

PACIFIC WORLD

Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies

Third Series Number 11
Fall 2009

Special Issue Celebrating the
Sixtieth Anniversary of the
Institute of Buddhist Studies
1949-2009



Pacific World is an annual journal in English devoted to the dissemination of historical, textual, critical, and interpretive articles on Buddhism generally and Shinshu Buddhism particularly to both academic and lay readerships. The journal is distributed free of charge. Articles for consideration by the *Pacific World* are welcomed and are to be submitted in English and addressed to the Editor, *Pacific World*, 2140 Durant Ave., Berkeley, CA 94704-1589, USA.

Acknowledgment: This annual publication is made possible by the donation of BDK America of Berkeley, California.

Guidelines for Authors: Manuscripts (approximately twenty standard pages) should be typed double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Notes are to be endnotes with full bibliographic information in the note first mentioning a work, i.e., no separate bibliography. See *The Chicago Manual of Style* (15th edition), University of Chicago Press, \$16.3 ff. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of all quotations and for supplying complete references. Please e-mail electronic version in both formatted and plain text, if possible. Manuscripts should be submitted by February 1st.

Foreign words should be underlined and marked with proper diacriticals, except for the following: bodhisattva, buddha/Buddha, karma, nirvana, samsara, sangha, yoga. Romanized Chinese follows Pinyin system (except in special cases); romanized Japanese, the modified Hepburn system. Japanese/Chinese names are given surname first, omitting honorifics. Ideographs preferably should be restricted to notes.

Editorial Committee reserves the right to standardize use of or omit diacriticals. Conventionalized English form of sutra title may be used if initially identified in original or full form in text or note. Editorial Committee reserves the right to edit all submissions. Upon request, page proofs may be reviewed by the author.

Include institutional affiliation and position, or present status/occupation and place. All manuscripts submitted for publication become the property of *Pacific World*. By agreeing to publication in the *Pacific World*, authors give the journal and the Institute of Buddhist Studies an unlimited license to publish and reprint the essay. This license includes, but is not limited to, any media format (hard copy, electronic, etc.), and international rights. Copyright remains the author's.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Richard K. Payne, Chair
David Matsumoto
Eisho Nasu
Natalie Quli
Scott Mitchell

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Natalie Quli

BOOK REVIEW EDITOR

Scott Mitchell

PACIFIC WORLD

Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies

Third Series, Number 11
Fall 2009

CONTENTS

The Lord of All Virtues HUDAYA KANDAHJAYA	1
Bianhong, Mastermind of Borobudur? HIRAM WOODWARD	25
Theravāda in History PETER SKILLING	61
Tsongkhapa on Tantric Exegetical Authority and Methodology DAVID B. GRAY	95
Nāgārjuna's Worldview: Relevance for Today KRISTIN LARGEN	119
Pattern Recognition and Analysis in the Chinese Buddhist Canon: A Study of "Original Enlightenment" LEWIS LANCASTER	141
Basing Our Personhood on the Primal Vow JUNDO GREGORY GIBBS	183
Shinjin and Social Praxis in Shinran's Thought TAKAMARO SHIGARAKI, TRANS. DAVID MATSUMOTO	193
The Metaphor of "Ocean" in Shinran TAKANORI SUGIOKA, TRANS. MARK UNNO	219
World Macrohistory and Shinran's Literacy GALEN AMSTUTZ	229

The Daoist Facet of Kinpusen and Sugawara no Michizane Worship in the <i>Dōken Shōnin Meidoki</i> : A Translation of the <i>Dōken Shōnin Meidoki</i> TAKUYA HINO	273
The Taoist Priest (Daoshi) in Comparative Historical Perspective: A Critical Analysis RUSSELL KIRKLAND	307
<i>Pì xiè jí</i> 闢邪集: <i>Collected Refutations of Heterodoxy</i> by Ouyi Zhixu (滿益智旭, 1599–1655) CHARLES B. JONES	351
Initiation and the Chinese <i>Hevajra-tantra</i> (T. 18, 892) CHARLES WILLEMEN	409
A Comparison of the Tibetan and Shingon <i>Homas</i> RICHARD K. PAYNE	417
BOOK REVIEW	
<i>Readings of the Lotus Sūtra</i> , eds. Stephen Teiser and Jacqueline Stone TAIGEN DAN LEIGHTON	451
BDK ENGLISH TRIPITAKA SERIES: A PROGRESS REPORT	459

Nāgārjuna's Worldview: Relevance for Today

Kristin Largen

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Gettysburg, PA

THIS ARTICLE IS A PART of a larger project in the field of comparative theology, which involves rethinking Lutheran Christian theological conceptions of salvation through engagement with Buddhism, particularly the Mādhyamaka school of Nāgārjuna. This essay draws on research done for my dissertation, which juxtaposed the worldview of Nāgārjuna and the soteriology of Wolfhart Pannenberg.¹ After reading the article, my hope is that the reader will come to appreciate not only Nāgārjuna's strong soteriological vantage point, but also the value his insights have regarding the nature of suffering and the liberation from suffering. For Christians, what can be learned from his thought is the importance of recognizing the interconnectedness of all life. This leads to relinquishing the insistence on interpreting one's salvation either primarily or exclusively in individualistic terms, and instead seeing salvation as the culmination and transformation of all the relationships, great and small, that make up human existence. Nāgārjuna's thought is also a helpful corrective to the Christian tendency to view salvation as something that happens only after death and doesn't actually affect life in the here-and-now. Nāgārjuna reminds Christians that salvation is seen and experienced right in the middle of one's daily life, drawing Christians into more loving engagement with their neighbors and eliciting a stronger commitment to the preservation and protection of the whole creation.

Nāgārjuna is undoubtedly one of the most important Buddhist thinkers in the history of the tradition. He figures prominently in many Mahāyāna lineages, and his philosophical interpretations of the Buddha's teachings continue to influence Buddhist thought today. One of the main reasons for this is that his teachings not only offer profound philosophical insights into the nature of reality, but they are also supremely practical in orientation, meant to assist one in the

realization of enlightenment. In this article, then, I hope to do two things simultaneously: give a brief overview of his major teachings, while at the same time emphasizing their continued relevance for one's life in the world today.

