origination and cessation of the going]

L5: [The origination of the going cannot be found]

\ ###

\ 12.

\ The "state of going to" (gatum) is not begun in "that which is already gone to" (gatam - iii),

\ nor in "that which is not yet gone to" (agatam - i);

\ Nor is the "state of going to" begun in "present going to" (gamyamana - ii).

\ Where then is it begun?

(THE PROBLEM OF THE ORIGINATION OF THE GOING / ACTION: You say there is a real inherent going / action, but when does it starts? It doesn't start with the goer after the going (iii) since he is not going anymore; it doesn't start in the goer before going (i) since he is not going yet; it doesn't start with the goer actually-going (ii) since he is already going. We cannot find the beginning of this supposedly inherent going / action.
-- The origination of the action is not caused by the resulting goer (iii), nor by the initial goer (i); nor by the goer going (ii).)

L5: [The three states of the goer relative to the limits of the going are not real; they cannot be found]

\ ###

\ 13.
 \ "Present going to" (ii) does not exist previous to the beginning of the "act of going," (visible activity & displacement)
 \ nor does "that which is already gone to" (iii) exist where the "act of going" (visible activity & displacement) should begin.
 \ How can the "act of going" (visible activity & displacement) [begin] in "that which is not yet gone to" (i) ?

(THE PROBLEM OF THE THREE TIMES RELATIVE TO THE ORIGINATION AND CESSATION OF THE ACTION:

There is no goer actually-going (ii) before the visible activity & displacement – so the beginning of the visible activity & displacement is not with the goer actually-going (ii). There is no goer after the going (iii) at the moment of the beginning of the visible activity & displacement – so the beginning of the visible activity & displacement is not with the goer after the going (iii). There is no visible activity & displacement in the goer before going (i) – so the beginning of the visible activity & displacement is not with the goer before going (i).

-- I think the problem here is that the three times (i, ii, iii) relative to the origination and cessation of the supposedly directly observable activity and displacement cannot really be defined since we cannot find the exact moment of the origination and cessation. And vice versa, the exact time of the origination and cessation cannot be deduced from those three goers (before, during and after the action) since their own limits cannot be found. The problem of the origination and cessation will be investigated further in section 7. The problem of the three times will be analyzed further in section 19...

--Who would be the cause of the origination of the activity?: The goer going (ii) doesn't exist before the origination; the resulting goer (iii) doesn't exist at the origination; the initial goer cannot be the cause of the origination either.

L5: [They are mere co-dependently arisen concepts, never absolute]

\ ###
 \ 14.
 \ It is mentally fabricated what is "that which is already gone to" (gatam - iii),
 \ "present going to" (gamyamana - ii) and "that which is not yet gone to" (agatam - i);
 \ Therefore, the beginning of the "act of going" (visible activity & displacement) is not seen in any way.

(THE REAL NATURE OF THE ORIGINATION, CESSATION AND OF THE THREE TIMES: before, during and

after the action: So if we cannot find the exact moment in time of the beginning or cessation of the going, or of the visible activity & displacement, then we cannot prove that the goer change from being a goer before going (i) to goer actually-going (ii) , and then to goer after the going (iii). In fact we see that those four concepts are defined on each other and that there is no absolute basis to really prove their existence.

-- Those three -- the initial goer (i), the goer going (ii), and the resulting goer (iii) -- are mental fabrications and cannot be used find or prove the origination. And if there is no origination, there cannot be any cessation, nor duration.)

L4: [The emptiness of the three times relative to the going]

L5: [The goer (not-going-yet) is not inherently existing, not completely non-existing

either]

\ ###

\ 15.

\ A "goer" does not remain unmoved (na tistati); then certainly the "non-goer" does not remain unmoved.

\ What third [possibility] other than "goer" and "non-goer" can thus remain unmoved?

(EMPTINESS OF THE GOER BEFORE GOING (I) AND OF "REMAINING UNMOVED": The goer before the

going is not going yet, so he is not a real goer that is not going yet, not a goer remaining unmoved. But that doesn't mean that he is completely non-existing either, or that he is a non-goer remaining unmoved. The subject of "remaining unmoved" is not a goer, not a non-goer, not both, not neither. This subject is empty of inherent existence, but not completely non-existent. Since there is no real subject, there cannot be any real "remaining unmoved". So the "remaining unmoved" is also empty of inherent existence.

-- The initial goer (i) / motive is not inherently existing, not completely non-existing.

This initial goer (i) is not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither. And if there is no subject, then the "remaining unmoved" is also empty.)

L5: [The goer (continuing-the-going) is not inherently existing]

L5: [The goer (not-going-anymore) is not inherently existing]

\ ###

\ 16.

\ It is said that a "goer" continues to be [a "goer"].

\ But how can that be possible,

\ Since a "goer"(ganta / self-existing subject) lacking the "act of going"

\ (gamanam - visible activity & displacement) is simply not produced?

(EMPTINESS OF THE GOER AFTER GOING (II), AND OF "COMING TO REST": The goer after the going

is not going anymore, so he is not a real goer that is not going anymore, not a goer coming to rest. But that doesn't mean that he is completely non-existing either, or that he is a non-goer coming to rest. The subject of "coming to rest" is not a goer, not a non-goer, not both, not neither. This subject is empty of inherent existence, but not completely non-existent. Since there is no real subject, there cannot be any real "coming to rest". So the "coming to rest" is also empty of inherent existence.

--The resulting goer (iii) at the destination is not inherently existing, not completely non-existing. This resulting goer (ii) at the destination is not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither. And if there is no subject, then the "coming to rest" is also empty.)

In short, the three states of the goer before, during and after the going, are all empty of inherent existence, but not completely non-existent either. So it is not the same goer in the three times, not is it something completely different each time. There is no goer, or non-goer, remaining at rest (i), going (ii), coming to rest (iii).)

L5: [There is no permanent goer coming from any of the three times]

\ ###

\ 17.

\ [The "goer"] does not continue to be [a goer] as a result of "present going to"

(ii)

\ or "that which is already gone to" (iii) or "that which is not yet gone to,"(i)
\ For then the act of going (gamana - visible activity & displacement) [would be] origination
\ while the "process of going" (gati - real going process) would be the same as cessation.

(EMPTINESS OF THE THREE TIMES RELATIVE TO THE ORIGINATION AND CESSATION OF THE ACTION/GOING:

(this verse is not clear yet) There is no same permanent goer that goes through three stages (before, during and after the going), otherwise the visible activity & displacement would be origination, while real going process would be the same as cessation. Or: The verbs "remaining unmoved", "coming to rest", "not moving" should be seen the same as the verb "going": empty of inherent existence because of interdependence.

Maybe: Nothing is not-going. The goer before going is not not-going; the goer going is not not-going; the goer after going is not not-going. If there was a real not-going, then at the transition between going and not-going that would be simultaneous origination and cessation. Maybe this will become more clear with chapter 7 on origination and cessation.

– If cause & effect were overlapping there would be origination and cessation at the same time.

--The resulting goer (iii) at the destination)

L4: [The goer and going are not the same, not different / separate]

\ ###

\ 18.

\ Thus it does not obtain that the "goer" is simply "what is going" (gamana) (i.e. gamana = "act of going").

\ Likewise it does not obtain that: "Then the "goer" is something other than what is in the "process of going"

\ (gatis - real going process)."

(The subject going is not the same subject that is just moving, nor is he a completely dissociated with the action. It is not the same subject to whom was added visible activity & displacement, nor a subject not moving.)

L5: [If the goer and the activity were the same]

\ ###

\ 19.

\ And if the "act of going" (visible movement) and the "goer" are identical,

\ The fallacy logically follows that the "person acting" (kartus) and the action (karma) are identical.

(INSEPARABILITY OF SUBJECT/GOER AND VERB/GOING: not the same, not different: The subject and

verb-action are not inherently existing and then brought together during the visible activity & displacement. They cannot exist independently of each other. They are inseparable: not the same, not different or separate, not; not two, not one.)

L5: [If the goer and the going/action were separate / different]

\ ###

\ 20.

\ Alternatively, if the "goer" is different from the "process of going" (gati - - real going process),

\ The "act of going" (gamana - visible activity & displacement) would exist without the "goer"

\ and the "goer" would exist without the "act of going." (visible activity & displacement)

(SUBJECT AND ACTION CANNOT BE DIFFERENT OR SEPARATE: Nor can the subject and the action be

totally separate, different. Otherwise we would have a subject without any visible activity & displacement, or visible activity & displacement without any subject. Or a person without any karma, or karma without any person.)

L3: [What are they then ?]

L4: [Non-duality: not one, not two]

\ ###

\ 21.

\ Neither the identity nor the essential difference is established (siddhi)

\ regarding the two [conceptions "goer" and "act of going" (visible activity & displacement)].

\ If these two [alternatives] are not established, in what way is [this problem] to be understood?

(THE SUBJECT AND ACTION ARE NOT SEPARATE OR DIFFERENT, NOT THE SAME. These two cannot exist

independently of each other; they are interdependent, thus empty of inherent existence. They are not existing, not non-existing, not both, not neither. They are two co-dependently arisen concepts, not absolute but conventional truths.)

L4: [Conceptual interdependence; not existent, not non-existent]

\ ###

\ 22.

\ The "goer" is defined by that which is in the "process of going" (real going process);

\ he does not go to that [destination] which is determined by the "process of going" (real going process)

\ because there is no prior "process of going". (gati - real going process)

\ Indeed someone goes somewhere.

(THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE THREE: SUBJECT, VERB, COMPLEMENT: The goer, going and

destination are interdependent definitions or concepts. None of them can exist alone independently of the other two. So they are all empty of inherent existence because interdependent, but that doesn't mean that they are completely non-existent either. They are just never absolute.)

L4: [This applies to the three, including the destination]

\ ###

\ 23.

\ The "goer" does not go to that [destination] other than that "process of going"
(real going process)
\ - by which he is defined as "goer",
\ Because when one goes [somewhere] (i.e. else) two "processes of going" (real
going processes) cannot be produced.

(THE DESTINATION IS NOT INHERENTLY EXISTENT, NOT COMPLETELY NON-EXISTENT
EITHER: If the
subject-action and its complement were two inherently existing things, there would be two
actions, and two destinations.)

L3: [Conclusions]

L4: [The reality: not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither]

\ ###
\ 24.
\ A real "goer" does not motivate three kinds of "acts of going": [real, non-real,
and real-and-non-real];
\ Nor does a non-real ["goer"] motivate three kinds of motion.

\ 25.
\ Also, a real-non-real ["goer"] does not motivate three kinds of motion.

(EVERYTHING HERE IS NON-DUAL: NOT EXISTENT, NOT NON-EXISTENT, NOT BOTH, NOT
NEITHER. First,

both the goer motivating, and its motivated actions like going, are not existent, not
non-existent, not both, not neither. All the 4x4 combinations of those are impossible. There
is no goer with or without a going; no going with or without a goer. They are inseparable,
non-dual: not two, not one. If we were to include the object/complement there would be 4x4x4
combinations to examine; all impossible. The meaning is that none of those four extreme
philosophical positions can describe reality: world & mind.

Empty motive -- > empty actions -- > empty objects: Second, by reformulating the problem of
the duality "goer going" as the trio "goer-motive, motivating, going-action", it is
demonstrated that the technique and conclusions of section 1, on "cause, causing, effect",
can be applied here ... and vice versa – the two techniques are complementary. The cause is
the motive, the effect is the action motivated. In that sense it is the continuation of the
case of "motive" as a primary cause as covered by verses 1:4-7. Section 1 showed that even
"motive" is an empty cause because dependent on its own empty causes and conditions. Section
2, shows that all actions caused by this empty motive are also empty of inherent existence.
Also, all objects of these actions are also empty of inherent existence, like the case of
the destination here.

L4: [Emptiness of the three: no continuity, no discontinuity]

\ ###
\ 25B.
\ Therefore,
\ the "process of going" (gati - real going process),
\ the "goer" (ganta / self-existing subject)
\ and "a destination to be gone to" (gantavyam)
\ do not exist (inherently).

(CONCLUSION – NO CONTINUITY, NO DISCONTINUITY OF A BEING MOTIVATING ACTIONS: In short, there is no permanent person (same) motivating real (wholesome or unwholesome) actions, and being changed by those actions (like accumulating karma or conditioning), nor is he changing into a completely different person (a different person suffering because of the first). The motivator (goer) doesn't stay the same before during and after, nor is he different, not is he ceasing completely. The motivator/motive is empty, the actions motivated are empty, the objects of those actions are empty. Empty of inherent existence but also not completely non-existent, not both, not neither, as seen in the previous verse. The whole chain is composed of co-dependently arisen concepts, never absolute, but could be quite useful is used with wisdom.

Note: The techniques of the two first sections are equivalent and could be apply to any action. The form of section 1 “subject causing effect-action” makes more evident the emptiness of the subject and the inseparability of subject & object-action. The form of section 2 “subject verb-action object” makes more evident the non-arising of the verb-action, and the fact that the subject is not the same nor different because of the action. So technique 2 could be used to analyze the arising of an effect, and the fact that the subject is not the same, not different with the coming of the effect – there is a feedback like with karma, but it is not absolute.)

L3: [RÉSUMÉ OF SECTION 2 – ON CHANGE / MOVEMENT]

-- 1. A GOER DOESN'T REMAIN THE SAME / CHANGE WHILE GOING / CEASE COMPLETELY. A goer cannot

remain the same all along, nor change into something different / other-existence, nor become non-existent. The goer going is not the same, nor different before, during (ii) and after. Therefore there is no real going that would make him different. (2:1)

-- 2. Opponent: The goer actually going (ii) is different because of his added visible activity & displacement, which is proof of the occurrence of a real going process (a real action / karma) motivated by a real goer. (2:2)

L4: [The emptiness of activity and movement, goer, going]

-- 1. THE VISIBLE ACTIVITY: The visible activity & displacement can hardly be used to prove the existence of anything since its own origination cannot be directly observed or proved. An independent visible activity & displacement is impossible; it cannot exist without a goer, otherwise there would be two kinds of activity, and two goers (2:3-7).

-- 2. THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT THE GOER: A goer going (ii) is not inherently existing (since he cannot exist without a going); he is not completely non-existent either (somebody is going); he is just not absolute. (2:7-8) Section 1: the subject / motive is empty because dependent on its own causes and conditions, and interdependent with its effects (actions).

-- 3. THE EMPTINESS OF GOING: An empty goer cannot really go; so there is no real inherent going. A real going would mean that there could be a goer without a going, then there would be two acts of going. So the duality “goer goes” is flawed since one cannot exist without the other. (2:9-11) Also, the visible activity & displacement of a going process can hardly be used to prove the difference in a goer before, during and after the going /action, since its own origination cannot be directly observed or proved. (2:12)

L4: [No origination & cessation of going, no real change in the goer]

-- 1. THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT THE THREE STATES OF THE GOER / THE ORIGINATION AND CESSATION OF

THE GOING: It is easy to show that none of these three are inherent or permanent. But they are not completely non-existent either; they are co-dependently arisen concepts. So they cannot be used to prove the origination of the going /action. (2:13-14) The goer before the going (i) is not inherently existing, not completely non-existent or useless either, just never absolute. (2:15) The goer after the going (iii) is not inherently existing, not completely non-existent or useless either, just never absolute. (2 :16) There is no permanent goer coming from any of the three times (i, ii, iii). (2:17)

-- 2. NO CONTINUITY, NO DISCONTINUITY OF THE GOER: (Non-duality: not two, not one) So there

is no permanent goer that exist and change with the going, nor is he changing into three different inherent things. (2:18)

L4: [The relation between the goer, the going, and the destination]

-- 1. NOT THE SAME, NOT DIFFERENT: The essence of the goer does not reside in (or come from) the activity or displacement, nor is the goer found outside of the going process. (2:19-21)

-- 2. INTERDEPENDENCE, INSEPARABILITY, NON-DUALITY Both empty because conceptually interdependent, inseparable, one cannot exist with or without the other, non dual: not two, not one. (2:21-23)

-- 3. THE CASE OF THE DESTINATION: There is no independent destination; it is interdependent with the process of going, and with the goer. Thus it is not inherently existent, nor completely non-existent. (2:22-23)

L4: [Conclusions: non-duality -- emptiness and interdependence]

-- 1. EQUIVALENT TO SECTION 1: The duality “goer, going”, or “motive, actions”, are like “cause & effect”. So they are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. No goer/cause with or without a going/effect; no going/effect with or without a goer/cause, etc. (2:24-25)

-- 2. CONTINUATION OF THE CASE OF “MOTIVE”: So the motive/doer is empty, the actions motivated are empty, the objects of theses actions are empty. All are not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither. They are co-dependently arisen concepts, not absolute, but useful.

In short, there is no free permanent person (same) motivating real (wholesome or unwholesome) actions, and being changed by those actions (like accumulating karma or conditioning), nor is he changed into a completely different person (a different person suffering). The action we imagine is a mist of fuzzy effects caused by an infinity of empty causes and conditions; never individual or absolute, but not from the mind only either. Nothing exist and change.

L3: [Initial-goer(i)/motive -- > goer going(ii) -- > resulting-goer(iii)]

-- 1. EMPTINESS OF GOER/MOTIVE: All goers(i) /motive are empty because they have their own initial-goers(i) and conditions; no inherent, absolute, permanent, independent (100% free), or primary goer /motive; no possible essence of action coming from the goers /motive. No

absolute free will. (1)

-- 2. GOERS/MOTIVE ARE NOT NON-EXISTENT EITHER: Even if never absolute, they are not completely non-existent, or without any influence, or unrelated to their motivated results in similarity, space & time. There is the observed relations. There is no resulting-goer (change, action) without a goer /motive.

-- 3. BOUNDLESS CHAIN OF CHANGE /MOVEMENT: All initial-goers(i) /motive are/were resulting-goer(iii); all resulting-goers are/will-be initial-goers. No first goer/motive, no final goer/destination. No first position/state, no final position/state for anything or anybody.

-- 4. A FLOW WITHOUT ANY INDIVIDUALITY IN IT: Each resulting-goer(iii) has/had an infinity of initial-goers(i) (in time), and other causes and conditions each time; is dependent on everything else. Each initial-goer(i) has/will-have an infinity of resulting-goers(iii) (in time), and influence many things (each time); has influence on everything else. Each initial-goer(i) is doing a multitude of going/actions simultaneously (each one relative to a different thing); and each actions are done by a multitude of agents simultaneously. There is no ownership.

-- 5. EMPTINESS OF THE ACTION, AND OF THE RESULT: If there is no absolute goer(i)/motive (because of its own causes and conditions), then there cannot be any going(ii)/action, or absolute resulting-goer(iii) /destination. All resulting-goers (iii) and going (all actions) are empty because dependent on empty initial-goers (i) /motive.

-- 6. RESULTING-GOERS AND GOING (ACTIONS) ARE NOT NON-EXISTENT EITHER: The resulting-goer (iii) (and going/action), even if never absolute, is not completely non-existent, or unrelated to its initial-goer(i) /motive in similarity, space and time. There is the observed regularity even if imperfect. There is no initial-goer(i) /motive without a resulting-goer (iii) or action.

-- 7. EMPTY AGGREGATE: If no initial-goer(i) / motive is absolute, an aggregate of cause and conditions including it cannot be absolute either. The product does not reside in the causes individually or collectively, nor outside of the aggregate.

-- 8. EMPTINESS OF NOT-GOING/STOPPING/NOT-DOING: There is no positive going/action, and no negative going/action (remaining unmoved or stopping).

-- 9. CONCEPTUAL INTERDEPENDENCE: All trio – goer (i), going(ii) /acting and destination / resulting-goer (iii) - are empty because conceptually interdependent. One cannot exist without the other, but they are never absolute. No initial-goer(i)/motive with or without a resulting-goer(iii) /destination; no resulting-goer(iii) /destination with or without an initial-goer(i) /motive ... No initial-goer(i)/motive with or without a going(ii) /acting; no going(ii) /acting with or without an initial-goer(i) /motive. Same between verb and complement.

-- 10. NOT THE SAME, NOT DIFFERENT: The goer before, during & after are not the same (self-movement), not different (other-movement), nor both together, nor neither (no initial-goer(i) /motive at all).

-- 11. NOT SIMULTANEOUS, NOT SEPARATE: The goer before, during & after a displacement

cannot be the simultaneous (or overlapping at the junctions), not separate (with gaps). The exact time of the beginning and ending of the going /action, its origination and cessation, cannot be found – so there cannot be duration either.

-- 12. EMPTINESS OF THE THREE TIMES: So there is no real before (i), during (ii) and after (iii) the going /action, since these points in time do not really exist. So, the three goers before, during and after the going /actions are also empty.

-- 13. NO CONTINUITY, NO DISCONTINUITY: No goer remain the same by going through the going/action process (inherent existence), nor change into something completely different (other existence), nor cease completely (non-existence). The goer before (i), during (ii) and after (iii) the going/action is not the same, nor different. (The same for the effect and the causing.)

-- 14. THE MIDDLE WAY: So we should stay away from the four extreme philosophical positions in regard to causes, effects, causal relations, causal lines or cycles, causality and dependent origination in general.

L3: [The illusion of continuity through change or movement]

-- 1. BOUNDLESS CHAIN OF CAUSALITY: All initial-goers(i) /motive are/were resulting-goers(iii); all resulting-goers are/will-be initial-goers. No first goer/motive, no final goer/destination. No first position/state, no final position/state for anything or anybody. All resulting-goer(iii) has/had an infinity of initial-goers(i) /motive; all initial-goer(i) /motive has/will-have an infinity of resulting-goers(iii). (1)

-- 2. A NETWORK OF MANY TO MANY EACH TIME: Each time ...

-- -- a. Back: Each resulting-goer(iii) is immediately depending on an infinity of causes and conditions. But we conventionally designate one cause “the initial-goer(i), the immediately preceding condition”, like if there was a continuity of something.

-- -- b. Forward: Each initial-goer(i) is immediately influencing an infinity of other things simultaneously. But we conventionally designate one “the resulting-goer(iii), the immediately following effect”, like if there was a continuity of something.

-- -- c. So anytime anything is at the convergence of an infinity of causes and conditions, and the starting point of an infinity of influences. But we usually concentrate on one cause before, one effect after, the continuity of a goer, and call the rest “other conditions” and “side effects”.

-- -- d. More so, this network of infinite changing-causes converging on one goer/thing, and the fanning out of the network of discrete influences on other things are just like an illusion. There is causality, influence, change, movement but nothing discrete, no individual things (initial-goer, resulting-goer or movement/change) in it. We are the ones who are giving names to small swirls in the middle of an ocean and following their “evolution”.

-- 3. THE IDEA OF LINES AND CYCLES OF CAUSES & EFFECTS:

-- -- a. LINES OF CAUSALITY:

-- -- -- i. Back: The resulting-goer has a initial-goer; this initial-goer had its initial-goer; this initial-goer had its initial-goer; ... ad infinitum. Each resulting-goer is the result of an infinity of initial-goers successively in line. We might call this the line of past states of the same goer. All of this assuming that we can use one to one causality.

-- -- -- ii. Forward: The initial-goer has its resulting-goer; this resulting-goer will have its resulting-goer; this resulting-goer will have its resulting-goer;... ad infinitum.

Each initial-goer will result in an infinity of resulting-goers successively in line. Like if it was the same goer all the time and that all other causes and conditions are pushed to a secondary role. All of this assuming that we can use one to one causality.

-- -- -- iii. So we usually concentrate on the continuity of something / some-being along this linear sequence of events: one being before, one being after, and call the rest “other minor conditions” and “side effects”; then we go to the next step.

-- -- -- iv. But we have no valid absolute basis to concentrate on only one cause and one effect at each step, or to concentrate on the continuity of a goer, because each step is at best a many to many point; or a mist of causes producing a mist of effects, or even just an apparent thing in the middle of an empty luminous space ...

-- -- b. EXAMPLES:

-- -- -- i. It is the case with movement, we think there is an object, or being, moving that is the same before, during and after the movement. He/it is not different either.

-- -- -- ii. It is the case with change, we think there is an object, or being, changing that is the same before, during and after the change. Not different either.

-- -- -- iii. It is the case with action, we think there is a being, motivating and acting that is the same before, during and after the action / acquisition of karma. He is not different either.

-- -- -- iv. It is the case with rebirth, we think there is a being having rebirth that is the same before, during and after the rebirth. He is not different either.

-- -- -- v. It is the case with consciousness or perception, we think there is a being having perception that is the same before, during and after the perception or consciousness. He/it is not different either.

-- -- -- vi. The self is also like that. We think there is a continuity; either a permanent cause, or a permanent individual stream. Not different either.

-- 4. GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE:

-- -- a. Each being is dependent on all other beings; each being has influence on all other beings.

-- -- b. All beings are interdependent with all other beings.

-- -- c. There is no ownership, no real network of discrete relations, no real lines or streams, no real cycle of causes and effects.

L1: [The elementary components of reality (ayatanas, skandhas, dhatus, cetasika), and the three stages of becoming of all products and moments of consciousness]

L2: [Section 3 - An Analysis of "Vision" and Other Sense-Faculties (the sense-fields) -- 9 – [The six senses, direct perception, the six objects / world]]

(RÉSUMÉ : Section 3 is about the “objects of sensations” or the perceived world, the third conditioning cause listed in the verse 1:2. This chapter proves that there is no real conditioning cause here either; so there cannot be any real effect from this type of causes: effects like knowledge, sensations, etc. If the “objects of sensations” are empty of inherent existence, then the acquired knowledge is also empty, so are cognitive sensations, affective sensations, desire, ...)

-- Section 2 is mainly about the object or complement of the verb, while section 1 is about the subject, and section 2 about the verb. But all three sections cover the three.

-- It is different than section 2 because there is no equivalent here of the “visible

activity and displacement” for the verb.)

L3: [The traditional understanding]

- \ ###
- \ 1.
- \ Vision, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thought
- \ Are the six sense faculties.
- \ The area of their concern is that which is seen [heard, smelled] and so forth.

(AFFIRMING DIRECT PERCEPTION, AND AN INDEPENDENT WORLD: The opponent is saying that the

following trio: sense organs, perceiving, objects of perception / external world, are all real. He is saying that those three are inherently existing, and that there is objective direct perception of an external independent world by true impartial sense organs and consciousnesses.)

L3: [Nagarjuna maintains: same conclusions as section 2]

- \ ###
- \ 2.
- \ Certainly vision does not in any way see its own self.
- \ Now if it does not see its own self, how can it possibly see something else?

(NO DIRECT PERCEPTION OF THE EYE BY THE EYE: If direct perception was possible, if there was true perception of the essence of an object while seeing it, “if the nature of all things first appears in themselves”, then the eye would be able to see itself. But that is not the case. So direct perception of the object is not possible. And this applies to the six senses.)

- \ ###
- \ 3.
- \ An understanding of vision is not attained through the example of fire [which, itself, burns].
- \ On the contrary, that [example of fire] together with vision is refuted by
- \ [the analysis of] "present going to," "that which is already gone to," and "that which is not yet gone to." (in Chapter 2)

(THE FIRE SIMILE: The opponent think that if the trio “fire burns kindling” is valid, then “seer sees objects” is also valid. And since fire doesn’t burn itself, why would the eye sees itself ?

Nagarjuna replies: Even in the case of “fire burns kindling” the trio subject, action-verb, complement is also empty of inherent existence as explained in section 2 with “initial-goer(i), going(ii), destination /resulting-goer(iii)”. All the arguments of section 2 apply to both cases here.

-- Conclusions: There is no real seeing; and the seer is not the same nor different before(i), during(ii) and after(iii) the seeing; and there is no object existing independently of the other two.

-- They also apply to the trio “a person clings to objects of the senses” for which the fire simile was first introduced. It is taught that liberation is like a fire with no more kindling.

-- So “perceiver”, “perceiving”, “the world”, as well as “beings”, “clinging”, “objects of

the senses” are all empty of inherent existence, but not completely non-existent, not both, not neither. Those elements cannot exist on their own; they are interdependent, co-dependently arisen concepts. They are not separate or different, not the same. They are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. They exist conventionally but should be seen for what they really are. The teachings of Dependent Origination uses them in the model, but the perfection of understanding this model, would be to unite it with the realization of the emptiness of all of its elements.)

\ ###
\ 4.
\ When no vision occurs, nothing whatsoever is being seen.
\ How, then, is it possible to say: Vision sees?

(NO “PERCEIVING SENSE ORGAN” WITH OR WITHOUT AN “OBJECT”: No “sense organ seeing” prior / without an “object” being seen. So how could it exist on its own and then “see” an object. A real sense organ existing on its own is impossible.)

\ ###
\ 5.
\ Therefore, vision does not see, and "no-vision" does not see.

(No “perceiving” with or without a “sense organ”: From the preceding verse we know that a “sense organ” does not perceive. But that doesn’t mean that there is no sense organs at all; it just means that it cannot be a sense organ before perceiving and then be perceiving something. So the individual sense organ is not an absolute permanent sense organ, not a completely non-existent sense organ either. We need to stay away from these two extremes: inherent /absolute sense organ, and completely non-existent sense organ. It is not both, or something else either. It also means that the perceiving is not inherently existing.)

\ ###
\ Nevertheless, it is explained that also the "seer" is to be known only by his vision.

\ ###
\ 6.
\ There is no "seer" with vision or without vision;
\ Therefore, if there is no "seer," how can there be vision and the object seen?

(EMPTINESS OF THE ACTION-VERB – SEEING, AND OF THE OBJECT: If there cannot be a seer before any vision; then there cannot be any seer during the seeing; then there cannot be any real seeing. An empty subject can only result in empty actions. And if there is no real seer or sense organs, no real seeing / perception, then there is no real object being perceived.)

L3: [Consequences on Dependent Origination]

\ ###
\ 7.
\ As the birth of a son is said to occur presupposing the mother and the father,
\ Knowledge is said to occur presupposing the eye being dependent on the visible forms.

(EMPTINESS OF THE COMPLEMENT: The simile of father and son: The opponent think that if the duality "father and son" is valid and implies that the father exist before the son, then in the duality "perception and knowledge" there must be real perception (cause or action-verb) before knowledge (effect or complement). This is what is taught by the Buddha in the law of Dependent Origination; so there must be real inherent perception (cause or action-verb), and real knowledge (effect or complement) because everything else is depending on this.

-- Note: this problem could be approached using the arguments in section 2 about the trio subject, action-verb, complement, or with the arguments of section 1 about the duality cause and effect. The logic similar and the conclusions the same.

-- Nagarjuna would reply: The cases of "father and son" and of "two consecutive steps in the theory of Dependent Origination" are exactly like any duality cause-effect as described in section 1. All the arguments of section 1 apply to both cases here. The conclusions are that the two poles of any cause-effect duality are both empty of inherent existence, but not completely non-existent, not both, not neither. Those elements cannot exist on their own; they are interdependent, co-dependently arisen concepts. They are not separate or different, not the same. They are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. They exist conventionally but should be seen for what they really are. The teachings of Dependent Origination uses them in the model, but the perfection of understanding this model, would be to unite it with the realization of the emptiness of all of its elements.)

\ ###

\ 8.

\ Since the "object seen" and the vision do not exist (independently, on their own),

\ there is no four-fold [consequence]: knowledge, etc. [cognitive sensation, affective sensation, and "desire"].

\ Also, then, how will the acquisition (upadana) [of karma]

\ and its consequences [i.e., existence, birth, aging, and death] be produced?

(EMPTINESS OF THE REST OF THE CHAIN OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION: Empty causes can only produce

empty results as explained in section 1. The whole chain of dependent origination, the 12 steps, are all empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen. All not inherently existing, not completely non-existing, not both, not neither. Every pairs is like a duality cause and effect; and it is non-dual: not two, not one.

-- An empty subject and action-verb can only result in an empty complement as explained in section 2. All subject, action-verb, complement, in any description, any conceptualization, any theory, are always all empty of inherent existence.

-- But that doesn't mean that we should drop the theory of dependent origination immediately, drop all morality, drop all virtues, all methods, all paths. It should be very clear that emptiness doesn't invalidate dependent origination, on the contrary, they implies each other. It is just that we need to perfect our understanding of dependent origination, that we need to perfect our practices of skillful means, morality and virtues, by combining them with more wisdom (the wisdom gradually realizing the emptiness of the three.)

\ ###

\ 9.

\ [Likewise] hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thought are explained as vision.

\ Indeed one should not apprehend the "hearer," "what is heard," etc. [as

self-existent entities].

(THE SAME FOR ALL SIX SENSES.)

L3: [RÉSUMÉ OF SECTION 3 – ON OBJECTS OF SENSATIONS]

-- 1. Opponent: The “objects of sensations” are real causes of sensations and knowledge. The perceiver actually perceiving (ii) is different because of his added perception, which is proof of the occurrence of a real perceiving process (by real sense organs of a real independent world). (3:1)

-- 2. It is different than with the “goer going destination”, there is no equivalent of the visible activity & displacement; the eye doesn’t see itself in “visible activity”. How then can there be real perception of anything else. (3:2)

-- 3. In verse 3:3 it is mentionned that the analysis of section 2 applies here. So:

-- 4. A SEER, OR SENSE ORGAN, DOESN’T REMAIN THE SAME / CHANGE WHILE SEEING / CEASE

COMPLETELY. A seer cannot remain the same all along, nor change into something different / other-existence, nor become non-existent. The seer seeing is not the same, nor different before, during (ii) and after. Therefore there is no real seeing that would make him different. (2:1)

L4: [The emptiness of perception, seer, seeing]

-- 1. THE FEELING OF PERCEPTION: The perception can hardly be used to prove the existence of anything since its own origination cannot be directly observed or proved. An independent perception is impossible; it cannot exist without a seer, otherwise there would be two kinds of activity, and two seers (2:3-7).

-- 2. THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT THE SEER: A seer seeing (ii) is not inherently existing (since he cannot exist without a seeing); he is not completely non-existent either (somebody is seeing); he is just not absolute. (2:7-8)

-- 3. THE EMPTINESS OF SEEING: An empty seer cannot really see; so there is no real inherent seeing. A real seeing would mean that there could be a seer without a seeing, then there would be two acts of seeing. So the duality “seer sees” is flawed since one cannot exist without the other. (2:9-11) Also, the perception of a seeing process can hardly be used to prove the difference in a seer before, during and after the seeing /action, since its own origination cannot be directly observed or proved. (2:12)

L4: [No origination & cessation of seeing, no real change in the seer]

-- 1. THE MIDDLE WAY ABOUT THE THREE STATES OF THE SEER / THE ORIGINATION AND CESSATION OF

THE SEEING: It is easy to show that none of these three are inherent or permanent. But they are not completely non-existent either; they are co-dependently arisen concepts. So they cannot be used to prove the origination of the seeing /perception. (2:13-14) The seer before the seeing (i) is not inherently existing, not completely non-existent or useless either, just never absolute. (2:15) The seer after the seeing (iii) is not inherently existing, not completely non-existent or useless either, just never absolute. (2:16) There is no

permanent seer coming from any of the three times (i, ii, iii). (2:17)

-- 2. NO continuity, no discontinuity of the seer: (Non-duality: not two, not one) So there is no permanent seer that exist and change with the seeing, nor is he changing into three different inherent things. (2:18)

L4: [The relation between the seer, the seeing, and the objects]

-- 1. NOT THE SAME, NOT DIFFERENT: The essence of the seer does not reside in the perception, nor is the seer found outside of the seeing process. (2:19-21)

-- 2. INTERDEPENDENCE, INSEPARABILITY, NON-DUALITY: Both empty because conceptually interdependent, inseparable, one cannot exist with or without the other, non dual: not two, not one. (2:21-23)

-- 3. THE CASE OF THE OBJECT: There is no independent object of sensation; it is interdependent with the process of seeing, and with the seer. Thus it is not inherently existent, nor completely non-existent. (2:22-23)

L4: [Conclusions: non-duality -- emptiness and interdependence]

-- 1. EQUIVALENT TO SECTION 1: The duality "seer, seeing", or "seer, object", are like "cause & effect". So they are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. No seer/cause with or without a seeing/object; no seeing/object with or without a seer/cause, etc. (2:24-25)

-- 2. So the subject is empty, the perceptions/actions are empty, the objects of theses perceptions/actions are empty, the consequences of these objects, the sensations, knowledge, ... are empty. All are not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither. They are CO-DEPENDENTLY ARISEN CONCEPTS, not absolute, but useful.

L3: [Initial-seer(i)/ sense-organ -- > seer seeing(ii) -- > resulting-seer(iii) with knowledge]

-- 1. EMPTINESS OF SEER/VISION: All seers(i) /organ of the senses are empty because they have their own initial-seers(i) and conditions; no inherent, absolute, permanent, independent (100% free), or primary seer /motive; no possible essence of action coming from the seers /motive. No absolute free will. (1)

-- 2. SEERS/MOTIVE ARE NOT NON-EXISTENT EITHER: Even if never absolute, they are not completely non-existent, or without any influence, or unrelated to their motivated results in similarity, space & time. There is the observed relations. There is no resulting-seer (change, action) without a seer /motive.

-- 3. BOUNDLESS CHAIN OF CHANGE /MOVEMENT: All initial-seers(i) /motive are/were resulting-seer(iii); all resulting-seers are/will-be initial-seers. No first seer/motive, no final seer/destination. No first position/state, no final position/state for anything or anybody.

-- 4. A FLOW WITHOUT ANY INDIVIDUALITY IN IT: Each resulting-seer(iii) has/had an infinity of initial-seers(i) (in time), and other causes and conditions each time; is dependent on everything else. Each initial-seer(i) has/will-have an infinity of resulting-seers(iii) (in time), and influence many things (each time); has influence on everything else. Each initial-seer(i) is doing a multitude of seeing/actions simultaneously (each one relative to a different thing); and each actions are done by a multitude of agents simultaneously. There

is no ownership.

-- 5. EMPTINESS OF THE ACTION, AND OF THE RESULT: If there is no absolute seer(i)/motive (because of its own causes and conditions), then there cannot be any seeing(ii)/action, or absolute resulting-seer(iii) /destination. All resulting-seers (iii) and seeing (all actions) are empty because dependent on empty initial-seers (i) /motive.

-- 6. RESULTING-SEERS AND SEEING (ACTIONS) ARE NOT NON-EXISTENT EITHER: The resulting-seer (iii) (and seeing/action), even if never absolute, is not completely non-existent, or unrelated to its initial-seer(i) /motive in similarity, space and time. There is the observed regularity even if imperfect. There is no initial-seer(i) /motive without a resulting-seer (iii) or action.

-- 7. EMPTY AGGREGATE: If no initial-seer(i) / motive is absolute, an aggregate of cause and conditions including it cannot be absolute either. The product does not reside in the causes individually or collectively, nor outside of the aggregate.

-- 8. EMPTINESS OF NOT-SEEING/STOPPING/NOT-DOING: There is no positive seeing/action, and no negative seeing/action (remaining unmoved or stopping).

-- 9. CONCEPTUAL INTERDEPENDENCE: All trio – seer (i), seeing(ii) /acting and destination / resulting-seer (iii) - are empty because conceptually interdependent. One cannot exist without the other, but they are never absolute. No initial-seer(i)/motive with or without a resulting-seer(iii) /destination; no resulting-seer(iii) /destination with or without an initial-seer(i) /motive ... No initial-seer(i)/motive with or without a seeing(ii) /acting; no seeing(ii) /acting with or without an initial-seer(i) /motive. Same between verb and complement.

-- 10. NOT THE SAME, NOT DIFFERENT: The seer before, during & after are not the same (self-movement), not different (other-movement), nor both together, nor neither (no initial-seer(i) /motive at all).

-- 11. NOT SIMULTANEOUS, NOT SEPARATE: The seer before, during & after a displacement cannot be the simultaneous (or overlapping at the junctions), not separate (with gaps). The exact time of the beginning and ending of the seeing /action, its origination and cessation, cannot be found – so there cannot be duration either.

