

Adoration To The Three Treasures

Nagarjuna — OTHER · Nagarjuna

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Adoration To The Three Treasures
(Mahayanavimsika)
Nagarjuna's Twenty Verses on the Great Vehicle

Mahayanavimsaka of Nagarjuna
(Adoration To The Three Treasures)
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Edited by Vidhusekhara Bhattacharya
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Second translation from “Nagarjuna's Mahamudra Vision”

Sub-section titles are in the form: L#: [...].
These can be used to regenerate the structure using a Word Processor.

L1: [CONTENTS] :L1

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L2: [Buddha represents total Liberation, the perfect union of compassion and wisdom beyond all conceptualization.]

L2: [Nirvana is not a real cessation, not a real change]

L3: [In reality there is no real samsara, no real liberation /cessation.]

L3: [Beings and Buddhas are not different, not the same.]

L3: [Everything, all things, beings and Buddhas are empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen.]

L3: [Everything is like an illusion, non-dual, already calm and pure.]

L3: [In the same way that they imagine a self, worldlings also imagine good, bad, neutral, samsara and Nirvana.]

L3: [But there is no real unwholesomeness, wholesomeness, six-realms, causality / karma, samsara, Nirvana.]

L2: [The real difference between beings in samsara and Buddhas: ignorance / the bondage of false notions]

L3: [Samsara]

L4: [Samsara is due to false notions about reality, not due to real unwholesome or wholesome actions.]

L4: [Beings are fooled by the creations of their own mind.]

L4: [Creating more and more complex illusions they do not know the real way out of suffering.]

L4: [Suffering is due to believing in "inherent existence" and getting attached to our own creations and false knowledge.]

L3: [The Mahayana path]

L4: [With compassion, seeing that all beings are stuck like that, we should engage ourselves onto the Mahayana path: accumulating both merit and wisdom together.]

L3: [Buddhahood]

L4: [Perfecting these two accumulations one become a Buddha free from the bondage of false notions]

L4: [Buddhahood is realizing the Union of The Two Truths beyond all conceptualization, beyond all discrimination: the inseparability of dependent origination and emptiness; their non-duality: not two, not one.]

L4: [Then the real non-dual nature of samsara and Nirvana is directly seen – the fact that everything has always been pure, that it was just a matter of directly seeing this.]

L4: [Then all illusions, attachments, fears are automatically dropped, without going to the other extreme of nihilism.]

L2: [Ignorance of real nature of everything, or wisdom]

L3: [Nothing really exist and change because there is no real origination]

L3: [All discrimination are relative, dependent on the mind, never absolute.]

L3: [When everything is seen as empty because dependent on the mind, then everything becomes calm and pure – that is Nirvana]

L3: [But ignoring this is the cause of all conditioning and suffering – that is samsara]

L2: [The need for a path based on reality, on non-duality, the Middle Way -- Mahayana]

L3: [To get out of this samsaric cycle we need both virtuous methods (like Bodhicitta) and wisdom (emptiness) together: the Middle Way, the Mahayana. Why? Because only then is it in accord with the non-dual nature of everything.]

L2: [Colophon]

L2: [Buddha represents total Liberation, the perfect union of compassion and wisdom beyond all conceptualization.]

\ #1.

\ I make my obeisance to the Buddha who is wise, free from all attachment, and whose powers are beyond conception,

\ and who has kindly taught the truth which cannot be expressed by words. (Note: Original verses are listed first.)

\ #1. I bow down to the all-powerful Buddha

\ Whose mind is free of attachment,

\ Who in his compassion and wisdom

\ Has taught the inexpressible. (Note: Another translation.)

L2: [Nirvana is not a real cessation, not a real change]

L3: [In reality there is no real samsara, no real liberation /cessation.]

L3: [Beings and Buddhas are not different, not the same.]

\ #2.

\ In the transcendental truth there is no origination (utpada), and in fact, there is no destruction (nirodha).

\ The Buddha is like the sky (which has neither origination nor cessation), and the beings are like him, and therefore they are of the same nature.

\ #2. In truth there is no birth -

\ Then surely no cessation or liberation;

\ The Buddha is like the sky

\ And all beings have that nature.

L3: [Everything, all things, beings and Buddhas are empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen.]

\ #3.

\ There is no birth either on this or the other side (of the world). A compound thing (samskrta) originates from its conditions.

\ Therefore it is sunya by its nature. This fact comes into the range of knowledge of an omniscient one.