BACKGROUND

Little is known about the life of Nāgārjuna, and thus the particulars of his life and death continue to be debated. Most scholars suggest that Nāgārjuna was born around 150 CE, and the date of his death is usually given around 250 CE. The tradition commonly accepts that he was born in a Brahman family; while this is the extent of the background information on Nāgārjuna that can be stated with confidence, this fact alone is enough to give us a hint of the cultural influences that must have influenced his work. Christoph Lindtner writes,

From his birth to his death Nāgārjuna must as a member of the community have received an incessant flow of impressions and convictions, prejudices and superstitions from the Hindu society surrounding him. This forms a part of his background which was never recorded and for an assessment of which no sources are available to us.²

Perhaps in part because of this uncertainty, a great amount of hagiography developed around Nāgārjuna in later traditions, elaborating his yogic feats and magical powers in order to validate his status as an enlightened saint. In the Chinese life of Nāgārjuna, for example, Nāgārjuna's holiness and wisdom was apparent almost from birth. It is recorded that "At his mother's breast he heard the holy sounds of the four Vedas. . . . He could chant them all, and he understood their meaning."³ When he reached adulthood and perfected his studies, the story is told that he and several friends obtained a magic formula by which they could enter the king's palace undetected and seduce the women there. The king, when petitioned by the women, set a trap for the young men, and caught them, killing them all but Nāgārjuna. "Then he [Nāgārjuna] awoke to [the truth that] desire is the origin of suffering and the root of the crowd of calamities, and that from this comes moral ruin and bodily peril."⁴ When he escaped from the palace he left and devoted himself to monastic practice and study. There are clear parallels here to the story of Gautama Buddha's own leave-taking of his father's palace and the decadence represented therein, and beginning his own quest for enlightenment.

One of the most famous stories associated with Nāgārjuna is his legendary encounter with the *nāgas*, the mythical water snakes.⁵ According to this legend, Nāgārjuna was lecturing at the Buddhist monastic university of Nālandā, where he was an abbot. Nāgārjuna noticed that two young men were frequenting his lectures; whenever they attended, the fragrance of sandalwood filled the entire area, and when they left, the fragrance disappeared with them. When Nāgārjuna questioned them, they told him that they were not men at all, but sons of the *nāga* king, who used the sandalwood paste as protection against the impurities of the physical world.

They further told Nāgārjuna that when the Buddha was teaching, the *nāgas* had attended his lectures on the Perfection of Wisdom, which few humans actually had understood. Therefore, the *nāgas* themselves had written down the Buddha's teachings and saved them for a time when a person might be born who could understand them. Nāgārjuna, they felt, was the one for whom they had been waiting. They then invited him to their kingdom under the ocean to read those Perfection of Wisdom sutras. Nāgārjuna accompanied them to their undersea world and studied the sutras; after a time, he returned to the human world to teach what he had learned. The name "Nāgārjuna," then, comes from his encounter with the *nāgas*.⁶ Given all this, it is perhaps not surprising, then, that as Kenneth Inada notes, "He was, in short, considered to be the second Buddha and he always occupied the second position in the lineage of Buddhist patriarchs in the various sectarian developments of Tibet, China, and Japan."⁷

One last point concludes this section. It must not be forgotten that while Nāgārjuna was an influential philosopher and thinker, he was also a Buddhist monk, and thus heavily involved in the traditional ritual practices and moral codes that governed monastic life. This means, too, that for Nāgārjuna, philosophy was not an end in itself. It was always directed toward the goal of enlightenment, and thus had a soteriological function. This is true for many other prominent Buddhist teachers as well. Donald Lopez writes, "It is important to recall, however, that the Buddhist philosopher was also a Buddhist, and, in most cases, a Buddhist monk. He was thus a participant in rituals and institutions that provided the setting for his work. . . . All endeavors in the realm of what might be termed 'philosophy' were theoretically subservient to the greater goal of enlightenment, and the ultimate task of the philosopher, at least in theory, was to attain that enlightenment."⁸

Nāgārjuna was not only a great thinker, he was supremely concerned with the practical ramifications of his insights as well.

THE *MŪLAMADHYAMIKAKĀRIKĀ*—EXPOUNDING THE MIDDLE WAY

Far and away the most significant of Nāgārjuna's writings is the *Mūlamadhyamikakārikā*, in which Nāgārjuna expounds upon the Buddha's teaching of the "middle path"—that is, the path between the two extremes of luxury and asceticism, between "eternalism and nihilism."⁹ In his own life, the Buddha came to realize that true enlightenment could not be found while indulging oneself in the decadent pleasures of the world, but neither could it be found in the vigorous practice of extreme asceticism and self-mortification. Instead, one must follow a moderate path, avoiding the two extremes. The *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra* describes the middle way as follows:

Everlasting—that is one extreme; passing away—that is another extreme; give up these two extremes to go on the Middle Way—that is the Perfection of Wisdom. Permanence is one extreme, impermanence is another; give up these two extremes to go on to the Middle Way—that is the Perfection of Wisdom. . . . Form is one extreme, formlessness is another; the visible is one extreme, the invisible is another; aversion is one extreme, nonaversion is another; . . . depravity is one extreme, purity is another; this world is one extreme, the supramundane is another; . . . ignorance is one extreme, the extinction of ignorance is another; old age and death are one extreme, the cessation of old age and death is another; the existence of all dharmas is one extreme, the nonexistence of all dharmas is another; give up these two extremes to go on to the Middle Way—that is the Perfection of Wisdom.¹⁰

It is this "middle way" that Nāgārjuna takes up in the *Mūlamadhyamikakārikā*, and he uses four primary themes to do so, each of which will be discussed below: *śūnyatā*, *pratīyasamutpāda*, two truths, and nirvana. As all of these themes are inter-related and interwoven, it is a somewhat difficult task to isolate them and discuss them separately. Therefore, the sections should not be read as discrete, independent monologues, but rather as a unified dialogue in several parts.

Śūnyatā

He who is united with emptiness
is united with everything.