-- 12. EMPTINESS OF THE THREE TIMES: So there is no real before (i), during (ii) and after (iii) the seeing /action, since these points in time do not really exist. So, the three seers before, during and after the seeing /actions are also empty.

-- 13. NO CONTINUITY, NO DISCONTINUITY: No seer remain the same by seeing through the seeing/action process (inherent existence), nor change into something completely different (other existence), nor cease completely (non-existence). The seer before (i), during (ii) and after (iii) the seeing/action is not the same, nor different. (The same for the effect and the causing.)

-- 14. THE MIDDLE WAY: So we should stay away from the four extreme philosophical positions in regard to causes, effects, causal relations, causal lines or cycles, causality and dependent origination in general.

L3: [The illusion of a self acquiring knowledge]

-- 1. BOUNDLESS CHAIN OF CAUSALITY: All initial-seers(i) /motive are/were resulting-seers(iii); all resulting-seers are/will-be initial-seers. No first seer/motive, no final seer/destination. No first position/state, no final position/state for anything or anybody. All resulting-seer(iii) has/had an infinity of initial-seers(i) /motive; all initial-seer(i) /motive has/will-have an infinity of resulting-seers(iii). (1)

-- 2. A NETWORK OF MANY TO MANY EACH TIME: Each time ...

-- -- a. BACK: Each resulting-seer(iii) is immediately depending on an infinity of causes and conditions. But we conventionally designate one cause "the initial-seer(i), the immediately preceding condition", like if there was a continuity of something.

-- -- b. FORWARD: Each initial-seer(i) is immediately influencing an infinity of other things simultaneously. But we conventionally designate one "the resulting-seer(iii), the immediately following effect", like if there was a continuity of something.

-- -- c. So anytime anything is at the convergence of an infinity of causes and conditions, and the starting point of an infinity of influences. But we usually concentrate on one cause before, one effect after, the continuity of a seer, and call the rest "other conditions" and "side effects".

-- -- d. More so, this network of infinite changing-causes converging on one seer/thing, and the fanning out of the network of discrete influences on other things are just like an illusion. There is causality, influence, change, movement but nothing discrete, no individual things (initial-seer, resulting-seer or movement/change) in it. We are the ones who are giving names to small swirls in the middle of an ocean and following their "evolution".

-- 3. THE IDEA OF LINES AND CYCLES OF CAUSES & EFFECTS:

-- -- a. LINES OF CAUSALITY:

-- -- -- i. BACK: The resulting-seer has a initial-seer; this initial-seer had its initial-seer; this initial-seer had its initial-seer; ... ad infinitum. Each resulting-seer is the result of an infinity of initial-seers successively in line. We might call this the line of past states of the same seer. All of this assuming that we can use one to one causality.

-- -- -- ii. FORWARD: The initial-seer has its resulting-seer; this resulting-seer will have its resulting-seer; this resulting-seer will have its resulting-seer;... ad infinitum. Each initial-seer will result in an infinity of resulting-seers successively in line. Like if it was the same seer all the time and that all other causes and conditions are pushed to a secondary role. All of this assuming that we can use one to one causality.

-- -- -- iii. So we usually concentrate on the continuity of something / some-being along this linear sequence of events: one being before, one being after, and call the rest "other minor conditions" and "side effects"; then we go to the next step.

-- -- -- iv. But we have no valid absolute basis to concentrate on only one cause and one effect at each step, or to concentrate on the continuity of a seer, because each step is at best a many to many point; or a mist of causes producing a mist of effects, or even just an apparent thing in the middle of an empty luminous space ...

-- -- b. EXAMPLES:

-- -- -- i. It is the case with movement, we think there is an object, or being, moving that is the same before, during and after the movement. He/it is not different either.

-- -- -- ii. It is the case with change, we think there is an object, or being, changing that is the same before, during and after the change. Not different either.

-- -- -- iii. It is the case with action, we think there is a being, motivating and acting that is the same before, during and after the action / acquisition of karma. He is not different either.

-- -- -- iv. It is the case with rebirth, we think there is a being having rebirth that is the same before, during and after the rebirth. He is not different either.
-- -- -- v. It is the case with consciousness or perception, we think there is a being having perception that is the same before, during and after the perception or consciousness. He/it is not different either.
-- -- -- vi. The self is also like that. We think there is a continuity; either a permanent cause, or a permanent individual stream. Not different either.

-- 4. GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE:

-- -- a. Each being is dependent on all other beings; each being has influence on all other beings.
-- -- b. All beings are interdependent with all other beings.
-- -- c. There is no ownership, no real network of discrete relations, no real lines or streams, no real cycle of causes and effects.

L2: [Section 4 - An Analysis of the "Groups of Universal Elements" (skandhas) (the aggregates) - 9 – [The five aggregates, explained/caused by their basic underlying causes; emptiness of emptiness]]

(i.e RÉSUMÉ : Section 4:

-- OPPONENT: There are real (inherent) causes, basic causes explaining the apparent five aggregates. It is important to understand the composition of the skandhas (body, and mind processes) in term of elementary elements (basic causes). These elements compose and condition the skandhas. They form the whole foundation for the theories explaining the conditioning and the possibility of Liberation.

-- KHANDHA / SKANDHA: Heap; group; aggregate. Physical and mental components of the personality and of sensory experience in general. The five skandhas / the five aggregates of clinging/sustenance are : form, feeling, perception, fabrications, consciousness, when clinging to them; when accompanied with mental fermentations; when the self is identified with any of them; when being obsessed by any of them thinking they are I, or mine; when having desire or passion toward them. (But if we know their real non-dual nature, and thus do not cling to them, then they are as pure as everything else.)

-- EX. THE AGGREGATE OF FORM corresponds to what we would call material, or physical, factors of experience. It includes not only our own bodies but also the material objects that surround us -- the earth, the trees, the buildings, and the objects of everyday life. Specifically, the aggregate of form includes the five physical sense organs and the corresponding material objects of those sense organs: the eyes and visible objects, the ears and audible objects, the nose and olfactory objects, the tongue and objects of taste, and the skin and tangible objects.

-- NOTE: We need to understand very well the theory of the five skandhas, their variety and composition, their dynamic, to appreciate this section as is. Or we need to be able to translate all of this in terms of our current modern scientific theories about our body, speech and mind, and about the whole perceptible world, and all theories, laws, concepts we have; all the material and immaterial entities we can imagine. A skandhas is then any

grouping (a more apparent macroscopic level) that can be explained (or caused) by more basic components (a more basic or microscopic level of reality either physical or non-physical).

-- It is easy to understand that a grouping of more elementary components can be explained fully by the dynamic of those basic components; we can accept that the existence of a macroscopic entity (biological or not) could be explained totally by the interactions of its more basic components like cells, molecules, atoms, sub-atomic particles, quarks, strings, energy, etc. We can accept that all the macroscopic behaviors and laws could be deduced from such microscopic (even if we have never been able to do it). But still, because we think there are real inherently existing basic components (elementary particles), we also think the macroscopic entities are real, solid, inherently existing. The same thing applies at the level of ideas, concepts, universal laws, and at the level of the self.

-- This section demonstrate that no such elementary particles (at any of the three levels: physical / perceptible, conceptual / form, or self / non-form) can exist on their own, inherently, and be the basic causes of everything else. NO BASIC LEVEL (MATERIAL OR NON-MATERIAL), CAN CAUSE OR FULLY EXPLAIN THE MACROSCOPIC APPARENT LEVEL. THAT IS NOT THE WAY REALITY IS.

-- The need to realize the emptiness of our five aggregates as a first step in the development of the transcending wisdom is very well explained in the Heart Sutra (copied at the end of this document). It is also mentioned that realizing the no-self is not enough; we need to realize the emptiness of all dharmas without any exception, including any basic level dharma of any skandhas of any of the three realms.

-- Applying the methods developed in section 1 to the five skandhas (physical or mental) and their respective basic causes ? both are empty, non-dual.

-- -- ANOTHER COUPLE CAUSE AND EFFECT: all the skandhas and their basic causes form a couple cause-effect. Like the more basic microscopic level explaining / causing the apparent macroscopic level. Example, shape, color, elementary particles, can be seen as the causes of the visible form. Mental factors are the basic causes of consciousness. There are different basic causes depending on the type of skandhas (physical or mental. All the arguments of section 1 apply here. The conclusions are also the same. (But they gives very surprising results when applied to the subjects here.)

-- -- ALSO ABOUT THE EMPTINESS OF EMPTINESS. Emptiness is not a basic cause either; it is not the absolute nature of everything.

-- So, if we copy the résumé of section 1, change a few words (like: cause -- > basic cause; effect -- > skandhas), and add some phrases we have:

-- -- ABOUT THE SKANDHAS AND THEIR BASIC CAUSES / about the elements composing the personality and about the perceptible world (the objects of the six senses, of the three realms), the real nature of this world, about causality as in section 1. About the macroscopic apparent level being explained (or caused) by a more basic (or microscopic) level of reality composed of elementary, inherent components – the real dharmas and relations described in the Abhidharma, or the elementary particles and laws of science.

-- -- THE MIDDLE WAY: There is no absolute basic causes (basic level), no absolute effect-skandhas (macroscopic level), no absolute causality (as covered in section 1), no

absolute control of the macroscopic by controlling the microscopic or basic level. But this doesn't mean that there is absolutely no causes or more elementary functional components that could partially explain the more macroscopic level, no effect-skandhas, no causality, no control at all. Things are still being dependently arisen and functional (at any level, or in any realms); they do exist conventionally and are very useful; there is partial control. Things are called this or that (elementary basic causes or macroscopic effects / skandhas) based on observed conventions and regularity, but they are never absolute. They are not inherently existent (as basic causes or effect-skandhas), not completely non-existent, not both, not neither. So even if we cannot find any absolute elementary particles for the physical, or component for the mind, the laws of physics, chemistry, bio-chemistry, biology, psychology, sociology, ... are still useful. Even if all subjects, verb-action and complement in all phrases are empty of inherent existence, we still find conceptualization very useful. Emptiness doesn't mean total chaos, total non-existent, total meaningless, or that everything is from the mind only. We should not jump from total realism, to total idealism or nihilism.

-- -- The Middle Way: No total determinism of the skandhas by their basic causes, no total chaos. No total conditioning of our body, speech and mind by their conditioning causes, no total free-will or independent existence. No objective direct perception of an independent world by impartial sense organs and consciousness, and actions motivated by free motive, no total impersonal conditioning of the skandhas by more elementary components. Also meaning that the macroscopic is not totally determined by the microscopic, no more than any effect can be totally determined by any grouping of causes and effect. Microscopic and macroscopic, like cause and effect, cannot exist one without the other; they are interdependent, thus both empty of inherent existence, inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.

-- -- THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE "THIS THAT", OR "DEPENDENT ORIGINATION" with inherent basic

causes, skandhas-effects and elementary causal relations, as taught in the Abhidharma. So no absolute path that can surely cause Liberation. But there is a conventional dependent origination with empty causes, effects and causality. There are possible adapted skillful means, virtues and useful views; they are just never absolute. Emptiness doesn't deny Dependent Origination (the Two Truths are not in opposition); they are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they are interdependent; one cannot exist without the other; one implies the other; they are inseparable: not two, not one. THIS IS HOW OUR UNDERSTANDING OF BOTH DEPENDENT ORIGINATION AND EMPTINESS SHOULD BE "PERFECTED", BY UNITING THEM, BY

REALIZING THEIR INSEPARABILITY, THEIR NON-DUALITY, AS IN THE PERFECT UNION OF THE TWO

TRUTHS. Thus, even if everything is empty of inherent existence, that doesn't mean that we should drop all skillful means, all virtues, all paths as if they were completely non-existent, useless, meaningless. We just need to perfect those methods by combining them with more wisdom (emptiness) We need both method and emptiness together all the time. One alone is not enough.

-- -- ALL EFFECTS ARE CAUSES, BUT, ALSO, ALL CAUSES ARE EFFECTS. Everything is produced for

its effect. Any cause or condition has causes and conditions of its own, and there is no beginning to this, and no end. And, since everything is dependent, then everything is empty of inherent existence. That covers all functional things, everything in the three realms. There is only the chain of causality, endless in both directions, with no inherent elements in it. – There is no basic level without a more macroscopic apparent level; and no more

macroscopic apparent level without a more basic (or microscopic) level. They are both empty of inherent existence because interdependent like cause and effect.

-- -- THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF "CAUSALITY / A BASIC LEVEL CAUSING THE APPARENT LEVEL" IS FLAWED.

The moment of production cannot be found. The cause and effect cannot be the simultaneous (as two separate inherent entities), nor can they be in sequence (separate in time). The cause and effect cannot be the same, nor can they be different. One cannot be included in the other (scientific reductionism, or pure idealism). One cannot exist independently of the other. They are interdependent, co-dependently arisen, inseparable (not two, not one), dependent on the mind labeling them together.

-- -- INHERENT EXISTENCE IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH DEPENDENT ORIGATION: No inherent basic

causes would be able to suddenly produce something (real, non-real, both, or neither) (what would explain the emergence of new more macroscopic entities from a more basic level of inherent entities). No inherent skandhas-effect (real, non-real, both, or neither) would need to be caused. Inherent existence would inhibit any possible change. So it is the assumption of inherent existence (of basic elements or macroscopic apparent elements) that is incompatible with Dependent Origination, with the teachings of the Buddha. An empty cause can only produce an empty effect-skandhas. And an empty effect-skandhas can only be produced by an empty basic cause. Empty basic level < -- -- > empty apparent level. Cause, effect and their causal relations are empty of inherent existence because interdependent; and interdependent because empty of inherent existence.

-- -- In resume, WE SHOULD STAY AWAY FROM THE FOUR EXTREMES: everything is not inherently

existing, not completely non-existing, not both, not neither. Every cause-effect dualities, the two opposites of any relation, everything in the three realms is non-dual: not two (not different), not one (not the same).

-- -- Ex. There is no inherent basic causes explaining / causing the apparent more macroscopic effect-skandhas, no inherent skandhas, no basic causes, no basic particles, no basic mental factors ... All so called basic causes are effects, dependent on their own causes and conditions; everything is continually changing; never exactly the same for even an infinitesimal moment, but still never completely different -- there is continuity. THERE IS NOTHING PERMANENT IN OUR BODY, SPEECH AND MIND; NOT EVEN SOME ELEMENTARY COMPONENTS

MATERIAL OR IMMATERIAL; NOT EVEN EMPTINESS. WE ARE CONTINUALLY CHANGING, NEVER EXACTLY THE SAME, NOR COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM ONE INFINITESIMAL MOMENT TO ANOTHER, FROM ONE REBIRTH TO ANOTHER. THERE IS NO PERMANENT SELF, BUT THERE IS CONTINUITY.)

L3: [Emptiness of "visible form" vs. "elements" because interdependent]

\ ###

\ 1.

\ Visible form (rupa) is not perceived without the basic cause of visible form (rupakarana);

\ Likewise the basic cause of visible form does not appear without the visible form.

(VISIBLE FORM AND ITS BASIC CAUSE FORM AN APPARENT CAUSE-EFFECT DUALITY: The

opponent affirm

that there could be direct perception of the form by the eye, as something inherently existing. Nagarjuna affirms that there is no direct perception of the essence of the form, but that the form is merely imputed on a valid basis that is also empty. This basis is the cause of the appearance of the form (the effect). The basic causes of visible forms could be color, shape, elementary particles, maybe even existence or non-existence ... (depending on the theory). They are either characteristics or parts. For the opponent these and the visible form are both inherent entities that can exist independently of each other. For Nagarjuna, since they form a couple cause-effect, all the arguments and conclusions of section 1 apply to this case. Here it is first mentioned that neither the visible form (effect), not its basic cause (cause) can exist without the other. They are interdependent, thus both are empty of inherent existence.

– The basic level cannot exist without the more apparent macroscopic level; and vice versa. Like, a universe cannot exist without its elementary particles, and those particles cannot exist without an universe. The same for a body and its components, a cell and its components, an atom and its components, a mind and its memory or assimilation scheme ...)

Streng3 : The skandhas, likewise, are analyzed and their independent reality denied in chapter iv (An Analysis of the "Groups of Universal Elements" (skandhas)). Buddhist Abhidharma accepted five skandhas (groups of universal elements). Again, the basic argument is against the individual reality of any dharma considered among the skandhas, and takes the form of denying every causal theory as an explanation for a skandha, e.g., rupa (form). The pattern of the argument can be seen in the first three verses.

\ ###

\ 2.

\ If the visible form existed apart from its basic cause, it would logically follow that visible form is without cause;

\ But there is nothing anywhere [arising] without cause.

(THERE IS NO EFFECT WITHOUT A CAUSE as mentioned in section 1. An inherent visible form directly perceivable would be totally independent of everything else, but, there is no visible form without a color and shape, without being composed of particles, ... So the visible form is empty of inherent existence because dependent on its basis (shape, color, particles, ...).

– If the apparent macroscopic level could exist without its more basic level, that would mean that the apparent macroscopic level is not caused by its more basic components.)

\ ###

\ 3.

\ On the other hand, if there would be a basic cause apart from visible form,

\ The basic cause would be without any product; but there is no basic cause without a product.

(THERE IS NO CAUSE WITHOUT AN EFFECT as mentioned in section 1. An inherent basic cause would not be able to change, and produce an effect like a visible form. It would exist independently of the visible form. But, there is no basic cause, like color and shape, without a visible form. So the basic cause of the form – its shape, color, particles – are all empty of inherent existence because dependent on the visible form.

– If the more basic level could exist without its apparent macroscopic level, that the more

basic components are not causing anything, no apparent macroscopic effects. A bunch of elementary particle without an universe ?

EMPTINESS OF BOTH CAUSE AND EFFECT – BASIC CAUSE AND VISIBLE FORM – BECAUSE INTERDEPENDENT.

There is direct perception of an inherent visible form, and no inherent components composing the visible form – like color, shape, particles. – The macroscopic and more basic microscopic level are both empty of inherent existence because interdependent, inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.)

In brief the relation between elements and forms is the same as the relation between cause & effect:

Warning: there is a distinction between "materiality" and "visible form":

-- In the Sautrantika School, form and matter are synonymous.

-- But in the Prasangika School, matter is not asserted.

The point here is to demonstrate that there is no "materiality" behind the "visible form".

L3: [No absolute, no discontinuity]

\ ###
\ 4.
\ Just as when there is visible form no basic cause of form obtains,
\ So when there is no visible form no basic cause of form obtains.

(AN EMPTY CAUSE CAN ONLY AND DO PRODUCE AN EMPTY EFFECT. The effect – the visible form – is

not inherently existent, not completely non-existent, not both, not neither. There is a flow of interdependence, but no inherent entities in it. – An apparent macroscopic level caused by the more basic level cannot be inherently existent, not can it be totally non-existent, not both, nor neither.)

\ ###
\ 5.
\ Furthermore, it does not obtain that no visible form exists without a basic cause,
\ One should not construe any constructs concerning the form.

(AN EMPTY EFFECT CAN ONLY BE AND IS PRODUCED BY AN EMPTY CAUSE. The cause – color, shape,

particles, ... – are not inherently existent, not completely non-existent, not both, not neither. There is a flow of interdependence, but no inherent entities in it. – A more basic level causing an apparent macroscopic level cannot be inherently existent, not can it be totally non-existent, not both, nor neither.

THE MIDDLE WAY: STAYING AWAY FROM THE FOUR EXTREMES: we should not jump to any of the four

extremes positions: existence, non-existence, both, neither. All views concerning the form, all theories, would be necessarily flawed. – So we should not jump to any of the four extreme conception concerning those two levels: such as, existence, non-existence, both, neither.)

L3: [Non-duality of "visible form" vs. "elements"]

\ ###
\ 6.
\ Just as it does not obtain that the product is the same as the cause,
\ So it does not obtain that product is not the same as the cause.

(THE CAUSE AND EFFECT ARE NOT SEPARATE OR DIFFERENT, NOT THE SAME. Like for any other

duality cause-effect, they are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. This was demonstrated in section 1. – The two levels, the apparent macroscopic level and the supposedly more basic causing level, are not different or separate, not the same. They are non-dual: not two, not one.)

L3: [Generalization to all composites (skandhas)]

\ ###
\ 7.
\ Also, sensation, thought, mental conception, conditioned elements (samskara) and
\ All "things" (bhava) are to be dealt with in the same way as visible form.

(GENERALIZATION TO ALL SKANDHAS, TO ALL COMPOSITE. The whole set of the five aggregates are

empty of inherent existence because interdependent with their parts. Not existent, not completely non-existent, not both, not neither. They are not different or separate from their basic cause, not the same. They are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. So we should stay away from any views concerning them. All views are flawed, all conceptualization flawed. But that doesn't mean that we should drop everything right now, that everything is non-existent, useless, meaningless. It only means that we should use them with more wisdom (realizing the emptiness of the three).

– This discussion about the relation between two levels of the material world, can also be applied to any apparent object of the mental world and its supposedly basic mental causes. So it applies to any idea, theory, or concept explained in terms of more basic concepts. It applies to any feeling, consciousness, mental state ... explained in terms of more basic mental factors. All occurrences of the five aggregates and their particular basic causes are empty of inherent existence because interdependent.)

L3: [Even emptiness is not the "primal cause" either]

\ ###
\ 8.
\ Whoever argues against "emptiness" in order to refute an argument,
\ For him everything, including the point of contention (sadhya) is known to be unrefuted.

(EVEN EMPTINESS IS EMPTY OF INHERENT EXISTENCE: Some might think that existence, non-existence, permanence, impermanence, ... are also basic elements of things. Since everything is empty of inherent existence, some might think that the basic building block of the whole universe is emptiness itself, or elementary particles of space, or energy quanta ... But using the arguments of this chapter one can realize that they are all also empty of inherent existence because dependent on the object they are inseparable with. – Again, proving that emptiness is also empty of inherent existence doesn't make it completely non-existent, useless, meaningless. It only means that we should use it with more wisdom – knowing its emptiness – like we would use an antidote only to cure a specific illness.

Nothing is absolute, there are only adapted skillful means.

\ ###

\ 9.

\ Whoever argues by means of "emptiness" in order to explain an understanding,

\ For him, everything including the point to be proved (sadhya) is known to be misunderstood.

(To jump on the other extreme from realism and think that emptiness is real, that it is the basic cause of everything, that it is the absolute truth, the real nature of everything, would be a mistake even worst than the initial position. We need to stay away from the four extremes: existence, non-existence, both together, neither.

-- In other words to stay away from the four extremes of thinking that Dependent Origination as explained in the Abhidharma is the absolute truth, that emptiness is the absolute truth, that both together is the absolute truth, that it is something else including none of them.)

Emptiness is not the primal cause of everything. Emptiness is also just a mental construction.

L2: [Section 5 - An Analysis of the "Irreducible Elements" (dhatus) (the elements) – 8 –
[The irreducible elements defined by their basic characteristics]]

(RÉSUMÉ:

-- Opponent: The elementary dharmas exist and they have very precise characteristics and relations that explain everything. They are primal causes/conditions: they are not produced, not composed, permanent, totally independent, and have definite effects. They are self-existing cause/conditions. They are the one we should observe, understand and try to control.

-- Another way to analyze those basic causes, beside describing their interdependence with the skandhas they are supposed to explain / cause, is to examine their relation with their own defining characteristics. For this we could take the example of THE MOST IRREDUCIBLE PARTICLES: EARTH, WATER, FIRE, WIND, AIR, AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS. Hardness is the characteristic of earth. Cohesion is the characteristic of water. Heat is the characteristic of fire. Motion is the characteristic of air. THESE IRREDUCIBLE ELEMENTS ARE SAID TO BE THE MOST BASIC CAUSE OF ALL MATERIALITY.

-- -- “Now all material phenomena possess these four elements to some degree. What distinguishes them is the proportion in which the primary elements are combined. We discriminate the types of matter on the basis of the dominant element. Thus we find solid bodies, liquids, gases and forms of energy depending on the proportions or predominance of the four primary elements. But all four elements are present to some degree in every unit of matter.”

-- And on the side of the non-materiality, THE INFINITESIMAL MOMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS is said to be the most basic cause of the mind. Without a previous consciousness moment, there

cannot be a next consciousness moment.

-- Again the method developed in section two can be applied here:

-- -- ABOUT ANOTHER TRIO SUBJECT, VERB AND COMPLEMENT: the characteristic, the verb “to define”, and characterized; and any other so called elementary component that is thought to be without any parts, without any causes, while having its own characteristics (like elementary particles, quarks, strings, energy quanta ... or the equivalent for the mind). All the arguments of section 2 & 3 apply here. The conclusions are also the same.

-- -- ABOUT THE DUALITY CHARACTERIZED AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS:

So, if we copy the résumé of section 2 or 3 and change a few words (like subject ? characteristic, action-verb ? to define, complement ? characterized or irreducible elements), we have:

-- ABOUT THE THREE: SUBJECT, ACTION-VERB AND COMPLEMENT – ABOUT CHARACTERISTICS,

DEFINITIONS, OBJECTS DEFINED OR IRREDUCIBLE ELEMENTS.

-- THE MIDDLE WAY: There is no absolute subject-characteristics, no absolute action-of-defining-something, no absolute object-being defined (absolute = inherent). But this doesn't mean that there is absolutely no characteristics, no definition, no objects being defined, no irreducible elements, at all. Things are still being dependently arisen and functional; they do exist conventionally. Things are called specific subject, action, or complement based on conventions, they are just never absolute, inherently existing, on their own, with their essence. They are not inherently existent (as characteristics, definition, characterized or irreducible elements), not completely non-existent, not both, not neither.

-- The Middle Way: No absolute basis for the whole universe, or mind, no total absence of basis; no absolute irreducible elements, but they do exist conventionally; no absolute definition process, not absolute definition, no absolute characteristics, no absolute object being defined; no objective discovery of the characteristics of real inherent elementary particles; but they do exist conventionally and their relative definitions are useful.

-- THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE "DEPENDENT ORIGINATION" with inherent characteristics, definitions,

and elementary components (like skandhas, basic causes or irreducible elements), as taught in the Abhidharma. No real absolute 12 steps. So no absolute rules that needs to be followed in order to create good or bad karma, or to ultimately attain Liberation. But there is a conventional dependent origination with empty subject, action and complement. There are possible adapted skillful means, virtues and useful views; they are just never absolute. Emptiness doesn't deny Dependent Origination (the Two Truths are not in opposition); they are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they are interdependent; one cannot exist without the other; one implies the other; they are inseparable: not two, not one. This is how our understanding of both Dependent Origination and Emptiness should be “perfected”, by uniting them, by realizing their inseparability, their non-duality, as in the Perfect Union of The Two Truths. Thus, even if everything is empty of inherent existence, that doesn't mean that we should drop all morality, all skillful means, all virtues, all paths as if they were completely non-existent, useless, meaningless. We need to perfect those methods and virtues by uniting them with the wisdom realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, complement. We need both method and wisdom together all the time. One alone is not

enough.

-- ALL CHARACTERIZED / IRREDUCIBLE ELEMENTS ARE CHARACTERISTICS, BUT, ALSO, ALL CHARACTERISTICS ARE CHARACTERIZED. Everything is the characteristics of something (all functional things are produced for their effect). Any characteristics has been a characterized (all causes are also effects, dependent on other causes and conditions), and there is no beginning to this, and no end. And, since everything is a dependent object of the sense, then everything is empty of inherent existence. That covers all functional things, everything in the three realms. There is only the chain of perceiver-perception-objects-of-the-sense, endless in both directions, with no inherent elements in it. Surprising ! No ?

-- THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF "DEFINITION" IS FLAWED. The exact beginning of a definition cannot

be found; so the three times defined relative to this point of reference are also empty of inherent existence. A definition being done is not directly observable by seeing its activity; the definition is either done or not done, there is no "in the middle", and its activity is not something separate from the definition, that is added to the definition without activity. The cause-characteristics (of the definition) and effect-characterized (the definition) cannot be the simultaneous, nor can they be in sequence (separate in time). The subject (characteristics), action-definition and complement (object being defined, characterized, or irreducible element) cannot be the same, nor can they be different or separate. One cannot include the others. One cannot exist independently of the others (no action without a subject, no subject without an action, no complement without an action ...). They are all empty of inherent existence because interdependent, co-dependently arisen concepts, inseparable (not two, not one), dependent on the mind labeling them together.

-- INHERENT EXISTENCE IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH DEPENDENT ORIGATION: No inherent subject-characteristics would be able to suddenly produce an process-of-definition (real, non-real, both, or neither). No inherent action-of-definition (real, non-real, both, or neither) would need to be caused. Inherent existence would inhibit any possible change. So it is the assumption of inherent existence that is incompatible with Dependent Origination, with the teachings of the Buddha. An empty subject can only produce an empty action. And an empty action can only be produced by an empty subject. Characteristics, action-definition, their characterized or irreducible elements, and their relations are all empty of inherent existence because interdependent; and interdependent because empty of inherent existence. All of our definitions, all views, all theories, all sentences are flawed: not absolute, but maybe skillful means depending on the situation.

-- In resume, WE SHOULD STAY AWAY FROM THE FOUR EXTREMES: everything is not inherently existing, not completely non-existing, not both, not neither. All dualities [like subject-action, action-complement, subject-complement], the two opposites of any relation, everything in the three realms is non-dual: not two (not different), not one (not the same).

-- Ex. There is no characteristic without a definition; no definition without a characteristic; no definition without defining something (a characterized, or, in the case here, irreducible element); no characterized without any characteristic defining. But the characteristic, definition and characterized are not the same. There is no characteristic before the definition, no characteristic defining, no characteristic after the definition; no permanent characteristic. They are empty of inherent existence because interdependent, co-dependently arisen concepts. But it is still useful to have conventional characteristic, definition, characterized or irreducible elements, past, present, future relative to not inherently existing characterized. We just have to try to always be aware that those concepts are never pointing to something absolute, inherently existing. They are just short

cuts, assumptions, hypothesis, imperfect models, play of our own mind. They are the result of karma accumulation based on habituation, and need to be seen for what they really are, otherwise they become the causes of grave mistakes (based on our ignorance) and create a lot of consequential illusions, attachments and suffering (the whole unsatisfying samsara.)

L3: [Interdependence of the trio: the characteristic defines a characterized]

\ ###

\ 1.

\ Space does not exist at all before the defining characteristic of space (akasalaksana).

\ If it would exist before the defining characteristic, then one must falsely conclude

\ that there would be something without a defining characteristic.

(THE COMPLEMENT-CHARACTERIZED IS DEPENDENT ON ITS SUBJECT-CHARACTERISTICS:

Even the most

irreducible elements, basic causes, like earth, water, fire, air, cannot exist without their defining characteristics. Otherwise that would mean that there could be earth that has no hardness whatsoever, air with no movement, ...

-- This is like the duality subject vs. complement as described in section 2. Since they form a couple subject-complement, all the arguments and conclusions of section 2 apply to this case.

-- This is like a duality cause vs. effect. Since they form a couple cause-effect, all the arguments and conclusions of section 1 apply to this case.

-- They are like any other duality.)

There is no space (C) without its defining characteristic (A). We don't say: "Ha, there is space! What is its characteristic? Or, let's put some definition on it." We see it by its defining characteristics. It doesn't exist independently of a mind discriminating, or without a schema to assimilate it.

Streng3: Chapter v (An Analysis of the "Irreducible Elements" (dhatus)) analyzes the nature of the "irreducible elements" (dhatus). These too are denied self-sufficient reality by the argument that they can not exist as dhatus before they are defined as such, and there can be no definition without something to be defined. Nagarjuna's basic argument is that the object of definition and the definition are dependent on each other and therefore the object, in this case akesa, cannot be said to exist by itself as akesa. It exists only because it has been named. Yet, this position should not be taken as the type of phenomenalism whereby the naming "creates" the object of naming. This is also denied. Nagarjuna, it must be noted, never does say how the naming and the named are related; for his position is that ultimately "they" as objects of knowledge are empty of reality as such, and therefore such a concern is vain speculation -- un conducive to realizing their basic emptiness.

The verses in this chapter attempt to show how the "existence" of dhatus are dependent on mental activity. Even such a primal factor, claims Nagarjuna, cannot be said to exist (or not-exist) by its own sui generis reality. By means of this rigorous dialectic to which Nagarjuna subjected the elements of existence, he denied that there were any self-existent entities which possessed static absolute characteristics. In doing so, he attempted to dislodge the seeker after truth from the assumption that truth was to be found in

identifying concepts with segments of existence as if they existed as such.

\ ###

\ 2.

\ In no case has anything existed without a defining characteristic.

(EVERYTHING IS LIKE THAT, AN DEPENDENTLY ARISEN COMPLEMENT-CHARACTERIZED:

Everything is like

that, possessing a definition, some characteristics. So everything is empty of inherent existence because dependent on characteristics.)

(Jonah Winters: "An existent that is without characteristics is nowhere evident")

\ ###

\ If an entity without a defining characteristic does not exist, to what does the defining characteristic apply?

(EMPTINESS OF INHERENT EXISTENCE OF THE ACTION-DEFINING: If the subject-characterized is

empty of inherent existence because dependent on its complement-characteristics, then to what is the action-defining applied.)

\ ###

\ 3.

\ There is no functioning of a defining characteristic in a case where there is [already] a defining characteristic

\ or where there is not a defining characteristic.

\ And it can function in nothing except where there is a defining characteristic or where there is not a defining characteristic.

(The action of defining is impossible on an entity without any defining characteristics (this entity cannot exist as stated before), not can it be useful on an entity that already has its defining characteristics. And there is no other possibility. SO there is no inherent action of defining a characterized with characteristics.)

\ ###

\ 4.

\ When there is no related function (sampravrtti) (i.e. defining process),

\ it is not possible to have "that to which a defining characteristic applies."

\ And if "that to which a defining characteristic applies" is not possible, then a defining characteristic cannot come into existence.

(EMPTINESS OF INHERENT EXISTENCE OF THE THREE: If the action-defining is not possible, then

the complement-characterized that is suppose to be defined is not possible, and the subject-characteristics are all also not possible. They are all empty of inherent existence.)

(Jonah Winters: "in the absence of the [existent], there is no occurrence of the characteristic.")

L3: [Their conventional existence]

\ ###

\ 5.
\ Therefore, "that to which a defining characteristic applies" does not exist (i.e independently);
\ and certainly a defining characteristic itself does not exist (i.e independently).
\ Now, something does not exist without "that to which a defining characteristic applies" and the defining characteristic.

(BUT THEY EXIST CONVENTIONALLY: they are not inherently existent, not completely non-existent, not both, not neither. Nothing conventionally exist without being defined by its own characteristics. Not even the most basic constituent of the universe, or of the mind, they are all dependent on their defining characteristics, thus empty of inherent existence.)

\ ###
\ 6.
\ If the existing thing (1) (bhava) does not exist, how then would the non-existing thing (2) (abhava) come into existence?
\ And who holds: the existing-and-non-existing (3) thing
\ which does not have the properties of an existing-and-non-existing thing (4)?

(TETRALEMMA - NOT EXISTING, NOT NON-EXISTING, NOT BOTH, NOT NEITHER: If nothing is inherently existing, then how could we talk about the cessation of something. There is no real birth, no real death, no real origination, no real cessation, no real creation, no real annihilation ... no real being in samsara being attached to objects of the senses, no real Liberation by the cessation of those.)

(Streng: The concluding verse of the initial argument states:)

\ ###
\ 7.
\ Therefore space is
\ neither an existing thing
\ nor a non-existing thing,
\ neither something to which a defining characteristic applies (i.e. separate from a defining characteristic)
\ nor a defining characteristic. (i.e. the same as a defining characteristic)

(NON-DUALITY: the characterized and the characteristics are not existent, not non-existent. They are not separate or different, not the same. They are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.)

\ ###
\ 7B.
\ Also, the other five irreducible elements can be considered in the same way as space.

(AND IT IS THE SAME FOR ANY IMAGINABLE IRREDUCIBLE ELEMENTS FROM ANY HYPOTHETICAL MODEL COMING OUT OF RELIGION OR SCIENCE.)

L3: [The real nature of Nirvana, not an ordinary cessation]

\ ###
\ 8.
\ But those unenlightened people who either affirm reality or non-reality
\ Do not perceive the blessed cessation-of-appearance of existing things.

(THE MIDDLE WAY – AND NIRVANA: There is no real inherent existence, and s no real possible cessation. So Nirvana is more subtle than a simple cessation. Nirvana is certainly not accepting everything as inherently existing, not rejecting everything as completely non-existent, not both, not neither. So should be the Middle Way then. The Middle Way consists of staying away from those four extremes conceptions, while still using the combination of adapted skillful means and wisdom together all the time. Why? Because only then can we get more and more close to respecting the real non-dual nature of everything. The real nature of everything is beyond any description, beyond all conceptualization: it is not existence, not non-existence, not both not neither. There is absolute basis for discrimination or non-discrimination. Everything is non-dual: not two, not one. Nothing is inherently existing or can be caused to ceased. Nirvana is not caused by doing something, or not-doing something else, not getting something or dropping everything, not by understanding something or by abandoning all views. Nirvana is more subtle than this. Nirvana is beyond causality, and there cannot be any permanent entity being Liberated. Nirvana is described as the Perfect Union of The Two Truths, where Dependent Origination and Emptiness are directly seen simultaneously, when they are completely inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. But that is jut pointing at the moon, because any description is necessarily flawed. All trio subject, verb, complement are necessarily empty of inherent existence because interdependent.)

(Streng5: This verse reminds us who affirm either reality or nonreality cannot perceive Nirvana.)

Like verse 25.24 "The cessation of accepting everything [as real] is a salutary (siva) cessation of phenomenal development (prapanca); No dharma anywhere has been taught by the Buddha of anything."

L2: [Section 6 - An Analysis of Desire (raga) and One Who Desires (rakta) [in the Context of Their Separateness and Concomitance] (affection and the person affected) – 10 – [Concomitance, a person and his acquired strong habits, the concomitant factors of consciousness]]

(RÉSUMÉ:

-- OPPONENT: "Concomitance" is used as an expression to denote things that comes together, that they are inseparable. Examples: "dependent origination and emptiness are concomitant"; "attraction and rejection, greed and aversion, are concomitant with ignorance"; "desire and dukkha are inseparable concomitants".

-- THERE ARE 52 FACTORS OF CONSCIOUSNESS that are concomitant with each moment of consciousness, which are of 121 types of consciousness (according to the Abhidharma).

-- This section is about another type of so-called basic constituents of reality (ultimate constituents of existence) (part of the Ultimate Truth according to the Abhidharma), but there it is not about physicality, but about the mental skandhas. "The so-called "being" is

composed of five aggregates or groups; namely, physical body, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness. If consciousness is taken as the mind, then feeling, perceptions and volitional formations are the concomitants or factors of that mind. Consciousness and its factors are always related and interdependent. Consciousness cannot arise and function independently of its factors, nor can its factors arise and function without it."

-- It seems to me that concomitance in causality was invented because of a lack of understanding of how karma works, how habits that redefine a being can be gradually developed, how self-conditioning and de-conditioning can work without any inherent entities in the flow.

-- TO DISPROVE THE REALITY OF "CONCOMITANT FACTORS" Nagarjuna uses here the example of two

concomitant elements that are more macro, or more evident. It is said, once a bad habit is solidly implanted it becomes the person; we then say that person "is like this, or like that" (this person is a liar, a killer, a thief, a greedy person". So it is as if those predicates are necessarily coming with this person, they are inseparable with that person, they are concomitant with him. The example used here is "the one-who-desires desires, or necessarily have desire". The acquired dispositions become concomitant with that being.

-- A PERSON AND HIS HABITS ARE SORT OF INSEPARABLE; but that doesn't mean that they are the

same, or different and concomitant. Concomitance assumes the inseparability of two different things, with their own self-existence that are always coming together. If it was the case then somebody would never be able to get rid of his bad habits, or dispositions. On the other hand it is not that easy to get rid of them; it is not like throwing out a bad shoe.

-- What we call consciousness and its factors are like that too.

-- A person and his habits are interdependent; one defines the other; one cannot exist without the other. They cannot exist independently and be concomitant.

