

DEPENDENT ARISING

James Low

November 2022

Content

DEPENDENT ARISING	2
THE MAHAYANA SUTRA ON DEPENDENT ARISING.....	6
12 NIDANAS.....	7
THE HEART OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION	12
THE COMMENTARY.....	15
DEDICATION	23
DHARMA ADVICE.....	24

DEPENDENT ARISING

Dependent arising or dependent origination points to the fact that there are no self-caused or self-existing entities. All phenomena, all experiences, all the possible patterns of occurrence that can ever happen, arise from causes in an interconnectivity which has no beginning or end. At each moment, on the basis of this pattern of illusion, that pattern of illusion arises. The brief compilation presented here can help us to understand the Four Noble Truths: suffering, the causes of suffering, the ending of suffering, and the path that leads to the ending of suffering. Suffering arises from causes, namely afflictions and actions.

In the Theravadan view illustrated in the Wheel of Becoming, the key affliction is ignorance understood as the ongoing ignoring of the absence of inherent existence in people. This ignoring of the ungraspable nature of self and other leads to clinging: clinging to self and clinging to other. Self and other do not exist and yet because these concepts structure our lives we cannot say that they are non-existent. The transient patterns of experience that are claimed to be 'self' have no existence of their own. They arise in dependence on other patterns, which also being empty of 'self', are not truly other.

Ignorance gives rise to the Three Marks Of Conditioned Existence: suffering, impermanence, and the absence of inherent existence. Suffering arises in different forms in each of the six realms. Details can be found in Chapter 1 of *Simply Being*. The Buddha stated concisely that suffering is getting what you do not want and not getting what you do want. Thus, suffering arises from aversion and desire which ripen from ignorance and mental opacity as represented by the three animals at the centre of the wheel. Suffering in the human realm arises as birth, old age, sickness and death. Once you are born some degree of suffering is inevitable though no one can predict how or when it will occur.

All that we experience is impermanent: our bodies, our speech, our thoughts, feelings and all mental events. The world around us is impermanent as the seasons change and the climate changes, bringing floods and fires. The changes in politics and economics alter the landscape, and the worlds of our childhood become unrecognisable in what we encounter today. Although we wish to cling on to forms and habits since they give us a sense of reliability, we find that they are not actually stable and that they change due to their dependence on other factors, which are also changing.

The absence of inherent existence in people is indicated by the fact that what we take to be someone is a varying dynamic construct. Traditionally this is described as the five heaps or *skandhas*, the basic constituents which combine and cooperate in diverse ways to generate our perception of people, including ourselves. The five are: form, indicating shape and colour; feeling, indicating positive, neutral or negative responses; perception, indicating the identification of objects via the senses; composition, indicating the incorporation of perceptions into schemas of identification; and consciousness, indicating the organisation of composites according to the use of interpretive concepts. Since all human beings arise in dependence and have no singular core or essence, we can see that they are forms organised according to 'names', the latter four constituents.

The fourth link or *nidana* is illustrated by an image of five men in a boat, i.e. the five constituents. Sometimes only two men are shown in which case the boat is form and the passengers are 'name', or the activation of the form, i.e. the activity of feeling, perception, composition and consciousness. The fact that there are several people in the boat points to the way in which our body, voice and mind develop in relation

to those of others. Parents, the wider family, and school are all actively engaging with the young person to elicit their potential and guide it into the pathways privileged by their particular culture.

I am because you are; and how you are with me influences how I can be with you. All humans are mutually conditioning since we are interdependent. Our lives are dynamic, not static. We may think of ourselves as being a separate person, an autonomous unit, isolated from others when we withdraw into ourselves. But this is a delusion. The idea of an enduring self that underpins my sense of being a continuous being, an existent, is based on imagining an entity. The entity of 'self' is an idea, a belief, a make-believe.

The Wheel of Becoming shows the dynamic interactive nature of our life. We are always already part of the field of emergence. Our separate self is a delusion which takes us out of alignment with how life is. Imagining that we are fundamentally apart from what is going on and that we can therefore choose to participate or not is a belief based on ignorance. The experience of isolation arises from ignoring all the evidence that we emerge from our mother, who is already in this world. We emerge into this world as part of it – breathing, drinking and urinating, eating and defecating. We are a flow within the flow. To ignore this, to be unaware of it, to not be awake to it, is the source of all our suffering.

