

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)

For an English translation of the karikas (virtually identical with G above) together with Je Tsongkhapa's commentary on them, consult Ngawang Samten and Jay L. Garfield (trans.), OCEAN OF REASONING: A GREAT COMMENTARY ON NAGARJUNA'S MULAMADHYAMAKAKARIKA (NY: Oxford University Press, 2006)

मूलमध्यमकारिका आर्यनागार्जुनस्य

कर्म नोत्पद्यते कस्मान् निःस्वभावं यतस्ततः ।

यस्माच्च तदनुत्पन्नं न तस्माद्विप्रणश्यति ॥ २१

B: Because actions are not born, in this way they have no nature. Therefore, because they are not born, therefore they are irrevocable.

SB: My acts are irrevocable because they have no essence.

S: [Nagarjuna refutes the above arguments:]

Why does the action not originate?

Because it is without self-existence.

Since it does not originate, it does not perish.

G: Because action does not arise, it is seen to be without essence. Because it is not arisen it follows that it is nonexpiring.

I: The reason why karman does not arise is that it is without a self-nature (nihsvabhava). As it does not arise there is no perishing.

K: Why does action not arise? Because it is without self-nature. Since it is non-arisen, it does not perish.

कर्म स्वभावतश्चेत्स्याच्छाश्वतं स्यादसंशयं ।

अकृतं च भवेत्कर्म क्रियते न हि शाश्वतं ॥ २२

B: If actions existed [by] nature, without doubt they would be permanent. Actions would not be done [by an agent] because what is permanent cannot be done.

SB: If they had an essence they would be permanent. No one could have performed them.

S: If an action did exist as a self-existent thing, without a doubt, it would be eternal. An action would be an unproduced thing; certainly, there is no eternal thing which is produced.

G: If action had an essence, it would, without a doubt, be eternal. Action would be uncreated. Because there can be no creation of what is eternal.

I: If karman has self-nature then undoubtedly it will have the nature of constancy and will also be uncreated. However, anything characterized by constancy does not create.

K: If it is assumed that action comes to be from self-nature, it certainly will be eternal, and action would also be uncaused, for that which is eternal is, indeed, not caused.

अकृताभ्यागमभयं स्यात्कर्माकृतकं यदि ।

अब्रह्मचर्यवासश्च दोषस्तत्र प्रसज्यते ॥ २३

B: If actions were not done [by anyone], one would fear meeting what [one] has not done. Also the fault would follow for that [person] of not dwelling in the pure life.

SB: I would fear the consequence of things I did not do. I would not lead a noble life.

S: If the action were not produced, then there could be the fear attaining something from "something not produced";

Then the opposite to a saintly discipline would follow as a fallacy.

G: If an action were uncreated, fear would arise of encountering something not done. And the error of not preserving one's vows would arise.

I: If an uncreated karman exists then there will be apprehensive (acts) without any creation. And a fallacy would result in which there will be no dwelling upon (i.e., carrying on) the ways of the Brahman.

K: If an action were not performed [by the individual], then there would be fear of begin confronted by something not performed [by him]. And ignoble life as well as error would follow from this.

व्यवहारा विरुध्यन्ते सर्व एव न संशयः ।

पुण्यपापकृतोर्नैव प्रविभागश्च युज्यते ॥ २४

B: All conventions also without doubt would be contradictory. Also the distinction between doing good and evil would not be valid.

SB: Descriptions would conflict with one another. I would be incapable of telling good and bad apart.

S: Then, undoubtedly, all daily affairs would be precluded.
And even the distinction between saints and sinners is not possible.

G: All conventions would then be contradicted, without doubt. It would be impossible to draw a distinction between virtue and evil.

I: all common practices would, no doubt, be destroyed for it follows that no distinction between the virtuous and evil doers could be made.

K: Undoubtedly, all conventions would then be contradicted. The distinction between the performance of merit and evil will also not be proper.

तद्विपक्वविपाकं च पुनरेव विपक्ष्यति ।

कर्म व्यवस्थितं यस्मात्तस्मात्स्वाभाविकं यदि ॥ २५

B: [When] the ripening of that [action] has ripened it would ripen again and again, because if it existed [by] nature, it would [always] remain.

SB: Having already ripened, acts would ripen again.

S: Then an act whose development had taken place would develop again,
If an act, because it persists, exists through its own nature.

G: Whatever is mature would mature time and time again. If there were essence, this would follow, because action would remain in place.

I: If karman is a fixed thing (i.e., enduring) because of its self-nature, then a maturity that is already matured will again seek maturity.

K: If action were to be determined, because it possesses self-nature, than a maturity that has matured will again mature.

कर्म क्लेशात्मकं चेदं ते च क्लेशा न तत्त्वतः ।

न चेत्ते तत्त्वतः क्लेशाः कर्म स्यात्तत्त्वतः कथं ॥ २६

B: This action has the character of affliction and afflictions are not real. If affliction is not real, how can action be real?

SB: If acts are compulsive and compulsions unreal, how can acts be real? .

S: An action is that whose "self" (atman) is desire, and the desires do not really exist.
If these desires do not really exist, how would the action really exist?

G: While this action has affliction as its nature this affliction is not real in itself. If affliction is not in itself, how can action be real in itself?

I: This karman will have the nature of defilements (kleshas) and these, in turn, will not be in the nature of truth (tattva). But if the defilements are not in the nature of truth, how could karman be in the nature of truth?

K: If this action is associated with defilements, these defilements, in turn, are not found in themselves. If defilements are not in themselves, how could there be an action in itself?

कर्म क्लेशाश्च देहानां प्रत्ययाः समुदाहृताः ।

कर्म क्लेशाश्च ते शून्या यदि देहेषु का कथा ॥ २७

B: Actions and afflictions are taught to be the conditions for bodies. If actions and afflictions are empty, how can one speak of bodies?