-- Concomitance is a false concept; nothing is concomitant or non-concomitant; nothing is separate or the same; two or one. Everything is non-dual.

-- So the whole Abhidharma theory about concomitant factors of consciousness moments is flawed. We have to look somewhere else to get a better understanding of the mind and its conditioning.)

(Streng3: Chapter vi (An Analysis of Desire (raga) and One Who Desires (rakta) [in the Context of Their Separateness and Concomitance]) is a similar analysis [as of section 2] of the one who desires (rakta) and desire (raga).)

L3: [Interdependence of the subject-having-dispositions and the complement/dispositions]

\ ###

\ 1.

\ If the "one who desires" would exist before desire itself, then desire may be regarded.

\ When desire becomes related to "one who desires," then desire comes into existence.

(This is about an individual having dispositions in samsara, and being Liberated when he no longer has them. See next verse.)

\ ###

\ 2.

\ If there is no one who desires, how then will desire come into being?
\ [And the question] whether desire exists or does not exist likewise holds true
for the one who desires.

(SUBJECT-HAVING AND COMPLEMENT-HAD ARE INTERDEPENDENT -- > EMPTINESS OF BOTH: The

subject-having-dispositions cannot exist independently of its complement-dispositions. The dispositions are called as such only conventionally when associated with an individual. The complement-dispositions cannot exist independently of the subject-having-dispositions. So one cannot exist without the other; they are interdependent, inseparable.)

\ ###

\ 3.

\ Further, it is not possible for both desire and the one who desires to be produced concomitantly.

\ Indeed, desire and the one who desires come into being independent of each other.

(INTERDEPENDENT BUT NOT PRODUCED TOGETHER, NOT THE SAME: They cannot exist separately, but

that doesn't mean that they are produced together because they have their own causes and conditions. They are not separate, but still not the same, not one.)

L3: [The case of the verb-having / concomitance / being one]

\ ###

\ 4.

\ Concomitance does not exist in that which is only one thing,

\ [for] certainly something which is only one thing cannot be concomitant.

\ But yet, how will concomitance come into being if there are separate (prthak) things?

(THE TRIO, SUBJECT, VERB-HAVING, COMPLEMENT ARE INTERDEPENDENT: A subject and verb-having

without a complement doesn't make sense. A complement and verb-having without a subject doesn't make sense either. There is no "verb-having" without both a subject and a complement. One of them alone with having would not make sense. If the subject-having and the complement-being-had were inherently existing, independently of each other, separate, then there could be no "having", no "association". And if the subject and complement are the same then there is no need to specify "having".)

\ ###

\ 5.

\ If concomitance applied to that which is only one thing,

\ then that one "with concomitance" would be that one "without [concomitance]."

\ If concomitance applied to separate things, then that one "with concomitance" would be that one "without [concomitance]."

(THE SUBJECT & OBJECT OF HAVING CANNOT BE TWO OR SEPARATE, NOT ONE OR THE SAME. A

subject-having which has no-complement is not a subject-having. And if the subject and complement exist separately then one is not having the other. -- If subject and complement were one, then there is no need for having; if they are two then there is no possible

having.)

\ ###

\ 6.

\ And if concomitance applied to separate things, what is the proof for the separation of both desire and the one who desires,

\ [Since] that which is non-separate is concomitant.

(IF THEY ARE ONE THEY ARE NOT SEPARATE - THERE CANNOT BE ANY “HAVING” BETWEEN TWO SEPARATE

THINGS: So there is no possible “having” between two separate subject-having-dispositions, and dispositions, because those two cannot exist independently, because “having” implies not being separate.)

\ ###

\ 7.

\ Or, if the separateness of desire and the one who desires really were proved,

\ Why do you imagine the concomitance of them both?

(IF THEY ARE SEPARATE THEY CANNOT BE ONE – two separate things cannot be united in one having the other. So they cannot be separate, not one, not both, not neither.)

L3: [The duality: being one (same) or two (separate / different)]

\ ###

\ 8.

\ You postulate concomitance by saying: neither is proved separate from [the other].

\ [And] you postulate separateness even more to prove concomitance.

(THE DUALITY: SEPARATE, THE SAME: Most people think that, in a duality like this, it is either one side or the other that is the truth. They think that the negation of one side implies the other. Or that they have to choose both sides as true, or reject both sides.

Those are the four extremes conceptions. The Middle Way points out the fact that we can transcend this duality, the two opposites, by seeing their interdependence and emptiness. In this case here: it is not because they are not separate that they are one, or the same. Nor is it because they are not one that they are separate, or different. This is like saying that things are completely non-existent because not inherently existing, or not empty because dependently arisen.

Emptiness of “having” doesn’t mean completely “no-having”: It is not because the verb “having” is empty of inherent existence that there is no “having” at all. The “having” is not completely non-existent, useless, meaningless. There is conventional “having” and it is very useful. Emptiness doesn’t deny Dependent Origination ...)

L3: [Non-duality of everything, of samsara and Nirvana]

\ ###

\ 9.

\ Because separateness is not proved, concomitance is not proved.

\ What kind of separateness must exist for you to establish concomitance?

(NOTHING IS REALLY SEPARATE, OR ONE: Those two, being not separate, and being not the same, are not contradictory, not in opposition. On the contrary they are interdependent, one

implies the other, they are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. Not being separate implies not being one; and not being one implies not being separate.)

\ ###

\ 10.

\ Thus there is no proof that the desire is concomitant with or not concomitant with one who desires.

\ From [this analysis of] desire [it can be shown that for] every fundamental element (dharma)

\ there is no proof of concomitance or non-concomitance.

(EVERYTHING IS NON-DUALITY: so all subject-having-something and the complement-being-had are not separate or different, not one or the same. They are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.

-- If inherent "having" doesn't exist, then inherent "not-having" doesn't exist either. One cannot have something, and then not have it.

-- The individual in samsara and his dispositions / conditioning / accumulated karma, are not separate or different, not one or the same. They are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. No individual in samsara is having dispositions, and being Liberated when he non longer have those dispositions.

-- SO SAMSAARA AND NIRVANA ARE NOT ABOUT HAVING SOMETHING OR NOT HAVING SOMETHING. Samsara and Liberations are not about getting something or dropping something, not about doing something or not doing something, not about understanding something or not understanding something ...)

L2: [Section 7 - An Analysis of Composite Products (samskrta) (origination, duration, and decay) – 34 – [The three stages of becoming: origination, duration / transformation, cessation; impermanence of all products and moments of consciousness]]

(RÉSUMÉ:

-- THE OPPONENT VIEW: All composite products (including consciousness moments) go through three stages of becoming: origination, duration / transformation, cessation.

-- In this section the real nature of the three so-called essential characteristics of all products is examined.

-- First, the possibility of them being "BASIC CHARACTERISTICS" is eliminated, because, obviously, the three of them cannot exist at the same time in the same product.

-- Second, if they were REAL ACQUIRED SECONDARY CHARACTERISTICS, then they must also have their own three stages of becoming: origination, duration and cessation. That creates an infinite regress.

-- The opponent argues then that the cause of origination is the product itself. But that is impossible because the product is the effect; it cannot be the cause of the origination.

-- Then the opponent argues that origination is self-caused and also cause the arising of the product. But nothing is self-originated, other-originated, both, or neither, as demonstrated in section 1.

-- So no real origination at all can be found anywhere. It is not-existent, not completely non-existent, not both, not neither. It exist only conventionally; but that is useful enough.

-- If there is NO REAL ORIGINATION, then there is NO REAL DURATION / TRANSFORMATION, NO REAL

CESSATION possible, no product.

-- All of these are like illusions.)

L3: [Case 1: Origination ... cannot be basic characteristics.]

\ ###

\ 1.

\ If origination (utpada) is a composite product,

\ then the three characteristics [of existence: "origination," "duration," and "dissolution"] are appropriate.

\ But if origination is a non-composite (asamstrta), then how [could there be] characteristics of a composite product?

(ORIGINATION CANNOT BE A "BASIC CHARACTERISTIC" – IT HAS TO BE "PRODUCED": It is said that

all products, all aggregates, have three essential characteristics: origination, duration and cessation. It is said by some that the goal of the deep meditation of a yogi is to ultimately directly see those three and then have a direct realization of the impermanence of everything. But what is "origination"? – If they are "basic characteristics" (as described in section 5) then how could they be applied to composite products that are not themselves permanent, that change. Obviously the three characteristics would not be able to apply to the same product at the same time. So they must be themselves "produced".)

(Jonah Winters: The obvious way out of the dilemma is to say that a thing merely can be described in terms of one of the three processes, rather than partaking of the nature of one of the three. This response may, at first, seem to be the proper one. For example, a phenomenon can be said to arise, but that does not mean that it partakes of a separate and real thing called "arising."

If arising, enduring, and ceasing were real, then they would be discrete entities and thus "not adequate to function as characteristics of the composite [thing]."

The reason for this is that if they were real and discrete entities, then a phenomenon could obviously not partake of all three at the same time, which would mean that it would be arising at the same time that it was ceasing. Neither could it partake of one after the other, for this would imply that at the time of arising a thing was permanent, non-arisen, and then becomes temporary between the moments of arising and ceasing, and then suddenly shifts from a state of enduring to the process of decaying. One could never find the precise moment when, for example, endurance gives way to cessation. Infinite regress becomes unavoidable. Each of the three processes would itself have to arise, endure, even if only but for an instant, and then cease. "If arising were to produce this present arising, which arising would again produce that arising of that arising?" Nagarjuna wryly asks. (18))

\ ###

\ 2.

\ When the three are separate, origination of either of the other two characteristics does not suffice to function as a characteristic.

\ If united in a composite product, how could they all be at one place at one time?

(THEY DO NOT EVEN HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A CONVENTIONAL BASIC CHARACTERISTICS: Obviously, they cannot be three basic characteristics of the same product at the same time; and if they were separate, then they are not basic characteristics.)

L3: [Case 2: Origination ... cannot be acquired secondary characteristics.]

L4: [2.1 Origination ... cannot be caused by another cause without creating infinite regress.]

\ ###
\ 3.
\ If origination, duration, and dissolution are other [secondary] characteristics of composite products,
\ It is an infinite regress. If this is not so, they are not composite products.

(IF THEY WERE REAL “ACQUIRED CHARACTERISTICS”, then the question about their own origination, duration and cessation brings the problem of infinite regress. So how can we explain the origination of the acquired characteristic called “origination”, and the origination of duration, and cessation, if those are assumed real ? There seems to be only two possibilities: either we accept infinite regress, or we assume that the “origination” is self-caused ?)

\ ###
\ 4.
\ The "originating origination" (utpadotpada) (i.e. the beginning of the origination)
\ is only the origination of the basic origination (mulotpada) (i.e. the beginning of the product);
\ Also the origination of the basic [origination] (i.e. the beginning of the beginning of the product)
\ produces the "originating origination." (i.e. the beginning of the origination)

(THERE CANNOT BE INFINITE REGRESS: A real “origination” would mean an origination of origination, and ad infinitum ... But there is no real origination of the acquired characteristic called “origination” different than the real “origination”. They are the same thing. There is no infinite regress. That leaves only the possibility of self-origination of the origination (an origination that doesn’t need its own origination ad infinitum); but that also will be proven to be absurd in the next verses.)

L4: [2.2 Origination ... cannot be caused by the product.]

\ ###
\ 5.
\ But if, according to you, the originating origination (i.e. self-originating origination) produces basic origination,
\ (i.e. also causes the beginning of the product)
\ How, according to you, will this [originating origination] (i.e. self-originating origination) produce that [basic origination]
\ (i.e. the beginning of the product) if [it itself] is not produced by basic origination (i.e. the beginning of the product)?

(THE OPPONENT IS LEADING TOWARD: SELF ORIGINATION OF THE ORIGINATION: The opponent affirms

that origination, even if it is a real acquired secondary characteristic, (is self-caused and also) cause the origination of the product itself.? But how could there be an independent (self-)originating origination before the beginning of the product itself? -- The reality is that it is the other way around, the originating origination is dependent on the product as said in the previous verse. It is called like that only after the fact, as a co-dependently arisen concepts.)

\ ###
\ 6.

\ If, according to you, that which has originated through basic [origination]
\ (i.e. referring to the dependent originating origination) produces basic [origination],
\ (i.e. like affirming that the effect exist before the cause)
\ How does the basic [origination], which is yet unproduced by that [originating origination]
\ (i.e. self-originating origination), cause that [originating origination] (i.e. self-originating origination) to be originated?

(The opponent affirms that the beginning of the product depend on its origination which would depend on the beginning of the product. There is a vicious circular reference here. THE PRODUCT CANNOT EXPLAIN ITS OWN ORIGINATION CHARACTERISTIC: The product itself cannot produced its own acquired characteristic called “origination”, since this product is not existing yet. So the cause of the “origination” cannot be found there either. This leaves only self-origination of the origination.)

\ ###
\ 7.
\ According to you, this, while originating, would certainly cause that to originate—
\ If this, not being produced, would be able to cause origination.

(THEY CANNOT BE CONCOMITANT: Two simultaneous effects, the origination and the product, cannot originate or explain each other. This is like the concomittance analyzed in section 6.)

L4: [2.3 Origination ... cannot be self-caused and causing the origination ... of the product.]

L5: [The false simile of the light illuminating itself and other.]

\ ###
\ 8.
\ [The opponent claim:]
\ As a light is the illuminator of both itself and that which is other than itself,
\ So origination would originate both itself and that which is other than itself.

(SELF-ORIGINATION OF ORIGINATION?: The opponent affirms: “origination” can originate itself and the product, like light illuminates itself and other stuff at the same time. Meaning the origination is without its own causes and conditions, it is self-caused. -- “Light illuminating itself and darkness” is like “a cause causing itself, and causing some other effect”... This could be compared with the analysis and conclusions of section 1.)

L6: [Light and darkness cannot be the same, or different.]

\ ###
\ 9.
\ [Nagarjuna answers:]
\ There is no darkness in the light and there where the light is placed.
\ What could the light illumine? Indeed illumination is the getting rid of darkness.

(THERE IS NO NEED FOR A LIGHT TO ILLUMINATE ITSELF: As shown in section 1, in the case of a “cause causing effect”, the effect cannot be the same as the cause itself, because then there would be no need to cause it. In the case here of a “light illuminating darkness”, the darkness cannot be the same as the light itself because then there would be no need to cause it – there is already no more darkness in the light.

As shown in section 1, in the case of a “cause causing effect”, the effect cannot be totally different than the cause itself, because then it would mean that anything can cause anything else anytime – total chaos. In the case here of a “light illuminating darkness”, the darkness cannot be totally different than light itself otherwise it would mean that anything could illuminate anything anytime. .

-- Another way to look at it would be to consider the duality light-darkness. One cannot be imagined without imagining the other one. One cannot be the same as the other one, even if they are not separate or different. They are both empty of inherent existence because interdependent, co-dependently arisen concepts.)

L6: [Light and darkness cannot be the simultaneous, or separate in time.]

\ ###
\ 10.
\ How is darkness destroyed by the light being originated,
\ When the light, being originated, does not come in contact with darkness?

(THE ORIGATION OF THE ILLUMINATION SUFFERS THE SAME PROBLEM – IT CANNOT BE FOUND: And if

we look at the illumination of something else than itself: at the moment of the cause, before the illuminating, there is still darkness. At the moment of the effect, after the illuminating, there is no more darkness. But, the exact time of the beginning of the action/illumination (the origination of the action) cannot be found. As shown in section 1, the cause and the effect cannot be simultaneous, overlapping, because then there would be no need to produce the effect; meaning here that light and darkness cannot be simultaneous.)

\ ###
\ 11.
\ But then, if darkness is destroyed by a light having no contact with [darkness],
\ [A light] placed here will destroy the darkness of the entire world.

(Also, as shown in section 1, the cause and the effect CANNOT BE SEPARATE IN TIME EITHER, because then there would be no direct link between the cause and effect; and, if that could result in causing something, then anything can cause anything. Meaning here that if it was the case, then illumination anywhere could be caused by any light anywhere else.)

L6: [So self-caused origination ... cannot be justified with this simile.]

\ ###
\ 12.

\ If the light illuminated both itself and that which is other than itself,
\ Then, without a doubt, darkness will cover both itself and that which is other than itself.

(THERE IS NO SELF-CAUSATION: If any cause could cause itself (self-causation) and other effects, that would mean total chaos because anything could be self-caused and produce anything. No, there is nothing that doesn't have its own cause and effect as proved in section 1.)

(Streng: By defining light and darkness as mutually exclusive essences, Nagarjuna logically demonstrates that they can have no effective relationship.)

L5: [Searching for this self-caused origination also causing the beginning of the product.]

L6: [The exact time of the beginning of this self-caused origination cannot be found]

\ ###
\ 13.
\ If it has not yet originated, how does origination produce itself?
\ And if it has already originated, when it is being produced, what is produced after that which is already produced?

(SELF-CAUSATION OF THE ORIGINATION IS IMPOSSIBLE: The self-caused origination is either already originated or not. At the moment of the cause, the effect cannot exist, otherwise there is no need to cause it again. At the moment of the effect, the cause cannot still exist otherwise there would be more causing. So they cannot be the same, or simultaneous. On the other hand, if the cause and the effect are different or separate, then there is no relation between the two, and if this could work then anything could produce anything else. So the cause and the effect cannot be the same or simultaneous, not different or separate. When does the beginning of the causing starts then ? When is the origination starts originating then ? No origination of origination can be found. There is no self-caused origination possible. How could it then cause the beginning of the product ?)

L6: [The exact time of the beginning of the originating/origination cannot be found ? emptiness of the action/origination]

\ ###
\ 14.
\ In no way does anything originate
\ by what is being originated (ii),
\ by what is already originated (iii),
\ or by what is not yet originated (i)—
\ Just as it has been said in [the analysis of] "presently going to (ii)," "that which is already gone to (i)" and "that which is not yet gone to (iii)."

(THERE IS NO INHERENT ACTION-OF-ORIGINATING: As stated in verse 1, section 2: There cannot be any inherently existing acting/action, and this applies here to "originating". Imagine 3 states: (i) before the action/originating, (ii) during the action/originating, (iii) after the action/originating. The action/originating is either already done (iii) or not at all (i); there cannot be a "during an action/originating", or an "half produced action/originating". The whole discussion of section 2 covers all of this in details. So there is no action/origination that is directly observable by a yogi in deep meditation.

THE EXACT TIME OF THE BEGINNING OF THE ACTION-OF-ORIGINATION CANNOT BE

FOUND. As stated in

verse 12, section 2: In the past it is not done yet, in the future it is already done. And in the present it has already started. So what we call an action/origination is not really what we think of it; it is not a really existing thing by itself. It is merely a conventional truths. And since there is no absolute point of reference, like the beginning of an action/origination, there is no absolute there times relative to it: before, during, after. – From section 1, we have another proof that the point of origination of the action cannot be found: by realizing that the cause of the action and the effect (the action itself) cannot be simultaneous, nor be separate in time.)

\ ###

\ 15.

\ When, in that-which-is-originated (iii), there is nothing which activates that which is being originated (ii),

\ How can one say: That which is being originated (ii) [exists] presupposing that which is produced?

(So that is another reason to stay that the origination cannot be caused by the product itself. If the action of originating cannot be explained by the origination itself, how could it be explained by the product itself. The present is not determined by the future.)

\ ###

\ 16.

\ Whatever comes into existence presupposing something else is without self-existence (stabhava).

\ [As there is] an allayment of "being originated," so [also] of that which is originated (iii).

(NO ABSOLUTE FUTURE RELATIVE TO THIS EMPTY BEGINNING OF ACTION: No exact time of the

beginning of the origination means no real origination originated after. The fact that we cannot find the exact moment of the beginning of the action of origination (of the origination), means that the three times relative to this empty point of reference are also empty of inherent existence; there is no real origination originated.)

\ ###

\ 17.

\ If some particular thing which is not yet originated (i) is indeed known to exist,

\ That thing will be originated. What originates if it does not exist?

(NO ABSOLUTE PAST RELATIVE TO THIS EMPTY BEGINNING OF ACTION: There is no origination about

to be produced either. If it existed, that would mean that the origination is certain, that is already existing.)

\ ###

\ 18.

\ And if the origination originates that which is being originated (ii),

\ What origination, in turn, would originate that origination? (i.e. infinite regress)

(NO ABSOLUTE PRESENT RELATIVE TO THIS EMPTY BEGINNING OF ACTION: And there is no “during an action/originating”, or an “half produced action/originating”, otherwise that would mean that we can divide the action/origination into sub-action and will have to explain their own origination, duration and cessation. This would imply an infinite regress.
-- So there is no real origination before, during or after the origination. No real origination can be found in the three times. Meaning that the origination is empty of inherent existence. But we do observe regularity, and apparent origination, duration and cessation.)

\ ###

\ 19.

\ If another origination originates that [origination], there will be an infinite regress of originations.

\ But if non-origination is that which is origination, then everything [without qualification] would originate.

(ONLY THE EMPTINESS OF ORIGINATION CAN EXPLAIN THE DEPENDENT ORIGINATION? Origination is

empty of inherent existence, but still not completely non-existent (non-origination), or from the mind only. Otherwise that would mean that anything would be able to originate without any valid causes and conditions. -- Origination, and the product being originated, exist conventionally. We arbitrarily accept that something has passed the threshold of existence, has originated, when there is enough appearance of existence for us to accept it and be able to work with it, when there is enough elements on the basis to assume that it conventionally exists. But there is never anything that really exists on its own, and there is never any origination of anything.)

L4: [The emptiness of the three characteristics]

L5: [No inherent origination]

\ ###

\ 20.

\ It is not possible that what has originated either exists or does not exist,

\ Nor that what has not originated either exists or does not exist; this has been demonstrated earlier.

(THERE IS NO REAL ORIGINATION OF SOMETHING BEING PRODUCED: There is no real product before

origination, during origination, or after origination; and the three times relative to the exact beginning of the origination are also empty because this exact time cannot be found. But they are is not completely non-existent either. They exist conventionally, in interdependence. Those three are not the same, not different.)

\ ###

\ 21.

\ The origination of something being destroyed is not possible;

\ And whatever is not being destroyed, that entity is not possible.

(THERE IS NO REAL ORIGINATION OF SOMETHING BEING DESTROYED: As for the opposite action, the destruction of something (the getting closer and closer to old age and cessation), the same

conclusions applies. The exact moment of the beginning of the destruction cannot be found. There is no real origination of the destruction. There is no real object about to be destroyed, or that has started to be destroyed, ... And the three times relatives to this empty moment are also empty. But they are is not completely non-existent either. They exist conventionally, in interdependence. Those three are not the same, not different.)

L5: [No inherent duration]

\ ###
\ 22.
\ Neither an "entity that has endured (iii)" (sthitabhava) nor an "entity that has not endured (i)" endures;
\ Not even something enduring (ii) endures.
\ And what endures if it is not originated?

(The same way we can prove that there could be no inherent duration. The exact time of the beginning of duration cannot be found. – Also, if there is no real origination, then there is no possible real duration. And the three times relatives to this are also empty of inherent existence.

THERE IS NO INHERENT ACTION-OF-ENDURING: As stated in verse 1, section 2: There cannot be any inherently existing acting/action, and this applies here to “enduring”. Imagine 3 states: (i) before the action/enduring, (ii) during the action/enduring, (iii) after the action/enduring. The action/enduring is either already done (iii) or not at all (i); there cannot be a “during an action/enduring”, or an “half produced action/enduring”. The whole discussion of section 2 covers all of this in details. So there is no enduring that is directly observable by a yogi in deep meditation.

THE EXACT TIME OF THE BEGINNING OF THE ACTION-OF-ENDURING CANNOT BE FOUND.
As stated in

verse 12, section 2: In the past it is not done yet, in the future it is already done. And in the present it has already started. So what we call an action/enduring is not really what we think of it; it is not a really existing thing by itself. It is merely a conventional truths. And since there is no absolute point of reference, like the beginning of an action/enduring, there is no absolute there times relative to it: before, during, after. – From section 1, we have another proof that the point of origination of the action cannot be found: by realizing that the cause of the action and the effect (the action itself) cannot be simultaneous, nor be separate in time.)

\ ###
\ 23.
\ Duration is not possible of a thing that is being destroyed.
\ But whatever is not being destroyed, that thing (bhava) is [also] not possible.

(**THERE IS NO REAL DURATION OF SOMETHING PRODUCED:** There is no real product before duration, during duration, or after duration; and the three times relative to the exact beginning of the duration are also empty because this exact time cannot be found. But they are is not completely non-existent either. They exist conventionally, in interdependence. Those three are not the same, not different.)

THERE IS NO REAL DURATION OF SOMETHING BEING DESTROYED: As for the opposite action,

the

destruction of something, the same conclusions applies. The exact moment of the duration of the destruction cannot be found. There is no real duration of the destruction. There is no real object about to be enduring destruction, or that has started to endure destruction, ... And the three times relatives to this empty moment are also empty. But they are is not completely non-existent either. They exist conventionally, in interdependence. Those three are not the same, not different.)

\ ###

\ 24.

\ Because every entity always [remains in] the law of old age and death,

\ What entities are there which endure without old age and death?

(EVERYTHING IS CONTINUALLY CHANGING; NOTHING STAYS THE SAME EVEN FOR AN INFINITESIMAL

MOMENT. Everything is continually being dependent on causes and effect, that are themselves being subject of their own causes and effect, ad infinitum. Because of that everything is empty of inherent existence. So nothing really “endure”; nothing really exist and change; nothing really exist and is being impermanent. There is only the flow of interdependence without any inherent entities in it – like the surface of the ocean.)

L5: [About the duration of causality]

\ ###

\ 25.

\ The enduring quality of a different duration is as impossible as of that same duration,

\ So the origination of origination is neither itself nor that which is other than itself.

(ABOUT THE DURATION OF CAUSALITY/ORIGINATING: ?? Since there is no real duration, the cause

and effect cannot have overlapping duration, nor separate duration. There is no possible self-causation of origination, nor other-causation of origination.

NO ABSOLUTE TIME AND TIME INTERVAL: Since nothing really originate and endure, then there is no possible absolute time relative to an absolute duration, not time interval relative to an absolute duration. So we cannot really compare time, and time intervals: they are always non-dual: not two, not one.)

L5: [No cessation of anything real, non-real, both, or neither]

\ ###

\ 26.

\ "That which has ceased (iii)" (niruddha) does not cease; and "that which has not ceased (i)" does not cease;

\ Nor even "that which is ceasing (ii)."

\ For, what can cease [if it is] produced? (i.e. or if it is not really produced?)

(CESSATION CANNOT BE FOUND: The same way we can prove that there could be no inherent cessation. The exact time of the beginning of cessation cannot be found. And the three times relatives to this are also empty of inherent existence. – Also, if there is no real origination and duration, then there is no possible real cessation.

THERE IS NO INHERENT ACTION-OF-CESSATION: As stated in verse 1, section 2: There cannot be any inherently existing acting/action, and this applies here to “ceasing”. Imagine 3 states: (i) before the action/ceasing, (ii) during the action/ceasing, (iii) after the action/ceasing. The action/ceasing is either already done (iii) or not at all (i); there cannot be a “during an action/ceasing”, or an “half produced action/ceasing”. The whole discussion of section 2 covers all of this in details. So there is no ceasing that is directly observable by a yogi in deep meditation.

THE EXACT TIME OF THE BEGINNING OF THE ACTION-OF-CEASING CANNOT BE FOUND. As stated in verse

12, section 2: In the past it is not done yet, in the future it is already done. And in the present it has already started. So what we call an action/ceasing is not really what we think of it; it is not a really existing thing by itself. It is merely a conventional truths. And since there is no absolute point of reference, like the beginning of an action/ceasing, there is no absolute there times relative to it: before, during, after. – From section 1, we have another proof that the point of origination of the action cannot be found: by realizing that the cause of the action and the effect (the action itself) cannot be simultaneous, nor be separate in time.)

\ ###
\ 27.
\ Therefore cessation of an enduring entity is not possible.
\ Moreover, cessation of a non-enduring entity is not possible.

(SOMETHING INHERENTLY EXISTING, OR COMPLETELY NON-EXISTENT, WOULD NOT CEASE: If the cessation of something inherently existing and enduring is impossible, more so the cessation of something completely non-existing is impossible.)

\ ###
\ 28.
\ Indeed, a state [of existence] does not cease because of this state;
\ And a different state [of existence] does not cease because of a different state.

(Indeed: Something inherently existing (lasting) would not be dependent on any causes and conditions, would not change, and would not eventually ceased. As for something completely non-existent, it would not need to be ceased. As for something both, or neither, that is also impossible.)

\ ###
\ 29.
\ So, if the production of all dharmas is not possible,
\ Then neither is the cessation of all (i.e. any?) dharmas possible.

(SOMETHING EMPTY OF INHERENT EXISTENCE CANNOT CEASED – AND EVERYTHING IS LIKE THAT: If no

dharma at all can originate and exist, the cessation of any dharma at all is also impossible. There is indeed nothing to terminate because they have never existed in the first place. It was all merely imputed by the mind.)

\ ###
\ 30.

\ Therefore cessation of a real existing entity is not possible;
\ And certainly both an existing entity and a non-existing entity cannot be possible in the same case.

(ALSO, SOMETHING BOTH EXISTING AND NON-EXISTING WOULD NOT CEASED EITHER: So far we have

covered the cases of something real, or not-real. As for the origination and cessation of something that is both real and non-real together, that is also impossible.)

\ ###
\ 31.
\ Even more, cessation of a non-real existing entity is not possible.
\ Just as there is no second decapitation!

(LASTLY, SOMETHING NEITHER EXISTING NOR NON-EXISTING WOULD NOT CEASED EITHER: As for the

origination and cessation of something that is neither real nor non-real, that is also impossible. So there is no cessation possible for anything real, not-real, both, or neither. There is no other possibility. That means that we have looked for cessation everywhere and have not found any.)

\ ###
\ 32.
\ There is no cessation by means of itself; nor cessation by something other than itself;
\ Just as there is no origination of origination by itself nor by another.

(NO SELF-CESSATION, OTHER CESSATION, BOTH, NEITHER: As for the case of the origination of origination where it was show that origination cannot be self-caused, there cannot be self-cessation. This is like verse 1 of section 1.)

L3: [Conclusion – emptiness of all products because there is no real origination, duration and cessation – but they exist conventionally]

\ ###
\ 33.
\ Because the existence of production, duration, and cessation is not proved, there is no composite product (samskrta);
\ And if a composite product is not proved, how can a non-composite product (asamskrta) be proved?

(ALL PRODUCTS ARE EMPTY OF INHERENT EXISTENCE, BUT NOT COMPLETELY NON-EXISTENT: So there is

no inherent origination, duration, cessation. We cannot find the exact time of the beginning of any of those three “acquired characteristics”. Thus, there can be no real product that would be really originating, lasting and eventually ceasing. All products are empty of inherent existence. But that doesn’t mean that they are completely non-existent, useless, meaningless, or from the mind only. They do exist conventionally, and it is very useful to consider them that way.)

\ ###
\ 34.
\ As a magic trick, a dream or a fairy castle.

\ Just so should we consider origination, duration, and cessation.

(ALL LIKE ILLUSIONS: Until we truly understand their real non-dual nature, we should consider origination, duration, and cessation as like illusions. Everything is not inherently existing, not completely non-existing, not both, not neither. To put this into one single concept is impossible even if there is no contradiction here. Non-duality cannot be conceptualized, it has to be directly seen by directly seeing the real nature of our own mind in action in the present. Until then, to be in accord with the real non-dual nature of everything, we should adopt the Middle Way: not accepting anything as absolute / inherently existing, nor reject everything as completely non-existent, useless, meaningless or from the mind only. We need both method and wisdom together all the time.)

(Jonah Winters: The ineluctable conclusion of a close examination of the three processes is that not one of them exists as real, and so the above response, though seemingly acceptable, also breaks down. "As an illusion, a dream, a [mythical city], so have arising, endurance, and destruction been exemplified." And, further, "with the non-establishment of arising, duration, and destruction, the composite [thing] does not exist." That is, if the three phases of the process are negated, then the processed thing itself must be illusory. Therefore, even the notion that a thing can be described in terms of one of the three processes must fail, even if the processes themselves are not reified.)

L1: [ABOUT THE AGENT]

L2: [Section 8 - An Analysis of the Product (Karma) and the Producer (Karaka) (action and agent) – 13 – [Tetralemma, cycle of samsara, and Liberation]]

(RÉSUMÉ: This is the same as section 1 or 2 where “cause causing effect”, “goer going destination” or “doer doing/action result-of-action, are analyzed in order to show the emptiness and non-duality of the three: subject, action-verb, complement. Here the case of “PRODUCER PRODUCING PRODUCT/KARMA” is revisited, while stressing some details (mostly about

the Tetralemma and the beginning and endless loop of causality).

-- Each entity can have only four possible state: inherently existing (real), completely non-existing (not-real), both existing and non-existing together (real-notreal), neither existing nor non-existing (neither). There is no other possibility. So if we take the three – subject, verb, complement, as in “producer producing product/karma”, we have $4*4*4$ possible combinations. For example, the subject could be real, the verb real, and the complement not-real; that is (real, real, non-real).

-- This chapter analyze the most important of the 64 possibilities, in order to show the real nature of everything and the relation between a producer/being-in-samsara, and it product/karma.

-- It is shown that everything is: not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither; and that the relation between the producer and its product/karma is one of interdependence, of a self-conditioning loop. But a loop of self-conditioning that is never absolute, leaving room for Liberation.)

L3: [Reality cannot be existent, non-existent, both, neither.]

L4: [Analyzing the cases where everything is either inherently existent or completely

non-existent]

\ ###

\ 1.

\ A real producer does not produce a real product.

\ Even more so, a non-real producer does not seek a non-real product.

(THEY CANNOT BE BOTH EXISTENT, OR BOTH NON-EXISTENT:

real, ____, real

real, ____, real)

\ ###

\ 2.

\ There is no producing action of a real thing; [if so,] there would be a product without someone producing.

\ Also, there is no producing by a real thing; [if so,] there would be someone producing without something produced.

(ONE CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT THE OTHER: If the producer or the product are real, then there is no producing possible.

____, real, real

real, real, ____)

\ ###

\ 3.

\ If a non-existent producer would produce a non-real product,

\ The product would be without a causal source and the producer would be without a causal source.

(THEY CANNOT BE BOTH NON-EXISTENT: If the producer and the product are both not-real, then everything is completely illusory, from the mind only, and there is no regularity at all, no causality at all. But that is not what we observe.

real, ____, real)

\ ###

\ 4.

\ If there is no causal source, there is nothing to be produced nor cause-in-general (karana).

\ Then neither do the producing action, the person producing, nor the instrument of production (karana) exist.

(THE CONSEQUENCES OF A NON-EXISTENT REALITY: If everything is non-existent, from the mind-only then who cares about anything. There is no action, no self, no karma, no path, ...)

\ ###

\ 5.

\ If the producing action, etc. do not exist, then neither can the true reality (dharma) nor false reality (adharma) exist.

\ If neither the true reality nor the false reality exists, then also the product (phala) born from that does not exist.

(THE CONSEQUENCES OF A NON-EXISTENT REALITY: If everything is non-existent, from the mind

only, then there is no right and wrong at all, no good or bad karma.)

\ ###

\ 6.

\ If there is no real product, then there also exists no path to heaven nor to ultimate release.

\ Thus it logically follows that all producing actions are without purpose.

(THE CONSEQUENCES OF A NON-EXISTENT REALITY: If there is no good or bad karma, then there is

no meaning to any morality, no meaning to any path, no possible Liberation.)

(Streng5: The same conclusion is reached in chapter viii by showing that the object of action (karma) and the person acting (kartaka) do not exist as such. Verses 5 and 6 deny the reality of dharma (truth), the path to heaven, and final release (moksa) as things in themselves.)

(Jonah Winters: A flat denial of activity would undercut the entire foundation of the Buddha's teachings on morality and, by extension, the Noble Path leading to enlightenment would be lost.)

L4: [Analyzing the cases of a reality that is both existent and non-existent together.]

\ ###

\ 7.

\ And a real-nonreal producer does not produce in a real-nonreal manner.

\ For, indeed, how can "real" and "non-real," which are mutually contradictory, occur in one place?

(SIMULTANEOUS EXISTENCE AND NON-EXISTENCE OF THE SAME THING IS IMPOSSIBLE:
realreal, realreal, ____)

\ ###

\ 8.

\ A real producer (kartra) does not produce what is non-real, and a non-real producer does not produce what is real.

\ [From that] indeed, all the mistakes must logically follow.

(ONE CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT THE OTHER:

real, ____, real

real, ____, real)

L4: [Analyzing the cases of a reality that is neither existent nor non-existent.]

\ ###

\ 9.

\ The producer, who is neither real nor non-real, does not produce a product which is either real or non-real,

\ Because of the reasons which have been advanced earlier.

(A PRODUCER THAT IS NEITHER IS IMPOSSIBLE:

neither real nor real, ____, real

neither real nor real, ____, real)

\ ###
 \ 10.
 \ The non-real producer does not produce a product which is not real, nor both
 real-and-non-real,
 \ Because of the reasons which have been advanced earlier.

(A PRODUCT THAT IS NEITHER IS IMPOSSIBLE:
 real, ____, real
 real, ____, realreal
 or is it suppose to be : real, ____, neither real nor real)

\ ###
 \ 11.
 \ And a real-non-real producer does not produce a product which is neither real nor
 non-real.
 \ This is evident from the reasons which have been advanced earlier.

(BOTH BEING NEITHER EXISTENT NOR NON-EXISTENT IS IMPOSSIBLE:
 realreal, ____, neither real nor real)

L3: [Interdependence: the cycle producer ? product ? producer.]

\ ###
 \ 12.
 \ The producer proceeds being dependent on the product, and the product proceeds
 being dependent on the producer.
 \ The cause for realization (i.e. Nirvana) is seen in nothing else.

(WHAT IS THE REAL NATURE OF THE PRODUCER/BEING AND ITS PRODUCT/KARMA THEN ?:
 Empty of

inherent existence because interdependent in a cycle, but still not completely non-existent.
 They do arise in dependence of each other, they do exist conventionally.

If we compare this to section 1,

-- the producer/being-in-samsara is the cause, the product/karma is the effect, the
 production-of-karma is the causing.

And if we map the conclusions of section 1 here we have:

-- There is no inherently existing producer/being-in-samsara, producing or product/karma.

But that doesn't mean that they are totally non-existent, useless, meaningless, or from the
 mind only. They do exist conventionally.

-- They are interdependent. One cannot exist alone without the other, independently.

-- They cannot be separate in time, nor simultaneous. They cannot be different, nor the
 same. They are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.

All causes are also effect means that the producer/being-in-samsara is also a product/karma.

And all effect are also causes means that the product/karma is also a

producer/being-in-samsara. The beginningless and endless chain of causality (cause-- >
 effect -- > cause) becomes beginningless and endless chain of production (producer? product?
 producer) or the cycle of samsara (being? karma? being).

-- Everything is both produced and producing, both conditioned by past karma, and
 conditioning future karma. But there is no permanent identity in this, nor total
 discontinuity of identity. And at each step, there is no total free will, nor total
 determinism. The product/karma is never totally determined by the actual five aggregates

(producer), there are always other causes and conditions that can come and change everything. And the next five aggregates (producer) are never totally determined by already accumulated karma.

-- So all producers/beings-in-samsara, and product/karma are empty of inherent existence because dependent on other causes and conditions, because interdependent with their respective cause/effect and causing/causality (one cannot exist without the other), because merely imputed by the mind, they are called producers or products conventionally only after observing patterns of regularity in the flow. They are not inherently existent, not completely non-existent, not both, not neither.

-- That means there is no being stuck in samsara, no being that are really creating karma, no real karma, nothing to produce or not produce in order to reach Nirvana, no being that is ultimately Liberates, no produced Liberation, no absolute causal path. But that doesn't mean that they are all completely non-existent, useless, meaningless, or from the mind only, or that there is no possibility of Liberation at all.