He who is not united with emptiness
is not united with anything (*Mūlamadhyamikakārikā* 24:14).¹¹

The teaching of *śūnyatā* is one of the most well-known Buddhist concepts in the world, and, as Roger Jackson says, it is “probably the most important philosophical and religious concept of Mahāyāna Buddhism.”¹² It is difficult to give just one definition of *śūnyatā*, as the way in which emptiness has been described by different Buddhist and non-Buddhist scholars throughout the tradition varies greatly. However, there are some basic characteristics, which, while perhaps not totally universal, are widespread enough to constitute a general definition. Jackson defines *śūnyatā* as well as anyone. He writes,

Philosophically, emptiness is the term that describes the ultimate mode of existence of all phenomena, namely, as naturally “empty” of enduring substance, or self-existence (*svabhāva*): rather than being independently self-originated, phenomena are dependently originated (*pratītyasamutpāda*) from causes and conditions. Emptiness, thus, explains how it is that phenomena change and interact as they do, how it is that the world goes on as it does. *Religiously*, emptiness is the single principle whose direct comprehension is the basis of liberation from samsāra, and ignorance of which, embodied in self-grasping (*ātmagraha*) is the basis of continued rebirth—hence suffering—in samsara.¹³

Perhaps one of the most important points to note in Nāgārjuna's use of *śūnyatā* is the way he applied it methodologically, rather than ontologically. What this means is that, first and foremost, Nāgārjuna sets up *śūnyatā* to function as a methodological tool, something to “accomplish the task of tailoring off the genuinely real world from that which is accepted as real on commonsensical ground.”¹⁴ Therefore, those interpreters who attempt to force either a nihilistic or absolutist reading onto Nāgārjuna's thought are making a conceptual error. Malcolm McLean writes, “It is hard to avoid the impression that both the nihilists and the absolutists in their interpretations of *śūnyatā* have grasped the snake by the tail! They have taken *śūnyatā*, which is intended only to be used as a conceptual tool, with no objective referent, and ontologised it negatively and positively respectively.”¹⁵ To say that *śūnyatā* refers either to nothingness, or fullness, literally speaking, is to make it into a “view,” a “theory,” an interpretation that Nāgārjuna himself expressly rejected.¹⁶

What, then, can be said about *śūnyatā*? To begin, it is perhaps best to describe *śūnyatā* negatively, that is, what it is not: an object, a thing, a/the Supreme Being, the Absolute, the Void, Fullness, etc., for emptiness itself is only dependent and nominal, and thus, ultimately empty. In fact, Candrakīrti writes that to identify emptiness with some form of absolute is “as if a shopkeeper were to say, ‘I have nothing to sell you,’ and would receive the answer, ‘Very well, then just sell me this—your absence of goods for sale.’”¹⁷

However, this does not mean that there are no positive statements that can be made about *śūnyatā*. *Śūnyatā* is the true form of existence, the state in which all things “are.” Further, as we will see below, *śūnyatā* refers to the fact that everything is dependently arisen; that is, nothing exists that has inherent existence. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, emptiness is the key to enlightenment and the key to freeing oneself from suffering. It is the wisdom that leads to liberation.

This is the point Nāgārjuna is making in the verse of the *Mūlamadhyamikakārikā* quoted at the opening of this section: “He who is united with emptiness is united with everything. He who is not united with emptiness is not united with anything.” The importance of this interpretation can hardly be overstated. As Garfield writes, “the interpretation of the entire Mādhyamika system depends directly on how one understands the concept of emptiness. If that is understood correctly, everything else falls into place. If it is misunderstood, nothing in the system makes any sense.”¹⁸ Without a proper understanding of *śūnyatā*, the world will never cease to delude and tempt the individual, and she will never be able to get beyond her simple sense perceptions and desires. Her suffering will never end, nor will she escape the karmic bonds that propel her through cycle after cycle of existence. Thus, for anyone who seeks wisdom, the first and most important concept that must be grasped is emptiness.

Huntington states the rewards of realizing emptiness most vividly, I think, in a way that puts a very human face on what can be very abstract and confusing language. He writes: “To actualize emptiness is to affirm one’s membership in the universal context of interpenetrating relations which give meaning and structure to human activity. And this affirmation of membership is registered in a transformation of behavior which simultaneously fosters and is fostered by a change in the nature of one’s experience of the everyday world—a world which no longer appears as a collection of intrinsically real, compartmentalized

objects, each one dissociated from the others and from a similarly isolated, fragmented 'I.'"¹⁹ I agree with Huntington here that the realization of emptiness actually helps us to be better human beings, to live more harmoniously in community with each other, and to recognize the ties that link us together.

This leads to my final observation, that is, the reason why the concept of emptiness is so closely linked to enlightenment, and what import it serves in the larger picture of a Buddhist worldview. Nāgārjuna himself describes the function of emptiness clearly in *Mūlamadhyamikakārikā* 24:20, where he writes, "If all this is not empty, there is no production or destruction. In that case, the nonexistence of the four noble truths would follow." In other words, if phenomena weren't really empty after all, and actually did have independent self-nature, then everything would be permanent, ceaseless, and unchanging, and therefore it would be impossible for anything to have an end. More specifically, suffering also would be permanent and without end, and thus the four noble truths would be a lie. There would be no end to suffering, nor an eightfold path to deliverance.

Given the relationship between emptiness and the nature of salvation in the Buddhist tradition, the soteriological efficacy of the Buddha's teaching is dependent upon the proper view of *sūnyatā*. Hence emptiness, and its complement, *pratīyasamutpāda*, are the heart and soul of the whole Mādhyamaka worldview, and the center of its soteriological path.

Pratīyasamutpāda

We declare dependent-origination
to be emptiness.
That has taken the form of the doctrine
which is indeed known as the middle way.

Since there is no dharma whatever
that has not originated dependently,
therefore there is no dharma whatever
that is not empty. (*Mūlamadhyamikakārikā* 24:18–19)

In order to understand the concept of *pratīyasamutpāda* in Nāgārjuna's thought, it is first necessary to describe the relationship between *pratīyasamutpāda* and *sūnyatā*. For that purpose, these two verses are two of the most important verses of the entire *Mūlamadhyamikakārikā*, given that they state most clearly and directly

the connection between existence, emptiness, and dependent origination.²⁰ First, Nāgārjuna is saying that there is no difference between understanding an entity as “empty” and understanding it as “dependently arisen.” Both terms point to the same reality, and the mode of being in the world for any entity can be described in two ways. Either term can say that all things exist in relationship to other things, and that those relationships are constitutive of their being. That is, nothing can exist on its own independently. That is the definition of *pratītyasamutpāda*. Or, one can say that nothing has its “own being” (*svabhāva*). Rather, everything is empty of discrete, autonomous existence. That is the definition of *sūnyatā*. Either way, the same thing is asserted.

