



B = Stephen Batchelor? (according to internet site)

SB = Stephen Batchelor: VERSES FROM THE CENTER: A BUDDHIST VISION OF THE SUBLIME (New York: Riverhead Books, 2000)

S = Frederick J. Streng, EMPTINESS: A STUDY IN RELIGIOUS MEANING (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967), Appendix A & B; pp. 183-227

G = Jay L. Garfield, THE FUNDAMENTAL WISDOM OF THE MIDDLE WAY: NAGARAJUNA'S MULAMDHYAMAKAKARIKA (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995)

I = Kenneth K. Inada, NAGARJUNA: A TRANSLATION OF HIS MULAMADHYAMAKAKARIKA WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY (Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press, 1970)

K= David J. Kalupahana, MULAMADHYAMAKAKARIKA OF NAGARJUNA: THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE MIDDLE WAY (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1986)

## तथागतपरीक्षा नाम द्वाविंशतितमं प्रकरणं

B: Investigation of the Tathagata (Buddhanature)

SB: Buddhanature

S: An Analysis of the "Fully Completed" (Tathagata) (the Buddha)

G: Examination of the Tathagata

I: Examination of the Tathagata

K: Examination of the Tathagata

OR: Examination of the Tathagata

स्कन्धा न नान्यः स्कन्धेभ्यो नास्मिन् स्कन्धा न तेषु सः।

तथागत स्कन्धवान्न कतमो ऽत्र तथागतः ॥ १

B: Not the aggregates, not other than the aggregates; the aggregates are not in him; he is not in them: the Tathagata does not possess the aggregates. What is the Tathagata?



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SB: It's not physical, emotional, conceptual, impulsive, conscious – or anything else. It does not dwell in us nor we in it. It does not own us.

S: 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"?

G: Neither the aggregates, nor different from the aggregates, The aggregates are not in him, nor is he in the aggregates. The Tathagata does not possess the aggregates. What is the Tathagata?

I: The Tathagata is not the (aggregation of the ) skandhas nor is it different from the skandhas. He is no in the skandhas nor are the skandhas in him. As he cannot possess the skandhas, what actually is he?

K: 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. In such a context, who is a tathagata?

बुद्धः स्कन्धानुपादाय यदि नास्ति स्वभावतः।

स्वभावतश्च यो नास्ति कुतः स परभावतः ॥ २

B: If the buddha depends on the aggregates, he does not exist from an own-nature. How can that which does not exist from an own-nature exist from an other-nature?

SB: If it depended on us or on anything else, it would not be itself. How could it be anything but itself?

S: 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)?



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G: If the Buddhas depended on the aggregates, He would not exist through an essence. Not existing through an essence, How could he exist through otherness-essence?

I: If a Buddha appropriates the skandhas, it is not so from the standpoint of self-existence. As there can be no self-existence, how can there be (a Buddha from the standpoint of) other-existence?

K: If a Buddha were to be dependent upon the aggregates, he does not exist in terms of self-nature. He who does not exist in terms of self-nature, how can he exist in terms of other nature?

प्रतीत्य परभावं यः सो ऽनात्मेत्युपपद्यते।

यश्चानात्मा स च कथं भविष्यति तथागतः ॥ ३

B: It is not tenable for something dependent on other-nature to be self-existent. How can that which has no self-existence be tathagata?

SB: Could what is not itself be buddhanature?

S: 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"?

G: Whatever is dependent on another entity, Its selfhood is not appropriate. It is not tenable that what lacks a self could be a Tathagata.

I: It would thus follow that relationship by virtue of other-existence will constitute a non-self. But how could that which is a non-self be a Tathagata?

K: He who is dependent upon other nature would appropriately be without self. Yet, how can he who is without self be a tathagata?

यदि नास्ति स्वभावश्च परभावः कथं भवेत्।



स्वभावपरभावाभ्यामृते कः स तथागतः ॥ ४

B: If self-nature does not exist, how can there be the existence of other-nature? What is a Tathagata apart from own-nature and other-nature?

SB: What is it apart from itself or something else?

S: 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?

I: If self-existence does not exist, how does other-existence exist? Apart from self-existence and other-existence, what could be (the nature of) a Tathagata?

G: If there is no essence, How could there be otherness-essence? Without possessing essence or otherness-essence, What is the Tathagata?

K: If there exists no self-nature, how could there be other-nature? Without both self-nature and other-nature, who is this tathagata?

स्कन्धान्यद्यनुपादाय भवेत्कश्चित्तथागतः ।

स इदानीमुपादद्यादुपादाय ततो भवेत् ॥ ५

B: If there exists a tathagata [who is] not depending on the aggregates, he exists in depending [on them] now and will henceforth depend.