SB: Acts and compulsions form me. What could empty acts and compulsions form?

S: Action and desire are declared to be the conditioning cause of the body.
If action and desire are empty, what need one say about "body"?

G: Action and affliction are taught to be the conditions that produce bodies. If action and affliction are empty, what would one say about bodies?

I: It is said that karman and defilements are a cooperating conditionality of differing bodies. But if karman and defilements are of the nature of shunya (i.e., thussness or "void"), what could be said of these bodies?

K: Action and defilements are specified as the conditions of the [different] bodies. However, if these actions and defilements are empty, what could be said about the bodies?

अविद्यानिवृतो जन्तुस्तृष्णासंयोजनश्च सः ।

स भोक्ता स च न कर्तुरन्यो न च स एव सः ॥ २८

B: People who are obscured by ignorance, those with craving, are the consumers [of the fruits of action]. They are not other than those who do the action and they are also not those very ones.

SB: Blocked by confusion consumers consume the fruits of acts, which neither they nor anyone else committed.

S: [An opponent tries to establish an identifiable entity by saying:]
The man shrouded in ignorance, and chained by craving (trsna)
Is one who seeks enjoyment. He is not different from the one who acts, nor identical to it.

G: Obstructed by ignorance, and consumed by passion, the experiencer is neither different from the agent nor identical with it.

I: (The opponent contends) The sentient being beclouded by ignorance is a bundle of cravings. He is the percipient (i.e. experiencer of karmic effects). He is not identical to nor different from the doer.

K: A sentient being, beclouded by ignorance, is also fettered by craving. As an experiencer, he is neither identical with nor different from the agent.

न प्रत्ययसमुत्पन्नं नाप्रत्ययसमुत्थितं ।

अस्ति यस्मादिदं कर्म तस्मात्कर्तापि नास्त्यतः ॥ २९

B: Because the action does not emerge from conditions and does not emerge from non-conditions, therefore, the agent too does not exist.

SB: Where are the doers of deeds absent among their conditions?

S: [Nagarjuna answers:]

Since action is not "originated presupposing the conditions" nor fails to arise from presupposing the conditions,

There is no one acting.

G: Since this action is not arisen from a condition, nor arisen causelessly, it follows that there is no agent.

I: (Nagarjuna asserts) Since karman does not arise by means of relational or non-relational conditionality, there is also no doer.

K: Since this action does not exist as arisen from a condition nor as issuing forth from a non-condition, even an agent does not exist.

कर्म चेन्नास्ति कर्ता च कुतः स्यात्कर्मजं फलं ।

अस्त्यथ फले भोक्ता कुत एव भविष्यति ॥३०

B: If neither the action nor the agent exists, where can there be a fruit of the action? If the fruit does not exist, where can the consumer exist?

SB: Where are the fruits of doers and deeds that cannot be found? Where are the consumers of fruits that are not there?

S: If there is no action, how could there be one who acts and the product of action?

And if there is no product, how can there be an enjoyer of the product?

G: If there is no action and agent, where could the fruit of action be? Without a fruit, where is there an experiencer?

I: If there is neither karman no doer, where could the effect arising from the karman be? Where there is no effect, how could there be any percipient (i.e., experiencer)?

K: If both action and agent are non-existent, where could there be the fruit born of action? When there is no fruit, where can there be an experiencer?

यथा निर्मितकं शास्ता निर्मितीतद्धिसंपदा ।

निर्मितो निर्मितीतान्यं स च निर्मितकः पुनः ॥ ३१

B: Just as a teacher creates a creation by a wealth of magical powers, and just as if that creation too created, again another would be created,

SB: Imagine a magician who creates a creature who creates other creatures. Acts I perform are creatures who create others.

S: Just as a teacher, by his magical power, formed a magical form,
And this magical form formed again another magical form—

G: Just as the teacher, by magic, makes a magical illusion, and by that illusion another illusion is created,

I: It is as if a master, by his supernormal powers, were to form a figure and this figure, in turn, were to form another figure. . .

K: Just as a teacher, through psycho-kinetic power, were to create a figure, and this created figure were to create another, that in turn would be a created.

तथा निर्मितकाकारः कर्ता यत्कर्म तत्कृतं ।

तद्यथा निर्मितेनान्यो निर्मितो निर्मितस्तथा ॥ ३२

B: Like this, whatever action too done by that agent [is] also like the aspect of a creation. It is just like, for example, a creation creating another creation.

SB: Deeds, compulsions, bodies, doers, fruits are like invisible cities, mirages, dreams.

S: Just so the "one who forms" is himself being formed magically; and the act performed by him

Is like a magical form being magically formed by another magical form.

G: In that way are an agent and action: the agent is like the illusion. The action is like the illusion's illusion.

I: In exactly the same way, the doer is like the formed figure and his action (karman) is like the other figure formed by the first.

K: In the same way, an agent is like a created form and his action is like his creation. It is like the created form created by another who is created.

क्लेशाः कर्माणि देहाश्च कर्तारश्च फलानि च ।

गन्धर्वनगराकारा मरीचिस्वप्नसंनिभाः ॥ ३३

B: Afflictions, actions and bodies and agents and fruits are like a city of gandharvas, a mirage, a dream.

S: Desires, actions, bodies, producers, and products
Are like a fairy castle, resembling a mirage, a dream.

G: Afflictions, actions, bodies, agents, and fruits are like a city of Gandharvas and like a mirage or a dream.

I: Defilements, karmans, bodily entities, doers and effects are all similar to the nature of an imaginary city in the sky, a mirage, and a dream.

K: Defilements, actions and bodies, agents as well as fruits, all these are similar to the cities of the gandharvas, are comparable to mirages and dreams.