\ #3. Neither Samsara nor Nirvana exist,

\ But all is a complex continuum

\ With an intrinsic face of void,

\ The object of ultimate awareness.

L3: [Everything is like an illusion, non-dual, already calm and pure.]

\ #4.

\ All things by nature are regarded as reflections. They are pure and naturally quiescent, devoid of any duality, equal, and remain always and in all circumstances in the same way (tathata).

\ #4. The nature of all things

\ Appears like a reflection,

\ Pure and naturally quiescent,

\ With a non-dual identity of suchness.

L3: [In the same way that they imagine a self, worldlings also imagine good, bad, neutral, samsara and Nirvana.]

\ #5.

\ In fact, worldlings attribute atman to what is not atman, and in the same way they imagine happiness, misery, indifference, passions and liberation.

\ #5. The common mind imagines a self

\ Where there is nothing at all,

\ And it conceives of emotional states -

\ Happiness, suffering, and equanimity.

L3: [But there is no real unwholesomeness, wholesomeness, six-realms, causality / karma, samsara, Nirvana.]

\ #6.

\ Birth in the six realms of existence in the world, highest happiness in the heaven, great pain in the hell,

\ -- these do not come within the purview of truth (cannot be accepted as true);
\ nor do the notions that unmeritorious actions lead to the extreme misery, old age, disease, and death, and meritorious actions surely bring about good results.

\ #6. The six states of being in Samsara,
\ The happiness of heaven,
\ The suffering of hell,
\ Are all false creations, figments of mind.

L2: [The real difference between beings in samsara and Buddhas: ignorance / the bondage of false notions]

L3: [Samsara]

L4: [Samsara is due to false notions about reality, not due to real unwholesome or wholesome actions.]

\ #7.
\ It is owing to false notions that beings are consumed by fire of passions even as a forest is burnt by forest conflagration and fall into the hells, etc.
\ As illusion prevails so do beings make their appearance. The world is illusory and it exists only on account of its cause and conditions.

\ #7. Likewise the ideas of bad action causing suffering,
\ Old age, disease and death,
\ And the idea that virtue leads to happiness,
\ Are mere ideas, unreal notions.

L4: [Beings are fooled by the creations of their own mind.]

\ #8.
\ As a painter is frightened by the terrible figure of a Yaksha which he himself has drawn, so is a fool frightened in the world (by his own false notions).

\ #8. Like an artist frightened
\ By the devil he paints,
\ The sufferer in Samsara
\ Is terrified by his own imagination.

L4: [Creating more and more complex illusions they do not know the real way out of suffering.]

\ #9.
\ Even as a fool going himself to a quagmire (swamp, quicksand) is drowned therein, so are beings drowned in the quagmire of false notions and are unable to come out thereof.

\ #9. Like a man caught in quicksands
\ Thrashing and struggling about,
\ So beings drown
\ In the mess of their own thoughts.

L4: [Suffering is due to believing in "inherent existence" and getting attached to our own creations and false knowledge.]

\ #10.

\ The feeling of misery is experienced by imagining a thing where in fact it has no existence.

\ Beings are tortured by the poison of false notions regarding the object and its knowledge.

\ #10. Mistaking fantasy for reality

\ Causes an experience of suffering;

\ Mind is poisoned by interpretation

\ Of consciousness of form.

L3: [The Mahayana path]

L4: [With compassion, seeing that all beings are stuck like that, we should engage ourselves onto the Mahayana path: accumulating both merit and wisdom together.]

\ #11.

\ Seeing these helpless beings with a compassionate heart one should perform the practices of the highest knowledge (bodhicarya) for the benefit of them.

\ #11. Dissolving figment and fantasy

\ With a mind of compassionate insight,

\ Remain in perfect awareness

\ In order to help all beings.

L3: [Buddhahood]

L4: [Perfecting these two accumulations one become a Buddha free from the bondage of false notions]

\ #12.

\ Having acquired requisites thereby and getting unsurpassable bodhi one should become a Buddha, the friend of the world, being freed from the bondage of false notions.

\ #12. So acquiring conventional virtue

\ Freed from the web of interpretive thought,

\ Unsurpassable understanding is gained

\ As Buddha, friend to the world.

L4: [Buddhahood is realizing the Union of The Two Truths beyond all conceptualization, beyond all discrimination: the inseparability of dependent origination and emptiness; their non-duality: not two, not one.]

\ #13.

