

Abhidharmakosa Chapter 9 - Closing verses

P/P: Pruden translation into English from the translation into French by Poussin. (Tomoma bold)

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Three Translations by Stcherbatsky:

S(a): “free” translation (of the ideas)

S(b): “literal” (no attempt to adapt into something intelligible)

S(c): from the Chinese of Xuan-zang

[Kapstein translates the text but does not seem to include the closing verses]

Chapter 9 appears to have been added to the Bhasya as a kind of appendix. The Kosa-karika came to a formal close at the end of Chapter 8. Chapter 9 refutes various theories of a soul or self, focusing mainly on the teachings a Buddhist school that held to a conception of the person (*pudgala*) neither different from nor identical to the Skandhas. The chapter consists almost entirely of detailed arguments. There are a few expositions (especially of memory) that complement the systematic presentation of the teachings in Chapter 1-8. The Sarvastivadin system is not a concern of this chapter. Chapter 9 concludes with the following three verses, affirming the significance of the teaching of non-self to Buddhism and genuine liberation:

*1. ityetāṃ suvihitahetumārgaśuddhāṃ buddhānāṃ pravacanadharmatāṃ niśamya | andhānāṃ
vividhakudrṣṭiceṣṭitānāṃ tīrthyānāṃ matamapavidhya yāntyanandhāḥ ||*

已善說此淨因道 謂佛至言真法性 應捨闇盲諸外執 惡見所為求慧眼

P/P: 1. Seeing then, by a path of demonstrative arguments, that the doctrine of the teaching of the Buddhas is perfect, and rejecting the opinion of those blind through bad views and through bad steps, the non-blind see.

JD: THOSE FREE FROM [THE] BLINDNESS [OF IGNORANCE] | ATTAIN [NIRVANA] BY HAVING HEARD THE TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHAS | ON THE NATURE OF PHENOMENA, [THE TEACHINGS ON SELFLESSNESS THAT ARE] FAULTLESS | BECAUSE WELL-FORMED ON THE PATH OF REASONING, | AND BY REJECTING THE DOCTRINES OF TIRTHIKAS, | WHO ARE BLIND [WITH IGNORANCE] | AND PUT INTO PRACTICE IN VARIOUS WAY FALSE THEORIES [OF PERSONS].

S(a): Mere Elements exist! There is no soul! | This stainless doctrine of the Buddhas | In perfect argument exposed. | The Saint perceives in pure intention. | Wrong, stubborn dogma he rejects, | Professed by blind heretics. | In perfect clearness of his sight, | He calmly wanders through these worlds | T'wards life's Repose Eternal.

S(b): 1. Having perceived this dharmata, which is pure through the well-arranged path of argument of the doctrine of Buddhas, having rejected the doctrines of blind heretics which consist in various machinations of wrong dogmatism, those who are not blind proceed (from samsara to nirvana).

S(c): Thus well we have explained the Path Which is the cause of pure (Nirvana). | Substantial Elements of Calm, (they are the Path). | They are the highest Truth, as taught by Buddhas. | We must destroy the dogma of heretics, dark and blind, | (We must reject) the fruit of their wrong view,- in search | Of Wisdom's eye, (which sees that there is no "I").

2. imāṃ hi nirvāṇapuraikavartinīm tathāgatādityavacoṃ 'śubhāsvatīm | nirātmatāmāryasahasravāhitām na mandacakṣurvivr̥tāmapīkṣate ||

此涅槃宮一廣道 千聖所遊無我性 諸佛日言光所照 雖開殊眼不能覩

P/P: 2. In fact, this doctrine of the non-existence of the soul is the only road to the city of Nirvana; although illumined by the rays which are the words of this sun which is the Tathagata, although followed by thousands of saints, and although it is without obstacles, it is not seen by persons of weak insight.

JD: SELFLESSNESS IS THE ONLY ROAD TO THE CITY OF NIRVANA; | IT IS ILLUMINATED BY THE SHINING WORDS OF THE SUN-LIKE TATHAGATA, | AND TRAVERSED BY A MULTITUDE OF ARYAS; | BUT THE POOR-SIGHTED [PUDGALAVADINS AND TIRTHIKAS] | ARE NOT INCLINED TO SEE THE [ROAD OF] SELFLESSNESS THAT LIES OPEN [TO ALL].

S(a): Like a broad way in broad daylight. | By rays of sun illuminated, | So is this Soullessness disclosed | By words of sunlike Buddhas. | It is the only glorious path | Towards Final Rescue's City. | The path is open to the wise | 'Tis trodden by saints in thousands. | But simple people nonetheless, | Their sight obstructed by delusion | Do not perceive the glorious path, | Cannot conceive that there's no Soul.

S(b): 2. The Soullessness the only path to the city of Nirvana is illuminated through the luster of the words of sunlike Tathagatas, it is trodden by thousands of Saints, although open it is not perceived by the short-sighted.

S(c): This one broad Path which to Nirvana's palace leads, | Is trodden by Saints in thousands. Substantial Elements – | (Among them there is) no "I", (they are the Path). | (Innumerable) rays of sunlike Buddha's words | Illuminate (this Path), but they, heretics, | Are opening their eyes and –cannot see.

3. *iti diṅmātramevedamupadiṣṭam sumedhasām| vṛaṇadeśo viśasyeva svasāmarthyavisarpiṇaḥ||*

於此方隅已略說 為開智者慧毒門 庶各隨己力堪能 遍悟所知成勝業

P/P: 3. In this book one will find but a summary indication for the use of intelligent persons: but poison (of belief in soul), once within a wound, will spread itself everywhere by its own force.

JD: WHAT LITTLE IS EXPLAINED HERE [ABOUT SELFLESSNESS | IS DRAWN FROM THE TREATISES ON KNOWLEDGE. | IT] IS FOR THE VERY WISE. | IT IS LIKE A WOUND [THAT PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY] | FOR POISON TO SPREAD [THROUGHOUT THE BODY] BY ITS OWN POWER. | [SO THE DOCTRINE OF SELFLESSNESS WILL PREVENT FALSE VIEWS | FROM ENTERING THE BODY OF OUR SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY.]

S(a): Of this deep doctrine for the learned | I made a short exposure, | By their schooled mind they will pervade | The whole with strength unfettered. | Like poison are they, these learned men: | One only spot it enters, | And then pervades by its own force | All limbs without exception.

S(b) 3. I have expounded this little bit for every learned, like a spot of poison of a wound it will diffuse by its own force.

S(c): Now of this (Doctrine deep) rectangular, | I made a short exposition, which intends | To open in wise men a (little) gate, (a wound), | Through which might enter wisdom poison-like. | O might you all according to your strength's capacity | Become enlightened in all that may be known, | So that you might person exalted deeds | (On all three paths that lead to Peace Eternal).