-- The path, those causes and effect, are conventional truths, useful adapted skillful means and virtues, that we need to combine them with the wisdom seeing their real nature in order to perfect them. Only by finally directly seeing the real non-dual nature of everything can there be total Liberation.

-- Liberation is gained by transcending the samsaric cycle of conditioned ? conditioning ? conditioned, by seeing through its appearance and directly seeing its real non-dual nature.)

(Streng4: Likewise, the "maker" and the "making" cannot be regarded as independent realities, for each requires the other to appear in existence. At the same time one cannot deny that they exist phenomenally. Therefore the conclusion is that each is produced depending on the other:)

(Jonah Winters: The proper relation between agent and action is once again nothing more than dependent arising, for neither of the two can have either a real or an unreal status. "We do not perceive any other way of establishing [them]," he concludes ... verse 12.)

L3: [The samsaric cycle being-in-samsara ? karma ? being-in-samsara, a cycle without anything inherently existing in it.]

\ ###

\ 13.

\ In the same way one should understand the "acquiring" (i.e. of karma - upadana) on the basis of the "giving up," etc. of the producer and the product.

\ By means of [this analysis of] the product and the producer all other things should be dissolved.

(THE CYCLE OF CONDITIONING / SAMSARA & THE POSSIBILITY OF LIBERATION: Both are empty of

inherent existence because interdependent. They are interdependent not only in terms of being co-dependently arisen concepts, but dependent in a causal loop, the cycle of samsara: a producer, having a set of actual five aggregates, make choices and do actions creating good or bad karma (the product), this product at the next cycle become the next set of five aggregates. So the five aggregates are both conditioned by past karma, and conditioning the production of the next karma. Karma is conditioned by the actual five aggregates, and conditions the next five aggregates. This is the beginningless and endless cycle of conditioning / the cycle of samsara as described on the Wheel of Life. The only difference here is that this description doesn't need any inherently existing entities in it.

Everything works because empty of inherent existence.)

(Streng4: The same basic argument is used in the analysis of the process by which the subject, object, and the sensation coalesce to form a phenomenon, i.e., samsarga (unification). The dilemma which Nagarjuna presents is that either two basically different things become united, or something unites with itself. The conclusion, similar to other analyses -- see XIV)

L2: [Section 9 - An Analysis of "the Pre-existent Reality" (purva) (grasper and grasping) – 12 – [No permanent owner of the six senses, perceiver before perception]]

(RÉSUMÉ: This is a continuation of the case “perceiver, perceiving, objects of the senses / world” covered in section 3.

-- The opponent is affirming that there is a permanent “perceiver/owner of the senses”, like a “perceiver” before any perception (case i).

-- But, as demonstrated in section 3, a permanent perceiver is impossible because then it would not be able to change and start perceiving, and then stop to stop the perceiving. It would not change to be aware and react to the result of the perception.

-- A conventional owner existing before (i), during (ii), and after any perception is not the same, not different. There is no permanent individuality, no complete discontinuity.

-- A perceiver cannot exist alone without an object of perception. They are interdependent, thus empty of inherent existence and inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.

-- So the perceiver is not inherently existing (on its own), not completely non-existent, not both, not neither.

-- The owner and the senses are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. They are co-dependently arisen concepts.)

L3: [The affirmation of a preexisting owner ...]

\ ###
\ 1.
\ Certain people say: Prior to seeing hearing, and other [sensory faculties]
together with sensation and other [mental phenomena]
\ Is that to which they belong.

(In section 3, “perceiver, perceiving, objects of the senses”, it has been shown that the perceiver cannot be a permanent entity, otherwise it wouldn’t change, making perception possible. The affirmation of the opponent here comes down to saying: there is a perceiver before any perception (i), a permanent perceiver. So this has already been covered from the point of view of a permanent perceiver, it is just generalized here to any kind of permanent owner of the six senses – or of the five aggregates.)

\ ###
\ 2.
\ [They reason:] How will there be seeing, etc. of someone (i.e. as the subject
seeing) who does not exist?
\ Therefore, there exists a definite (vyavasthita) entity before that [seeing,
etc.].

(STUCK IN THE DUALITY OF EXISTENCE VS. NON-EXISTENCE: The opponent think that the only other solution next to a completely non-existent owner is an inherently existent owner, a permanent self. For him it is either existent or non-existent. Nagarjuna will show that it is none of those two extremes.)

(Jonah Winters: The speculative approach to establishing the reality of the agent is logical induction. ...

"Therefore, it is determined that, prior to [perceptions], such an existent is," asserts the opponent.)

L3: [Owner and senses are both empty because interdependent]

\ ###
\ 3.
\ But that definite entity is previous to sight, hearing, etc., and sensation, etc
--
\ How can that [entity] be known?

(A SELF-EXISTING INDEPENDENT OWNER IS IMPOSSIBLE: If a owner exists on its own, independently of the senses, then how could we be sure, since without them we cannot perceive it.)

(Jonah Winters: If the subject is said to exist prior to perception, then "by what means is it made known?"

\ ###
\ 4.
\ And if that [entity] is determined without sight [and other sensory faculties],
\ Then, undoubtedly, those [sensory faculties] will exist without that [entity].

(SELF-EXISTING INDEPENDENT SENSES ARE ALSO IMPOSSIBLE: And if the owner can exists on its own, independently of the senses, then those senses should also be able to exist on their own, independently of the owner, and be added to the owner later. But that doesn't make sense.)

\ ###
\ 5.
\ Someone becomes manifest by something (i.e. like vision); something is manifest by someone.
\ How would someone exist without something? How would something exist without someone?

(THEY ARE INTERDEPENDENT: The owner is known in dependence of the senses; the senses are dependent on an owner. One cannot exist without the other. They are interdependent, thus both empty of inherent existence. That should be the end of this discussion.)

L3: [There is no owner of each senses]

\ ###
\ 6.
\ [The opponent admits:]
\ Someone does not exist previous to (purva) sight and all the other [faculties]

together.

\ [Rather,] he is manifested by any one of [them:] sight, etc., at any one time.

(A owner that of only one of the senses at a time ?)

\ ###

\ 7.

\ [Nagarjuna answers:]

\ But if nothing exists previous to sight and all the other [faculties] together,

\ How could that [being] exist individually before sight, etc.?

(A SELF-EXISTING INDEPENDENT OWNER IS IMPOSSIBLE: A owner cannot exist on its own, independently of all senses together, so how could he exist before only one of them.)

\ ###

\ 8.

\ [Further,] if that [being] were the "seer," that [being] were the "hearer," that [being] were the one who senses,

\ Then one [being] would exist previous to each. Therefore, this [hypothesis] is not logically justified.

(That would also mean that there is a owner for each senses; one at a time.)

\ ###

\ 9.

\ On the other hand, if the "seer" were someone else, or the "hearer" were someone else, or the one who senses were someone else,

\ Then there would be a "hearers when there was already a "seer," and that would mean a multiplicity of "selves" (atma).

(Or it would means that there are multiple simultaneous owners.)

L3: [No owner in the basic parts either]

\ ###

\ 10.

\ In those elements (bhuta) from which seeing, hearing, etc., and sensation, etc., arise—

\ Even in those elements that [being] does not exist.

(THERE IS NO PERMANENT ABSOLUTE BASIS FOR A PERMANENT OWNER ANYWHERE: There is no

pre-existent reality in the elementary components either. Any basic causes explaining the skandhas and a self would also be empty of inherent existence as shown in section 4. Any basic characteristics, or irreducible elements would also be empty of inherent existence as shown in section 5.)

L3: [No owner, no possessions: six senses]

\ ###

\ 11.

\ When he to whom seeing, hearing, etc., and feeling, etc. belong does not exist,

\ Then certainly they do not exist.

(NO INHERENTLY EXISTING OWNER (SELF), NO POSSESSED SIX SENSES (MINE): If the owner is not existent, then the six senses, and the five aggregates, are also not existent. Nothing permanent is having rebirths and acquiring a set of five aggregates..)

L3: [The real non-dual nature of the owner]

\ ###
\ 12.
\ For him who does not exist previous to, at the same time, or after seeing, etc.
\ The conception "He exists," "He does not exist," is dissipated.

(NO PERMANENT SELF OWNER OF THE SIX SENSES, BUT NOT COMPLETELY NON-EXISTENT EITHER: As shown

in section 3, there is no same permanent perceiver that doesn't change while perceiving the object of the senses, that is the same before (i), during (ii) and after (iii) the perceiving. It is not the same thing that is about to perceive, is perceiving, and has perceived. The perceiver needs to change into something else to start the perceiving, then change again into something else to stop the perceiving.

On the other hand, there is no completely different perceiver before (i), during (ii) and after (iii) the perceiving -- otherwise there would be a complete discontinuity in the identity. It is not a completely different thing that is about to perceive, is perceiving, or has perceived.

Non-duality of the perceiver & objects of the senses: The perceiver is not inherently existing, not completely non-existent, not both, not neither. The perceiver is inseparable, non-dual with its object of the senses: not one, not two.

Non-duality of the owner & senses The owner is not inherently existing, not completely non-existent, not both, not neither. The owner is inseparable, non-dual with its senses: not one, not two.

The Middle Way consists of staying away from all extremes, like existence, non-existence, both, neither.)

(Jonah Winters: "Someone prior to, simultaneous with, or posterior to [perception] is not evident," and therefore neither are the experiences themselves evident (11). The upshot is that "thoughts of existence and non-existence are also renounced.")

L2: [Section 10 - An Analysis of Fire and Kindling (fire and fuel) – 16 – [Non-duality of self & the five aggregates of clinging; non-duality of dependent origination and emptiness]]

(RÉSUMÉ: This is about the relation between the self and the five aggregates of clinging / the acquiring of karma; about the causes of suffering and the way to gain Liberation; and between dependent origination and emptiness of inherent existence.

-- The analogy "KINDLING/CAUSE, sustaining/causing-the-dependent-origination-of, FIRE/EFFECT" is used to describe the possibility of Liberation. Meaning, if we cut out the cause/kindling, then the effect/fire will extinguishes itself, going nowhere. It is interesting because it shows that Liberation is not a product, an effect, but something like a letting go of the causes of suffering.

-- So we have "the-acquiring/the-five-aggregates-of-clinging,

sustaining/causing-the-dependent-origination-of, the-illusory-self/all-the-suffering".
Meaning, if we cut out the the-acquiring/clinging, then the illusory-self/suffering will extinguishes itself, going nowhere.

-- But that could assume that there are real five aggregates, real acquiring, real clinging, real causing/sustaining. That is how it is presented in the teaching of the law of Dependent Origination.

-- It could also assume that the five aggregates of clinging must be real because the illusion of a self is depending on them, and because suffering is real.

-- To remove this misunderstanding, the analogy is revisited in more details to show that that it could still be valid/useful without the assumption of inherent existence, and that in fact it wouldn't work any other way.)

L3: [Fire and kindling are not the same, not different]

\ ###

\ 1.

\ If fire is identical to its kindling, then it is both producer and product.

\ And if fire is different from kindling, then surely [fire] exists without kindling (i.e. separate).

(THE CAUSE/KINDLING/THE-ACQUIRING/CLINGING AND THE
EFFECT/FIRE/ILLUSORY-SELF/SUFFERING

CANNOT BE THE SAME OR DIFFERENT: In the case of "cause/kindling/the-acquiring sustaining/causing-the-dependent-origination-of the effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering", there is a self-amplifying loop. – Actions "like throwing dried grass, dried cow dung, & dried timber time and again into a great mass of fire", or "like when one keeps focusing on the allure of clingable phenomena, like the five aggregates" – "thus nourished, thus sustained" from SN 12.52 – Meaning, if we cut out the cause/kindling/the-acquiring/clinging, then the effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering will extinguishes itself, going nowhere.)

Upadana seems to be "clinging" and "the five aggregates"; one may be seen from the cause point of view, the other from the effect point of view.

Attachment / grasping (Upadana) -- acquisition (upadana) [of karma] - Grasping is clinging to sense-objects and the 5 aggregates

-- Clinging to sensuality

-- Clinging to views

-- Clinging to mere rules and ritual

-- Clinging to ego-belief (belief that the 5 aggregates are Self)

Note: kindling : Easily ignited material, such as dry sticks of wood, used to start a fire.

L3: [Fire and kindling are interdependent]

\ ###

\ 2.

\ A [fire] which is perpetually burning would exist without a cause, which is kindling,

\ Since another beginning would be pointless; in this case [fire] is without its object [i.e., burning of kindling].

(NO INDEPENDENT FIRE/ILLUSORY-SELF/SUFFERING: An inherent effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering would exist without its

cause/kindling/the-acquiring/clinging, and not need to be caused/sustained/dependently-arisen.)

\ ###

\ 3.

\ [Fire] is without a cause, namely kindling, if it were independent of anything else;

\ In which case another beginning would be pointless, and there is perpetual burning.

(An independent effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering would not have rebirths, it would be permanent.)

\ ###

\ 4.

\ If it is maintained: Kindling is that which is being kindled,

\ By what is kindling kindled, since kindling is only that [kindling]?

(NO INDEPENDENT KINDLING/ACQUIRING EITHER: Kindle is said to be the cause of fire, and it is also said that the kindle is what is set alight. What then starts the cause, or the fire ?--

So if cause/kindling/the-acquiring/clinging is causing/sustaining/dependently-arising the effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering, then what is causing cause/kindling/the-acquiring/clinging? It cannot be self-caused.)

L3: [It is inherent existence that would make extinguishing / liberation impossible]

\ ###

\ 5.

\ [Fire], when different and not obtained [through kindling], will not obtain; not burning, it will not burn later;

\ Without extinction, it will not be extinguished; if there is no extinction, then it will remain with its own characteristics.

(An effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering without cause/kindling/the-acquiring/clinging would not originate, last, and be possibly extinguished/Liberated.)

L3: [They cannot exist separately and be united later]

\ ###

\ 6.

\ [The opponent claims:]

\ If fire is different from kindling it could obtain the kindling

\ As a woman obtains a husband, and a man [obtains] a wife.

(The opponent affirms that the effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering can exist before and acquire the cause/kindling/the-acquiring/clinging.)

\ ###

\ 7.

\ [Nagarjuna answers:]

\ Though fire is different from kindling, it could indeed obtain the kindling,

\ On the condition that both fire and kindling can be reciprocally differentiated [—but, this is impossible].

(For them to be different or separate and then united, like man and woman, would mean that they could exist one without the other. But this has never been seen. A fire cannot exist without its fuel, and vice versa.)

\ ###

\ 8.

\ If the fire is dependent on the kindling, and if the kindling is dependent on the fire

\ Which is attained first, dependent on which they are fire and kindling?

(If they were different or separate, and interdependent, then which one would come first to explain the other.)

L3: [Dependence of the illusory-self cannot be used to prove inherent existence of the five aggregates]

\ ###

\ 9.

\ If fire is dependent on kindling, so is the proof of the proved fire.

\ Thus, being kindling it will exist without fire.

(DEPENDENCE OF THE ILLUSORY-SELF CANNOT BE USED TO PROVE INHERENT EXISTENCE OF THE FIVE

AGGREGATES: The opponent point here is that if the fire/illusory-self is dependently arisen from the kindling/five aggregates of clinging/being, then that must prove that the five aggregates are real; that only the self is not real. But this would mean that there is cause/kindling/the-acquiring/clinging without effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering. But that is impossible.)

\ ###

\ 10.

\ When a thing (bhava) is proved by being dependent on something else, then it proves the other by being dependent [on it].

\ If that which is required for dependence must be proved, then what is dependent on what?

(THEIR INTERDEPENDENCE CANNOT BE USED TO PROVE THEIR INHERENT EXISTENCE. They are both empty

of inherent existence because interdependent, co-dependently originated. There is no absolute solid basis to prove anything real here.)

L3: [There is no real dependent origination, but it is not completely non-existent either]

\ ###

\ 11.

\ If that thing is proved by being dependent, how can that which has not been proved be dependent?

\ So, that which is proved is dependent; but the dependence is not possible.

(IN FACT THERE IS NO REAL DEPENDENT ORIGINATION, IT IS ALSO EMPTY: The concept of dependence, interdependence, or dependent origination, assumes two self-existing things, and a relation between the two. Like saying: they could exist alone but are interdependent. – The reality is that they are both empty of inherent existence because interdependent, and

vice versa. They have never been different/separated, or the same. They are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. – So the real meaning of “dependent origination” has to be perfected by uniting it with the understanding of the emptiness of inherent existence, and vice versa. One doesn’t deny the other one; they imply each other. That is the meaning of the Perfect Union of the Two Truths.)

\ ###

\ 12.

\ Fire does not exist in relation to kindling; and fire does not exist unrelated to kindling.

\ Kindling does not exist in relation to fire; and kindling does not exist unrelated to fire.

(BUT THAT DOESN’T MEAN THAT THERE IS NO DEPENDENT ORIGINATION AT ALL: There is no real inter- dependent origination between the two. But they are not completely unrelated either. The interdependence between the cause/kindling/the-acquiring/clinging and the effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering is not inherently existing, not completely non-existent, not both, not neither.)

L3: [Non-duality of fire and kindling, of the self and the five aggregates]

\ ###

\ 13.

\ Fire does not come from something else;
\ and fire does not exist in kindling.

(WE CANNOT FIND A SELF IN THE FIVE AGGREGATES OR OUTSIDE OF THEM: The effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering is not self-caused, not other-caused, not both, not neither or without any cause. The cause/kindling/the-acquiring/clinging and the effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering are not the same nor different, not simultaneous not separate.)

\ ###

\ The remaining [analysis] in regard to kindling is described by [the analysis of] "that which is being gone to," "that which is gone to" and "that which is not yet gone to."

(This is like the case of “goer going to a destination” in section 2 or “producer producing product”.

THERE IS NO SAME PERMANENT THE EFFECT/FIRE/ILLUSORY-SELF/SUFFERING that doesn't change while

being produced by the cause/kindling/the-acquiring/clinging, that is the same before (i), during (ii) and after (iii) sustaining. It is not the same thing that is before its origination, during its origination, and after its origination, otherwise there would be no need to sustain it. The effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering doesn’t exist and change. No effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering is really impermanent. (Case: real, real, self-existent)

THERE IS NO COMPLETELY DIFFERENT EFFECT/FIRE/ILLUSORY-SELF/SUFFERING before (i), during (ii)

and after (iii) the sustaining -- otherwise there would be a complete discontinuity in the identity. It is not a completely different thing that is before its origination, during its origination, and after its origination. There is a relation between those. There is valid

basis for conventional effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering with its three marks:
origination, duration, cessation.; or to call it impermanent
effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering. (Case: real, real, no-continuity)

NON-DUALITY OF CAUSE/KINDLING/THE-ACQUIRING/CLINGING AND THE
EFFECT/FIRE/ILLUSORY-SELF/SUFFERING: The cause/kindling/the-acquiring/clinging and the
effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering are not inherently existing, not completely
non-existent, not both, not neither. The cause/kindling/the-acquiring/clinging and the
effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering are inseparable, non-dual: not one, not two.

THE MIDDLE WAY CONSISTS OF STAYING AWAY FROM ALL EXTREMES, like existence,
non-existence,
both, neither.)

\ ###

\ 14.

\ Fire is not identical to kindling, but fire is not in anything other than
kindling.

\ Fire does not have kindling as its property; also, the kindling is not in fire
and vice versa.

(The cause/kindling/the-acquiring/clinging and the effect/fire/illusory-self/suffering are
not the same nor different, not simultaneous not separate. They are inseparable, non-dual:
not one, not two.)

L3: [Non-duality of dependent origination and emptiness]

\ ###

\ 15.

\ By [the analysis of] fire and kindling the syllogism of the individual self
(atma) and "the acquiring" (upadana)

\ Is fully and completely explained, as well as "the jar" and "the cloth" and other
[analogies].

(The parallel: "kindling causing/sustaining fire" is an analogy for
"the-acquiring/the-five-aggregates-of-clinging causing/sustaining
the-illusory-self/all-the-suffering".)

\ ###

\ 16.

\ Those who specify the nature of the individual self and of existing things
(bhava) as radically different—

\ Those people I do not regard as ones who know the sense of the teaching.

(NON-DUALITY OF THE SELF AND THE WORLD: To think that there is no-self (that there is an
illusory-self), but that there are real existent dharmas (real acquiring or five aggregates
of clinging) is wrong. All dharmas without any exception are empty of inherent existence,
non-dual. The illusory-self and the five aggregates are both empty of inherent existence
because interdependent; they are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.

Dependent origination doesn't imply inherent existence, or deny emptiness. On the contrary
dependent origination and emptiness are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.)

Those who oppose a self to its productions or conditions, existent things (perception,

acquiring of karma, dispositions, actions, ...) do not understand Dependent origination.

L2: [Section 11 - An Analysis of the Past (purva) and Future Limits (aparakiti) [of Existence] (samsara) – 8 – [Explaining samsara and “no-self” without using any inherent dharma.]]

(RÉSUMÉ: Life / existence as a product with the three stages of becoming.

-- There is no need for any real dharma to explain samsara and no-self.

-- Samsara has no beginning because all causes necessarily have their own causes and conditions; there is no cause that is not an effect.

-- Samsara has no end because all effects necessarily have their own effects; everything is caused for its own effect; there is no effect that is not a cause.

-- So the beginning of production of anything, and the end of the effects of anything, are limitless as time itself.

-- There is no real birth, living or growing old, death, rebirth of beings.

-- And there is no origination, duration, cessation of any dharma at all.

-- So there is no inherent individual beings, no self. But that doesn't mean that there is no self at all.

-- We cannot say that the individual life of a being has started only with his birth and will end with his death, because causes and effects are beginningless and endless. There is no discontinuity before life, and after life; no cause (birth) without its own causes and conditions (like: past karma, and previous rebirths), no effect (death) without its own effects (like: karma, next rebirths).

-- And we cannot say there is no individual life of a being at all , or that there is no self at all, that it is completely non-existent, useless, meaningless, from the mind only. There is regularity.

-- And we did it without using any inherently existing dharmas.

-- Beings and dharmas are not different, not the same.)

L3: [No inherent birth, life, death, rebirth]

\ ###

\ 1.

\ The great ascetic [Buddha] said: "The extreme limit (koti) of the past cannot be discerned."

\ "Existence-in-flux" (samsara) is without bounds; indeed, there is no beginning nor ending of that [existence].

(THERE IS NO FIRST CAUSE, NO FINAL EFFECT, TO ANYTHING FUNCTIONAL. All causes also have

their own causes and conditions. All effects are also causes of some more effects of their own. -- There is no real cause and effect, not real causal relation, we just arbitrarily give names to observed regularity. This doesn't mean that there is no cause, no effect, no interdependence at all; it is just like giving names to swirls at the surface of an infinite ocean, or names to figures appearing on clouds. – In fact there is not only one, or a certain number of causes and conditions for one effect; everything is depending on everything else. We concentrate on a few imagined causes and conditions based on more

frequent observed regularities.)

- \ ###
- \ 2.
- \ How could there be a middle portion of that which has no "before" and "after";
- \ It follows that "past," "future," and "simultaneous events" do not obtain.

(THERE IS NO REAL PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE EVENTS: The origin of anything, the beginning of its

causes, goes back in time as far as the beginning of time itself (there is no real birth); and the end of anything, the end of its effects, is pushed as far as the end of time itself (there is no real death). So the exact moment of the beginning of the production of anything, or the end of its cessation, cannot be found. These are all arbitrarily imagined, are co-dependently arisen concepts with the existence itself of the thing. – We cannot pinpoint any absolute time of any event anywhere; not its origination, not its cessation, not its duration (there is no real individual life between birth and death). So there is no absolute basis for the three times relative to any point of reference. There is no absolute time, and no absolute time interval, no absolute past, present and future. Those concepts are always merely conventional, based on conventional origination, duration, cessation of conventionally determined things. – There is no real past lives, present life, future lives and rebirths; they are just adapted skillful means for those who are stuck in samsara. And the usefulness of this skillful means is to convey the important message that “it is not because everything is empty of inherent existence, that everything is completely non-existent, or could be annihilated – beings are and will always be dependent on their actions.”)

L3: [Birth and death are not separate / different, not simultaneous / the same.]

- \ ###
- \ 3.
- \ If birth [is regarded as] the former, and growing old and dying [are regarded as] coming into being later,
- \ Then birth exists without growing old and dying, and [something] is born without death.

(BIRTH CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT DEATH – A CAUSE WITHOUT ITS EFFECT – SEPARATE / TWO: If birth

and death, like origination and cessation, like cause and effect, were inherent, then they would be able to exist independently of each other. But we have never seen one without the other; there is no cause without an effect.)

- \ ###
- \ 4.
- \ If birth were later, and growing old and dying were earlier,
- \ How would there be an uncaused growing old and dying of something unborn?

(BIRTH CANNOT COME AFTER DEATH OF THE SAME BEING – AN EFFECT WITHOUT ITS CAUSE – SEPARATE /

TWO: If birth and death, like origination and cessation, like cause and effect, were inherent, then they would be able to appear in any order. But that is non-sense, there is no effect without a cause.)

\ ###

\ 5.

\ And a birth which is simultaneous with growing old and dying is likewise impossible;

\ For, that which is being born would die, and both would be without cause.

(BIRTH AND DEATH CANNOT APPEAR SIMULTANEOUSLY – CAUSE AND EFFECT BEING SIMULTANEOUS / ONE:

If birth and death, like origination and cessation, like cause and effect, were inherent, then they would be able to appear in any order. But that is non-sense.)

L3: [Nothing exist and is impermanent]

\ ###

\ 6.

\ Since the past, future, and simultaneous activity do not originate,

\ To what purpose [do you] explain in detail [the existence of] birth, growing old and dying?

(NOTHING AT ALL HAS ORIGATION, DURATION, CESSATION. To hold on to those ideas is not proper. There is no real origination, lasting, and cessation activity; no real birth, living and dying. So what is the use to grasp at those ideas.)

\ ###

\ 7.

\ That which is produced and its cause, as well as the characteristic and that which is characterized,

\ The sensation and the one who senses, and whatever other things there are --

\ 8.

\ Not only is the former limit of existence-in-flux (samsara) not to be found,

\ But the former limit of all those things is not to be found.

(EMPTINESS OF ALL FIVE AGGREGATES: No only is the life of a being empty (no-self), but all dharmas without any exception are empty of inherent existence: not existent, not completely non-existent, not both, not neither. Nothing starts, lasts/ages, and ceases. Nothing exist and is impermanent.)

L1: [The real nature of dukkha (next 3 chapters)]

L2: [Section 12 - An Analysis of Sorrow (dukkha) (suffering) – 10 – [Dukkha cannot be caused by a personality, internal, external, both or neither]]

(RÉSUMÉ:

-- Opponent: But dukkha during this life is real. Buddha said: "Dukkha should be known, The origin of dukkha should be known, The cessation of dukkha should be known, And the Path leading to the cessation of dukkha should be known." Dukkha is Birth, old age, and death.

... Those are the Four Noble Truths. Also, the Twelve-linked Chain (the Wheel of Samsara) describes THE CYCLE OF DUKKHA. and if there is dukkha, then there is a self suffering.

-- But there is no real dukkha, and there is no real objective world.

- About the nature and origin of suffering itself.
- About the gross definition of suffering, physical suffering, BODILY SUFFERING. Dukkha is either self-afflicted, caused by others or other external things, or both. (It cannot be without cause)
- There is no real dukkha:
 - -- Dukkha cannot be self produced, self-existent.
 - -- Dukkha cannot be caused by oneself, internal cause -- the same as our own personality
 - -- Dukkha cannot be produced by an external cause (another personality) -- different than our own personality
 - -- Dukkha cannot be produced by both an internal cause (self) and an external cause (another personality)
 - -- Dukkha is not without cause
- The same for external things (the objective world):
 - -- The world cannot be self produced, self-existent. (like independent of our aggregates)
 - -- The world cannot be caused by oneself, internal cause -- the same as our own personality (like only illusions)
 - -- The world cannot be produced by an external cause (another personality) -- different than our own personality (like a God, Universal laws, determinism)
 - -- The world cannot be produced by both an internal cause (self) and an external cause (another personality) (like God and self)
 - -- The world is not without cause (completely random)
- More: The next steps would be to propose that dukkha is mental, caused by the dispositions, or cosmic in the sense that everything is essentially impermanent, thus unsatisfactory. Those are examined in the next section.)

L3: [Dukkha is not produced by a personality (internal, external, both, neither)]