SB: Is it independent of body, feeling, thought, impulse or consciousness? It depends on them now and is set to continue.

S: If some kind of "fully completed" [thing] would exist without dependence on the "groups,"

It is dependent now; therefore it exists dependent [on something].



G: If without depending on the aggregates there were a Tathagata, Then now he would be depending on them. Therefore he would exist through dependence.

I: If a Tahtagata exists without appropriating the skandhas, then he should be appropriating the skandhas now. And he should be a Tathagata in virute of the appropriation.

K: If there were to be a tathagata because of non-grasping on to the aggregates, he should stil depend upon them in the present. As such he will be dependent.

स्कन्धान् चाप्यनुपादाय नास्ति कश्चित्तथागतः ।

यश्च नास्त्यनुपादाय स उपादास्यते कथं ॥ ६

B: If there does not exist a tathagata [who is]not depending on the aggregates, how does he grasp [depend on? them]?

S: 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?

G: Inasmuch as there is no Tathagata dependent upon the aggregates, How could something that is not dependent come to be so?

I: Again, no Tathagata could exist without appropriating the skandhas. And how does an entity which cannot exist without appropriation appropriate the skandhas?

K: There exists no tathagata independent of the aggregates. How can he who does not exist dependently be grasped?

न भवत्यनुपादत्तमुपादानं च किं चन।

न चास्ति निरुपादानः कथं चन तथागतः ॥ ७



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B: [Since] there is nothing to be grasped/dependent on, there can be no grasping/depending. There is no tathagata at all who is without grasping/depending.

SB: Can you say that buddhanature is “contingent” when what is depended on and what depends are empty?

S: 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"].

G: There is no appropriation. There is no appropriator. Without appropriation how can there be a Tathagata?

I: There is neither an appropriating process nor an unappropriated entity. How could there ever be a Tathagata which is without the process of appropriation?

K: There is no sphere of non-grasping, nor is there something as grasping. Neither is there someone who is without grasping. How can there be a tathagata?

तत्त्वान्यत्वेन यो नास्ति मृग्यमाणश्च पञ्चधा।

उपादानेन स कथं प्रज्ञप्यते तथागतः ॥ ८

B: If having examined in five ways, how can that tathagata who does not exist as that one or the other be [conventionally] understood by grasping/depending?

S: 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?

G: Having been sought in the fivefold way, What, being neither identical nor different, Can be thought to be the Tathagata through grasping?



I: How could a Tathagata be known by his appropriating process when he does not exist in terms of the fivefold nature of identity and difference with respect to (the function of) the skandhas?

K: He who, sought for in the fivefold manner, does not exist in the form of a different identity, how can that tathagata be made known through grasping?

यदपीदमुपादानं तत्स्वभावान्न विद्यते।

स्वभावतश्च यन्नास्ति कुतस्तत्परभावतः ॥ ९

B: That which is grasped/depended on does not exist from its own nature. It is impossible for that which does not exist from its own nature to exist from another nature.

S: So when there is dependence, self-existence does not exist;  
And if there is no self-existence whatever, how is an other-existence possible?

G: Whatever grasping there is does not exist through essence. And when something does not exist through itself, It can never exist through otherness-essence.

I: Again, the appropriating process cannot function from the standpoint of self-existence. If nothing exists in virtue of self-existence, how could it exist in virtue of other-existence?

K: This grasping is not found in terms of self-nature. How can that which does not exist in terms of self-nature come to be in terms of other-nature?

एवं शून्यमुपादानमुपादाताच्च सर्वशः।

प्रज्ञाप्यते च शून्येन कथं सून्यस्तथागतः ॥ १०

B: In that way, what is grasped/depended on and what grasps/depends are empty in every aspect. How can an empty tathagata be [conventionally] understood by what is empty?



S: Thus "dependence" and "that which is dependent" are completely empty (sunya).

How is that empty "fully completed one" known through that which is empty?

G: Thus grasping and grasper together are empty in every respect. How can an empty Tathagata be known through the empty?

I: Consequently, all instances of appropriation and the appropriating entity are in the nature of shunya. But then, how could a Tathagata in the nature of shunya be known in terms of shunya?

K: Thus, grasping and grasper are empty in every way. How can an empty tathagata be made know by soemthing that is empty?

शून्यमिति न वक्तव्यमशून्यमिति वा भवेत्।

उभयं नोभयं चेति प्रज्ञस्यर्थं तु कथ्यते ॥ ११

B: Do not say "empty," or "not empty," or "both," or "neither:" these are mentioned for the sake of [conventional] understanding.

SB: Can you say that buddhanature is "empty" when "empty" and "not empty" are mere ciphers?

S: 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.