Contrary to the traditional way of understanding phenomena in Western philosophy, in which independent entities are considered primary and the relationships between them only secondary, in this understanding of emptiness, relationships are primary for existence, and an independent entity is an illusory appearance. Thus, *pratītyasamutpāda* and *sūnyatā* are not two different things, but rather two ways of describing the same thing. Further, it is this twin awareness of dependent origination and emptiness that constitutes the “middle way,” that is, the way between the philosophical extremes of absolutism—the reification of things as independently existent, and nihilism—the denial of any existence at all.

It is important to note here that this affinity between the two teachings of *pratītyasamutpāda* and *sūnyatā* is something new in Nāgārjuna’s work. Nancy McCagney observes, “Equating *sūnyatā* and *pratītyasamutpāda* is a dramatic departure from earlier usage in the Pāli Canon.”²¹ Earlier, and traditionally, *pratītyasamutpāda* (Pāli *patīccasamuppāda*) was most often defined as the twelve links of the chain of causation. Those links are: ignorance, karmic activities, consciousness, mind and matter, six sense-doors, contact, sensation, craving, clinging, becoming, birth, old age, and death.²² *Pratītyasamutpāda*, then, in establishing the connected nature of all phenomena, establishes the chain of causation. It is this chain of causation that is said to give rise to suffering, and thus *pratītyasamutpāda* becomes a way to interpret the four noble truths—particularly the second truth, which is concerned with the origins of suffering (the chain in normal order), and the third truth, which is concerned with the cessation of suffering (the chain in reverse order). It was Nāgārjuna, however, who took this

understanding of dependent origination and linked it to the concept of emptiness.

For Nāgārjuna, dependent origination is not the link between two “things”—that is, it does not function as cause and effect. Rather, dependent origination describes the fundamental lack of any self-sufficient, independent reality—it describes “radical becoming,” rather than static “being.” Padhye writes, “the fundamental purpose behind *pratītyasamutpāda* is to outline what is the case.”²³ What he means by this is that the objective of the doctrine of dependent origination is to remove misunderstandings about the nature of the world and sketch out a theory of how things “really are.” *Pratītyasamutpāda* is not something to be overcome or ultimately discarded on the way to enlightenment; rather, it itself is not different from enlightenment. Indeed, in his *Suḥṛllekha* (Letter to a Friend), Nāgārjuna writes, “This dependent origination is the precious and profound treasure of the Buddha’s teaching. Whoever sees this as real, realizes the Buddha and sees the Supreme Unity.”²⁴

Nāgārjuna gives several examples to explain what he means by *pratītyasamutpāda*, a few of which I want to mention here. One of the most easily understandable comes in his *Śūnyatāsaptatikārikā*. There he writes, “A father is not a son, a son is not a father. Neither exists without being correlative.”²⁵ This is obvious to us from our own experience. The assertion that a man is a father requires that he have a child—“father” is a term of relationship, and one cannot attain it independently. At the same time, in that relationship, there is only one father and only one son. Just because each is dependent upon the other does not mean that they are interchangeable. Dependence does not mean equivalence. This example is particularly revealing because it indicates the depth to which these relationships are fundamental to our being. The relationship a father has to his child profoundly changes his entire life. It is not just something “added on” to his “true self,” which makes only a superficial change—like a coat of paint that merely makes the outside of the house look nicer, but doesn’t alter the floor plan. Rather, the very “selfhood” of a father is reconfigured and recreated by the event of having a child, so much so that he cannot conceive of himself outside that relationship.²⁶ In just this way, says Nāgārjuna, the entire world is interdependent and interrelated, we just don’t realize it.

Two other examples Nāgārjuna gives to illustrate this principle of dependent origination are found in the *Vyavahārasiddhi*. There

he writes, “One syllable is not a spell. On the other hand many syllables are not a spell either: dependent upon syllables that are [therefore] insubstantial this [mantra is neither existent] nor non-existent. Likewise no medicine appears independently of its specific ingredients. It appears [like] an illusory elephant: It is not [identical with them] nor is it [absolutely] different from them.”²⁷ These two examples also point to the truth of dependent origination, but in a more general way. These examples indicate the interconnectedness of all phenomena, not just the particular one-to-one connection between a father and a son. In the first example, Nāgārjuna illustrates that one syllable by itself has no meaning, no function. Rather, it requires a larger network of syllables, a broader context into which it can come to life in *particular* relationships—not just a random pile of syllables will do—in order to make a spell. At the same time, however, a particular amalgam of syllables does not have a fixed, independent existence; thus it is also correct to say that the mantra is “empty,” dependent as it is upon the network of syllables.

Similarly, an efficacious medicine requires the combination of specific ingredients, none of which is therapeutic on its own. It is impossible to isolate one component of any medicine and pronounce that it and it alone is the one individual healing property of the medicine. The medicine only works insofar as it combines a nexus of compounds. The medicine is not this or that ingredient, but rather the unique combination of all of them together. Yet, it is the combination in active relationship that is medicinal: a bunch of ingredients all piled up loosely on a counter does not constitute a medicine. A medicine is not a mathematical equation, where one apple, plus two oranges, plus three bananas makes six pieces of fruit. Medicine does not result from the combining of discrete, autonomous objects, but rather arises in dependence upon a series of particular relationships. It is thus “empty” of any existence of its own.

Nāgārjuna believed that any conception of independent origination was inherently fallacious; his system describes a world in which everything is dependent upon everything else, in which everything is empty. These two ideas point to the same reality.

Two Truths

The dharma teaching of the buddhas
depends on the two truths:

the supreme truth
and the conventional truth.

Those who do not understand
the distinction between the two truths
do not know
the profound truth of the Buddha's teaching.

Without recourse to worldly practice,
the highest truth is not taught.
Without understanding the highest truth,
nirvana is not achieved. (*Mūlamadhyamikakārikā* 24:8–10)

Gadjin Nagao writes, “If the relationship between emptiness and dependent co-arising is the warp running tautly through the fabric of Mādhyamika thought, the two truths of ultimate meaning and worldly convention comprise the woof. It is the weaving together of the two that makes up Mādhyamika philosophy.”²⁸ Thus, we need to fill out the picture of Mādhyamika philosophy with an analysis of Nāgārjuna's doctrine of two truths.