\ He who realizes the transcendental truth knowing the pratityasamutpada (or the manifestation of entities depending on their causes and conditions),

\ knows the world to be sunya and devoid of beginning, middle or end.

\ #13. Knowing the relativity of all,

\ The ultimate truth is always seen;

\ Dismissing the idea of beginning, middle and end

\ The flow is seen as Emptiness.

L4: [Then the real non-dual nature of samsara and Nirvana is directly seen – the fact that everything has always been pure, that it was just a matter of directly seeing this.]

\ #14.
\ The samsara and nirvana are mere appearances;
\ the truth is stainless, changeless, and quiescent from the beginning and
illuminated.

\ #14. So all samsara and nirvana is seen as it is -
\ Empty and insubstantial,
\ Naked and changeless,
\ Eternally quiescent and illuminated.

L4: [Then all illusions, attachments, fears are automatically dropped, without going to the
other extreme of nihilism.]

\ #15.
\ The object of knowledge in dream is not seen when one awakes. Similarly the world
disappears to him who is awakened from the darkness of ignorance.
\ The creation of illusion is nothing but illusion. When everything is compound
there is nothing which can be regarded as a real thing. Such is the nature of all things.

\ #15. As the figments of a dream
\ Dissolve upon waking,
\ So the confusion of Samsara
\ Fades away in enlightenment.

L2: [Ignorance of real nature of everything, or wisdom]

L3: [Nothing really exist and change because there is no real origination]

\ #16.
\ One having origination (jati) does not originate himself. Origination is a false
conception of the people.
\ Such conceptions and (conceived) beings, these two are not reasonable.

\ #17. The nature of beings is unborn
\ Yet commonly beings are conceived to exist;
\ Both beings and their ideas
\ Are false beliefs.

L3: [All discrimination are relative, dependent on the mind, never absolute.]

\ #17.
\ All this is nothing but mind (citta) and exists just like an illusion.
\ Hence originate good and evil actions and from them good and evil birth.

\ #18. It is nothing but an artifice of mind
\ This birth into an illusory becoming,
\ Into a world of good and evil action
\ With good or bad rebirth to follow.

L3: [When everything is seen as empty because dependent on the mind, then everything becomes
calm and pure – that is Nirvana]

\ #18.
\ When the wheel of the mind is suppressed, all things are suppressed.
\ Therefore all things are devoid of atman (independent nature), and consequently they are pure.

\ #19. When the wheel of mind ceases to turn
\ All things come to an end.
\ So there is nothing inherently substantial
\ And all things are utterly pure .

L3: [But ignoring this is the cause of all conditioning and suffering – that is samsara]

\ #19.
\ It is due to thinking the things which have no independent nature as eternal, atman,
\ and pleasant that this ocean of existence (bhava) appears to one who is enveloped by the darkness of attachment and ignorance.

\ #16. Idealizing things of no substance
\ As eternal, substantial and satisfying,
\ Shrouding them in a fog of desire
\ The round of existence arises.

L2: [The need for a path based on reality, on non-duality, the Middle Way -- Mahayana]

L3: [To get out of this samsaric cycle we need both virtuous methods (like Bodhicitta) and wisdom (emptiness) together: the Middle Way, the Mahayana. Why? Because only then is it in accord with the non-dual nature of everything.]

\ #20.
\ Who can reach the other side of the great ocean of samsara which is full of water of false notions without getting into the great vehicle (Mahayana) ?
\ How can these false notions arise in a man who thoroughly knows this world which has originated from ignorance ?

\ #20. This great ocean of samsara,
\ Full of delusive thought,
\ Can be crossed in the boat Universal Approach.
\ Who can reach the other side without it?

\ Here ends the Mahayanavimsika of Acarya Nagarjuna.

L2: [Colophon]

\ The Twenty Mahayana Verses, (in Sanskrit, Mahayanavimsaka; in Tibetan: Theg pa chen po nyi shu pa) were composed by the master Nagarjuna.
\ They were translated into Tibetan by the Kashmiri Pandit Ananda and the Bhikshu translator Drakjor Sherab (Grags 'byor shes rab).
\ They have been translated into English by the Anagarika Kunzang Tenzin on the

last day of the year 1973 in the hope that the karma of the year may be mitigated.

May all beings be happy!

See also:

A Study of Nagarjuna's Twenty Verses on the Great Vehicle (Mahayanavimsika) and His Verses
on the Heart of Dependent Origination

R. C. Jamieson / Hardcover

[End]

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