G: "Empty" should not be asserted. "Nonempty" should not be asserted. Neither both nor neither should be asserted. They are only used nominally.



I: Nothing could be asserted to be shunya, ashunya, both shunya and ashunya, and neither shunya nor ashunya. They are asserted only for the purpose of provisional understanding.

K: “Empty,” “non-empty,” “both” or “neither” – these should not be declared. It is expressed only for the purpose of communication.

शाश्वताशाश्वताद्यत्र कुतः शान्ते चतुष्टयं।

अन्तानन्तादि चाप्यत्र कुतः शान्ते चतुष्टयं ॥ १२

B: Where can the four such as permanence and impermanence exist in this peaceful one? Where can the four such as end and no-end [of the world] exist in this peaceful one?

SB: Fixed ideas of permanence and transience, finitude and infinity, have no place when all is well.

S: 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?

G: How can the tetralemma of permanent and impermanent, etc., be true of the peaceful? How can the tetralemma of finite, infinite, etc., be true of the peaceful?

I: How could the fourfold possible natures of permanence, impermanence, etc., manifest in quiescence? Again, how could the fourfold limit, limitless, etc., manifest in quiescence?

K: How can the tetralemma of eternal, non-eternal, etc., be in the peaceful? How can the tetralemma of finite, infinite, etc. be in the peaceful?

येन ग्राहो गृहीतस्तु घनो ऽस्तीति तथागतः।



नास्तीति स विकल्पयन् निर्वृतस्यापि कल्पयेत् ॥ १३

B: Those who hold the dense apprehension, “the tathagata exists” conceive the thought, “he does not exist in nirvana.”

SB: Believers believe in buddhas who vanish in nirvana. Don’t imagine empty buddhas vanishing or not.

S: 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.

G: One who grasps the view that the Tathagata exists, Having seized the Buddha, Constructs conceptual fabrications about one who has achieved nirvana.

I: One who is firmly entrenched in asserting (or grasping) the existence and non-existence of the Tathagata will, in turn, even discriminate on the existence and non-existence of the Tathagata in the nirvanic realm.

K: Discriminating on the basis of grasping or the grasped, and firmly insisting that a tathagata “exists” or “does not exist,” a person would think similarly even of one who has ceased.

स्वभावतश्च शून्ये ऽस्मिंश्चिन्ता नैवोपपद्यते।

परं निरोधाद्भवति बुद्धो न भवतीति वा ॥ १४

B: For that one empty of own-nature, it is entirely inappropriate to think that once the buddha has nirvana-ed he either “exists” or “does not exist.”

S: 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.

G: Since he is by nature empty, The thought that the Buddha exists or does not exist after nirvana is not appropriate.



I: As the Tathagata in its self-existence is in the nature of shunya, it is not possible to reason that the Buddha exists or does not exist after liberation.

K: When he is empty in terms of self-nature, the thought that the Buddha exists or does not exist after death is not appropriate.

प्रपञ्चयन्ति ये बुद्धं प्रञ्चातीतमव्यं।

ते प्रपञ्चहताः सर्वे न पश्यन्ति तथागतं ॥ १५

B: Those who make fixations about Buddha who is beyond fixations and without deterioration -- all those who are damaged by fixations do not see the tathagata.

SB: When transfixed on what's unwavering beyond fixation's range, you see no buddhanature.

S: 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].

G: Those who develop mental fabrications with regard to the Buddha, Who has gone beyond all fabrications, As a consequence of those cognitive fabrications, Fail to see the Tathagata.

I: Those who resort wholly to provisional descriptions in speaking of the Buddha, which is actually beyond description and destruction, are impaired by the descriptions themselves and cannot understand the Tathagata.

K: Those who generate obsessions with great regard to the Buddhas who has gone beyond obsessions and is constant, all of them, impaired by obsessions, do not perceive the tathagata.

तथागतो यत्स्वभावस्तत्स्वभावमिदं जगत्।



तथागतो निःस्वभावो निःस्वभावमिदं जगत् ॥ १६

B: Whatever is the own-nature of the tathagata, that is the own-nature of this world. The tathagata has no own-nature. This world has no own-nature.

SB: Buddhanature is the nature of this world. Buddhanature has no nature, nor does this world.

S: 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.

G: Whatever is the essence of the Tathagata, That is the essence of the world. The Tathagata has no essence. The world is without essence.

I: The Tathagata's nature of self-existence is also the nature of the worldly existence. The Tathagata, (strictly speaking), is without the nature of self-existence and this worldly existence is likewise so.

K: Whatever is the self-nature of the tathagata, that is also the self-nature of the universe. The tathagata is devoid of self-nature. This universe is also devoid of self-nature.