Moreover, according to the Mahayana view, the seeming reality of phenomena is a mere name, an attribution, a sign. They are devoid of inherent existence and arise dependently. The actuality of phenomena is signless, empty, and devoid of intention as the verses on pages 18-20 make clear.

Reified phenomena arise for us due to ignoring the ungraspable. Ignoring the actual gives rise to imagining all the pseudo-entities refracted through the deluding prism of duality. Belief that these imagined entities are real and can be organised to increase our pleasure and diminish our pain keeps us striving in the Wheel of Becoming. The wheel turns and we run after mirage-like entities only to be disappointed. On and on we go chasing illusions which we believe to be real.

From the Buddhist point of view the whole of samsara, all of conditioned existence, is a prison. Some areas of the prison seem to offer freedom, yet this is a delusion. Even in the god realms, where sensuous pleasure is always available and gross suffering only arises in the final week as we prepare to leave, we are not free of the invisible prison of unawareness. In all the six realms, whether experience is subtle or gross, it is organised around two erroneous beliefs: belief in the inherent existence of phenomena and belief in the inherent difference between subject and object, and between all the other polarities.

Our own identity, our sense of being who we believe ourselves to be, seems to be a given, something that just is. Yet when we look without prejudice, we see that we have been deluded. No fixed enduring self can be found – not in ourselves and not in others. We arise in dependent origination, and our own deep sense of individual existence is merely an illusory construct held in place by our lack of insight.

The prison of samsara arises from unawareness of the ever-open ground and source of all. This unawareness of our true basis gives rise to the false notion that we exist in and of ourselves. This notion is the prison we cannot detect because we are inured to it. The fundamental prison is the idea of inherent or independent existence. This is, I am, you are – how effortlessly meaningful these untrue statements are for us. From the initial 'this is', the fact of 'something', all else arises. Facts are made by belief – not to see this is to believe that facts rest on existents. This delusion gives rise to duality, to the mutually excluding definitions which establish the variety of things.

Thus all that we take for granted, all that we believe to be real and reliable, is in fact contrived, compounded, put together by mental activity acting on the concepts generated by mental activity. Reification both freezes the open field of co-emergent becoming and then fragments it into the many things that we seem to encounter, including ourselves. Yet nothing has actually come into true existence. All appearances are unborn; they are illusions fabricated into the erroneous form of self-existing entities. All this is the work of dualistic consciousness desperately seeking to stabilise the flow of interactive experience. Consciousness grasps at ideas and takes them to be substantial objects. This generates our familiar sense of the world. These entities which seemed to validate our existence are actually the mind-forged blinkers that blind us to the open ground of all experience.

The things which constitute our reified experience are then further defined by naming, by the allocation of identificatory signs. Relying on the sign-web of language, each seemingly autonomous subject is able to refine its sense of liking or not liking, friend or foe, adopting or rejecting. Then, believing in the separate reality of self and other, we find ourselves shaped by different intentions: to help, to harm, to win, to collaborate. Acting on the basis of these we generate the karmic fuel which keeps the Wheel of Becoming turning and the inhabitants of samsara always active in trying to optimise pleasure and minimise pain.

So many diverse forms of prison arise from this and so many diverse experiences of being imprisoned. Sentient beings can be imprisoned by wealth and by poverty, by beauty and by plainness, by their own opinions and by others' opinions. Animals live in fear of predators within the food chain and in fear of human jailers who pluck them from the sea, shoot them in the sky and trap them in fields and intense factory farming. For humans they are a means to an end as human concerns are placed first – how many humans would want to ban insecticides for the harm they cause to insects? No, it's all about us.

Yet many humans are also trapped. For example, in dictatorships, in military regimes where the rights of ordinary citizens are disregarded and cruel punishments can be administered without fear of reprisal. To have power over others, to enforce their compliance through fear-inducing threats and control of all resources, brings joy to a few and misery to many. Once the power of the state is directed towards the benefit of a self-selected minority sealed in complacency, the intensity of suffering for the rest makes insight into the fundamental structure especially difficult to achieve.

