

Fa-tsang on Madhyamaka

**Nagarjuna's *Treatise on the Twelve Gates* and Fa-tsang's
*Commentary***

Translated by Dirck Vorenkamp

This Work is Dedicated To

Maryanne Leagans

A wonderful friend

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Translator's Preface

This work began several years ago as a result of a question. A reader of my translation of Fa-tsang's *Commentary on the Awakening of Faith* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2004) wrote to question my interpretation of Fa-tsang's thought. The reader wondered whether I had incorrectly injected Madhyamaka thought into Fa-tsang's interpretation of the *Awakening of Faith*. As it turned out that idea stuck with me and pondering whether that might be the case led me to wonder about Fa-tsang's familiarity with Madhyamaka views. His *Commentary on the Treatise on the Twelve Gates* was a natural place to look for answers and the result is this effort.

After working my way through his *Commentary* I decided to translate the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates* as well. It is not included in Fa-tsang's text and I find it much easier to follow his *Commentary* with the original at hand. I expect that will be true for most readers as well. To ease the task of flipping back and forth between the two I divided the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates* into chapters and inserted each before Fa-tsang's corresponding explanations.

Both translations are based on the *Taisho* versions of the texts. For readers with the ability to follow along in the Buddhist Chinese I have included *Taisho* page and row numbers throughout both texts. They are bracketed and boldfaced in both texts - e.g., **[167a]**. I have also utilized parentheses to more precisely distinguish between the content of the original and additions necessary for comprehensible English. Brackets are used to mark additions I have inserted in order to clarify content and/or structure. I have dispensed with diacritical marks in transliterated

terms. They are cumbersome and add no information that is not already familiar to scholars.

I have elected to avoid any discussion of the Author of the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*. There is some debate about that but it seems irrelevant here. There is no question that the work is a Madhyamaka text. Furthermore, the primary focus of this translation is Fa-tsang's *Commentary* and clearly, as far as Fa-tsang was concerned, the work was written by Nagarjuna. I have adopted that view for the translation and the various references to its Author.

I want to thank Maryanne Leagans for proofreading the manuscript. Her sharp eye for detail has been a tremendous help.

As for the original question that first motivated my interest in these two texts, I'll simply note that while the views found in Fa-tsang's *Commentary on the Treatise on the Twelve Gates* may not apply to his interpretation of the *Awakening of Faith*, I think it is clear to see from his explanation that he understood what Madhyamakans mean by "emptiness."

Finally, this translation is posted on the web to make it available to anyone interested. Please feel free to use it for any noncommercial purpose.

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[212b]

First section (of the) roll (containing)

A Record Conveying the Meaning of the Tenets of the Treatise on the Twelve Gates

By Fa-tsang, renunciant *Dharma* exegete of Ch'ang-an's Western Temple of the Great Vow¹

Now due to (this text's) treatment of the profound severing of attachments, the ultimate and conventional thereby both interfuse (and) ordinary convention transcends sensation. Emptiness and existence are by this both destroyed. Yet, by the emptiness of (a self) nature (the conventional,) that no means does not exist, is an existence thereby differentiated in emptiness. An illusory existence that has never begun to be not empty is an emptiness thereby clarified in existence. Existence is empty – existence therefore does not exist. Emptiness exists – emptiness therefore is not empty. Grasping of extremes is then destroyed. (Erroneous) hearing and seeing is accordingly lost. (This approach also) exhausts the erroneous offerings of the existence of a (fundamental) source and accordingly the clouds of the four attachments are cleared away. It erects the True *Dharma's* lack of deficiency and accordingly the Two Truths are then present. (As the Two Truths are present and clear,) therefore the *Tathagata* is in the world, shining wisdom on the dark thoroughfares (of the road to understanding). The flow of a superior grade (of understanding) matches with the profound stream beyond the accumulated (confusions of ignorance).

After the Great Teacher was gone (his followers became) differently attached and confused. Some advanced toward heterodox ways, some ran to *Hinayana sutras*. In this ninety-five types of (doctrinal) quarrels fanned the winds of heterodoxy. Eighteen sects wrangled in a blazing fire (of disagreement). As a result (they) caused the sun of the wisdom of true emptiness to be hidden by dark clouds (and) the profound pearl of wisdom (became obscured by) delusion muddied fish eyes. Thereupon (came) a great master. He was called Nagarjuna and ascending to the position of extreme joy, he responded with a million golden words. (He) regretted these debased nets (of delusion and was) aggrieved over these ruinously sunken (perspectives). He took up a desire to accordingly (use) the torch of the true *Dharma* to overthrow the sunscreens of heterodoxy. As a result (he) caused a multitude of compositions to overflow India and of (his) profound narrations (concerning ultimate truth), this [212c] Treatise is foremost.

Presenting twelve expansive principles (this work) lays bare dark paths while revealing the real (and) leading (the deluded) into returning to the origin (so they might) blend with profound tranquility. It reveals the lustrous principles (found within all) sensation and accordingly (those principles) are designated as “gates.” (As the text) ranges to and fro (over a variety of topics) providing proofs,² it is also called a “treatise.” (As for the) gates, there are twelve and so it takes (that number) as (part of the text’s) name. Additional meanings will be specifically explained below.

Now in taking up an explanation of this Treatise (I will) briefly create ten points (to clarify the text’s background and content): 1. (To begin I will) clarify the

causes for the arising of this teaching. 2. (I will then clarify) the division of the canon (within) which (this text) is encompassed. 3. (I can then) reveal (its place among the) divisions of the teachings. 4. (That, in turn, will allow an explanation of the range of *karmic*) potentials that its teaching covers. 5. The essence of the teaching (its ideas) can expound (will follow). 6. (Then I can detail) the central tenets and paths that are expounded (by the text).³ 7. (Next I will explain) the time of the text's composition. 8. (An examination of the various factors that) conditionally gave rise to transmitting the translation (will follow). 9. (I will then) explain the Treatise's title. 10. (Finally,) an exegetical explanation (closely) following the text (will wrap up the explanation).

[I. Reasons for the Arising of this Teaching]

As for the first point, the reasons for the arising of this teaching, briefly (speaking) there are ten reasons to compose this type of treatise. The first is due to the power of the fundamental vow of this text's Author. Due to this (vow's power) Nagarjuna abided in the first stage (of a *Bodhisattva's* spiritual development).⁴ As a matter of principle due to the power of the vows, in the time after the Buddha's *nirvana*, (the task of) spreading a *Dharma* that included (blessings for all) beings was (a focus) of his activity. Moreover, the Author saw texts like the *Lankavatara* (wherein) the Buddha then noted, "I will come so that the torch of the correct Dharma will destroy the screen of heterodoxies." Therefore as a matter of principle (he was bound to) spread (the *Dharma* and so) composed various treatises. Thereby (he) supported the praiseworthy cries (for the truth of the *Dharma*).

Second, because following the Buddha's extinction heterodox paths and quarrels flourished, (producing a) confusion of erroneous discourse (that also) slandered the Buddha's *Dharma*, (he wrote) in order to destroy that sort of (confusion) and bring about a return to correct (understanding).

Third, because (adherents of) various (forms of the) Two Vehicles do not believe in the *Mahayana*, (he wrote) to break their different (and various) attachments and cause them to turn towards the *Mahayana*.

Fourth, because in regards to the *Mahayana* (there were) warped understandings of true emptiness, (errors that) obstructed (correct understanding) in regards to the attachments of the sensations, (he wrote) to cause them to break (attachment to those) sensations and perceive the correct principle (of emptiness).

Fifth, (he wrote) in order to reveal the (extreme) limits of the *Mahayana* (concept of) Thusness, and bring about (the situation where) they faithfully accept (it and) do not doubt it (or remain) deluded (about it).

Sixth, (he wrote) because he desired to summarily reveal that the true emptiness of the wisdom of the *Mahayana* is the most profound (teaching of all. Those who) depend on it come to complete the myriad practices.

Seventh, (he wrote) because of a desire to explain the profound meanings in *Mahayana* texts (and thereby) bring about their revelation.

Eighth, (he wrote) in order to bring about (the enlightenment of) the one type (of individual who,) based on an explanation of treatises, attains insight and owing to this (insight) attains entry into the True *Dharma*.

Ninth, (he wrote) because in the (period) after the Buddha's extinction he desired to assist the Buddha (by) spreading and protecting the *Mahayana Dharma* and cause it to long abide (in the world).

Tenth, (he wrote) because (he desired to use) beautiful words and wondrous verses to widely spread this *Mahayana Dharma* (and thereby) complete *Dharma* offerings (that) repay the Buddha's kindness.

[II. The Text's Place in the Canon]

As for the second (major point for explanation, the place of the text's) inclusion in the sections of the canon, within the (categorization of a) two (part) canon, (i.e., a canon with) Hearer and *Bodhisattva* (sections), the *Bodhisattva* canon includes (this text). In the (categorization of a) three (part) canon, (i.e, the canon with) *sutra*, (*vinaya*, and *abhidharma* sections), the *abhidharma* (section of the) canon receives (this text). In the (categorization of a) twelve section (canon, the section with) "discursive" texts includes (this work).⁵

Question: Since (the text) is not a discourse of the Buddha, how is it that it comes to be so (included in the canon)?

Answer: (That is) because of two (points of) significance. First, due (to the fact) it is that type (of text indicated by the corresponding sections), therefore those (sections have come to) include (it). Second, (it is) simply (because) there are three varieties of the *Dharma* that Buddhas expound. (That is to say, 1. there is the *Dharma*) Buddhas personally expound, 2. (there is the *Dharma*) others (so) empowered expound, and 3. (there is the *Dharma* of) expositions permitted by prophecy. **[213a]** This Treatise matches the permitted by prophecy type. By means of (content) in the *Lankavatara sutra* and *Maya sutra* (we see) the Buddha foretold Nagarjuna would light the torch of the True *Dharma*. Therefore (we) know (this *Dharma*) promised (by) prophecy is expoundable. Because of this it is also entered into the collection of the canon (that includes) collected *Dharmas* on doctrinal reasoning.

[III. The Text's Place Among Divisions of the Doctrine]

As for the third (major point for explanation), determining (the text's place among) the divisions of the doctrine, (in) this (matter when we) compare the various masters of the south and north, (their) different explanations are confusing. Without laboring (over) the record of their rankings, but to still distinguish (among the views) transmitted by the virtuous (teachers of) India, I asked (for help from) the Temple of the Great Vow's translator, central Indian *Tripitaka* Master Divakara. The T'ang (Chinese) pronunciation (of his name is) "Re-chao."⁶ He said presently two *sastra* masters of great virtue are both at India's Nalanda monestary. One is named Silabhadra and one is named Jnanaprabha.⁷ Both (have) a spiritual understanding that transcends the ordinary (and their) reputations are high (throughout the) five (regions) of India. (He said that) the six teachers (of heterodoxies all) bow (to them). Different sects return to and rely on (their understanding and even) *Mahayana* scholars look up (to them) as to the sun and moon. (Nevertheless) in India they walk alone (on separate paths. Their observance of) the regulations constitutes (a moral) compass (for others) even though each maintains a school (of tenets) that mutally are (like) a spear and shield [i.e., mutually opposed].

(If we) speak of Silabhadra, then he inherited (the teachings of) Maitreya and Asanga from long ago (while more) recently following the footsteps of Dharmapala and Nanda. (He) relies upon *sutras* like the *Sandhinirmocana* and *sastras* like the *Yogacarabhumi* (to) clarify the *Fa-hsiang* (school of) *Mahayana*. The broad divisions that designate (his) enumeration (of the periods of the *Dharma*) uses three

teachings to explain the (various) schools and reveal that which they individually rely upon as the true meaning (of the *Dharma*). That is to say, (according to this view) initially at Deer Park the Buddha turned the *Dharma* wheel in regards to the *Hinayana* of the Four Noble Truths. Although he expounded the emptiness of persons to overturn various heterodoxies, even so in regards to dependently arising (*dharmas*), he definitively expounded (their) real existence. In the second period though, relying upon (objects) which are grasped at by the understanding that universally reckons (all objects have an essential nature),⁸ and explaining that the self nature of the various *dharmas* are all empty (of own being, he thereby) overturned those *Hinayana* (views). Even so, in regards to the dependent (nature) and the perfected (nature he) still as yet expounded their (essential) existence. In the third period then (he reached) the correct principle of the *Mahayana* and completely expounded the Three Natures and the Three Non (self-) natures that then actually constitute the exhaustive principle (of true emptiness). Therefore, regarding *dharmas* produced by causes and conditions, in the initial period he only expounded (their real) existence and accordingly fell to the existence side (of extreme views). Next he expounded on (their) emptiness and accordingly fell to the emptiness side (of extreme views). Since each (of these two options) falls (to an extreme) side, neither is the final meaning (of the *Dharma*. So) in the subsequent period (he) completely expounded the emptiness of the natures that are grasped at. The other two (earlier views) constitute (views of essential) existence (while this view) unites (them with) the Middle Path and actually constitutes the final meaning (of the *Dharma*).

Therefore, based on (classifications) that this (view) expounds, (we can) judge *sutras* like the *Prajnaparamita* (and texts like the present one that) mostly expound emptiness tenets as included in the Second (period) Teachings. (These texts then) do not constitute the final meaning (of the *Dharma*. Of course) this depends upon the decisions (and views) of the *Sandhinirmocana (sutra)*.

(As for) the second (view, that of) *Sastra* Master Jnanaprabha, he inherited the (views) of Manjusri and Nagarjuna from old (and more) recently received (the teachings of) Aryadeva and Bhavaviveka.⁹ Based on *sutras* like the *Prajnaparamita sutra* and *sastras* like the *Madhyamaka-sastra* (he) reveals the *Mahayana* of no characteristics, broadly distinguishes (the teaching of) true emptiness, and also uses three (periods of) teaching to express tenets (and) reveal that which he personally depends upon as constituting the final meaning (of the *Dharma*).

That is to say (according to this view) initially at Deer Park the Buddha turned the *Hinayana Dharma* wheel in regards to the Four (Noble) Truths for individuals of less (well developed) faculties. (At that time he) expounded (the teaching that) the mind and its objects both exist. Next, in the second period, for those of moderately (developed) faculties, (he) expounded the *Mahayana* of Dharma-characteristics – (namely, the view that) objects are empty while the mind exists. Accordingly (this teaching includes various) ideas like consciousness only. Because (at that time people’s) faculties were still (relatively) inferior, (they) were as yet unable to completely enter (an understanding of) universal **[213b]** true emptiness. Therefore he created these (sorts of provisional) explanations. In the third period then (he) expounded this *Mahayana* of no-characteristics for (those of)

superior faculties. (At that time he) revealed that the mind and its objects are both empty, (and that the) universal, single “flavor” (of emptiness) constitutes the true, complete meaning (of the *Dharma*).

Furthermore, (according to this view) the initial (teaching) then was in order to break heterodox (notions like) a self-nature and such. Therefore he expounded (the idea that) *dharmas* produced by causes and conditions certainly are existent. Subsequently then in order to break *Hinayana* (notions of essentially) real existence he expounded (the idea that) these dependently produced (*dharmas*) are only provisionally existent. Because they feared and dreaded this true emptiness he therefore still preserved (the notion of) existence while guiding them (to true emptiness). The third period then concerns the final *Mahayana* (and at that time he) expounded (the idea that) these dependently produced (*dharmas*) are exactly the emptiness of a (self) nature, a universal single characteristic. This (progression of the teachings) is also a gradual sequence of entering (final understanding of) the *Dharma*.

Accordingly, based on this explanation (Jnanaprabha) judges *Fa-hsiang Mahayana* (school ideas) such as an existent (consciousness and the empty *dharmas* it) appropriates as constituting second period teachings, and not as the complete purport (of the *Dharma*. As for) this progression of three teachings, (it is) that which *Dharma* Master Jnanaprabha explained in his *Prajnapradipa-mulamadhyamakavritti*, drawing on the *Ta-ch'eng miao-chih ching*.¹⁰ Therefore, based on these doctrinal principles, *Prajnaparamita* type *sutras* are the true, complete purport (of

the *Dharma*. All) the other designations and enumerations of *dharma* characteristics are expedient explanations and nothing more.

Question: If it is as the preceding two masters have expounded, which one has attained (the truth) and which one has erred?

Answer: If we use (the principle of *karmic*) potential to unite the teachings, the two expositions both attain (the truth) because each, depending on the Noble Teaching, constitutes (valid) direct and inferential (understanding).¹¹

(Question:) How so? That is to say, these two expound a (different) sequence of three teachings. (Taken) together it is not possible to determine (the case) and select (one) by means of the temporal succession of the three periods. (So) how can we understand it?

(Answer:) It is like the *Vajrapani sutra* says: At Deer Park the Buddha initially turned the *Dharma* wheel of the Four Noble Truths (and) innumerable sentient beings attained the first fruit (of understanding), the second fruit, and so on even to the fruit of (becoming an) *Arhat*.¹² (Also) innumerable sentient beings aroused the mind of insight and innumerable *bodhisattvas* attained patience (with the truth of) *dharma*s that are not-produced. (Those *bodhisattvas*) abided in the first stage, the second stage, and so on even to (the stage of competence with) broad exposition. In the *Ta-p'in sutra* (we) also (find passages) that agree with this explanation. Therefore we cannot definitively explain (the sequence of) before and after.

We only know that when the *Tathagata*¹³ set up the Teaching then (it contained) complete and incomplete meanings (and) has its two (types of) gates. The first (of those two gates) corresponds to (teachings that) encompass (*karmic*)

potentials (both) broadly and narrowly. (These expositions) express the teaching wholly and with omissions to thereby clarify (views which are) complete and (in other cases,) incomplete. The second (gate) corresponds to (teachings that) encompass (those *karmic*) potentials (which can fully) enter the (complete) *Dharma*. (It) reveals the principle (of emptiness) with increasing subtlety, thereby (fully) clarifying (that which is) complete and incomplete. The first (of these two) is that which Silabhadra's (view) attains.

How so?

That is to say, it is like (it says) in the *Sandhinirmocana sutra*. Initially (the Buddha) established the Deer Park (teachings) only for advancing those of the Hearer's Vehicle. (Accordingly,) by (using) the characteristics of the Four Noble Truths (he) turned the wheel of the correct *Dharma*. The second period was only for advancing those who cultivate the *Mahayana*. Relying upon (the teaching that) all *dharma*s lack a self-nature (he) thereby (used previously) hidden characteristics (of *dharma*s) to turn the wheel of the correct *Dharma*. (In) the third period in order to universally advance all vehicles, (he) relied upon (the teaching that) all *dharma*s lack a self-nature, (extending the idea) even to the nature of lacking a self-nature. (By this teaching he) thereby revealed the complete characteristic (of *dharma*s and the teaching about *dharma*s) to turn the wheel of the correct *Dharma*.

(We can) explain this (by) noting (that if we) weigh this text's passage the first (period) then only includes Hearers. The next (period) then only includes *Bodhisattvas*. Because (these two) encompass (*karmic*) potentials (that are relatively) narrow, (their teachings) are designated as not (expressing the)

complete meaning. The final (period) includes both *Hinayana* and *Mahayana* and hence (it) mentions the phrase “universally [213c] for advancing all vehicles.” Furthermore, (we can note that during) the first (period he) only expounded the *Hinayana*. (In the) next (period he) only (expounded) the *Mahayana*. (But) these two expressed teachings are each mutually deficient. Accordingly (they) are (both) designated “not complete.” (So, during) the last (period he) completely expounded the two teachings (thereby) utilizing and encompassing the two (types of *karmic*) potential. This (third period teaching) then is the whole of the teachings (and) accordingly it is designated as the “complete teaching.” (So, in light of this we see) it is not that the principles (taught) have shallow and profound aspects.

(If we) further weigh (the implications of) this passage (we) also cannot certainly classify (texts) such as the *Prajnaparamita (sutras)* as second period teachings. (For example, consider this point) by what the *Ta-p'in sutra* says:

If a person wants to attain the fruit of a stream-winner then (that person) ought to study the perfection of wisdom. (One ought to study this wisdom) even (if one has) a desire to attain (the goal of) the fruit of an *Arhat*, and (goals) such as unsurpassed insight.

All (of these texts) say (one) should study the perfection of wisdom so we know (texts) like the *Prajnaparamita sutras* also completely encompass *Mahayana* and *Hinayana* and are universal expositions for arousing the tendency toward (developing an understanding of) all the vehicles. The *Chih-lun* also says: “Within this *Mahayana*, (its teachings are “great”) because it completely encompasses the two groups of *Bodhisattvas* and Hearers.” (We can) explain (this by) noting since it

completely (contains) the Two Truths, (the two) together encompass both (*karmic*) potentials. So, (since that is the case) how could (this text) come to be definitely classified as a second (period) teaching? For this reason, if (we) definitively classify (this text) as a perfection of wisdom (teaching) then (that classification) opposes the (idea) quoted (in) the (view of Silabhabhra mentioned) above. (On the other hand,) if we definitively take hold of the (idea of a temporal progression of) previous and subsequent (teachings), then (we) oppose the passage from the *Vajrapani sutra*. For this reason, (we might note that the first classification of the teachings) only corresponds to (the notion that in) encompassing (*karmic*) potentials (it) has broad and narrow (aspects). As for saying that the teachings have complete and deficient (aspects, if one then) classifies these three teachings as having complete and incomplete (qualities, it means) the teaching of the principle (of true emptiness) is lacking (in those teachings classified as “deficient”).

The second (idea of the teaching) corresponds to encompassing (*karmic*) potential and entering the *Dharma*. As for (this one), the gate of revealing the increasing subtlety of the principle (of true emptiness), it is the position that was inherited by Jnanaprabha. That is to say, (on this view the Buddha) initially expounded (the idea that) the mind and its objects both exist. (This teaching) does not reach to the emptiness of (self-) nature. (In the) next (period he) revealed that objects are empty (of a self-nature while still teaching that) the mind exists. (Accordingly then at this point he) had revealed one portion of the emptiness of (self-) nature. Subsequently (then the idea that) mind and its objects are both empty

was universally and completely revealed. (That teaching) then constitutes the final meaning (of the *Dharma*).

Furthermore, (considering this sequence) in regards to conditioned production, (he) initially expounded (essentially) real existence, next (he) expounded a semblance of existence, and subsequently he then expounded the emptiness (of any essential nature. Now,) this text is also (one that expounds the idea that) entering the (final) *Dharma* has successive (stages and that) revealing the principle (of emptiness) has increasing (levels of) subtlety. (It uses this notion of a progression) to thereby clarify the three teachings (in terms of) complete and incomplete meanings.

(Now) if (we) determinedly grasp (at the particular sequence of) before and after (and) determinedly classify the texts and (their) passages (thusly, then these texts all) also have (points) of opposition and injurious (contradiction). But (if we are flexible and simply) adjust (them) it is (all) understandable. Furthermore, Silabhadra's (view) corresponds to a classification of the teachings that takes (all the) teachings together as the final meaning (of the *Dharma*). Jnanaprabha's (view) corresponds to a classification of the principle (of emptiness and) takes the profundity of (that) principle as the final meaning (of the *Dharma*). For this reason that upon which the two expositions rely is different. The divisions revealed thusly (each have their) superior and inferior (points. Accordingly) shallow and profound (aspects) regarding these (ways of approaching the question) are evident.

[IV. The Karmic Potentials Covered by this Text]

As for the fourth (major point for explanation,) the (range of *karmic*) potentials that this teaching covers, regarding (*karmic types*) within the *Mahayana*, I personally divide it into two teachings. If we depend upon (my category of) the Initial Teaching of the *Mahayana*,¹⁴ (among) all sentient beings (there are) distinctions of five natures.¹⁵ Among them, only the *Bodhisattva* type nature and the undetermined nature are (those) this text is (suited) for. The others are not right for (this text) and combined there is no opposition (between the two types for whom this text is intended). Considering this Treatise's tenets (to be) the same as the perfection of wisdom, it thusly combines and benefits the two teachings (for the sake of certain) men and Gods.

If we depend upon (my category of) the Final Teaching of the *Mahayana*, then all sentient beings (without exception are those) this text is (suited) for. Taking the recent expositions of the five natures, although there are distinctions (among them), because distant (older) treatises each (say) they [i.e., sentient beings] will (all) attain insight, (we can) take (this as meaning) **[214a]** all (sentient beings) have the mind (that seeks insight and) each has Buddha-nature.

Regarding people who slander the *Mahayana*, in the *Buddha-nature sastra* because for an immeasurable period these (individuals) are unable to arouse the mind (that seeks insight), it explains (this by) designating (them as) "lacking Buddha-nature." (Nevertheless) it does not claim that ultimately they lack a pure (Buddha-)nature because each (and everyone does eventually) attain unsurpassed insight.

(If we) rely upon (texts) like the *Ratnagotravibhaga* and the *Wu-shang yi sutra*, after establishing (clear understanding of) the two vehicles' (idea) of entering *nirvana*, (one) receives a transformation body.¹⁶ As a result of accepting the Buddha's teaching, (one advances) towards great insight. For this reason, (if we) rely on the previous (idea of the) Initial Teaching, (it) corresponds with (the notion that) the five natures are not the same and (so we) say the three vehicles (have) distinctions. (But, if we) rely on this (idea of the) Final Teaching, (it) corresponds with (the idea that) all (beings) have Buddha-nature and everyone will attain Buddha (awareness). For this reason, based on this (latter idea we) say there is only one vehicle. This treatise's tenets penetrate (the classifications of both) the preceding two expositions. Weigh it and (you) can understand it.

[V. The Nature of the Teachings Illustrated by the Text]

As for the fifth (major point for explanation,) analyzing the essential (nature) of the teaching (this text) can illustrate, (by) taking names, phrases, passages, and the sounds that are dependent (on them) as constituting the particular nature (of the *Dharma*), some say five principles constitute (the essential) nature (of the Buddha's teaching. The five principles are:) 1. names, 2. phrases, 3. recitation, 4. letters, (and) 5. sounds. Accordingly, (if we) thoroughly discuss these essential (natures and their relationship to the *Dharma*,) in general there are four levels (of understanding possible for the five principles). The first (level of understanding) corresponds to phenomena (and) completely (includes) the two teachings of the false and real as analyzed above. The second corresponds to the real (as ultimate and this level) takes the false as returning to the real. (This understanding) only considers sound as the (essential) nature (of the *Dharma*). The third corresponds to a semblance of (the real). That is to say, (according to this understanding) only the seemingly (real) sounds manifested by consciousness constitute the (essential) nature (of the *Dharma*). The fourth (level) corresponds to (an understanding of the essentially empty) nature (of all arisings). That is to say, these sounds (of the *Dharma*) are exactly empty (of essential nature, so) there is no nature, no names, no sound. Lacking no-names, lacking no-sound, (this idea then) constitutes the particular nature (of the *Dharma*). That is to say, (with this level one understands) the nature of abandoning (an essential) nature (- even a no-nature nature).

[VI. Central Tenets and Paths Covered by the Text]

As for the sixth (major point for explanation), the central tenets and paths that are illustrated (by the text), this means that which the words present is referred to as “tenets” and that to which the tenets return is called the “path.” Accordingly (we can) take (the text’s) twelve gates’ (various forms of) breaking attachment as (its) tenets, and (their process of) revealing the principle (of emptiness), of completing practice, and of entering the *Dharma* as the paths. That is to say, turning (the followers of) the two vehicles (from their erroneous views) and causing (them) to enter the *Mahayana* is its intention.

Generally speaking, although it is as (just outlined), in that (broad idea we might further) differentiate and in brief make (note of) four aspects (concerning the Author’s intent. 1. (He intends to) generally clarify (*sutras* and *sastras* in order to) establish and refute conventional modes (of thinking). 2. (He intends to) specifically select (and deal with the particular misunderstandings) that are refuted herein. 3. (He intends to) generally report on the meaning of the three treatises. 4. (He intends to) unite various different expositions.

[General Clarification]

As for the first, generally clarifying the *sutras* and *sastras* to establish (key propositions) and refute conventional modes (of thinking, within) the great net of the Buddha *Dharma* there are two types (of teachings). The first, for (those of a) superior grade of unadulterated (*karmic*) potential, directly reveals the meaning of

the *Dharma*. (This version) does not establish (key propositions) and does not refute (conventional modes of thinking). The second, for (those of) intermediate and low grade assorted (*karmic*) potentials, (uses) skilful means to reveal (the meaning of the *Dharma*. With this version) there is establishment (of key propositions) and there is refutation (of conventional modes of thinking). When the Buddha was in the world (he) mostly clarified the first meaning and along with that, (secondarily) clarified the latter. (The primary meaning is) like that which is distinguished in the various *sutras*. After the Buddha's *nirvana* (followers) mostly clarified the latter meaning and along with that (only secondarily) clarified the first meaning. (This secondary meaning) is as that which is distinguished in the various *sastras*.

Now regarding this (text) there are established (propositions) and refutations and therein (we can) briefly note three phrases to reveal its divisions (in approaching truth). 1. (It) clearly refutes (erroneous thinking). 2. (It) clearly establishes (correct meaning). 3. (It clarifies that) both distinctions lack obstruction.

[Clear Refutation]

As for the first, by means of great compassion Noble Ones falsify various (incorrect) words and treatises, refute and eliminate attachments to views, and attend to driving off their illnesses. (If we) speak of the lack of (technically) correct determination (in some of the refutations, and) now relate (that) to the characteristic (forms of typical refutation), there are five (types to note.)

The first is refutation by absurd evidence. That is to say, (this is) like (when) the Buddha refuted the long-nailed Brahmacarin¹⁷ saying **[214b]** if you, (in regards

to) every (proposition,) do not accept (them), do (you) also accept this “do not accept”? As this type (of person) already has mature faculties, (this sort of approach) consequently produces shame (at one’s own ignorance. At that time the individual) attains the effect (of correct and determinate understanding).

The second is refutation in accord with what is suitable. That is to say, (this is) like (when) the Buddha observed the suitability of sentient beings’ faculties. If (they might) by that power attain entry into the *Dharma*, then accordingly (he) would use that and refute their (incorrect) reckonings, leading them to awaken to the Path. (That sort of approach) certainly does not yet present the various rules of formal reasoning.¹⁸ This (sort of refutation) is for (those of the) superior roots rarely produced in the preceding (type of individual. Even so these individuals) await the Buddha’s many words and (only) then are faithful and submit (to correct thinking. For example, this type of case is) just like (when he) refuted the *senika* heterodoxy.¹⁹

These above two types (of refutation and their illustrations) correspond to (methods of) refuting heterodox (ideas). If (we) relate (them) to refuting (ideas of the) Two Vehicles, it is as in the *Lotus Sutra* (where it says,) “The *nirvana* your types attain is not a true extinction of (*samsaric*) passage.” Accordingly (and as above, upon hearing this sort of pronouncement the errors) are refuted. Similarly, (those passages that) refute the equality of the three refuges also conform to this (approach).

The third (form is) refutation in accord with attachments. That is to say, (this is) as (the approach taken in) the *Three Treatises* composed by Nagarjuna and

Aryadeva. (This approach) counters those heterodoxies and *Hinayana* (views) in accord with that to which they are attached. By means of assorted reasonings (this approach) subtly refutes their reckonings. (This) necessarily causes the attached mind to lack a lodging (point so that it) accords with and enters true emptiness. (This realization) then completes the benefits (of refutation. Since the point has then been realized,) what need is there to complete the three aspect and five part (forms of formal, technically accurate) inferential reasoning? Because, moreover, (the) faculties (of these individuals) are superior, (they) easily accept (the refutations,) enter (correct understanding, and) are not falsely influenced.

The fourth is refutation by presenting illustrative reasoning. That is to say, (this is) like the *Fang-pien hsin lun* and the *Hui-cheng lun* composed by Nagarjuna and the *Tarka-sastra* composed by Vasubandhu. Together each presents worldly causes and clarifies the reasoning of the three aspect and five part (forms of formal) inference. (Such) sharp edged inference refutes (erroneous) reckoning and will certainly reveal the true *Dharma* while also not preserving (attachments to) this *Dharma* of comparative inference. For this reason, in this Treatise a later (section) itself refutes this (very sort of reasoning). The faculties which this (approach) is for are (only) slightly inferior to the preceding so the functional merits are plentiful.

The fifth is refutation by direct reasoning. That is to say, (this is) like the *Hetu-vidya sastra* and others composed by Dignaga and the *Prajnapradipamulamadhyamaka- vritti* and the *Tarka-jvala* composed by Bhavaviveka. (These texts) together rely on the reckoning of direct reasoning such as (precisely) determining the proposition, reason, and example (for the three part syllogistic

form. When these reasonings) depart from the errors of other propositions and lack mistakes of contradiction then (they) come to constitute a refutation (that is) truly capable (of establishing truth. On the other hand,) in regards to the proposition (and/or other parts of the syllogism,) if they do not expertly depart from errors (of logical analysis, then they are) designated refutations that are seemingly capable (of establishing truth) and are (rightly considered) refutations that do not complete (the requirements of formal reasoning). Because the faculties that are countered by this (form of reasoning) are the most inferior (of all, their) attached views are deeply layered and as a result it is difficult (for such individuals) to accept and enter (into truth). Broadly (speaking) by means of the logical reasoning (found) within the five worldly illuminations²⁰ (these individuals) squarely reason (the distinctions between) “is” and “is not” and then begin to believe (in the *Dharma*) and subdue (misunderstanding). If (one) reaches this stage (of explanation) and (the student) still does not believe (in the *Dharma*) and subdue (misunderstanding,) the extreme (degree) of their stupidity is inexpressible. As a result (at this point one has reached the end of applicable approaches and these forms of refutation) do not further extend to a sixth aspect.

[Establishing Correct Meaning]

As for the second (phrase I’m using to note divisions in this text’s approach to truth, that of) establishing (correct) meaning, (even though) the basis of the *Dharma* departs from words, (with the appropriate *karmic*) potential and conditions a rare awakening (can occur. Accordingly,) sages compassionately and skillfully elicit (that *karmic* potential) and earnestly cause hidden benefits (that), in accord

with conditions, lead to establishing (correct) meaning (and) influentially transforming many points (of the student's circumstances).

(However, to) broadly summarize and speak (of the many possible forms of eliciting karmic potential, we might note they) also have their five (basic types).

First, (teachers) establish (correct meaning) in response to (*karmic*) potential. (This approach is) as in the *Nirvana sutra* (where) heterodox (followers) view the Buddha's golden forms, body, etc., and say, "Although Gautama is a good person, (he) distorts principles and expounds emptiness - a view that severs (the *karmic* continuum)." The Buddha [214c] then informed them saying, "I do not speak of emptiness. Because all sentient beings have Buddha-nature, they have eternal joy, personal purity, and so forth." Hearing (this and having) already entered the *Dharma*, (they) subsequently awaken to the traces of the Path. And yet, actually, in the literature "Buddha-nature" connotes emptiness' first (level) of meaning. For those who fear emptiness like this type the *Lankavatara sutra* expounds (ideas such as that) the *Tathagatagarbha* has thirty-two characteristics. (This) text's intent is the same and (its point is) completely like the (*Nirvana*) *sutra's* exposition.

Second, (teachers) establish (correct meaning by) refutation. That is to say, this is as Nagarjuna's (approach) in the three treatises. (There,) in accord with (the practice of) refuting their attachments to the point of complete extinction, (he produces circumstances where) the mind lacks (any place to) lodge and so true emptiness is conveniently revealed. (Accordingly, this) then constitutes (a method of) establishing (correct meaning). That is to say, it is an establishing without establishment.

Third, (teachers) establish (correct meaning) in accord with the time period. That is to say, it is like when the *Buddhas* and *Bodhisattvas* of a time period (notice) there are heterodox criticisms (of the *Dharma* and so, for example,) conveniently establish two collections (of *dharma*s. In doing so, they) take countering (the anxieties of) the burdened as (the occasion for pointing out the existence of) proven meaning.²¹ It is like (when) a person's two shoulders have a load (and they are unable to carry anymore. At times like that,) the meaning is (presented as) already ultimately complete. Subsequently (though), in regards to the Great Assembly²² they conveniently establish (a more complete) five collections (of *dharma*s. At that time, regarding) its basis, the heterodox (believers) then ask, "If it is thus, then why did you previously establish (only) two?" The answer (to this question is that) the previous (version was for) responding to (anxieties of) the burdened (and) further, (to help) those without knowledge. Now, (this version) responds to the assembly of the knowledgeable (and so) then completely expounds (the five collections. The third approach to teaching) is like this type (of method).

Fourth, (teachers) establish (correct meaning by) overthrowing evil. That is to say, (this) is as (when) the *Buddhas* and *Bodhisattvas* respond to heterodoxies of the eight directions and establish the meaning of the Three Jewels. If (they find that) the (various) views of existence oppress (people), then (they rightly) ought to behead (those views, putting them) to death. Although they attack, the group opposing (will find that) the principles (of the *Dharma* are) unsinkable. Accordingly, this causes the heterodox to return to faith and enter the *Dharma*. (The arguments) which are established (by) this sort (of approach) do not necessarily have the three

member, five part (form of formal) analytical reasoning. Yet, by means of a revelatory exposition of superior analysis in accord with the time, (they) cause the meaning (of the *Dharma*) to be firmly (established) and lead (the deluded) to faith and submission (to the truth). Also, as a result, (their) words lack (any essential and therefore contradictory) positions.

Fifth, (teachers) establish (correct meaning) by direct reasoning. That is to say, (this approach) must rely on the worldly logic of (formal) reasoning (that,) in regards to propositions, reasons, and examples, lacks the various types of (technical) errors. (Accomplishing that means) the principle is ultimately completed. (This approach is) designated as “truly capable of proving.” If in regards to the proposition, etc., there is erroneous slippage, (this) is designated as “seemingly capable of proving.” (This approach) is incomplete proof. Furthermore, (this is) like using the eight types of reasoning by comparative inference to verify that the *Mahayana sutras* truly are the Buddha’s words. Therefore (you) should know (this) is like the meaning of establishment and refutation expounded above.

Together (these forms of teaching) are all skillful means. (They) attend to leading the preceding (types of *karmic*) potentials to return (to the *Dharma*), submit (to truth), and produce faith. (Even so, they) do not necessarily come to the profound purport of the complete Buddha *Dharma*. Moreover, (they can be) like (proofs of) Thusness that lack examples (showing it) is the same as *dharmas*. Consequently, (due to the lack of an example,) these (cases) do not attain (the technical status of) proven, (but) how is it possible Thusness is not *dharmas*? For this reason (one) ought to (eventually) leave these debates on establishing (correct

meaning) and refuting (errors. Only by doing so will understanding) then constitute the ultimate meaning that accords with the Real.

[Nonobstruction of Establishing Truth and Refuting Errors]

As for the third (phrase I am using to denote divisions in this text's approach to truth, that of) the nonobstruction of establishing (correct meaning) and refuting (errors, if one) considers (the possibility) that sensuous attachments do not (refute) the principle (of emptiness, one) then will (see that their) essence is emptiness. (In turn, that) brings about (an understanding of) the nonrefuting refutation, (or, put another way,) that refutation is nonrefutation. If (one) is attached to the refutation of existence, (that attachment) in turn is the same as that which is refuted. For this reason (the refutation itself) is not refutation. Now, since there is not that which is refuted, therefore consider nonrefutation as refutation and accordingly (attachments to) that which can (refute) and that which is (refuted) are both severed. A mind lacking (any place) of lodging constitutes ultimate refutation. Take up this idea and consider it (but) do not latch on to the words.

Furthermore, considering (the fact) that the *Dharma* surpasses sensation, (in) what **[215a]** mode (could it) come to be established? (If it) corresponds to the "seemingly established" of sensation, (then the) established is exactly the nonestablished. If (one) can comprehend that this establishment is nonestablishment, (this) establishment of nonestablishment constitutes final establishment. If (however,) as words, (one) takes up "establishment," then that is the reckoning of sensations. Because (such "establishment") is not that which is established, accordingly nonestablishment is (ultimately the case). For this reason

(all reckoning) within sensations also lacks establishment and because (of this, such reckoning) is not the (final) *Dharma*. (But reckoning) outside sensations also lacks establishment because it lacks (the) dependently (produced) contrasts (required for establishment). Yet, (even so one) may consider sensations and (thereby) enter the *Dharma*. Establishment is exactly the absence of establishment (and) the absence of establishment is exactly establishment. (If one) takes up the idea and thinks about it, the point may be seen.

This (point) refers to establishment and refutation being confused (by the deluded). As yet there has not been an exposition (so that those with) concealed (*karmic*) potential (might) enter the *Dharma*. (But consider this:) what opposition could there be? Furthermore, by driving off (the false reckoning of) sensation, there is nothing that does not correspond to the principle (of emptiness). Therefore, (with) refutation there is no nonestablishment and (with) establishing the *Dharma* there is no noncancellation of sensation. Therefore, with establishment there is no nonrefutation. (Given) this, because refutation is exactly establishment, therefore there is no refutation. (Because) establishment is exactly refutation, there is no establishing. Nonestablishment and nonrefutation do not obstruct establishing and refuting. For this reason, establishing and refuting are one while yet constantly two; two while yet always one. Existence does not obstruct emptiness, emptiness does not obstruct existence. This refers to the great idea of the nonobstruction of establishment and refutation.

[Specific Selection of Points for Refutation]

As for the second (of the four points concerning the Author's intentions), determining that which it refutes, there are masters who explain saying this Three Treatise school only refutes the "real self" and "real *dharmas*" that are grasped at by the *Hinayanas*' and heterodoxies' (erroneous) universal reckonings²³ (about *dharmas*. Those masters claim that this school) does not refute the *Mahayana* (view) of a nature that arises dependent on another. (They say this school does not refute dependent arisings) because this illusory existence [i.e., dependence on another] is not an error and if this (view) is also refuted, then (such an approach must be considered) the evil of nihilism that takes collected (notions) of (absolute) emptiness (as ultimately true. It is not surprising then that they claim such views) are not the true *Dharma* as a result. (On the other hand) there are (those who) state (that in) the Three Treatise (school) everything is refuted. (On this view the school) sets up (proofs where the various notions of) dependence upon another, (such as those) established (by) treatises like (those of) the *Mahayana Yogacara*, (are) herein also refuted. (They assert this) because (according to this view, among the) various dependent productions there is no (arising which) is not empty. (According to this view) if (this misunderstanding) is not refuted, (illusory) perception is not ruined and the principle (of the true *Dharma*) is not exhausted.

Question: (With) two explanations like this, is there a (way to) harmoniously combine them or not?

Answer: There are masters who say it is not possible to harmoniously combine (them. They) also (say) do not expect a strong combination (to emerge from any such effort). Taking this (view) then, within the *Mahayana* the various

sections are not the same, and this leads to (a situation where) there are conflicting debates. (This is just) like the various *Arhats* within the *Hinayana* (whose views found in) different sections (of the canon) do extend to (one another). One should know the different sections of the *Bodhisattva* (canon) are also thus. Consequently (we) may not (take it) as strange (that there is disagreement in the canon). For good reason the Buddha *Dharma's* ultimate (truth) is exceedingly profound, pervading (all) their different debates. Each (view) has a principle of the teachings (and) the meanings (of those views are) individually and ultimately complete. Therefore, they may not be combined.

Now, (going even) further, (with these variously) layered explanations there is nothing that may not be combined because the principle (of true emptiness) individually pervades (them all).

(Question:) How so?

(Answer:) That is to say, if (one) does not refute the illusory existence of dependence upon another, leading to (an understanding that such existents) do not (ultimately) exist, as a consequence attachments to those universally reckoned (illusions) are not eternally exhausted. Because this illusory existence is a “nonexisting existence,” if (one) does not accept not existing, that (view then) is exactly that to which (one) is attached. Therefore, (in order to) refute (such) attachments, desiring to bring about exhaustion of (the mind's) agitation, it is necessary to reach the boundary of the nonexistence of illusory existence. (It is due to the) need to refute illusory existence to cause its eternal exhaustion (that one can) then reach the boundary of the nonexisting (illusory existence) to which one is

attached. For this reason the meaning of the two expositions (mentioned above) do not mutually (conflict).

Furthermore, that *Hinayana* (doctrine) is a “Half Letter” teaching (in that) the meaning of the principle (of emptiness) is not exhausted and allows for different **[215b]** debates. (With) the “Whole (Letter)” teaching of the *Mahayana* the meaning of the principle (of emptiness) is replete. How (in light of this, could it not) also agree with those (other views) while still yet having (its own different) sections? Furthermore, the various *Arhats* do not come to (understand) the various *dharmas’ dharmadhatu* of one “flavor.”²⁴ (Considering it this way, various partial views of *dharmas* and attachments mutually correspond (through dependent arising. Such dependency) produces (various) views and (leads individuals to) compose treatises. Therefore there is mutual opposition. (But, if we take an example) like the *Bodhisattvas* who enter the (Ten) Stages²⁵ and completely penetrate the real characteristics of the “Middle Path of the *Dharma*,” how could (their understanding) also be the same as the mutual opposition of those (found in the various partial and) attached views? For this reason (the fact) that Nagarjuna, Asanga, (and all) the authors of various great treatises do not mutually oppose (one another) is exceedingly evident.

[Generally Reporting on the Meaning of the Three Treatises]

As for the third (of the four points concerning the Author’s intentions, his intention to) generally report on the school’s ideas and thoroughly distinguish (key points of the) three treatises, (we can) generally take the “Middle Path of the Two Truths” as the (key to their) tenets and path. Now, to explain the meaning of this, in

brief (I will) create three (key) aspects. 1. (I will) reveal the meanings of the (key) principles. 2. (I will) relate (those points to the process of) completing contemplation. 3. (I will) reveal the virtuous function (of these contemplations).

[Revealing the Meanings of Key Principles]

Within the first aspect (we can) again create three (points to explain its) meanings. 1. In relation to the “dependent on other arisings” nature²⁶ (I will) clarify (this school’s doctrine of) the “Middle Path of Two Truths.” 2. In relation to the remaining two natures (I will further expand on the preceding point). 3. (Finally, I will finish by explaining this point) in relation to the entire Three Natures.

[The “Dependent on Other Arisings” Nature]

As for the first meaning, that is to say, the arising of *dharmas*, there are no (such arisings) that do not follow from conditions. (Since they are) existents that follow from conditions, therefore (they) certainly have no individual nature. Due to lacking an individual nature and thereby following from conditions, conditionally (arisen *dharmas*) exist (while an individual *dharmic*) nature does not. Furthermore, there is no second *dharma* (that constitutes an “other” nature). Yet, (even so,) in relation to the conditionally existent myriad distinctions, (these) are designated as “conventional truths.” In relation to the single “flavor” of a lack of (an individual) nature, (it is) designated as ultimate truth. For this reason, in regards to a single dependent arising, the two principles do not mix (and) are designated the “two” truths. (However) dependent arisings lack duality (and when considered) together, apart from the two boundaries (just mentioned, that) is designated the “Middle Path.”

Generally speaking it is like this. (But) if we further specifically explain (we can) in brief create three (additional) aspects (to elaborate upon.) 1. (We can) relate (the above point to the twofold qualities of) separate and combined. 2. (We can) relate it to unity and difference. 3. (We can) relate it to existence and nonexistence.

[Separate and Combined]

[Separate]

Within the first, initially (we will cover) separate, then combined. As for separate, in regards to a single dependent arising, separate consists of two meanings. 1. (It refers to) the meaning of the illusory existence of the dependently arisen. 2. (It refers to) the meaning of the true emptiness of lacking an (individual) nature.

[Illusory Existence]

Within the first meaning there are also two (further) meanings. 1. (The first is) the meaning of “is not existent.” That is to say, (if we) bring forth the essence (of arisings) as completely empty (of any individual nature, then) there is nothing which exists as a result. 2. (The second is) the meaning of “does not not exist.” That is to say, (this existence of *dharmas*) is because (their dependent arising) does not await (an emptiness which) destroys those (very same) characteristics of differentiation. The *Ta-p'in sutra* says:

The various *dharmas* lack that which exists. For this reason existents like this are not existent, are not not existent, (and) are designated as “illusory existents.”

[True Emptiness]

Second, within (the meaning of the) true emptiness (of lacking an individual nature,) there are also two meanings. 1. (First is) the meaning of “are not empty.” That is to say, (*dharmas* are not empty) because emptiness lacks the characteristic of emptiness. 2. (Second is) the meaning of “are not not empty.” That is to say, (of) all the other characteristics (of arisings), there are none (this meaning) does not exhaust (or describe). For this reason, “are not empty” and “are not not empty” are designated as “true emptiness.” A *sutra* says:

Empty and not empty – it is not possible to attain (either. This) is designated as “true emptiness.”

The *Madhymaka-sastra* states:

Dharmas without a nature are also lacking.

All *dharmas* are empty therefore.

[Combined]

As for combined, this has five levels.

1. That is to say, (given) that (*dharmas*) “are not existent,” then “is” (and) “is not” do not exist. (We can) consider this “lack of duality” as *illusory* existence. For this reason the *Mahayana-sutralamkara* says:

Lacking an essence is not (the quality of a) “lack of essence.” (This) “is not (the quality of a) lack of essence” is exactly the essence (in question). Lacking essence, (the notion of an) essence (itself) lacks duality (and) for this reason (we) say it is “illusory.”

The point of this text considers the lack of an essence as illusory essence. Therefore it refers to “lacking duality.” Due to this lack of duality, (the concept of

lacking duality) does not fall to one side (or the other and) therefore is designated the “Middle Path”. This is the [215c] “Middle Path of Conventional Truths.”

2. (Given that) in ultimate (truth arisings) are “not empty,” then “is” and “is not” are “not empty.” (We can) consider this lack of duality as true emptiness. Together the two depart from the two (extreme) sides (and this) is designated as the “Middle Path.” This is the “Middle Path in Ultimate Truth.”

3. Within illusory (existence arisings) are “not existent.” Accordingly, within ultimate (truth we find the) meaning of “are not not empty.” (On the other hand,) within illusory existence (arisings) are “not nonexistent.” Accordingly, this is the meaning of within ultimate (truth arisings) are “not empty.” Because together (these aspects) lack duality, due to this lack of duality, along with the preceding lack of duality, (this gives) a further (level of a) lack of duality. For this reason the Two Truths both fuse and do not fall to one side (or the other. This) is designated as the “Middle Path.” This is the “Middle Path of the Two Truths.”

4. Within illusory (existence arisings) are “not existent.” Along with (arisings as) “are not empty” within ultimate (truth this allows the two) to fuse without duality. (This is also) designated the “Middle Path.” This is the “Middle Path of Is Not Existent, Is Not Empty.” A *sutra* says:

(Arisings) are not existent (and) are not nonexistent. (This is) designated the “Middle Path.”

5. Within illusory (existence arisings) are “not nonexistent.” Accordingly, this is (the meaning of) within ultimate (truth arisings) are “not not empty.” This is the “Middle Path of Is Not Not Existent and Is Not Nonexistent.” That is to say, (this) is

the middle within the severing (of all views). For this reason the Two Truths fuse. The wondrous severing of (all notions associated with a) middle and boundaries is its point (here).

[Unity and Difference]

Second as for relating it to the aspect of their unity and difference, there are four phrases (marking the key points).

[Not Different]

1. As for the meaning of “not different,” (*dharmas* are not different) because if (*dharmas*) were not conditionally produced, they would not lack (an individual) nature. That is to say, as for conditional existence, (it) reveals (that *dharmas*) are not individually existent. (Now if it is the case they) are not individually existent, then (that means) they are lacking (a self) nature. Further, as for lacking an individual nature, (it) reveals (they) are not individually (self) existent. (*Dharmas*) which are not individually existent accordingly are lacking (a self) nature. Furthermore, as for lacking an individual nature, it reveals (they) are not individually (self) existent. (Arising) which are not individually existent are accordingly conditionally existent. For this reason the (*Heart*) *sutra* says:

Form is exactly emptiness. Emptiness is exactly form.

A (related) *sastra* says:

The extreme darkness of the obstruction of knowledge

refers to attachments of ultimate and conventional differentiations.

This is what it means.

Also, it does not obtain that because of the emptiness of (an individual) nature, (that emptiness) does not allow for conditioned production. (This is the case) because without conditionally produced (*dharmas*), emptiness (of an individual nature) is not established. A *sastra* says:

(Dependent) existence constitutes the emptiness of *dharmas*

because (the emptiness of *dharmas*) is produced from conditions.

Furthermore, this is the emptiness of ultimate (truth) and is not the emptiness (derived from) severing (the ultimate from the conventional). If it is the case that (we must) wait on extinguishing conditioned production to only then count that as emptiness, this (notion of emptiness) then is an emptiness wrongly grasped within the (realm of the false reckonings of the) sensations.

Furthermore, it also does not obtain that allowing for conditioned production opposes and harms the emptiness of true emptiness. (This is the case) because if (*dharmas*) are not empty (of an individual nature, they) are not conditionally produced. As for an individual (nature), if (it is self) existent, it is not, as a consequence, conditionally produced.

Furthermore, (if we are referring to) an emptiness that does not differ from (conditional) existence, that then constitutes true emptiness. (On the other hand,) existence that does not differ from emptiness is then an illusory existence. For this reason these two are not two. Therefore lacking difference is (the case). A *sutra* says:

(As for) forms and the emptiness of forms constituting a duality, forms are exactly empty (of an individual nature). It is not that form extinguishes

emptiness. The nature of forms and the emptiness of individuality, to be among them and yet universally penetrate (both aspects), this constitutes entering the Dharma gate of non-duality.

Furthermore. The *Ta-p'in sutra* says:

It is not because of emptiness and form (constituting a duality that we) designate (the relationship as) the “emptiness of forms.” But rather because form is exactly emptiness and emptiness is exactly form.

Furthermore verse 389 of the *Mahaprajnaparamita sutra* says:

Subhuti, consider (the fact that the state of being) causally conditioned does not differ from the emptiness of a fundamental nature. (Also,) the emptiness of a fundamental nature does not differ from (the state of being) causally conditioned. Causally conditioned is exactly the emptiness of a fundamental nature and the emptiness of a fundamental nature is exactly (the state of being) causally conditioned.

(That text) also says:

Subhuti, consider (the fact that the) various *dharmas* which are produced from conditions do not differ from the emptiness of a fundamental nature. **[216a]** (Also, then) the emptiness of a fundamental nature does not differ from the various *dharmas* produced from conditions. The various *dharmas* produced from conditions are exactly the emptiness of a fundamental nature and the emptiness of a fundamental nature is exactly the various *dharmas* produced from conditions.

Passages like these clarify this aspect of “not different.”

Question: If it is so (then this notion) should destroy the Two Truths. Because causes and effects are just empty (we) lose illusory existence and destroy conventional truth. Because emptiness is just causes and conditions, (we) lose true emptiness and destroy ultimate truth.

Answer: The correct (way to understand this is that precisely) due to not being different, the Two Truths come to be preserved. If it were not so then (as you suggest, we would in fact) lose the Two Truths.

(Question:) How so?

(Answer:) Causes and effects that differ from emptiness are not illusory *dharmas* and so (if that were the case there would be a real) loss regarding conventional truth. Emptiness that differs from causes and effects is not true emptiness and so (if that were the case there would be a) loss regarding ultimate truth. For this reason the Two Truths come to be preserved due to (the fact they) are not different. (That) “not-different” then is the equality of the Middle Path. Given this, then due to (the fact this relationship constitutes the equality of the) Middle Path even while there are still Two Truths, accordingly this (relationship between the ultimate and the conventional) is the “Two Truths of the Middle Path.”

[Not One]

As for the second (phrase marking a key point about unity and difference), the aspect of “not one,” due to the emptiness of (an individual) nature (the arising of) these conditionally arisen *dharmas* leads to (a situation where) those (very same) illusory existents do not come to (essentially) exist. Therefore, everything is only true emptiness. A *sutra* says:

The various *dharmas* are, in the end, empty. Lacking even the minutest characteristics, emptiness (itself) is (also) lacking distinctions. (This lack of characteristics) is the same as if (we were referring to) a void.

Furthermore, a *sutra* says:

The emptiness of all *dharmas* is like (the void left by) the fires at the end of an eon.

The *Mahaprajnaparamita sutra* says:

Because of the emptiness of forms, etc., within emptiness there are no forms. (This point designated “not one”) is like these types (of explanations).

Depending on that (idea), illusory existence is the aspect of “is not existent” and (again) depending (on that idea), true emptiness is the aspect of “is not not empty.” (So we can) say that true emptiness forever destroys illusory existence. For this reason it consequently leads to conventional characteristics being forever exhausted while constituting ultimate truth. Furthermore, these conditionally arisen *dharmas* are due to characteristics of illusory existence and (this) leads to (the case where) that true emptiness also becomes “not empty.” (In that case true emptiness) is only a distinction of conditionally arisen illusory existence. For this reason the *Lankavatara-sutra* says:

It is not a checked extinction that is again produced, (but rather) a mutually continuous, causally conditioned arising.

Furthermore, in (texts) like the *Samgrahabhasya* and *Yogacara (bhumi sastra)* they clarify (the point that) *dharmas* arisen dependent upon others are always not lacking (existence). In this fashion, (taken together,) depending on the

aspect that true emptiness is not empty and depending on the aspect that illusory existence is not not existent, (one can) say that conditioned existence always is not empty. Because of “always is not empty,” then (this) constitutes conventional truth. (With) the Two Truths (understood) like this, final characteristics and forms are determined and (they) then become (an expression of the) fundamental nature (of all arisings. This is) like the (the passage in the) *Yinglo (sutra which)* says:

Worldly truth exists therefore it is not empty.

Ultimate truth is empty therefore it does not exist.

These types (of views) are all distinctions that rely on the aspect of “not one.”

Question: If we rely upon the preceding gate, taking true emptiness as extinguishing illusory existence and causing it to not exist, this then annihilates conventional truth, and because it destroys *karmic* effects, is wrongly grasping at emptiness. Furthermore, this emptiness of (an individual) nature, since it is due to illusory existence, if it leads to (a situation where) illusory existence also does not exist, illusory existence is lacking as a result. Based on what (then do we) come to establish that tenet of the emptiness of (an individual) nature? (Given) this (problem) then (we) also lose the meaning of the true emptiness of an individual (nature).

Furthermore, within (the discussion) of the preceding aspect of “are not different,” (you) clarified that it does not destroy illusory existence. (But in) this aspect (you) alternate and destroy it. How is it not the case that the two explanations individually (and) mutually oppose (one another)? Furthermore, if we rely on the latter meaning, and consider that existence taking away **[216b]**

emptiness leads to a case (where) emptiness is not empty, this then is (a case where *dharmas* are) truly existent and are not illusorily existent. (This cannot be though) because this perverts true emptiness and is (a case of) sensations (generating) attachments to existence. Further, this conditioned existence, since it is due to the emptiness of (an individual) nature, if this (emptiness) is lacking, conditioned existence is also destroyed. (In that case) then (we) lose the meaning of conditioned existence.

Further, in (your explanation of) the preceding aspect of “are not different,” (you) clarified (this) does not injure true emptiness. This aspect (however,) alternately destroys it. How is it they do not mutually oppose (one another)?

Answer: We can explain these various difficulties (by) clarifying (the relationships between) the “emptiness/existence”, “allowed for/taken away,” and “preserved/destroyed” (aspects) of ultimate and conventional (truth). There are four parts for (each of the following) two aspects (of the first relationship).

[Emptiness/Existence]

1. “Only True Emptiness.” (This) has four meanings. 1. Due to this, emptiness therefore does not destroy conditioned emptiness. Consider that a (particular, essential) nature, if it exists, is therefore not an existence (dependently derived) from conditions. 2. Due to this, emptiness therefore destroys and exhausts conditioned existence. Because emptiness certainly must damage conditioned existence, (conditioned) existence, if not exhausted, is not truly empty. 3. Due to (this), emptiness therefore also destroys true emptiness. Because this emptiness of (an individual) nature is due to conditioned existence, [i.e., only the conditionally

existent are “empty” of a nature] conditioned existence is preserved. Accordingly, there is no true emptiness (other than the emptiness of the conditionally existent). As for lacking true emptiness, it is due to (emptiness being) truly empty (of any nature). 4. Due to (this), emptiness therefore does not destroy true emptiness. Because destruction in regards to conditioned existence (means) exhausting those empty characteristics, (that) then is true emptiness.

2. “Only Illusory Existence.” (This) also has four meanings. 1. Due to (the fact that *dharmas* are illusory existents,) conditioned existence therefore does not damage the emptiness of (a self) nature. Because existents derived from conditions must be empty of a nature, (conditioned existents) definitely lack a nature. 2. Due to (this,) conditioned existence certainly subverts the emptiness of a (self) nature. (This is) because conditioned existence is not nonexistent. 3. Due to (this,) conditioned existence accordingly destroys conditioned existence. Because existents derived from conditions must be empty of a nature, the emptiness of a nature is manifest (and that) certainly damages conditioned existence. As for damaging conditioned existence, it is due to (being) conditionally existent. 4. Due to (this,) conditioned existence does not destroy conditioned existence. Because existents derived from conditions certainly damage the exhaustion of emptiness, (whatever) exists then constitutes the conditionally existent (and conditional existence) is not nonexistent.

In this fashion conditional existence and emptiness of a nature are either mutually taken away and completely exhausted, or mutually allowed and

completely preserved, or (one is) individually destroyed and (one) individually preserved. (Notice that these various relational states) lack obstruction.

[Allowed for/ Taken Away]

(1.) For this reason if we concern (ourselves with) the gate of “mutually allowed,” then (that) “emptiness that does not destroy existence” allows for that “existence that does not destroy emptiness.” Because the principles are not mixed this is not a gate of oneness.

2. If (we) concern (ourselves with) the gate of “mutually taken away,” then (as for) this “emptiness that destroys existence” along with (that) “existence that exhausts emptiness,” (each aspect) completely takes away (the other) and (again, they) are not one.

[Preserved/Destroyed]

3. If (we) concern (ourselves with) the gate of “each individually preserved,” then “not mutually” (related) is (the case) and therefore they are not one.

4. If (we) concern (ourselves with) the gate of “each individually destroyed,” then there is no (other) one that might be united and (again,) therefore there is no unity.

(However), because preservation and destruction lack obstruction, the two principles are not mixed (and) do not fall to (either extreme) boundary. (Given this, we) do not lose the Middle Path and this is referred to as the “Middle Path of the Two Truths.”

[Not One is Not Different]

As for the third (phrase marking a key point about unity and difference), (considering) this “not one” along with the preceding “not different,” alternately there is no difference – because the conditionally arisen lack duality. That is to say, an “emptiness that destroys existence” is exactly an “existence that exhausts emptiness.” In this fashion emptiness and existence lack obstruction and so mutual opposition of the extremes flips and returns to mutual accord of the extremes. For this reason “mutual taking away” and “mutual allowing for” alternately lack duality. (This) is the reason conditionally arisen (*dharmas*) interfuse with the meaning and principle (of true emptiness) without obstruction. [216c] Due to (the fact that) “not one” is exactly “not different,” therefore the Two Truths constitute the Middle Path. Due to (the fact that) “not different” is exactly “not one,” therefore the Middle Path constitutes the Two Truths.

[Not One is Not Not Different]

As for the fourth (phrase marking a key point about unity and difference, as for the relationship of) this “not one” along with “not different,” (it is) also (the case that they) are not one. For this reason then (they constitute) a “not different that is exactly not one” (that also) then allows for a “not one that is not different.” As a result the (two) meanings are not mixed even while (they) are not one. That is to say, (this is) a duality that does not differ from a (unified) middle and a (unified) middle that does not differ from a duality. Although the meanings fuse completely, the principles do not mix so (they) are “not a middle and are not a duality” (and also) are “completely a middle and a duality.” This is referred to as the “non-

hindrance and non-obstruction of the middle and the boundaries.” Think about it and it may be seen.

[Existence and Nonexistence]

(Now, returning to the categories of my more detailed explanation of the “dependent on other” arising of *dharmas*,) as for the third (point, that) relating to existence and nonexistence, there are two aspects. Initially (I will) relate (this point) to being “manifest” then (I will) relate (it) to being “hidden.”

[Manifest]

In the preceding (of these two points, i.e., “manifest”, there are) two (subpoints): first (I will) “generally” (explain the ideas) then (I will) “specifically” (focus on a key distinction).

As for generally (explaining), in a single conditioned arising (existence and nonexistence) fuse and form four aspects (even as) each (arising) does not fall to a boundary. (1.) That is to say, (every *dharma* manifests an) existence that does not obstruct emptiness. Although (that *dharma*) exhausts emptiness (and) is simply existent, yet it does not fall to the (extreme) boundary of (essential) existence. 2. (That *dharma*) is an emptiness that does not obstruct existence. Although (it) exhausts existence (and) is only empty, yet (it) does not fall to the (extreme) boundary of (nihilistic) emptiness. 3. (That *dharma* is) an “empty existence” that lacks differentiation (between the two aspects). Although the extremes mutually oppose, yet even (as) both are differentiated (they) do not fall to the (extreme) boundary of dualism. 4. (That *dharma* is an) “empty existence” of an extreme contrast (between the two aspects). Although (in) lacking duality both (aspects) are

muddled (together), yet (the condition of) both (together is) negated (and they) do not fall to a boundary (of simply lacking distinction). For this reason the four parts (are) successive yet do not fall to (any of) the four extreme boundaries.

Furthermore, based on the gate of the above meanings it also might obtain that the four parts together come to express an extreme. Therefore, some (say it) is neither middle nor extreme (but a) replete “middle-extreme.” (Consider the point and it) may be known.

As for the second (part), specific (explanation of a key point), either (we) consider illusory existents as existence and the lack of an (individual) nature as emptiness, or (we) consider the lack of an (individual) nature as existence -because of the reality of the principle (of emptiness), and illusory existents as emptiness - because they are not real. Each (of these two taken) together fuse and both (become) mixed (even as) each individually does not fall to an extreme. This is designated the “Middle Path of Existence and Nonexistence.” Therefore the *Nirvana sutra* says: “(Being) both existent and nonexistent is designated as the Middle Path.” (This type of comment) also adjusts for the above (issue). Consider it (and the point will be evident).

[Hidden]

As for the second (point of this discussion about the existence and nonexistence of dependent arisings, the point) relating (the two) to being “hidden,” (I will) also initially (discuss the) general (features), then specific (ones).

(Now) within the (discussion of the) general (features we will begin with several) questions:

(Question:) Dependent others are existent aren't they?

Answer: (They) are not because (they) lack a particular nature.

(Question: Then they) are empty aren't they?

(Answer: They) are not because (emptiness) does not destroy conditioned characteristics.

(Question: Then they) are both existent and nonexistent aren't they?

(Answer: They) are not because in lacking a principle of duality, (the two) do not mutually oppose.

(Question: Well, then they) are neither existent nor nonexistent aren't they?

(Answer: They) are not. Because (in regards to) existence and nonexistence, since (we've) departed (from both) there is no (other alternative) waiting. (Notice too that such an understanding) does not obstruct the two (original) meanings. Therefore, due to the preceding three parts, departing from existence and departing from nonexistence consequently does not don (the guise of yet another) extreme. Due to the fourth part, departing from neither existence nor nonexistence does not don (the guise of a previously excluded) middle. In this fashion "does not don the middle and does not don an extreme" then constitutes a "Middle Path Without Lodging."

As for the second (part here,) "specific" (features), the first (point to cover) relates to illusory existence.

[Illusory Existence]

Question: Illusory existents are existent aren't they?

Answer: (They) are not. (They) are illusory existents (and) certainly do not exist as a result.

(Question: Then they) are nonexistent aren't they?

(Answer: No, they) are not. Because existents do not (essentially) exist, (they) lack (any quality) that might (be considered) nonexistent. Furthermore (such a lack of essential qualities) does not obstruct illusory phenomena and is not a (nihilistic) extinction severed (from existence).

(Question: Then they) are both existent and nonexistent aren't they?

(Answer: No, they) are not. Because both the forms (associated with) the two meanings are snatched away and are not preserved (one cannot say they exist and do not exist).

(Question: Then they) are neither existent nor nonexistent **[217a]** aren't they?

(Answer: No, they) are not. Because in lacking existence and nonexistence, there is a lack of that with which to deal. (Accordingly, it is the case that) these two meanings are completely illusory existence and for this reason simply concern illusory existents. (When the various reckonings attached to) the four parts are each severed, (the result) is also (called) the "Middle Path Without Lodging."

[True Emptiness]

As for the second (point, the point) relating to true emptiness, (here again we will begin by addressing several questions).

Question: True emptiness is empty isn't it?

Answer: It is not. Because it is true emptiness, it is not an emptiness severed (from everything).

(Question: Then) it is existent isn't it?

(Answer:) It is not because (in regards to all) characteristics, there are none not exhausted (by emptiness).

(Question: Then) it is both isn't it?

(Answer:) It is not. Because there is no principle of duality, they do not mutually oppose (and there is no "both").

(Question: Then it is) both "neither/nor" isn't it?

(Answer:) It is not. Because ("neither/nor") severs (any further option with which) to deal.

(These are the) complete meanings of true (emptiness). For these reasons true emptiness also severs (all) four parts (of the tetralemma) and is the reason (it) completely reveals the Middle Path.

The above general (summary) relates to the arising of a nature in dependence upon another. Clarifying the "Middle Path of the Two Truths" (in regard to that nature) is (now) finished.

[In Relation to the Remaining Two Natures]

As for the second (part of this discussion of key principles in relation to the Three Natures, the part) relating to the remaining two natures, first (I will) specifically (explain), then generally (distinguish key points).

[Specific Explanation]

In the specific (explanation), the initial (point) relates to “that to which general reckoning is attached.”²⁷ This has two meanings. Accordingly the *Yogacara (bhumi sastra)* states:

(As for) “that to which general reckoning is attached,” (it means) sensations exist, (while the) principle (of emptiness) does not.

In this (text, the point) relates to (that which) deluded sensation says exists. (Such constructions seem real,) like empty (sky) flowers to diseased eyes. (These constructions) are that which the common deluded (person) clutches at (and) are considered conventional truths.

(Now) relating this to the nonexistence of real (conventions) within the principle (of emptiness),²⁸ it is like empty (sky) flowers to clear eyes. (This) is what “that known by the sages’ wisdom” takes as real. This nonexistence and that existence reciprocally penetrate without obstruction, mixing as one nature. Therefore in the *Satasastra* (it says:)

It is like a crabapple - (relative) to a melon it is small, but (relative) to a date it is large. Big and small lack obstruction and (this state) is designated as “one crabapple.”

(You) should know the existence and nonexistence herein are also thus.

Lacking duality like this is designated as the “Middle Path.” Accordingly the Treatise says:

“Lacking duality” and “there is this lack,” these two are designated as the “Middle Path.”

The Treatise auto commentary states:

As for “lacking duality,” it is lacking (any) existent that can grasp or which is grasped. As for “there is this lack,” it is (the fact that) there is this nonexistence of that which can grasp and of that which is grasped. (As for) this “existence” and that “nonexistence,” lacking (these) two constitutes the Middle Path.

(Now) as for “there is this lack,” in this (text) it is just a consequence of lacking that existence. This is an exposition of (the constructions of) sensation and the principle (of emptiness) mutually facing (one another). If the sole concern is sensation, everything is sensation referencing vacuous emptiness. If (it is) only related to the principle (of emptiness), all existence, nonexistence, etc., together lack that which exists (and this) “lacking that which exists” also lacks that which exists. (Accordingly,) each and every (option) is severed. Also, there is no middle and (there are) no boundaries.

Second, as for relating to the perfectly complete real (emptiness),²⁹ this has three levels.

The first relates to words as regards explanation and (words) coming to constitute conventional (truth). Departing from words (is to) abandon explanation and is not settling (upon another) standpoint as a result. (That understanding) then, thereupon constitutes (ultimate) truth. (With that understanding,) both fuse without obstruction (and that) is considered as the Middle Path.

The second relates to the severing of characteristics (and) is therefore (concerned with) the meaning of “empty.” (This second also) relates to the reality of the qualities of ultimate (truth and) therefore is (also concerned with) the meaning

of “not empty.” The lack of duality of this “empty” and “not empty” constitutes the Middle (Path). As (it states) in a *sutra*, “the empty/not empty *tathagatagarbha* is (the Middle).”

The third relates to the lack of obstruction of this Thusness and the present body (of forms. Given that, then) accordingly the lack of that which (essentially) exists constitutes emptiness. (Given that,) then this Thusness-body (of empty forms) cannot be destroyed. So it is designated as “not empty.” This “empty” and “not empty” (that) are not two constitutes the Middle (Path).

[General Explanation]

As for the second (part of this explanation, the part that) generally distinguishes (key points, this) also has two levels.

The first relates to a delusory ultimate giving rise to the false as **[217b]** the conventional. (With this view,) collecting the false and returning it to the ultimate constitutes the ultimate. (In this case) the ultimate and the false both fuse, reciprocally penetrating without obstruction. (This state) may be considered the Middle Path. (This) is the ultimate containing the false derivative (and) the false (derivative) penetrating into the ultimate origin. The ultimate and conventional mix and fuse (and this) is considered the Middle Path.

Second, (if we) encompass the ultimate from the false, then the conventional exists and the ultimate does not exist. (If we) encompass the false from the ultimate, then the conventional does not exist and the ultimate does exist. In this fashion the existence and nonexistence of the ultimate and conventional lack obstruction (and this lack of obstruction) is considered the Middle Path.

[In Relation to all the Three Natures]

As for the third, wholly relating (these points) to distinctions of the Three Natures, initially (I will) reveal (the Three Natures, then) subsequently unite (them).

As for revealing (the Three Natures), “That which is grasped” [i.e., *parikalpita*] has two meanings. That is to say, (this refers to) the existence of (the illusory constructs of the) sensations and the nonexistence of the principle (of emptiness). “Dependent upon other” [i.e., *paratantra*] also has two meanings. That is to say, (it refers to) the (dependent) existence of the illusory (constructs of sensation) and the emptiness of (any individual) nature. “Perfectly complete” [i.e., *parinispanna*] also has two meanings. That is to say, (it refers to) the existence of an essential, (empty dependency) and the nonexistence of (any essential) characteristics (of such dependency).

As for uniting them, (we can) consider the existence of (the constructions of the) sensations that are grasped at, the existence of the illusory dependent upon other, and the nonexistence of characteristics of the perfectly complete (so that) in this fashion the nonduality of existence and nonexistence constitutes the “Middle Path of Conventional Truth.” (Also, we can consider) the nonexistence of an (essential) principle (of the constructions of the sensations) which are grasped at, the emptiness of the nature that is dependent upon other, and the existence of an essence of the perfectly complete (so that) in this fashion the nonduality of existence and nonexistence is designated as the “Middle Path of Ultimate Truth.” In this fashion the ultimate and the conventional are united while eternally separate,

separate while eternally united. The lack of obstruction of (their) separation and unity is the “Middle Path of Two Truths.”

These above two gates also have (aspects) like “same-different,” “hidden-manifest”, etc. Each (of those aspects also) has a number of aspects. Also (if you will) weigh the first gate (in light of them you) should know (the key points).

The above presentation (revealing the meanings of key) principles is now finished.

[Completing Contemplation]

As for the second (of the three sections devoted to explaining the Author’s intention to report on the meaning of the three treatises, the section) relating to completing contemplation, this two truths of the equality of truly empty *dharmas* is that upon which the Buddhas of (all) three time periods have likewise depended. And all *Bodhisattvas* departing from this lack a road (leading to enlightenment). For this reason if one desires to seek out the essentials in regard to this ultimate *Mahayana* (then) in regards to this profound emptiness (and) the constructed notions that biasedly attack (it), contemplate and judge (them) for a long while and then (you) can illuminate the principle (of truth) and prostrate delusion (before it).

Now, (I will) briefly clarify this contemplation of ultimate emptiness by creating three gates.

[The First Gate of Contemplating Emptiness]

The first (gate pertains to) illnesses of awareness. This has two (subaspects).

1. (*Karmic*) dust. That is to say, (this refers to the results of) having cultivated activities for seeking fame, pursuing profit, etc. (Such actions may) skillfully

resemble (true practice but) are not truly for causing other (types of) knowledge and (they) do not safeguard (morally) disciplined action. This sort of (*karmic*) type is not capable of attaining entry into this contemplation of true emptiness.

2. (Lacking) the minutely (and unremittingly attentive mind). That is to say, even if (practitioners occasionally) have the mind that is straightforward and advances towards the principle (of truth, they) are not aware of the selfish mind's grasping at views, errors, and troubles. For this reason (such practitioners) lack the (attentive) mind's (ability to) overturn (deluded) sensation and enter the principle (of emptiness). Therefore (they) also cannot enter this contemplation.

Therefore, (for any) practitioner who wishes to enter this contemplation, in regards to the above troubles of (*karmic*) dust and (the lack of a) minutely (attentive mind, they have) a surpassing need (for the) good awareneses that seek distance from those (difficulties).

[The Second Gate of Contemplating Emptiness]

As for the second (gate,) selecting objects (for contemplation, this gate) also has two (subaspects).

1. Perverted objects. That is to say, hearing (of) "emptiness," (this problem arises when one takes it) to mean an absolute nonexistence. (Alternately,) hearing of "existence," (one takes it) to mean an actual, (essential) existence. (Taken) together (these objects) are as those which the sensations grasp at. They are not *Dharmic* objects.

2. Real objects. As the above explained emptiness and existence both fuse, (the) *Dharma* of nonobstruction (that) is difficult to designate is (the real object,

and) it is absolutely necessary to (intentionally) select it (as an object of contemplation). If it is the case (one) does not thusly (approach it), then that is the reason (one) enters the nets of *Mara*.

[The Third Gate of Contemplating Emptiness]

As for the third (gate), meditative wisdom, (it) also has two (subaspects).

1. Understanding. That is to say, in regards to the preceding ultimate emptiness, one ably divides (the true and false) and selects (the true) and does not associate with the three types of confused ideas about emptiness. Furthermore, one also comprehends that this understanding and practice are not the same. If it is the case (one) does not **[217c]** thusly (proceed) regarding this *Dharma* above, (one will) fall into (a state of) not producing understanding. (If that happens) then in that case that means this (so-called) understanding is the active mind. (Such a mindset) is not the correct principle so it is not designated as “understanding.”

2. Active (contemplation of the ultimate). That is to say, when contemplating the true principle by means of the active mind, (that mindset) certainly is not like (the mindset) which is understood by the preceding (category designated “understanding”). Because understanding (alone) cannot reach (all the way), the active mind accords with the *Dharma* and destroys the conceptualizations of sensations as a result. That is to say, in regards to ultimate objects, (this mindset) does not create interpretations of emptiness, does not create interpretations of existence, does not create interpretations of both, and also does not create interpretations of both neither/nor. In the interval of a single thought-moment all the active conceptualizations of the interpreting mind are completely severed and

also there are no “does not move” interpretations (generated). The (objects) which are (so) interpreted are also severed. This “severing” is also severed. Objects and knowledge both fuse in the interval of a single thought-moment. This is to say, the opening of sensation and manifestation of principle (that accompanies this insight) is difficult to express and as for reaching it, (one) should know that (regarding) Nagarjuna’s expounding emptiness, the point is found in this (insight).

[Functions of These Contemplations]

As for the third (of the three sections devoted to explaining the Author’s intention to report on the meaning of the three treatises, the part that) reveals the virtuous functions (of these contemplations), the *Madhyamaka-karika* says:

Because of the meaning of the emptiness of existence, all *dharmas* come to be formed.

(It) further says:

Because of the emptiness of all *dharmas*, (there) comes to be the Three Jewels, 4 (Noble) Truths, etc.

The *Ta-p’in sutra* says:

If all *dharmas* were not empty, then there would be no Path and no fruits (of the Path).

It further says:

If the various *dharmas*, as the least (of everything,) are granted existence, then the various Buddhas do not leave the world.

Texts like this all clarify (the point that) because there is true emptiness, only then are there the various *dharmas*. Furthermore, due to contemplating true emptiness,

only then (does one) complete the various practices. For this reason practices like the Ten Perfections are all completed due to emptiness. Fruits like insight are all established due to emptiness. For this reason, from this lack of a dwelling (place) of true emptiness, (one) establishes the various *dharmas*. Furthermore, (this) causes the various *dharmas* to attain characteristics which mutually enter (one another) without obstacle, without obstruction, and so on. Together (all the completing, establishing, interpenetrating, etc.) is the great functioning of this gate.

[Uniting Different Expositions]

As for the fourth (of the four sections devoted to explaining the Author's intentions, the part concerning his intention to) unite the different explanations, therein (we can note) two (points). First (he intends to) rank the different explanations then, (secondly, to) unite them without opposition.

[Ranking the Explanations]

Within the former, in this *Mahayana* (branch of Buddhism there is a) rich debate (concerning) two principles regarding conditionally produced *dharmas*. (The debate involves questions about) 1, grasping at existents (and) 2, explanations as to the emptiness (of *dharmas*).

[Grasping at Existents]

Moreover, as for grasping at existents, (some) explain that this conditioned production certainly is not empty because there are those (*dharmas*) that causes and conditions produce. (This view claims) even though (such *dharmas*) are like illusory phenomena, (one) may not say (they) do not exist. If it is the case (one) speaks of emptiness, (that) necessarily is not the conditionally produced – like the

horns of a hare (for example). If it were so then (that would) further annihilate (the principle of) cause and effect (and) destroy the two truths. (They claim this must be the case) because if there were no mind (or) *dharmas* of the mind what (then could be) severed? What verified? What (Path could be) cultivated? What benefits (could obtain)? Accordingly the *Wei-shih lun* says:

If everything is empty, how (can) there be the wisdom for eliminating the opposition of illusion? (Such a case is like) seeking the sons of barren women (and) considering them a military brigade.

As this type (of passage suggests,) those who establish existent *ayatanas*³⁰ (or) expound the emptiness of conditionally produced (*dharmas*) should know this concerns that which is grasped at by universal reckoning.³¹ (This is) the reason (they) explain (the idea that) conditionally produced *dharmas* lack the two (forms of) self (essence). The implicit point (in) speaking of emptiness does not mean that the *Dharma* brings up an essence that is completely nonexistent. If it were a case of this (complete) nonexistence, then it is a severed nonexistence, a view that wrongly grasps at emptiness. The *Shen Wei K'o-wei sutra* says:

Rather than arousing the view of an existent (emptiness), which (once aroused) is like (having to destroy) Mt. Sumeru, (better to) not arouse a view of emptiness, which is like (eliminating) a mustard seed.

The *Madhyamaka-karika* says:

If again **[218a]** (one constructs a) view regarding emptiness, (such views) are those which the Buddhas cannot transform.

A view of emptiness like this is actually a profound error. Clearly understand that conditioned production is certainly not nonexistence. The *Samgraha*, *Yogarcara*, and *Sandhinirmocana sutras* definitely expound (dependent) existence and (this, they say,) is the reason it may not be opposed.

[Explanations of the Emptiness of *dharmas*]

Second, as for grasping at the emptiness (*dharmas*), speaking of these conditionally produced *dharmas*, (they) certainly are empty (of own being). Because (they) are produced from conditions, (they) definitely lack a self-nature. Although they are like illusory phenomena, (one) may not say they exist. If it is the case that (one) says (they essentially) exist, then (they) are not (derived) from conditions. As a consequence of (being) not (derived) from conditions, then (such existents) are not conditionally arisen *dharmas*. As for establishing existent *ayatanas* (and) expounding (the idea that) the essence of conditionally produced *dharmas* is (essentially) existent, (we) should know (such notions) are only provisional expositions that accord with conventional (truth). It is not a claim that the essence (of *ayatanas* and *dharmas*) actually is not empty. (This must be the case) because if (they had) an existent essence, then (they could) not come from conditions. As a consequence of not coming from conditions, then there is no knowledge of severing (delusion or) verifying cultivation. Also, (in such a case there is) destruction in regards to the two truths. The *Ta-pin sutra* says:

If the various *dharmas* are not empty,

then there is no Path and there are no fruits (of the Path).

The *Madhyamaka-karika* says:

If all (arising) are not empty,
then there are no Three Jewels, Four Truths, (etc.).
(Such an understanding) constitutes a great heterodoxy.

The *Chih Lun* says:

Contemplate that all *dharma*s are produced from causes and conditions.
(Because they) are produced from causes and conditions, accordingly (they)
lack a self-nature. As a result of lacking a self-nature, in the end (they) are all
empty.

Furthermore, if it is the case we say these illusory phenomena are not empty,
(then we might) now ask (if it) is like an illusory scroll (painting of a rabbit)
constituting a (real) rabbit. (Should we consider) this (so-called real) rabbit as
located in the scroll? As located outside the scroll? As exactly and just the scroll? As
separate from the scroll's existence? As having skin and hair? As having bones and
flesh? Since (the "real" rabbit is) also decidedly nonexistent (apart from the scroll),
based on what (might we) grasp (its) existence? (We) should know this (so-called
real) rabbit does not await (an) extinction of individual death. (It is) originally not
produced even while emptily becoming (present as a painting). For this reason, (we)
must (understand) that due to the emptiness of a nature there come to be the two
truths.

Furthermore, (they note,) "As for you taking my point (about emptiness) as a
view of emptiness, this error belongs to you (and is not part of my point)."

(Question:) How so?

(It is as they note.) If you grasp at existence then (those existents) do not rely on conditions. As a result of not relying on conditions, (this view) accordingly severs (the dependent relationship between) causes and effects. How is this not a view of emptiness? (And) conversely, grasping at existent *dharmas*, how is (that) not a view of existence? The two views of existence and nonexistence both support your point. How (does this contradiction) not produce apprehension (about your position)?

Further, you do not comprehend that the emptiness I expound departs from the views of existence (and) emptiness. As for attaching to it as a view of emptiness and producing fear, this is your particular view of emptiness. It is not related to my principles.

Moreover, you contradictorily fear the view of self while grasping at the existence of sensations. (This) again forms a view of existence. Both (views) lose (the point of) the Buddha's *Dharma* regarding reversing sensations even as they constantly flow. Supposing that (views which) contaminate the *Dharma* and the robed (ones) always lie outside the *Dharma* is your error.

Further, you say "How is there wisdom such as eliminating illusory enumerations, and so on?" (Just consider) the various *Mahayana sutras* – in what place (do they) not expound (the idea) that the various *dharmas* are like (illusory) transformations? That *Bodhisattvas* cultivate the wisdom of illusion? Sever illusory delusions? Complete illusory practices? Acquire illusory effects? And so forth. A Noble Teaching like this, how does it not oppose harm? How (does it) not produce fear (of error)?

Furthermore, you think (this) means there is a realization that ends (illusions) and so it is not like an illusion. (But) because (such a realization) is not like an illusion, it is not produced from conditions. Because it is not produced from conditions, how is there a realization that ends (illusions)? For this reason, overturn this great heterodoxy.

Moreover, **[218b]** your (great teacher,) the *Bodhisattva* Asanga accorded with (the ideas) within the *Madhyamaka-karika*. (He) venerably inherited Nagarjuna's (ideas), was in accord with (that) *Acarya's* (practices, and) taught what he expounded. (He) interpreted those other treatises, even further protecting the *Dharma*, while unceremoniously destroying (their) slander. In the *Lankavatara (sutra)* the Buddha prophesied (that) Nagarjuna, abiding in the first stage, (the stage) of joy,³² would be able to smash views of existence and nonexistence, (thus allowing progress) towards birth in the land of peace and joy. Since this is (a process of) refuting views of existence and nonexistence, how (can it be) understood as a (view of) emptiness? If we say that Nagarjuna was (an advocate of) a view of emptiness, (then we) come to profoundly slander (his point). This (approach) is exactly that which the Buddhas praise. (However) other folks destructively slander (it and) contrarily contend with the Buddhas' (idea. They) do not then (correctly) interpret (this) sort (of thinking).

[Combining the Explanations]

As for the second (point of this explanation concerning the Author's intention to unite various explanations, the part on) "combining (them so they) lack opposition," the various conditionally arisen *dharmas* have never yet had an

essence, never yet been destroyed. Lacking an essence (and) lacking destruction lacks duality without obstruction (and this is what is) considered to be “conditionally arisen *dharmas*.” For this reason Nagarjuna, and so on, although they expound an emptiness that exhausts existence, yet (that emptiness) does not wait on extinguishing existence. Since it does not destroy existence, it is exactly a “does-not-oppose-existence emptiness.” Therefore the emptiness Nagarjuna expounded departs from existence and departs from nonexistence and (ought to be understood) as true emptiness.

Asanga, and so on, although (they) expounded an “existence that exhausts emptiness,” yet (that existence) does not destroy true emptiness. Since (it) does not destroy emptiness, it is exactly an existence that does not oppose emptiness. Therefore (it is) also an illusory existence that departs from (essential) existence and (nihilistic) nonexistence.

(Question:) How do (these) mutually opposing (views agree) then?

(Answer: You) should know the two expositions’ entire essences (are) mutually associated (and the extreme) boundaries lack opposition. Although each narrates a single (particular) idea, yet they (both) bring up the perfect completion of the essence. Therefore they lack (essential) opposition. (Taking them) as if they are not so, (and) dreadfully falling into empty (nihilistic) nonexistence, (only) encourages thought to establish (essential) existence. (Precisely because emptiness) does not oppose this (dependent) existence is the reason (it is) an existence that is not different from emptiness. Therefore do not accept that (erroneous notion of) emptiness contrarily omitting individual existence.

As for omitting individual existence, now that is due to grasping at (essential) existence. Furthermore, if (one) fears falling into that which comes (with erroneous notions of) existence, (one might) therefore courageously encourage and establish (correct views of) emptiness. Not opposing this emptiness is the reason (it is) an emptiness that does not differ from existence. For this reason do not accept that conditioned existence contrarily omits true emptiness.

As for omitting true emptiness, now that is due to grasping at (erroneous notions of nihilistic) emptiness. For this reason (these masters) bring up the (idea that) the essence (is an) entirely empty existence and bring up (the idea that) the essence (is a) completely existent emptiness.³³ Asanga's expositions and Nagarjuna's expositions are not merely two (different types) of exposition that together do not mutually oppose, (but) also then are two meanings mutually (existent) due to (one another and which) completely encompass (one another). Therefore, they lack duality.

Question: If it is thus, why do Bhavaviveka, Dhamapala, and (other) *sastra* masters of later periods mutually refute (one another's views)?

Answer: These (activities) then are (actually their) mutual completion! It is not mutual refutation.

(Question:) How so?

(Answer:) As (it is now) the final period (of the *Dharma* when) there is a gradual dulling of capacity in sensation and faculties, hearing expositions about illusory existence, (some take) the meaning as (referring to) definitive (essential) existence. Therefore, Bhavaviveka, et al, refuted existence, leading (those in error

to) exhaust (that view), reach final emptiness, and thereupon come to (understand) that conditionally arisen illusory existence. If (one) does not reach this final emptiness of (an essential) nature, then (one) does not complete (an understanding of) that conditionally arisen illusory existence. For this reason, in order to complete (correct understanding of) existence, (their) refutations (were directed) toward (erroneous notions of) existence.

Furthermore, those (individuals,) hearing expositions about the emptiness of conditionally produced nature, (took the) meaning as a severed nonexistence. Accordingly Dharmapala, et al, refuted emptiness and preserved existence. As a result of the preservation of illusory existence, thereupon (they) come to (understand) that emptiness that does not differ from existence. Consider that if it is not (the case that the) **[218c]** complete essence extends to these illusory existents, then (it) is not that emptiness of a true nature. For this reason, in order to complete (understanding of) emptiness (these later masters') refutations (were directed) towards (that misunderstood) emptiness. If we lacked masters of the later period like these (who) consider the two principles interpenetrating and the complete essence as mutually determined, (we would) lack a reason to come to realize the profundities of conditioned arising. For this reason (their) mutual refutations are, contrarily, mutual completions.

Due to the true emptiness of the illusory existence of conditionally arisen *dharmas* there are two meanings (to note). The first (point concerns the) absolute mutual accord (of all *dharmas*). That is to say, (*dharmas*) profoundly combine (as) a single characteristic. (This meaning) brings forth the entirely encompassing

(nature) of the essence (of *dharmas* as empty). The second (point concerns the) absolute mutual opposition (of all *dharmas*). That is to say, each (*dharma*) mutually injures the other, completely taking away and forever exhausting (its opposite). If (they) did not mutually take away and forever exhaust (one another then reality would) lack the means whereby to bring forth (arising that) completely garner (all aspects of) the essential (absence of a self-nature). For this reason absolute opposition is exactly absolute accord. Nagarjuna's and Asanga's (ideas) concern the gate of absolute accord. Therefore there is no mutual refutation (between their views). Bhavaviveka's and Dharmapala's (replies) rely upon the gate of absolute opposition. Therefore, (mutual) accord is mutual refutation. As a result of opposition and accord lacking obstruction, that then is conditioned arising. For this reason it is (the case that) earlier and later (views) do not mutually oppose (one another. As for the) other meanings, weigh the above and think about it. (In light of this, as for the) various (different) expositions (of the *Dharma*), is it not the case they lack disharmony?

[VII. The Time of the Text's Composition]

As for the seventh (of the ten major topics covered in this commentary,) the period of the text's composition, there (are sources that) say Nagarjuna came 800 years after the Buddha's *nirvana* (but) based on the *Mahamayasutra* he came 700 years after the Buddha's *nirvana*. Recently (I) asked *Tripitaka* (Master Divakara who) said western regions have transmitted Nagarjuna's (teachings and they say) after the Buddha's *nirvana* 300 years (passed before Nagarjuna) emerged in Southern India. (This version claims that Nagarjuna,) along with the King of one country, maintained (himself) by (magical) medicine, intending to await Maitreya, and reached 800 years (following the Buddha's *nirvana*). That King's sons all died (very) old. Lacking successors, a later heir regretted (the fact that) there was no (one to) ascend the throne. His mother instructed him saying, "Your father did not die, (he) is supported by Nagarjuna. You (should) implore that patron (as your) father is accordingly (and otherwise forever) lost. Relying on (his mother's) words the son then went to (Nagarjuna) and implored (him for his father). The *Bodhisattva* (Nagarjuna heard him, took pity,) cut (his own) throat and presented (his life to the son to save the father). With that (final act of compassion Nagarjuna then) died. With that then (there were) 500 years (for Nagarjuna) on this earth. Therefore, the various explanations all combine. Thus, that which he composed (in this Treatise and its later commentaries), although (the ideas cover) a broad multiplicity (of texts), only in this Treatise did he personally compose the original verses while still personally composing the (later) interpretations. Since it then does not intermix other words (the commentary is) also upheld as extremely profound.

[VIII. Historical Conditions of the Text's Transmission]

As for the eighth (of the ten major topics here), the conditions of the Treatise's transmission, *Tripitaka Dharma* Master Kumarajiva said (of) this (text, that from) youth to old age, the Sanskrit original (was handed down) to this (time). By the initial year of the Great Ch'in's (era of) Expansion, at the Hsiao-yao monastary (in Ch'ang-an, Kumarajiva) along with various virtuous (monks like his four great disciples) Buddhajiva, Seng-chao, Tao-jung, and Seng-jui, together translated this Treatise. Seng-jui publically recorded (the text) received (by dictation). The *Madhyamaka-karika*, *Satasastra*, and *Chih-lun* were likewise translated. As a result, (thereafter) Seng-chao (would occasionally and) publically take out and inspect the four treatises. (He) cherished (them) as (the keys to) entry of (that wisdom which is like the) sun and moon. That (master) discussed them saying the *Satasastra* broadly refutes heterodoxy, the *Dvadasanikaya*³⁴ broadly refutes *Hinayana* (views), the *Madhyamakakarika* thoroughly refutes internal and external (errors, while) the *Chih-lun* interprets *Mahayana* (views). The influence of these texts is like this (and) for this reason the profound purport of the Three Treatise (school) spread to the nine regions. The principles of Nagarjuna [219a] were transmitted (by) the power of Kumarajiva. Still (yet these were) again translated at Kuan-ho and so amply transmitted to (areas) south of the Yangtse (river). Accordingly, (they) brought forth the merits of supreme clarity.

[IX. The Text's Title]

[Nagarjuna's *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*:]³⁵ [159c]

The Treatise on the Twelve Gates

The Gate of Contemplating Causes and Conditions

The First (Gate)

Composed by the *Bodhisattva* Nagarjuna

Translated by *Tripitaka* Master Kumarajiva

As for the ninth (of the ten major topics here), explaining the text's title, now these three treatises (from which the school takes its name) come to have designations that are not the same. Either (the text) regards that which is revealed as the name – like (for example) the *Madhyamaka-sastra* because it takes the Middle Path as that which is revealed. Or (the text) matches that which is bestowed and/or that which is requested with the title – like this *Treatise* because it takes the “*Dharma* of the Twelve Gates” as that which is bestowed. Alternately, (the text may) match enumerations with the name – like the *Satasastra*, because that *Treatise* has 100 verses.

As for the twelve (gates) in this (text), there are individuals who interpret it saying this is one great (single) number as in accord (with usage) in (common) speech. (In this case the meaning would be the same as phrases) like the “twelve hours of a day” and “twelve months of a year.” Furthermore, (as for concerns that) displaying the twelve (problems to be cured leads to falling) into the twelve (problematic) conditions, and so on, these fears are not the case.

Now, (as for) interpreting the (number) “twelve” (in the title), there are three meanings. The first (holds it) correlates to that which is banished. That is to say, the myriad extremes, which are (objects of) attachment, (are) specifically dispelled (so

the) difficulties (of each are) exhausted. Therefore (in this) present (text they are all) generally encompassed. (The) twelve (in the title) gathers (them all together) without specifically displaying (each).

The second (interpretation holds it) correlates to that which is trusted - that is to say, the many methods of crossing to awakening. (The text) enumerates and exhausts eighty thousand (errors of thought), essentially summarizing that (understanding) which is relied upon. "Twelve" is the number (of those trustworthy understandings). Like the passage below says, "By means of the Twelve Gates (one may) enter into the meaning of emptiness." These are superior skillful means of entering true emptiness.

The third (interpretation) unites these two meanings. That is to say, (if the twelve) are not (a means) to banish attachments, (one) lacks (that) by which to enter emptiness. (Accordingly, the understandings that) banish (error) are exactly (those which are) trusted. (And, if they) are not (a means to) enter emptiness, (one then) lacks (that) by which to banish attachments. (So, that which is) trusted is exactly (that which) banishes.

As for (the word) "gate," it also has three meanings. First is the meaning of "gathering together." That is to say, these Twelve (Gates), by means of a one by one (progression), gather together various other immeasurable doctrines which are (thereby) banished. Therefore they are taken as "gates." (In this sense they are) like the introduction to a section (of a larger text).

The second is the meaning of "opening." That is to say, because in these Twelve (Gates the text) reveals and manifests the principle of true emptiness, (we

can) consider these “gates.” (It is) just as opening the gate of skillful means reveals the characteristics of the ultimately real.

The third is the meaning of “penetrate into.” That is to say, because (the text) leads (the reader), based on these musings, to penetrate into that true emptiness, the twelve (discussions found) herein are “gates.” (These gates) take (the reader) into numerous explanations (that penetrate ultimate truth). Also there is a basis (upon which one can then) engage in contemplating the Twelve Gates.

As for “contemplation,” (this word carries) the meaning of “to scrutinize.” Moreover, “to scrutinize” has two (connotations). The first (connotation is) “to illuminate the conventional.” That is to say, (one) contemplates and illuminates these twelve types of *Dharma*. The second (connotation is) “to contemplate the ultimate.” That is to say, since refutation of characteristics is revealed based on these twelve *Dharmas*, (and that in turn) illuminates and penetrates true emptiness, leading the mind to lack lodging, therefore it is referred to as “contemplation.” In this (explanation I present) an exposition that relies on later meanings (from the text). Contemplation accordingly then is (a form of) wisdom (and) the Twelve Gates are “objects” (of that wisdom). Object-wisdom unites the (various) topics and in this fashion object-wisdom is that meaning which is illustrated (by the text).

As for (the meaning of the word) “treatise,” it (means) a teaching which can illustrate (key points). That is to say, by means of (reasoning and) principles (it) exhaustively investigates (the topics,) causing the eternal exhaustion of the various (erroneous and misunderstood) characteristics. Therefore it is referred to as a “treatise.” Furthermore, by means of skillful disputation it proves (its points and)

rebukes (error), leading the attached mind to lack lodging. (For this reason) too it is referred to as a “treatise.”

As for “The Gate of Contemplating Causes and Conditions,”³⁶ it concerns a specific topic. That is to say, the essential (nature) of *dharmas* that are closely distinguished (as immediately influential factors) constitute “causes.” (More) distant (*dharmas* that) still assist in manifesting (effects) constitute “conditions.” Investigating (their) lack of (self-)nature **[219b]** constitutes “contemplation.” (That which) reveals true emptiness is called a “gate.” (This gate is) the start of the twelve so it is referred as “the first.”

As for “Composed by the *Bodhisattva* Nagarjuna,” the Sanskrit name is created with “*naga*” (and) “*arjuna*.” “*Naga*” refers to a dragon. As for “*arjuna*,” Kumarajiva translates it as “tree” (while) *Tripitaka* (Master) Kuei-chi translates it as “ferocious.” Both (of these interpretations) do not match up opposite the correct translation. Hence, knowing (this I) recently asked Divakara (about it and he said):

In western countries it is conventionally exhausted speech [i.e., outdated]. In a previous period there was a ferociously strong individual named “Arjuna” (and his name) was translated as “ferocious”. (The name) only indicated that individual and is not a correct translation of his name. Furthermore, western countries have a type of tree that is also designated “*arjuna*.” This *Bodhisattva* [i.e., Nagarjuna] was born under (that type of) tree and consequently (he) was called “Arjuna.” For this reason translating it as “tree” also indicates that (type of) tree and does not correctly translate the name. (As for these) “*arjunas*”, although both (versions) are lacking correct

translation, regarding the meanings as indicating the matter, (the meaning of) tree is attained (but) the (actual) person is lost. (But) by (taking the meaning of) “born under an (*arjuna*) tree,” (the phrase connotes a) “dragon palace (where he) awakens to the (true) Path.” Accordingly (he is) referred to as “Dragon Tree.”

As for (the abbreviation) “*P’usa*”, if it were complete it should read “*P’u-ti-sa-ta*” [i.e., *Bodhisattva*]. Various treatises thoroughly explain (this word but) generally (speaking) it has three meanings.

1. (Regarding) “*bodhi*,” this refers to “awakening” and accordingly is that which is sought. (Regarding) “*sattva*,” this refers to “birth” and accordingly is that which is traversed. These two are both objects which are (causally) conditioned (and) accordingly from the objects (in question, we) get the name. (This is like other descriptive phrases) such as “Bone Pile Contemplation”, etc.

2. (As with the first interpretation just covered, in the second interpretation) “*bodhi*” is the same as above and is the object sought. “*Sattva*” (however) is (understood as) the active (wisdom) that can seek (that object). Accordingly, (that which) can (seek the object) and (that object) which is (sought) are combined topics (in this reading of the term. This version takes) the object (sought) and wisdom (seeking it) as the designation.

3. (In the third interpretation) “*sattva*” refers to the intrepid (practitioner). That is to say, regarding great *bodhi*, they intrepidly seek (it).

(As for these three interpretations), by (the meanings derived) from "*P'u*," (they) abbreviate "*ti*" and from "*sa*" (they) abbreviate "*ta*." Consequently (the text) refers to (the abbreviated compound) "*P'usa*".

As for (the word) "composed," it is (the same as) "created by."

[X. Exegetical Interpretation of the Text]

[The Gate on Contemplating Causes and Conditions]

[The First Gate]

[The *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*] [T. 159c]

The expositor states: “Now (I) will briefly explain the meanings of “*Mahayana*.”

Question: As for explaining *Mahayana*, what are the benefits of its meanings?

Answer: As for *Mahayana*, it is the exceedingly profound *Dharma*-store of the Buddhas of the ten directions and three time periods. It is expounded for those of great merit and sharp faculties. Sentient beings of this final period (of the *Dharma*) have scant blessings and dull faculties. Although they seek (the meaning) of *sutras*, they cannot penetrate it. I sympathize with these types (of individuals) and desire to bring about an awakening (so they might understand). Furthermore, I wish to illuminate and spread the *Tathagata*’s unsurpassed great *Dharma*. For these reasons I will briefly explain the meanings of *Mahayana*.

Question: (The meanings of) *Mahayana* are without measure, lacking limit, and it is not possible to count them. As a matter of fact even (just) the Buddha’s sayings cannot be exhausted. (So, how can one) explain and lay out (all the) meanings?

Answer: (It is precisely) because of (all) these (immeasurable) meanings (that) I initially stated (this will be) a “brief” explanation.

Question: (Okay. Now) for what reason is it designated “*Mahayana*?”

Answer: As for (the designation) “*Mahayana*,” in regards to the two vehicles, it constitutes the superior one and so is called the *Mahayana* [i.e., “great vehicle”]. (If we consider) the Buddhas’ greatness, it is a vehicle that can reach (that very same state). Therefore it is designated as “great.” The greatest individuals and Buddhas ride this vehicle so it is designated as “great.” Furthermore, it can eliminate the great sufferings of sentient beings and confer advantageous matters of great benefit. Therefore, it is designated as “great.” Furthermore, it is the vehicle that was ridden by great individuals and *Bodhisattvas* such as Avalokitesvara, Mahastamaprapta, Manjusri, and Maitreya. Therefore, it is designated as “great.” Furthermore, by this vehicle one can exhaust the deepest limits of all *dharmas*. Therefore it is designated as “great.” Furthermore, as (we find) in the *Prajnaparamita sutras*, Buddha personally states the meanings of *Mahayana* are without measure and lacking limits. Because of (all) these (above) causes and conditions it is designated as “great.”

The (most) profound meaning of the great part (of “Great Vehicle”) is that (idea) which is called “emptiness.” If (one) can penetrate this meaning then (one will have) penetrated the *Mahayana*, (understood) all six perfections, and lack that which obstructs (clarity). For these reasons I now (intend to) only explain (the meaning of) emptiness.

As for explaining emptiness, (I) will use twelve gates to enter into the (the various) meanings of emptiness. The first (of the twelve) is the gate on causes and conditions.

[The Gate on Contemplating Causes and Conditions]

That is to say:

Dharmas are produced of collected conditions,
 (they) are, then, lacking a self-nature.
(But,) if it is the case there is no self-nature,
 how (can we) say there are these *dharmas*?

Dharmas that are produced of collected conditions are of two types. The first (type) is internal and the second (type) is external. Collected conditions also are of two types. (Here too) the first (type) is internal and the second (type) is external.

As for external causes and conditions, it is like a coil of clay [160a], a cord for turning (the potter's wheel), and a potter. (When these factors) come together there is, as a result, the production of a vase. Also, it is like yarn, a loom, and a weaver. (When these factors) come together there is, as a result, the production of a rug. Also, it is like managing a (building) location, constructing a foundation, (adding) ridge (beams), rafters, mud grass, human labor, and so on. (When these factors) come together there is, as a result, the production of a dwelling. Also it is like buttermilk, a vessel, agitator, and human labor. (When these factors) come together there is, as a result, the production of cheese. Also it is like seed, earth, water, warmth, wind, space, the seasons, and human labor. (When these factors) come together there is, as a result, the production of a sprout. One should know the various *dharmas* of external (causes and) conditions are all like this.

As for internal causes and conditions, (they include) so-called ignorance, action, awareness, name and form, the six sense faculties, sensation, feeling, desire, grasping, being, production, old age, and death. Each (of these) is an antecedent cause and subsequent product.

In this fashion internal and external *dharmas* are all produced from collected conditions. As a result of being produced from collected conditions is it not then (the case that) they lack a self-nature? (And) if a self-nature of *dharmas* is lacking, (is it not the case) that an other-nature is also lacking? And (further, is it not the case then) that (both) a self-nature and an other-nature is also lacking?

(Question:) What is the reason (for this conclusion)?

(Answer: It must be so) because the other-nature (also) lacks a self-nature. If we claim that by means of an other-nature therefore (a different effect) exists, then cows (might) exist by means of horse-nature and horses (might) exist by means of cow-nature. A pear (might) exist by means of crabapple-nature and a crabapple (might) exist by means of pear-nature. All the remaining (possibilities) ought to be thus (as well) and yet, in fact, that is not the case.

If we claim it is not by means of an other-nature that therefore (effects) exist, but (rather) it is just due to others that therefore they exist, (this) too is not so.

(Question:) What is the reason?

(Answer:) If it were the case that by means of rushes therefore there are mats, then rushes and mats would (constitute) a single substance. (In that case the rushes) should not be designated as an other. If we claim it is the case that rushes constitute an other in respect to mats, (then we) do not get to claim that by means of rushes therefore there are mats. Furthermore, rushes also lack a self-nature.

(Question:) What is the reason?

(Answer:) Rushes also emerge from collected conditions. Therefore (they) lack a self-nature. As a result of lacking a self-nature (we) do not get to say that by means of rush-nature therefore there are mats. For this reason mats ought not (be thought) to take rushes as their substance. All the remaining *dharmas* produced of external causes and conditions, such as jars, cheese, etc., are also like this (and) do not come to be (produced by an other-nature).

Dharmas produced of internal causes and conditions are also like this (and) do not come to be (produced by an other-nature). It is as stated in the *Sunyata-saptati sastra*:

Conditionally (arisen) *dharmas* in fact lack production.

If (one) claims (*dharmas*) are (that which) has production, are (they that which is produced) in one moment of thought, (or) are (they that which is produced) in (the span of) many moments of thought?

These twelve (types) of causally conditioned *dharmas* in fact individually lack production. If (one) claims there is production, is (that production) existent in one moment of thought (or) is it existent in (the span of) many moments of thought? If it is the case that (production) exists in one moment of thought then causes and effects are produced together at a single time. Furthermore, (if this were so then) causes and (their) effects (would) exist at one time. (But) this situation is not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Because all things are antecedent causes (and/or) subsequent effects. If it is the case (production) exists in (the span of many) collected moments of the mind, (then) the twelve (types of) causally conditioned *dharmas* are each individually separate and different. (In such a case, when) the antecedent (*dharmas*) and the (associated moments of) mind are extinguished, (for the) subsequent (*dharmas* and moments of mind), what then constitutes their causes and conditions? Extinguished *dharmas* lack (any quality) which exists (so) how might (they) come to constitute a cause? (So we can see that as for) the twelve types of causally conditioned **[160b]** *dharmas*, whether (production takes place in) one moment of thought or (over the span of) many moments of thought, neither (possibility) is the case.

For these reasons collected conditions are all empty. (As all causal) conditions are empty, therefore subsequent conditionally produced *dharmas* are also empty. For this reason one should know all (*karmically*) functional *dharmas*³⁷ are empty. If even (*karmically*) functional *dharmas* are empty, how much more so the self? It is because of the (*karmically*) functional *dharmas* of the five *skandhas*,

twelve *ayatanas*, and eighteen *dhatu*s that one says there is a self. (The relationship) is like (those cases where) due to (the existence of) that which can burn we therefore say there is burning. (But) if (the *dharmas* of) the *skandhas*, *ayatanas*, and *dhatu*s are empty, then again, in lacking existent *dharmas*, (what) can one say constitutes a self? (This) is like (a case where) if (we) lack that which can burn (then we) cannot speak of burning. (It) is like the *sutra* states:

The Buddha intoned to the monks: As a result of “I,” there is that which is “mine.” If there is no “I,” then there is nothing which is “mine.”

In this fashion (we know *karmically*) functional *dharmas* are empty. Consequently (we) should (also) know the (*karmically*) nonfunctional *dharma* of *nirvana* is also empty.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) The extinction of (the *dharmas* of) the five *skandhas* does not further produce an additional five *skandhas*. This is designated “*nirvana*.” (Since) the five *skandhas* are themselves fundamentally empty, what then is that which is extinguished (such that) therefore we refer to and designate (the state of extinction) “*nirvana*?” Furthermore, (since) the “I” is also empty, who (then) attains *nirvana*?

Again, (to reiterate,) *dharmas* that lack production are designated as “*nirvana*.” If it is the case that produced *dharmas* are established, (then) *dharmas* without production also ought to be established. (But) produced *dharmas* are not established (for reasons) previously explained already (in the discussion of) causes and conditions. Subsequently (I) will again explain (this in detail. But, for now,) because of (the fact that) produced *dharmas* are not established, “produced *dharmas*” are therefore (more properly) designated as “lacking production.” If produced *dharmas* are not established how can one say *dharmas* without production are established? For these reasons (*karmically*) functional (*dharmas*), (*karmically*) nonfunctional (*dharmas*), and the self are all empty.

[End of the First Chapter of the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*]

[Commentary by Fa-tsang]

As for the tenth (of our ten topics here,) an interpretation that follows the text, the headings of various texts each (typically) have verses of reverence. As for this *Treatise* lacking them, it is for preserving brevity. It is because this *Treatise* is a summary text. Also it is (an example of) the Author according with (the main) idea: (namely that) existence and nonexistence lack definitive (essential states to explain).

Now, as for (the contents) in this Treatise, the text specifically has two (main parts). Initially it presents the principle (and) distinguishes (key) ideas. Secondly, from “as for explaining emptiness,” it presents an explanation.

[The Principle and Key Ideas]

In the preceding (of the above two parts there are) three (subparts). First it presents the principle. Second, from “Question,” it distinguishes (key) ideas. Third, from “great part,” it assembles the ideas (and) returns to the principle.

[The Principle]

In the beginning (of Nagarjuna’s text), as for (the phrase) “The expositor states,” the question and answer (format of the text that follows) is styled a “discussion” while direct expression (of ideas) is called “exposition.” Also, (texts that) form the teachings and transmit them universally are called “treatises.” Individuals who indirectly hand down the gates are called “expositors.” As for “states,” (it refers to expression by) words.

As for (the phrase) “briefly explain,” “briefly” has four meanings. The first corresponds to the individual (explaining). That is to say, compared to the great unobstructed arguments of the perfect voice of the fruit of Buddhahood, (a voice that) broadly expounds the 20,000 verses of the *Prajna(paramita sutras)*, the present position this Nagarjuna occupies is not complete, (his) realization of the *Dharma* not yet perfect, (and accordingly) that which he expounds is not “broad.” Accordingly (the text) refers to (the fact it is) “brief.”

The second (meaning of “briefly”) corresponds to the teaching. That is to say, (consider) the 10,000 verses of the *Treatise on Great Fearlessness* composed by

Nagarjuna, compared to (the length and depth of) that exposition, this [219c] can (only) be considered a “summary.”

The third (meaning of “briefly”) refers to the meanings (expressed). That is to say, emptiness constitutes the basis of *dharmas* (while) existence constitutes (the nature of) derivative characteristics. If (one) addresses the basis from the derivatives, following the myriad differentiations of conventional (truth for the explanation, then one can) consider (such an approach) a broad exposition. If (however, one) gathers (all the) derivatives (and) returns (them to) to the basis, concerning (oneself) with the essential subtlety of the (main) principle, (then we can) consider (that approach) a brief exposition. Accordingly, (and furthermore, this text) is a summary of a summary of essential (points). Therefore the text says (it) “only explains the meaning of emptiness.” This is what is meant (by the phrase “briefly explain”).

The fourth (meaning of “briefly”) corresponds to the (*karmic*) potential (of those individuals towards whom the text is directed). That is to say, (when) the Buddha was in the world that which (he) expounded was broad for great individuals of superior faculties. (In this period) after the Buddha’s *nirvana*, *Bodhisattvas* (teach) for the dull faculties (of individuals living during) this final period (and) that which (they) expound is brief.

Now, in this text (it is) endowed with these four meanings and accordingly is referred to (as a) “summary.”

Speaking of “explain,” its (meaning) is “to distinguish.” Still, (as for) that which is expounded by the Buddha’s *sutras*, the principles have many aspects and (we) do not yet know what meanings the present (text) distinguishes.

In order to note those *Hinayana* (ideas that) are not those explained by this (text), it accordingly refers to the “meaning of *Mahayana*.” “*Maha*” – this refers to “great.” As for “*yana*,” this refers to a “vehicle.” (Regarding) this designation “*Mahayana*,” later the Treatise will investigate and explain. As for “meaning,” it is the “that for which” (the text is expounded). Accordingly, it is the principle which is expounded. That is to say, it is “true emptiness.”

[Key Ideas]

In the second (subpart, the subpart that) distinguishes ideas, there are three rounds of questions and answers (used) in order to distinguish his (key) notions. The first one clarifies the benefits of the meanings of *Dharma*. The next one presents a brief, not a broad, (explanation of those benefits). The last one reveals the meaning of the designation “*Dharma*.”

[First Question and Answer]

Within the first (round of question and answer he) initially (raises) a question, then (he provides) an answer. In the answer (there are) two (parts). First (he) extols the superlative profundity of the fundamental *Dharma*. Then (he) clarifies the intention (behind) composing the text.

In the preceding (of these two subparts) there are two types of superlative profundity. First (he) extolls the superlative profundity of realization. That is to say, (he extols it) because it is (the realization) which Buddhas possess. Second, (he)

extols the superlative profundity of the *Agamas*.³⁸ (He praises the *Agamas*) because (they) were expounded for those of great virtue and sharp faculties. Furthermore (if we consider the) first (type of profundity above) then (as the) Lord (Buddha) was a superior, consequently the *Dharma* (he expounded) was profound. (If we consider the) latter (type of profundity) then (since the Authors' *karmic*) potentials were superior, consequently the *Dharma* (they expounded) was (also) superior. Consider that if there were no Buddha *mahasattvas* (the world) would lack that by which (the *Dharma*) could be expounded. If there were no *Bodhisattva mahasattvas*, (the world) would lack that by which (the *Dharma*) is sustained and received. Therefore the wonder of the abstruse patterns of this *Dharma* accordingly lack (anything which is) not superlatively profound. Consequently it is designated as the "*Dharma*."³⁹ Accordingly "*Dharma*" implicitly encompasses the (*dharma*s of the) *skandhas*. It (also) includes the various superior virtues and so (we) designate it as a "treasury."

"Great Merit" is then (a reference to the) superiority of the joy (the *Dharma* produces) and "sharp faculties" is the profundity of (their) wisdom. "Those" is (a reference to these types of) individuals. That is to say, it is (a reference to) those who, having prepared superior joy and profound wisdom, thereupon sustain (understanding) as (one might wield a) tool and (thereby) reveal the profundity of the *Dharma*.

Finally, (as for) clarifying the intention of composing the Treatise, therein (we find) two (parts): The first answer (regards the) benefits (of the *Mahayana*)

then, from “illuminate and spread...” (the second) answer (regards the) meaning (of *Mahayana*).

As for why, in this (section, he) initially (deals with) benefits, then with meaning, this means (first) presenting (the practice of) *Bodhisattva mahasattvas*. (He does so) because they rightly take (the act of) embracing (all living) things as primary. Further explaining, the first (point here, i.e., benefits,) is (a reference to) enriching sentient beings, the latter (point, i.e., meaning,) is (a reference to) completing the Buddha’s *Dharma*. Based on treatises like the *Yogacara (bhumi-sastra)*, given that from (the time when they) initially arouse the mind (seeking insight) various *Bodhisattvas* constantly cultivate two types of correct practices such as these, (his presentation of benefits and means) is also (a reference to) two beneficial practices.

In the preceding (of the above two there are) two (subparts). First (the text) clarifies the inferior faculties which are covered. Subsequently it clarifies the teachings established by the Author.

In the preceding part (of the above two), as for (the phrase) “final period,” it is (a reference to) the inferiority of the (current) era. This has two meanings. First, (the time period) from the Buddha’s *nirvana* is generally designated as the “final period.” Second, (this phrase) is (a way) to refer to the five hundred years after the (period of the) correct *Dharma*. (This latter period) is generally designated **[220a]** the “final period.” As for “sentient beings... scant blessings,” (it is a reference to) inferior people. That is to say, the six great (elements and) five *skandhas* (combined) form (so-called) “collective productions” and hence are referred to as “sentient

beings.” “Scant blessings” contrasts (with) the above (mentioned) “great merit.” “Dull faculties” reveals the inferiority of (their) wisdom (and) contrasts (with) the above (mentioned) “sharp faculties.”

As for “seek (the meaning) of *sutras* (but) cannot penetrate,” it means although (they) investigate texts, yet (they) do not penetrate their meaning. Hearing (the texts) expound the nonexistence of existence, each, in accord with the words (they hear) determines an interpretation. Therefore (this sort of understanding) is an error of delusion.

From “I sympathize with these...”, (the text) clarifies (that) the Author aroused compassion (and so) established (this) teaching. The cause of the rousing of the Treatise is to respond (to their needs), sharpen (their faculties, and generate) benefits.

In the second answer (regarding the) meaning (of *Mahayana*), it means this *Bodhisattva* illuminates and displays the unsurpassed great *Dharma*. (He thereby) causes it to long abide in the world and repays the Buddha’s kindness as a result. This, among the *Yogacara bhumi sastra’s* six intentions for *Bodhisttvas* to compose a treatise, is to cause errors to die (so that) assorted gates of meaning are repeatedly revealed as a result. This is its meaning.

[Second Question and Answer]

In the second (round of) question and answer that reveals (the text is) a brief exposition, first (it raises) a question, then (provides an) answer. (Both of these points) are understandable (without further comment here).

[Third Question and Answer]

In the third (round of question and answer the Author) reveals the meaning of the name (*Mahayana*). In (this round that) first (raises a) question, then (presents the) answer, (the word) “*maha*” (in “*Mahayana*”), has seven meanings. 1. (It is great) because compared to the small (vehicle) [i.e., *Hinayana*,] (*Mahayana*) is transcendent. 2. (It is great) because (it) can reach a great place. 3. (It is great) because it is that which is ridden by great individuals. Also, it is (a reference to) the greatness of its conveyance of (their) understanding. 4. (It is great) because of the expansive greatness of its beneficial functions. 5. (It is great) because (it is the vehicle) which is ridden by many. Also, it is (a reference to) the greatness of its conveyance of (their) realization. 6. (It is great) because its expansiveness is exceedingly profound. That is to say, it expansively exhausts its (own) boundaries. Accordingly, it is a boundary-less boundary and is the object of the wisdom of analysis.⁴⁰ It profoundly exhausts its foundation and accordingly is a foundation-less foundation. It is the object of the wisdom of the (fundamental) principle (of emptiness). 7. Because of the greatness of (the way it) encompasses (great) merit, the Buddha’s *sutras* individually (all) expound (it).

Furthermore, as the (*Mahayana- abhidharma-*) *sammucaya-vyakhya* (states), “*yana*” (in “*Mahayana*,” also) has seven meanings. (But) in the *Awakening of Faith* (there are) three meanings.⁴¹ All (the versions) have the meaning of “to turn around.”⁴² This vehicle takes the wisdom without differentiation as its nature. Broadly (speaking, the meaning) is as specifically discussed.

[Assembling the Ideas]

In the third (subpart of the first of the two main sections of the text, the subpart that) assembles the ideas and returns to the principle, (there are) also three (subsections). First it brings up the essence of *dharmas*. As for the (phrase) “great part” (of the *Dharma*), it is only an expression for the “Great” [i.e. “*Mahayana*”] section (of the canon). That is to say, (regarding) the myriad distinctions of the various *dharmas* (and) the general characteristics of the *Mahayana (Dharma)*, because there are none that are not empty, it does not obstruct the various *dharmas*. (All these) have never yet been not empty so (the Author) expounds (the notion of) “true emptiness.” (That) designation (can be) taken as the meaning of (the word) “profound.”

As for the second (part of this section that assembles the ideas and returns to the principle, the part) that clarifies its superior function, if one’s (understanding) penetrates this “truly empty,” then the myriad practices are all perfectly complete. (At this point the Author) briefly brings up the six perfections, taking them as the basis of practice.

As for “lack (that which) obstructs,” this has three meanings. The first relates to the “objective,” (external aspect of practice). That is to say, true emptiness does not obstruct the myriad practices (and) the myriad practices do not obstruct true emptiness. Therefore it states (they) “lack obstruction.” Also then, since (we must take) true emptiness as the myriad practices, myriad practices have never yet not been empty. (Also) since (we must take) the myriad activities as truly empty, true emptiness has never yet not been practice. Accordingly, it states (they) “lack obstruction.”

The second (meaning of “lacking obstruction”) relates to (the subjective component of experience, i.e.,) wisdom. That is to say, (it refers to) the wisdom that illuminates emptiness and accordingly all the myriad practices (are understood in light of this. When that is the case) the myriad practices are exactly wisdom (and the two) lack obstruction. Therefore it states, “If one (can) penetrate.” “Penetrating” accordingly then is (a reference to this) wisdom.

The third (meaning of “lacking obstruction”) relates to “both interfusing.” That is to say, wisdom has two meanings. First, because of the vacancy (of everything arisen) from conditions, vacancy lacks (that which it) does not exhaust (and) wisdom is the same as (its) objects. Second, vacancy exhausts only (that which is already) empty and has never yet erroneously **[220b]** illuminated (objects as essentially separate. Accordingly,) objects are exactly the wisdom (which illuminates them). Considering (that that illumination) is exactly the wondrous wisdom of emptiness, (then) in return illumination is exactly the true emptiness of (that) wisdom. For this reason, after all, (he) speaks (of) illumination while still lacking illumination, (and) after all, (he) speaks of objects while still lacking objects. (This is a case of) lacking objects and lacking wisdom even while (finding) objects and wisdom as if (they are as they appear). Therefore (this sort of understanding is) designated as “penetrating” and is also said to “lack obstruction.”

From “For these reasons...” onwards the third (part of this section that assembles the ideas and returns to the principle, the part that) concludes (these) ideas and returns to the main proposition, (the key points) are understandable (without further comment here).

[Explanation]

The second (of the two main sections of the first chapter of the text is the) large section (which) reveals (his) explanation of the main principle. Therein (we find) two (subsections). Initially (he) presents, enumerates, and reveals the gates. Subsequently, from “The first is...” the Twelve Gates form twelve sections (of text) within (a sequence of) specific explanations (that) accord with (each of the) gates.

The Gate of Contemplating Causes and Conditions

The First Gate

In the First Gate (there are) three (parts). First he marks the gate of the chapter on arising. Secondly, (he) establishes a verse (that) briefly indicates (the key points). Subsequently (and thirdly, he) explains the verse (to) broadly reveal (the ideas).

In the verse (section) the top half (of the verse) brings up (the production of) *dharmas*. The bottom half seeks (evidence for) the circumstances (claimed).⁴³ Furthermore, the top half clarifies (that *dharmas* are) conditionally produced and therefore lack an (essential) nature. The bottom half reveals (that such *dharmas*) lack a nature and therefore are exactly empty. If (we) completely discuss (the points) in this (entire verse then) there are two types of comparative inferences (that) use the first (point) to complete the subsequent (point).

(Question:) How so?

(Answer:) The top half clarifies that all (*karmically*) functional *dharmas* lack a self-nature. (This is the) proposition.⁴⁴ Because (they) are produced from conditions (is the) reason. The example is understandable (without further comment).

The bottom half clarifies that (*karmically*) functional *dharmas* are certainly empty. (This is the) proposition. Because (they) lack a self-nature (is the) reason. Again the example is understandable (without further comment).

In the third (part of this first gate, the part where he) explains the verse to broadly reveal (the ideas, there are) two (subsections). The first clarifies the emptiness of (*karmically*) functional (*dharmas*). The subsequent (section) categorizes (other types of *dharmas* and) reveals that the self and the (*karmically*) nonfunctional (*dharmas*) are all empty.

[*Karmically Functional Dharmas*]

In the preceding (of the two subsections there are) three (further subpoints). First (he) labels and brings up (two types of) effects. Second, from “In this fashion...”, (he) refutes (the errors to) reveal (such effects) lack a (self-)nature. Third, from “For these reasons...”, (he) concludes (the point showing) the emptiness of (*karmically*) functional (*dharmas*).

[Types of Effects]

In the first (of the subpoints mentioned above there are) three (elements). (First he) lays out (the idea that) effects have internal and external (varieties). Secondly (he) lays out (that) conditions also have internal and external (varieties). Thirdly, (he) explains (the above two and) reveals (the conclusions about) internal and external conditions and effects. Herein (he) initially distinguishes external phenomena. There are five (such) phenomena and each has causes and conditions that extend to *dharmas* that are produced (by those causes and conditions). This is all (readily) understandable (and so there is no need for further comment here).

Subsequently he reveals internal (forms of *karmic*) recompense. That is to say, (he refers to the) twelve-fold (chain of) causes and conditions. Based upon *Hinayana* propositions, each preceding branch (of the twelve) constitutes a cause producing the subsequent branch. So, all together there are causes and conditions that amount to the *dharmas* that are produced. (This is) also understandable (without further discussion here). Also, (this is) the end of the first paragraph in (the section that) explains the verse.

[Refuting Errors]

Second, (in the next section where he) refutes (errors to) reveal (all *dharmas*) lack a (self-)nature, (there are) two (subpoints). Initially (he) generally reveals (the point). That is to say, internal and external *dharmas*, since each, in this fashion are formed (based on) supporting conditions, how is it (they) are not then exactly the lack of a self-nature? If they have a particular substantial (self-essence), how (could they be) further conditioned? As a result the *Nirvana-sutra* says,

It is like, for instance, blue and yellow combining to form green. (We) should know (green) is two (combined colors) and fundamentally lacks an (essential) green-nature. If it is fundamentally the case that there is (such a nature), why (is it) necessary to combine (blue and yellow to get green)?

Second, from “ if a self-nature of *dharmas* is lacking...”, (he) specifically reveals (details about this) lack of a (self-)nature. Therein, initially (he deals with) external (*dharmas*), then (he deals with) internal (*dharmas*).

[External *dharmas*]

In the (section on) external (*dharmas* there are) two (subpoints): first, (he) correctly refutes (errors), then (he) categorically concludes.

[Refuting Errors]

In the preceding, first (he) presents (the key point. There he) arranges (the possibilities of a nature as) self, other, and (both) combined. The three sections (that deal with these possibilities show) all (of them) lack (self) existence. Second, from “By what reason...”, (he provides an) explanation of the evidence. Therein first (he provides the) evidence, then the explanation. In the explanation, first (he) explains the lack of a self-nature. Then (he) explains the lack of an other-nature. (He) does not explain the third – the production of both together. (He does not explain it) because **[220c]** if self and other(-nature) are refuted, there is no separate (and third possibility of) “both together.”

[Self-nature]

Regarding (the point) in the first (part) of the explanation, (it) claims if self-nature exists then it does not cause others. (But) because (it) does cause others, a self-nature is lacking.

[Other-nature]

In the second (section) from “if we claim...”, (he) explains the lack of other-nature, there are three (subpoints). Initially (he notes) the other forms a separate substance and therefore is not a cause. Second, from “if we claim...”, (he notes) a cause that is the same as the substance of the effect therefore is not an other. Third, from “(If it were the case...) rushes...”, (he notes) a cause that again lacks a nature (means one) loses (both) self(-nature and) other(-nature).

Further explaining these three (above points), the first relates to remote, (unrelated causation), the second relates to familial, (related causation, and the) third (notes that) both are not (the case).

[Remote Causation]

In the first (of the above three there are) two (subpoints). The initial (point) corresponds to refutation of (the notion that) gives rein to (unrelated distant objects of) sensation. That is to say, if it is the case that (objects are) produced by an other, then oxen ought to produce horses, a pear seed (might) produce a crab-apple, and so on. As for "...and yet in fact that is not the case", it is then a refutation (that) denies the reasonableness (of the premise).

[Familial Causation]

Second, from "if we claim...", is then a refutation of familial, (related causation). Furthermore, it is (an argument) clarifying (the idea that) causes, (which) are the same substance as effects, are therefore not an other. Therein (he makes) three (subpoints).

[Rejoinders]

First (he) notes the rejoinders⁴⁵ (to this issue) are generally not (viable). That is to say, the reckoning of (some) heterodox (thinkers) says there are two types of others. The first is the other that is not a cause. (For example, this) is like oxen in regards to horses. (Oxen) may not similarly produce (a horse). The second (type) are causal others. As (for example,) rushes in regards to mats. (If this is the case then) how does it come (to be that rushes) do not (naturally) produce (mats)? Because the preceding section only says the other does not refer to a cause, (and)

herein it speaks of causes while not referring to an other, this rejoinder is not reasonable. Consequently, (the Author) says (this view) is not the case. Second, (he) investigates (the reasons) why it is not the case (that the rejoinders are viable). The third (part regarding the rejoinders) is a refutation (that is based upon) a correct explanation.

Therein first (he shows that) preserving causes (while) omitting the other consequently (means such so-called “causes”) are not (actually) causes. (This) is a refutation that denies (the premise. He notes that) if (one claims) it is the case (causes) are causes while not an other, (then) in regards to the effect, the cause is exactly and still not an other. Accordingly, (for example, in such a case) rushes and mats are one substance. (If their) substances are exactly one (substance), there is (now) an omission in regards to a (distinct) cause. (As) the cause is indeed omitted, where is the meaning of production by another (now)?

Second, (he) preserves the other and omits causes. This is a refutation of conditions. That is to say, if (a cause) is an other, as a consequence (it is) the same as not a cause (because it is, instead an “other.”)

(Now,) the preceding (view above that) accordingly takes a cause as an other is not established. (And this) subsequent (view that) accordingly takes the other as a cause (is also not established). Furthermore, (with) the preceding (view), due to (the fact the two are) one (substance), therefore (that view) does not establish production. (And with this) subsequent (view), due to their difference, therefore (it) also does not (establish) production. For this reason the other does not produce.

Also, it is possible in the preceding (he may) inferentially say causes certainly do not produce effects because, compared with effect *dharmas*, (cause *dharmas*) are not separate, (and so it is) as if (they are in fact already) effect *dharmas*. (In the) subsequent idea (he may) inferentially claim causes certainly do not produce effects because, compared with effects (they are) different, (and so it is) as if they are not cause *dharmas*.

Third, he deduces (that when) causes lack a (self-)nature, (one) loses an other(-nature). Therein he checks heterodox rejoinders saying (having) brought up (the points that) either (they) are different, (in which case causes) are the same as not a cause, or (they) are one (and the same, in which case causes) are the same as effects, both (forms) do not come to produce (effects). And yet (since there is) the principle of production (they must be) neither one nor different. Therefore, (we) come to mutual production. Now, he refutes (this) idea saying if there is this cause, it may be granted that (relative to such a cause) the effect (is) neither one nor different, even as (that cause) is capable of production in regards to the effect. Now, if we investigate and seek this cause (we find it) also lacks a self-nature. Because it is established from collected conditions, it is like an effect *dharma*. For this reason it lacks an (essential) substance that might be able to produce (the effect).

In (this passage) there are four (points): First, (he) presents (the idea); second, (he) investigates (it); third, (he) explains (it); and fourth, (he) concludes. In the explanation (he) first explains rushes lack a self-essence. Subsequently he distinguishes (the point that accordingly rushes) lack the (functional, *karmic*) power to form a mat. That is to say, (if) a self-essence is also lacking, what has the function

of (*karmic*) power? From “Therefore...”, (and) below, the conclusion is understandable (without further comment).

[Conclusion of Refuting Errors]

Second, from “All the remaining [221a]... vases...”, (and) below, (he) categorically (notes) all the remaining external *dharmas* of causes and conditions cannot be obtained.

[Internal *dharmas*]

Within the second explanation (that) refutes the conditioned effects of internal *dharmas* there are two (parts). First, (he) briefly indicates (this refutation) is the same as the preceding refutation. (This first part) also anticipates the refutation of the subsequent passage. Second, (he) quotes verses to broadly reveal (the nature of the) refutation. In this (second section there are) two (parts). First (he) quotes (a) verse and transmits (ideas from) the *Treatise of Seventy (Verses)*. That text) is also (one) composed by Nagarjuna. It has seventy verses, hence the name.

[The Verse]

Among the verses the first sentence reveals the correct principle. The next sentence documents the attachment (at issue). The following two sentences (form a) mooted refutation.⁴⁶ Furthermore, it is possible the first sentence is a refutation that denies (the opponent’s premise while) the subsequent three sentences are a conditional refutation. Also, it is possible the first sentence presents the lack of production (while) the subsequent three sentences explain the lack of production.

[Explanation]

Second, in (the section that) explains the verses, first (he) explains the passage (and) reveals the proposition. Subsequently (he) concludes that causes and effects are both empty.

[Correct Meaning]

In the explanation first (he) establishes the correct meaning. (This part) also is to explain the first sentence of the verses (and,) in regards to (the main) principle, is a refutation that denies (that point). Second, from “If (one) claims...”, (he) refutes the reckonings of externally (derived) sensations. (He) also explains the following three sentences’ conditional refutation. Herein, (there are) three (parts). First, (he) reveals the certainty of two obstacles. Second, (he provides) a specific refutation of successive (moments). Third, (taken) together (he) concludes both are not (the case).

[Successive Moments]

In the second (of the three parts, the part with the) specific refutation (of successive moments there are) two (subparts).

The first relates to one (moment of the) mind and refutes both (causes and effects because such a case) conditionally allows for that which they, [i.e., such thought moments,] (subsequently) establish. That is to say, at the time of correcting the preceding mind moment of ignorance, the practice, etc. (that follows) also ought to be simultaneous. From “Furthermore, (if this were so then) causes and (their) effects...”, denies their causes and effects. In the passage, first a presentation (of the point) is brought forward, then the explanation is completed.

The second (of the two parts in this section with the specific refutation of successive moments) relates to a refutation of many moments (and) has three (subparts).

First, (he presents) a refutation (based on the) particular differences of causes and effects. Because they do not mutually extend to (one another they) are not conditionally produced *dharmas*.

The second (is a) “subsequent effects lack causes” refutation. That is to say, (when) the ignorance of the preceding section (of the chain of *dharmic* causation) and the previous (moment of) mind are both extinguished, (then, regarding) the subsequent part’s activities, what constitutes the cause?

The third is a refutation checking a repeat of a (conceptually similar) rejoinder. That is to say, a heterodox teaching says,

“My previous thought moment’s ignorance, although extinguished, can draw forth a subsequent branch of activity and therefore constitutes a cause.

(There is then) this type of conditioning without interval. (With *karmic*) seeds in the fundamental consciousness⁴⁷ the preceding are extinguished, the subsequent produced, etc.”

Now, (Nagarjuna) refutes (this) saying, (as for) your preceding moment of mind, (do you take it) as already extinguished or as not yet extinguished? If already extinguished, the extinct is not a thing. What (then) can be taken as a cause? If not yet extinguished, then the effect does not come to be produced because the destruction of the preceding moment of mind (is as yet not the case).

[Conclusion]

Third, from “The twelve (types of) causally conditioned...”, both conclusions are understandable (without further comment here).

[*Karmically* Functional *dharmas* Conclusion]

Third, from “For these reasons...” (he) concludes conditioned effects are all empty. (This) is understandable (without further explanation).

[Refutation of Other Types of *dharmas*]

Third [*sic*], in the refutation of (the various other) categories (of *dharmas*) there are four (parts).

The first, (where he) concludes that (*karmically*) functional *dharmas* are empty, is understandable (without further comment).

Second, from “(If even *karmically*) functional *dharmas* are empty...” (he notes that) because *dharmas* are empty, it reveals the “I” lacks an (essential) dependent (basis) and hence is also empty. The Treatise (quoted) states *dharma* attachments constitute the causes, “I” attachments constitute the effects. Since a fundamental cause is lacking, future results are accordingly lost. (That is) the reason the Treatise clarifies the two emptinesses of the person and *dharmas*.

As for initially distinguishing the emptiness of *dharmas*, by a valid refutation of the two (Buddhist) vehicles, a corresponding refutation of heterodox paths results. Herein there are three (parts). First (he) presents an adjunct refutation, second, (he) explains the refutation of *dharmas*, (and) third (he) quotes an evidential refutation (from a *sutra*).

In the explanation (there are) two (parts). First, (he provides) an explanation that follows (the key idea). That is to say, due to the aggregation of the three

categories of (*karmically*) functional *dharmas*, (one view) suppositionally (and fallaciously) states (they) constitute an “I.” Since the functional (*dharmas*) are then empty, where then is the suppositional (and false) “I”? The hypothetical (he provides) is (like) **[221b]** fuel, (and the consequence) given is the fire. The explanation countering (that hypothetical relationship) is understandable (without further comment).

In (the section that) quotes evidence (from a text), it is as a *sutra* states: “Due to I, there is mine.” Likewise, due to *dharmas* there is the semblance of “I.” Furthermore, (he) explains that because of the emptiness of the aforementioned *dharmas*, the “I” is empty. This clarifies that because of the emptiness of “I,” “mine” is (also) empty. (This is the case) because “mine” is a (*karmic*) function of “I.” This then is (an explanation that proceeds) from the basis towards the derivative in order to expound emptiness.

Third, in (the section that) categorically reveals the emptiness of (*karmically*) nonfunctional (*dharmas*), first (he) presents the classification. That is to say, (*dharmas* of) “*nirvana*” are designated as “extinct.” Second, from “For what reason”, (he) explains the establishment (of functional and nonfunctional *dharmas*). In explaining the establishment (of functional and nonfunctional *dharmas* there are) three (parts). First, (he notes that) because there are no *dharmas* that might be extinguished, there is no extinction. Second, (he also notes that) lacking (an “I” which) can attain extinction, (again) therefore there is no extinction. Third, from “again...”, (he) clarifies (that) the production of (*dharmas*) deficient (in self-nature) awaits the opposite so therefore, there is no extinction.

Fourth, from “For these reasons...”, (he) concludes the three emptinesses.
(This part) is understandable (without further comment).

(End of) the first (section of) the roll (containing) *A Record Conveying the Meanings of the Tenets of the Treatise on the Twelve Gates*.

Second (section) of the roll (containing) *A Record Conveying the Meanings of the Tenets of the Treatise on the Twelve Gates*.

By Fa-tsang, renunciant Dharma Exegete of Ch’ang-an’s Western Temple of the Great Vow

The Gate of Contemplating Existent Effects and Nonexistent Effects

The Second (Gate)

[The *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*] [cont. **160b**]

Again, the various *dharmas* are not produced.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:)

The antecedently existent is not (subsequently) produced.

The antecedently nonexistent is also not (subsequently) produced.

The antecedently existent and nonexistent is also not (subsequently) produced.

What (then) will have (the characteristic of) production?

If the effect (exists) within the cause, (then) it is antecedently existent. (If it is antecedently existent,) then it is not necessary to produce it. (If the effect is) antecedently nonexistent, it is also not necessary to produce it. (If it is both antecedently) existent and nonexistent, it is also not necessary to produce it.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If the effect is in the cause, antecedently existent yet still produced (again later), this then (creates a regress) without end. If the effect which is antecedently not yet produced is still produced, the current (effect which is) produced already ought to yet again be produced.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Because (such effects) are eternally existent in the cause. From this existent's side (of production) there ought to be, again, further production (already). Given this, (the idea leads to a regress) without end.

If one claims the (effect which is) produced already is not further produced, (but) the not yet produced is still produced, in this (idea) there is no principle of production of the existent. For this reason, (as for the idea of) antecedently existent (effects which are) yet produced, this situation is (simply) not the case.

Again, if there are antecedently existent effects in causes and (we also) claim the not yet produced is still produced, (while) the produced already is not (again) produced, (then) these two [i.e., the already produced and not yet produced] are both existent even as one is produced and one is not produced. (But) there is no (such) situation.

Again, if (we) claim the not yet produced certainly exists (already), then the produced already ought to be nonexistent.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Because (the two notions of) the produced and the not yet produced mutually oppose. **[160c]** Because the produced and the not yet produced mutually oppose (one another), these two characteristics of activity also mutually oppose.

Again, existence and nonexistence mutually oppose, nonexistence and existence mutually oppose. (So,) if it is the case that the produced already exists and the not yet produced also exists, then the produced and the not yet produced ought not have any difference.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If the produced already exists and the not yet produced also exists, (then in regards to) a produced and not yet produced (which are) like this, what difference is there (between them? But, in fact we can see that in regards to) a produced and a not yet produced that lack any difference, this situation is (simply) not the case. For this reason (the idea that antecedent effects) exist (means effects) are not produced.

Again, (if) the existent is already antecedently complete, what is the use of producing it again? (Just) as an activity (which is) already (done) does not need to be done (again, obviously that which is) complete already does not need to be completed (again). For this reason (already) existent *dharmas* do not need to be produced (again).

Again, if it is the case there is the (not yet) produced (antecedently) in the cause, then (even) when it is not yet produced the effect ought to be evident. Yet, in fact, it is not evident. Similarly (we ought to be able to find) a vase in (unformed) clay, (or) a (finished) mat in (a bundle) of rushes. (In such cases the effect) ought to be evident but, in fact, (the effects) are not evident. For this reason (antecedently) existent (effects means effects) are not produced.

The interlocutor states: (But), even though an effect antecedently exists, by not yet transforming, it is therefore not yet evident.

Answer: If it is the case that when a vase is not yet produced the body of the vase is not yet transformed, and is therefore not yet evident, (then) by what characteristics is it known (to exist such that we could) say in the clay there is an antecedent vase? Is it by means of vase characteristics (that we can say) there is a vase (in the clay)? Is it by means of cow characteristics or horse characteristics that therefore (we can say) there is a vase? If it is the case that in the clay there are no vase characteristics, no cow characteristics, (and) no horse characteristics, given this then are not (such "characteristics" simply) called nonexistent? For these reasons (when) you state there is an effect in the cause antecedently even as (it will eventually) be produced, this situation is not the case.

(Now,) if (one) claims the not yet transformed is not designated as an effect, then, in the end, the effect is not attainable.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) (If) this transformation is antecedently nonexistent, then it also ought to be subsequently nonexistent. Therefore effects such as vases, (which all require a process of transformation to arise,) are not attainable after all. If (one) claims the already transformed is the effect, then it is antecedently nonexistent in the cause. Given this then (the matter) is not settled. Is it the case that there is an effect antecedently in the cause or is it the case there is no effect antecedently (in the cause)?

Question: Antecedently there is transformation yet (we) do not come to perceive it. All things individually exist. As for (their) existing even as they do not

come to be perceived, it is like a thing which exists close by yet is not knowable, or a thing which exists distantly and is not knowable. Or (it may be the case the required sense) faculty is broken and it is not knowable. Or, (it may be a case where) the mind is unsettled and it is not knowable. (Or, it may be the case there are) obstacles (in the way) and it is not knowable. (Or it may) be similar (to other things and) so it is not knowable. Or (it may be a case where it is) overcome (by other things) and so is not knowable. Or (it may be) minute and so is not knowable.

As for it being close but yet not knowable, (this case) is like having medicine in the eye. As for it being distant yet not knowable, this is like a bird flying off into space, soaring high and departing in the distance. As for (the sense) faculties being broken [161a] so it is not knowable, this is like the blind (who) cannot perceive color, the deaf who cannot hear sound, a nose that is stopped up and does not smell scent, a mouth (whose taste buds) miss the mark (and so) does not know taste, a body (whose sense of touch) is dulled (and so) does not know feeling, (or) a mind that is insane (and) does not know the real.

As for a mind that is not settled and hence cannot know (the object), it is like (when) the mind (is settled upon a particular) form it does not perceive sound. As for (the case where there are) obstacles and one does not perceive (an object), it is like (when) an earthen (dam) obstructs (one's view of) a large (body of) water or a wall blocks (one's view of) things outside. As for (the case where there is) similarity and hence one cannot know (the object), it is like a black dot on a dark (background). As for (the case where the object) is overcome (by other things) and hence one cannot perceive it, it is like (a situation where there is the loud) noise of gongs and drums and one does not hear a voice dispersed (by the other sounds). As for (the situation where a thing) is minute and so is not knowable, it is like small particles that are not visible.

In this fashion all the various *dharmas*, although existent, are not knowable due to (these) eight causal conditions. (Now) you state that transformation in the cause is not attainable. (But) as for (your claim that) vases, etc., are not attainable, this situation is not the case. For what reason? These phenomena, although existent, do not come to be (observed) because of the (aforementioned) eight causal conditions. (Given all this, what is the problem here?)

Answer: *Dharmas* of transformation and effects such as vases are not the same as (objects which) are not knowable (due to) the eight causal conditions.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If it is the case that *dharmas* of transformation and effects (such as) vases are extremely close and (therefore) not attainable, (then with) a bit of distance (we) ought to be able (to detect them). If it is the case that they are at great distance and (therefore) are not attainable, (then when) a bit closer (we) ought to be able (to detect them). If it is the case that (one's sense) faculties are broken, (and therefore the objects) are not attainable, then (when those) faculties (are functioning) properly, (we) ought to be able (to detect them). If it is a case that the mind is unsettled (and therefore they) are not attainable, (then when) the mind is settled (we) ought to be able (to detect them). If it is the case (that due to) obstacles (they) are not attainable, (then we) ought to be able (to detect them when) *dharmas* of transformation and effects such as vases are not obstructed. If it is the case (that

in being) similar (they) are not attainable, (then when) there is difference (we) ought to be able (to detect them). If it is the case that (when) overcome (they) are not attainable, (then when that state of being) overcome ceases (we) ought to be able (to detect them). If it is the case that (they) are minute and (therefore) are not attainable, (then we might note that) even so effects such as vases are (rather large and) coarse (so we) ought to be able (to detect them). If it is the case that vases are (fundamentally) minute and (that is why we) are not able (to observe them in the cause, then once) produced they also should not be attainable.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Because the characteristic of minuteness of the already produced and the not yet produced is one (and the same characteristic). Therefore the already produced and the not yet produced both certainly have (the same characteristic which must prevent their detection).

Question: (How so?) When (a thing) is not yet produced it is minute (but) when produced it becomes (large and) coarse. For this reason (when) already produced (we) are able to (observe it but when) not yet produced we are not able (to observe it).

Answer: If that is the case then there is a lack of the effect in the cause.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Because there is no (large and) coarse (characteristic) in the cause. Furthermore, antecedently in the cause there is no (large and coarse) effect (such as arises later). If it is the case there is a coarse (effect) antecedently in the cause, then (one) ought not say it is minute (and therefore we) are not able (to observe it). Now (in this case) the effect is coarse (but) you said it is minute and therefore (we) are not able (to observe it). This coarse (product then) is (apparently) not designated as an effect. Now (in contrast, as for the antecedent minute) effect, in the end (we) ought not be able (to ever observe it). Yet, in fact, effects do come (to be observed). For this reason, (clearly) it is not because of minuteness that (we) are not able (to observe) existent *dharmas* like this. (So, as for the notion of) antecedently existent effects in causes, (and the idea that) because of the eight causal conditions (we) are not able to observe existent effects in antecedent causes, this situation is (simply) not the case.

Again, if it is the case that antecedently there is the production of the effect in the cause, **[161b]** then the causal characteristic of causes is destroyed and the effect characteristic of effects is destroyed.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer: This) is like having a blanket in threads or fruit in a dish. (In such cases the point of origination) is only a location (and we) do not designate (such locations) as "causes."

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Because threads and dishes are not the causes of blankets and fruit. If a cause is destroyed the effect is also destroyed. For this reason thread is not the cause of a blanket. If the cause is nonexistent the effect is also nonexistent.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) As a consequence of the cause there is the establishment of the effect. If the cause is not established how can we say the effect is established? Again,

if there is no activity (of production we) do not designate (a thing as an) effect. Causes like threads cannot create effects like blankets.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer: Well,) it is as with threads. (Threads) are not capable of creating effects like blankets by means of abiding in blankets. (If reality) is like this then there are no causes and there are no effects. If causes and effects are both nonexistent then (we) ought not seek whether antecedently there are effects or there are no effects in causes.

Again, if in the cause there are effects even as (we) do not come (to observe them, then they) ought to have (some) characteristics that are evident. For example, (when we) smell a fragrance (we) know there is a flower. (When we) hear a sound (we) know there is a bird. (When we) hear laughter (we) know there is a person. (When we) see smoke (we) know there is a fire. (When we) see a crane (we) know there is a pond (nearby). In this fashion if antecedently there is an effect in the cause, (it) should have characteristics that are evident. Now (this should be true even of) the substance of the effect (but we) also do not come (to observe that. As for the various possible) characteristics (of effects, those) too we do not come (to observe). Given that (the facts are) like this, (we) should know there is no effect antecedently in the cause.

Again, if there is production of an effect antecedently in the cause, then (we) ought not say that there is a blanket due to thread, or mats due to rushes. If a cause does not create (the effect then some) other (thing) also does not create it. This is like a (thread) blanket which is not made from thread. (In such a case) could (the thread blanket) be made from rushes? If thread does not create it and (some other thing such as) rushes also do not create it, do we not come to say there is nothing from which it is created? If there is nothing from which it is created, we do not designate it as an "effect." If the effect does not exist, a cause also does not exist. (This is) just as previously explained. For these reasons production from effects antecedently existent in causes is (simply) not the case.

Again, if an effect lacks that from which it is created then we consider it permanent, like the nature of *nirvana*. If effects are permanent then the various (*karmically*) functional *dharmas* are all permanent.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer: This would be the case) because all (*karmically*) active *dharmas* are effects. If all *dharmas* are permanent, then there is no impermanence. If there is no impermanence then there is no permanence.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Due to permanence there is impermanence. Due to impermanence there is permanence. For these reasons, as for the nonexistence of both permanence and impermanence, this situation is (simply) not the case. Therefore (one) does not get to claim there is the antecedent production of an effect in a cause.

Again, if there is antecedent production of the effect in the cause, then furthermore (this would) allow a different effect to make a cause. (This would) be like cotton (cloth) allowing (subsequent) sitting upon (the cotton mat) to constitute an (antecedent) cause (of the cloth, or like) matting allowing (the subsequent effect of) screening to constitute a cause (of the matting, or like) a cart allowing (the

subsequent process of) conveying (a load) to constitute a cause (of the cart). And yet, in fact (such things) do not allow different (subsequent) effects to create (antecedent) causes. For this reason we do not get to say there is the production of the effect antecedently in the cause.

(Now) if (we) claim (this) is like the earth [161c] antecedently having (as yet undetected) scents, (and that if) not for rain showers the scents accordingly do not emerge, (and that all) effects are also like this – that is (to say, when) as yet there are not the (required) collected conditions, then the (effect) is not able to make a cause, (well) this situation is (also simply) not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer: Well) it is as you have stated. (Only) when (the result) can be (clearly) distinguished (is it then) designated as an effect. (Accordingly,) things like vases and such are not effects.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) The distinguishable is created. Vases and such that antecedently exist are not created. Given this then (we) take the created as effects. For this reason as for there being the production of effects antecedently in causes, this matter is (simply) not the case.

Again, the distinguishing cause is only capable of revealing (the effect). It is not capable of producing things. (It works) like (a case where) in order to illuminate a vase in the dark (one lights a lamp and,) consequently, the lamp can also reveal a bed and other such things (in the room). In order to create a vase (one) consequently (needs) a combination of collected conditions (and those conditions) are not capable of producing other things like beds. For this reason (one) ought to understand it is not (the case that) antecedently in causes there is the production of effects.

Again, if there is the production of effects antecedently in causes, then there ought not be a distinction between the presently created and (and that which is) to be created. And yet you accept (the distinction between) the presently created and the to be created. For this reason it is not (the case that) antecedently in causes there is the production of effects.

If (one) claims it is the case that there is no effect antecedently in the cause but an effect is (subsequently) produced, this also is not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If it is the case (that the effect) is nonexistent yet (subsequently) produced, (we) might as well have the production of a second head or third hand.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Because the nonexistent (effect) is nevertheless produced.

The interlocutor notes: Things like vases and such have (specific) causes and conditions. A second head and third hand lack (such) causes and conditions. Why would we say they come to be produced? For this reason your explanation is not the case.

Answer: Effects like second heads and third hands as well as vases and such are all nonexistent in the cause. Just as there is no vase in a lump of clay (there is) also no vase in stone. So, for what reason do we designate a lump of clay as the cause of a vase (but) do not designate stone as the cause of a vase? For what reason

do we designate milk as a cause of cheese and thread as a cause of a blanket but do not designate rushes as a cause (of either)?

Again, if it is the case that the cause antecedently lacks an effect while the effect is still produced (later), then (any) individual thing might produce every (other possible) thing. As (for example,) a fingertip ought to (be able) to produce a cart, a horse, food, drink, and so on. In this fashion thread ought not only to put out blankets, but also things like carts, horses, food, drink, and so on.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If it is the case (the effect is antecedently) nonexistent but (the cause) can still (subsequently) produce it, then why is thread only capable of producing blankets but is not (capable of) producing things like carts, horses, food, drink, and so on. (All these effects are equally possible) because they are all (likewise antecedently) nonexistent (in the cause).

(Furthermore,) if it is the case there is no antecedent effect in the cause while (subsequent) effects are (nevertheless) produced, then various causes ought not to individually have the (antecedent *karmically* functional) power (that is) capable of producing (subsequent) effects. (Clearly this is incorrect because) like a case where we need oil, we must extract it from hemp (seed). We do not crush sand (to obtain hempseed oil).

(Now,) if (we) claim (we have had) occasion to observe hemp (seed) give off oil and do not observe it given off by sand, and for this reason we seek (oil) in hemp (seed) and do not crush sand (for it, then) this situation (also cannot) be the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If it were the case that the characteristic of production was (already) established then we ought to say at other times that having observed hemp produce oil and not observed **[162a]** sand produce it, for these reasons, in regards (to oil,) we seek it in hemp and do not (attempt to) extract it from sand. However the characteristic of production of all *dharmas* is not established and therefore we do not get to say at other times that having observed hemp give off oil we therefore seek it in hemp and do not (attempt to) extract it from sand.

Again, I am now not only refuting one (specific) case (of cause and effect production), but am (also) generally refuting all (possible cases of production by) cause and effect. If there is production of an effect antecedently in a cause, or if there is not production of an effect antecedently (in a cause), or if there is both production antecedently and there is not production antecedently, each of these three (possible explanations of) production are not established. For this reason your claim at other times (that you have previously) seen hemp (seed) emit oil falls to (and fails with the) same doubtful (original) cause.

Again, if it is the case that there is no effect antecedently in the cause, even as an effect (is subsequently) produced, the various characteristics (necessary for a) cause are not (then) established.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If the various (characteristics of a) cause are nonexistent how are *dharmas* capable of creating (an effect? Furthermore,) how are (those nonexistent characteristics) capable of being established? If we lack (the characteristics of) creating and establishing (effects), what then is designated as a "cause?" In this

fashion the maker does not come to have (an effect) which is made. (Furthermore,) in employing the “maker” (for that purpose we) also do not come to have (an effect) which is made.

(Alternately,) if we claim there is an effect antecedently (in the cause), then we ought not have the distinctions of making, maker, and *dharmas* made.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If there is an antecedent effect, what need is there to make it again? For this reason your assertions (regarding) the various causes of making, maker, and *dharmas* made are not obtainable.

(Now) as for (the contrary assertion that) there are no effects antecedently in causes, this is also not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If one accepts distinctions of making and maker (and) that there are causes and effects, that ought to produce this difficulty (and require an explanation). I assert that making and maker, causes and effects are all empty. If you refute (distinctions of) making and maker, cause and effect, you establish my point and (we) would not designate that as a difficulty (I must address). For this reason, (the claim that) there are no effects antecedently in causes even as effects are (subsequently) produced is (simply) not the case.

Again, if one accepts that, there is an effect antecedently in the cause that should produce this difficulty. But because I do not assert that there is an effect antecedently in the cause I do not accept (that this is) is a difficulty (I must explain. I) also do not accept (the only apparent alternative that) there is no effect antecedently (in the cause. Hence I do not have to explain that either). If (one) claims that in the cause antecedently there is an effect and also there is not an effect even as an effect is (subsequently) produced, this is also (simply) not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Because the nature of existence and nonexistence mutually oppose. As for the mutual opposition of those natures, how can we speak (of them as being in the same) one place? Just as brightness and darkness, suffering and pleasure, going and staying, loosening and binding, do not come to be (in the same) one place, (so too with existence and nonexistence). For this reason any cause that antecedently both has an effect and lacks an effect does not produce (anything).

Again, (the idea that) there is and there is not an effect antecedently in a cause has already been refuted above in (the sections dealing with) existence and nonexistence.

For these reasons, antecedently existent effects in causes are not produced, (antecedently) nonexistent effects are not produced, (and both antecedently) existent and nonexistent (effects) are also not produced. The limit of the principle (is reached) in this. All (possible) situations have been investigated and (we) are not able to obtain (production by causes and effects). For these reasons effects are, in the end, not produced. Because effects are, finally, not produced, all *karmically* active *dharmas* are empty.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Each and every *karmically* active *dharma* is a cause and an effect. (Furthermore,) because *karmically* active (*dharmas*) are empty, *karmically* inactive

(*dharmas*) are also empty. Since *karmically* active and *karmically* inactive (*dharmas*) are, for all that, empty, how much more so the self.

[End of Chapter Two of the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*]

[Commentary by Fa-tsang]

To explain this gate (I will) briefly (summarize by) constructing four parts (for commentary).

[The Name of the Gate]

First, as for explaining the name, the names of all of the gates have three meanings. 1. (They) bring up (the idea that) contemplative wisdom constitutes (the wisdom that) can contemplate (truth). 2. (They also) bring up (the idea that the misunderstandings) which are repudiated constitute the gate's (main points). Accordingly, (in this case the) existent effects and the nonexistent effects which are contemplated are (exactly those very misunderstandings). 3. (Upon) entering the gate (one) perceives the ultimate. Accordingly, the true emptiness of the text that follows (from each chapter's analysis) is (that ultimate). All (of the gates primarily) title the (various) chapters (by drawing) from the first two meanings.

[Derivation of the Ideas]

Second, as for deriving the ideas (of this gate), there are two meanings. 1. The preceding section generally refutes causes and conditions (and) extends to (the notion that) effects are all empty. Now, this (section) specifically overcomes (notions of) existent and nonexistent (effects) within causes. By (previously) revealing the lack of production this next (point logically) arrives. 2. (In) the preceding (section) the appearance of self and other(-natures) is dispelled by (refuting) causes and conditions and (by) extending (that refutation to) effects. (It)

thereby reveals the lack of production. Now, accordingly, by (examining notions of) existent and nonexistent (effects) in causes, (this section) minutely distinguishes (aspects of the previously demonstrated) lack of production. (That) is the reason (this analysis) leads to the aforementioned true emptiness (and) comprehension of the limit of transformation. As for (the previous analysis) leading to attachments to existent and nonexistent (effects, that) is because the transformations of the mind lack lodging (and hence naturally seek an attachment point). For these reasons (the ideas of this gate naturally) arrive (following the preceding analysis).

[The Propositions Advanced]

Third, as for advancing the propositions, initially (he) arranges (them according to) that which is refuted. (Namely and in order:)

[The Doctrines Refuted]

1. Heterodox (notions). That is to say, Samkhya reckons there are effects in causes; Vaisheshika reckons there are no effects in causes; Nigrantha reckoned both that there are effects and there are no effects in causes; (finally), Jnanaputra reckoned that neither are there effects nor are there no effects in causes.⁴⁸

2. *Hinayana* (notions). The Sarvastivada reckon that in causes there is the nature of effects. The Sautrantika reckon that in causes there is no essence of effects. Further, the Mahasamghika reckon that past and future (*dharmas*) are nonexistent. Accordingly, in these (schools) there are no effects. The Vatsiputriya reckon (it is a case of) both existing and not existing. (This is) because (they figure) there are no phenomena **[221c]** even as there is a nature. (This) meaning is adjusted (by) the *Fa-hsiang Mahayana* (who) expound neither existence nor nonexistence. Because

(effects) await conditions, (they) do not exist. (But) in constituting causes, therefore (they) do not lack existence. Passages (expounding) these types (of ideas) are those which are refuted (in this chapter).⁴⁹

[The Propositions Revealed]

Second, (we find him presenting) the propositions which are revealed. That is to say, due to the four propositions (exhaustively) constituting that by which (effects might possibly exist in causes, the analysis shows they) do not come to be produced and do not await a place of production. These are the propositions which (one) enters (through this gate).

[Explanation]

Fourth, in the explanatory section (of the chapter there are) four (parts): 1. (The first is) a general presentation (of the points). 2. (The second is a) specific explanation (of those points). 3. (After that we find a) concluding proposition. 4. (He finishes by) categorically dispelling (the errors).

In the first (part, the general presentation, there are) two (points). Initially (he) presents a proposition (about) productive arising, then (he) brings up verses to establish that proposition. This is understandable (without further comment).

Second, in the specific explanation (there are also) two (main points). First (he) brings up verses to establish a three section gate. Second, from “For what reason...”, (he) explains. In the explanation (there are) three (parts). First (he) explains that existent effects in causes are not produced. Next (he) explains nonexistent (effects in causes also are not produced). Finally, (he) explains both (options together also do not produce effects).

[Refutation of Antecedently Existent Effects]

In (the section that) explains (antecedently) existent (effects in causes) do not complete production, there are 15 iterations (of the point).

[The 15 Iterations]

[1] The first is a refutation (demonstrating that) eternally produced (effects) are not (further) produced. Therein (we find) four (parts): The first (part) reveals the error. Second is a refutation (based upon) genealogical reckonings (about the effect). Third is a refutation of an obscuring (attempt to) save (the view). Fourth (he) concludes, completing the (first form of the) refutation. The preceding two (are) refutations allowing (for a hypothetical). That is to say, (if one) considers the already produced as (being) the same as the not yet produced, then (such effects) ought to be eternally (and already) produced. The last two are refutations that take away (the posited hypothetical. If one) takes the not yet produced as (being) the same as the already produced, then (such effects) ought not be produced ever.

Among the preceding, in the second one – the refutation (based upon) genealogical reckoning (about the effect, he) syllogistically states causes ought to produce effects that have already been (but) are yet again produced because within the cause there is, eternally, the (very same) effect. (In such a case) it is a cause of a not yet produced effect (which also already and eternally exists. This occurs) because the (relative, *karmic*) position of a cause of the not yet produced and the (already) produced does not change. Furthermore, (it is) because an already produced effect does not differ from the time when (the effect is) not yet produced. For this reason, in the cause there (would) always be eternal production.

As for (the notion that) following this (time of the antecedent cause) there is a (temporal) boundary that (means the effect) ought to be produced again, (this) claims the effect *dharma* (is found both) in the cause and apart from the cause. (This means) both (such effects) are (simultaneously) existent. (Now,) as for (the effect that is already) in the cause, since it is (already) produced, (in regards to the very same effect which) departs from the cause, how does it (ever) come to be not produced? For this reason, the produced is already and still again produced. (Given) this, then there is no exhausting (this particular unnecessary sequence). This is repeated production (of the same effect) without end.

Third, the refutation of an obscuring (attempt to) save (the view) is also a refutation (based on the idea that) eternally (existent effects) do not produce.

Therein he first records a heterodox teaching (which) states:

The already produced is the completion of the phenomena (and) the completion of the phenomena does not require (further) production. The not yet produced is (a reference to) the existence of an (antecedent and unmanifest) nature (and) the existence of that nature therefore must be (subsequently) produced.

The subsequent valid refutation states that as for lacking the principle of production, since the already produced is existent and not further produced, the not yet produced (nature) is also (antecedently) existent (and so) ought to also not be (subsequently) produced. Therefore (he) says (that) in the end there is no principle of production. Also there is an inference stating that a cause (containing a nature that) is not yet produced should not produce a (subsequent) effect because in the

cause there is the effect (already. Given this,) there is no principle of production. (This is) like (the illogical case of) causes with an already produced effect. This (notion is) the error of eternal nonproduction. If (we) take the already (produced as being) the same as the not yet (produced), then (the not yet produced) should be forever (already) produced. If (we) take the not yet as (being) the same as the already, then (the not yet produced) ought to be forever not produced.

From all these errors the fourth (part) generally concludes (by pointing out the) lack of production.

[2] The second (refutation concerning the notion that) both exist is a refutation (based on) nonequivalence. The idea of the refutation states that if the already and not yet both exist it follows then (we) come (to have in existence) one produced and one not produced. Also it is possible (with a case of) the already produced along with the not yet produced (that) one exists and one does not exist. If (one) claims the not yet (produced) is the existence of (an essential) nature (and) therefore there is (its subsequent) production, (while) the already (produced) is the existence of the (fully manifest) phenomena (and) therefore (it) is not (antecedently) produced, (then it is) also possible (everything) produced has two **[222a]** productions – one is because of the production of the (essential) nature (and) the second is because of the production of the phenomena (itself).

In the passage (on) nonproduction, first (he) records the attachments, then (presents a) valid refutation. (These points) are understandable (without further comment here).

[3] The third (is) a refutation of the mutual opposition of the already and the not yet. Herein (he) initially (presents a) valid refutation and subsequently (he) explains completion. As for the first, the (already) produced and the not yet produced actually are mutually opposed. (If) the not yet produced exists, the produced already ought to be nonexistent because they are mutually opposed – like brightness and darkness.

In the explanation, concerning the two actions as also mutually opposed, (if) the not yet produced is taken as having the characteristic of active (functioning), the produced already also (can be) taken as having the characteristic of active (functioning. But as shown, the) already (and) not yet actually mutually conflict (so as for) the (two) characteristics of active (functioning), how are they not mutually opposed? Therefore (this) leads to (the conclusion that they) are not equivalent.

It is also possible this is a refutation of (arisings) changing position (and) losing (an) essence (in the process). That is to say, (if) the not yet produced actually has subsequent creative (function), the produced already ought to lose its particular essence (of producing the not yet. This must be the case) because (the already produced) loses the position of (being) not yet produced.

[4] The fourth is a refutation (based on) the already (produced) and not yet (produced) lacking difference. That is to say, if you do not accept the troublesome (consequences of their) mutual opposition, then (you) fall into the fault of (their) lacking distinction. (In that case we can) inferentially say the not yet produced ought to actually be the already produced because the essences of both have no distinction even as the already produced is antecedent. (If,) by (means of the

distinctions between) the already and not yet (we) investigate (their) particular essence, (their) particular essences do not come to be one. Now (in contrast, if) by (means of the singular nature of their) particular essence (we) investigate the already and not yet, the already and not yet do not come (to be) differentiated.

In the passage (there are) three (parts): that is to say, (there is a) presentation, explanation, and conclusion. (These are all) understandable (without further comment here).

[5] The fifth is a refutation of the antecedently complete lacking function. That is to say, (if) effects are already antecedently existent, (then) causes lack a productive function. Like (for example, if) the effect is (already located) at the tool, tools lack the function of producing effects. Therefore (he) says (if a phenomena is) created already, (then such a thing) is not created (as a future effect).

In the passage (there are) three (parts). First (he provides a) valid refutation. Second (he) brings up the rule. Third, (he provides) a concluding negation. (These are all) understandable (without further comment).

[6] The sixth is a refutation (based on the notion that the) already existent ought to be evident. Initially (he presents a) valid refutation. That is to say, if an effect is existent yet still not perceived, then again, by what *dharma* can one know it exists? (One can then) inferentially say the existent is not existent because it is not perceived. It is (simply the same) as a non-thing.

The second (part of the sixth refutation) refutes the (attempted) saving (rejoinder). The save considers the future change as lacking characteristics and for this reason (claims it is) not perceived. (Nagarjuna) refutes (this) idea (noting that

in) this case since (there is) future change (to a vase) in clay even as it (presently) lacks the characteristics of a vase, (one might further) allow that clay also (presently) lacks the characteristics of a horse. (In that case we might ask of) these two, what difference is there? In clay there are no characteristics of a horse and also then there is no essence of a horse. In clay there are no characteristics of a vase, (so) how does it come to have the essence of a vase? The inference is understandable. The conclusion is (also) understandable (without further comment).

Furthermore, (since) in clay there are no characteristics of horses, (naturally) there is no reason to know there is a horse (there. Similarly,) in clay there are also no characteristics of vases (so) by what (means might one) know there is a vase (in there)? Again, (here) there is an inference that is understandable (without further comment). Following this (there) is also a refutation of investigating effects by means of characteristics.

[7] The seventh is a refutation that exhausts (the possibilities of) transformation and (thereby) loses effects. Therein (there are) two (parts): first (he presents a) valid refutation, then (he) refutes the save.

[First Part of the Seventh Refutation]

In the preceding (part there are) three (subsections). The first is a refutation of taking transformation as being the same as (future) effects. As for effects (antecedently) existing, transformation (to the effect then) also exists. Now (granting this, then it) ought to be evident. This is a refutation that allows for (the hypothetical. From) “yet, in fact...” [*sic*]⁵⁰ regards (the key) proposition (and) concludes (it) is not (the case.) This is a refutation that takes away (the premise).

Second, from “if (one) claims the (already) transformed...”⁵¹ is a refutation that takes (future) effects as being the same as transformation. (If) transformation is nonexistent, effects also are nonexistent (and) accordingly (one) has erred in regards to effect *dharmas*. Taking transformation as initially nonexistent (must mean) the subsequent end (product also) does not exist. (This is) because in that proposition, if effects are initially nonexistent, (then that must mean) subsequently the end (product) is not produced. For this reason transformation’s **[222b]** end (product) does not come to exist. Because transformation’s end (product) does not come to exist, effects are then eternally nonexistent.

Third is a refutation of the uncertainty of existence and nonexistence. (This is) a result of perverse basic reckoning and of contradicting their own words. The passage’s (meaning) is evident (without further comment here).

[Second Part of the Seventh Refutation]

In the second (part of this section with the seventh refutation, the part where he) refutes the saving (rejoinder, there are) four (subsections). First, (he presents the) heterodox (attempt at a) save. Second, (he presents) a valid refutation. Third, (he presents) a reiterated save. Fourth, (he provides) a reiterated refutation.

[The Rejoinder]

First, the idea of the heterodox save draws upon eight conditions of the world to prove transformation is existent while lacking manifestation. (And) for this reason (the opponent claims that regarding) the above (mentioned) various difficulties, they are all cleared up. In (this) passage (there are) three (points). First, a single sentence presents the particular proposition. Second, from “All things...”

(he) draws on the particular categories. Third, from “You state that (transformation) in the cause...” concludes (with) refuting (and) negating (these notions).

In (the part that) draws on (the particular) categories (there are) four (subsections). First (he) presents; second (he) classifies; third (he) explains; (and) fourth (he) concludes. (These four) together are understandable (without further comment). The heterodox idea holds the eight as a (valid) inference.

[Refutation of the Rejoinder]

Second, in the (section with the) valid refutation, (there are) three (parts). Initially (he shows) the general selection (of the eight conditions) is not the same (as the *dharmas* of transformation and effects). Second (he deals with) the sequential, specific selection (of the eight conditions). Third (he provides a) specific refutation of the eighth. That is to say, because beginning and end are one, (and) because both certainly exist, they do not come to change. The inference is understandable.

[The Rejoinder Reiterated]

Third, the reiterated save is understandable (without further comment here).

[The Reiterated Refutation]

Fourth, in the reiterated refutation (there are) three (parts). The first is a refutation (based on the notion that) taking effects to be the same as (the sensed) qualities (of objects accordingly) loses the effect. That is to say, (he notes that if) you speak of details concerning a time when (effects are) not yet produced, (then) accordingly the effects of (such) qualities are antecedently nonexistent. (In so doing you thereby) contradict your own proposition.

Second, from “Furthermore, (antecedently in the cause)...” is a refutation that by details takes away the (key) qualities and loses the effects. That is to say, if you speak of producing already transformed qualities, then the details (of such qualities) are not effects. Because (in such a case one) does not come to speak of the effect’s details (as they) are unobtainable. (So, when) qualities and (their) details are both checked, the essence of effects is fundamentally nonexistent.

Third, from “For this reason...” (he) concludes, rebuking reckoning (based on) sense (perceptions).

[8] In the eighth (he presents a) refutation (based on) causes and effects (which have had their) self (-essence) destroyed. Initially he records the reckoning (and) presents the destruction. Second, from “For what reason?” (he) explains and reveals the destruction of (their key) characteristics.

Herein (he) first explains the destruction of causes. (In the case cited,) causes lack causation because (they) are only the location (where an) effect *dharma* lodges. (This situation is) as with fruit in a dish. As a result the dish is not the cause of the fruit. (In his argument “blanket in) threads” is the (main) proposition, “(fruit in a) dish” is an example, (and) the (concluding) inference is understandable.

Second, from “If a cause is destroyed...” (he) explains the destruction of the effect. (Herein he) first (provides a) refutation of (nonexistent causal) characteristics awaiting (manifestation). The next (part that) explains the refutation is understandable (without further comment).

[9] The ninth is a refutation (which shows) losing the (essential characteristics of effect) *dharmas* (leads to an) empty search (for such effects).

Therein (there are) three (parts). Initially (he) presents (the idea that) because (effects are) not created (there is) destruction in regards to the (key characteristic of an) “effect.” That is to say, if (effects) antecedently exist, because (they) antecedently exist, accordingly (they) are not that which is created. Because (they) are not that which is created, (they) do not come to be designated as “effects.” Accordingly (this) is a case of losing the effect.

Second, from “For what reason...” (he) explains that because (causes) do not create (effects) there is destruction in regards to (the key characteristic of a) cause. That is to say, because in the end (if one) does not take effects as abiding therein, [i.e., in the cause] (then when) expounding causes (as) having that (characteristic) which can create, for this reason (one) lacks (the key characteristic) which can create (and) accordingly there is no cause.

Third, from “In this fashion...” (he) concludes (with) empty searching. That is to say, causes and effects – since both are nonexistent, why must (one) deludedly seek (them) in an existent nonexistence? Furthermore, (given the points of the) preceding gate, because causes perish, effects perish. (In) this gate the perishing of effects (means) furthermore (one) loses the cause. (With) causes (we) consider “producing effects” as (the key characteristic of that which) can create. (With) effects (we) consider “consequentially produced” as (the key characteristic of) that which is created. (In the erroneous view explained here) effects are exactly antecedently existent (and) accordingly causes lose the quality of (being that which) can produce. (As a result) effects perish (with respect to) the meaning of “consequentially produced.” For this reason both (meanings) are lost.

[10] The tenth is a refutation (pointing out the) nonexistence of characteristics (means) the essence is lost.

(Question: If we compare) this (one) with the preceding rebuke (of the idea that there are the) characteristics of a vase in clay, what differences are there?

[222c] (Answer:) The preceding examined the characteristics of an essence. This (one) rebukes (the idea that there are) characteristics of signification. Consequently, (the two) are different. In this section (there are) three (parts). First, hypothetically granting existence, (he) examines characteristics. Second, (he) raises precedents (that might) indicate phenomena. Third, from “In this fashion...” (he) validly deprives (the opponent of) attachments to (notions produced by) sensation. (These points are all) also understandable (without further explanation).

[11] The eleventh is a refutation rebuking (the notion that) effects lack consequentiality. Therein (we find) three (parts). Initially he records (the idea that) effects do not consequentially follow causes. Second, from “If a cause does not...” (he) searches for effects that validly lack (the quality of) consequentially deriving from (a cause). Third, from “If the effect does not exist ...” he concludes both (options are) nonexistent. (This is) understandable (without further comment).

[12] The twelfth is a refutation (pointing out) individual destruction (means the) two unite. Therein (we find) four (parts). First (he) presents the attachment (and) displays the error. The inferential (analysis) states that effects ought to be eternal because (they) lack (the status of being) consequentially created. Like, (for example,) the nature of *nirvana*. Second, from “If effects...” (shows how this) destroys and loses (the key characteristic of *karmically*) active (*dharmas*). Third,

from “If all...” (shows how this) destroys and loses (the key characteristic of *karmically*) inactive (*dharmas*). Fourth (is a) concluding negation that rebukes and ends (the error. These parts are) also understandable (without further explanation).

[13] The thirteenth is a refutation (pointing out the) endless (regress) of a cause (to) cause (sequence). Therein (are) two (parts).

[First Part of the Thirteenth Refutation]

Initially (he provides) a valid refutation (while) subsequently (he) refutes the rejoinder. In the first (part there are) three (subparts). First (he) records the attachment (and) displays the error.

Second, from “(This would be) like cotton (cloth)...” he cites a category (of the error which) also is a hypothetical existence corresponding to (an associated) sensation. That is to say, (if) within (a) cause there is an effect, (and) this effect again constitutes an additional cause, (then) therein and again there is an additional effect. In this fashion then there is no exhausting (the regress). Relying on the *Nirvana sutra* (we find the following point:)

(This) is like in the cow, first there is milk and (yet) this milk has (within it) cheese curds (and so on) even up to refined butter.⁵² For this reason, (on this view) the five flavors (of dairy products) are already complete (in the unprocessed milk).

Furthermore (it also) says:

(If on) the morrow (milk) will submit (to producing) cheese, presently (one ought to) already suffer the smell. (And this is true) even to (the idea that) in rice there ought to be (the smell of as yet unproduced meals). Furthermore,

selling a mare (one) ought to obtain (compensation for) a foal wherein, again, there is (another) foal. In this fashion one horse accordingly ought to be a herd.

This is the meaning (of this section of the text).

Third, from “And yet, in fact...” concerns the (main) proposition. (This part) takes away (the main point while ending with) nonexistence. That is to say, since different effects internal to (other) effects (which are found) within causes are not existent, (this) does not allow for creating causes. Effects within causes are, accordingly, not present.

[Second Part of the Thirteenth Refutation]

Second, in (the next section where he) refutes the rejoinder (there are) four (parts). Initially he records the attachments and generally negates (them). Second, from “For what reason...” (he) explains the negations and reveals the refutation. (He) refutes the idea saying, if (for example,) it is like the scent of earth (which) must await conditions to emerge, (then) when it has yet to emerge (one) does not designate it as an effect. You take what may be completed as an effect and consequently, (in the case of the scent of earth,) water is what can complete (it and) the scent is what may be completed. The completed is created and so may be designated as an effect. (Similarly,) vases, and so on, since (they) are antecedently existent are not created. As a result, (they) do not (count as) an effect. The third (part) is a reiterated explanation (while) the fourth is a concluding negation. Both (parts) are understandable (without further comment).

[14] The fourteenth is a refutation (that points out) identical completion (leads to) losing production. That is to say, (if) you consider water giving rise to the scent of earth as a revealing cause (and if) vases, etc, are (similarly) thus, (then they) ought to mutually complete one another. (This would be) like a lamp illuminating a vase and also illuminating other (things) as a result. Furthermore, (he notes) “your (erroneous view) considers being (already) created as (the key characteristic of an) effect (and also) considers (subsequently being) completed as (the key characteristic of an) effect.” If effects are (already) created (then) vases, etc. are antecedently existent. (In such a case they) are not (actually) created (by the cause and one) does not designate (them) effects. (Also) if effects are (to be) completed (then) clay (for example, counts as a cause which) completes vases. (If such things subsequently follow from clay,) why does it not also equally produce other things as well?

In (this) passage (there are) four (parts). First is the proposition, second is an example, third is a combination (of the key points, and) fourth is the conclusion. Together (these four) are understandable (without further comment).

[15] The fifteenth is a refutation (based on the notion that) dual creation does not complete (production of the effect). That is to say, because the effect is antecedently existent, what is presently created? What will be created (in the future)? That school reckons there are differences of the two created (effects).

[223a] (But this) is to lose a grasp of the particular (nature of an effect). In the passage (he) first (makes a) demand, (then) afterward concludes (the point). (Both parts) are understandable (without further elaboration).

The above section explaining (that) antecedently existent (effects) do not produce (subsequent effects) is finished.

[Refutation of Antecedently Nonexistent Effects]

The second portion (of the specific explanation) explains (that) antecedently nonexistent (effects) also are not produced. Therein there are five iterations (of the argument).

[Five Iterations of the Argument]

[1] The first (iteration) is a refutation (based on the notion that in case of antecedently nonexistent effects), causes are not causes. Therein (we find) two (parts). Initially (he presents) a valid refutation and subsequently (he) refutes a saving (rejoinder). In refuting the save initially (he presents) the save and then the refutation. In the refutation (of the rejoinder there are) two (subparts). Initially (he notes causes) categorically do not produce different (types of) effects. Then (he notes) identical (causes) do not constitute different causes. The inferences are both understandable (without further comment).

[2] The second is a refutation (based on the idea that) one cause (produces) many effects. Therein initially (he provides a) valid refutation and then refutes the saving (rejoinder). In the preceding, (his argument) corresponds to the refutation of a hypothetical. That is to say, one cause ought to produce all things categorically; (since they do not, one) can consider this nonexistent as a result.

Then, from “If (it is the case that) the cause...” (he provides a) refutation (that) denies (the rejoinder). That is to say, if it is the case the (effect is antecedently) nonexistent it ought not (be true that) various causes, in regards to

various effects, each individually have the (*karmic*) power to be able to produce (only particular) effects. Now, since various causes each individually in regards to particular effects do have (*karmic*) power, as a result (we) know they are not (antecedently) nonexistent. From “Like a case where we need oil...” brings up a (specific) matter (to) illuminate (the point).

Second, in refuting the save, initially (he) records the general negation of (the rejoinder’s) reckoning. Second, (he) explains and reveals the meaning of the negation. That is to say, extracting oil from hemp (seed) is production. But this is an empty delusion of worldly individuals referred to as “production.” In fact, it is not production. (As he points out in this section,) with sand there is no difference. For this reason investigating the rebuke accordingly (shows why the heterodox idea) does not establish production. And even further, by what principle (might one) know there is production?

Third, from “for this reason...” (he provides a) concluding negation and rebukes the attachment.

[3] The third is a refutation (of the idea that) even if previously (the cause is observed to produce a certain effect, this case is) likewise doubtful. Therein (we find) three parts. First (he) presents (the) particular idea. That is to say, (he) fears that heterodox individuals, even though they (may) lack attachment to no effects in causes, perceive the Author taking sand to illustrate (the nature of) hemp (seed and conclude) the meaning of nonexistent (oil) in hemp (seed) is not complete. Accordingly (this may) mean (they think) the Author permits (the notion that) they [i.e., effects] are existent. The idea (he) wants to convey (is one ought to simply)

lack attachment to existents. For this reason the Author, in turn, checks (this possible tendency) saying, "I do not simply refute your reckoned nonexistent (effects), existent (effects) equally are also refuted." Therefore (he) says (he) refutes all (types of) causes and effects.

Second from "If... in a cause..." explains that all (the possible variations) do not complete (actual production). That is to say, the three (types of) causation together do not complete production.

Third, from "For this reason..." concludes (all the possibilities) are likewise doubtful. That is to say, (he is asserting), "You only speak of seeing oil extracted from hemp (seed), yet do not know (whether) in hemp (seed) it is on account of (antecedently) existent (oil), on account of (antecedently) nonexistent (oil), or on account of both (antecedently) existent and nonexistent (oil). (Given) this, then your (views) in regards to particular causes are (all) likewise doubtful and not complete." (So the question remains,) "How do they come to complete production?"

[4] The fourth is a refutation (based on the idea that) the characteristics of causes do not complete (production). Therein are two (points). Initially he records attachments to causes that do not complete (production). Second, (he) explains and reveals characteristics that do not complete (production). Therein initially (he) explains that causes do not complete (production). That is to say, proximate and remote (causes) are not one (type) so (he) mentions various causes. Among (them) there are no effect *dharmas* so (he also) says there are no (cause) *dharmas*. If (they are) a single type (and) both lack effect *dharmas*, (one) does not know which is the proximate cause (that) therefore can create (the initial conditions for the effect, nor)

which is the remote cause (that) therefore can complete (the effect). Furthermore, if there is no effect *dharma*, what is created? What is completed? Because there is no created and completed, accordingly it is (the case that so-called causes) are not causes. This passage (actually) inverts (the point). It should say, “If there is no effect *dharma*, (then) what sort (of thing) can this cause create?” Because there is no completion or creation, there are also no causes.

Second, (he) explains (the idea that) effects do not complete (production either). In this fashion causes do not complete (effects) and therefore the proximate **[223b]** cause designated as “maker” does not come to have effects which are created. (That which) stirs the maker is the remote cause (and it) also does not come to have an effect. Furthermore there are treatises (wherein) originally the word “stirs” creates the word “which is (made).” Accordingly, (on this view) the maker is an artisan (who) lacks an effect *dharma* (which) may be created. Therefore (the artisan) does not come to have (a product) which is created. (Alternately, if) that which is made (e.g., a clay vase) is caused by clay, (then the clay) also does not come to have (a product) which is created because clay is that which is utilized by the artisan to create (the vase).

[5] The fifth is a refutation (that addresses various) counter difficulties and contrary propositions. Therein are three (parts). First, heterodox individuals’ counter difficulties (are addressed by) the Author. Second, the Author reveals the errors of those contrary propositions. Third, (he) concludes with a negation, rebuking (and) putting an end to (the difficulties).

In the first, within the heterodox individuals' counter difficulties there are two (specific) difficulties (mentioned). First is the counter substance difficulty. (The opponent) says, "You refute me (stating) because there are no effects in the cause, accordingly, there is no maker. Because there is no maker accordingly this is to lack a cause. If it is so, (then) your (view) accordingly (must be that) in causes there are effects and therefore, there is creating and a maker. Aren't (those then) the cause of various *dharmas*?"

The second is an equally erroneous difficulty. That is to say, "If, because in my (view of) causes there are no effects, then without (the act of) creating, (causes) are not causers. (But) in your (view of) causes there are antecedent effects (and given this, then) also there is no creating (or) maker." (This is) because the antecedently existent does not need (to be) created. Among these (two views we find) the "difficult to create" and the "difficult to exist."

(In this part of the text the word) "maker" is the agent; "creating" is the *karmic* functioning. "Created *dharmas*" are the effects which are created. The presentation (part) in (this section of) text is the initial difficulty. The explanation (part) is the subsequent difficulty. (These) are understandable (without further comment).

In the second (part here, the) Author's refutation (providing) counter answers, (there are) two (points). First (he) records the attachment and generally negates (it). Second he specifically explains two difficulties. Therein (we find) two (parts). First (he) answers the "equally erroneous" difficulty saying, "Now, refuting the (notions of a) maker (and) created *dharmas* is not my position (because I simply

point out their emptiness). Therefore it does not form a difficulty (I must address. However,) if you can refute that, (you) still accord with my emptiness proposition. (So, that) also does not form a difficulty (for me).” The passage’s two (points) are understandable (without further comment). From “For this reason...” (he provides the) conclusion (and it is) understandable (as is).

In the second answer (where he) counters the substance difficulty (there are) two (parts). First is a valid answer. That is to say, (he notes) that (the view of an essential) basis of an existent effect is “not my proposition.” (Pointing out as much simply means,) “You yourself hastily labor to complete my meaning.”

Second (he) blocks the difficulty. That is to say, fearing that difficulty (may arise he) says “Since you do not accept existent effects, accordingly and like me, (you are left) without reckoning.” Therefore (he notes that his view) also does not accept that there is no effect.

The above (section with the five iterations of the) refutation of (antecedently) nonexistent (effects) is complete.

[Refutation of Both]

The third large section refutes attachments to both existent and nonexistent (effects) together (and addresses the question of) how they arise. That is to say, (when) heterodox individuals’ initially reckoned existent (effects) do not form (a satisfactory answer, they) accordingly shift attachments to nonexistent (effects). Further, (they) perceive the Author’s refutation as already incomplete and accordingly claim his “biased” reckoning of existent and nonexistent therefore is not complete. (This is) due to both (possibilities reflecting their) grasping at two

(misunderstood) meanings (when they) ought to accord with the principle of the way. Therefore, (a need for) a (third) gate of refutation comes to (logically follow the above two).

Furthermore, the faculties (of individuals) are of three classes. (Those of) superior faculties at the first gate are even then awakened (to the final point. Those of) middling faculties reach the second (gate before understanding the final point). (Those of) inferior faculties reach this (level before understanding the idea). Therefore there is the (logical) arrival of this (third explanation).

In the passage (there are) two iterations (of the argument). The first is a refutation (that illustrates the) mutual opposition of the particularity of the (two) natures). Therein (we find) four (parts). First (he) brings up the attachment and generally negates (it). Second, (he) explains and reveals the mutual opposition. Third, he draws upon an example and indicates phenomena (that are mutually opposed). Fourth, (he) generally concludes (with the idea that such phenomena) do not produce (arising). Also (it is) possible (to read these parts as:) 1. the proposition, 2. the reason, 3. an illustration, and 4. the conclusion.

The second (turn of the argument) is a refutation that indicates the same (points) as the preceding two. The (meaning of the) passage is evident.

[223c] The third (part of this) large section (with the explanation) concludes the basis of the proposition. (Herein there are) two (parts). Initially (he) concludes that the above three gates (show these ideas) do not produce (arising). Second, from “All (possible situations)...” (he) concludes (by) returning to nonproduction.

In the fourth (and final part of this explanatory section, the part where he) categorically dispels (these errors), there are three (subparts). First, he categorically dispels (the notion of) *karmically* active (*dharmas*). Second, (he) dispels (the notion of) *karmically* inactive (*dharmas*). Third, (he) dispels (the notion of a) self (-essence. These three are all) also understandable (without further comment).

The Gate of Contemplating Conditions

The Third (Gate)

[The *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*] [cont. 162b]

Again, the various *dharmic* conditions are not established.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:)

Generally and briefly (speaking, as for the) collected conditioned *dharmas*, among them there is no effect.

(Now,) among conditions, if there is no effect, how can we speak of production from conditions?

Effects like vases are not existent in individual conditions and are also not existent in aggregations. If (effects) are nonexistent in (these) two aspects, how can we speak of production from conditions?

Question: What are designated as “conditions”?

Answer:

Four conditions produce the various *dharmas* and there is no fifth condition.

(The four conditions are) the causal-condition, the sequential-condition, the conditioning-condition, and the augmenting-condition.

As for the causal-condition, in regards to *dharmas* produced from (its influence,) if they are already produced from it, presently being produced from it, or will be produced from it, (then) this (particular) *dharma* is designated as the “cause-condition.”

As for sequential-conditions, (any set of) sequential production (-conditions requiring the) extinction of earlier *dharmas* is designated as “sequential-conditions.”

As for conditioning-conditions, in regards to *dharmas* of conceptualization, if they give rise to *karma* of the body, if they give rise to *karma* of speech, (and/or) if they give rise to *dharmas* of the mind and (associated) mental attributes, (then) they are designated as “conditioning-conditions.”

As for augmenting-conditions, (when it is the case that) due to (the presence of) this *dharma*, that *dharma* comes to be (directly) produced, (then) this *dharma* constitutes the augmenting-condition (in respect) to that *dharma*.

In this fashion the four conditions like these each (illustrate that) in the cause there is no effect. If it is the case that there are effects in the cause (then it) ought to be (the case) that there are still effects even separate from the various conditions. Yet, in fact, separate from conditions there are no effects. (On the other hand) if it is the case that there are effects in conditions, (then it) ought to be (the case) that there are still effects even separate from causes. Yet, in fact, separate from causes

there are no effects. (Finally,) if it is the case there are effects in (both) conditions and causes, (we) ought to be able to attain them. (But, when) by means of logical analysis (we) investigate (this possibility, we) are still not able to attain them. For these reasons the two positions are both nonexistent. (Accordingly,) in this fashion (the effect) is nonexistent in each individual (condition and) is also nonexistent in their aggregations. (Since that is the case,) how do (we) come to say the effect is produced from conditions? Again,

If effects are nonexistent in conditions, even while emerging from conditions, (then as for) these effects, why do they not emerge from nonconditions?

If one claims it is the case that effects are lacking in conditions (but are) nevertheless produced from conditions, why are they not (then) produced from nonconditions? (This ought to be possible) because (in) each of the two (options, effects) are (likewise) nonexistent. For this reason there is no case of existent causes and conditions that can produce effects. