

Establishment of Convention - Six verses from a Lost Text

Nagarjuna — *DIALECTICAL* · Nagarjuna

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Establishment of Convention
(Six verses from a Lost Text)
(Vyavaharasiddhi)
by Nagarjuna

#1. One syllable is not a mantra; many syllables are not a mantra either. Dependent upon syllables that are [thus] insubstantial, this [mantra is neither existent] nor non-existent.

#2. Likewise, no medicine appears apart from its specific ingredients. It appears [like] an illusory elephant: It is not [identical with them] nor is it [absolutely] different from them.

#3. It arises in dependent co-origination! Who would maintain that it is existent or non-existent? [Similarly,] visual consciousness arises based on [eye and form].

#4. Projected by the power of karma and passions, the appropriator arises out of existence. Form arises likewise. Who would maintain its existence or non-existence?

#5. Similarly, all the [twelve] members of existence are [simply] conventional designations. All the dharmas, such as extinction, have [only] been advocated [by the Buddhas] for a specific purpose.

#6. Just as a mantra is not a mantra and medicine is not medicine, so [all phenomena] are stated to be dependent. Neither of the two [i.e., cause or effect] can be established [as existing independently].

[End]