Of *Mūlamadhyamikakārikā* 24:8, David Kalupahana writes, “This has turned out to be one of the two most discussed verses in Nāgārjuna's *Kārikā*. Modern disquisitions on the conception of two truths could perhaps fill several substantial volumes.”²⁹ This is true not only for verse 8, but also for the three related verses, 8–10. The bulk of the debate centers on the relationship between the two truths: How are they different, and how are they related? There is a great deal of discussion around this issue primarily because the concept of the two truths is understood to originate with the Buddha, and thus the question remains as to what extent Nāgārjuna is following in direct continuity with the Buddha's teaching and in what respects he is espousing something new.

From verse 9 above, it appears that Nāgārjuna claims to be drawing upon the Buddha's teaching and aligning himself with the Buddha's position. The Buddha's “profound truth” is the truth of liberation, and this is the truth that Nāgārjuna, too, is describing. While Nāgārjuna is writing with a clear soteriological purpose in mind, he uses language that is very different from the Buddha's, and his argumentation also seems to lead to some novel conclusions. Thus it remains to examine the way in which Nāgārjuna both maintains a distinction between the two truths, yet at the same time closely identifies them.

Jay Garfield, in his commentary on the above verses, writes,

This is the first explicit announcement of the two truths in the text. It is important to note that they are introduced as two *truths*, and that they are introduced as distinct. This will be important to bear in mind later. For it is tempting, since one of the truths is characterized as an ultimate truth, to think of the conventional as “less true.” Moreover, we will see later that while the truths are introduced as quite distinct here, they are in another sense identified later. It will be important to be very clear about the respective sense in which they are distinct and one.³⁰

Note the issues Garfield identifies. First, he argues that Nāgārjuna is doing two things simultaneously: he is both distinguishing between the two truths, and identifying them. Second, Garfield calls attention to the common tendency to denigrate the conventional truth and elevate the ultimate truth, so much so that often the only truth that is considered liberative is the latter. As we will see below, this tendency is misguided and violates Nāgārjuna’s own teaching that the two truths are profoundly interconnected and mutually dependent.

One of the common interpretations of the two truths doctrines is that the higher truth is ineffable, beyond language, and therefore a conventional truth is needed to put the ultimate truth into words. Musashi Tachikawa takes this approach. He writes, “The ‘conventional truth’ represents the verbalization of ‘ultimate truth.’ On the one hand language is totally rejected and ultimate truth is held to be ineffable, but on the other hand it is possible to give verbal expression to ultimate truth in the form of conventional truth.”³¹ This is a problematic interpretation, not only because it does imply a “higher/lower” schema for the two truths, but also because it ascribes that same distinction to language in general, arguing that what is most true is actually unspeakable, and that the spoken truth is actually a crutch, or, at best, a finger pointing to something beyond itself. This does not in fact appear to be Nāgārjuna’s understanding of language. The only thing Nāgārjuna seems to be saying about language is that it, too, is “empty” and does not have independent ontological status. Saying that, however, does not imply that the conventional truth expressed in language is any more provisional than the ultimate truth, which, of course, also must be empty. I agree here with Jeff Humphries, who, writing about Buddhism and literature, states, “According to the Mādhyamika system, the truth is never essentially present, but it is evident as emptiness in all phenomena, including words.”³²

Thus, despite all appearances to the contrary, one of the most important points to note about Nāgārjuna's doctrine of two truths is that one truth is not "higher," or "better," than another.³³ Even though this seems to be the end result of much analysis on this subject, Nāgārjuna himself clearly rejected any privileging of one truth over another. In Garfield's commentary on the above verses he writes, "It is important to see here that Nāgārjuna is not disparaging the conventional by contrast to the ultimate, but is arguing that understanding the ultimate nature of things is completely dependent upon understanding conventional truth."³⁴ Lindtner argues the point similarly, saying, "The two truths cannot be claimed to express different levels of objective reality since all things always equally lack *svabhāva*. They are merely two ways of looking (*darśana*) at things, a provisional and a definite."³⁵ In the same vein, Richard King writes, "The 'two truths' must not be seen in terms of two specific 'levels of reality,' for to do this would be to undermine Nāgārjuna's denial of a difference between *samsāra* and *nirvāna*. *Samvṛti-satya* is the conventional and 'concealing' level of meaning, while *paramārtha-satya* is the supreme or 'ultimate meaning' (*parama-artha*). The distinction is semantic and not ontological."³⁶

Nāgārjuna's theory of two truths, therefore, does not imply that the sensory world is invalidated somehow, or that the things we interact with on a daily basis really don't exist. They still serve a purpose, and they still have utilitarian value. Ian Mabbett writes: "Just as things like carts, cloth or pots, in spite of being dependent and devoid of intrinsic reality, can still carry out their functions of transporting wood, grass or earth, containing honey, water or milk, and protecting from cold, wind or heat, even so this statement of mine, in spite of being dependent and void of intrinsic reality, can carry out its function of demonstrating that things are devoid of intrinsic reality."³⁷ Candrakīrti says something similar in *The Entry into the Middle Way*. He argues, "A jug, a woollen or burlap cloth, an army, a forest grove, a rosary, a heavenly tree, a house, a small cart, a guesthouse, and so on and so on—these things and whatever else that is, like them, apprehended by living beings: They are to be understood [as conventionally real] because the sage had no quarrel with the world."³⁸ I think this last sentence is particularly important: an enlightened person has no "quarrel with the world"—that is, she does not regard it as an obstacle in her path, or an

enemy to be conquered. For one who has realized the two truths, the world is not to be shunned or disparaged.

From this discussion of two truths we now turn to the final, and from a practical view the most important, component of Nāgārjuna's thought, the concept of nirvana. Nāgārjuna's entire system is focused on the realization of nirvana; thus we must explore how it is that he understands this primary goal of all meditation, study, and practice.