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\   ###
\   1.
\   Some say:
\   Sorrow (dukkha) is produced by oneself (i),
\   or by another (ii),
\   or by both [itself and another] (iii),
\   or from no cause at all (iv);
\   But [to consider] that [sorrow (dukkha)] as what is produced is not possible.

```

(DUKKHA IS NOT A PRODUCT: There are various types of dukkha: birth, aging, disease, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair, union with the unpleasant, separation with the pleasant, not to get what we desire. Then the Buddha sums up: “in brief the five aggregates of clinging are dukkha”. With this statement the Buddha indicates that all our experience is included in dukkha. The reason they are all included in Dukkha is that they are all impermanent, changing from moment to moment. -- What is the cause of dukkha, or the five aggregates of clinging? This verse says that dukkha should not be considered as an inherent product, or as an inherent effect, like we usually think of them.)

L4: [Dukkha is not caused by our own personality]

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\   ###
\   2.
\   If it were produced by itself (i.e. self-causation), it would not exist dependent
on something else.

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\ Certainly those "groups of universal elements" (skandhas) exist presupposing these "groups."

(NO INHERENTLY EXISTING, INDEPENDENT, SELF-CAUSED DUKKHA: As an inherent product dukkha

would be self-caused and independent of any other causes and conditions. But dukkha, or our actual five aggregates of clinging, are certainly dependent on previous aggregates. So dukkha, our five aggregates of clinging, our personality, are not self-produced, or inherently existing.)

\ ###

\ 3.

\ If these were different from those, or if those were different from these,

\ Sorrow (dukkha) would be produced by something other than itself (i.e. other-causation),

\ because those would be made by these others.

(NO OTHER CAUSATION, BY OUR OWN FIVE AGGREGATES: So one set of five aggregates and the next

set are not the same or permanent; meaning that dukkha is not inherent or self-caused. But, on the other hand, one set of five aggregates and the next set are not completely different either; meaning that dukkha is not other-caused either.)

\ ###

\ 4.

\ If sorrow (dukkha) is made through one's own personality (i) (svapudgala),

\ then one's own personality would be without sorrow (dukkha);

\ Who is that "own personality" by which sorrow (dukkha) is self-produced (i)?

(OTHER-CAUSATION, BY OUR OWN PERSONALITY: Cause/our-own-personality and effect/dukkha cannot

be different or separate. One cannot exist without the other. There is no personality without dukkha, that is then producing its own dukkha.)

L4: [Dukkha is not caused by another personality]

\ ###

\ 5.

\ If sorrow (dukkha) were produced by a different personality (ii) (parapudgala),

\ How would he, to whom is given that sorrow (dukkha) by another after he had produced it, be without sorrow (dukkha)?

(OTHER-CAUSATION, BY ANOTHER PERSONALITY: Cause/another-personality and effect/dukkha cannot

be different or separate. One cannot exist without the other. There is no personality without dukkha, that is then given dukkha.)

\ ###

\ 6.

\ If sorrow (dukkha) is produced by a different personality, who is that different personality

\ Who, while being without sorrow (dukkha), yet makes and transmits that [sorrow (dukkha)] to the other?

(OTHER-CAUSATION, BY ANOTHER PERSONALITY: Cause/another-personality and effect/dukkha cannot be different or separate. One cannot exist without the other. There is no personality without dukkha, then producing dukkha, and then giving it away.)

\ ###

\ 7.

\ It is not established that sorrow (dukkha) is self-produced (i), [but] how is [sorrow (dukkha)] produced by another (ii)?

\ Certainly the sorrow (dukkha), which would be produced by another (ii), in his case would be self-produced (i').

(OTHER-CAUSATION, BY ANOTHER PERSONALITY IS THE SAME AS BY OUR OWN PERSONALITY FOR THE

OTHER: Cause/another-personality and effect/dukkha cannot be different or separate. One cannot exist without the other. There is no personality without dukkha, then producing dukkha, and then giving it away. Meaning that from our point of view it would be produced by another personality, but from his point of view it would be produced by his own personality. But in any case the personality is considered different than dukkha; so it is other-caused in both cases.)

\ ###

\ 8.

\ Sorrow (dukkha) is not self-produced (i), for that which is produced is certainly not produced by that [personality].

\ If the "other" (para) is not produced by the individual self (atma), how would sorrow (dukkha) be that produced by another?

(IN BOTH CASES OTHER-CAUSED IS NOT POSSIBLE.)

L4: [Dukkha is not caused by both self and other personality]

\ ###

\ 9.

\ Sorrow (dukkha) could be made by both [self and the "other"] (iii) if it could be produced by either one.

\ [But] not produced by another, and not self-produced (iv) —how can sorrow (dukkha) exist without a caused

(OTHER-CAUSATION, BY BOTH PERSONALITIES TOGETHER: If other-causation by either one (our own personality, or by another personality) is impossible, then other-causation by both simultaneously is also impossible.

NEITHER-CAUSATION, BY NO PERSONALITY AT ALL: On the other hand, dukkha is not without any cause.)

L3: [External things are not produced by a personality (internal, external, both, neither)]

\ ###

\ 10.

\ Not only are the four [causal] interpretations not possible in respect to sorrow

(dukkha),

\ [but also] none of the four [causal] interpretations is possible even in respect to external things (bhava).

(GENERALIZATION: External things (the world) are not self-caused, other-caused (caused by other causes, our personality, other personalities, both, neither), both, or neither. That is the same as verse 1:1.)

L2: [Section 13 - An Analysis of Conditioned Elements (samskara) (the real) – 8 – [Dukkha is not due to things that exist and are impermanent]]

(RÉSUMÉ:

-- Opponent: The dukkha you have described is the first level of description of dukkha. But dukkha can also be understood at the second level as mental suffering, caused by the samskara (dispositions embedded in the body and mind). At a third level, dukkha can finally be seen as the universal characteristic of all aggregates: because everything is impermanent, everything is suffering.

-- But, we have already seen that there is no dispositions in section 6. And since nothing is, nothing is impermanent. So this is not a good explanation for suffering either. Nothing is, and change.

-- About THE CAUSE OF SUFFERING (PART II) THE DISPOSITIONS which cause all phenomena to be

experienced as suffering, and impermanence / unsatisfactoriness. -- Intention, volitional or mental formations or disposition, mental tendencies; any volitional activity or habitual tendency, good and bad, that creates karma; conditioning forces, conditioned consciousness.

-- What is the root cause of suffering:

-- -- We have covered in the previous section the gross definition of dukkha.

-- -- Mental pain: the three poisons, the dispositions which cause all phenomena to be experienced as suffering -- Conditioned elements = Sankhara (Volitional activities) DO-2, habits, reactions, dispositions, discrimination, desire (section 6), hatred, ... based on ignorance // The fourth constituent aggregate of the individual is samskara, mental formations and dispositions. These dispositions include any volitional activity or habitual tendency, good and bad, that creates karma and thus binds one to the cycle of birth-and-death. Dispositions include confidence and conceit, wisdom and ignorance, lust and hatred.

-- -- Cosmic suffering: the impermanence of all things: birth, change/decay, death

-- First, all dispositions would have the basic cause for suffering; what is it then? We have seen in section 6 that there is no real dispositions, and in section 2 that there is no real actions.

-- Opponent: the real root cause is non-self, due to impermanence of things. (probably meaning that the root disposition is that we have the bad habit of thinking they are permanent = ignorance of impermanence). But things exist because they are impermanent and empty. Things exist and change. Things are existing, impermanent, and empty.

-- But, nothing "is", otherwise they would not change

-- So nothing "is impermanent", nothing "changes". Nothing goes through birth, aging, death.

-- And nothing "is empty". Emptiness cannot be used to prove the existence.

-- Emptiness is not something to apply to self-existence.

- Emptiness is not absolute, a real thing, an absolute view
- More: So nothing is suffering. No birth, aging, death. No dukkha. Dependent Origination (or the Four Noble truths) has to be seen without self-existence, and not as an absolute view, a system. Nothing exist, change, or cease. Everything is pure and indestructible in emptiness.
- For more on the dispositions :
- -- Section 6 - An Analysis of Desire (raga) and One Who Desires (rakta) - concomitance
- -- Section 13 - An Analysis of Conditioned Elements (samskara) -- as mental suffering
- -- Section 16 - An Analysis of Being Bound (bandhana) and Release (moksa)
- -- Section 26 - An Analysis of the Twelve Components (dvadasanga))

L3: [The essential dukkha nature of all things – because impermanent]

- \ ###
- \ 1.
- \ A thing of which the basic elements are deception is vain, as the glorious one said.
- \ All conditioned elements (samskara) are things that have basic elements (dharma) which are deception; therefore, they are vain.

(THE THREE MARKS OF ALL THINGS: All conditioned things are impermanent, unsatisfying, not-self. So, according to this, the real cause of dukkha is the impermanence of everything. But the opponent think these things are still composed of real basic elements and have some inherent characteristics like impermanence, deception, ... The Hinayana denies that there is a self, but accepts the reality of some dharma.)

- \ ###
- \ 2.
- \ "If that which has deceptive basic elements is vain, what is there which deceives?"
- \ This was spoken by the glorious one to illuminate "emptiness."

(THINGS DO NOT EXIST AND ARE ESSENTIALLY IMPERMANENT, UNSATISFYING: We have already covered the cases of the origination, duration and cessation of products. There is no real origination, duration and cessation, no real product. This chapter is about the cause of mental suffering; what is it about things that causes mental suffering. -- It is not necessarily something in the things, but in the way we see them.)

- \ ###
- \ 3.
- \ [An opponent says:]
- \ There is non-self-existence of things [since] a thing, by observation, [becomes] something else. (i.e. impermanence)
- \ A thing without self-existence does not exist—due to the emptiness of existing things.

(THE OPPONENT AFFIRMS THAT THINGS EXIST, AND ARE DECEPTION BECAUSE THEY ARE IMPERMANENT, THEY CHANGE: The opponent denies the possibility of emptiness, because things change and are impermanent. He thinks emptiness means the opposite of existence, that it means complete non-existence, and the impossibility of the observed change.)

\ ###

\ 4.

\ If self-existence does not exist, whose "other-existence" would there be?

(THE OPPONENT THINKS THAT EMPTINESS CONTRADICTS THE OBSERVED IMPERMANENCE OF REAL THINGS.

The opponent thinks that something non-existent (empty) would not be able to change. And that would contradict our observations.)

L3: [Inherent existence would make impermanence impossible]

\ ###

\ [Nagarjuna answers:]

\ If self-existence does exist, whose "other-existence" would there be?

(ON THE CONTRARY, IT IS INHERENT EXISTENCE THAT CONTRADICTS DEPENDENT ORIGINATION: On the

contrary, says Nagarjuna, it is inherent existence that makes conventional change, dependent origination, birth, growing old and death, totally impossible. Something inherently existing, independent of everything else would not change.)

L3: [A changed thing is not the same thing, nor a different thing]

\ ###

\ 5.

\ Just as there is no other-existence of a thing, so also [an-other-existence] of something else is not possible—

\ Since a youth is not aging (jiryate), and since "who has already aged" is not aging (jiryate).

(THE OBJECT BEFORE ITS CHANGE AND AFTER THE CHANGE ARE NOT THE SAME, NOT DIFFERENT: There is

apparent change/impermanence but nothing is changing. Nothing stays the same for even an infinitesimal moment. So nothing exist and is essentially impermanent, or unsatisfying.)

(Jonah Winters: First, he repeats his negation of the possibility of real change. "Neither change of something in itself nor of something different is proper. The youth does not age nor does an aged person age." (Karikas XIII.5)

An entity cannot both have a real identity and experience a change. If, in the example, the person were youthful, then he or she would partake of no agedness and thus could not remain a youth and still age. If the person were aged, then it would be ludicrous to say that he or she ages. This would be tantamount to saying, for example, that a red thing turns red: real change would not have occurred. The solution is to say that all existent things have no self-nature, svabhava. Substances do not have attributes---they are "empty.")

L3: [Nothing exists and change, exists and is impermanent]

\ ###

\ 6.

\ If there would be an other-existence of a thing, milk would exist as curds.

\ [But] surely "being curds" will be something other than milk.

(THINGS DO NOT EXIST AND CHANGE; NOTHING IS IMPERMANENT: To say that something exist and

change while keeping its identity, would mean that being young and old is the same thing.
But that doesn't make sense.)

L3: [Nothing exists and is empty either – emptiness of emptiness]

\ ###
\ 7.
\ If something would be non-empty, something would [logically also] be empty
\ But nothing is non-empty, so how will it become empty?

(NOTHING EXIST AND IS EMPTY EITHER: We are not replacing the essential characteristic of being "impermanent" with the characteristic of being "empty". That is not the meaning of emptiness. Nothing is really existing in the first place, so they cannot exist and be empty.)

L3: [Emptiness is not the absolute nature of everything]

\ ###
\ 8.
\ Emptiness is proclaimed by the victorious one as the refutation of all
viewpoints;
\ But those who hold "emptiness" as a viewpoint—[the true perceivers] have called
those "incurable" (asadhya).

(THE EMPTINESS OF EMPTINESS: Emptiness should not be considered as the absolute essential characteristic of everything. Emptiness is merely another adapted skillful means, the antidote of the belief in inherent existence. But when this belief no longer enslave the mind of a being, then there is no more need for its antidote: emptiness.)

L2: [Section 14 - An Analysis of Unification (samsarga) (combination) – 8 – [The inseparability of the three realms; or of body, speech and mind]]

L3: [All trio 'subject, verb-action, complement' are interdependent, inseparable, non-dual]

\ ###
\ 1.
\ That which is seen, sight, and the "seer": these three
\ Do not combine together either in pairs or altogether.

(THE IMPOSSIBLE UNION OF SUBJECT, VERB-ACTION, OBJECT/COMPLEMENT: They cannot become united
because they have never been separated in the first place. Subject, verb, complement are always interdependent, one cannot exist without the other. They are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one, not three.)

\ ###
\ 2.
\ Desire, the one who desires, and the object of desire have to be regarded in the
same way,
\ [As also] the impurities which remain and the three kinds of "base of sense"
(ayatana) which remain.

(ALL TRIO SUBJECT, VERB, COMPLEMENT ARE LIKE THAT. Ex. Self, interacting with, the world.
Ex. Perceiving, feeling, clinging, craving, suffering, ...)

L3: [Differentness, then unification are impossible]

\ ###
\ 3.
\ [Some hold:] There is unification (samsarga) of one different thing with another
different thing; [but] since the differentness
\ Of what is seen, etc. does not exist, those [factors] do not enter into
unification.

(OPPONENT: THINGS CAN UNITE BECAUSE THEY ARE DIFFERENT: The opponent affirms that
subject,
verb-action and objects of the three worlds unite to interact. And this possible because
they are existing independently of each other before the interaction.)

\ ###
\ 4.
\ Not only does the differentness of that which is seen, etc. not exist,
\ Also the differentness of something coming from another does not obtain.

(NO TRIO SUBJECT, VERB, COMPLEMENT ARE COMPOSED OF THE UNION OF DIFFERENT
THINGS: We have
already seen in section 3 that perceiver, perceiving, and objects of the senses are not
different, not the same; that they are inseparable, non-dual. We have seen the same thing
about other trios like: goer, going, destination; doer, doing-action, result of action;
producer, producing, product; cause, causing, effect; characteristics, defining,
characterized; young, changing into, old; etc. We even have seen the same thing about
something coming from another personality in section 12: internal or external personality,
causing, producing, dukkha or external objects. -- So in all cases the subject, verb,
complement are always inseparable, non-dual. They cannot exist on their own and then be
united.))

\ ###
\ 5.
\ A thing is different insofar as it presupposes a second different thing.
\ One thing is not different from another thing without the other thing.

(DIFFERENTNESS IS IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE IT PRESUPPOSES TWO RELATED THINGS: The
concept of
differentness presuppose two independent things that are then combined in a comparison. It
always presupposes at least two things. One thing alone cannot be different. So we cannot
say that those two things were independent first, before the comparison.)

\ ###
\ 6.
\ If one different thing is different from a second different thing, it exists
without a second different thing;
\ But without a second different thing, one different thing does not exist as a
different thing.

(ONE CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT THE OTHER: One different thing cannot exist without the other

thing.)

\ ###

\ 7.

\ Differentness does not exist in a different thing, nor in what is not different.

\ When differentness does not exist, then there is neither what is different nor "this" [from which something can be different].

(THERE IS NO DIFFERENTNESS ANYWHERE: One different thing cannot exist without the other thing.)

\ ###

\ 8. Unification is not possible by [uniting] one thing with that one thing, nor by [uniting] one thing with a different thing;

\ Thus, the becoming unified, the state of being united, and the one who unites are not possible.

(THERE IS NO UNIFICATION ANYWHERE: Since there is no differentness of subject, verb, complement. The world and the mind are inseparable. The three realms are inseparable, non-dual. That is the perfect inseparability of the body, speech and mind of a Buddha.)

L1: [ABOUT ANY SELF-NATURE -- THAT WOULD TRANSMIGRATE]

-- In general, in existing things

-- In the dispositions (in the aggregates)

-- With karma

-- Consequence, and "What then?"

L2: [Section 15 - An Analysis of a Self-existent Thing (svabhava) (being and non-being) – 11

– [The provisional and definitive teachings; a changing thing or being is not the same, nor different]]

(RÉSUMÉ:

-- The three stages of becoming are provisional teachings; when changing a thing is not the same, nor different.

-- Rebirth is also a provisional teaching; when reborn a being is not the same, nor different.

-- All things and beings are not inherently existent, not completely non-existent, not both, not neither. They are never the same or different.

-- One has to be able to make the distinction between provisional teachings and definitive teachings of the Buddha.)

L3: [No possible three stages of becoming of an inherent thing (origination, duration and transformation, cessation)]

\ ###

\ 1.

\ The production of a self-existent thing by a conditioning cause is not possible,

\ [For,] being produced through dependence on a cause, a self-existent thing would be "something which is produced" (krtaka).

(AN INHERENTLY EXISTING THING WOULD NOT BE PRODUCED IN DEPENDENCE ON CAUSES AND CONDITIONS:

By definition an inherently existing thing would be independent of everything else; it would not depend on causes and conditions. So to say that something dependently arisen is inherently existing is absurd.)

\ ###

\ 2.

\ How, indeed, will a self-existent thing become "something which is produced"?

\ Certainly, a self-existent thing [by definition] is "not-produced" and is independent of anything else.

(THE PRODUCTION OF AN INHERENTLY EXISTENT THING WOULD BE USELESS: If it is inherently

existing then it already exist, there is no need to produce it.)

\ ###

\ 3.

\ If there is an absence of a self-existent thing, how will an other-existent thing (parabhava) come into being ?

\ Certainly the self-existence of an other-existent thing is called "other-existence."

(THE TRANSFORMATION INTO SOMETHING ELSE IS ALSO IMPOSSIBLE: If things are not inherently

existing then they cannot change and become something else. The "becoming something else" is also impossible.)

\ ###

\ 4.

\ Further, how can a thing [exist] without either self-existence or other-existence?

\ If either self-existence or other existence exist, then an existing thing, indeed, would be proved.

(So there is no inherent existence or transformation of an existing thing.)

\ ###

\ 5.

\ If there is no proof of an existent thing, then a non-existent thing cannot be proved.

\ Since people call the other-existence of an existent thing a "non-existent thing."

(NOTHING IS COMPLETELY DESTROYED / NON-EXISTENT EITHER: If things are not inherently

existing then they cannot change and cease completely.

-- Tetralemma: So nothing is inherently existing, completely non-existing, both, neither.)

L3: ["Those sutras that are definitive and those requiring further interpretation" (HHDL)]

\ ###

\ 6.

\ Those who perceive self-existence and other-existence, and an existent thing and a non-existent thing,
\ Do not perceive the true nature of the Buddha's teaching.

(PROVISIONAL TEACHINGS: The teachings about the three stages of becoming should not be taken literally as absolute truths. They are all merely adapted skillful means.)

\ ###
\ 7.
\ In "The Instruction of Katyayana" both "it is" and "it is not" are opposed
\ By the Glorious One, who has ascertained the meaning of "existent" and non-existent."

(DEFINITIVE MEANING TEACHINGS – THE MIDDLE WAY: The Sutras that teach the need to stay away from both extremes are of the second kind: definitive meaning teachings. See some extracts below like: Kaccayanagotta Sutta - To Kaccayana Gotta (on Right View) - SN XII.15)

L3: [A changing thing or being is not the same, nor different]

\ ###
\ 8.
\ If there would be an existent thing by its own nature, there could not be "non-existence" of that [thing].
\ Certainly an existent thing different from its own nature would never obtain.

(WHEN CHANGING, A THING IS NOT THE SAME, NOT DIFFERENT: An inherently existent thing would be permanent and would not change; it would be the same before and after a change. What is the purpose of any change then? On the other hand, it cannot be a totally different thing either. Otherwise anything would be able to change into anything else.)

L3: [Incompatibility of inherent existence and dependent origination]

\ ###
\ 9.
\ [An opponent asks:]
\ If there is no basic self-nature (prakti), of what will there be "otherness"?
\ [Nagarjuna answers:]
\ If there is basic self-nature, of what will there be "otherness"?

(IT IS INHERENT EXISTENCE THAT IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH DEPENDENT ORIGINATION: An inherently existing thing would not be able to change into something else. On the other hand dependent origination and emptiness are mutually supportive; one implies the other. They are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.)

L3: [The Middle Way between the two extremes of existence and non-existence of things and beings]

\ ###
\ 10.
\ "It is" is a notion of eternity. "It is not" is a nihilistic view.

\ Therefore, one who is wise does not have recourse to "being" or "non-being."

(EXISTENCE AND NON-EXISTENCE ARE TWO EXTREMES. The Middle Way consists of staying away from both extremes.)

\ ###

\ 11.

\ That which exists by its own nature is eternal since "it does not not-exist."

\ If it is maintained: "That which existed before does not exist now," there annihilation would logically follow.

(To talk about the cessation of inherently existing things is to prone annihilation.)

L2: [Section 16 - An Analysis of Being Bound (bandhana) and Release (moksa) (bondage and release) – 10 – [No personal rebirths or Liberation]]

(RÉSUMÉ:

-- As seen in the previous sections, nothing dependently arisen, things or beings, can exist and change, go through transformations, or rebirths, or be completely terminated, or ceased, or purified.

-- So there is nothing permanent that is carried from one rebirth to the other. We certainly have found nothing inherently existing in the five aggregates, the 12 ayatana, or the dhatu.

-- But rebirths are not completely non-existent either.

-- The analysis of "ACQUISITIONS BINDING THE SELF" like "goer going to a destination" permits to eliminate wrong conceptions about rebirths and Liberation.

-- We find out that the subject (acquisitions), the verb (binding, or not binding), and the complement (self) are not independent of each other, they are not inherently existing and joining to produce the action. They are interdependent, inseparable, non-dual.

-- That means no self is really bound in samsara, and no self is finally not-bound / Liberated with Nirvana. No individual samsara, or individual purification or Liberation. But they do exist conventionally, dependently.)

L3: [Nothing permanent in any dharma that could support real rebirths, and individual Liberation]

L4: [The acquisitions / conditioning, causes of conditioned rebirths, are not inherently existing, nor completely non-existing]

\ ###

\ 1.

\ When conditioned elements (dispositions, conditioning?) continue to change (through rebirths?),

\ they do not continue to change as eternal things (the same before and after).

\ Likewise they do not continue to change as non-eternal things (different before and after).

\ The arguments here is the same as for a living being.

(NOTHING PERMANENT IN THE FIVE AGGREGATES THAT IS TAKING REBIRTHS: As demonstrated in

section 13, nothing exist and change; nothing exist and is impermanent, unsatisfactory, empty. Nothing is inherently existing, completely non-existing, both, or neither. – As demonstrated in section 15, there is no permanent self that can exist and take rebirth. All changing things and beings are never the same, nor different. – So there cannot be anything in the five conditioned aggregates that would remain the same and go through a rebirth process: no permanent dispositions, no permanent karma, no permanent subtle consciousness, ...)

THE PROBLEM: Of all the aggregates, which one can be say to evolve in samsara? What does take rebirth? The best choice would be the dispositions; they are the product of karma. Dispositions (with karma and rebirth) account for (innate and acquired) differences in abilities and attitudes. Dispositions explain the perception of the six realms. The body is easily seen as not continuing. Perceptions and feelings are also very impermanent. And there is not much personality in basic awareness.

So, one may think that in the dispositions, that take rebirth, there is A VERY SUBTLE SELF. So the Path consist of "purifying this self" -- removing the taints -- removal of existence-in-flux -- as mentioned in the last verse.

(Jonah Winters: The dilemma is, once again, found to be caused by a "Personalist" misunderstanding of the theory of the aggregates (skandhas). The dispositions, as the primary embodiment of the forces of grasping and greedy passions, are also the chief forces causing rebirth. The erroneous tendency was to posit a substantial self-nature in these dispositions. The popular belief, Nagarjuna explains, was that only a real entity with real soul can be bound to phenomenal existence and transmigrate.)

L4: [No permanent dharma that could explain real rebirths]

\ ###
\ 2.
\ If the personality would change when it is sought five ways in the "groups" (skandha),
\ "bases of sense perception" (ayatana), and the "irreducible elements" (dhatu),
\ Then it does not exist. Who [is it who] will change (i.e. transmigrate)?

(NOTHING PERMANENT IN THE ELEMENTARY DHARMA THAT COULD TAKE REBIRTH: From the previous

chapters we have seen that there is no inherent existence (or permanence) in any of the five aggregates - skandha, in any of the 12 sense-fields - ayatanas, in any supposedly irreducible elements – dhatu. So there is no absolute basis for any permanent self that would be going through rebirths there.)

(Jonah Winters: The obvious difficulty that the Buddhist faced was in reconciling the fact of bondage and its conjunct, transmigration, with the Buddha's teaching that there is no self. This is the problem that is Nagarjuna's major concern in section sixteen, ``Examination of Bondage and Release." "It may be assumed that a person transmigrates," he agrees. Yet, he has demonstrated in the previous sections that there is no person-hood, no self, to be found in any of the elements of existence. "Who then will transmigrate?" Karikas XVI.2)

...

There can be no self- nature in the dispositions. If there were an entity with a permanent nature, then it could not transmigrate. Transmigration, Kalupahana points out, "implies

moving from one position to another, disappearing in one place and appearing in another." (Kalupahana 1986, 54) The notion of permanence holds that an entity is always present, and so there is no question of its ceasing and arising.)

L4: [But rebirths are not completely non-existent either]

\ ###

\ 3.

\ Moving from "acquisition" (upadana) to "acquisition" would be "that which is without existence" (vibhava).

\ Who is he who is without existence and without acquisition? To what will he change (i.e. transmigrate)?

(BUT WHAT IS TAKING REBIRTHS IS NOT COMPLETELY NON-EXISTENT EITHER: Even if there is no inherently existent self in any of those skandhas, ayatanas and dhatus, as stated in the previous verse, that doesn't mean that this self is completely non-existent either. A completely non-existent self would not explain the continuity across rebirths, the continuity of the conditioning, of the acquisitions. As seen in section 10, there is no fire without kindling, and vice versa.)

(Jonah Winters: Neither can an entity without an enduring self-nature transmigrate, for, if the entity is truly temporary, then it will completely cease, and no discussion of its continuance, either from one moment to the next or from one life to the next, is appropriate. This method of analysis, Nagarjuna says, applies not just to one factor of the individual, but to the sentient being as a whole.)

L4: [There is no real binding, purification, Liberation]

\ ###

\ 4.

\ The final cessation (nirvana) of the conditioned elements certainly is not possible at all.

\ Nor is the final cessation of even a living being possible at all.

(NOTHING EXIST AND CHANGE, AND THEN CEASE: Nothing, things or beings, exist and have rebirths, and ultimately are eliminated or Liberated. There is no beginning and no end to the kindling-fire cycle.)

\ ###

\ 5.

\ The conditioned elements, whose nature (dharma) is arising and destruction, neither are bound nor released.

\ Likewise a living being neither is bound nor released.

(THERE IS NO REAL BINDING OR NON-BINDING: All dependently arisen things are empty of inherent existence. So they cannot exist and continue through transformations, rebirths, nor cease or be Liberated / purified. That applies to all things and beings.)

(Jonah Winters: It cannot transmigrate whether it has or does not have a self-nature, and therefore it can experience neither bondage nor release from bondage. If one thinks in terms of self-nature, then the inevitable conclusion is that "a sentient being, like [dispositions], is neither bound nor released." Karikas XVI.5)

L3: [The analysis of “acquisitions binding the self like “goer going to the destination”]

\ ###

\ 6.

\ If the acquisition (upadana) were the "binding," that one [having] the acquisition is not bound;

\ Nor is that one not having the acquisition bound.

\ Then in what condition is he bound?

(NO INDEPENDENT OBJECT / SELF BOUND: This “acquisitions, binding, the self” is similar to “goer, going, destination” of section 2. The analysis is the same and the conclusions are the same.

-- There is no binding acquisitions of a self (real, real, real). There is no non-binding acquisitions of a self (not-real, not-real, real). So there is no self bound.

-- If “binding acquisitions” and “self” are real then they should exist independently of each other. In that case the self is essentially not “bound” with or without acquisitions.)

\ ###

\ 7.

\ Certainly if the "binding" would exist before "that which is bound," then it must bind;

\ But that does not exist. The remaining [analysis] is stated in [the analysis of] "the present going to," "that which has already gone to" and "that which has not yet gone to."

(NO INDEPENDENT BINDING: No self is bound (--, real, real); no non-self is bound (--, real, not-real). There is no binding.

Note: In section 2 there is mention of “that which is already gone to”, not of “that which has already gone to”. So one is talking about the relation between the subject and the verb; the other one is talking about the relation between the verb and the object, or complement.)

\ ###

\ 8.

\ Therefore, "that which is bound" is not released and "that which is not bound" is likewise not released.

\ If "that which is bound" were released, "being bound" and "release" would exist simultaneously.

(NO INDEPENDENT NOT-VERB / NOT-BINDING / RELEASE: No self is not-bound (--, not-real, real);

no non-self is not-bound (--, not-real, not-real). There is no not-binding or release.

-- If there is no real “binding”, then there is no real “non-binding”. Like for “the goer going to a destination”, if there is no real origination of going, then there is no real “duration of going”, no “cessation of going” or “coming to rest”)

L3: [There is no personal Liberation or purification]

\ ###

\ 9.

\ "I will be released without any acquisition."

\ "Nirvana will be mine."

\ Those who understand thus hold too much to "a holding on" [i.e., both to the

acquisition of karma, and to a viewpoint].

(NO INDEPENDENT OBJECT / SELF RELEASED: To say that there could be a self independent of any

acquisitions, of any binding, is to fall into the extreme of thinking the complement is inherently existing. If he is inherently existing then there is no acquisitions and binding even in samsara. So the case “not-real, not-real, real” is not an acceptable case either.

-- If there is no real binding or non-binding, then there is no real self bound or nor-bound / released. Like no goer is coming to rest.)

\ ###

\ 10.

\ Where there is a super-imposing of nirvana [on something else], nor a removal of existence-in-flux,

\ What is the existence-in-flux there?

\ What nirvana is imagined?

(NO INHERENT SELF IS “LIBERATED” OR “PURIFIED”: Like saying “binding acquisitions” are removed from a “bound self”. But there is no permanent self that is the same before, during and after the action (positive or negative). There is no "permanent being" to which we add or remove something. Nothing exist and change.)

L2: [Section 17 - An Analysis of Action (karma) and Its Product (phala) (action and its results) – 33 – [The whole chain of karma formation and its fruits is empty, like a magic trick]]

(Similar to sections 2, 8, ...)

L3: [The opponents theories]

L4: [An opponent presents the traditional causal theory of action:]

STATIC VIEW

MOTIVE --> ACTIONS/KARMA (lasting until:) --> FRUITS

ACTIONS: physical, verbal, mental; wholesome, unwholesome

That which does not rest (??) -- like the mind stream ?

That which is considered to be at rest (??) -- like the permanent, very subtle self ?

The action /karma is real, and last until the fruit.

\ ###

\ 1.

\ The state of mind which is self-disciplined, being favorably disposed toward others,

\ And friendship: that is the dharma; that is the seed for the fruit now and after death.

(Morality and its fruits now and as favorable rebirths.)

\ ###

\ 2.

\ The most perceptive seer [Buddha] has said that there is action (karma) as

volition and as a result of having willed.

\ The variety of acts of that [action] has been explained in many ways.

(The different kinds of actions.)

\ ###

\ 3.

\ Thus, that action which is called "volition": that is considered [by tradition] as mental;

\ But that action which is a result of having willed: that is considered [by tradition] as physical or verbal.

(Actions are one part mental, one part physical.)

\ ###

\ 4.

\ Sound (1), gesture (2) and that which does not rest which is considered as unknown (3),

\ Also the other unknown which is considered to be at rest (4);

(The five aggregates, including the parts that change, and the part that doesn't change: the owner, the self?)

\ ###

\ 5.

\ That which is pure as a result of enjoyment (5), that which is impure as a result of enjoyment (6),

\ And volition (7): these seven basic elements (dharma) are considered [by the tradition] as the modes of action.

(Modes of action ? Of body, speech and mind. Wholesome and unwholesome, neutral.)

L4: [Another opponent argues by the imagery of a process:]

PROCESS VIEW

SEED --> PROCESS --> FRUIT

THOUGHT --> MENTAL PROCESS --> PRODUCT

The process is real, and last until the fruit.

\ ###

\ 6.

\ If an action [exists] by enduring to the time of its fulfillment, that [action] would be eternal.

\ If [an action] were stopped—being stopped, what will it produce?

(Critique of the previous explanation. The action doesn't last until its consequences, and it doesn't not last either..)

\ ###

\ 7.

\ There is fruit (phala) when a process, a sprout, etc., starts from a seed;

\ But without a seed that [process] does not proceed.

(Karma seeds ?)

\ ###
\ 8.
\ Inasmuch as the process is dependent on a seed and the fruit is produced from the process,
\ The fruit, presupposing the seed, neither comes to an end nor is eternal.

(There is continuity of a process.)

\ ###
\ 9.
\ There is a product (phala) when a mental process starts from a thoughts;
\ But without a thought that [process] does not proceed.

(The origin of karma is the motive.)

\ ###
\ 10.
\ Inasmuch as the process is dependent on a thought and the product (phala) is produced from the process,
\ The product, presupposing the thought, neither comes to an end nor is eternal.

(The process continues.)

\ ###
\ 11.
\ The ten pure "paths of action" are means for realizing the dharma.
\ And the five qualities of desired objects [i.e., desire to know the form, sound, odor, taste, and touch of existence]
\ are fruits (phala) of the dharma both now and after death.

(There are ten absolute wholesome actions that have real benefits in the form of objects of the realm of desire for the next rebirths.)

L4: [A third opponent argues for an imperishable element:]

Action/karma is like a debt
--> ACTION/KARMA --> FRUITS
the action/karma is real, and indestructible.

\ ###
\ 12.
\ There would be many great mistakes if that explanation [were accepted].
\ Therefore, that explanation is not possible.

(Critique of the previous explanation.)

\ ###
\ 13.
\ In rebuttal I will explain the interpretation which can be made to fit [the facts],
\ That which is followed by the Buddha, the self-sufficient enlightened ones (pratyekabuddha) and the disciples [of Buddha].

\ 14.

\ As "that which is imperishable" is like a credit [on an account statement], so an action (karma) is like a debt.

\ [The imperishable is] of four kinds in its elements (dhatu) [i.e., desire, form, non-form, and pure];

\ in its essential nature it cannot be analyzed.

\ ###

\ 15.

\ [An imperishable force] is not destroyed qua destruction; rather it is destroyed according to spiritual discipline.

\ Therefore, the fruit of actions originates by the imperishable force.

\ 16.

\ If [the imperishable force] were that which is destroyed by [usual] destruction or by transference of action,

\ Fallacies [like] the destruction of action would logically result.

\ 17.

\ At the moment of transition that [imperishable force]

\ Of all identical and different actions belonging to the same element (dhatu) originates.

\ ###

\ 18.

\ That [imperishable force] is the dharma, having arisen by one action after another in visible existence;

\ And it remains [constant] even in the development of all bifurcating action.

\ 19.

\ That [imperishable force] is destroyed by death and by avoiding the product (phala) .

\ There the difference is characterized as impure and pure.

\ 20.

\ "Emptiness," "no annihilation," existence-in-flux, "non-eternity,"

\ And the imperishable reality of action: such was the teaching taught by the Buddha.

L3: [Nagarjuna's answers]

L4: [Inherent actions would imply no utility for any morality]

\ ###

\ [Nagarjuna refutes the above arguments:]

\ 21.

\ Why does the action not originate?

\ Because it is without self-existence.

\ Since it does not originate, it does not perish.

(EMPTINESS OF THE ACTION: As seen in section 2, the action is empty of inherent existence because dependently originated. There is no real origination, duration and cessation of an action. There is no absolute wholesome or unwholesome actions.)

\ ###

\ 22.

\ If an action did exist as a self-existent thing, without a doubt, it would be eternal.

\ An action would be an unproduced thing; certainly, there is no eternal thing which is produced.

(AN UNPRODUCED INHERENT ACTION? : An inherently existing action would be independent of any causes and conditions, and would be eternal. It would then be unproduced and having no effect. This would be completely incompatible with dependent origination.)

\ ###

\ 23.

\ If the action were not produced, then there could be the fear attaining something from "something not produced";

\ Then the opposite to a saintly discipline would follow as a fallacy.

(THIS WOULD BE INCOMPATIBLE WITH MORALITY: Inherently existing actions would be incompatible with the need for morality.)

\ ###

\ 24.

\ Then, undoubtedly, all daily affairs would be precluded.

\ And even the distinction between saints and sinners is not possible.

(THIS WOULD MEAN THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE AT ALL BETWEEN PURE AND IMPURE.)

\ ###

\ 25.

\ Then an act whose development had taken place would develop again,

\ If an act, because it persists, exists through its own nature.

(IT WOULD BE TOTAL CHAOS.)

L4: [No absolute wholesome or unwholesome actions and their fruits]

\ ###

\ 26.

\ An action is that whose "self" (atman) is desire, and the desires do not really exist.

\ If these desires do not really exist, how would the action really exist?

(NO REAL DESIRES, NO REAL ACTIONS: In section 6, the emptiness of desires and the one who desires have been demonstrated. If there is no real desires, then there is no real actions motivated by them.)

\ ###

\ 27.

\ Action and desire are declared to be the conditioning cause of the body.

\ If action and desire are empty, what need one say about "body"?

(THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE WHOLESOME OR UNWHOLESOME ACTIONS AND THEIR FRUITS: In section 1, the emptiness of causes, causality and effects have been demonstrated. So if the empty desires

and actions are the conditioning causes, and the body is the effect, then the body is also empty of inherent existence. So the whole cycle of motive, action, karma, and results of karma is an empty cycle.)

MOTIVE (DESIRE ...) --> ACTIONS --> FRUITS (BODY ...)

ALL EMPTY

L4: [Emptiness of the whole chain of karma and its fruits]

\ ###
\ 28.
\ [An opponent tries to establish an identifiable entity by saying:]
\ The man shrouded in ignorance, and chained by craving (trsna)
\ Is one who seeks enjoyment. He is not different from the one who acts, nor identical to it.

\ 29.
\ [Nagarjuna answers:]
\ Since action is not "originated presupposing the conditions" nor fails to arise from presupposing the conditions,
\ There is no one acting.

(NO REAL DOER: In section 2, the emptiness of the doer, the action, and the object of the action, were demonstrated. The doer before, during and after the action is not the same, nor different. The doer is not inherently existing, not completely non-existing, not both, not neither.)

\ ###
\ 30.
\ If there is no action, how could there be one who acts and the product of action?
\ And if there is no product, how can there be an enjoyer of the product?

(NO REAL FRUITS, NO REAL ENJOYMENT OF THE FRUITS: In section 2, it has been shown that there

is no real origination of any action; thus no real duration, and ending of an action, If there is no real action, then there is no real subject of the action, and no real object of the action. And if there is no object of the action, then nobody can enjoy it.)

L4: [The whole chain is like a magical trick]

\ ###
\ 31.
\ Just as a teacher, by his magical power, formed a magical form,
\ And this magical form formed again another magical form—

\ 32.
\ Just so the "one who forms" is himself being formed magically; and the act performed by him
\ Is like a magical form being magically formed by another magical form.

\ 33.
\ Desires, actions, bodies, producers, and products
\ Are like a fairy castle, resembling a mirage, a dream.

(A FLOW OF INTERDEPENDENCE WITHOUT ANY INHERENT ENTITIES IN IT: The whole chain of karma and its fruits is like a cascade of illusions.)

L2: [Section 18 - An Analysis of the Individual Self (atma) (the self and phenomena) – 12 – [Nirvana is realizing the non-dual nature of the self and everything, beyond causality, production, conceptualization, or the four extremes]]

(RÉSUMÉ:

- The self is not the same nor different than the five aggregates
- There is no preexistent owner of the five aggregates, no possessions.
- There is no empty self.
- When all actions based on the belief of inherent existence stops, there is no more actions based on ignorance, no more self-conditioning, no more becoming, no more consequential suffering.
- The self is not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither.
- This real non-dual nature is beyond causality, conceptualization, direct perception, discrimination, existence and non-existence.
- Everything is empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen. These two truths are interdependent, inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. This is called the perfect Union of The Two truths.
- This absolute non-dual nature of everything is not added to everything, it is not a characteristic or a product, it is not a view, or another adapted skillful means. We use words to point toward it, but no words can describe it.)

L3: [The real nature of the self]

- \ ###
- \ 1.
- \ If the individual self (atma) were [identical to] the "groups" (skandha), then it would partake of origination and destruction.
- \ If [the individual self] were different from the "groups," then it would be without the characteristics of the "groups."

(THE SELF IS NOT THE SAME NOR DIFFERENT THAN THE FIVE AGGREGATES: When sought, there is no self within the five aggregates, nor outside of the aggregated.)

- \ ###
- \ 2.
- \ If the individual self does not exist, how then will there be something which is "my own"?
- \ There is lack of possessiveness and no ego on account of the cessation of self and that which is "my own."

(THERE IS NO PREEXISTENT OWNER OF THE FIVE AGGREGATES: Since a self without the five aggregates is not possible, then there is no permanent owner of the five aggregates of each rebirth. So there is no ownership as demonstrated in section 9 about ownership of the six

senses. There is no real me, myself and my stuff.)

\ ###

\ 3.

\ He who is without possessiveness and who has no ego — He, also, does not exist.

\ Whoever sees "he who is without possessiveness" or "he who has no ego" [really] does not see.

(EMPTINESS OF EMPTINESS: There is no empty self, or self without possessions.)