We can make use of the teachings on dependent arising to see the absence of separate or inherent existence in any appearance, activity, or experience. If we see this we stop ignoring the actual emptiness of phenomena and when the resulting clarity is bright the urge to cling to self and other fades away. With nothing to cling to, the tension of grasping relaxes and we are free to work with the ceaseless play of unborn circumstances.

In all the Dharma traditions, there is an emphasis on wisdom and compassion for together they form the key that unlocks the prison of egotism and brings access to the intrinsic freedom of the mind. May all beings awaken from the nightmares of delusions and be freed from the power of the five poisons. The pure, the good, the inclusive, the welcoming, is intrinsic and has never actually been lost. May we abandon futile striving and relax into the ease offered by our ever-open source. This ease is the basis of effortless inclusive kindness that abandons not a single sentient being and sees them all as the radiance of the Buddha's heart.

If you wish to study this further, you can read the first section of *This Is It* entitled, *One Thing Leads to Another*.

James Low
November 2022

THE MAHAYANA SUTRA ON DEPENDENT ARISING

ARYAPRATITYASAMUTPADANAMAMAHAYANASUTRA

Homage to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was in the Realm of the Thirty-three Gods, seated on the throne of Indra. With him were great hearers such as the venerable Asvajit; bodhisattva mahasattvas such as noble Maitreya, noble Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani, adorned with immeasurable precious qualities; along with various gods such as the great Brahma, lord of the Saha world; and Narayana and Mahesvara; and Sakra, the chief of the gods, and Pancasikha, the king of the gandharvas.

On that occasion, the bodhisattva mahasattva Avalokitesvara rose from his seat, draped his upper robe over one shoulder and knelt down with his right knee on the peak of Mount Meru. With his palms together he bowed to the Blessed One and addressed him with these words:

“Blessed one, these gods all wish to build a stupa. Now that they are present with us, please teach them the Dharma in such a way that their merit of Brahma will increase and the merit of the monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen will increase more than that of all types of beings in the worlds of gods, maras, Brahma, renunciates and brahmins.”

At this, the Blessed One spoke the verse of dependent arising:

ye dharma hetuprabhava
hetum tesam tathagato hy avadat
tesam ca yo nirodha
evamvadi maha sramanah

*“Phenomena, whatever they are that arise from causes,
Have their causes and whatever stops them
Taught by the Tathagata.
This has been stated by the great renunciate.*

“Avalokitesvara, it is like this. This dependent arising is the dharmakaya of all the Tathagatas. A person who sees dependent arising sees the Tathagata. Avalokitesvara, if a faithful son or daughter of a noble family, in a remote place, builds a stupa the size of a gooseberry fruit, with a central pole the size of a needle and a parasol the size of a flower of the bakula tree, and inserts this verse of dependent arising which is the dharmadhatu, he or she will generate the merit of Brahma. When such people die they will be reborn in the world of Brahma.”

After the Blessed One had spoken, the hearers, bodhisattvas, and the whole assembly, along with the universe of gods, humans, asuras and gandharvas rejoiced and praised his words.

THE MAHAYANA SUTRA ON DEPENDENT ARISING is concluded.

Translated by James Low 2019

12 NIDANAS

In the centre of the wheel of life is a circle coloured blue-black or white, the symbol of the *alayavijnana* (Skt.), the ground consciousness that is the basis of all that occurs in and as samsara. Within it, chasing each other in a never-ending round of aroused activity, are a black pig, symbol of stupidity; a multicoloured poisonous snake, symbol of anger; and a red and multihued rooster, symbol of desire.



Surrounding the central circle, the six segments representing the six realms are as follows. Starting at the top the syllable in the first segment represents the realm of the gods. Then in clockwise direction, the syllable in the second segment represents the realm of the asuras or jealous gods. The syllable in the third segment represents the realm of the pretas or hungry ghosts. The syllable in the fourth segment represents the realm of the hell beings. The syllable in the fifth segment represents the realm of the animals. The syllable in the sixth segment represents the realm of human beings.

These six realms are surrounded by an outer circle containing the symbols of the twelve links of dependent origination. They are each described on the following three pages.