Nirvana

Whoever sees dependent origination,
he sees this:
suffering, its arising,
its annihilation, and also the path. (*Mūlamadhyamikakārikā* 24:40)

The attainment of liberation is the point around which Nāgārjuna's entire philosophical system revolves. Abstract philosophical concerns and the intricacies of Nāgārjuna's logic sometimes overshadow the practical import of his thought, and Nāgārjuna often is seen as a pure philosopher, rather than a religious leader. To think that these are two distinct aspects of his life is a serious misinterpretation. D. Seyfort Ruegg emphasizes that Buddhism has suffered from the dichotomy set up between philosophy and religion in much of Western scholarship. Buddhism does not fit neatly into either category, but rather is both at the same time. The problem is not with Buddhism itself, but rather the way in which the two terms are often defined in the West. Ruegg writes, "a doctrine like Buddhism that has represented itself as therapeutic, and soteriological, would not be counted as essentially philosophical so long as philosophy is understood to be nothing but analysis of concepts, language and meaning (though these matters do play an important part in the history of Buddhist thought too). But the fact remains that, in Buddhism, soteriology, gnoseology and epistemology have been closely bound up with each other."³⁹ There is no distinction in Nāgārjuna's thought between "religion" and "philosophy," because that separation was not part of his intellectual milieu. Instead, it is clear that the goal of Nāgārjuna's philosophy is a religious one: liberation, enlightenment, nirvana.

There is no distinction whatsoever between samsara and nirvana.
There is no distinction whatsoever between nirvana and samsara.
(*Mūlamadhyamikakārikā* 25:19)

This verse is one of the most surprising, controversial verses in the entire *Mūlamadhyamikakārikā*. Mervyn Sprung writes, “What a mind-splitting thunderclap this conception must have been to Nāgārjuna’s contemporaries!”⁴⁰ It is entirely unexpected and challenges much of traditional Buddhist thinking about the nature of nirvana. Rather than stress the difference between nirvana and samsara, Nāgārjuna is arguing their lack of distinction. Jay Garfield calls it “one of the most startling conclusions of the *Mūlamādhyamakakārikā*,”⁴¹ and describes Nāgārjuna’s position as follows: “Just as there is no difference in entity between the conventional and the ultimate, there is no difference in entity between nirvana and samsara; nirvana is simply samsara seen without reification, without attachment, without delusion.”⁴²

T.R.V. Murti seems to agree with Garfield on this point, at least generally speaking. However, he holds that samsara and nirvana are not exactly identical, interpreting the verse with a Kantian spin. Describing Nāgārjuna’s claim that there is no difference between samsara and nirvana, he writes, “Noumenon and Phenomena are not two separate sets of entities, nor are they two states of the same thing. The absolute is the only real; it is the reality of samsara, which is sustained by false constructions (*kalpanā*). The absolute looked at through the thought-forms of constructive imagination is the empirical world; and conversely the absolute is the world viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*, without these distorting media of thought.”⁴³ It should be questioned whether Nāgārjuna’s verses actually point to “the absolute” (assuming Murti means nirvana) as being “real” in a way that samsara is not. Rather, it appears Nāgārjuna has gone to some lengths to emphasize that nothing is “real” in the sense of having abiding, independent existence; instead, as we have seen, everything that is, is empty.

Unfortunately, in many instances, the Buddhist concept of nirvana is interpreted as an escape from here to there—a leaving, a turning one’s back on this life and looking elsewhere. This conception of nirvana is most prevalent in Western popular parlance, where the very word nirvana has come to mean a state of sheer bliss, otherworldly and transcendent. However, for Nāgārjuna, such an interpretation could not be further from the truth. Rather, as Padhye writes, “According to Nāgārjuna nirvana consists in ‘proper understanding’ or developing a proper perspective and cannot be considered even in imagination that it is an end of life or getting away from worldly transaction. It is but a direction to the discovery of the way things truly are.”⁴⁴ In other

words, there is no “there” there, but rather nirvana is “right here”—suddenly apparent with a shift in perspective, or focus. As Garfield says, “Nāgārjuna is emphasizing that nirvana is not someplace else. It is a way of being here.”⁴⁵ In other words, it is not “ontological,” in that respect. Richards describes it this way: “*Nirvana* is not an existing entity. If it were to be so regarded it would have to be classified as a constructed product or *samskrta* dependent upon something else. On the other hand *nirvana* is not a non-existent thing; it is neither existent nor non-existent, nor is it both existent and non-existent for that would make it a composite product while *nirvana* is non-composite or *asamskrta*.”⁴⁶

In *The Buddhist Concept of Hell*, Daigan Matsunaga offers an idealist interpretation of this idea. He concludes that the basis of Mādhyamaka philosophy is that “the ultimate difference between heaven and hell lies in the attitude of the viewer.”⁴⁷ At first glance, this might well seem to be an overstatement, but when we look more closely at Nāgārjuna’s thought, we see that such a bold statement is a not unreasonable interpretation. Here is where we see the goal of enlightenment most clearly. At another place in the *Mūlamadhyamikakārikā* (26:11), Nāgārjuna writes, “The removal of ignorance occurs through knowledge and meditative praxis,” and it is only through wisdom that the non-duality of nirvana and samsara can be seen. To the enlightened one, the former is not different from the latter, hidden off in some far-away place. Rather, it, too, belongs to the emptiness of all things and is itself “empty.” In this view, the world as such is not inherently evil. Bruce Matthews writes, “The world in itself ought not to be viewed as either a source of pain or not a source of pain. It is only our relation to it through consciousness that makes it thus or otherwise.”⁴⁸ Streng echoes this perspective: “The practical, everyday world as such is not to be rejected—only the ignorance, the attachment to *svabhāva*, should cease.”⁴⁹ Wisdom, then, becomes the key to unlocking the secret of emptiness.

In the realization that nirvana is actually present to us now, life takes on new meaning. This means that there is no “beyond,” no escape from this world as such. Whereas before, nirvana was opposed to human existence, now they are discovered to be one and the same reality. Without the false reification of substances, the true nature of the world can be seen, and the root of suffering is extirpated. As Garfield comments, “For then, in the context of impermanence and dependence, human action and knowledge make sense, and moral and spiritual progress become possible. It is only in the context of *ultimate*

nonexistence [i.e., the emptiness of both nirvana and samsara] that *actual existence* makes any sense at all.”⁵⁰ Thus, in Nāgārjuna’s philosophy, there is no way to fully separate these three important aspects of emptiness. Compassion leads to a realization of the interconnectedness of all life, which points to the emptiness (i.e., dependent origination) of all concepts, including nirvana, and this, in turn, circles back to compassion for all those who have not yet achieved the necessary wisdom that brings enlightenment. Hence, Nāgārjuna closes his *magnum opus* with a prayer to the Buddha:

I bow to Gautama
 who, with compassion,
 taught the true dharma
 in order to eliminate all philosophical views.
 (*Mūlamadhyamikakārikā* 27:30)