L3: [The result of seeing the real non-dual nature of self and everything]

\ ###

\ 4.

\ When "I" and "mine" have stopped, then also there is not an outside nor an inner self.

\ The "acquiring" [of karma] (upadana) is stopped; on account of that destruction, there is destruction of verse existence.

(WHEN ALL ACTIONS BASED ON THE BELIEF OF INHERENT EXISTENCE STOPS: The self and the world

are not different, not the same. They are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. So there is no absolute basis for discrimination or non-discrimination. Nothing pure or impure in absolute terms. Nothing to do, or not do in absolute terms. From this the uncontrolled self-conditioning stops, and the consequential suffering stops.

-- But that doesn't mean that all actions stops, it just mean that all actions based on ignorance stops. An action based on the wisdom realizing the real non-dual nature of everything is a Buddha activity. Emptiness doesn't deny dependent origination. One has to be perfectly united with the other, as they have always been: inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.)

\ ###

\ 5.

\ On account of the destruction of the pains (klesa) of action there is release for pains of action exist for him who constructs them.

\ These pains result from phenomenal extension (prapanca); but this phenomenal extension comes to a stop by emptiness.

(When actions based on ignorance of the real non-dual nature of everything stops their consequential suffering stops. This what is called Nirvana. And there is no self in there.)

L3: [Provisional and definitive teachings about the self]

L4: [Beyond the two extremes]

\ ###

\ 6.

\ There is the teaching of "individual self" (atma), and the teaching of "non-individual self" (anatma);

\ But neither "individual self" nor "non-individual self" whatever has been taught by the Buddhas.

(THE MIDDLE WAY BETWEEN AN INHERENT SELF AND A COMPLETELY NON-EXISTENT SELF: As seen in

section 15, some teachings are provisional, and some teachings are definitive. One has to be able to make the distinction between the two. The teachings that talk about an individual self, absolute wholesome and unwholesome action and their consequences, the Wheel of Life, the strict law of Dependent Origination, etc, are provisional teachings for those not ready for the teachings of emptiness. The teachings of no individual self are also provisional teachings. The Sutras that teach the need to stay away from both extremes are of the second kind: definitive meaning teachings. In that sense the Buddha has never taught anything because any view is necessarily based on either inherent existence, non-existence, both, or neither. The definitive teachings about the Middle Way prone to stay away from all four extremes.)

L4: [Beyond conceptualization]

\ ###

\ 7.

\ When the domain of thought has been dissipated, "that which can be stated" is dissipated.

\ Those things which are unoriginated and not terminated, like nirvana, constitute the Truth (dharmata).

(BEYOND ALL CONCEPTUALIZATION IS NIRVANA: All views, all statements based on "subject, verb,

object", all conceptions based on causality, all views based on existence, non-existence, both, or neither, are all empty of inherent existence. That was demonstrated in the previous chapters. All trio subject, verb, complement, are interdependent, inseparable, non-dual. The real nature of everything cannot be described using conceptualization. It has to be directly seen by directly seeing the real nature of our own mind, and thus of everything, in the present, without conceptualization. Once we directly see this, then it is like what we call Nirvana.

-- But that doesn't mean that all conceptualization are "bad", that we should drop them all, reject them. That would be jumping to the other extreme. Nothing is good, or bad in absolute terms. There is nothing to do or not do in absolute terms. We just have to see the real nature of even conceptualization. Conceptualizing with ignorance is binding; conceptualizing with wisdom is Buddha speech. That is the meaning of the union of the Two Truths: dependent origination, and emptiness.)

L4: [Beyond accepting or rejecting the four extremes]

\ ###

\ 8.

\ Everything is "actual" (tathyam) or "not-actual," or both "acts actual-and-not-actual,"

\ Or "neither-actual-nor-not-actual":

\ This is the teaching of the Buddha.

(CONVENTIONAL TRUTHS / ADAPTED SKILLFUL MEANS: The absolute nature of everything is beyond

any conceptualization, it cannot be described or taught like any other ordinary knowledge. So the Buddha uses adapted skillful means to help all sentient beings stuck with their own obsessions and fears. Views based on any of the four extremes are then used depending on the particular situations. Conventional truths, when used with the wisdom realizing the

emptiness of the three, become Buddha teachings. There is no “bad” conceptualization, just conceptualization with ignorance or with wisdom. But even that cannot be really described with conceptualization.)

\ ###
\ 9.
\ "Not caused by something else," "peaceful," "not elaborated by discursive thought,"
\ "Indeterminate," "undifferentiated": such are the characteristics of true reality (tattva).

(ABSOLUTE TRUTH: But the real non-dual nature of everything is beyond causality (section 1), beyond conceptualization (section 2), beyond any perceptions or discrimination (section 3), non-dual. It is beyond the four extremes of existence, non-existence, both, neither.)

But "true reality" is beyond those four possibilities (the Tetralemma)
Beyond mental constructions, discriminations, beyond description, without the stress of origination and cessation.

L4: [The union of dependent origination and emptiness]

\ ###
\ 10.
\ Whatever exists, being dependent [on something else], is certainly not identical to that [other thing],
\ Nor is a thing different from that; therefore, it is neither destroyed nor eternal.

(EVERYTHING IS EMPTY OF INHERENT EXISTENCE BECAUSE DEPENDENTLY ORIGINATED:
Cause and effect
are not the same, not different. Nothing really originates, last, is being transformed, or ceases. Nothing exist and change. Nothing stays the same even for an infinitesimal moment. –
The two truths: dependent origination and emptiness are mutually supportive, inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.)

\ ###
\ 11.
\ The immortal essence of the teaching of the Buddhas, the lords of the world, is
\ Without singleness or multiplicity; it is not destroyed nor is it eternal.

(THIS IS NOT A PRODUCT: This absolute non-dual nature of everything beyond any conceptualization is not something added to everything; it is not the characteristic of everything. It is not another fabricated view, another adapted skillful means. It is beyond existence and non-existence, beyond causality space & time, beyond everything. So it cannot be destroyed.)

\ ###
\ 12.
\ If fully-developed Buddhas do not arise [in the world] and the disciples [of the Buddha] disappear,
\ Then, independently, the knowledge of the self-produced enlightened ones (pratyekabuddha) is produced.

(IT IS NOT DEPENDENT ON ANYTHING (OR INDEPENDENT): This same absolute non-dual nature of everything beyond any conceptualization can be discovered by any being in any realms who seeks the truth until he discovers it.)

L1: [ELEMENTS OF A DISCRETE MODEL]

- 1. time,
- 2. the harmony existing between the elements constituting a phenomenon,
- 3. and the occurrence (appearance) and dissolution of such composite phenomena.

L2: [Section 19 - An Analysis of Time (kala) (time) – 6 – [No real space-time limits of anything, no real space or time]]

(RÉSUMÉ:

- Past, present and future are evidently defined in interdependence. Those are relative terms even conventionally. We always assume “the past before something”, “the future after something”, “the present simultaneous with something”. And when it is not explicitly mentioned it is assumed relative to the actual existence.
- The interdependence of past, present and future can also be shown using the analysis of the interdependence of cause and effect as described in section 1. Cause and effect cannot be the same or different.
- We have already seen in section 11, An Analysis of the Past (purva) and Future Limits (aparakiti) [of Existence], that if there is no limits to the beginning or ending of existence, then there is no “in the middle” of existence.
- We have also seen in section 2 and 7, that there is no real origination, no real, cessation and no real duration / existence of any action or product.
- We have also seen in section 5, that there is no absolute space existing independently of its defining characteristic.
- In the present section, the question of the space-time limits of anything is examined.
- There cannot be any before, after or in the middle (in space or time) of anything empty of inherent existence. And since space and time are dependent on things for their definition, then space and time are empty of inherent existence.)

L3: [Emptiness of the 3 times because of interdependence]

\ ###
\ 1.
\ If "the present" and "future" exist presupposing "the past,"
\ "The present" and "future" will exist in "the past."

(THE EFFECT (PRESENT & FUTURE) IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE CAUSE (PAST) -- THE SAME. If the effect exists presupposing the cause, then the effect would exist in the cause. If we assume the effect exist because there is an absolute cause for it, then the effect must be included in the cause. But if they were the same or simultaneous then there would be no need to cause the effect again.)

\ ###

\ 2.
\ If "the present" and "future" did not exist there [in "the past"],
\ How could "the present" and "future" exist presupposing that "past?"

(THE EFFECT (PRESENT & FUTURE) IS NOT NOT-INCLUDED IN THE CAUSE (PAST) --
DIFFERENT: If the

effect did not exist at all in the cause, the how could the effect be similar to the cause?
If they were completely different, then it would mean that anything can cause anything.)

\ ###
\ 3.
\ Without presupposing "the past" the two things ["the present" and "future"]
cannot be proved to exist.
\ Therefore neither present nor future time exist.

(THE EFFECT (PRESENT & FUTURE) IS EMPTY OF INHERENT EXISTENCE BECAUSE
DEPENDENT ON THE CAUSE

(PAST): The effect is necessarily dependent on the cause; there is no effect without a cause
(not different). But this dependence is not absolute (not the same). And since the effect is
dependent on the cause it is empty of inherent existence.)

\ ###
\ 4.
\ In this way the remaining two [times] can be inverted.

(THE CAUSE (PAST) IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE EFFECT (PRESENT & FUTURE) -- THE SAME. If
the cause
exists presupposing the effect, then the cause would exist in the effect. If we assume the
cause exist because there is an absolute effect of it, then the cause must be included in
the effect. But if they were the same then there would be no need for a cause again.

THE CAUSE (PAST) IS NOT NOT-INCLUDED IN THE EFFECT (PRESENT & FUTURE) -- THE
SAME. If the
cause did not exist at all in effect, the how could the cause be similar to the effect? If
they were completely different, then it would mean that anything can be caused by anything.

THE CAUSE (PAST) IS EMPTY OF INHERENT EXISTENCE BECAUSE DEPENDENT ON THE
CAUSE (PRESENT &
FUTURE): The cause is necessarily dependent on the effect; there is no cause without a
effect (not different). But this dependence is not absolute (not the same). And since the
cause is dependent on the effect it is empty of inherent existence

NON-DUALITY OF THE THREE TIMES: The three times are interdependent like that. They are
empty
of inherent existence because interdependent. They are not the same, not different. They are
inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. They are co-dependently arisen concepts.)

L3: [Emptiness of any space-time limits]

\ ###
\ Thus one would regard "highest," "lowest" and "middle," etc., as oneness and
difference. (or "after," "before" and "middle", or "right," "left" and "middle" ...)

(If "the middle" and "highest" exist presupposing "the lowest,"

"The middle" and "highest" will exist in "the lowest."

If "the middle" and "highest" did not exist there [in "the lowest"],

How could "the middle" and "highest" exist presupposing that "lowest?"

Without presupposing "the lowest" the two things ["the middle" and "highest"] cannot be proved to exist.

Therefore neither middle nor highest exist.

In this way the remaining two can be inverted.)

(NO PRECISE SPACE-TIME LIMITS OF ANYTHING: Like there is no subject, verb, or complement without the other two, there is no after, before, or middle (in any direction of space or time) without the other two.

-- There is no before, after, or middle in time of any action or phenomenon. There is no before, after, or in the middle in space of any object. There is no bellow, on top, or in the middle in space of any object. The extreme space-time limits of anything, in any direction, cannot be found.

-- The exact time of the origination, or cessation, of any action or phenomenon cannot be found among the infinite flows of empty causes and effects.

-- The exact spatial boundary of any object cannot be found among all the infinite parts and wholes.

-- Those space-time limits, like the action or object itself, are merely imputed by the mind, empty of inherent existence.)

L3: [No absolute space-time or space-time interval]

\ ###

\ 5.

\ A non-stationary "time" cannot be "grasped"; and a stationary "time" which can be grasped does not exist.

\ How, then, can one perceive time if it is not "grasped"?

(WE CANNOT DIRECTLY PERCEIVE AN ABSOLUTE SPACE-TIME OR SPACE-TIME INTERVAL.

To deduce time

we need at least two moments of consciousness; but those two moments cannot perceive each other and establish an inter-moment entity. And even with space, there is no direct perception of anything as seen in section 3.)

\ ###

\ 6.

\ Since time is dependent on a thing (bhava), how can time [exist] without a thing?

\ There is not any thing which exists; how, then, will time become [something]?

(TIME AND SPACE ARE EMPTY OF INHERENT EXISTENCE BECAUSE DEPENDENT ON THINGS:

Our notion of

space-time is dependent on our notions of things. There is no space-time without making a reference to the beginning of something, or its ending, or its duration/length. There is no space-time without a thing; and no thing without a space-time.

THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE BASIS FOR SPACE-TIME OR SPACE-TIME INTERVAL THAT COULD BE DIRECTLY

OBSERVED: There is no absolute basis to define space-time or a space-time duration/length. A precise space-time would be dependent on the beginning (in space or time) of something, but we have seen in section 2 and 7 that there is no real origination of any action or product,

so we cannot define a precise time on that basis. Also, if there is no real origination, there is no real cessation and no real duration; so we cannot define an absolute time duration on this basis. And otherwise time is not directly perceptible. The same for the space coordinates.)

L2: [Section 20 - An Analysis of the Aggregate (samagri) of Causes and Conditions (cause and effect) - 24]

L3: [A real product (self) cannot emerge from its aggregate of causes and conditions, nor from another]

(AN EMERGING SELF?: Suppose the self is the result of the aggregation of our five aggregates of clinging, like a new emerging level of reality, like a whole that is more than the aggregate of its parts.)

\ ###
\ 1.
\ If a product (phala) is produced through the aggregate of causes and conditions,
\ And exists in an aggregate, how will it be produced in the aggregate?

(NO SELF-EMERGING ENTITY RESIDING IN THE PARTS: Instead of having just one cause causing one effect like in section 1, here we have an aggregate of multiple causes and conditions resulting in a new emerging product. Can the aggregate of causes and conditions result in a new emerging self? -- Like there is no real effect caused by a real cause, there is no real product emerging from a real aggregate, and residing in the aggregate.)

\ ###
\ 2.
\ If a product is produced in the aggregate of causes and conditions,
\ And does not exist in the aggregate, how will it be produced in the aggregate?

(NO OTHER-EMERGING RESIDING OUTSIDE OF THE PARTS: Like there is no real effect caused by a real cause, there is no real product emerging from a real aggregate, and not residing in the aggregate.)

\ ###
\ 3.
\ If the product is in the aggregate of causes and conditions,
\ Would it not be "grasped" [i.e., located] in the aggregate? But it is not "grasped" in the aggregate.

(THE PRODUCT IS NOT IN THE CAUSING PARTS – THE SAME: When sought, the product is not found in the aggregate. Like the whole is not inside of its parts.)

\ ###
\ 4.
\ If the product is not in the aggregate of causes and conditions,

\ Then the causes and conditions would be the same as non-causes and non-conditions.

(THE PRODUCT IS NOT OUTSIDE OF THE CAUSING PARTS -- DIFFERENT: When sought, the product is not found outside of the aggregates. Like the whole is not outside of its parts.)

L3: [A cause and the product cannot be simultaneous, nor separate in time]

\ ###

\ 5.

\ If a cause, having given the cause for a product, is stopped,

\ Then that which is "given" and that which is stopped would be two identities of the cause.

(NO INDIRECT CAUSING THROUGH AN INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN THE CAUSE AND EFFECT:

A participating

cause cannot be active while the effect is present otherwise it would continue to participate. So the cause and the effect cannot be simultaneous. On the other hand, the participating cause and the effect cannot be separate in time otherwise the participation will have no direct link with the effect. As for an indirect participation through an intermediary "token to cause" that would bridge the gap between the two separated cause and effect, that doesn't make sense either because then that token would be the new produced cause and the problem would still remain.)

\ ###

\ 6.

\ If a cause without having given the cause for a product is stopped

\ Then, the cause being stopped, the product would be produced as something derived from a non-cause (ahetuka).

(On the other hand, if the participating cause is stopped before the effect, without having found a way to contribute, then it will be too late. The effect would be without this cause.)

L3: [The aggregate and the product cannot be simultaneous, nor separate in time]

\ ###

\ 7.

\ If the product would become visible concomitantly with the aggregate [of causes and conditions],

\ Then it would logically follow that the producer and that which is produced [exist] in the same moment.

(THE PRODUCT CANNOT BE CONCOMITANT WITH THE AGGREGATION OF THE CAUSES AND CONDITIONS:

Otherwise they would be the same.)

\ ###

\ 8.

\ If the product would become visible before the aggregate,

\ Then the product, without being related to causes and conditions, would be something derived from a non-cause.

(THE PRODUCT CANNOT BE SEPARATE IN TIME AND BEFORE THE AGGREGATION OF THE CAUSES AND CONDITIONS. There is no effect without a cause.)

L3: [A cause doesn't stay the same, nor change into something different]

\ ###

\ 9.

\ If, when the cause of the product is stopped, there would be a continuation of the cause,

\ It would logically follow that there would be another production of the previous producing cause.

(THE CAUSE CANNOT CONTINUE TO BE THE SAME BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE CAUSING, otherwise it will still continue to cause after the production of the effect..)

\ ###

\ 10.

\ How can that which is stopped, i.e., something which has disappeared, produce the arising of a product?

(THE CAUSE CANNOT BE DIFFERENT BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE CAUSING, otherwise there would be no continuity.)

L3: [The product is not caused by its parts or by other parts]

\ ###

\ How could a cause which is enclosed by its product, even though it persists, originate [that product]?

(A part of the product cannot be one of its cause.)

\ ###

\ 11.

\ Or if that [cause] were not enclosed by the product, which product would it produce?

\ For the cause does not produce the product, having seen or not having seen [the product].

(A non-part of the product cannot be one of its cause.)

\ ###

\ 12.

\ There is no concomitance of a past product with a past cause, a future [cause] or present [cause].

\ ###

\ 13.

\ Certainly there is no concomitance of the present product with future cause, past [cause] or present [cause].

\ ###

\ 14.

\ Certainly there is no concomitance of a future product with a present cause,
future [cause] or past [cause].

(??? A product in any of the three times, could never be concomitant with a cause in any of
the three times.)

\ ###

\ 15.

\ If there is no concomitance whatever, how would the cause produce the product?

\ Or if a concomitance exists, how would the cause produce the product?

(A cause and the product be never be concomitant (simultaneous) or separate in time.)

L3: [There is no real origination, nor cessation of a product]

\ ###

\ 16.

\ If the cause is empty of a product, how would it produce the product?

\ If the cause is not empty of a product, how would it produce the product?

(The cause is not absolute. The cause doesn't include the product, nor does it exclude the
product.)

\ ###

\ 17.

\ A non-empty product would not be originated, [and] a non-empty [product] would
not be destroyed.

\ Then that is non-empty which will not originate or not disappear.

(There is no real origination, no real cessation of a real product.)

\ ###

\ 18.

\ How would that be produced which is empty?

\ How would that be destroyed which is empty?

\ It logically follows, then, that which is empty is not originated and not
destroyed.

(There is no real origination, no real cessation of a non-real product.)

(Streng5: Likewise, in conventional speech, sunya (empty) designates that which is beyond
human expression; as such this term indicates the nature of ultimate reality. Because of the
non-substantiality of this ontology, "emptiness" is not used to designate a state of
existence, but rather a condition which precludes a static ontological character. This usage
is exemplified in 20.18:)

L3: [Non-duality]

\ ###

\ 19.

\ Certainly a oneness of cause and product is not possible at all.

\ Nor is a difference of cause and product possible at all.

(NON-DUALITY OF CAUSE AND EFFECT: The cause and effect cannot be the same, or different.

They are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.)

\ ###

\ 20.

\ If there were a oneness of the cause and product, then there would be an identity of the originator and what is originated.

\ If there were a difference of product and cause, then a cause would be the same as that which is not a cause.

(If they were the same there would be no need for production. If they were totally different then there could be no causal link.)

L3: [The Middle Way between existence and non-existence of the three: cause (aggregate), production, product]

\ ###

\ 21.

\ Can a cause produce a product which is essentially existing in itself (svabhava) ?

\ Can a cause produce a product which is not essentially existing in itself (svabhava) ?

(NO INHERENT PRODUCT, NO COMPLETELY NON-EXISTENT PRODUCT: There is no production of a real product, or of a non-real product.)

\ ###

\ 22.

\ It is not possible to have "what is by its nature a cause" (hetutva) of "that which is not producing."

\ If "what is by its nature a cause" is not possible, whose product will exist?

(NO INHERENT CAUSE, NO COMPLETELY NON-EXISTENT CAUSE: There is no production from a real cause, or from a non-real cause.)

\ ###

\ 23.

\ How will that [aggregate of causes and conditions] produce a product when

\ That which is the aggregate of causes and conditions does not produce itself by itself?

(NO FIRST CAUSE: No inherent cause that is not itself dependent on other causes and conditions.)

\ ###

\ 24.

\ The product is not produced by the aggregate;

\ nor is the product not produced by the aggregate.

\ Without the product, how is there an aggregate of conditions?

(NO INHERENT PRODUCTION, NO COMPLETELY NON-EXISTENT PRODUCTION: No inherent production, no complete absence of production either. No inherent cause and effect; but no cause without an effect, and no effect without a cause. One cannot exist without the other. They are empty of

inherent existence because interdependent.)

L2: [Section 21 - An Analysis of Origination (sambhava) and Disappearance (vibhava) (coming to be and passing away) - 21]

(RÉSUMÉ:

- All products are assumed to go through the three stages of becoming: origination, duration, and cessation. This should also apply to the successive moments of a single consciousness.
- The problem is: How to account for the junction between two consecutive moments where the cessation of the cause (the previous moment of consciousness) and the origination of the effect (the next moment of consciousness) should be somehow synchronized in order to assure the continuity of the consciousness stream.
- From the analysis of section 1, it can be shown that cause and effect cannot be the same or simultaneous, nor different or separate in time.
- So there cannot be any gap between the cessation of the preceding cause and the origination of the next effect, nor can there be overlapping.
- What is left ? Nothing. The whole concept of the continuity of a consciousness is flawed. There is continuity but nothing inherently existing in it.
- As seen in sections ... nothing exist and change. It is not the same consciousness that goes from one moment to the other.
- As seen in sections ... there is nothing permanent that goes from one rebirth to the other, or that is finally Liberated.)

L3: [Two consecutive moments cannot be simultaneous or separate in time]

L4: [Cessation of the cause and origination of the effect cannot be simultaneous or separate in time]

- \ ###
- \ 1.
- \ There is no disappearance either with origination or without it.
- \ There is no origination either with disappearance or without it.

(The cessation of the cause and the arising of the effect cannot be simultaneous or separate in time. Death and rebirth cannot be simultaneous or separate in time. Birth and death of the same thing cannot exist independently or in concomitance. There is no death with or without an birth. There is no birth with or without a death.)

- \ ###
- \ 2.
- \ How, indeed, will disappearance exist at all without origination?
- \ [How could there be] death without birth?
- \ There is no disappearance without [prior] origination.

(The cause cannot disappear before the effect, otherwise there would be a cause without an effect, a death without a rebirth. There cannot be death without a birth of the same thing -- independently.)

\ ###

- \ 3.
- \ How can disappearance exist concomitantly with origination?
- \ Since, surely, death does not exist at the same moment as birth.

(The cessation of the cause and the origination of the effect cannot be simultaneous, otherwise there would be death at the same time as the next rebirth.
Death cannot be concomitant with birth of the same thing, since there is no death at the moment of birth.)

- \ ###
- \ 4.
- \ How, indeed, will origination exist at all without disappearance?
- \ For, impermanence does not fail to be found in existent things ever.

(The origination of the effect and the cessation of the cause cannot be separate in time. There is no origination of the effect without the cessation of the cause, no rebirth without the death of the previous.
There is no birth without a death of the same thing -- independently.)

- \ ###
- \ 5.
- \ How can origination exist concomitantly with disappearance?
- \ Since, surely, death does not exist at the same moment as birth.

(The origination of the effect and the cessation of the cause cannot be simultaneous, otherwise there would be rebirth at the same time as the previous death.
Birth cannot be concomitant with death of the same thing, since there is no death at the moment of birth)

- \ ###
- \ 6.
- \ When two things cannot be proved either separately or together,
- \ No proof exists of those two things.
- \ How can these two things be proved?

(So the cause and the effect cannot exist simultaneously or separately. The death and the next rebirth cannot be simultaneous or separate in time. Neither can be proven.
So birth and death of the same thing cannot be proven together (concomitance) or separately (independently).)

L4: [There is no real origination and cessation]

- \ ###
- \ 7.
- \ There is no origination of that which is destructible, nor of that which is not-destructible.
- \ There is no disappearance of that which is destructible nor of that which is non-destructible.

(There is no origination of an impermanent or permanent effect. And no cessation of an impermanent or permanent cause. No death and rebirth of an impermanent or permanent being. If there is no birth of an impermanent thing, there is certainly no birth of a permanent thing. If there is no death of an impermanent thing, there is certainly no death of a

permanent thing.)

- \ ###
- \ 8.
- \ Origination and disappearance cannot exist without an existent thing.
- \ Without origination and disappearance an existent thing does not exist.

(Origination, cessation and duration are interdependent. One cannot exist without the other two. Birth, death and life are interdependent. One cannot exist without the other.)

- \ ###
- \ 9.
- \ Origination and disappearance does not obtain for that which is empty.
- \ Origination and disappearance does not obtain for that which is non-empty.

(There is no origination and cessation of something that has no duration/existence. There is no origination and cessation of something that has real existence. There is no birth and death of something without life. There is no birth and death of something without inherent life.)

- \ ###
- \ 10.
- \ It does not obtain that origination and disappearance are the same thing.
- \ It does not obtain that origination and disappearance are different.

(So two consecutive moments are not the same, not different.
Like cause and effect, birth and death are not the same, not different.)

L4: [There cannot be any real origination and cessation of anything existent, non-existent, both, neither]

- \ ###
- \ 11.
- \ [You argue:] Origination, as well as disappearance, is seen.
- \ [Therefore] it would exist for you.
- \ [But] origination and disappearance are seen due to a delusion.

(There is no direct perception of origination and cessation as stated in the Abhidharma.)

- \ ###
- \ 12.
- \ An existent thing does not originate from [another] thing;
- \ and an existent thing does not originate from a non-existent thing.
- \ Also, a non-existent thing does not originate from another non-existent thing;
- \ and a non-existent thing does not originate from an existent thing.

(THERE CANNOT BE ANY REAL ORIGINATION AND CESSATION OF ANYTHING EXISTENT,
NON-EXISTENT,
BOTH, NEITHER: Cases: real-real, real-non-real, non-real-non-real, non-real-real)

L4: [There is no self-origination, other-origination, both, neither]

- \ ###
- \ 13.

\ An existent thing does not originate either by itself or by something different.
\ Or by itself and something different [at the same time]. How, then, can it be produced?

(EMPTINESS OF THE ORIGINATION: No self-causation of moments of consciousness, other-causation, both, neither.)

L3: [Emptiness doesn't deny the continuity, dependent origination, and the possible Liberation]

\ ###
\ 14.
\ For someone assuming an existent thing, either an eternalistic or nihilistic point of view would logically follow,
\ For that existent thing would be either eternal or liable to cessation.

(Inherent existence would lead to the extremes of eternalism or annihilationism.)

\ ###
\ 15.
\ [An opponent objects:]
\ For someone assuming an existent thing, there is not [only] eternalism or nihilism,
\ Since this is existence: namely, the continuity of the originating and stopping of causes and product.

\ ###
\ 16.
\ [Nagarjuna replies:]
\ If this is existence: namely, the continuity of originating and stopping of causes and product,
\ It would logically follow that the cause is destroyed because the destroyed thing does not originate again.

(On the contrary it is inherent existence that would make dependent origination impossible.)

\ ###
\ 17.
\ If there is self-existence of something which is intrinsically existing, then non-existence does not obtain.
\ At the time of nirvana there is destruction of the cycle of existence (bhavasamtana) as a result of the cessation.

(Inherent existence would make Nirvana impossible.)

L3: [Emptiness of the chain of existence / rebirths]

\ ###
\ 18.
\ If the last [part of existence] is destroyed, the first [part of] existence does not obtain.
\ If the last [part of existence] is not destroyed, the first [part of] existence does not obtain.

(With real death there is no rebirth. With no death at all there is no rebirth.
If death is definitive, there is no rebirth. If death is not definitive, there is no rebirth.)

\ ###
\ 19.
\ If the first [part of existence] were produced while the final part were being destroyed,
\ There would be one thing being destroyed and being produced [both at the same time].

(The cessation of one life and the origination of the next rebirth cannot be simultaneous.
If the death of the previous life were to occur simultaneously with the rebirth of the next life, there would be death and birth simultaneously.)

\ ###
\ 20.
\ If the one "being destroyed" and the one "being produced" cannot exist together,
\ Can someone be produced in those "groups of universal elements" (skandhas) in which he is [also] "dying"?

(Can there be a person be dying and reborn simultaneously?)

\ ###
\ 21.
\ Thus, the chain of existences is not possible in any of the three times [i.e. past, present, and future];
\ And if it does not exist in the three times, how can the chain of existences exist?

(So the chain of rebirths is impossible.)

L1: [ABOUT THE GOAL & ULTIMATE REALITY]

-- The state of a fully completed being - Tathagata -- U.T. is beyond conceptualization (not D.O., not Emptiness)
-- The state of an impure being - errors -- nothing to purify, no right and wrong, everything is pure in emptiness
-- The middle way - the Two Truths -- the duality D.O. and Emptiness, a conventional tool to stay on the razor edge
-- Nirvana - The cessation of accepting everything as real -- samsara and nirvana, not different, not the same
-- The method -- how we are conditioned, and how to break all the conditioning, the wisdom of seeing through
-- Anybody being Liberated ? -- nothing is taking rebirth or being liberated, there is just the flow

Thus, seeing through the cyclic conditioning; all constructions (body, mind, knowledge) are based on ignorance (about self-existence), expecting; but there is just the flow.

L2: [Section 22 - An Analysis of the "Fully Completed" (Tathagata) (the Buddha) - 16]

(RÉSUMÉ:

- So far we have talked about impermanent things, conventional reality.
- What is the nature of the Tathagata, the true nature of the "very final absolute truth" / "the very ultimate reality" ?
- Which concepts, views, can express those ? Dependent Origination or Emptiness or ... ?
- A. Can we use the vocabulary of "Dependent Origination" to express the nature of the Tathagata ?
 - -- He cannot be in the aggregates or outside of the aggregates
 - -- He cannot be dependent or independent of the aggregates
 - -- Nothing is dependent or independent, there is no dependence or independence
- B. Can we use the term "emptiness" to express the nature of the Tathagata ?
 - -- Emptiness itself is empty, a mental fabrications dependent of things being not independent.
- C. Can we answer the questions about the existence or not .. of the Tathagata after death ?
 - -- These questions are "unanswerable" because:
 - -- In emptiness there is no existence, no non-existence, no both, no neither
- D. Can we use any concepts to express the nature of the Tathagata or of the "very final absolute truth"?
 - -- No concepts can express those. All concepts are mental fabrications, dependent, temporary, based on the idea of self-existence and opposition (duality).
 - -- There is no Buddha to describe, no absolute reality behind to describe.
- E. Implicit:
 - -- The "very ultimate truth" is not "Dependent Origination", not "Emptiness", not Both, not some other concepts.
 - -- It is beyond this duality : "Dependent Origination" vs. "Emptiness".
 - -- It is "THE UNION OF THE TWO TRUTHS"
 - -- But both Truths are useful tools to clear up the way for "transcendence".)

L3: [A. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE TATHAGATA ? CAN WE USE DEPENDENT ORIGINATION TO EXPRESS THE TATHAGATA ?]

- \ ###
- \ 1.
- \ That one [who is "fully-completed"] is not the "groups of universal elements" (skandha),
 - \ nor something other than the "groups";
 - \ the "groups" are not in him, nor is he in them;
 - \ The "fully completed" does not possess the "groups."
 - \ What, then, is the "fully completed"?

THE DUALITY "TATHAGATA" vs. "SKANDHAS"

THE TATHAGATA IS NOT THE SAME AS THE SKANDHAS

THE TATHAGATA IS NOT SEPARATE FROM THE SKANDHAS

Could be about the self of the Tathagata. Like in section 18, the self is denied: it cannot be found in the aggregates or outside of the aggregates.

The self is not to be found in the five aggregates, neither without (independent of) the

five aggregates, because it is imputed on the five aggregates. They are not the same. They are not different -- The self doesn't own the aggregates - like most people think

(Jonah Winters: One tendency was to hold that the Tathagata was composed of some substance not found in ordinary unenlightened humans. This propensity to believe that the person's nature underwent some essential transformation upon the achievement of enlightenment was evidenced even in the Buddha's time. The theory was that the soul which is unenlightened partakes of the quality of bondage, and, when this soul becomes free, then its essence shifts to now partake of the quality of freedom. (FOOTNOTE: This notion was likely a product of the influence of Jainism, which believed that the defiling karma is an actual substance that adheres to the soul (jiva).)

Nagarjuna explains clearly that the nature of the Buddha is identical to that of any other person, and it has neither the "quality" of bondage nor the "quality" of freedom. There is no self to be found in either the bound or the freed person; both are composed of nothing but the soulless aggregates, and there is no real self which can be thus qualified. "The Tathagata is neither the aggregates nor different from them. The aggregates are not in him; nor is he in the aggregates. He is not possessed of the aggregates." This definition of the Tathagata is no different than that of any and all persons. Thus, "in such a context, who is a Tathagata?" Karikas XXII.1)

The existence of a self in the Buddha is denied for the same reasons that it is denied in any person. If the Buddha is independent of the aggregates, then he will not evidence their characteristics, e.g. he will not have a body, sensations, or consciousness. If the Buddha depends on the aggregates, then "he does not exist in terms of self-nature."

\ ###

\ 2.

\ If the Buddha exists dependent on the "groups," then he is not "that which exists by itself" (svabbava)

\ And how can he exist as something else (parabhava) ("other-existence") if he is not "that which exists by itself" (svabbava)?

THE DUALITY "TATHAGATA" vs. "SKANDHAS"

-- IS HE DEPENDENT ? (like an effect cause by the skandhas ?)

Being dependent on the skandhas, he would not be self-existing.

Assuming that enlightenment is a change in nature:

To change to other-existence, you have first to exist.

But, since there was never an existent being in the first place, how could he change to something-other?

So there is nothing being dependent on the skandhas.

(Jonah Winters: Further, if his essence were to change upon enlightenment, then he would now have a different, or "other- nature." But, if he does not exist in terms of self-nature, then "how can he exist in terms of other-nature?" Karikas XXII.2)

\ ###

\ 3.

\ That which exists presupposing another existent thing is properly called a "non-individual self" (anatma).

\ How will that which is a non-individual self become the "fully completed"?

If he is "dependent" then he is a "non-individual self" (a group self?)

How could he become a "fully completed" (an individual self -- not composed ?)

\ ###

\ 4.

\ And if there is no self-existence (svabhava), how would it have an "other-existence" (parabhava)?

\ What would that "fully completed" [reality] be without either a self-existence or other-existence?

THE NATURE OF THE TATHAGATA (if he is dependent)

TETRALEMMA: It is not self-existence, it is not other-existence, it is not something else.

\ ###

\ 5.

\ If some kind of "fully completed" [thing] would exist without dependence on the "groups,"

\ It is dependent now; therefore it exists dependent [on something].

\ ###

\ 6.

\ There is no kind of "fully completed" [being] which is not dependent on the "groups."

\ And whatever is not non-dependent—how will it become dependent?

THE DUALITY "TATHAGATA" vs. "SKANDHAS"

-- IS HE INDEPENDENT ? (like an effect without being cause by the skandhas ?)

THE PROBLEM OF THE TRANSITION(S)

Is there a state completely separate from the skandhas, after Enlightenment ?

If there is a very subtle Buddha nature independent of the aggregates, that exist before, during and after samsara.

But it is dependent on the aggregates in samsara.

How could it switch from independence to dependence ... ?

Or, if after being dependent, he becomes independent with enlightenment. Then enlightenment is dependent on this previous state.

And if he is an effect without a cause, how will he be produced ?

So there is nothing independent of the skandhas

(Jonah Winters: As all that exists is ruled by the process of dependent arising, one cannot say that the Tathagata has an independent and transcendent existential status. Even though the Buddha has ceased to grasp on to the aggregates, "he should still depend upon them in the present. As such he will be dependent... There exists no Tathagata independent of the aggregates." Karikas XXII.5-6)

\ ###

\ 7.

\ There is nothing whatever that is dependent on [the "groups"]

\ and there is no thing whatever on which something does not depend.

\ There would not exist in any way a "fully completed" [being] without being dependent on [the "groups"].

There is no effect (Tathagata) that is dependent (caused) on the skandhas.
And there is no real skandhas.
Like, the effect of emptiness is emptiness.
But the effect (Tathagata) is not without cause (skandhas)

\ ###
\ 8.
\ That [fully completed being] which does not exist by its actual reality (tattva)
\ or by some other reality (anyatva) according to the five-fold examination—
\ How is the "fully completed" [being] perceived by being dependent?

THE DUALITY "TATHAGATA" vs. "SKANDHAS"
THE NATURE OF THE TATHAGATA
THEN WHAT ?

The effect (Tathagata) is not self-caused, or other-caused (like from the skandhas).
Then what?

\ ###
\ 9.
\ So when there is dependence, self-existence does not exist;
\ And if there is no self-existence whatever, how is an other-existence possible?

\ ###
\ 10.
\ Thus "dependence" and "that which is dependent" are completely empty (sunya) .

In resume:
Because there is dependence, there is no self-existence.
And if there is no self-existence, there cannot be other-existence.
Then nothing is dependent, and there is no dependence, no independence.

Thus, we cannot use the vocabulary of "Dependent Origination" to express the nature of the Tathagata.
Dependent Origination is not the "very final absolute truth" because it is empty, merely words.

L3: [B. CAN WE USE "EMPTINESS" TO EXPRESS THE TATHAGATA ?]

Can we use the term "emptiness" to express the nature of the Tathagata ?

Answer:

-- First emptiness is empty; it is just a mental fabrications dependent on "thing being not independent"
-- Thus, we cannot use the vocabulary of "Emptiness" to express the nature of the Tathagata.
-- Being empty is not the "very final absolute truth" because it is empty, merely words.

\ ###
\ How is that empty "fully completed one" known through that which is empty?

\ ###
\ 11.
\ One may not say that there is "emptiness" (sunya) (1)
\ nor that there is non-emptiness. (2)"
\ Nor that both [exist simultaneously] (3),

\ nor that neither exists (4);
\ the purpose for saying ["emptiness"] is for the purpose of conveying knowledge.

Answer: Nop! Emptiness too is empty. It is just a tool.

SO EMPTINESS CANNOT BE USED TO DESCRIBE THE TATHAGATA.

No, emptiness is not the cause (Path) or the result (Tathagata); we are using "emptiness" as an antidote only. Emptiness is not the Tathagata, not the Ultimate Truth. It is a conventional truth.

-- emptiness is the antidote to inherent-existence or Eternalism ?

-- dependent origination (there are two ways) is the antidote to Nihilism ?

(Streng: In verses 10, 11, and 14 of this chapter we see that the terms "empty" and "emptiness" are used to denote the Tathagata; yet, to avoid any interpretation of a substantial reality in emptiness, verse 11 emphatically states that "emptiness" is simply a designation for conveying knowledge.)

L3: [C. WHAT CAN WE USE TO EXPRESS THE TATHAGATA ?]

(Streng5: The next six verses (including the previous one) in Chapter xxii deny that any term, including "empty," can properly express the truth of the Buddha if it is used in an absolute way, for the terms do not refer to qualities- or substances-in -themselves. What human beings designate as the Tathagata actually is what human beings also designate as "the world"; and this truth must be realized before one can perceive the "fully attained.")

(Streng: Verses 12-16 indicate that no definition reveals the Tathagata, not because the Tathagata is some absolute reality standing aloof and unrelated to human activity, but because the Tathagata precludes - prevent - the thought of inherent ultimacy from arising. The final three verses summarize this position)

\ ###
\ 12.
\ How, then, will "eternity," "non-eternity," and [the rest of] the Tetralemma apply to bliss (santa)?
\ How, then, will "the end," "without end," and [the rest of] the Tetralemma apply to bliss?

\ ###
\ 13.
\ That image of nirvana [in which] the Buddha (Tathagata) either "is" or "is not"—
\ By him who [so imagines nirvana] the notion is crudely grasped.

THE NATURE OF THE TATHAGATA ?

Can we use the following concepts to express the nature of the Tathagata:

- Gone from non-eternity to eternal bliss.
- The end of suffering without end.
- He is in Nirvana. He is not in samsara.

All of those questions presuppose the existence of something, or the non-existence of something else. But according to emptiness, nothing is, or is not, or both, or neither.

(Jonah Winters: This is not to say that the Buddha has a self which exists even in the present. Having abandoned grasping and soul-theorizing, it is only the external appearance of him which exists. It is grasping which causes the aggregates to continue coming together

in life after life, grasping for self-assertion, for sense-fulfillments, and for continued existence. Since the Buddha has become enlightened by virtue of having released his tendency to grasp, he no longer believes that there is a self comprising him in the present, and so he knows that he will not exist after death, either. It is only, Nagarjuna says, the misguided drive to attribute reality to the objects of grasping, the grasping itself, and the one who grasps that embroils the ignorant person in the tangle of existence-theorizing. It is only this misguided person, "firmly insisting that a Tathagata 'exists' or 'does not exist,'" who ascribes a present or posthumous existence to the Buddha. Karikas XXII.13)

\ ###

\ 14.

\ Concerning that which is empty by its own nature (svabhava), the thoughts do not arise that:

\ The Buddha "exists" or "does not exist" after death.

THE NATURE OF THE TATHAGATA ?

THE EXISTENCE OR NOT OF THE TATHAGATA ?

A FEW OF THE "UNANSWERABLES"

There questions are unanswerable because:

In emptiness: there is no existence, no non-existence, no both, or neither