1) The link of ignorance



Ignorance, the first link, is both the ignoring of what is actually the case and the ignorance of actively imagining that which is not the case. It is illustrated by a blind old person who is unable to find their way.

3) The link of consciousness



Consciousness, the third link, is depicted by a monkey swinging from branch to branch in a tree. In a similar manner the consciousness of beings dulled by ignorance springs uncontrollably from object to object.

2) The link of volitional factors/impulses



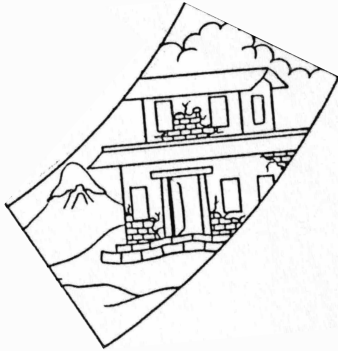
The second link of volitional formation is illustrated by a potter at his wheel. The pots symbolise the deeds being performed that will mould the future experience of the one who performs them, generating for 'them' a specific life in one of the six realms.

4) The link of name and form



Name and form, the fourth link is shown by five people in a boat carried on the stream of becoming. The five people represent the five skandha constituents, form and the four 'names': sensation, perception, composition and consciousness.

5) The link of six sense bases



The six sense-bases, the fifth link, are symbolised by a house with five windows and a door. This illustrates the six sense entrances by which the world is perceived.

6) The link of contact



Contact, the sixth link, is shown by a man and woman embracing.

7) The link of feeling



Feeling, the seventh link, has the picture of the man with an arrow in his eye. This indicates how sense contact has an impact on the subject.

8) The link of craving



Craving, the eighth link, is shown by a woman offering a drink to a man. This illustrates how a pleasant situation will bring with it the desire for its continuation.

9) The link of clinging



Clinging, the ninth link, is the longing to keep that which is desired. This clinging and grasping is the result of previous entanglement and is represented by a man plucking a fruit from a tree. It is the urge to hold on to what one believes one has.

11) The link of birth



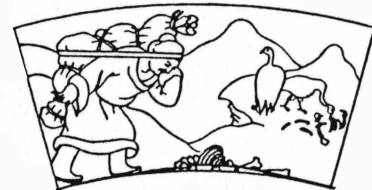
Birth, the eleventh link, is shown by a woman giving birth to a child. This indicates the experience of finding oneself separated off as an individual who now has to find their own way.

10) The link of becoming



Becoming, the tenth link, is represented by a pregnant woman. This indicates a potential which has been awakened but has not yet manifested.

12) The link of old age and death






Old-age and death, the twelfth link, is the inevitable end of all episodes of worldly existence. It is shown by people carrying a bier on which a swathed corpse lies in a foetal posture. The one who has died is already moving towards their next birth and the experience of further misery in one of the six realms.



THE HEART OF DEPENDENT ORIGATION





VERSE AND COMMENTARY




Homage to Manjusri, the ever-youthful

1 The twelve different links,
Those taught by the Buddha as dependently arising,
Are fully encompassed by these three,
Afflictions, actions and suffering.

2 The first,  eighth  and ninth  are afflictions,

The second  and tenth  are actions,

The remaining seven are suffering.    

Thus the twelve links are encompassed by these three (afflictions, actions and suffering).

3 From the three

1) The link of ignorance



8) The link of craving



9) The link of clinging



the two

2) The link of volitional factors/impulses



10) The link of becoming



arise.

2) The link of volitional factors/impulses



10) The link of becoming



From the two

3) The link of consciousness



4) The link of name and form



5) The link of six sense bases



6) The link of contact



the seven

arise.

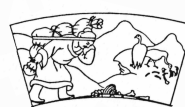
7) The link of feeling



11) The link of birth



12) The link of old age and death



3) The link of consciousness



4) The link of name and form



5) The link of six sense bases



6) The link of contact



Moreover from these seven

7) The link of feeling



11) The link of birth



12) The link of old age and death



1) The link of ignorance



8) The link of craving



9) The link of clinging



the three

arise.

The wheel of life revolves again and again.

- 4 Since all beings are cause and consequence
In this way there are no sentient beings at all.
Phenomena are empty, that is all,
And from them arise only empty phenomena.
- 5 As with instructive speech, butter lamps, mirrors, seals,
Magnifying crystals, seeds, sourness and sound,
The wise know that although the aggregates emerge in the next life
They are not transmigrating.
- 6 Those who impute traceless obliteration
To the most subtle entities,
Will, due to their lack of knowledge,
Not see how they are dependently arisen.
- 7 In this way there is not the least aspect to be cleared away,
Nor the slightest aspect to be put in place.
Truly looking at the actual truth,
By truly seeing there is complete liberation.

These are the verses on *THE HEART OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION* written by the teacher Arya Nagarjuna.




THE COMMENTARY

The virtuous student who wishes to learn, who is able to listen, retain and recall, and who has the power to clear away discursive thought, approaches close to the teacher and requests instruction in the following manner: *‘Regarding the Buddha, “The twelve different links, those taught by the Buddha as dependently arising¹”, I request that I may study all that is included in this view.’* The teacher, having understood this request concerning the specificity of just this aspect of Dharma, replied that they **“are fully encompassed in these three, afflictions, actions and suffering.”** He spoke these words which brought complete clarity.

Regarding this, ten plus two makes twelve. These links are actually different, being different in the manner of the parts that constitute a wooden chariot. This is how they are shown to be linked aspects. The Buddha, the Capable One, is capable in body, voice and mind. What has been spoken by the Buddha should be known as equivalent to demonstration and elucidation. Dependent arising does not come from causes such as inherent existence, fixed essence, reliance on others, gods, time, the real, willpower, or specific location.

These twelve different links rest on the afflictions, actions and suffering which support each other in the manner of the beams of a house. All are fully encompassed in these three. ‘Fully’ means without exception.



Another question is posed. *‘Which of these different links are encompassed within each of the following, afflictions, actions and suffering?’* The reply comes,

“The first ,  eighth  and ninth 

are afflictions.”

The first of these twelve links is ignorance. The eighth is craving. The ninth is clinging. These three are known as afflictions.

If one asks about activity²,

“The second  and the tenth  are activity.”

The second is volitional formation. The tenth is becoming. These two aspects are known to be encompassed by activity.

“The remaining seven are suffering.”

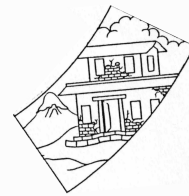
3) The link of consciousness



4) The link of name and form



5) The link of six sense bases



6) The link of contact



7) The link of feeling



11) The link of birth



12) The link of old age and death



The links that remain after the portions allocated to afflictions and activity are the seven links which are known to be suffering. Thus there is consciousness, name and form, the six sense bases, contact, feeling, birth, and old age and death. Moreover this sound (of the word ‘suffering’) encompasses the sufferings of being separated from what is loved, not being separated from what is not loved, and unfulfilled desires. **“Thus the twelve links are encompassed by these three.”**

Therefore these twelve links are known as afflictions, actions and suffering. The Tibetan particle ‘Ni’³ indicates that there is something further to be stated and the aspects taught in the sutras are now fully completed. Thus it is clear that there are no other factors apart from the links which are shown here.

A question: ‘What specifically gives rise to afflictions, to activity and to suffering? I request you to please explain this.’

1) The link of ignorance



8) The link of craving



9) The link of clinging



The reply: **“From the three**

2) The link of volitional factors/impulses



10) The link of becoming



the two

arise.”

From the three (ignorance, craving and clinging), which are known as the afflictions, arise the two (volitional formation and becoming), which are known as activity.

“From the two

2) The link of volitional factors/impulses



10) The link of becoming



the seven

3) The link of consciousness



4) The link of name and form



5) The link of six sense bases



6) The link of contact



arise.”

7) The link of feeling



11) The link of birth



12) The link of old age and death



These are the seven indicated above (consciousness, name and form, the six sense bases, contact, feeling, birth, and old age and death) which are known as suffering.

“Moreover from these seven

3) The link of consciousness



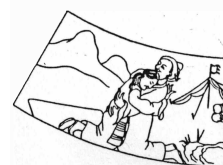
4) The link of name and form



5) The link of six sense bases



6) The link of contact



7) The link of feeling



11) The link of birth



12) The link of old age and death



the three

1) The link of ignorance



8) The link of craving



9) The link of clinging



arise” that are known as afflictions.