THE CONTINUING PRACTICAL RAMIFICATIONS OF NĀGĀRJUNA’S TEACHING

Virtually all the great philosophical systems of India, Sāṅkhya, Advaitavedānta, Mādhyamaka and so forth, were preeminently concerned with providing a means to liberation or salvation. It was a tacit assumption with these systems that if their philosophy were correctly understood and assimilated, an unconditioned state free from suffering and limitation could be achieved. Thus, it may be said that Indian philosophy in general and the Mādhyamaka have a fundamentally soteriological orientation.⁵¹

Nāgārjuna’s philosophy was squarely focused on the goal of enlightenment. In this respect, he stands directly in a line of Buddhist thinkers that extends back to Gautama Buddha himself. Although Nāgārjuna was also responsible for important modifications in the traditional Buddhist understanding of the world and nirvana, Le Roux writes, “Nāgārjuna insists that he operates squarely within the framework of Buddhist philosophy that reflects a context of soteriological efficiency with the reach of the Buddha’s Four Noble Truths concerning suffering and the cessation of suffering.”⁵²

In his article on Nāgārjuna, Kant, and Wittgenstein, Hsueh-Li Cheng argues that “The doctrine of emptiness is not a metaphysical theory; rather it is essentially a way of salvation.”⁵³ This might seem surprising to those of us who have struggled through the *Mūlamadhyamikakārikā* itself, or with the profound, dense commentaries on it, but, indeed, under the heavy layer of philosophical gloss lays a text that is profoundly

concerned with the way in which people see themselves and the world. However, this should not come as a complete shock when we remember that Nāgārjuna did not intend to expound anything new, but rather claimed he wanted only to reinforce the Buddha's original teachings, which were themselves supremely soteriological in character. It is like the parable told about the man who had been shot with an arrow. The Buddha showed how absurd it was to ask questions regarding the nature of the arrow while failing to treat the wound itself. In the same way, he chided those who would know all the details of nirvana, except how to get there.

Poussin also argues that the emphasis on salvation is present in the Buddha's teaching from the very beginning: "Deliverance, or Nirvāna, is the central idea of the teaching of Śakyamuni and the *raison d'être* of the religious life." He then goes on to quote from the Buddha's teaching: "As the vast ocean, O monks, is impregnated with one flavour, the flavour of salt, so also, O monks, this my Law and Discipline is impregnated with but one flavour, with the flavour of deliverance."⁵⁴ This same idea is stated more directly by Francis Cook: "Emptiness is the key to the liberated life, and Buddhism is about liberation."⁵⁵ Here, he is echoing Conze, who said that "Emptiness has its true connotations in the process of salvation, and it would be a mistake to regard it as a purely intellectual concept. . . ."⁵⁶ Emphasizing the liberative function of insight into emptiness, these modern commentators echo the view of the great medieval Indian commentator on Nāgārjuna, Candrakīrti (ca. 600–650 CE). At the central moment in his description of the path to liberation, he says,

Dependent coarising [*pratītyasamutpāda*], in its truth, lies open, manifest;
The Bodhisattva dwells in wisdom and achieves cessation [*nirvana*].⁵⁷

All these commentators recognized a central theme of the *Mūlamadhyamikakārikā*, and that is its concern with human experience. It is not some philosophic tract disconnected from concrete reality, designed for esoteric and abstract reflection. As we have seen, the four themes discussed above, *śūnyatā*, *pratītyasamutpāda*, the two truths, and nirvana all point to the final goal of liberation and enlightenment. This focus is apparent even in the structure of the chapter topics of the *Mūlamadhyamikakārikā* as well: the examinations are of "conditions," "the senses," "desire," "bondage," "suffering," and "actions and their fruits." Almost every chapter concerns itself primarily with some aspect of lived human experience and seeks to shed light upon it—not for the illumination itself, but rather for the result wisdom brings,

which is enlightenment and liberation. Thus, even for all its terse, technical language, in the *Mūlamadhyamikakārikā*, Nāgārjuna has written a practical guide to salvation, and whatever else can be said about his philosophy, this must be said first. In other words, as Richards provocatively suggests, “Can it be that the meaning of *sūnyatā* ultimately has to be sought in its use in a form of life rather than in any attempt to locate an objective referent or counterpart?”⁵⁸ Using Nāgārjuna’s own writings, a persuasive case certainly can be made.

NOTES

1. An initial, popular presentation of this rethinking can be found in Kristin Largen, *What Christians Can Learn from Buddhists: Rethinking Salvation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009).
2. Christoph Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana: Studies in the Writings and Philosophy of Nāgārjuna* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1982), 251. However, in the same section, Lindtner argues that Nāgārjuna must have been aware of the various Indian *darśanas*, but they had no positive influence in the development of his thought (p. 250).
3. Roger Corless, “The Chinese Life of Nāgārjuna,” in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 526.
4. *Ibid.*, 527–528.
5. I follow the account as recorded by David Ross Komito, *Nāgārjuna's Seventy Stanzas: A Buddhist Psychology of Emptiness* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1987), 17–18.
6. However, in Corless, “The Chinese life of Nāgārjuna,” another etymology is given. “Because his mother gave birth to him under an [*arjuna*] tree he was called Arjuna. Because a dragon perfected his knowledge [lit., “completed his way”] he is fittingly called Dragon (*nāga*). His style (*hao*) is Long Shu [Dragon Tree, that is, Nāga-arjuna].” Roger Corless, “The Chinese Life of Nāgārjuna,” 531.
7. Kenneth Inada, trans., *Nāgārjuna: A Translation of His Mūlamadhyamikakārikā with an Introductory Essay* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1970), 3. Although Inada’s claim is not literally true—as there are lineages in which, although Nāgārjuna is important, he is not second in order—Nāgārjuna certainly does play an important role in most, if not the vast majority, of Mahāyāna lineages.
8. Donald S. Lopez, Jr., “Buddhism in Practice,” in *Asian Religions in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 63–64.
9. Peter Della Santina, “The Mādhyamaka Philosophy,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 15, no. 2 (June 1987): 174.