Note: They are referred to as the Avyakṛta, the "Unanswerables," or the "questions which tend not to edification." ... The questions represent the most basic and deepest insecurities held by unenlightened persons, and all stem ultimately from a belief in the self and a fear of its dissolution.

Cula-Malunkya Sutta (MN 63) -- The Shorter Instructions to Malunkya. Ven. Malunkya puts the Buddha to the test, threatening to disrobe unless the Buddha answers all his speculative metaphysical questions.

Using the famous simile of a man shot by a poison arrow, the Buddha reminds him that some questions are simply not worth asking.

These positions that are undisclosed, set aside, discarded by the Blessed One

-- "The cosmos is eternal,"

-- "The cosmos is not eternal,"

-- "The cosmos is finite,"

-- "The cosmos is infinite,"

-- "The soul & the body are the same,"

-- "The soul is one thing and the body another,"

-- "After death a Tathagata exists,"

-- "After death a Tathagata does not exist,"

-- "After death a Tathagata both exists & does not exist,"

-- "After death a Tathagata neither exists nor does not exist" --

The other "Unanswerables," are covered in section 27 on Views.

\ ###

\ 15.

\ Those who describe in detail the Buddha, who is unchanging and beyond all detailed description—

\ Those, completely defeated by description, do not perceive the "fully completed" [being].

THE NATURE OF THE TATHAGATA ?

We cannot use the vocabulary of "Dependent Origination" to express the nature of the Tathagata.

We cannot use the vocabulary of "Emptiness" to express the nature of the Tathagata.

We cannot use any vocabulary to express the nature of the Tathagata.

There is no view that can express the nature of the Tathagata or the "very final absolute truth" because it is beyond words.

All words express some self-existence, some duality, some transformation of one reality to another, that is the role of words. But they are just words, mental fabrications, dependent and temporary.

(Jonah Winters: That is, even though the Buddha no longer falsely believes that he exists, it is still possible for those who do imagine reality to attribute an existence to him.

Nagarjuna explains that these people are seeing nothing more than a figment of their imaginations. "Those who generate obsessions with great regard to the Buddha..., all of them, impaired by obsessions, do not perceive the Tathagata." Karikas XXII.15))

\ ###

\ 16.

\ The self-existence of the "fully completed" [being] is the self-existence of the world.

\ The "fully completed" [being] is without self-existence [and] the world is without self-existence.

There is a duality: "fully completed one" vs. "the world".

One is non-dependent, eternal, non finite, eternally blissful.

The other is dependent, impermanent, finite, cycling in suffering.

They are not two real opposites; they are two mental constructions based on each other.

That is the way the mind operates.

L2: [Section 23 - An Analysis of Errors (viparyasa) (the perverted views) - 25]

(RÉSUMÉ:

-- Opponent: ignorance --> errors, perversion --> klesa, defilements, impurities, desire, hatred, delusion, ...

-- But

-- But all is empty: objects, judgment values, notions, errors, klesa, someone in error, making an error

-- -- Men characterize things, beings and processes as :

-- -- right vs. wrong, salutary vs. unsalutary, pleasant vs. unpleasant, good vs. bad (in essence) ...

-- -- subjective value judgments, discriminatory judgments, duality thinking - always opposing concepts.

-- But nothing is essentially good or bad. So there is no right or wrong about that.

-- EVERYTHING IS PURE (in emptiness)

-- But men think some things are pure, some impure, so they hold views on right and wrong, desire purity, hate impurity, ignore true nature, build, fight ... suffer.

-- The problem is not the perversions (vs. the Path), but the discrimination, the value judgments, the buying into the dualities, the belief in self-existence.)

\ ###

\ 1.

\ It is said that desire (raga), hate, and delusion are derived from mental fabrication (samkalpa),

\ Because they come into existence presupposing errors as to what is salutary and unsalutary.

THE DUALITY CAUSE (ERROR) vs. EFFECT (IMPURITIES)

OPPONENT: ALL REAL

Opponent: The three roots are based on errors, perversions. There are things that are salutary (virtues), and things that are unsalutary (non-virtues). One should know and not mix-up. See Vipallasa Sutra - (AN IV.49) - Perversions bellow.

CAUSE: errors, perversions

EFFECT: defilements, impurities, desire, hate, delusion, ...

ex. We have desire for an object because we think it is permanent, pleasant, attractive ... even though it is not. Desire is based on an error, a perversion. Implicitly accepting the dualities: permanent vs. impermanent, pleasant vs. non-pleasant, ...

(Jonah Winters: The defilements such as passionate attraction and aversion (lust and hatred), Nagarjuna says, "have thought as their source," and it is on the basis of these defilements that value judgments such as pleasant and unpleasant come to be. (Karikas XXIII.1)) -- This translation is again very different.

\ ###

\ 2.

\ Those things which come into existence presupposing errors as to what is salutary and unsalutary

\ Do not exist by their own nature (svabhava); therefore the impurities (klesa) do not exist in reality.

THE DUALITY ERROR vs. IMPURITIES

IMPURITIES ARE NOT SELF-EXISTING

If they (impurities) are dependent on errors (perversions), then they are not self-existing. Thus they (the defilements, impurities, passion, aversion, and delusion in their various forms) do not self-exist.

They are dependent, empty of self-existence.

(THE CASE OF SOMEONE HAVING IMPURITIES)

\ ###

\ 3.

\ The existence or non-existence of the individual self (atma) is not proved at all.

\ Without that [individual self], how can the existence or non-existence of the impurities be proved?

THE DUALITY IMPURITIES vs. SOMEONE IMPURE (the owner of those defilements, the one to

purify)

CANNOT BE USED TO PROVE IMPURITIES

If a self is not proved, how can he be have defilements, impurities, klesa.
So those are not proved either.

\ ###

\ 4.

\ For impurities exist of somebody, and that person is not proved at all.

\ Is it not so that without someone the impurities do not exist of anybody?

\ ###

\ 5.

\ In reference to the view of having a body of one's own,

\ the impurities do not exist in what is made impure according to the five-fold manner.

\ In reference to the view of having a body of one's own,

\ that which is made impure does not exist in the impurities according to the five-fold manner.

THE DUALITY IMPURITIES vs. SOMEONE IMPURE

NOT THE SAME, NOT SEPARATE

\ ###

\ 6.

\ The errors as to what is salutary and non-salutary do not exist as self-existent entities (svabhavatas)

\ Depending on which errors as to what is salutary and non-salutary are then impurities?

THE DUALITY CAUSE (ERROR) vs. EFFECT (IMPURITIES)

THE EFFECT OF EMPTINESS IS EMPTINESS

The proof of the emptiness of the cause (error) follows:

Opponent:

-- The error is to have the wrong notion about an object.

-- The object is either form, sound, taste, smell, ... any object of the senses.

-- Then there is a subjective value judgment, a discriminatory judgment on the object based on a duality: ex. salutary, or non-salutary.

-- If it is judged "salutary" then there is desire. If it is judged "non-salutary" then there is hatred. ...

-- The notion (the judgment of ... on the object) may be right or wrong.

-- It is wrong if it cause desire for something impermanent, unsatisfying, non-salutary, ...

Nagarjuna will show that

-- the object is empty

-- the attribute of the object is empty

-- the generated defilements, impurities, desire, ... is empty

-- the notion is empty

-- everything surrounding the notion is empty

-- the error (or non error) is empty

-- the phrase "somebody makes an error" is empty (no permanent being in i, ii, iii), no

origination of "making an error"

\ ###

\ 7.

\ Form, sound, taste, touch, smell, and the dharmas: this six-fold
\ Substance (vastu) of desire, hate, and delusion is imagined.

\ ###

\ 8.

\ Form, sound, taste, touch, smell, and the dharmas are
\ Merely the form of a fairy castle, like a mirage, a dream.

\ ###

\ 9.

\ How will "that which is salutary" or "that which is non-salutary" come into
existence

\ In a formation of a magical man, or in things like a reflection?

THE OBJECTS ARE EMPTY

HOW COULD THEY BE SALUTARY OR NON-SALUTARY ?

Everything is empty.

So how could anything be good or bad in essence.

So how could there be errors, perversions

(Jonah Winters: Visual form, sound, taste, touch, smell, and concepts (mental sensations)
are the "sixfold foundations" of defilements and discriminatory judgments. But, as
demonstrated above, (cf. sections IV, "Examination of Aggregates" and XVIII, "Examination of
Self.") all six sensory foundations "are comparable to [a mythical city] and resemble
mirages and dreams. How can the pleasant and the unpleasant come to be in people who are
fabrications of illusion or who are comparable to mirror images?" (Karikas XXIII.8-9))

\ ###

\ 10.

\ We submit that there is no non-salutary thing unrelated to a salutary thing.
\ [And in turn] depending on which, there is a salutary thing; therefore, a
salutary thing does not obtain.

\ ###

\ 11.

\ We submit that there is no salutary thing unrelated to a non-salutary thing,
\ [And in turn] depending on which, there is a non-salutary thing; therefore a
non-salutary thing does not obtain.

THE DUALITY SALUTARY, NON-SALUTARY IS EMPTY

Good and bad form a duality. Both are dependent of the other. None is self-existing /
absolute.

\ ###

\ 12.

\ If "what is salutary" does not exist, how will there be desire [for it]?
\ And if "what is non-salutary" does not exist, how will there be hatred [for it]?

DUALITY CAUSE (OBJECTS) vs. EFFECT (DEFILEMENTS, IMPURITIES)
THE EFFECT OF EMPTINESS IS EMPTINESS

If nothing is absolutely, objectively good, then how could there be desire for any.
If nothing is absolutely, objectively bad, then how could there be hatred for any.

\ ###
\ 13.
\ Even if the notion "What is permanent is in something impermanent" is in error,
\ How can this notion be in error since "what is impermanent" does not exist in emptiness?

THE NOTION (IN ERROR) AS THE ROOT CAUSE FOR DEFILEMENTS, IMPURITIES
EMPTINESS OF THE NOTION

Opponent: This is an example of an error: 'Constant' with regard to the inconstant is a perversion of perception, a perversion of mind, a perversion of view.

Since nothing "is" permanent or impermanent -- all empty
Then there cannot be an error of taking one for the other.

\ ###
\ 14.
\ Even if the notion "what is permanent is in something impermanent" is in error,
\ Is not then the notion concerning emptiness, i.e., that it is impermanent, in error?

\ ###
\ 15.
\ That by which a notion is formed, the notion, those who have notions, and that which is grasped [in the notion]:
\ All have ceased; therefore, the notion does not exist.

All notions (ex. truth or errors, perversions) are themselves impermanent mental fabrications. They are not permanent self-existing.
So how could they be essentially true or false ?

\ ###
\ 16.
\ If a notion is not existing either as false or true,
\ Whose is the error? Whose is the non-error?

So there is no real "errors, perversions" or non-perversions.

\ ###
\ 17.
\ Nor do errors of someone who has erred come into existence.
\ Nor do errors of someone who has not erred come into existence.

\ ###
\ 18.
\ And errors of someone who is at present in error do not come into existence.
\ Now you examine of whom do errors really come into existence!

There is no error of ... i, ii, iii

There is nobody in error (permanent in i, ii, iii).

\ ###

\ 19.

\ How in all the world will errors which have not originated come into existence?

\ And if errors are not originated, how can there be someone involved in error?

There is no origination of "error"

So no ii distinct that the other two: i, iii

\ ###

\ 20.

\ Since no being is produced by itself, nor by something different,

\ Nor by itself and something different at the same time, how can there be someone involved in error?

There is no cause for "someone in error": no self-causation, no other-causation, no both ...

\ ###

\ 21.

\ If the individual self, "what is pure," "what is eternal," and happiness really exist,

\ Then the individual self, "what is pure," "what is eternal," and happiness are not errors.

\ ###

\ 22.

\ But if individual self, "what is pure," "what is eternal," and happiness do not exist,

\ Then non-individual self, "what is impure," "what is impermanent" and sorrow (dukkha) do not exist.

Maybe: It is not error, it is not non-error, ...

For any duality, apply the Tetralemma.

\ ###

\ 23.

\ From the cessation of error ignorance ceases;

\ When ignorance has ceased, conditioning forces (samskara) and everything else cease.

(Streng5: Whatever notions are assumed to possess self-sufficient reality are subjects to Nagarjuna's analysis; thus, even the notion of "misunderstanding" is regarded as a misunderstanding if it is distinguished from correct understanding in an absolute way. In chapter xxiii, "misunderstanding," "good," and "bad"—which, in the Abhidharma, are held to be the conditions for mental fabrication—are shown to be void of self-existence. They are also shown to be insignificant on the grounds of dependent co-origination, for then they are already regarded as empty. Verses 24 and 25 sum up the irrelevancy of deciding if "misunderstanding," "good," and "bad" exist as such or not:)

\ ###

\ 24.

\ If any kind of self-existent impurities belong to somebody,
\ How in all the world would they be eliminated? Who can eliminate that which is self-existent?

\ ###

\ 25.

\ If any kind of self-existent impurities do not belong to somebody,
\ How in all the world would they be eliminated? Who can eliminate that which is non-self-existent?

Impurities: they do not exist, they do not not exist, ...

L2: [Section 24 - An Analysis of the Holy Truths (aryasatya) (the noble truths) - 40]

(RÉSUMÉ:

-- THE TWO TRUTHS: the duality "emptiness" vs. "conventional truth - D.O.

-- MOSTLY ABOUT THE EMPTINESS OF EMPTINESS

-- Opponent: Emptiness --> no conventional truth, no Path

-- The two truths form an apparent duality, but they are not two self-existing opposite reality

-- They are both tools, we need to transcend both to reach Nirvana

-- There is a danger of objectifying emptiness; it leads to nihilism, or rejection of emptiness

-- a self-existing emptiness leads to absurdity, to rejection of the flow, of all cause & effect

-- an empty emptiness acknowledges the flow, it does not lead to nihilism

-- Emptiness is a mental construction based on the dependence origination of things

-- The middle way consist in walking on the razor edge (between emptiness and D.O.) -- dharmaksanti

-- -- accepting that everything is dependent

-- -- accepting that everything is empty

-- -- accepting that everything is pure

-- It is not emptiness, it is not non-emptiness, (it is not both, it is not neither)

-- It is not emptiness, it is not D.O., it is not both, or neither

-- We have to transcend both: THE UNION OF THE TWO TRUTHS)

L3: [An opponent claims:]

\ ###

\ 1.

\ If everything is empty, there is no origination nor destruction.

\ Then you must incorrectly conclude that there is non-existence of the four holy truths.

\ ###

\ 2.

\ If there is non-existence of the four holy truths, the saving knowledge, the elimination [of illusion],

\ The "becoming" [enlightened] (bhavana), and the "realization" [of the goal] are impossible.

\ ###

\ 3.

\ If there is non-existence, then also the four holy "fruits" do not exist.

\ In the non-existence of fruit there is no "residing in fruit" nor obtaining.

\ ###

\ 4.

\ When the community [of Buddhists] does not exist, then those eight "kinds of persons"

\ [i.e., four abiding in the fruit and four who are obtaining] do not exist.

\ Because there is non-existence of the four holy truths, the real dharma does not exist.

\ ###

\ 5.

\ And if there are no dharma and community, how will the Buddha exist?

\ By speaking thus, [that everything is empty] certainly you deny the three jewels [i.e., the Buddha, the dharma, and the community].

\ ###

\ 6.

\ You deny the real existence of a product, of right and wrong,

\ And all the practical behavior of the world as being empty.

THE DUALITY EMPTINESS vs. CONVENTIONAL TRUTH (D.O.) -- (THE TWO TRUTHS)

The two truths as seen by the opponent as two real opposites; it is one or the other, like in a duality.

Opponent: if there is emptiness then ... no Path, no realization, no three jewels -- nihilism.

Like: EMPTINESS ==> NO CONVENTIONAL TRUTH, NO PATH

(Garfield: The first six verses present a reply by an opponent charging the doctrine with nihilism. -- if the entire phenomenal world were empty nothing would in fact exist, a conclusion absurd on its face and, more importantly, contradictory to fundamental Buddhist tenets such as the Four Noble Truths as well as to conventional wisdom.)

L3: [Nagarjuna replies:]

\ ###

\ 7.

\ We reply that you do not comprehend the point of emptiness;

\ You eliminate both "emptiness" itself and its purpose from it.

\ ###

\ 8.

\ The teaching by the Buddhas of the dharma has recourse to TWO TRUTHS:

\ The world-ensconced truth (T1) and the truth which is the highest sense (T2).

\ ###

\ 9.

\ Those who do not know the distribution (vibhagam) of the two kinds of truth
 \ Do not know the profound "point" (tattva) (T3) in the teaching of the Buddha.

\ ###

\ 10.

\ The highest sense [of the truth] (T2) is not taught apart from practical behavior (T1),
 \ And without having understood the highest sense (T2) one cannot understand nirvana (T3).

THE DUALITY EMPTINESS vs. CONVENTIONAL TRUTH (D.O.) -- (THE TWO TRUTHS)
 THEY ARE NOT TWO SELF-EXISTING REALITY (independent of each other, and of the mind)
 THEY ARE NOT SEPARATE OR THE SAME
 WE HAVE TO TRANSCEND BOTH

By rejecting the emptiness of emptiness (making it real), you reject its purpose (it is just a tool).

If we take "emptiness" as an absolute truth, then we end up in "nihilism".

If we take "dependent origination" too literally, then we end up in "realism".

Both are tools to fight the other extreme; none is the final view.

Those who do not know the distinction between the two truths cannot understand the profound nature of the Buddha's teaching.

Without relying on everyday common practices (that is, relative truths), the absolute truth cannot be expressed.

Without approaching the absolute truth, Nirvana cannot be attained.

This seems to mean that both two truths are "means" to reach Nirvana; none of them is the ultimate point.

Confirming that it is the Union of the Two truths that is the final point.

So "Emptiness" is not a "final view" of reality.

It is not absolute, a "primal cause", or "primal explanation".

So one possibilities is :

-- The two truths form a duality, one side fighting the extreme tendency of the other. Those two truths are not real opposites; they imply each other; they are dependent on each other; like for any other duality.

-- Nirvana is going beyond this duality.

-- T1: Conventional, conceptual truths -- based on dependent origination -- it fights non-existence.

-- T2: Supreme truths, aiming at the final fruit -- based on emptiness -- it fights existence.

-- BEYOND: Nirvana, Tathagata, ...

see Section 22 for:

THE DUALITY "DEPENDENT ORIGINATION" vs. "EMPTINESS" -- in order to describe the Tathagata

We cannot use Dependent Origination (or its negation ...) to express the Tathagata

We cannot use Emptiness (or its negation ...) to express the Tathagata

Implicit: The Union of the Two Truths

\ ###

\ 11.
\ Emptiness, having been dimly perceived, utterly destroys the slow-witted.
\ It is like a snake wrongly grasped or [magical] knowledge incorrectly applied.

\ ###

\ 12.
\ Therefore the mind of the ascetic [Guatama] was diverted from teaching the
dharma,
\ Having thought about the incomprehensibility of the dharma by the stupid.

THE DUALITY EMPTINESS vs. CONVENTIONAL TRUTH (D.O.) -- (THE TWO TRUTHS) DANGER OF A SELF-EXISTING EMPTINESS

Here, the "dharma" is the real character of all dharmas -- Emptiness.
If emptiness is thought as an "absolute" then there is suffering.

\ ###

\ 13.
\ Time and again you have made a condemnation of emptiness,
\ But that refutation does not apply to our emptiness.

OUR EMPTINESS IS ALSO EMPTY -- (a dependent mental fabrications)
The utilization of "emptiness" is dangerous if thought as an "absolute".
Emptiness is not the denial of everything, but just of self-existence.
You reject what you understand as "empty", but do not understand our emptiness

\ ###

\ 14.
\ When emptiness "works", then everything in existence "works". (A)
\ If emptiness "does not work", then all existence "does not work". (B)

THE DUALITY EMPTINESS vs. CONVENTIONAL TRUTH (D.O.) -- (THE TWO TRUTHS) -- A SELF-EXISTING EMPTINESS LEADS TO ABSURDITY, REJECTING THE FLOW -- AN EMPTY EMPTINESS ACKNOWLEDGES THE FLOW THUS THERE IS NO SELF-EXISTING EMPTINESS -- EMPTINESS OF EMPTINESS

On the contrary to your objections,
B) it is when there is no emptiness that nothing works
-- or, when emptiness itself is static / self-existing / not dynamic / not working ... that
there is nihilism, no flow.
A) our emptiness is necessary for everything to works
-- or, when emptiness is itself empty, then "there is a flow"

Like for any mental fabrication, emptiness should not be thought as anything more than that.
If everything is empty, then nothing is empty, then there is no emptiness.

L3: [(B - Self-existence -- of emptiness -- do not permit the flow / D.O.)]

\ ###

\ 15.
\ You, while projecting your own faults on us, (i.e. objectifying emptiness)
\ Are like a person who, having mounted his horse, forgot the horse!(i.e. a tool)

\ ###

\ 16.
 \ If you recognize real existence on account of the self-existence of things,
 \ You perceive that there are uncaused and unconditioned things.
 \ ###
 \ 17.
 \ You deny "what is to be produced," cause, the producer, the instrument of
 production, and the producing action,
 \ And the origination, destruction, and "fruit."

THE DUALITY EMPTINESS vs. CONVENTIONAL TRUTH (D.O.) -- (THE TWO TRUTHS)
 -- A SELF-EXISTING EMPTINESS LEADS TO ABSURDITY, REJECTING THE FLOW

The two truths as seen by the opponent as two real opposites; it is one or the other.
 Accepting emptiness is seen as rejecting all causality, all production, the path.

You are the one who is objectifying, idealizing emptiness.
 You use emptiness as a tool, and forget about the tool itself (its own emptiness).
 You take emptiness as an absolute.
 Objectifying a real emptiness, everything else is negated, and there is no cause & effect at
 all (no dependent origination).

(Garfield: The important philosophical work begins with 24: 15. From this point Nagarjuna
 offers a theory of the relationship between emptiness, dependent origination, and
 convention, and argues not only that these three can be understood as co-relative, but that
 if conventional things (or emptiness itself) were nonempty, the very nihilism would ensue
 with which the reificationist opponent charges Maadhyamika. This tactic of arguing not only
 against each extreme but also that the contradictory extremes are in fact mutually entailing
 is a dialectical trademark of Nagarjuna's philosophical method.)

(Garfield: Though this is not made as explicit in the text as one might like, it is
 important to note that the (mis-) understanding Nagarjuna has in mind is one that, in the
 terms of Maadhyamika, reifies emptiness itself. Verse 24:16 provides a clue. -- the danger
 of seeing emptiness as an absolute.

If the existence of all things
 Is perceived in terms of their essence,
 Then this perception of all things
 Will be without the perception of causes and conditions.

The opponent is seeing actual existence as a discrete entity with an essence. it would
 follow that for the opponent, the reality of emptiness would entail that emptiness itself is
 an entity, and at that an inherently existing entity. To see emptiness in this way is to see
 it as radically different from conventional, phenomenal reality. It is to see the
 conventional as illusory and emptiness as the reality standing behind it. To adopt this view
 of emptiness is indeed to deny the reality of the entire phenomenal, conventional world. It
 is also to ascribe a special, nonconventional, nondependent hyperreality to emptiness
 itself. Ordinary things would be viewed as nonexistent, emptiness as substantially existent.
 (It is important and central to the Maadhyamika dialectic to see that these go together --
 that nihilism about one kind of entity is typically paired with reification of another.)
 This view is not uncommon in Buddhist philosophy, and Nagarjuna is clearly aware that it
 might be suggested by his own position. So Nagarjuna's reply must begin by distancing

himself from this reified view of emptiness itself and hence from the dualism it entails. Only then can he show that to reify emptiness in this way would indeed entail the difficulties his imaginary opponent adumbrates, difficulties not attaching to Nagarjuna's own view.)

L3: [(A - Emptiness -- of emptiness -- recognizes the flow, D.O., the Path)]

\ ###
\ 18.
\ The "originating dependently" we call "emptiness";
\ This apprehension, i.e., taking into account [all other things], is the understanding of the middle way.

\ ###
\ 19.
\ SINCE THERE IS NO DHARMA WHATEVER ORIGINATING INDEPENDENTLY,
\ NO DHARMA WHATEVER EXISTS WHICH IS NOT EMPTY.

THE DUALITY EMPTINESS vs. CONVENTIONAL TRUTH (D.O.) -- (THE TWO TRUTHS)
-- AN EMPTY EMPTINESS ACKNOWLEDGES THE FLOW
THEY ARE NOT THE SAME, THEY ARE NOT SEPARATE, THEY ARE CO-DEPENDENT
WE HAVE TO TRANSCEND BOTH
BUT, MEANWHILE, DHARMAKSANTI, (the intuitive tolerance of the ultimate incomprehensibility of all things)

Emptiness is a mental construction, a name given to a thing, meaning it is not independent, self-existing, it is co-dependently arisen. Emptiness is not an absolute, or a primal cause. It also means that emptiness is not separate from D.O.

So emptiness does not stop the flow, it acknowledges the flow, and reject self-existence in the flow.

This approach, to indeed take all into consideration (not objectifying anything -- making them real, self-existing) (and not rejecting everything), is the middle way (not eternalism, not nihilism).

Because there is nothing existing that is independent, then nothing existing is not empty. All dharmas are empty.

So the middle way is simply :

- not existence, not non existence (implicit: not both, not neither)
- not real D.O., not real emptiness, not both, not neither -- on the razor edge
- Note: real D.O. would mean real things that change.
- accepting the Tetralemma on the two truths, , even without proof, without the final realization -- Bodhisattva way :
- never taking anything as absolute --- but do take them ---
- always seeing the flow, never interrupting the flow
- never assuming there is a beginning in the chain of causality: a primal cause
- never assuming there is an end to the chain of causality: a final product
- never assuming there is a real cause, a real effect, a real relation
- never assuming there are real events or objects in the chain of causality: things to get attached to
- never assuming something is not dependent, or primal, or final, or absolute
- and not assuming it is total anarchy either -- indeed taking thing into account.

(Streng4: The arguments against causal relations between self-existent entities which we have given above are based on a logical critique of theories themselves. It is important to note that nowhere does Nagarjuna himself give a theory describing the operation of causal relations. As we have seen, he denies that the entities exist by virtue of their own being and that, even if such an impossible assumption of self-existence were accepted, no causal relationship could obtain. In what sense, then, does Nagarjuna understand the reality of the phenomenal world arising at all? Or, to formulate the question in Buddhist terminology: How is the notion of "dependent coorigination" to be understood? The answer is dramatically given in MMK, xxiv. 18 & 19. Considered in the context of emptiness (sunyata), co-originating dependency loses its meaning as the link between two "things"; rather it becomes the form for expressing the phenomenal "becoming" as the lack of any self-sufficient, independent reality.

A consideration for the phenomenal aspect of "originating dependently" is given in chap. xxvi (An Analysis of the Twelve Components (dvadasanga)) where the root cause for constructed phenomena is designated as ignorance. The "realization" of sunyata (the emptiness of svabhava), on the other hand, prevents the continuation of fabrication. This is made clear in verses 10-12.

From the ultimate point of view "originating dependently" is the realization of emptiness, while at the same time it is the causal law, or "chain of causation" from the mundane point of view. For Nagarjuna, "emptiness" became the best verbal expression for "originating dependently." It avoided the illusion of self-existence (svabhava) most completely, and omitted the necessity for a law of causation which related entities that were presupposed in a "svabhava perspective."

See also in section 20 ...

To sum up Nagarjuna's concern with constructed phenomena in light of emptiness, we would point to his assertion that mental distinctions are only imaginary fabrication, that there are no self-establishing characteristics of "things," and that there is no real difference between accepted dichotomies such as Nirvana and samsara (flux of existence). Correlative to this assertion is the denial of real entities in conditioned phenomena or the "unconditioned," the denial of a succession of moments in time, and a denial of the triple factors: subject, object, and activity. If all this is true, then without real entities there is no real cause. The causal process itself, conceived as a chain of events, is a mere fabrication—though indeed a fabrication powerful enough to bind man to more fabrication.)

Garfield: the central verses of this chapter:

- ~ 18. Whatever is dependently co-arisen
- ~ That is explained to be emptiness.
- ~ That, being a dependent designation
- ~ Is itself the middle way.
- ~ 19. Something that is not dependently arisen,
- ~ Such a thing does not exist.
- ~ Therefore a non-empty thing
- ~ Does not exist.)

(Garfield: In 24:18, Nagarjuna establishes a critical three-way relation between emptiness, dependent origination, and verbal convention, and asserts that this relation itself is the Middle Way towards which his entire philosophical system is aimed. As we shall see, this is the basis for understanding the emptiness of emptiness itself. First, Nagarjuna asserts that the dependently arisen is emptiness. Emptiness and the phenomenal world are not two distinct things. They are rather two characterizations of the same thing. To say of something that it

is dependently co-arisen is to say that it is empty. To say of something that it is empty is another way of saying that it arises dependently.

Moreover, whatever is dependently co-arisen is verbally established. That is, the identity of any dependently arisen thing depends upon verbal conventions. To say of a thing that it is dependently arisen is to say that its identity as a single entity is nothing more than its being the referent of a word. The thing itself, apart from conventions of individuation, is nothing but an arbitrary slice of an indefinite spatiotemporal and causal manifold. To say of a thing that its identity is a merely verbal fact about it is to say that it is empty. To view emptiness in this way is to see it neither as an entity nor as unreal -- it is to see it as conventionally real. Moreover, "emptiness" itself is asserted to be a dependent designation (Skt praj~naptir-upadaya [brTen Nas gDasgs pa]). Its referent, emptiness itself, is thereby asserted to be merely dependent and nominal -- conventionally existent but ultimately empty. This is, hence, a middle path with regard to emptiness. To view the dependently originated world in this way is to see it neither as nonempty nor as completely nonexistent. It is, viewed in this way, conventionally existent, but empty. We thus have a middle path with regard to dependent origination. To view convention in this way is to view it neither as ontologically insignificant -- it determines the character of the phenomenal world -- nor as ontologically efficacious -- it is empty. Thus we also have a middle way with regard to convention. And finally, given the nice ambiguity in the reference of "that," (De Ni), not only are "dependent arising" and "emptiness" asserted to be dependent designations, and hence merely nominal, but the very relation between them is asserted to be so dependent, and therefore to be empty.

These morals are driven home in 24:19, where Nagarjuna emphasizes that everything -- and this must include emptiness -- is dependently arisen. So everything -- including emptiness -- lacks inherent existence.

So nothing lacks the three coextensive properties of emptiness, dependent-origination, and conventional identity. With this in hand, Nagarjuna can reply to the critic.)

L3: [(B - Self-existence -- of emptiness -- do not permit the flow / D.O.)]

THE DUALITY EMPTINESS vs. CONVENTIONAL TRUTH (D.O.) -- (THE TWO TRUTHS)
-- A SELF-EXISTING EMPTINESS LEADS TO ABSURDITY, REJECTING THE FLOW, THE PATH
Then everything is chaotic.

\ ###

\ 20.

\ If all existence is not empty, there is neither origination nor destruction.

\ You must wrongly conclude then that the four holy truths do not exist.

\ ###

\ 21.

\ Having originated without being conditioned, how will sorrow (dukkha) come into existence?

\ It is said that sorrow (dukkha) is not eternal; therefore, certainly it does not exist by its own nature (svabbava).

\ ###

\ 22.

\ How can that which is existing by its own nature originate again?

\ For him who denies emptiness there is no production.

\ ###
 \ 23.
 \ There is no destruction of sorrow (dukkha) if it exists by its own nature.
 \ By trying to establish "self-existence" you deny destruction.
 \ ###
 \ 24.
 \ If the path [of release] is self-existent, then there is no way of bringing it
 into existence (bhavana);
 \ If that path is brought into existence, then "self-existence," which you claim
 does not exist.
 \ ###
 \ 25.
 \ When sorrow (dukkha), origination, and destruction do not exist,
 \ What kind of path will obtain the destruction of sorrow (dukkha)?
 \ ###
 \ 26.
 \ If there is no complete knowledge as to self-existence, how [can there be] any
 knowledge of it?
 \ Indeed, is it not true that self-existence is that which endures?
 \ ###
 \ 27.
 \ As in the case of complete knowledge, neither destruction, realization, "bringing
 into existence,"
 \ Nor are the four holy fruits possible for you.
 \ ###
 \ 28.
 \ If you accept "self-existence," and a "fruit" is not known by its self-existence,
 \ How can it be known at all?
 \ ###
 \ 29.
 \ In the non-existence of "fruit," there is no "residing in fruit" nor obtaining
 [the "fruit"];
 \ When the community [of Buddhists] does not exist, then those eight "kinds of
 persons" do not exist.
 \ ###
 \ 30.
 \ Because there is non-existence of the four holy truths, the real dharma does not
 exist.
 \ And if there is no dharma and community, how will the Buddha exist?

(Garfield: He first points out (24: 20-35) that in virtue of the identity of dependent
 origination and emptiness on the one hand and of ontological independence and intrinsic
 reality on the other, such phenomena as arising, ceasing, suffering, change, enlightenment,
 and so on -- the very phenomena the opponent charges Nagarjuna with denying -- are possible
 only if they are empty. The tables are thus turned: it appears that Nagarjuna, in virtue of

arguing for the emptiness of these phenomena, was arguing that in reality they do not exist, precisely because, for the reification of emptiness, existence and emptiness are opposites. But in fact, because of the identity of emptiness and conventional existence, it is the reification who, in virtue of denying the emptiness of these phenomena, denies their existence. And it is hence the reification of emptiness who is impaled on both horns of the dilemma s/he has presented to Nagarjuna: contradicting the ultimate truth, s/he denies that these phenomena are empty; contradicting the conventional, s/he is forced to deny that they even exist!)

\ ###

\ 31.

\ For you, either the one who is enlightened (buddha) comes into being independent of enlightenment,

\ Or enlightenment comes into being independent of the one who is enlightened.

\ ###

\ 32.

\ For you, some one who is a non-buddha by his own nature (svabhava) but strives for enlightenment (i.e. a Bodhisattva)

\ Will not attain the enlightenment though the "way of life of becoming fully enlightened."

\ ###

\ 33.

\ Neither the dharma nor non-dharma will be done anywhere.

\ What is produced which is non-empty? Certainly self-existence is not produced.

\ ###

\ 34.

\ Certainly, for you, there is a product without [the distinction] of dharma or non-dharma.

\ Since, for you, the product caused by dharma or non-dharma does not exist.

\ ###

\ 35.

\ If, for you, the product is caused by dharma or non-dharma, be non-empty?

\ How can that product, being originated by dharma or non-dharma empty?

\ ###

\ 36.

\ You deny all mundane and customary activities

\ When you deny emptiness [in the sense of] dependent co-origination (patytya-samutpada).

THE DUALITY EMPTINESS vs. CONVENTIONAL TRUTH (D.O.) -- (THE TWO TRUTHS)
-- A SELF-EXISTING EMPTINESS LEADS TO ABSURDITY, REJECTING THE FLOW, THE PATH

With your definition of emptiness (or without emptiness at all) you deny the obvious, the flow.

(Streng5: A more complete development is given in xxiv, 20-40: analyzes the notion of the four holy truths (caturaryasatya); here Nagarjuna insists that only if all things are empty can the holy truths be effective. As before, emptiness refers to the conditioned

co-origination of all things, and nonemptiness refers to the self-sufficient reality (svabhava) of all things. Emptiness is the condition (i.e., dependent co-origination) which must exist before any phenomenal causes and conditions can "produce" entities; at the same time it is the condition which denies the ultimate reality of phenomenal entities. The claim that emptiness is the condition for both mundane action and the release from sorrow is seen in the concluding five verses of this chapter:

Garfield: And so Nagarjuna can conclude (24: 36):

If dependent arising is denied,
Emptiness itself is rejected.
This would contradict
All of the worldly conventions.

\ ###
\ 37.
\ If you deny emptiness, there would be action which is unactivated.
\ There would be nothing whatever acted upon, and a producing action would be something not begun.

\ ###
\ 38.
\ According to [the doctrine of] "self-existence" the world is free from different conditions;
\ Then it will exist as unproduced, undestroyed and immutable.

\ ###
\ 39.
\ If non-emptiness does not exist, then something is attained which is not attained;
\ There is cessation of sorrow (dukkha) and actions, and all evil is destroyed.

THE DUALITY EMPTINESS vs. CONVENTIONAL TRUTH (D.O.) -- (THE TWO TRUTHS)
IT IS NOT NON-EMPTINESS EITHER

\ ###
\ 40.
\ He who perceives dependent co-origination (patytya-samutpada)
\ Also understands sorrow (dukkha), origination, and destruction as well as the path [of release].

Maybe: one has to perceive D.O. while perceiving emptiness.

It is not emptiness, it is not non-emptiness, (it is not both, it is not neither)
It is not emptiness, it is not D.O., it is not both, or neither
We have to transcend both: THE UNION OF THE TWO TRUTHS

L2: [Section 25 - An Analysis of Nirvana (nirvana) - 24]

(RÉSUMÉ:

-- But
 -- It is about the nature of "very final absolute truth" / " the very ultimate reality" /
 What is Nirvana ?
 -- -- As in section 22, where it is said that no concepts can express the nature of the
 Tathagata: not dependent origination, not emptiness, not eternity, ..., we cannot even ask
 if he exist or not after death.
 -- Nirvana is suppose to be non-dependent, a non-composite-product
 -- -- Is Nirvana a thing ... ?
 -- -- -- Nirvana : is not an existing thing, is not a non-existing thing, is not both, is
 not neither
 -- -- Is there a change in "being" from samsara to nirvana ? :
 -- -- -- As in section 22: The "unsanswerables"
 -- -- -- -- the questions about the existence or not .. of the Tathagata after death ?
 -- -- -- -- These questions are "unanswerable" because:
 -- -- -- -- In emptiness there is no existence, no non-existence, no both, no neither.
 -- -- -- Here it is mentioned that it is the same before or after death.
 -- -- -- There is no difference.
 -- -- -- There is no change of "being" between samsara and Nirvana.
 -- -- Is there a difference between samsara and Nirvana
 -- -- -- Nirvana and Samsara are not different, not the same
 -- -- -- They are both mental fabrications, a duality
 -- -- The "unsanswerables"
 -- -- -- The questions about the status of the Tathagata afer death, those views,
 "unanswerable questions", are based on the idea of something changing with Nirvana. Either
 something new added, or something ending.
 -- -- -- But in emptiness, nothing "is", and nothing "changes"
 -- -- -- So those questions are just the misguided, with no foundation.
 -- -- Then what is Nirvana ?
 -- -- -- The cessation of accepting everything [as real].
 -- -- -- Then there is the salutary (siva) cessation of phenomenal development (prapanca)
 -- More:
 -- -- Seeing things in the flow.
 -- -- Thinking there are first causes, or final products.
 -- -- Thinking things exist and change.)

L3: [WHAT IS NIRVANA?]

L4: [An opponent says:]

\ ###
 \ 1.
 \ If all existence is empty, there is no origination nor destruction.
 \ Then whose nirvana through elimination [of suffering] and destruction [of
 illusion] would be postulated?

Opponent: if everything is empty, then ... no Nirvana.

(Jonah Winters: He opens the section with the opponent's objection that, if all is really
 empty, then there is no arising of things and so there is nothing to be extinguished
 (nirvana).)

Note for the following verses: Nirvana is suppose to be non-dependent, a

non-composite-product,)

L4: [Nagarjuna replies:]

\ ###
\ 2.
\ If all existence is non-empty, there is no origination nor destruction.
\ Then whose nirvana through elimination [of suffering] and destruction [of illusion] would be postulated?

Nagarjuna: if everything is not empty, then ... no Nirvana.

(Jonah Winters: Nagarjuna replies, as before, that "if all this is non- empty, there exists neither arising nor ceasing." If there is svabhava, a self-nature in things, then it is that which will prevent freedom. (Karikas XXV.2))

\ ###
\ 3.
\ Nirvana has been said to be neither eliminated nor attained, neither annihilated nor eternal,
\ Neither disappeared nor originated.

(Jonah Winters: Having rejected self- nature by saying that all is empty, he is now faced with a problem. If there are no things, then what is freedom, and how can one speak of it or strive for it? The Buddha offered various definitions of nirvana, one of which Nagarjuna now makes use of. "Unrelinquished, not reached, unannihilated, non-eternal, non-ceased and non-arisen---this is called freedom." (Karikas XXV.3))

-- One substantialist notion of freedom was that the bound person partakes of the quality of bondage. Freedom, then, would be the relinquishing of this nature and the adoption of a new and wholly disparate mode of existence---the freed state. This does not apply.

-- There is not a person who partakes of qualities, and freedom is not a concrete goal that can be striven for.

-- An eternalist soteriology would hold that the state of freedom transcends temporality, and the one who achieves freedom also becomes eternal. Nirvana is not such, for it is non-eternal.

-- Neither, however, is it a temporal state of salvation, for it is "unannihilated."

-- It cannot have any relation to temporality, which is measured by arising and ceasing, for it is "non-ceased and non-arisen."

Freedom is thus not obtainable, not a transcendent reality, and not, like the Vedanta atman, a preexisting immanent substratum.)

L5: [CASE 1 - an ordinary thing]

\ ###
\ 4.
\ Nirvana is certainly not an existing thing, for then it would be characterized by old age and death.
\ In consequence it would involve the error that an existing thing would not become old and be without death.

\ ###
\ 5.
\ And if nirvana is an existing thing, nirvana would be a constructed product

(samskrta),

\ Since never ever has an existing thing been found to be a non-constructed-product (asamskrta).

\ ###

\ 6.

\ But if nirvana is an existing thing, how could [nirvana] exist without dependence [on something else]?

\ Certainly nirvana does not exist as something without dependence.

(Streng: Nirvana is not an existent entity (verse 4-6))

(Jonah Winters: Further, nirvana has absolutely no relation to the concepts of either existence or non-existence. If it were a form of existence, then, like all existent things, it would partake of birth and death, arising and ceasing. It would be relative and thus conditioned, for there are no existent things that are unconditioned. If conditioned, it could not be independent. These would necessitate that nirvana, like all conditioned and dependent things, be characterized by impermanence and suffering, which would make for a poor enlightenment, indeed.)

L5: [CASE 2 - a non existent anymore - the negation of the first]

\ ###

\ 7.

\ If nirvana is not an existing thing, will nirvana become a non-existing thing?

\ Wherever there is no existing thing, neither is there a non-existing thing.

\ ###

\ 8.

\ But if nirvana is a non-existing thing, how could [nirvana] exist without dependence [on something else] ?

\ Certainly nirvana is not a non-existing thing which exists without dependence.

\ ###

\ 9.

\ That state which is the rushing in and out [of existence] when dependent or conditioned—

\ This [state], when not dependent or not conditioned, is seen to be nirvana.

\ ###

\ 10.

\ The teacher [Gautama] has taught that a "becoming" and a "non-becoming" (vibhava) are destroyed;

\ Therefore it obtains that: Nirvana is neither an existent thing nor a non-existent thing.

(Streng: Nirvana is not a nonexistent entity (verses 7-10))

(Jonah Winters: Neither can freedom be said to be non-existence, for, "wherein there is no existence, therein non-existence is not evident." (Karikas XXV.7)

The two (existence & non-existence) are relative concepts. Moreover, if freedom were said to be non-existence, it would, as one half of a dual conception, still not be independent.

Nagarjuna echoed the Buddha's clear assertion that nirvana is neither transcendent existence

nor posthumous annihilation. In discussing the nature of the enlightened one in an earlier section, he clearly stated that "the thought that the Buddha exists or does not exist after death is not appropriate." (Karikas XXII.14)

Notwithstanding such difficulties, nirvana must be seen as non-contingent and independent. If it were not, then it would not be free from the contingency and dependence of the suffering world. The solution, the Buddha said, is to relinquish the notions of becoming and being in all forms. Therefore, "it is proper to assume that freedom is neither existence nor non-existence." (Karikas XXV.10 (na bhavo nabhavo nirvanam)) That is, if one completely ceases to think in terms of being, then neither arising nor ceasing, origination nor annihilation will be posited.)

L5: [CASE 3 - it is both]

\ ###

\ 11.

\ If nirvana were both an existent and a non-existent thing,

\ Final release (moksa) would be [both] an existent and a non-existent thing; but that is not possible.

\ ###

\ 12.

\ If nirvana were both an existent and a non-existent thing,

\ There would be no nirvana without conditions, for these both [operate with] conditions.

\ ###

\ 13.

\ How can nirvana exist as both an existent thing and a non-existent thing,

\ For nirvana is a non-composite-product (asamskrta),

\ while both an existent thing and a non-existent thing are composite products (samskrta).

\ ###

\ 14.

\ How can nirvana exist as both an existent and a non-existent thing?

\ There is no existence of both at one and the same place, as in the case of both darkness and light.