Furthermore, from these three

1) The link of ignorance



8) The link of craving



9) The link of clinging



afflictions

the two

2) The link of volitional factors/impulses



10) The link of becoming



arise.

Thus **“The wheel of life revolves again and again.”**

There are three modes (or realms) of life (or becoming), desire, form and formless within which the wheel revolves without coming to rest. Due to this beings wander everywhere in the world. The Tibetan particle ‘Ni’ (placed between ‘the wheel’ and ‘ceaselessly revolving’) indicates a sense of uncertainty. The precious wheel turns (in a regular fashion) but the (revolving wheel of) becoming in these three (realms) does not occur in that way. Hence uncertainty is indicated.

A question: *‘Now, who made sentient beings? Was it the lord of all that is embodied? How was this work done?’*

The reply: **“Since all beings are cause and consequence, in this way,”** except by attribution⁴ **“there are no sentient beings at all.”** If we truly examine this⁵ we see that even the attribution does not exist. It is not fitting that what is merely an attribution should be adhered to as a real object.

A question: *‘If this is so, then who passes from this world to the next?’*

The reply: From this world to the next not even an atom of dust transmigrates. Moreover, **“Phenomena are empty, that is all, and from them arise only empty phenomena.”** Phenomena are without a self and what pertains to a self. What are known as afflictions and actions have become causes. From these five links (*afflictions*: ignorance, craving, clinging; *actions*: volitional formation and becoming), which are empty, come the consequent result of what is called suffering (which is also) free of self and what pertains to self. Thus there are deemed to arise the described (attributed) seven empty phenomena (factors, links) (*suffering*: consciousness, name and form, the six sense bases, contact, feeling, birth, and old age and death).

Regarding what is thus stated, all that follows on from what is without self or that which pertains to self is never self or that which pertains to self. Moreover from phenomena (factors, links), which are inherently without self, arise only phenomena which are inherently without self. This should be understood just as it has been explained.

A question: *'What examples illustrate how only phenomena without inherent self (existence) arise from phenomena without an inherent self?'*

The reply: **"As with instructive speech, butter lamps, mirrors, seals, magnifying crystals, seeds, sourness and sound."** By enquiring using these examples one can know the inherent absence of self (existence) as well as subsequent manifestation in the world. For example, if the words from the teacher's mouth were (fully) transferred to the student then the teacher would be deprived of her own words. Hence there is no transference. Nor does the reply of the student arise from something other otherwise there would be no cause. In this way, as with the speech from the teacher's mouth, so with the mind at the time of death. It does not travel across to the next life otherwise there would be the fault of permanence. Nor does the next life arise from something other otherwise there would be the fault of being without cause. Hence, it is impossible to say if what arises from the cause of the teacher's speech arises identically or not for the student. Similarly it is impossible to say if the mind at the point of death and the mind assigned to the arising birth are identical or different.

In like manner, with (the flame) of one butterlamp another lamp is lit. And from a face the mirror shows a reflection; from a seal an impression; from a magnifying crystal a fire; from a seed a shoot; with the juice of sour fruit saliva arises; and from a sound an echo arises. With these examples (one can see that) it is not possible to know if what arises is the same or different.

Hence, **"The wise know that although the aggregates emerge in the next life they are not transmigrating."** There are five aggregates⁶: form, feeling, perception /apprehension, volitional formation and consciousness/comprehending. Their emerging in another life indicates that from a cause that has stopped another consequence/result arises. Yet not even an atom's worth of substantial entity has transmigrated from this world to the next. Because it is like this, the revolving wheel (of life) arises due to the subtle propensity for erroneous thought. The humble Tibetan particle 'Yang' (even, yet) indicates opposition, a rejection⁷. (If one sees that) all entities are impermanent, suffering and empty, and are always insubstantial (then one) will not be deluded concerning entities.

