

The Twenty Fourth Chapter, Investigation of Noble Truth

If all these were empty it follows that
There would not be arising and disintegration,
And the four truths of Ārya¹
Would not exist for you.

[24.1]

Question:²

In case, if you were to prove that all these aspects of the outer and inner things [*vastu*]³ are completely empty since they are not feasible logically, in that case, would not it be a big mistake and too much for you?

Because, if all these were completely empty, then it follows that whatever is empty would be non-existent and whatever is non-existent is not an existence; therefore it would not have arisen like a son of a barren woman and it would not cease whereby it follows that there would not be anything that arises and disintegrates. Since they do not exist, it follows that all the four truths of ārya do not exist for you who speak of emptiness.

How is it that? It is as the following: Here, the five aggregates that we have appropriated are produced by the cause in past and they have arisen through dependent relation.

They, because of being the suffering of pain, the suffering of change, and the suffering of being compounded conditions, are unpleasant whereby they are in the nature of harm; for this reason they are called “suffering”. This suffering furthermore is known as suffering only by the āryas who know have abandoned the misapprehension, not by the non-āryas, because they are associated to misapprehension and they posit the nature of things exactly as they see.

In that way, when those things⁴ observe those very [appropriated] things to have that nature, they then are caught by the sickness such as epidemic disease whereby their sense power misapprehend. For those observing even the nature of sweet

¹ An ārya is an elevated being or we can simply say a superior because of having directly realized the emptiness.

² This is a debate from raised by the lower school to the proponents of middle way. The debate from the lower school actually carries on till the end of [24.6].

³ *Vastu* in sanskr̥t means objects or things our belongings.

⁴ For some reason, the text says “those things” but the meaning is that the ordinary beings who are associated to misapprehension observe the appropriated aggregates to be that nature of pleasure. But at philosophical level, the statement is acceptable. Because, the non-āryas who are associated with misapprehension are also *vastus* or objects.

molasses as bitter, it is true that it is bitter and it is absolutely not sweet with respect to their consciousness; similarly the five appropriated aggregates here indeed are in the nature of suffering.

However, they are posited as suffering only for some who see them as the nature of suffering, not for those who observe them to have different aspect due to being allied to misapprehension. For that reason, [the five appropriated aggregates] are true to be the nature of suffering only for the āryas; therefore they are called “the true suffering for āryas”.

Question:

In case if it said that the painful feelings, aren't they to be cut off completely even by the non-āryas by saying “they are sufferings”, therefore how can it be said that the suffering is true only for the āryas ?

Answer:

It is not only the painful feeling that is true suffering; then, how is it? All the five appropriated aggregates are [true sufferings]. For that reason, they are called “the truth for ārya” since they are true only for the āryas. They are posited and explained as such in the following [*sūtra of Bhadantasūriānusaptatika*]⁵:

A single piece of hair that is
At one's palm is not seen by people,
Yet when it enters in their eyes
It produces discomforts and harms.

Similarly the childish beings who resemble the palm
Would not realize the hair of the suffering of compounded conditions
Whereas the āryas who resemble the eyes
Would even be very saddened.

Therefore, these sufferings are true only for the āryas whereby they are posited as “the true suffering for āryas”.

Question:

⁵ btsun pa dpal legs kyi rdul bdun ćupa in Tibetan wily or simply *the sūtra of seventy atoms by Venerable Suśrī*.

When would it⁶ be suitable to be the suffering, the truth of āryas?

When the compounded phenomena do not arise and do not disintegrate then at that time since they being empty, they would not be arisen even the slightest and they would not cease even the minimum; at that point the sufferings are not existent.

So, if the sufferings do not exist, then also how can there be true origin?

In this case, if the cause from which all the sufferings arose and produced, if this cause which has the characteristics of craving, karma and delusion is called the “origin”, then since the true suffering that is the result do not exist, it would be just untenable that that which is free of a result being a cause whereby there is also no origin.

If that which is free of suffering and unborn were called “the cessation”, what is ceased by what when the suffering itself does exist?

Therefore, there is also no cessation of suffering. For that reason, when there is no suffering there is also no true cessation.

If there is no cessation of suffering, then also the eight paths of ārya to cease the suffering, how can they exist? For that reason, there is also no true path. Therefore, for you who speak of the things to be empty, it follows that all the four noble truths would not exist.

Question:

What faults would there be from this?

Answer:

Since there are no four noble truths,
The thorough knowledge and abandonment
The meditation and the obtainment
Would not be tenable.

[24.2]

It follows that there would not be the four noble truths —and the thorough knowledge of the true suffering by its aspects such as the impermanence, the abandonment of the true origin of suffering, the meditation on the path that ceases the suffering and the obtainment i.e. the actualization of the cessation of suffering— [all these four] would not be tenable.

Question:

⁶ It refers to the appropriated aggregates that are contaminated. I think, to express it in a short way, we could simply say ‘the contaminated aggregates’.

In case the āryas truth such as the suffering did not exist, there can not exist the thorough knowledge and so forth, at that point, what faults would there be?

Answer:

Since they are non existent,
Also the four results are not existent.
If there are no results there are no abiders in result.
There are also no approachers. [24.3abcd]

In case the eight beings or persons
do not exist, the saṅghas do not exist.
Since the truths of āryas do not exist
Also the holy dharma do not exist. [24.4abcd]

If the dharma and saṅghas are not existent
How can there be buddhas? [24.5ab]

When the thorough knowledge and so forth of suffering do not exist in that way, at that point, since they do not exist, the result of stream enterer, once returner, non returner, foe destroyer⁷ and also the four⁸ are not tenable.

How is it that? Here, one who totalizes the abandonment of delusions receives the name of result. It is as the following:

1) the possession of any abandonment of delusions such as the subsequent knowledge at the sixteenth instant of [the path of seeing] by abandoning the three entanglements is the result of stream enterer.

Each of the [three] aspects: the great, medium and small delusion consumed⁹ in the desire realm, that are to be abandoned through meditation also respectively has great, medium and small aspect whereby there are nine aspects.

In regard to that, 2) the possession of any abandonment on the liberated path by exhausting the sixth aspect¹⁰ [of the delusion] consumed in the desire realm is the result of once-returner.

⁷ A foe-destroyer means someone who has abandoned all the delusions, someone who has overcome all these inner enemies. In sanskr̥t it is called arhat.

⁸ They are the four abiders: abider in the result of stream enterer, abider in the result of once returner, abider in the result of non returner and the abider in the result of foe destroyer.

⁹ This word 'consumed' can be also replaced by 'relied on' or 'followed' or used or experienced depending on the context.

3) The possession of any abandonment on the liberated path by exhausting the 9th aspect¹¹ of the delusions consumed in the desire realm is the result of non- returner.

4) The delusions consumed in the form realm and formless realm that are to be abandoned by meditation, at each of [the eight remaining] levels are divided into nine aspects. So the possession of any abandonment on the liberated path by extinguishing exhaustively the nine aspects of the delusions consumed at the level of the absorption without discrimination and not without discrimination is the result of foe-destroyer. These are the four results.

Question:

How are these feasible?

In case there is a thorough knowledge of suffering, abandonment of origin, actualization of cessation and the cultivation of path, at that point, since there is no truth of ārya such as the suffering there would not be the thorough knowledge of suffering and so forth, at this point these four results would not exist. If these four results did not exist, the ārya people abiding on them, the four abiders on the results also would not exist. For that reason, also all the four ārya people who are the approachers would not exist.

Here follows the sixteenth moment, the subsequent knowledge of the [true] path and the fifteen previous moments of knowledge and forbearance. It is like this, when one directly realizes the suffering of the three realms, there are four instants of forbearance¹² and knowledge that observe the suffering.

Question:

In regard to that, what are the four instants of forbearance and knowledge at the time of realizing directly the suffering of the three realms?

¹⁰ The small of the medium, counted from great to small. The 1st in this case would be the great of the great of delusion, 2nd the medium of the great, 3rd the small of great, 4th the great of medium, the 5th the medium of medium and 6th the small of the medium.

