

Sixty verses of Arguments

Nagarjuna — *DIALECTICAL* · Nagarjuna

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Sixty verses of Arguments

(Yuktisastika)

by Nagarjuna

- \ #0.
\ Obeisance to the Buddha, the Munindra, who has proclaimed dependent co-arising, the principle by which origination and destruction are eliminated!
- \ #1.
\ Those whose intelligence has transcended being and non-being and is unsupported have discovered the profound and non-objective meaning of 'condition'.
- \ #2.
\ First you must reject non-being, the source of all faults. But now hear the argument by which being also is rejected!
- \ #3.
\ If things were 'true' as fools imagine, why not accept liberation as tantamount to non-being?
- \ #4.
\ One is not liberated by being; one does not [transcend] present existence by non-being. [But] by thorough knowledge of being and non-being the magnanimous are liberated.
- \ #5.
\ Those who do not see reality believe in samsara and nirvana, [but] those who see reality believe in neither.
- \ #6.
\ Existence and nirvana: These two are not [really] to be found. [Instead,] nirvana [may be] defined as the thorough knowledge of existence.
- \ #7.
\ While [the ignorant] imagine that annihilation pertains to a created thing that is dissolved, the wise are convinced that annihilation of [something] created is an illusion.
- \ #8.
\ Though [something apparently] is annihilated by being destroyed, it is not [destroyed] when one thoroughly understands it to be compound. To whom will it be evident?

How could one speak of it as dissolved?

\ #9.

\ Opponent: If the skandhas are not annihilated [an Arhat] does not enter nirvana, though his klesas are exhausted. [Only] when the skandhas have been annihilated is [he] liberated.

\ #10.

\ Reply: When one sees with correct knowledge that which arises conditioned by ignorance, no origination or destruction whatsoever is perceived.

\ #11.

\ This is nirvana in this very life—one's task is accomplished. [But] if a distinction is made here, just after knowledge of the Dharma —

\ #12.

\ One who imagines that even the most subtle thing arises: Such an ignorant man does not see what it means to be dependently born!

\ #13.

\ Opponent: If samsara has stopped for a monk whose klesas are exhausted, then why would the Perfect Buddhas deny that it has a beginning?

\ #14.

\ Reply: [To say] there was a beginning would clearly be holding on to a dogma. How can that which is dependently co-arisen have a first and a last?

\ #15.

\ How could what has previously been generated later be negated again? [No, actually] the world, devoid of an initial and a final limit, appears like an illusion.

\ #16.

\ When one thinks [something] illusory arises or is destroyed, one who recognizes the illusion is not bewildered by it, but one who does not recognize it longs for it.

\ #17.

\ One who comes to see by means of his understanding that existence is like a mirage [and] an illusion is not corrupted by dogmas [based on] an initial or a final limit.

\ #18.

\ Those who imagine that something compounded possesses origination or destruction do not understand the movement of the wheel of dependent origination.

\ #19.

\ Whatever arises depending on this and that has not arisen substantially. That which has not arisen substantially: How can it literally be called 'arisen'?

\ #20.

\ A [compound thing] quieted due to a spent cause is understood to be spent. [But] how can what is not spent by nature be spoken of as spent?

\ #21.

\ So to conclude: There is no origination; there is no destruction. The path of origination and destruction has [however] been expounded [by the Buddhas] for a practical

purpose:

\ #22.

\ By knowing origination destruction is known; by knowing destruction impermanence is known; by knowing impermanence the Holy Dharma is understood.

\ #23.

\ Those who have come to understand that dependent co-origination is devoid of origination and destruction have crossed the ocean of existence, consisting of dogmas.

\ #24.

\ Common people who hold a positivistic attitude are dominated by klesas, due to the fault of being mistaken about being and non-being. They are deceived by their own minds!

\ #25.

\ Those who understand things see that things are impermanent, fraudulent, vain, empty, selfless, and void.

\ #26.

\ Homeless, non-objective, rootless, unfixed, arising wholly through ignorance, without a beginning, middle or end;

\ #27.

\ Without a core (like a plantain), or like the city of gandharvas: [Thus] the dreadful world — a city of confusion — appears like an illusion!

\ #28.

\ It is said that Brahma and the others, who appear to this world to be most true, are, to the noble, false. What of the rest, apart from that?

\ #29.

\ The world, blinded by ignorance, following the current of craving, and the wise, who are free from craving: How can their view of the good be similar?