(Streng: Nirvana is not both an existent and nonexistent entity at the same time (verses 11-14))

(Jonah Winters: There is another possible interpretation of the Buddha's exhortation to relinquish notions of being. One could say that, instead of seeing freedom as neither existence nor non-existence, one could see it as both, as a transcendence of the two categories or, in Hegelian terms, a synthesis of thesis and antithesis. This would declare freedom to be some sort of mystical consciousness which is both existence and non-existence by virtue of being a transcendence of the dualities. This will not work, either, Nagarjuna now shows, for nirvana can contain no aspect of either half of the duality. If it were both existence and non-existence, then, rather than being independent, it would be dependent on both and thus doubly contingent. Further, since existence and non-existence are mutually exclusive opposites, "their simultaneous existence in one place is not possible, as in the case of light and darkness." (Karikas XXV.14)

That which precipitated the debate was the Buddha's teaching that freedom is attainable, and the following speculations of his followers about what sort of existence the Buddha enjoyed after death, after his full attainment of nirvana.)

L5: [CASE 4 - it is neither - the negation of both]

\ ###
\ 15.
\ The assertion: "Nirvana is neither an existent thing nor a non-existent thing"
\ Is proved if [the assertion]: "It is an existent thing and a non-existent thing"
were proved.

\ ###
\ 16.
\ If nirvana is neither an existent thing nor a non-existent thing,
\ Who can really arrive at [the assertion]: "neither an existent thing nor a non-existent thing"?

(Streng: Nirvana is not neither an existent nor nonexistent entity at the same time (verses 15-16))

THE DUALITY "NIRVANA" vs. "SAMSARA"
EMPTINESS OF NIRVANA

L4: [WHAT CHANGES FROM SAMSARA TO NIRVANA? IS BEING DIFFERENT?]

\ ###
\ 17.
\ It is not expressed if the Glorious One [the Buddha] exists (1) after his death,
\ Or does not exist (2), or both (3) or neither (4).

\ ###
\ 18.
\ Also, it is not expressed if the Glorious One exists (1) while remaining [in the world],
\ Or does not exist (2), or both (3) or neither (4).

THE DUALITY "NIRVANA" vs. "SAMSARA"
NO CHANGE OF STATUS BETWEEN THE TWO
EMPTINESS OF A "BEING" IN BOTH

As in section 22: the questions about the existence or not .. of the Tathagata after death ?
These questions are "unanswerable" because: In emptiness there is no existence, no non-existence, no both, no neither.
Here it is mentioned that it is the same before or after death.
There is no difference. There is no change of status between samsara and Nirvana.

(Jonah Winters: That which precipitated the debate was the Buddha's teaching that freedom is attainable, and the following speculations of his followers about what sort of existence the Buddha enjoyed after death, after his full attainment of nirvana.

--- There are two forms of nirvana: the one achieved during life is a state of freedom but, since the freed one still has a karmically-bound body, it is not complete nirvana. Complete freedom, "total extinction" (parinirvana), only occurs at death when the body, too, is extinguished. As Nagarjuna has just shown, no theories of the Buddha's existential status

seem to be possible. Thus, "it is not assumed that the Blessed One [the Buddha] exists after death. Neither is it assumed that he does not exist, or both, or neither." (Karikas XXV.17))

An immediate question following this statement is "then what happened to him? He obviously existed at one point, and now he doesn't, so where did he go?" Nagarjuna's answer is startling: "It is not assumed that even a living Blessed One exists. Neither is it assumed that he does not exist, or both, or neither." (Karikas XXV.18)

The answer, then, is that nothing happened to the Buddha. His existential status did not change when he attained nirvana, for he could not even be said to have existed before it. If the Buddha's nature before his nirvana was the same as his nature after enlightenment, then the only thing that changed was his subjective understanding. His actual nature did not change.)

\ ###

\ 19.

\ THERE IS NOTHING WHATEVER WHICH DIFFERENTIATES THE EXISTENCE-IN-FLUX
(SAMSARA)

FROM NIRVANA;

\ And there is nothing whatever which differentiates nirvana from
existence-in-flux.

THE DUALITY NIRVANA vs. SAMSARA
NOT DIFFERENT

(Jonah Winters: An even more startling conclusion follows from this: if his nature did not change, then the world of suffering, samsara, must not be different from the world experienced by the freed person. This is exactly what Nagarjuna concludes. "The life-process has no thing that distinguishes it from freedom. Freedom has no thing that distinguishes it from the life- process." (Karikas XXV.19) There is no transcendent reality, no unique state of freedom experienced by the enlightened one. The worlds experienced by the one bound by suffering and the one freed from suffering are not different worlds. Nirvana is nothing more than a shift in understanding the world and a new way of reacting to it.)

\ ###

\ 20.

\ The extreme limit (koti) of nirvana is also the extreme limit of
existence-in-flux;

\ There is not the slightest bit of difference between these two.

THE DUALITY NIRVANA vs. SAMSARA
NOT THE SAME

(Streng: The rationale for handling Nirvana as any mental fabrication is expressly stated in verses 19 and 20.)

(Jonah Winters: However, Nagarjuna is quick to say, this does not mean that the cycle of life-and- death and freedom are the same. "Whatever is of the extremity of freedom and the extremity of the life-process, between them not even a subtle something is evident."
(Karikas XXV.20)

If they were simply declared to be identical, then there would be neither the experience of suffering nor the experience of release from it. Although the cycle of birth-and-death and nirvana are not different, then, they are nonetheless experienced differently and are not simply one and the same.)

L4: [NOT THE SAME, NOT DIFFERENT -- THEN WHAT CHANGES?]

\ ###

\ 21.

\ The views [regarding] whether that which is beyond death is limited by a beginning or an end or some other alternative

\ Depend on a nirvana limited by a beginning (purvanta) and an end (aparanta),

Those views, "unanswerable questions", are based on the idea of something changing with Nirvana. Either something new added, or something ending.

\ ###

\ 22.

\ Since all dharmas are empty, what is finite ? What is infinite ?

\ What is both finite and infinite ? What is neither finite nor infinite ?

\ ###

\ 23.

\ Is there anything which is this or something else, which is permanent or impermanent,

\ Which is both permanent and impermanent, or which is neither ?

But nothing "is", so how can anything change ?

(Jonah Winters: The cause of this whole sphere of confusions and misunderstandings about the nature of freedom is the human tendency to speculate and theorize. Were there not this tendency, then one would never perceive transitory phenomena as enduring in the first place, which would prevent one from developing passionate attractions and aversions regarding phenomena. Without such passions, the dispositions, grasping and craving would not develop, and thus suffering would not come to be. Without these passions, one would not create the concepts of eternal life, identity or difference, or infinity of the universe, concepts which the Buddha repeatedly refused to discuss. The notion of emptiness is an antidote to this chain which has its birth in confused understanding and its result in suffering. For, "when all things are empty, why [speculate on] the finite, the infinite, both the finite and the infinite and neither the finite nor the infinite? Why speculate on the identical, the different, the eternal, the non-eternal, both, or neither?" (Karikas XXV.22-23)

When one completely and utterly ceases to grasp onto theories and perceptions, speculation comes to an end, and dispositions are "blown out." This is nirvana.)

\ ###

\ 24.

\ THE CESSATION OF ACCEPTING EVERYTHING [AS REAL]

\ IS A SALUTARY (SIVA) CESSATION OF PHENOMENAL DEVELOPMENT (PRAPANCA);

\ NO DHARMA ANYWHERE HAS BEEN TAUGHT BY THE BUDDHA OF ANYTHING.

THE DUALITY "NIRVANA" vs. "SAMSARA"

THEY ARE NOT DIFFERENT, THEY ARE NOT THE SAME

-- A DUALITY, A MENTAL FABRICATION

-- SO THE DIFFERENCE IS IN THE MIND

If nothing "is", then nothing "changes".

All is empty, dependent on the mind ...

So the change is in the mind, in the perception.

But this does not mean that there is no difference at all:

The difference is in not being fooled by our own mind, thinking its own constructions are real or represent real things or processes, holding to views or right and wrong, judging things accordingly, grasping, suffering from any change.

Nirvana is : never falling for any absolute, any view, any perception; never stopping the flow; always seeing Both Truths at the same time.

The "very ultimate reality" is still inexpressible.

(Streng5: Nirvana, for Nagarjuna, is not a term which darkly reflects an absolute Ultimate Reality; it, too, is simply a fabrication of the mind which, if misunderstood as referring to a self-sufficient and independent Ultimate Reality, will misguide the one who seeks release. Only as a conventional i.e., relative, term can it be profitably used to direct the mind from ignorance and greedy The Ultimate Truth to which the term Nirvana points is that it is without any designations in actuality there is no "it" and no designation, just as visible forms are not things-in-themselves which have certain attributes.

The difference between Nirvana and samsara applies only to the conventional norms of truth, for ultimately both of them are empty (sunya). The "negative tendency" in dealing with Nirvana and samsara as "undifferentiated" rather than as "the same" is important to prevent the misunderstanding that emptiness is an Absolute in the sense of Brahman in Advaita-vedanta thought. Nirvana and samsara have a "negative identity" whereby the nature of reality in Nirvana consists in the lack of self-sufficient reality in the factors that constitute samsara. The emptiness of the phenomenal world is also the emptiness of any "non-phenomenal reality" that is conceived as self-existent. Samsara is no more "empty" than Nirvana; nor is Nirvana more "empty" than samsara from the highest point of view—though Nirvana is more "empty" than samsara from the conventional, practical perspective.

See much more in Chapter 5 of Streng)

(Williams: Nirvana, for Nagarjuna, is 'the calming of all representations, the calming of all verbal differentiations, peace' (MK 25:24).

Since for Nagarjuna Nirvana is the result of calming the categorizing, conceptualizing mind, so any tendency to conceptualize Nirvana is refuted. Nirvana, he says, is neither an existent nor a nonexistent, neither both together nor neither alternative.

-- It could not be an existent, since all existents are part of the realm of causal conditioning (MK 25:5-6). It would then be subject to decay and perishing (literally: birth and death: MK 25:4).

-- It could not be a nonexistent, however, since if there are really no existents so there can be no nonexistent Nonexistence occurs when something goes out of existence, and also the very notion of nonexistence depends upon the notion of existence. Non-existents are anyway not independent entities (MK 25:7-8). If there is really, from an ultimate point of view, nothing (that is, nothing has inherent existence), then Nirvana could not come about either.

-- Moreover Nirvana could not be both an existent and a nonexistent, since these are contradictory (MK 25:14).

-- And Nirvana as a really existing thing which is neither existent nor nonexistent is simply incomprehensible (MK 25:1G). in fact, Nagarjuna says:

There is nothing whatsoever differentiating samsara (the round of rebirth) from Nirvana.

There is nothing whatsoever differentiating Nirvana from samsara.

The limit of Nirvana is the limit of samsara.

Between the two there is not the slightest bit of difference.
(MK 25:19-20)

According to Tsong kha pa in his commentary to the MadhyamakaKarikas (f.263b) this is not to be taken as the expression of some mystical identity. Rather, Nirvana and samsara are identical in the sense that they have in all respects the same nature - absence of inherent existence. We should not think that this world is empty but Nirvana is some really existing alternative realm or world. Nirvana is attainable here and now through the correct understanding of the here and now.)

L2: [Section 26 - An Analysis of the Twelve Components (dvadasanga) (the twelve spokes) - 12]

(RÉSUMÉ:

- Section 22 mentionned that the "very ultimate truth" is not "Dependent Origination" or "Emptiness", and that no conceptual thought can express it.
- Section 23 affirmed that there is no such thing as right vs. wrong.
- Section 24 introduced the Two Truths and the Middle Way -- razor edge, dharmaksanti
- Section 25 ended with: What is nirvana then ? : the cessation of accepting everything [as real].
- All of these suggest that, even if we cannot conceptualize the goal or the "very ultimate reality", we should adopt a certain conventional way -- a middle way -- based on Dependent Origination and Emptiness.

So how to do that ? -- necessarily a conventional truth method --

- Dependent Origination explains samsara and the possibility of Nirvana (the cessation of accepting everything [as real]). Even though the elements of this model should not be seen as real (like in the Abhidharma), they form a useful model.

- -- The whole set of five aggregates is the result of a cycle (iteration or flow), where knowledge is stored in the body and mind (and in some way passed accross lives). A cycle with more and more adaptations, constructions, fabrications, classifications, discriminations, theories, views.

- -- All new construction, fabrication, theories, views, ..., are ultimately based on the hypothesis of something being invariant, a self-existing something, something that can be expected, planned, control -- this is ignorance.

- -- We construct because of this ignorance, we think there are invariants, self-existence, right and wrong, pure and impure, real cause and effect.

- -- But all constructions are dependent, impermanent, unsatisfactory, empty. They necessarily fail at one point, because there is no invariant, no absolute, no self-existence.

- -- The structure and mind stream expect, and is deceived = dukkha.

- Paradoxically: if it is the accumulation of knowledge in the five aggregates that perpetuates samsara; it is also knowledge that permits to escape from it (not shutting down the mind from the start).

- The key (to escape) is to remove ignorance, which can be done by cultivating knowledge and wisdom.

-- The truth in question is dependent arising and its concomitant, emptiness.
 -- -- (they may not be the "very ultimate truth", but they are very useful tools to clear the way.)
 -- -- When all things are seen as being empty (...), one can form no dispositions about them and will cause neither passionate attractions nor aversions to come into play. // The "realization" of sunyata (the emptiness of svabhava) prevents the continuation of fabrication.
 -- -- This will prevent grasping (the weak link of the chain).
 -- -- It is not a linear process; it is like breaking a habit, de-programming the five aggregates.
 -- -- With knowledge, the person is no more fooled by "self-existence", there is no more constructions,
 -- -- the cessation of accepting everything [as real].
 -- -- With no more constructions, no more accumulation of knowledge, no more views, no more false expectations, no more deceptions ==> Nirvana.
 -- The Eightfold Path is (still) the way to do this. -- but nothing should be "crystallized", all dharmas are empty. There is just the flow, nothing in the flow.)

L3: [(THE CASE OF SAMSAARA :)]

\ ###
 \ 1.
 \ "What is hidden by ignorance (1)" (avidyanivarta) has caused the three kinds of conditioned things (2) (samskara)
 \ to be made for rebirth —
 \ By those actions it [i.e., " what is hidden by ignorance"] goes forward.

Ignorance and volitional formations are considered to be from past life -- in a three lives model of the 12 links.

What is hidden by ignorance .. and that goes forward : ?? -- maybe the result of those actions, the five aggregates themselves. Going forward may then mean "becoming".

The three kinds of conditioned things are maybe : physical, mental and verbal actions // or wholesome, unwholesome and neutral.

In the context of dependent arising, the most important aspect of volitional formations is their power to generate a new existence in the future, its power to bring about rebirth. These volitional formations, depending on whether they are wholesome or unwholesome volitions, will bring about a good or bad rebirth.

Note: in section 13 & 16, conditioned things are "dispositions".

Conditioned elements = Sankhara (Volitional activities) DO-2, habits, reactions, dispositions, discrimination, desire (section 6), hatred, ... based on ignorance // The fourth constituent aggregate of the individual is samskara, mental formations and dispositions. These dispositions include any volitional activity or habitual tendency, good and bad, that creates karma and thus binds one to the cycle of birth-and-death. Dispositions include confidence and conceit, wisdom and ignorance, lust and hatred.

\ ###
 \ 2.
 \ Consciousness (3), presupposing that which is conditioned (samskara), enters on its course.

After rebirth / from previous karma:

If volitional formations are accumulated in the mind and ignorance is still present, when death occurs, a new moment of consciousness will be generated following death. This is the first moment of consciousness of the new life. (the first of a series of moments)

The formula states -- "Dependent upon Activities arises Consciousness." By consciousness is here meant re-linking consciousness or re-birth consciousness. By this formula is therefore meant that the conscious life of man in his present birth is conditioned by his volitional activities, his good and bad actions, his Karma of the past life. To put it in another way, the consciousness of his present life is dependent on his past Karma. This formula is highly important since it involves a linking of the past life with the present and thereby implies re-birth. Hence, this third link is called //patisandhi vinnana// or re-linking consciousness or re-birth consciousness.

\ ###

\ When consciousness is begun, the "name-and-form"- (namarupa) (4) is instilled.

After rebirth / from previous karma:

Mentality-materiality is a term for the psycho-physical organism. When the rebirth consciousness springs up at the time of conception it does not arise in isolation. It arises in association with the totality of the psycho-physical organism, which also comes into being at the time of conception. A living being is a compound of five aggregates, the material factor being form and four mental factors being feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness.

\ ###

\ 3.

\ When the "name-and-form" is instilled, the six domains of sense perceptions (5) (ayatana) are produced.

\ Having arrived at the six domains of sense perceptions, the process of perception begins to function.

After rebirth / from previous karma:

As the psycho-physical organism grows and evolves, the five physical sense faculties appear; the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body. There is also the mind faculty, the organ of thought, which coordinates the other sense data and also cognizes its own objects - ideas, images, concepts, etc.

The six sense faculties serve as our means for gathering information about the world. Each faculty can receive the type of sense data appropriate to itself. The eye receives form, the ear sounds, nose smells etc. Thus we come to the next link.

\ ###

\ 4.

\ Consciousness begins to function presupposing the eye, the visual forms, and ability of mental association—

\ Presupposing "name-and-form."

\ ###

\ 5.

\ That which is the coincidence (6) (samnipata) of visual form, consciousness, and the eye:

After rebirth / from previous karma:

Contact means the coming together of the consciousness with the sense objects through the sense faculty,

e.g. the eye consciousness contacts form through the eye.

Here consciousness means "undifferentiated cognition" -- without discrimination or recognition, which is perception.

\ ###

\ That is sensual perception; and from perception, sensation (7) begins to function.

After rebirth / from previous karma:

Perceptions is recognition, discrimination.

Sensation / feeling : Feeling is the "effective tone" with which the mind experiences the object.

-- There can be six kinds of feeling as determined by the organ through which the feeling arises

e.g. there is feeling born of eye contact, feeling born of ear contact, etc.

-- By way of its effective quality, feelings are of three types; pleasant, painful and neutral feelings.

-- It is through these feeling that our past karmas work themselves out and bring their fruit.

\ ###

\ 6.

\ "Craving (8)" (tr̥sna) [for existing things] is conditioned by sensation.

The weak link, according to Bikkhu Bodhi

With this link we take a major step forward in the movement of the wheel of existence. All the factors we have mentioned so far - consciousness, mentality-materiality, the six sense faculties, contact and feeling - represent the results of past karma. They arise through the maturation of karma from our past, from volitional formations.

But now with the arising of craving experience moves from the past to the causes operating in the present, those causes which generate a new existence in the future.

-- When we experience pleasant feelings we become attached to them. We enjoy them, relish them, crave for a continuation of them. Thus craving arises.

-- When we experience painful feeling, this pain awakens an aversion, a desire to eradicate its source, or to flee from them.

But this pattern, by which feeling leads to craving, does not occur as a necessity.

This is a very important point. Between feeling and craving there is a space, a gap which can become a battlefield where the round of existence is brought to an end. The battle fought in this space determines whether bondage will continue indefinitely into the future or whether it will be replaced by enlightenment and liberation. For if, instead of yielding to craving, we contemplate our feeling with mindfulness and awareness and understand them as they really are, then we can prevent craving from arising and from generating renewed existence in the future.

Tanha (Craving) is depicted in the image of a man smoking opium. He is an addict who always craves for more and more of the drug. Having no contentment, he cannot have enough of it.

Craving cannot be fulfilled. It is the mind which causes impulses and emotions.

Craving (Tanha) There are 6 kinds of craving corresponding to the 6 sense objects.

- 1. Craving for forms
- 2. Craving for sounds
- 3. Craving for odours
- 4. Craving for tastes
- 5. Craving for tangible objects
- 6. Craving for mental objects.

Up to this point, the succession of events has been determined by past karma. Craving, however, leads to the making of new karma in the present and it is possible now, and only now, to practice Dharma. What is needed here is mindfulness (sati), for without it no Dharma at all can be practiced while one will be swept away by the force of past habits and let craving and unknowing increase themselves within one's heart. When one does have mindfulness one may and can know "this is pleasant feeling," "this is unpleasant feeling," "this is neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling" -- and such contemplation of feelings leads one to understand and beware of greed, aversion and delusion, which are respectively associated with the three feelings. With this knowledge one can break out of the Wheel of Birth and Death. But without this Dharma-practice it is certain that feelings will lead on to more cravings and whirl one around this wheel full of dukkha. As Venerable Nagarjuna has said:

"Desires have only surface sweetness,
hardness within and bitterness --
deceptive as the kimpa-fruit.
Thus says the King of Conquerors.
Such links renounce -- they bind the world
Within samsara's prison grid.

If your head or dress caught fire
in haste you would extinguish it,
Do likewise with desire --
Which whirls the wheel of wandering-on
and is the root of suffering.
No better thing to do!"
-- L.K. 23, 104

In Sanskrit, the word trisna (tanha) means thirst, and by extension implies "thirst for experience." For this reason, craving is shown as a toper guzzling intoxicants and in my picture I have added three bottles -- craving for sensual sphere existence and the craving for the higher heavens of the Brahma-worlds which are either of subtle form, or formless.

\ ###
\ Certainly [a person] craves for the sake of sensation.
\ The one who craves acquires the four-fold acquisition (9) (upadana)
\ [namely sexual pleasure, false views, ascetic morality and vows, and the doctrine of self-existence].

Attachment / grasping (Upadana) -- acquisition (upadana) [of karma] - Grasping is clinging to sense-objects and the 5 aggregates
-- Clinging to sensuality
-- Clinging to views

- Clinging to mere rules and ritual
- Clinging to ego-belief (belief that 5 aggregates are Ego)

This is an intensification and diversification of craving which is directed to four ends: sensual pleasures, views which lead astray from Dharma, external religious rites and vows, and attachment to the view of soul or self as being permanent. When these become strong in people they cannot even become interested in Dharma, for their efforts are directed away from Dharma and towards dukkha. The common reaction is to redouble efforts to find peace and happiness among the objects which are grasped at. Hence both pictures show a man reaching up to pick more fruit although his basket is full already.

(Jonah Winters: The weak link, according to Jonah Winters ? - (with the ability to refrain from grasping ?)

This leads to grasping, which takes the two forms of passionate desire to partake of pleasant sensations and avoid unpleasant ones.

With the development of grasping, the one who grasps now becomes bound to the cycle of birth-and-death.

Nagarjuna here points out a converse progression. "If [the grasper] were to be a non-grasper, he would be released, and there would be no further becoming." (Karikas XXVI.7) This, Nagarjuna points out, is a weak link in the chain. This is where the cycle of suffering can be broken and freedom won. One may not have control over the earlier links of the chain, such as primal ignorance or past karma, but one assuredly has the ability, here and now, to refrain from grasping. With detached equanimity, bondage would be broken. If one does grasp, then the five aggregates constituting the psychophysical personality will be bound by dispositionally-conditioned karma and will continue to arise again and again. This will lead to unending rebirths, which in turn will lead to unending deaths. This is the final link of the chain. "Such is the occurrence of this entire mass of suffering." (Karikas XXVI.9))

\ ###

\ 7.

\ When the acquisition exists, the acquirer begins to function (10) (i.e. existence, becoming).

\ If he were someone without acquisition, that being would be released, and would not exist.

Bhava is the "kammicly" accumulative side of existence,
 -- the phase of life in which we act and accumulate karma,
 -- in which we generate more volitional formations,
 -- in which we build up these formations,
 -- accumulate them in the flow of consciousness.

When these karmas are accumulated after death they bring about a new existence.

With hearts boiling with craving and grasping, people ensure for themselves more and more of various sorts of life, and pile up the fuel upon the fire of dukkha. The ordinary person, not knowing about dukkha, wants to stoke up the blaze, but the Buddhist way of doing things is to let the fires go out for want of fuel by stopping the process of craving and grasping and thus cutting off Unknowing at its root. If we want to stay in samsara we must be diligent and see that our //becoming//, which is happening all the time shaped by our karma, is //becoming// in the right direction. This means //becoming// in the direction of purity

and following the white path of Dharma-practice. This will contribute to whatever we become, or do not become, at the end of this life when the pathways to the various realms stand open and we //become// according to our practice and to our death-consciousness.

\ ###

\ 8.

\ That being is the five "groups of universal elements" (skandha). Because of a being, birth (11) begins to function.

Birth in the future life is conditioned by the actions in this life and previous ones.

There is accumulation of knowledge, dispositions, structures, from life to life.

And any of those (knowledge, dispositions, structures) are necessarily imperfect, impermanent, conducive to sorrow and death.

\ ###

\ Growing old, dying, sorrow (dukkha) (12), etc., grief and regrets,

\ ###

\ 9.

\ Despair and agitation: all this results from birth;

\ That "produced being" is a single mass of sorrows (dukkha).

Necessarily following birth.

\ ###

\ 10.

\ Thus the ignorant people construct the conditioned things (samskara); [that is] the source for existence-in-flux.

(Maybe:) Like, the whole set of five aggregates is the result of a cycle, where knowledge is stored in the body and mind (and in some way passed across lives). A cycle with more and more constructions, fabrications, classifications, discriminations, theories, views.

All new construction, fabrication, theories, views, ..., are ultimately based on the hypothesis of something being invariant, a self-existing something, something that can be expected, planned, control.

The structure and mind stream expect, and is deceived = sorrow.

Question: Is progress a short sided perspective, a catastrophe waiting to happen, or is the humanity as a whole getting better, closer to transcendence ?

L3: [(THE CASE OF NIRVANA :)]

\ ###

\ The one who constructs is ignorant; the wise person is not [one who constructs] because he perceives true reality.

\ ###

\ 11.

\ WHEN IGNORANCE CEASES, THE CONSTRUCTED PHENOMENA DO NOT COME INTO EXISTENCE.

\ A person's cessation of ignorance proceeds on the basis of "becoming" [enlightened] through knowledge.

\ ###

\ 12.

\ Through cessation of every [component] none functions;
\ That single mass of sorrow (dukkha) is thus completely destroyed.

Lead by ignorance of emptiness, one builds knowledge, hardware and software, discriminative grids, ..., hoping to find the "very ultimate view", the final adaptation, the final knowledge, total security and happiness.

All knowledge are ultimately based on the hypothesis of something being invariant, a self-existing something, something that can be expected, planned, control.

The structure and mind stream expect, and is deceived = sorrow, because there is no self-existence, no invariant, no absolute cause & effect, no control.

When ignorance ceases, this building up ceases.

The paradox: The cessation of ignorance, is (also) through building knowledge (Dependent Origination, Emptiness). Until there is the Union of the Two Truths.

L2: [Section 27 - An Analysis of the Views (drsti) About Reality (dogmas) - 30]

(RÉSUMÉ:

- Is there a "being" in this "flow"? Is there anything to Liberate or Purify.
- Is there any view explaining it all.
- About views on self and the world. About rebirth and what is taking rebirth.
- Searching for a "self" in samsara
- -- Obsessive views about the past and the future
- -- The duality "self" vs. "acquisition"; not the same, not different
- -- It is not "I have existed", not "I have not existed", not both, not neither
- -- The same for the future
- Searching for a divine soul in a temporary body (dualism)
- -- The primal mind, very subtle Citta, basic knower, conscience base de tout
- Conclusion about a "self" in samsara
- -- Thus, there is no eternal part that goes from life to life in samsara. There is no samsara either.
- -- The self is not eternal, non-eternal, both or neither
- Searching for the cycle of samsara itself -- the worlds
- -- Could there be a world, eternal, infinite (or any other possibilities)
- -- Showing the absurdity of this chain of rebirth, of these worlds
- Thus all views are flawed, absurd.)

L3: [(A. SEARCHING FOR A BEING IN THE CYCLE OF SAMSAARA)]

\ ###
\ 1.
\ Those [views] relating to the limits of the past reality are: "The world is eternal," etc.,
\ [And "I have existed in the past," "I have not existed in the past," etc.]

Preoccupations about the past.

Like : The cycle of samsara (Dependent Origination) has no beginning, and no end.

Like : I have been cycling in Samsara since beginningless time.

So the world is seen as eternal because we thing there are thing that continues through it

-- like a "self" going through the endless samsara.

There is a lot of stories about the past lives of the Buddha. - The Sutra of the Past Lives of the Bodhisattva.

"If he wants, he recollects his manifold past lives ...

\ ###

\ 2.

\ The assertion: "I will not become something different in a future time,"

\ "I will become [something different]," and the alternative, etc., are relating to an end [in the future].

Preoccupations about the future.

Like: I will continue in this cycle for endless time.

Like: I will become Liberated at one point.

QUESTIONS:

Is it the same being that is cycling in samsara.

Like can I remember past life?

Something that stays the same in i, ii, iii -- a permanent "self" ?

First, lets look at one cycle of this eternity in samsara.

-- Was I the same in the past ? -- or Will I be the same in the future ?

-- Was I different in the past ? -- or Will I be different in the future ?

-- Both in the past ? -- Both in the future ?

-- Neither in the past ? -- Neither in the future ?

The trio i (before acquisition), ii (after acquisition), iii (after liberation, or another cycle):

It will be remembered that they are not the same, not different, all empty.

\ ###

\ 3.

\ [The assertion:] "I existed in a past time (1)" does not obtain,

\ Since this [present being] is not (i.e. "ii" is not the same as "i") that one who [was] in a former birth.

L4: [(ABOUT THE DUALITY "SELF" vs. "ACQUISITION":)]

\ ###

\ 4.

\ Were he [in a previous birth], that individual self (atma) which he acquires [in coming into existence] would be different.

\ Moreover, what kind of individual self is there without acquisition (upadana)?

\ ###

\ 5.

\ If it were held that: "There is no individual self without the acquisition,"

\ Then the individual self would be [only] the acquisition or it is not an individual self [at all].

\ ###

\ 6.

\ The individual self is not the acquisition, since that [acquisition] appears and

disappears.

\ Now really, how will "he who acquires" become "that which is acquired?"

\ ###

\ 7.

\ Moreover, it does not obtain that the individual self is different from the acquisition.

\ If the individual self were different, it would be perceived without the acquisition; but [in fact] it is not so perceived.

\ ###

\ 8.

\ Thus that [individual self] is not different from nor identical to the acquisition.

\ The individual self is not without acquisition; but there is no certainty that "It does not exist."

THE DUALITY "SELF" vs. "ACQUISITION"

NOT THE SAME, NOT DIFFERENT, ALL EMPTY

Karma changes the five aggregates.

And there is no "self" outside of the aggregates, or different from the acquisition. (see previous chapters)

(Jonah Winters: Nagarjuna next addresses the issue of the relation between the soul and the body (WARNING: I think the section about "god" vs. "man" is the section about "soul " and "body") by focusing on grasping, for it is grasping which causes the belief in self-hood. There is certainly an appearance of continuous selfhood. This illusion arises from the agglomeration of the aggregates, but it is only dispositions and grasping that cause one to see a self in the aggregates. "When it is assumed that there is no self separated from grasping, grasping itself would be the self. Yet, this is tantamount to saying that there is no self." (Karikas XXVII.5))

(Jonah Winters: But, he cautions, this does not mean that there is a self different from grasping. The self, then, "is neither different from grasping nor identical with it." (Karikas XXVII.8))

What has been refuted here is any natural existential status of the self, not the self as it has come to be in those who grasp. "A self does not exist. Yet, it is not the case that a person who does not grasp does not exist. This much is certain." (Karikas XXVII.8) That is, when there is grasping, there is a belief in selfhood, and a self comes to be. Nagarjuna's point is that this self is not ultimately real.)

\ ###

\ 9.

\ [The assertion:] "I have not existed in a past time (2)" does not obtain,

\ For that one [now living] is not different (i.e. "ii" is not different than "i") from that one who was in a former birth.

\ ###

\ 10.

\ If that [present person] were different, he would exist in exclusion of that [former] one.

\ Therefore either that [former person] persists, or he would be born eternal!

\ ###

\ 11.

\ -- note 4 : Verse 11 is not available in the Sanskrit text, but it is known from the Tibetan translation

\ ###

\ 12.

\ There is no existing thing which is "that which has not existed prior."

Therefore, the error logically follows that

\ Either the individual self is "what is produced" or it originates without a cause.

(Jonah Winters: Nagarjuna opens with a discussion of views about eternalism. All views of the survival of the self are based on the belief that the self existed in the past and/or that the self will exist in the future. However, it would not be appropriate to say that the self existed in the past, for this would require that the self who existed in the past is identical with the self who exists now, in the present. This has already been refuted in section eleven. However, the Buddha also said that it is incorrect to say that the self is not eternal. If the Buddha had denied continuity of existence, then, as discussed above, morality would be undercut, for "the fruit of action performed by one will be experienced by another." (Karikas XXVII.11) This was discussed in section seventeen.)

\ ###

\ 13.

\ Thus the view concerning the past which [asserts] "I have existed (1)," or "I have not existed (2),"

\ Both ["existed and not existed"] (3) or neither (4): this does not obtain at all.

\ ###

\ 14.

\ [The views:] "I will become something in a future time (1'),"

\ Or "I will not become (2') [something]," etc. (3') (4'), [should be considered] like those [views] of the past.

EMPTINESS OF THE SUBJECT OF EXISTING IN THE PAST. PRESENT, OR FUTURE
THERE IS NO "SELF" GOING THROUGH i, ii, iii

L3: [(B. SEARCHING FOR A "DIVINE SOUL" IN A TEMPORARY "BODY")]

\ ###

\ 15.

\ If "This is a man, this is a god" [obtains], then eternity (i) exists,

\ For god is unproduced, and certainly something eternal would not be born.

\ ###

\ 16.

\ If man is different from god, there would exist something non-eternal (ii).

\ If man is different from god, then a continuity does not obtain.(i.e. they cannot be different)

Continuity means: how can one become the other -- from samsara to Nirvana.

There has to be a dependent relation -- cause & effect.

\ ###
\ 17.
\ If one part were divine and another part human, (i.e. a man with an eternal soul)
\ Then there would be something non-eternal [together with] that which is eternal
(iii); but that is not possible.

If they cannot exist separately, then maybe there is already a "divine part" in man. And it would be that part that realize Nirvana / eternal happiness.

THE DUALITY "GOD" vs. "MAN"

--- or "DIVINE PART" vs. "ORDINARY PART" in man

--- or "ETERNAL" vs. "NON ETERNAL"

They are not the same, they are not different (both), all empty

Note: This is not the same God as in Tibetan Cosmology; because they would be non-eternal and produced.

It looks like the dualism "eternal soul" vs. "non-eternal body".

Like in : At a time of contraction, beings are mostly reborn in the Abhassara Brahma world. So the question is about the existence of an eternal "buffer-zone" while the world collapse, and regenerate.

Or maybe it is about the "Tathagatagarba" = a part of us that is "Buddha like", eternal, to purify.

(Jonah Winters: One may object that perhaps there are forms of "subtle existence" which do not face the above problems. The Buddha did allow for the possibility of higher realms of existence, such as realms of Gods or spirits. This was a natural corollary of the doctrine of rebirth, for one living the Eightfold Path may improve his or her station but not achieve the final enlightenment which would obviate further existences. This person would then have to be reborn, but would be reborn in a better world. However, these divine spheres of reality, while better, were still not eternal and ultimately no more satisfactory than the human sphere. Nagarjuna devotes three verses to clarifying the fact that divine existences share the same limitations as human existence.)

\ ###
\ 18.
\ If something both non-eternal and eternal were proved,
\ Then, no doubt, something "neither eternal nor non-eternal (iv)" is proved.

L3: [(C. CONCLUSION ABOUT A SELF IN SAMSAARA)]

\ ###
\ 19.
\ If someone, having come from somewhere, in some way goes somewhere again,
\ Then there would be existence-in-flux with no beginning; but this is not the case.

Thus, there is no eternal part that goes from life to life in samsara.
Thus there is no samsara either.

\ ###
\ 20.

\ If someone who is eternal does not exist, who will exist being non-eternal,
\ Or who being both eternal and non-eternal, or devoid of these two
[characteristics] ?

there is no non eternal-part that is in samsara.

Or both, or neither.

Thus EMPTINESS OF A SELF IN SAMSAARA

(Jonah Winters: But, "if it is thought that there is nothing eternal, what is it that will be non-eternal, both eternal and non-eternal, and also what is separated from these two ['neither']?" (Karikas XXVII.20))

L3: [(D. SEARCHING FOR THE CYCLE OF SAMSAARA ITSELF
-- A ROUND OF REBIRTHS / A SERIES OF WORLDS)]

Mixing: Worlds, aggregates, karma, rebirth, space and time

Maybe just an exercise showing that they are all the same.

\ ###

\ 21.

\ If the world would come to an end, how would an other-world come into existence?

\ If the world would not come to an end, how would an other-world come into being?

Like, each period of contraction and expansion? -- (the buffer zone:) At a time of contraction, beings are mostly reborn in the Abhassara Brahma world.

Or like, each of the six realms.

Or like, a world disappears with the five aggregates, and another world is created based on karma

-- there is no world outside of the five aggregates (that was understood in the Hinayana) -- see sutras below.

-- there is no space and time without objects -- any questions about the extent of these, are answered by the extent of those.

The problem of iteration as in Chapter 21.

It is a problem, if we insist on seeing the series of worlds as real, like for the five aggregates.

\ ###

\ 22.

\ Since the continuity of the "groups of universal elements" (skandhas)

\ [from one moment to the next] functions like flames of lamps,

\ [The view:] "both having an end and not having an end" is not possible.

\ ###

\ 23.

\ If the former ["groups"] would disappear, those [new] "groups" which are dependent on those [former] "groups" would not arise;

\ Therefore, the world would come to an end (ii).

Like: Case "having an end" -- the cause does end.

-- the "origination" of a moment or the whole is impossible, after its "cessation"

-- or the "origination" of the next moment is impossible, after the "annihilation" of the previous one

-- or the production of the effect is impossible, after the "stopping" of the cause

That would be an "end", but then nothing would work either.

Like, at the death of the body, nothing will continue; there would be no consequences of bad actions.

\ ###

\ 24.

\ If the former ["groups"] would not disappear,
\ these [new] "groups" which are dependent on those [former] "groups" would not arise;

\ Therefore, the world would be eternal (i).

Like: Case "not having an end" -- the cause does not end.

-- the "origination" of a moment or the whole is impossible, before/without its "cessation"

-- or the "origination" of the next moment is impossible, before/without the "annihilation" of the previous one

(e,c)

-- or the production of the effect is impossible, before/without the "stopping" of the cause

That would be "eternity", but then nothing would work either.

Like, the self does not die, everything continue; there would be no consequences of bad actions.

\ ###

\ 25.

\ If one part were finite and the other were infinite,
\ The world would be both finite and infinite (iii); but this is not possible.

Note: Finite being, infinite gods

Here finite seems to take the meaning of "impermanent" (not about limited space).

Finite and infinite == conditioned and unconditioned == dependent and independent

So finite and infinite would mean: a permanent Buddha Nature in an impermanent body and mind.

Like, finite up-and-down, and infinite across ?

Or finite in space, infinite in time.

Or like, a finite body and an infinite subtle mind.

Or a self finite or infinite -- like the infinite Buddha-Nature of Dzogchen.

How can we have part of the aggregates that continue, and part the totally cease?

Like some of the "cause/conditions" do not stop, some do.

See verse 25.22-23 :

Since all dharmas are empty, what is finite ? What is infinite ?

What is both finite and infinite ? What is neither finite nor infinite ?

Note: Finite: Having bounds; limited: a finite list of choices; our finite fossil fuel reserves. b. Existing, persisting, or enduring for a limited time only; impermanent.

\ ###

\ 26.

\ Therefore, how can it be that one part of "one who acquires" [karma] will be destroyed, (i.e. the body – man ?)

\ And one part not destroyed? (i.e. the very subtle mind -- the divine part ?) This is not possible.

\ ###

\ 27.

\ How, indeed, can it be that one part of the acquisition [of karma] (i.e. the learning stored in the body) will be destroyed,

\ And one part not destroyed? (i.e. the learning stored in the mind) That, certainly does not obtain.

\ ###

\ 28.

\ If the [view] "both finite and infinite" were proved,

\ Then no doubt, "neither finite nor infinite" (i.e. nothing at all) could be proved.

(Jonah Winters: The thoughts of the soul's eternity or lack thereof were negated above, and now Nagarjuna negates thoughts of the universe's temporal eternity or lack thereof and its spatial infinity or lack thereof. The popular metaphor of candle flames is here used to illustrate the nature of the universe's existence. If the flame of one candle is used to ignite the wick of another candle, and then that newly-ignited candle is used to ignite a third one, then there is the appearance of a flame passing from one candle on to the next. It cannot be said that there is one identical flame passing on, for it is burning on different wicks, using different fuel sources, and in different times. Yet neither can there said to be three different flames, for there is an obvious continuity from one to the next. In the same way are the elements of which the universe is composed. The universe cannot be said to end, because continuity is observed in the series of dependently-arising elements. Nor can it be said to endure, because each entity in each moment is composed of different elements. Finally, the spatial extension of the universe cannot be theorized about in any way. "It is not possible to assert either the finite or the infinite," Nagarjuna concludes. (Karikas XXVII.28))

\ ###

\ 29.

\ Because of the emptiness of all existing things,

\ How will the views about "eternity," etc., come into existence, about what, of whom, and of what kind?

Because of emptiness,

-- there is no "things" being dependent ("Dependent Origination"),

-- no "being" who passed from life to life in "samsara",

-- there is no cycling world, no six realms, no contraction and expansion,

\ ###

\ 30.

\ To him, possessing compassion, who taught the real dharma

\ For the destruction of all views—to him, Gautama, I humbly offer reverence.

[End]

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