Free of delusion/stupefaction there is no attachment. With no attachment aversion does not occur. With no aversion actions will not be performed. With no actions there is no adopting of/involvement in entities. With no involvement there is no construction of becoming. With no becoming there is no birth. If there is no birth suffering of body and mind will not arise. In this way, as shown here, if the five causes (aggregates) are not engaged with then no other result will arise. With this the end is known. In this way the wrong views of permanence and annihilation are dispelled. There are two stanzas which address this:

Those who impute traceless obliteration

To the most subtle entities,

Will, due to their lack of knowledge,

Not see how they are dependently arisen.

In this way there is not the least aspect to be cleared away,

Nor the slightest aspect to be put in place.

Truly looking at the actual truth,

By truly seeing there is complete liberation.

This completes the explanation of *THE HEART OF DEPENDENT ARISING* written by Acharya Arya Nagarjuna.

Translated by James Low, March 2019

Notes

¹ Dependent origination and dependent arising are both valid translations and both are used in this text. Experiences arise, appear, emerge from, and have their origin in, other experiences.

² This activity is the karmic activity which acts as a cause having consequences that manifest later.

³ The 'Ni' is placed in the line between "the twelve links" and "are encompassed by these three". This indicates their equivalence.

⁴ *brTag-Pa*, examining and investigating on the basis of identification through signs. This indicates attributing an 'essence' by the act of naming, installing a superimposed identity which is not inherent.

⁵ That which seems to exist on the basis of believing the attribution (including the attribution itself).

⁶ Delusion gives rise to the first aggregate, the sense of form as substance and thereby generates seemingly separate objects. Towards such objects the second aggregate, feelings arise and they can be positive, negative or neutral, and this encourages discrimination and choice. This leads to the third aggregate, apprehension by which specific objects are taken hold of as being of particular interest. With this there is the fourth aggregate, volitional formation that manifests as an urge to get involved, to do something to someone or something. From this there arises the fifth and final aggregate, consciousness, which is our capacity to comprehend a situation according to our own conceptual capacity.

⁷ Of the idea of the continuity of the aggregates, and hence there is the possibility of the reversal of the twelve links.

གང་གི་རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་བར་འབྱུང།

GANG GI TEN CHING DREL WAR JUNG
whatever of depending connected arise
Whatever arises through dependent connection is

འགགས་པ་མེད་པ་སྐྱེད་མེད་པ།

GAG PA ME PA KYE ME PA
stopping, without arising, without
ceasing born
Without ceasing or arising,

ཆད་པ་མེད་པ་རྟག་མེད་པ།

CHE PA ME PA TAG ME PA
annihilated, without permanent, without
cut off eternal
Without annihilation or permanence,

འོང་བ་མེད་པ་འགོ་མེད་པ།

ONG WA ME PA DRO ME PA
coming without going without
Without coming or going,

ཐ་དད་དོན་མིན་དོན་གཅིག་མིན།

THA DAD DON MIN DON CHIG MIN
different meaning without meaning same without
Without difference or sameness.

སྤོས་པ་ཉེར་ཞི་ཞི་བསྐྱེད་པ།

TRO PA NYER ZHI ZHI TAN PA
thought fully pacifying peaceful doctrine,
proliferation teaching
This peaceful teaching that stills dualistic thought

རྫོགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་སྤྲི་རྣམས་ཀྱི།

DZOG PAI SANG GYE MA NAM KYI
complete, Buddha teaching, of
perfect speaking
Is the holy teaching of the perfect Buddha.

དམ་པ་དེ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ།།

DAM PA DE LA CHAG TSHAL LO
holy, best that to bow down, salute
I bow in reverence to this.

Whatever arises through dependent connection is without ceasing or arising, without annihilation or permanence, without coming or going, without difference or sameness. This peaceful teaching that stills dualistic thought is the holy teaching of the perfect Buddha. I bow in reverence to this.

Arya Nagarjuna, from his *ROOT VERSES OF THE MIDDLE WAY*

སྐར་མ་རབ་རིབ་མར་མེ་དང་།

KAR MA RAB RIB MAR ME DANG
stars hallucination, flickering lamps and haziness, mirage

As stars, hallucinations, flickering lamps,

སྐྱུ་མ་ཟླེལ་པ་རྒྱ་བུར་དང་།

GYU MA ZIL PA CHU BUR DANG
illusions dew drops bubbles on water and

Illusions, dewdrops, bubbles,

མི་ལམ་གློག་དང་སྲིན་ལྗ་བུ།

MI LAM LOG DANG TRIN TA BU
dreams flashes of and clouds like lightning

Dreams, flashes of lightning and clouds –

འདུས་བྱས་དེ་ལྟར་བལྟ་བར་བྱ།

DU JE DE TAR TA BAR JA
compounded things in this way look at do

This is the way one should perceive all compounded phenomena.