\ #30.

\ To begin with, [a teacher] should say to his truth-seeking [student] that everything exists. Later, to [the student] who understands the meaning and is free from attachment, [he should say] "All things are void."

\ #31.

\ Those who do not understand the meaning of separation but merely keep on learning without enacting merit: Such base people are lost!

\ #32.

\ Karma [in all its variety], together with its results and the places of rebirth have also been fully explained [by the Buddhas]. [They] have taught as well full knowledge of its nature and its non-origination.

\ #33.

\ Just as the Buddhas have spoken of 'my' and T for pragmatic reasons, so they have also spoken of the skandhas, the sense-fields, and the elements for pragmatic reasons.

\ #34.

\ Things spoken of, such as the great elements, are made to cohere in

consciousness; they are dissolved by understanding them. Certainly they are falsely imagined!

\ #35.

\ When the Jinas have stated that nirvana alone is true, what learned person will then imagine that the rest is not false?

\ #36.

\ As long as mind is unstable it is [under] Mara's dominion. If it is as [has been explained], there is surely no mistake [in maintaining non-origination].

\ #37.

\ Since the Buddhas have stated that the world is conditioned by ignorance, does it not stand to reason that this world is a [result of] discrimination?

\ #38.

\ When ignorance ceases, how can it not be clear that what ceases was imagined by ignorance?

\ #39.

\ That which originates due to a cause and does not abide without [certain] conditions, but disappears when the conditions are absent: How can it be understood to 'exist'?

\ #40.

\ If the advocates of being, who continue clinging to being, go on in the same way, there is nothing strange about that;

\ #41.

\ But it is strange indeed that the proponents of the impermanence of everything, [who] rely on the Buddha's method, contentiously cling to things.

\ #42.

\ When "this" and "that," said about something, are not perceived through analysis, what wise man will contentiously maintain that "this" or "that" is true?

\ #43.

\ Those who adhere to a self or to the world as unconditioned, Alas! They are captivated by dogmas about 'permanent', 'impermanent', and so forth.

\ #44.

\ Those who postulate that conditioned things are established in reality are overtaken by faults related to permanence and the rest.

\ #45.

\ But those who are convinced that conditioned things are like the moon in the water, neither true nor false, are not carried away by dogmas.

\ #46.

\ When one affirms 'being' there is a seizing of awful and vicious dogmas that arise from desire and hatred. From that contentions arise.

\ #47.

\ That is the cause of all dogmas. Without it the klesas do not arise. When this is

thoroughly understood, dogmas and klesas disappear.

\ #48.

\ But how is it thoroughly known? By seeing dependent origination! The [Buddha], best among knowers of reality, also said that what is dependently born is unborn.

\ #49.

\ For those who — oppressed by false knowledge — take the untrue as true, the sequence of seizing, contending, and so forth will arise.

\ #50.

\ The magnanimous have neither thesis nor contention. How can there be an opposing thesis to those who have no thesis?

\ #51.

\ By taking any standpoint whatsoever one is attacked by the twisting snakes of the klesas. But those whose minds have no standpoint are not caught.

\ #52.

\ How can those whose mind takes a stand avoid the strong poison of the klesas? Even if they live an ordinary [life], they are consumed by the snakes of the klesas.

\ #53.

\ Just as a fool is attached to a reflection through conceiving it to be true, so the world is trapped in the cage of objects through stupidity.

\ #54.

\ When the magnanimous see with their eye of knowledge that things are like a reflection, they are not trapped in the swamp of so-called 'objects'.

\ #55.

\ The simple-minded are attached to material form, those of middling level attain absence of the klesas, but those of supreme understanding are liberated by knowing the nature of form.

\ #56.

\ One awakens desires through thinking of a pleasant [thing]; one becomes free from desires through turning away from it; but one obtains nirvana by seeing it to be void like a phantom.

\ #57.

\ The faults of the klesas that torment due to false knowledge do not arise for those who understand the meaning of judgments concerning being and non-being.

\ #58.

\ If there were a standpoint, there would be passion and dispassion. But the great souls without standpoint have neither passion nor dispassion.

\ #59.

\ Those for whom the wavering mind does not waver, not even at the thought of the void, have crossed the awful ocean of existence that is agitated by the monsters of the klesas.

\ #60.

\ May all people by this merit accumulate merit and insight and obtain the two
goods that arise from merit and insight.

[End]

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