

## SIXTY STANZAS OF REASONING

Nagarjuna

Sanskrit title: *Yuktisastika-karika*

Tibetan title: *rigs pa drug cu pa*

Homage to the youthful Manjushri.

Homage to the great Sage  
Who taught dependent origination,  
The means by which are eliminated  
Arising and destruction.

1  
Those whose mind has transcended  
Existence and non-existence and abides no more [in them],  
They've realized the meaning of conditioned existence,  
The profound absence of objectification.

2  
First non-existence, the source of all faults,  
Had already been undone;  
Now listen to the reasoning  
That undoes existence itself as well.

3  
If things were truly existent,  
As imagined by the childish,  
What is the reason they're not accepted  
As liberated with no entity [of existence at all]?

4  
One is not freed by existence;  
One does not transcend samsara through non-existence;  
It's through understanding existence and non-existence  
That the great beings are liberated.

5  
Those who do not see ultimate reality  
Grasp at samsara and nirvana;  
But those who see ultimate reality possess  
No pretensions of world and its' transcendence.

6  
Both samsara and nirvana,  
Neither of these two exists;  
The thorough understanding of cyclic existence-  
This is referred to as "nirvana."

7  
Just as cessation is imputed  
On the disintegration of an arisen entity;  
So too the sublime ones accept  
Cessation that is illusion-like.

8  
Things cease due to utter destruction,  
But not due to understanding their conditioned nature;  
To whom will this be evident?  
How can “destruction” be possible?

9  
If [grasping at] aggregates do not cease,  
Even if afflictions are extinct one’ll not transcend;  
However when they come to cease,  
At that instant one attains freedom.

10  
When the perfect gnosis sees  
That things come from ignorance as condition,  
Nothing will then be objectified,  
Either in terms of arising or destruction.

11  
This is transcendence of sorrow  
In this very life and one’s task is complete;  
If, after the knowledge of truth,  
Differentiations occur here,

12  
And even with respect to most subtle things  
One imputes originations,  
Such an utterly unskilled person does not see  
The meaning of conditioned origination.

13  
If samsara comes to an end

For a monk whose afflictions are extinguished,  
Why have the perfectly awakened Buddhas  
Not explained that [samsara] has beginning?

14  
If there were a beginning, then certainly  
There too would be clinging in the form of dogmas;  
That which is dependently originated,  
How can there be its beginning or end?

15  
That which has arisen before,  
How can it cease again later on?  
Devoid of the limits of beginning and end,  
The world appears like an illusion.

16  
When one views the arising of illusions  
Or the dissolution of the illusions,  
One who recognizes illusions is not confused;  
Those who do not thoroughly crave.

17  
Those who sees with their mind  
That existence is like a mirage and an illusion,  
They will not be corrupted  
By views [grasping at] beginning and end.

18  
Those who imputes arising and disintegration  
With relation to conditioned things,  
They do not understand well the movement  
Of the wheel of dependent origination.

19  
That which has originated due to “this” and “that,”  
That has not done so as its own being;  
And that which has not arisen as its own being,  
How can it be called “arisen”?

20  
The tranquility derived from extinction of cause,  
This is understood to be a cessation;  
That which is not extinguished through its intrinsic nature,  
How can that be called an “extinguishment”?

21  
Since there is nothing that arises,  
There is nothing that disintegrates;  
Yet the paths of arising and disintegration  
Were taught [by the Buddha] for a purpose.

22  
By understanding arising, disintegration is understood;  
By understanding disintegration, impermanence is understood;  
By understanding how to engage with impermanence,  
The sublime dharma is understood as well.

23  
Those who understand the dependent origination  
To be utterly devoid of arising and disintegration,  
Those who have such knowledge will cross  
The ocean of samsara of dogmatic views.

24  
Ordinary beings who hold at entities,

Who, due to distortions of existence and non-existence,  
Are therefore under the domination of faults of afflictions –  
They’re being fooled by their own minds.

25  
Those who’re learned with respect to the facts,  
They see that things are impermanent,  
Deceptive, mere shells, empty and selfless;  
They see them as utterly isolated.

26  
Devoid of locus, there is nothing to objectify;  
Rootless, they have no fixed abode;  
They arise totally from the cause of ignorance,  
Utterly devoid of beginning, middle and end.

27  
Like a plantain tree they have no essence;  
They resemble the city of Gandharvas;  
Thus this dreadful world, a city of ignorance,  
Appears like a magical illusion.

28  
Brahma and so on that appear  
So real to the beings of this world,  
They’re said to be false to the Noble Ones;  
Other than that, what more is left?

29  
The world blinded by ignorance  
Follow after the current of desire;  
The wise, who’re excellent, are free of craving;  
How can these two be equal at all?

30  
To those searching for ultimate reality,  
First one should say that everything exists;  
Later when they understand the meaning  
And are free of attachment, then teach the absence.