As stars, hallucinations and flickering lamps, as illusions, dewdrops and bubbles, as dreams, flashes of lightning and clouds – this is the way one should perceive all compounded phenomena.

From the Prajnaparamita text, *THE DIAMOND CUTTER*

DEDICATION

ལྷུ་ལྷོ་དང་མི་དགའི་རྟོག་ཚོགས་རང་གྲོལ་ལཱ་།

A GE DANG MI GEI TOG TSOG RANG DROL LA
virtuous and unvirtuous thoughts all self-liberating with

A. With all virtuous and non-virtuous thoughts being self-liberating, and

རེ་དང་དོགས་པའི་མཚན་མ་མི་དམིགས་ཀྱང་།

RE DANG DOG PAI TSEN MA MI MIG KYANG
hopes and doubts signs, not take that object also,
characteristics conceptualise although

Being free of identifying with the signs that generate hopes and fears,

སྐྱང་ཚའི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་བསྐྱུ་མེད་དགའ་ཚོགས་རྒྱུ་།

NANG CHAI TEN DREL LU ME GE TSOG GYUN
appearances, connection, not cheating virtue collection always flow
ideas (relative truth
absence of inherent existence)

The accumulation of virtue keeps flowing from the undeceiving dependent origination of appearances.

ཟག་མེད་ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས་སུ་བསྐྱོ་བར་བྱེ།

ZAG ME CHOE KYI YING SU NGO WAR JA
pure, all encompassing in give, do
undefiled space dedicate

This is dedicated in undefiled all-encompassing space for the benefit of all beings.

A. With all virtuous and non-virtuous thoughts being self-liberating, and being free of identifying with the signs that generate hopes and fears, the accumulation of virtue keeps flowing from the undeceiving dependent origination of appearances. This is dedicated in undefiled all-encompassing space for the benefit of all beings.

DHARMA ADVICE

ཚོས་རྣམས་ཐམས་ཅད་རྒྱུ་ལས་བྱུང་།

CHOE NAM TAM CHE GYU LAE JUNG
phenomena, all cause from arise
appearances

All phenomena arise from a cause.

དེ་རྒྱུ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པས་གསུངས།

DE GYU DE ZHIN SHEG PE SUNG
that cause Tathagata, Buddha, by spoken, told

This cause has been shown by the Tathagata.

རྒྱུ་ལ་འགོག་པ་གང་ཡིན་པ།

GYU LA GOG PA GANG YIN PA
cause from stop whatever is

How to put an end to this cause

དག་སྤོང་ཆེན་པོས་འདི་སྐད་གསུངས།

GE JONG CHEN POE DI KE SUNG
virtue practitioner great by that speech said

Has been taught by the great practitioner of virtue.

All phenomena arise from a cause. This cause has been shown by the Tathagata. How to put an end to this cause has been taught by the great practitioner of virtue.

སྲིག་པ་ཅི་ཡང་མི་བྱའོང་།

DIG PA CHI YANG MI JA ZHING
sin whatsoever not doing

Not to do anything unvirtuous whatsoever but

དག་བ་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་པར་སྦྱད།

GE WA PHUN SUM TSOG PAR JAE
virtue all good things, good ideas do

To practise virtue and all that is good and

རང་གི་སེམས་ནི་ཡོངས་སུ་འདུལ།

RANG GI SEM NI YONG SU DUL
own mind fully control

To fully control one's own mind -

འདི་ནི་སངས་རྒྱུས་བསྟན་པ་ཡིན།

DI NI SANG GYE TEN PA YIN
this is Buddha's doctrine is

This is the doctrine of the Buddha.

Not to do anything unvirtuous whatsoever but to practise virtue and all that is good and to fully control one's own mind – this is the doctrine of the Buddha.