10. As translated in John S. Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1995), 142.
11. All translations from the *Mūlamadhyamikārikā* are the author's own.
12. Roger Jackson, "For Whom Emptiness Prevails: An Analysis of the Religious Implications of Nāgārjuna's *Vigrahavyāvartanī*," *Religious Studies* 21, no. 3 (September 1985): 14.
13. Ibid.
14. A. M. Padhye, *The Framework of Nāgārjuna's Philosophy* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1988), 54.
15. Malcolm McLean, "The Meaning of Śūnya in the Teaching of Nāgārjuna," *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 38.
16. It should be noted, however that many scholars trained in the in the dGe lugs pa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism contend this conclusion. For example, José Cabezón, in his review of C. W. Huntington, Jr.'s *The Emptiness of Emptiness*, strongly refutes the suggestion that Mādhyamaka philosophy rejects all philosophical views and "technical philosophical terminology that has as its aim the setting forth of a normative and true philosophical viewpoint" (José Cabezón, review of *The Emptiness of Emptiness*, by C. W. Huntington, Jr., *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 13, no. 2 [1990]: 153). Cabezón emphasizes that, according to dGe lugs pas tradition, Mādhyamaka is viewed as a philosophical system in its own right, and he seems to want to challenge what he reads as Huntington's tendency to treat Mādhyamaka as pure praxis with no theory. To read Huntington's response to Cabezón's review and Cabezón's reply, see *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 15, no. 1 (1992): 118–143. While I agree that the Mādhyamaka school of Buddhism as a whole does promote a specific understanding of the Buddha's teaching and a particular ontology, it cannot be denied that there is strong evidence in Nāgārjuna's own words that he did, in fact, reject all views. I want only to note here that the question remains far from settled in current Buddhist scholarship.
17. C. W. Huntington, Jr., with Geshé Namgyal Wangchen, *The Emptiness of Emptiness* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989), 29.
18. Jay Garfield, trans., *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* by Nāgārjuna (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 301.
19. C. W. Huntington, Jr., *The Emptiness of Emptiness*, 117.
20. Both David Kalupahana (*Nāgārjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way* [Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1986]) and Jay Garfield (*Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*) use "dependent origination" to translate *pratītyasamutpāda*, and I follow them here. Kenneth Inada (*Nāgārjuna*) uses "relational origination," and Frederick Streng ("The Significance of *Pratītyasamutpāda* for Understanding the Relationship between *Samvṛiti*

and *Paramārthasatya* in Nāgārjuna,” in *The Problem of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta*, ed. Mervyn Sprung [Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1973]) uses “originating dependently.”

21. Nancy McCagney, *Nāgārjuna and the Philosophy of Openness* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 54.

22. Mathieu Boisvert, *The Five Aggregates* (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1995), 7.

23. Padhye, *The Framework of Nāgārjuna's Philosophy*, 37.

24. Translated in Leslie Kawamura, *Golden Zephyr: The Garland of White Lotus Flowers: A Commentary on Nāgārjuna's "A Letter to a Friend"* (Emeryville, CA: Dharma Publishing, 1975), 85.

25. Translated from the Tibetan in Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 41.

26. It should be noted here that these categories of “father” and “son” are socially located and thus are not ontological in character.

27. Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 97.

28. Gadjin Nagao, *The Foundational Standpoint of Mādhyamika Philosophy*, trans. John P. Keenan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 21.

29. Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna*, 331.

30. Garfield, trans., *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, 296–297 (italics author's).

31. Musashi Tachikawa, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nāgārjuna*, trans. Rolf W. Giebel (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1997), 27.

32. Jeff Humphries, *Reading Emptiness, Buddhism and Literature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 43.

33. However, there are those interpreters of Nāgārjuna who persist in thinking otherwise, despite all the evidence to the contrary. See, for example, Mervyn Sprung, “The Mādhyamika Doctrine of Two Realities as a Metaphysic,” in *The Problem of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta*. He writes that *paramārtha* is an end to *saṃvṛti*: *saṃvṛti* is the means, and *paramārtha* is the end (pp. 45–46).

34. Garfield, trans., *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, 298–299.

35. Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 276.

36. Richard King, “*Śūnyatā* and *Ajāti*: Absolutism and the Philosophies of Nāgārjuna and Gaudapāda,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 17, no. 4 (December 1989): 389.

37. Ian Mabbett, “Is there a Devadatta in the House?” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 24, no. 3 (June 1996): 308.

38. Huntington, *Emptiness of Emptiness*, 177.

39. D. Seyfort Rugg, "Some Reflections on the Place of Philosophy in the Study of Buddhism," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1995): 151.
40. Mervyn Sprung, *Lucid Exposition of the Middle Way: The Essential Chapters from the Prasannapadā of Candrakīrti*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 19.
41. Garfield, trans., *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, 331.
42. Ibid.
43. T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1987).
44. Padhye, *Framework of Nāgārjuna's Philosophy*, 101.
45. Garfield, trans., *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, 332.
46. Glen Richards, "Śūnyatā: Objective Referent or *Via Negativa*?" *Religious Studies* 14, no. 2 (June 1978): 258.
47. Daigan Matsunaga and Alicia Matsunaga, *The Buddhist Concept of Hell* (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1972), 60.
48. Bruce Matthews, *Craving and Salvation* (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1983), 19.
49. Frederick Streng, "The Significance of *Pratītyasamutpāda* for Understanding the Relationship between *Samvriti* and *Paramārthasatya* in Nāgārjuna," in *The Problem of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta*, ed. Mervyn Sprung (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1973), 34.
50. Garfield, trans., *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, 318.
51. Peter Della Santina, *Mādhyamaka Schools in India* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986), 31.
52. Charles du P le Roux, "The Other: Nāgārjuna and the Theologians," *Religion and Theology* 1–2 (July 1994): 136.
53. Hsueh-Li Cheng, "Nāgārjuna, Kant and Wittgenstein: The San-Lun Mādhyamika Exposition of Emptiness," in *Religious Studies* 17 (1981): 68.
54. Louis de La Vallee Poussin, *The Way to Nirvāna* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1917), 110.
55. Francis Cook, "Reflections on Christopher Ives's Commentary," in *Concepts of the Ultimate*, ed. Linda J. Tessier (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 127.
56. Ibid., 113.
57. Candrakīrti, *Introduction to the Middle Way: Chandrakīrti's Madhyamaka-vatara with Commentary by Jamgön Mipham*, trans. Padmakara Translation Group (Boston and London: Shambhala, 2004), 68.
58. Richards, "Śūnyatā: Objective Referent or *Via Negativa*?" 260.