¹¹ The small of the small delusion consumed in the desire realm is the 9th of the nine aspects of the delusion that is consumed in the desire realm. In short, the delusion of each of the nine levels within the three realms is divided in nine. Desire realm itself is counted as the first level. The four mental stabilizations in the form realm are the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and the 5th level. The four absorptions in the formless realm are the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th level. So, when the delusion of each of these 9 levels is divided into 9, there are 81 altogether.

¹² Forebearance is a name given to the uninterrupted path and knowledge is a name given to the liberated path.

Answer: It is like this:

1) —the instant of forbearance that knows the dharma¹³ regarding the true suffering, —which is the antidote to the ten *anuśayas*¹⁴ so called (the view of the transitory collection, the view holding at extreme, wrong view, the conception of a [bad] view as supreme, conception of bad ethics and modes of conduct as supreme, doubt, attachment, anger, pride and ignorance) that are to be abandoned by the path of seeing related to the suffering, which belong to the desire realm, —generated in the aspect of impermanence, pain, empty, devoid of self-entity, —having the characteristic of uninterrupted path that observes the true suffering that is experienced in the desire realm; this is the first.

2) The instant of dharmic knowledge regarding the suffering, which has the characteristic of liberated path that has the same observed object and aspect; this is the second.

3) —The instant of the subsequent forbearance¹⁵ that knows dharma regarding the suffering later, —which similarly observes the true suffering that belongs to the form realm and formless realm, —which is the antidote to the eighteen *anuśayas* that were just explained above excluding the anger, —generated in the aspect of suffering etc. and having the characteristic of uninterrupted path; this is the third.

4) The instant of the subsequent knowledge of the true suffering, which has the characteristic of liberated path that has the same observed object and aspect; this is the fourth.

¹³ This dharma, from the point of view of the higher school, refers to the emptiness, but in this case it refers to the attributes of true suffering. The conclusion is that the bodhisattva is able to tolerate the direct realization of the attributes of the four noble truths, such as the impermanence without any fear.

¹⁴ Anuśaya literally means subtle-increaser, in other word it simply means affliction.

¹⁵ The subsequent forebearance and subsequent knowledge are called subsequent because the yogi first directly realize the attributes of the true suffering and so forth in the desire realm and then they later directly realize them in the two upper realms.

Just as there being the four instants of the forbearance and knowledge that directly realize the true suffering that belongs to the three realms, [here follows the four of the true origin]:

1) —The instant of forbearance that knows the dharma regarding the true origin,
—which is the antidote to the seven *anuśayas* so called (the wrong view, the conception of a [bad] view as supreme, doubt, attachment, anger, pride and ignorance) that are to be abandoned by the path of seeing related to the true origin, which belong to the desire realm,
—generated in the aspect of cause, origin, strong production and condition,
—having the characteristic of uninterrupted path that observes the true origin that belongs to the desire realm; this is the first.

2) The instant of dharmic knowledge regarding the origin, which has the characteristic of liberated path that has the same observed object and aspect; this is the second.

3) —The instant of subsequent forbearance that subsequently knows dharma regarding the origin,
—which similarly observes the true origin that belongs to the form realm and formless realm,
—which is the antidote to the twelve *anuśayas* that were just explained above excluding the anger,
—generated in the aspect of true origin and having the characteristic of uninterrupted path; this is the third.

4) The instant of subsequent knowledge of the true origin, which has the characteristic of liberated path that has the same observed object and aspect; this is the fourth. These are thus the four moments of the direct realization of the true origin of suffering experienced in the three realms.

Just as there being these four instants of the direct realization of the true origin of suffering of the three realms, [here follows the four of the true cessation]:

1) —The instant of forbearance that knows the dharma regarding the cessation,
—which is the antidote to the seven *anuśayas* (as explained above in the case of true origin), which are to be abandoned by the path of seeing related to the cessation of suffering experienced in the desire realm,
—generated in the aspect of cessation, pacification, auspiciousness, and definite emergence,

—having the characteristic of uninterrupted path that observes the cessation of suffering experienced in the desire realm; this is the first.

2) The instant of dharmic knowledge regarding the cessation of suffering, which has the characteristic of liberated path that has the same observed object and aspect; this is the second.

3) —The instant of subsequent forbearance that subsequently knows the dharma regarding the cessation,

—which with the same aspects of this and that observes the true cessation of suffering experienced in the form realm and formless realm,

—which is the antidote to the twelve *anuśayas* excluding the anger,

—which has the characteristic of uninterrupted path; this is the third.

4) The instant of subsequent knowledge of the true cessation of suffering, which belongs to the form realm and formless realm, which has the characteristic of liberated path that has the same observed object and aspect; this is the fourth.

These are thus the four moments of the direct realization of the true cessation of suffering in the three realms.

Just as there being these four instants of the direct realization of the true cessation of suffering of the three realms, [here follows the four of the true path]:

1) —The instant of forbearance that knows the dharma regarding the true path,

—which is the antidote to the eight *anuśayas* (seven as explained above in the case of ceasing the suffering, and the additional eighth, the conception of bad ethics and modes of conduct as supreme), to be abandoned by the path of seeing related to the path to the cessation of suffering, which belong to the desire realm,

—generated in the aspect of path, knowledge, achievement, and definite removal,

—having the characteristic of uninterrupted path that observes the path that ceases the suffering experienced in the desire realm; this is the first.

2) The instant of dharmic knowledge regarding the path, which has the characteristic of liberated path that has the same observed object and aspect; this is the second.

3) —The instant of subsequent forbearance that subsequently knows the dharma regarding the path,

—which with the same aspect of this and that observes the path that ceases the suffering experienced in the form realm and formless realm,

—which is the antidote to the fourteen *anuśayas* excluding the anger,
—which has the characteristic of uninterrupted path; this is the third.

4) These fifteen instants are called “The path of seeing”; and the āryas who abide on them are called “the enterer” since they are there for actualizing the result of stream enterer. Those abiding on the subsequent knowledge of true path, the sixteenth instant are called “the stream enterers”.

These eighty eight¹⁶ *anuśayas* are called “the objects to be abandoned by the path of seeing”, because they are abandoned by merely seeing the truth without depending on meditation.

Those that will be abandoned later by meditating just as it is done by seeing the aspect of truth are called the objects to be abandoned by the path of meditation i.e. that there are ten *anuśayas*: attachment, anger, pride and ignorance that are followed in the desire realm, three of them excluding the anger followed in the form realm and the same three of them followed in the formless realm, which make the total of ten.

They then are divided into nine aspects in relation to each of the [nine] levels within the three realms as explained earlier: desire realm, the four mental stabilizations and the four levels of formless realm. In order to abandon each aspect of the delusion, two instants of consciousness, —one that of uninterrupted path and one that of liberated path— are posited on the basis of opposing instantaneously a delusion.

It is as the following: the great of the great aspect of delusion is abandoned by the small of the small uninterrupted path and liberated path, starting from this one goes up to the abandonment of the subtle of the subtle aspect of delusion with the help of the great of the great uninterrupted path.

The gross stains are removed with a small effort whereas the subtle stains are removed with a great deal of effort. One should know it as the action of the one who does laundry.

In regard to that, after the path of seeing, the ārya —with the antidote to the sixth aspect of delusion that belongs to the desire realm, which is to be abandoned by the path of meditation,— who abides on the instant of consciousness that is before the instant of the exalted wisdom called “the liberated path” is called the approacher to the result of once returner. He/she is called once returner because he comes back one time to this world and enters in pāranirvāṇa. He is called the approacher to the result of once

¹⁶ 28 related to true suffering (10 of desire realm, 9 of form realm and 9 of formless realm); 19 related to true origin (7 of desire realm, 6 of form realm and six of formless realm); 19 related to true cessation (7 of desire realm, 6 of form realm and six of formless realm); 22 related to true path (8 of desire realm, 7 of form realm and 7 of formless realm).

returner because he approaches to the aim of that result and abides in its preparation. On the sixth instant he/she is an once returner.

After the sixth instant, the ārya who abides on the instant of exalted wisdom that is before the instant of exalted wisdom of liberated path that has abandoned the ninth delusion, is called the approacher to the result of non-returner. He/she is called non-returner because he enters in pāranirvāṇa right there¹⁷ without coming back to this world. He is called the approacher to the result of non-returner because he approaches to the aim of that result and abides in its preparation. On the ninth instant he/she is called non-returner.

After the ninth instant, the ārya who abides on the instant of antidote to the ninth delusion of the summit of cyclic existence that is before the instant of exalted wisdom called the liberated path, is called the approacher to the result of for-destroyer. He/she is called for-destroyer because he/she is worthy to be worshiped in the world, by the gods, human beings and the anti gods. He is called the approacher to the result of non-returner because he approaches to the aim of that result and abides in its preparation. The one who is abiding on the ninth liberated path that is free of the ninth delusion of the summit of cyclic existence is called [the abider in the result of] foe-destroyer.

It is said that the so called “the four people who are approachers and the four abiders”, these eight great beings who are worthy of veneration are the saṅghas of the bhagavan as mentioned below:

In regard to that, the Indra, king of gods,
The Controller asked question:
The farmer sentient beings who will become kings
And those with faith wish merits;

For those who create merits always
By means of substances,¹⁸ which field would bring them
Bigger result when they are offered?
O Noble, I will explain well.

Due to possessing knowledge and its feet [of base]¹⁹

¹⁷ This can refer to any of the three following possibilities: intermediate state, form realm and the formless realm.

¹⁸ There are two kinds of merits, one that derives from substance and that derives from non-substance. So here it is talking about the merits from substance.

¹⁹ Literally the word is feet, but in fact it means the base of morality and concentration. Buddha has perfected these two bases and the wisdom.

He is the field of generosity; the great saṅghas,²⁰
the four classes of approachers
and the four abider on results [are too].

Therefore, in case the four truths of ārya, the thorough knowledge of them and so forth did not exist, then at that point there would not be the seeing of truth whereby there would not be those who approach because of seeing the result, and those who abide on the result; therefore the saṅghas would not be existent. Then, it follows that the saṅghas who have actualized²¹ the attributes of the dharma of realization²² and who cannot be separated from the bhagavan even by all the māras, would not exist.

If these eight beings or persons themselves did not exist due to the non-existence of āryas' truth, then it follows that the holy dharma, which is the practice of the holy saṅgha also would not exist.

In regard to that, the true cessation is a resultant dharma whereas the true path is the dharma for entering into the result. This for example is the dharma of realization. Since the scriptural dharma being that which clarifies them,²³ if the āryas' truth did not exist then all these would not be existent.

Since the āryas' truth do not exist,

The holy dharma also would not exist.

[24.4cd]

If there were no dharma and no saṅghas,

How could there be a buddha?

[24.5ab]

If the dharma that is just explained existed, it would be appropriate to say "One can buddhify himself by comprehending all the phenomena directly and completely in all the aspects with an emphatic practice that accords with the dharma [of nirvāṇa].

So if the saṅghas exist, then when one stores the accumulation of exalted wisdom by means of the teaching given by them and when one stores the accumulation of merits by making offerings, service to them and taking refuge in them, one will gradually become a buddha.

Or, if the saṅghas did not exist, there would not be those approaching the stream enterer and so forth. The buddha state itself is not attained without attaining the position of the approacher and so forth. Also the bhagavan definitely in the past

²⁰ The four approachers and the four abiders are saṅghas of hinayāna.

²¹ The saṅghas who have directly realized the emptiness or the saṅghas who have attained the true cessation and true path.

²² There are two kinds dharma, that of scripture and that of realization. That of realization refers to the true cessation and true path.

²³ The true cessation and the true path which are the dharma of realization.

approached some of the results. Since he approached the results, the bhagavan belongs to the saṅgha category; without saṅghas the buddha bhagavan would not have existed.

Or, if even the bhagavan belongs to the category of saṅghas who pertain to the saṅghas of no more learning, it is indeed so, therefore some people say that since the buddha bhagavan and so forth are said to be ‘the bhikṣu saṅghas’ the bhagavan is included in the category of saṅgha and according to their system it is very clear by the quote that says:

If the dharma and saṅgha did not exist,
How could there be a buddha? [24.5ab]

When the discussion of grounds presented in Lokottaravidis²⁴ mentions that the bodhisattva on the first ground has generated the path of seeing, those reciting the *Middling Quote*²⁵ underline that he is included in the category of saṅghas. In that case, it is quite clear that it would indirectly mean:

If there were no saṅghas
There would not even be bodhisattva,
Therefore how could there be a buddha?

Therefore,

If you speak of emptiness like that,
it undermines the three jewels. [24.5cd]

That means if you speak of the meaning of emptiness like that, it does harm also all the three jewels, the so called “buddha, dharma and saṅgha” since it is difficult to encounter them, since they arise occasionally, since those with little merit would not encounter them and since they are of great value.

Furthermore,

It harms all:
the existence of result;
the non-dharma, dharma itself,
the worldly conventions. [24.6abcd]

²⁴ a text of the Mahāsāṅghika sub school

²⁵ This is the first of the four vinaya texts: madhyamāgama (middling quote), dīrghāgama (long quote), śuddhamatigama (quote possessing purity), ekottarikāgama (vinaya elaborated from one quote); It is said that Madhyamāgama is still not translated in Tibetan.

Add the subordinate clause “If you speak of emptiness,” [to each of the main clause].²⁶ In case all these were empty and they did not exist, it would follow that this cancels —the two of them, the dharmic cause²⁷ and non dharmic cause which— bring about the wanted result [happiness] and the unwanted result [suffering] since they are included in the word all; and also it would be completely untenable since all the following the worldly conventions saying, “Do! Cure! Eat! Stay! Go! Come! and so forth, are included in the word all; [it is untenable] since also all the phenomena are completely empty. They²⁸ say “Therefore, teaching in such a way is not good”.

In regard to that explanation,²⁹ you
Have not understood the purpose of emptiness
The emptiness, the meaning of emptiness,
therefore, there is harm like that. [24.7abcd]

Only through conceptualization, you superimpose wrongly saying “Non existence is the meaning of emptiness” and you express censures such as saying:

If all these were empty,

There would be neither arising nor ceasing. [24.1ab]

What distresses us so much is that it harms [yourself] very much; another way that is equivalent to say this is “You are deviating yourself due to your different kinds of incorrect conceptualizations”.

Whatever you have apprehended has not been described as the meaning of emptiness in our scripture here. You have not understood the meaning of emptiness whereby you would not know emptiness and you also would not know what the purpose of emptiness is. For this reason, you without knowing the meaning, how the entity of things exists, you have spoken many of these inappropriate things that are not related to what we have explained. Following this, if somebody asked “What is the purpose of emptiness?” The answer is:

At the end, due to exhausting the karmas and afflictions
The elaborations from the karmas,
Afflictions and the conceptualizations
Will be ceased by the emptiness. [18.5abcd]

²⁶ If you speak of emptiness, it harms the existence of result. If you speak of emptiness, it harms the worldly conventions and so forth.

²⁷ Dharmic cause refers to virtuous cause and non dharmic cause refers to non-virtuous cause.

²⁸ The people of lower school.

²⁹ Here, the middle-wayers answer the debate from lower school.

This has been already explained in the Examination of self. Therefore, the emptiness has been thoroughly taught in order to totally pacify all the elaborations. For that reason, although the purpose of emptiness is to totally pacify all the elaborations you on the contrary conceptualize the emptiness as meaningless and increase only the net of elaboration whereby you have not realized the purpose of emptiness. At this point, if someone asked “What is emptiness?” The answer is:

It is unknown from other,³⁰ peaceful,
Unelaborated by the elaborator,
Without conceptualization, without identity and distinction,
These are the very characteristics. [18.9abcd]

This has been explained in that same [chapter]. Therefore, how can the emptiness where all the elaborations are turned away, be non-existent. For this reason, you also do not know emptiness. Keeping that as the meaning of emptiness, that term emptiness refers to the following:

Anything that is arisen dependently
Is explained to be emptiness.
It is designated dependently.
This itself is the middle way. [24.18abcd]

This has been taught in that same [chapter]. Also the Bhagavan taught in the following stanza.

Whatever is arisen from condition is unarisen.
It does not have inherent arising.
Anything that relies on conditions is explained to be empty.
Someone who knows emptiness would be conscientious.

In that case, whatever is the meaning of the word dependent arising, that itself is the meaning of the word emptiness. Whatever is the meaning of the word non-thing³¹ is not the meaning of the word emptiness. You by superimposing the meaning of the word non-thing as the meaning of the word emptiness, look for a quarrel with us. Therefore, you do not even know the meaning of the word emptiness. Looking for a quarrel unknowingly is definitely a harm for your self.

³⁰ Of course, the explanation on emptiness is learned or understood by depending on others, But the realization itself of emptiness is something felt by oneself, like the taste of molasses that is experienced by oneself, no one can experience it for you.

³¹ Literally non-thing is the translation of dngos med, but it in reality means “totally non-existent” in such case. In sanskr̥it, it is abhāva, which could mean non-existent, impossible, thing that has not happened, entityless etc.

Question: Who is the one that looks for quarrel with us?

Answer: It is those who only recite voluntarily the scriptures without knowing correctly the differentiation between the two truths that have been presented in Buddha's teaching.

Therefore Ācārya [Nāgarjuna], in order to cancel the misunderstanding of others regarding [buddh's] scriptures, said the following stanza temporarily in terms of a correct presentation of the two truths taught in the scripture of bhagavan.

The Buddha's teaching of the dharma

Is based perfectly on the two truths:

The worldly conventional truth and

An ultimate truth.

[24.8abcd]

This means that the buddha bhagavans' teaching of dharma has been given in dependence on the two truths. If asked, "What are the two truths?" They are the worldly conventional truth and the ultimate truth.

Regarding that, it is said:

The world is definitely dependent on

That world that is known as the aggregates.

Based on that, the person that is imputed in dependence on aggregates is called the world. Because of obscuring always it is called convention,³² i.e. the lack of understanding which obscures always the reality of things whereby it is called "convention".

Alternatively it is called convention since it is mutually dependent, that is "because of mutually depending". Alternatively, convention is a term i.e. a synonym for saying the "worldly convention". This furthermore is, characterized by expressions and the objects of expression and the knowledge and object of knowledge.

Question: When saying "worldly convention", does it mean that there is a convention that is not worldly?

Answer: It is said so just to express the way things exist, it does not go through in that examination here.

On the other hand, those³³ abiding with the erroneous seeing because of deteriorating their sense faculties due to hallucination, cataract, jaundice and so forth are not worldly;³⁴ because anything that is their convention is not worldly conventional

³² Literally "all obscured"

³³ the wrong consciousnesses

³⁴ For some reason, the text only says "worldly" without mentioning the content complete. What it means is that they are not valid worldly conventional consciousness.

truth; therefore it is differentiated from the line that says: “the truth of worldly convention” [24.8b]. This is elaborately explained in [Āndrakṛti’s] *Madhyamakāvātāra* therefore one should understand it from there.

What is conventionally true in the world is a worldly conventional truth, because all these conventions such as the object of expression, the expressing agent, knowledge, object of knowledge and so forth are called the truth of worldly convention. These do not exist in the ultimate, because there, the object of expression is overturned i.e. the object of the activity of the mind³⁵ is overturned. Since the unborn and incessant being similar to the innate nature and nirvāṇa, how can a word or consciousness³⁶ can be applied to the ultimate.

That ultimate is unknown from others, it is peaceful, it is known by the own cognition of an ārya, it is gone beyond to all fabrication; it cannot be taught³⁷ and also it cannot be known [clearly]³⁸ as it was explained earlier through the following stanza:

It is unknown from other, peaceful,
Unelaborated by the elaborator,
Without conceptualization, without identity and distinction,
These are the very characteristics. [18.9abcd]

Itself is an object and it is also sacred whereby it is an ultimate object. That itself is true, therefore it is an ultimate truth. You can learn the difference of these two truths from *Madhyamakāvātāra*.³⁹ The buddha bhagavans’ teaching of dharma has been given in dependence on these two truths. That was the way that it was taught.

Those who do not understand
The distinction between these two truths
Do not understand
The Buddha’s profound teaching. [24.9abcd]

Dictum: At this point I would say: in case the ultimate is a nature that is free of fabrication, it is indeed okay that he can teach that. But what need is there to teach something that is not ultimate, such as the aggregate, constituent, entrance, the truth of ārya? If that which is not the ultimate is an object to be thoroughly abandoned, what is point of teaching something that is to be thoroughly abandoned?

I would say that it is indeed true, yet one cannot be taught an ultimate without accepting a mundane ultimate that has the characteristic of the object of expression, the

³⁵ of dualistic appearance

³⁶ the consciousness of duality

³⁷ by means of an agent that is an expressing sound exactly as it is.

³⁸ A mind of dualistic appearance.

³⁹ the *Supplement to the Middle Way* by Āndrakṛti.

subject that expresses, the knowledge and the object of knowledge and so forth. One also cannot realize it without being taught the mundane ultimate. To indicate that one cannot also proceed to the city of nirvāṇa without realizing the ultimate it is said:

The meaning of the ultimate cannot be taught

Without depending on convention and

Without realizing meaning of the ultimate

One will not attain nirvāṇa.

[24.10abcd]

Therefore, since it is the means for attaining the nirvāṇa one has to accept exactly how the conventional exist without any doubt just as a person who desires water looks for a vessel. For that reason, the kind of people who propound the emptiness in that way without understanding the two truths that have the characteristics of conventional truth and ultimate truth are as the following.

If the the emptiness is misviewed,

Those with little wisdom would fail.

It would be like a miscatching of a snake

And a miscasting of knowledge mantra.

[24.11abcd]

A yogi, having realized that ignorance gives rise to a conventional truth and that it is without inherent existence and who realizes that its emptiness has the characteristic of being ultimate truth would not fall in the two extremes. Because since he has not observed the inherent existence of things in that way before he also cannot apprehend it as [totally] non-existent later by saying “If something [that is inherently existent] becomes non-existent now, how is that possible?”⁴⁰ And [this yogi] does not undermine the mundane convention that is like a reflection whereby he also does not undermine the action and its result and what is virtuous and non-virtuous. He also would not superimpose an ultimately existing entity on things, because the results of action and so forth are seen only in the things that do not have inherent existence. Things that have inherent existence are not existent. Also according to those who propound the things to have inherent existence, the action and its result are not seen, the dependent arising and so forth are not seen.⁴¹ The one who sees the compounded phenomena as emptiness without seeing the differentiation of the two truths, has seen them as

⁴⁰ This is related to the 11th stanza of the 15th chapter, Investigation of nature that says: “Whatever exists inherently/ cannot be non-existent whereby it is permanent./ It existed before, but does not now”/ entails the view of nihilism./

⁴¹ The concept here is that the Buddha said things do not inherently exist and some people have difficulty to accept this teachings. Because they think “If things do not exist inherently then they become completely non-existent, like the son of a barren woman”. This is why the text says “Also according to the [lower schools] who propound things to have inherent existence, the action and its result are not seen” exactly in the right way.”

completely empty whereby he conceives the compounded phenomena as totally non-existent. Alternatively, he imagines some emptiness as things and as a basis for that, he imagines also the inherent existence of the things. Both of these⁴² are misviews in regard to the emptiness whereby they definitely ruin us. How?

If all were empty,

All would not be existent.

When conceptualizing thus, this would be a wrong view. As [Ratnāvalī]⁴³ says:

If this phenomenon is misapprehended,

The unwise will be ruined,

Thus, through the view of non-existence,

They will sink into impurity. [2.19abcd]

Yet, if they by all means do not assert to deprecate all, then although these things have been observed, how can they be emptiness? Therefore they definitely give up the emptiness by saying “The lack of inherent existence is not the meaning of emptiness”. Having given up [the emptiness] in that way, they will definitely go to lower realm due to the karma to become poor of dharma as [Ratnāvalī] explains:

Moreover, if this is misapprehended,

Any unworthy fools who take pride in the wisdom,

In virtue of abandoning it,

Will fall headfirst in the hell of unceasing torment. [2.20abcd]

In this way, because of apprehending temporarily the emptiness as totally non-existent the apprehender is ruined.

[Mādhyamika speaking]: If the emptiness and its base the compounded phenomena taught by the bhagavans are conceptualized as [inherently] existent, one would wrongly enter into the path of nirvāṇa. In that case their teaching of emptiness would be fruitless. For that reason, also if the apprehender apprehended the emptiness as an entity of [inherently] things he would be ruined.

[Hypothetical objection]: Of course, if you consider anything that is beneficial in a different aspect, it would not help you, but why should it harm you either? When the

⁴² a) If things exist they must exist truly, b) if they do not exist truly they become completely non-existent.

⁴³ This is the text called Precious Garland, one of the six tests of Nāgārjuna on the Middle-Way.

seeds of grains are sown in the wrong season, it is not that it makes the farmer to ruin himself.⁴⁴

Therefore, the example of the meaning that the Ācārya mentioned is the following:

It would be like a miscatching of a snake

And a miscasting of knowledge mantra. [24.11cd]

You can attract a great accumulation of wealth when the [mythological] snakes⁴⁵ is caught according to the medicinal technique or by the power of mantra whereas if you catch it by giving up the technique that you are taught exactly you can ruin yourself. Alternatively we can say that when a practitioner recites mantra according to the exact technique it would help him/her, but if it is practiced by deviating yourself from the technique you would ruin yourself.

In the similar manner, also here, if you apprehend the emptiness exactly according to the teaching that you have been given it would connect you the apprehender to the supreme bliss nirvāṇa. But if you apprehend it by ignoring the related teaching this would definitely ruin you the apprehender as just explained. For that reason, if one makes mistake in apprehending the emptiness it makes the him the apprehender to ruin and also those with weak wisdom are not able to apprehend it correctly.

Knowing that the dharma is

Deep and difficult for simpletons to understand,

The Buddha retreated his mind

from teaching dharma about it.

[24.12abcd]

Therefore, since they apprehend it wrongly, the teaching on the characteristic of emptiness ruin the those with small wisdom, which means the sentient beings of little confidence. The lord bhagavan, having been fully and completely buddhified at the highest and correctly completed enlightenment, having seen the dispositions of all the sentient beings and seeing the teaching [on emptiness] as very profound, and having known that it is difficult for the weak ones to understand the meaning of this teaching, withdrew himself from the intention to teach about it. It is as mentioned extensively in the [Lalitavistara] sūtra:

⁴⁴ If the farmer sows the seed of wheat in the wrong season it will of course not give rise to any wheat sprout but it does not really make the farmer himself to ruin or disappear.

⁴⁵ Some of these snakes who belong to nāga class are said to possess jewels, usually at their heads. There are actually texts to study about it, for example to know how to cure oneself with medicines with the power of mantra if the snakes attack.

Subsequently, the Bhagavan not long after his full and complete buddhification thought as the following, "I, having realized that this profound teaching, [which] appears to profound, is not to be investigated, that it is not a domain of intellectuals, that it is an object to be understood by the expertise and wise ones in detail; so if I taught it to others they would not understand what I am saying; they would harm me and dishearten me; as this makes me unhappy I will abide myself alone in total isolation by attaining well the state of enjoying happiness in this life"

Therefore, without knowing unmistakably the two truths, [many erroneous consequences are said to follow].

Since the absurd consequences that you state out
Are not relevant to emptiness,
Your rejection of emptiness is
Not relevant to me. [24.13abcd]

For that reason, you are lancing at me the following absurd consequences of great error such as:

If all these were empty it follows that
There would not be arising and disintegration,[24.1ab]

You stated these consequences due to not understanding properly the emptiness, its meaning and its purpose because of not knowing clearly the presentation of the two truths. Therefore your consequences are not relevant to me who accept empty, in other word the emptiness. For that reason, since they are irrelevant you simply express the absurd consequences and forsake the emptiness, in other word you reject and dispel it and such rejection is not tenable for us.

In this way, while you express such absurd consequence by superimposing the meaning of non-existence as the meaning of emptiness, we would not explain the meaning of emptiness as the meaning of non-existent.

If asked what is it then? It is the meaning of dependent arising. For this reason it is inappropriate to repudiate the view of emptiness. Not only that the absurd consequence that you have just stated are applicable in our system, but the entire framework of such thing as truth is absolutely tenable. For this the following verse says:

For him to whom emptiness is suitable
Everything is suitable.
For him to whom emptiness is not suitable
Nothing is suitable. [24.14abcd]

For him to whom everything being empty of inherent existence is suitable, all as just said would be suitable. How?

Because, in our system we say that which arises in relation to dependence is emptiness. For that reason, for him to whom the emptiness is suitable the dependent arising is suitable. For him to whom the dependent arising is suitable the four noble truths are suitable. How?

Because, the dependent arising itself turns into suffering whereas that which is not a dependent arising does not. It is empty due to lacking inherent existence. If there is suffering, there is an origin of it, a cessation of it, and there is the path that ceases the suffering. Therefore, it is also suitable to have a thorough knowledge of suffering, abandonment of its origin, actualization of its cessation and the cultivating of path.

If there exist a thorough knowledge of true suffering and so forth it makes sense to have their results. If there are results there are the abiders in the results. If there are the abiders in results there are also the approachers to result. If there are abiders in result and approachers to result it makes sense to have saṅghas. If there is the truth of ārya it also makes sense to have holy dharma. If there are holy dharma and saṅghas, it also makes sense to have buddhas. Therefore, it follows that there are also the three jewels. All the mundane and supra mundane phenomena, in particular all the realizations in regard to them also would be suitable. Those that are sacred and profane, their results and all the mundane conventions would also be suitable.

For that reason, according to this context, for whomsoever the emptiness is suitable, everything is suitable for him. For whomsoever, the emptiness is not suitable, there is no dependent arising itself for him. Therefore everything becomes unsuitable. I will teach extensively how they are unsuitable.

⁴⁶Our position is perfectly super correct and it is perfectly consistent in its entire framework. It is discordant to your position⁴⁷ where there are the most gross errors and you are so foolish that you do not see the qualities and faults.

When you turn all your
Errors toward us,
you are like a man who has mounted his horse
and forgotten horse itself. [24.15abcd]

Just as somebody who is riding on a horse forgets the horse itself and instead looks for a quarrel with somebody else by accusing him of snatching that horse, you also while

⁴⁶ In present original text it says “The quality of our position is perfectly correct...”.

⁴⁷ I have translated this particular passage according to snar thang bstan ‘gyur publication and Lama Tsongkhapa’s Ocean of Reasoning. The original present text here actually says, “Our position is free of the most gross errors and you are very foolish about that it is not compatible to those faults”. The present text is written like in the sde dge bstan ‘gyur publication.

riding on the horse that has the characteristic of emptiness and dependent arising dispute with us without observing it due to your total distraction.

Question: What are the faults of somebody who without observation, looking for a dispute with only those propounding emptiness?

To present them extensively, [the root text says]:

Subsequently if you view all things
as existing inherently,
Then you regard all things
As being without causes and conditions. [24.16abcd]

If you view the things to exist inherently, at that point, since the inherent existence does not depend on causes and conditions, the things then are without causes and conditions i.e. there do not exist causes and conditions, yet you would not view the cause as non-existent.

Although you do not accept to view the cause as non-existent you still undermine the following:

Effects and causes,
And agent, instrument and actions,
And arising and ceasing:
And the effects will be undermined. [24.17abcd]

Question: How?

If it is imagined that “The vase exists inherently” at that point, what cause and condition such as the clay are needed for that vase which exists inherently. Therefore, they do not exist; it is also not tenable that the result so called “vase” being without a cause. If that did not exist, there would not exist the potter, the instrumentals such as the potter’s wheel, and the action of producing the vase. Since they do not exist, there would not also be arising and cessation. If the arising and cessation were not existent, how could there be also result. For that reason, if you accept the things together with inherent existence, all of them such as the result are undermined. Therefore, if you accept the things together with inherent existence in that way, everything is not suitable for you.

For us who speak of emptiness, all these are feasible.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ The text actually says “...all these are not feasible,” like in sde dge bstan ‘gyur Publication. The way to interpret this, is that ‘all these’ is: “All these inherently existing phenomena accepted by the lower schools are not feasible for us the Prāsaṅgika who speak of emptiness.” In snar thang bstan ‘gyur Publication and and in Lama Tsong Khapa’s Ocean of Reasoning, it says “...all these are feasible”. There are some small mistakes in the present printing.

If asked “Why?”

We say as the following:

That which is dependent arising

Is explained to be emptiness.

That, being imputed dependently,

Is itself the middle way.

[24.18abcd]

A dependent arising is anything such as the sprout, consciousness that arises in dependence on causes and conditions; they are not arisen inherently; therefore anything that is not arisen inherently is emptiness as Bhagavan mentioned in [Anavatapta] sūtra:

Whatever is arisen from condition is unarisen.

It does not have the nature of arising.

Whatever relies on conditions is explained to be empty.

One who knows the emptiness is conscientious.

And it is as mentioned in the Lāṅkātrāsūtra:

O man of great intelligence! Having in mind that which is inherently non-arisen, I have explained that all phenomena are non-arisen.

Likewise, it is as he also said in the Śatapañcāśatka⁴⁹:

All phenomena are empty, i.e. [empty] by way of lacking the inherent existence.

Anything that is emptiness is imputed dependently i.e. it is established by saying “The emptiness itself is imputed dependently. The chariot is imputed in dependence on its components such as the wheel. The fact that anything that is imputed by depending on its component is not arisen inherently. Whatever that is unrisen inherently is emptiness. The emptiness itself which has the characteristic of being not arisen inherently is posited as “the middle way”.

In this way, something that is not arisen inherently does not have the [inherent] existence itself and since that which is not arisen inherently is not [totally] disintegrated, it is not [totally] non-existent, therefore [the above mentioned emptiness] is free of the two extremes of inherent existence and being totally non-existent. For that reason, that very emptiness which has the characteristic of being not arisen inherently is called “the middle way i.e. the trace of midway”. Therefore, in this way, the so called

⁴⁹ *Exalted Sūtra on the One Hundred and Fifty Stanzas* which unravel the intentions of the Buddha himself. The sūtra in this case is not really in verses, it is in prose. But there is a way to count stanza; each thirty-two syllables is counted as one stanza.

“emptiness”, “dependently imputed” and the “middle-way”, are details of name for dependent arising. When it is analyzed thoroughly in all aspects, any phenomenon that is not dependent arising is not an existence.

There does not exist any phenomenon

That is not dependently arisen.

Therefore there does not exist anything

That is not empty.

[24.19abcd]

It is as explained in the *Four Hundred Stanzas [on the Middle Way]*:⁵⁰

Anything that exists independently does not exist

Anywhere, at anytime.

Hence, a permanent [functional phenomenon]

Can never exist anywhere at all.

The ordinary beings conceptualize thinking

“The space and so forth are permanent”.

The wise ones would not even

See them⁵¹ as an object of the worldly [conventional valid cognizer].

Also the Bhagavan [in *Anavataptaparipṛcchāsūtra*]⁵² said:

The wise, having understood the dependently arisen phenomena,

Do not rely on extreme views.

They understood that phenomena have causes and conditions,

And that no phenomena exist without causes and conditions.

Thus, there is not any phenomenon that is not dependently arisen and since the dependent arising is also empty, there is not any phenomenon that is not empty. For that reason, since it is like this, according to us all phenomena are empty and it also does not follow to be the fault uttered by others.

According to you who propound the things to have inherent existence,

If all these were nonempty,

Then there would be no arising and disintegration.

[24.20ab]

If there were no arising and disintegration. At that point, it is definite that

It would follow that the four noble truths

⁵⁰ By Āryadeva

⁵¹ the permanent functional phenomena

⁵² Sūtra requested by a Nāga King named Anavatapta.

Would not exist.

[24.20ab]

If asked, “Why?” Because,

If it is not dependently arisen,

How can there be suffering?

The fact that impermanent is taught to be suffering

Is not relevant to inherent existence .

[24.21abcd]

Something that is inherently existent is not a dependent arising, something that is not dependently arisen is not impermanent, because a flower in the space is not impermanent. Regarding also the suffering being impermanent the Bhagavan said “Whatever is impermanent, it is suffering”.

Likewise, [Āryadeva in his] *Four Hundred Stanzas* explains:

Being impermanent is definitely a harm.⁵³

Wherever there is harm, it is not a happiness.

Therefore, anything that is impermanent

Is entirely suffering.

If even the impermanent [contaminated objects] are accepted to be inherent i.e. to exist inherently, it is not relevant to functional phenomenon. In that case, if functional phenomenon existed inherently for some, then it is not suitable for them to be suffering. It is not only that the sufferings is not suitable, but also the origin would not be suitable if they are accepted to have inherent existence.

If things were existent inherently,

How could they ever be arisen?

Therefore for you who undermine the emptiness

There is no source [of suffering].

[24.22abcd]

Here, the cause of suffering is called “origin” since all the sufferings are originated from this cause. For that reason, according to you who undermine the emptiness and who accept the suffering to be inherent existent,⁵⁴ it does not make any sense [for the suffering] to arise from its cause, in that case, thinking about that cause is nonsense. In that way, for you who undermine the emptiness, even the origin is not tenable.

In order to present that the ceasing suffering is also not suitable for you who accept the sufferings to exist inherently, the root text says:

⁵³ Being impermanent is an indirect harm for us, because we are obliged to go through the suffering of sickness, aging and dying at the end. We are harmed by the fact that we will disintegrate due to being impermanent.

⁵⁴ Because, if the suffering were inherently existent, it is already produced or arisen from before.

If suffering existed inherently,
Its cessation would not exist.
Because of abiding eternally by nature,
The cessation is undermined.

[24.23abcd]

If the suffering existed inherently, then how can there be a cessation since it by nature cannot be removed. In that case, apprehending its nature as eternal and to remove it later, is a conflict also in ceasing the suffering since that nature exists eternally.

Now, to present that how the true path is also not tenable for the proponents of realism, the root text says:

If the path had inherent existence,
The cultivation would not be tenable.
If the path is to be cultivated,
It cannot have inherent existence.

[24.24abcd]

If things were inherently existent, at that point, also the path would be inherently existent whereby it would have already existed without cultivating it. Therefore, what would be the point of cultivating it? For that reason, if there were inherent existence, the cultivation of path would not be tenable. Suppose, if you accept to cultivate that path, then it follows that that noble path does not have that nature [of inherent existence], because you have thought “It is to be cultivated”.

Furthermore, according to the proponents of realism, for somebody who cultivates the path in order to attain the cessation of suffering and to abandon the true origin, it is as explained earlier:

If suffering, its origin, and
Its cessation were not existent,
What sort of cessation of suffering
Would you assert to attain by the path?

[24.25abcd]

If there does not exist the cessation of suffering, which is to be attained by cultivating path, —in that case,— also the noble true path would not be tenable. Therefore, for you the proponents of realism, it follows that the four noble truths are non-existent.

Now, to present that the knowledge of true suffering and so forth are also not possible as they are exactly to the others, the root text says:

If it is not thoroughly
Known that it is inherently,
How could it be known thoroughly?
Doesn't the inherent existence endure?

[24.26abcd]

Someone⁵⁵ conceptually thinks “The sufferings were inherently existent that was not thoroughly known before, but then they have been thoroughly known later”.

[Mādhyamikaprāsāṅgika says:] This is not appropriate. Why is that so? Don’t they endure inherently i.e. anything that is inherently existent would endure well in the world just like the heat of fire. From the moment where the inherent existence cannot be changed, it would be also incorrect to know thoroughly the inherent existence of sufferings that was not thoroughly known earlier. Therefore, it is also impossible to know thoroughly the suffering.

In regard to the moment where there is no thorough knowledge of true suffering, the root text says:

Likewise, also your own
thorough knowledge of the four:
abandonment, actualization,
Cultivation and the result would not be tenable. [24.27abcd]

Just as the thorough knowledge of true suffering being impossible, the two: abandoning the true origin and actualizing the true cessation i.e. the abandonment and actualization and the fact that someone cultivates this and that path would not be tenable. It is also not correct that the inherently existing true origin, which has not been abandoned inherently, can be abandoned later, because it is not removable. Apply this same procedure to the actualization of result and the cultivation of path. If you propound the things to exist inherently it is not only that the thorough knowledge and so forth are not tenable, but also the four results would not be tenable like the thorough knowledge.

Just as the true suffering that is not thoroughly and inherently known not being tenable to be known thoroughly, it is also not possible for the result of stream enterer that was not inherently existent before to exist inherently later. Just as the result of the stream enterer being like that, one should understand that it is also not possible for the result of once returner, non-returner and foe-destroyer (which were not inherently existent before to exist inherently later).

It is not only that the results are not tenable like the thorough knowledge, so what, but it is also not tenable to attain them. To present this, the root text says:

For one who holds on inherent existence,
How could it be possible
To attain those results
That are already not⁵⁶ attained inherently? [24.28abcd]

⁵⁵ Someone from the school of propounding realism, Vaibhāṣika or Sautrāntika.

For somebody who accepts to propound inherent existence, it is not feasible for the inherently existent (results) which have not been attained before also cannot be attained inherently later, because that inherent existence is irremovable. Therefore, the root text says:

If there were no results, there would be no abiders in results.
There would be also no approachers.
If the eight beings or persons did not exist,
There would be no saṅghas. [24.29abcd]

If the noble truths did not exist
The noble dharma would not exist.
If there were neither dharma nor saṅghas,
How could there exist a Buddha? [24.30abcd]

The meaning of these verses is to be understood as above.

Furthermore, if you accept propounding the inherent existence, it follows:

For you, it follows absurdly that a Buddha
is independent of enlightenment.
And for you, it follows absurdly that
Enlightenment is independent of a Buddha. [24.31abcd]

If the so called Buddha were a some kind of phenomenon that exists inherently then it follows absurdly that he does not depend on i.e. rely on the enlightenment i.e. the exalted wisdom of omniscience. This is because

Inherent existence itself is not contrived,
And it does not depend on another. [15.2cd]

Similarly, it follows that the enlightenment is also without the Buddha i.e. it follows that there is a baseless enlightenment, not depending on the Buddha, because it is established inherently.

Furthermore, the root text says:

For you, anybody who is
Inherently unenlightened,
Will not attain enlightenment
Even by seeking it and practicing the bodhisattva conduct. [24.32abcd]

⁵⁶ In the original text, it says “..that are already attained inherently”. But, referring to other texts such as the Ocean of Reasoning by Lama Tsong Khapa it says “...not attained...”.

Here [before] the buddhification, it follows that a person who was inherently not a buddha before, will not attain the enlightenment even by practicing the bodhisattva conduct and seeking it, because an inherently existent [person] who is not enlightened cannot be changed.

Furthermore,

Nobody could ever perform

Virtuous or non-virtuous actions.

Because in non-emptiness, what can be done?

Inherent existence cannot have action. [24.33abcd]

If you accept propounding inherent existence, it is not tenable to perform virtuous or non-virtuous action. What can be done in the none-emptiness? Because, since things exist [inherently] it is not tenable for the inherent existence that is not empty, to have actions.

Furthermore,

For you, even without virtuous or non-virtuous causes,

There would not be an effect.

According to you there is no effect

Arisen from virtuous or non-virtuous causes. [24.34abcd]

It explains, “If any pleasant and unpleasant result that has its respective virtuous and non-virtuous cause, existed inherently, it follows that there are those results even without the virtuous and non-virtuous cause for you.

If there were those results without the virtuous and non-virtuous cause for you, —in that case— the results arisen from the virtuous and non-virtuous causes would be non-existent for you, because it follows that the virtuous and non-virtuous cause become meaningless. Therefore, there are no results which are caused by the virtuous and non-virtuous cause for you”.

Someone asserts: “There are no⁵⁷ results that are caused by the virtuous and non-virtuous causes”.

Answer: “Well then, those results aren’t non-empty”

To explain this, the root text says:

If for you, an effect arose

From virtuous or non-virtuous causes,

⁵⁷ Logically, it would make more sense if we took away the negative word “no”. But Geshe Lozang Khechog checked other sources and he said that they also have the same thing.

Then, having arisen from virtuous or non-virtuous causes,
How could that effect be not empty? [24.35abcd]

It is thought, “They are empty, like a reflection because they are dependently arisen”. Furthermore, if you assert the dependently arisen worldly conventions such as “Go away”, “Do it”, “Cook it”, “Look here”, “Be here” to be inherently existent, —at this point,— you are undermining the dependent arising.

Because of undermining that, you are undermining the entire worldly conventions. To present this, the root text says:

Anything that undermines emptiness,
Which is dependent arising,
Undermines all of
The worldly conventions. [24.36abcd]

The action is the particularity of the sound [or the word] anything i.e. it is to be related to the action of undermining.

Furthermore, the root text says:

If you undermine the emptiness,
It follows that there is not any action;
That there can be action without effort
And that there can be an agent who performs no action. [24.37abcd]

If things were not emptiness and had inherent existence, at that point it follows that there is not any action done by anyone since⁵⁸ the inherent existence is non-existent; it is like the unobscured space that is not created by anyone. If there are actions even if nothing is being done, and if there is an agent without performing any action, they are not like this, Therefore, things are not non-empty.

Furthermore,

If there were inherent existence, all beings
Would be birthless, deathless,
And endure everlasting.
They would be void of a variety. [24.38abcd]

If things were inherently existent, at that point, all these migrating beings would not have birth and death since the inherent existence cannot be contrived and cannot have any change. Since they are birthless and deathless it follows that they endure everlasting. Since they do not rely on causes and conditions it follows that the

⁵⁸ Logically it should be “since the inherently existent actions are there anyway without being created by anyone”.

migrating beings are not dependently originated and they would be void of the variety of states for you who propound non-empty. It is as the following verse taught by Bhagavan:⁵⁹

If there were even the slightest thing that is non-empty,
The victor would not make predictions anywhere.
Each and everything which abides as everlasting without any change,
would neither increase nor degenerate completely.

Likewise, *Hastikaṣyasūtra* says:

If phenomena had any inherent existence,
The victor and his disciples would have known it.
No everlasting phenomena could attain nirvāṇa.
The wise ones⁶⁰ would never be empty of elaboration [of inherent existence].

So if you accept the things to have inherent existence, it is not only that the worldly conventions become untenable, but also —what?— those that are supra mundane become untenable.

To explain that, the root text says:

If they were no emptiness, then there would be
Neither attainment of that which has not been attained;
Nor the act of ending suffering;
Nor the abandonment of all the afflictions. [24.39abcd]

So if there were no emptiness, and if all these had inherent existence, at that point, whatever has not been attained will remain always as unattained whereby an unattained result will not be attained. Likewise, because of not having ended the sufferings, they cannot be ended now either. Because of not having abandoned all the delusions before, they will not be abandoned also in the future.

Therefore, because of accepting the things to have inherent existence everything becomes unsuitable. Therefore the root text says:

Whoever sees dependent arising
Also sees suffering,
Its origin, and its cessation,
And also the path. [24.40abcd]

⁵⁹ Some say that it is the *Pitāputrasamāgama-sūtra*, the Sūtra of the *Meeting of Father and Son*, but it seems to be invisible.

⁶⁰ The wise ones refer to the proponents of Mādhyamikaprāsāṅgika and their position is that all phenomena are free from the elaboration of inherent existence.

One who sees that the emptiness has the characteristic of arising from being dependently related, and that it really arises, sees correctly all the four noble truths as the reality exactly as they are.

It is as extensively taught in the *Āryasarvadharmāpravṛtinirdeśasūtra*:⁶¹

“O Mañjuśrī, one who sees all the phenomena as birthless thoroughly knows the suffering; one who sees all the phenomena as non-existent abandons the origin; one who sees all the phenomena as absolutely gone beyond to sorrow actualizes the cessation; one who sees all the phenomena as an absence of things meditates on path”.

It is also extensively taught in the *Āryadhyānamuṣṭipariṣṭhasūtra*:⁶²

“Then, the Bhagavan said as the following to Youthful Mañjuśrī:

O Mañjuśrī, because of not seeing the noble truths correctly and exactly as they are, those with wrong mind thinking “The perverse sentient beings” will not pass beyond this impure saṃsāra.

Having said that, the Youthful Mañjuśrī asked Bhagavan the following:

Bhagavan, based on what observation do sentient beings keep themselves from passing beyond saṃsāra? Please teach us.⁶³

Bhagavan responded:

O Mañjuśrī, because of observing I and mine, the sentient beings will not pass beyond saṃsāra. Why is that so? Mañjuśrī, because anyone who sees the I and the others as perfectly established⁶⁴ would manifestly create karma.⁶⁵

O Mañjuśrī, the childish ordinary beings who have not heard teachings⁶⁶ would not know that all the phenomena have completely passed beyond the sorrow⁶⁷ would

⁶¹ *The Noble Sūtra that Presents all the Phenomena Without Engagement.*

⁶² *The Sūtra Requested by the Āryadhyāna Stingy of Sharing Knowledge.* Geshe Lozang Khechog found out that this might be the sūtra called *Mañjuśrīnirdeśasūtra*. For some reason Ācāryaśrī's *Prasannapadā* that the quote is from *Āryadhyānamuṣṭipariṣṭhasūtra* i.e. the *Sūtra Presented by Mañjuśrī*.

⁶³ This is obviously the main key of the question by Mañjuśrī for the Bhagavan.

⁶⁴ This part proves how those with the transitory view (or 'jig lta in Tibetan) create karma. They see the self of person and phenomenon as that which is established perfectly or as established from their own side.

⁶⁵ This is the part where the Bhagavan gives a brief presentation about creating karma, then he gives the extensive explanation about how the karma is created by addressing Mañjuśrī again.

⁶⁶ Teaching about emptiness

⁶⁷ Sorrow here refers to the inherent existence or that which is naturally established.

observe the I and mine; and they manifestly adhere at them. They, due to the strong adherence, they will be attached, they would be hateful, they would be confused. Due to their attachment, hatred and confusion they manifestly perform the three kinds of action with the body, speech and mind. Although they do not exist [naturally from their own side] the childish beings superimpose them to exist [in that way] whereby they conceptualize saying “The I am attached, I hated, the I am confused”.

They then take ordination within the framework of Tathagāta’s teaching and conceptualize the following,⁶⁸ “I have morality, I am in pure conduct, I will completely pass beyond the saṃsāra, I will attain the nirvāṇa, I will be free from the sufferings”.

They subsequently conceptualize the following:
“These phenomena are virtuous, these phenomena are non-virtuous, these phenomena are to be abandoned, these are to be actualized, the sufferings are to be thoroughly known, the origin is to be abandoned, the cessation is to be actualized, the path is to be cultivated”.

They then for certain time avoid the [suffering of] pervasive compounded phenomena and think, “All compounded phenomena are impermanent, all the⁶⁹ compounded phenomena blaze everywhere”.

The thought which arose in that way is preceded by the sadness⁷⁰ along with contemplation without the sign.⁷¹ They conceptualize the following, “Any thorough knowledge about these phenomena is the through knowledge of suffering”.

They conceptualize the following, “I will abandon the origin”. They will be endangered by these phenomena,⁷² they will be greatly ashamed, they will be unhappy, they will be insulted, they will be frightened and completely panicked.

They conceptualize the following, “One who is endangered by these phenomena, would manifestly perceive these phenomena;⁷³ and he would think “I will abandon the true origin”. They conceptualize the following, “I will actualize the cessation”.

Having investigated them two,⁷⁴ they would directly realize the true cessation.

They conceptualize the following, “This is the actualization of cessation”.

They conceptualize the following, “I have cultivated the path”.

⁶⁸ With the thought that adheres at the true existence

⁶⁹ Sufferings of the pervasive compounded phenomena

⁷⁰ the renouncement or the definite emergence

⁷¹ Of conceptual thought of distraction.

⁷² Karma and delusion which are the true origin

⁷³ Literally the phenomena refer to the undesirable sufferings such as the danger, insult, shame, panic, caused by the karma and delusion which are the true origin. But the meaning is: “They... would manifest the mind that dislikes these mentioned sufferings”.

⁷⁴ True origin and true cessation

When they individually go in isolation and contemplate these phenomena, they attain the calm abiding. One who contemplates together with sadness will generate calm abiding in regard to it. He turns his mind out of all the phenomena⁷⁵ i.e. he would induce his mind outward or leave them behind. One will be endangered by them, one will be greatly ashamed, and a very unhappy state of mind will be generated.

They consider themselves⁷⁶ by conceptualizing, “I will be liberated from all the sufferings i.e. I have nothing more to do again in subsequence and I will thus have become arhat”. When they come to the time of death, they see that they will be reborn whereby they will doubt about the enlightenment of buddha. They, having fallen in doubt and died, fall in the great hells. Why is that so? Because they, after investigating the phenomena about how they are unarisen, made themselves to generate the doubt of two pointed mind toward the Tathagāta.

Then the Youthful Mañjuśrī asked Bhagavan the following:

O Bhagavan, how should one summarize the Four Noble Truths?

The Bhagavan responded:

O Mañjuśrī, whoever has seen the compounded phenomena to be unarisen has thoroughly known the suffering. Whoever has seen all phenomena to be unarisen has abandoned the source of suffering. Whoever has seen all phenomena to be completely liberated has realized cessation. Whoever has seen all phenomena to be completely unarisen has meditated on the path.

O Mañjuśrī, whoever has seen the Four Noble Truths in this way does not conceptualize that which is non conceptual, saying “These phenomena are virtuous; these phenomena are non-virtuous; these phenomena are to be abandoned; these phenomena are to be realized. Suffering should be thoroughly known, the origins of sufferings should be abandoned, cessation should be realized, and the path should be cultivated.” Thus he does not see whatever phenomena that is to be imagined.

When the childish ordinary beings conceptualize these phenomena, develop desire, aversion and confusion. But he neither accepts nor rejects any phenomenon. The one who neither accepts nor rejects does not develop attachment to the three realms. He sees the three realms as unarisen, and as like illusion, like dreams, and like echoes. In virtue of seeing all phenomena as having that nature, he becomes free from attachment and aversion toward all sentient beings.

⁷⁵ That are included in the true suffering.

⁷⁶ They simply consider themselves to have become arhat, but in fact, this is not possible because they do everything on the basis of the conception of true existence, meaning they strongly adhere themselves to true existence. As long as they adhere at true existence they cannot become arhat no matter what they meditate and so forth.

Why is that so? Because he does not observe the phenomena toward which one might develop attachment and aversion. Since his mind being equal to the space, he does not see even the buddha to be real.⁷⁷ Nor does he see the dharma to be real. Nor does he see the saṅgha to be real. And thus, because he sees all phenomena as empty, he does not develop doubt. When there is no doubt, there is no appropriation. Being unappropriated, one will completely pass beyond the sorrow without appropriation.”

This is the so called *Commentary Clear Word on the Twenty Fourth Chapter*, Regarding the investigation of noble truth, by Ācārya Āndrakṛti.

This *Commentary Clear Word on the Twenty Fourth Chapter*, regarding the Investigation of the Four Noble Truth is Translated from Tibetan by Lotsawa Thubten Sherab Sherpa. Anything that is inserted in the square parenthesis, is added by myself to make the sense of the sentence complete. I thank you so much to Geshe Lozang Kheghog of Drepung Gomang and Gyuto Khenzur Geshe Thubten Tenzin of Gaden Shartse for their kindness in clarifying different passages of this present text.

The present english translation needs to be checked by someone whose mother language is english so that it becomes more easy to read.

⁷⁷ to be perfectly established or inherently established