31  
With no understanding of the meaning of absence,  
But engaging only in mere studies  
And failing to engage in meritorious acts-  
Such base people are lost.

32  
The karma and their results,  
And the realms of rebirth are explained;  
Full knowledge of their natures,  
And their absence of origination are taught.

33  
Just as the Buddhas have spoken of  
“I” and “mine” for a practical purpose;  
Likewise they spoke too of “aggregates,”  
“Elements” and “sense-fields” for practical reasons.

34  
Such things spoken of as the “great elements”,  
These are fully absorbed into consciousness;  
Since they are dissolved by understanding them,  
Are they not falsely imputed?

35  
Inasmuch as the Conquerors have stated

Nirvana is the sole truth,  
What learned person would imagine  
That the rest is not false?

36  
As long as the mind remains wavering,  
So long it remains within Mara’s sphere;  
If this is so then why is it not reasonable  
That this [dependent origination] is free of fault?

37  
Since the Buddhas have stated  
That the world is conditioned by ignorance,  
So why is it not reasonable [to assert]  
That this world is [a result of] conceptualization?

38  
Since it comes to an end  
When ignorance ceases;  
Why does it not become clear then  
That it was conjured by ignorance?

39  
That which comes into being from a cause  
And does not endure without conditions,  
It disappears as well when conditions are absent-  
How can this be understood to exist?

40  
If the proponents of existence  
Abide by clinging to real entities,  
There is nothing to be surprised of;  
For they live by such a path.

41  
Deplorable are those who abide  
By grasping at real entities with contention,  
While, on the basis of the Buddha's path,  
They speak about impermanence of all things.

42  
If nothing is observed  
Through examination of "this" or "that,"  
What learned person would assert  
That this or that contention is true?

43  
Those who cling to a self  
Or to the world as unconditioned,  
They are captivated by the views  
About arising, permanence, impermanence, and so on.

44  
Those who assert the conditioned things  
As being established in terms of ultimate reality,  
Why wouldn't the faults of permanence and so on  
Not arise within their minds?

45  
Those who accept the conditioned things  
As being neither true nor false,  
Just like the moon in the water,  
They are not carried away by dogmatic views.

46  
If one has the thesis of real entities,

Awful and vicious views arise,  
Which give birth to attachment and aversion;  
From this contentions ensue.

47  
This is the cause of all dogmatic views;  
Without it no afflictions will arise;  
So if this is understood thoroughly,  
All views and afflictions will cease.

48  
"Who understands this?" one might wonder;  
It's those who see dependent origination.  
The supreme knower of reality has taught  
That dependent arising is unborn.

49  
For those who are suppressed by false knowledge  
And grasp the untrue to be true,  
In them arises from attachment  
A series of grasping and contentions.

50  
Those who are great beings,  
They have neither thesis nor contention;  
For those who have no thesis,  
How can there be opposing thesis?

51  
Having found a locus one is caught  
By the twisting snake of afflictions;  
Those whose minds have no locus,  
They will not be caught [by this snake].

52

In those whose minds possess a locus,  
Why would the grave poison of afflictions not arise?  
As for those who abide in between,  
They too will be caught by the snake of afflictions.

53

Just as the child that thinks it to be real  
Feels attached to a reflection of form;  
Likewise, because the worldly beings are ignorant,  
They are trapped in the cage of objects.

54

The great beings see with their wisdom eye  
All things like reflections of forms;  
They do not become stuck  
In the mire of so-called objects.

55

The childish are attached to forms;  
The moderate attains detachment;  
By knowing the nature of forms,  
Those of supreme intellect are free.

56

One becomes attached [to something]

By thinking of it as pleasant;  
By turning away from it  
One becomes devoid of attachment.

57

The faults of mental afflictions that torment  
Due to false knowledge do not arise  
To those who understand the meaning  
Of conceptualizations of real and unreal entities.

58

If one possesses a locus,  
One becomes attached or detached;  
But the great beings who're devoid of locus,  
They have neither attachment nor detachment.

59

Those who do not waver, even with their fluctuating mind,  
In such terms as "This is utterly absent,"  
They'll cross the unbearable ocean of samsara  
Agitated by the monster of afflictions.

60

Through this virtue may all beings  
Gather accumulations of merit and wisdom;  
May they attain the two sublime Buddha bodies,  
Which arise from merit and wisdom.

This completes "Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning" composed by master Nagarjuna himself. The Indian abbot Muditashri and the Tibetan translator Patsap Nyima Drak standardized it with further revisions.

© English translation. Geshe Thupten Jinpa. This translation was prepared on the basis of a careful reading of both the Sanskrit original and its Tibetan translation and by consulting Candrakirti's commentary (*Tengyur*, Dergé, dbu ma *Ya*, p.1a – 30b) as well as Je Tsongkhapa's *Notes on the "Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning"* (*rigs pa drug cu pa'i zin bris*, *The Collected Works of Je Tsongkhapa*, vol.ba).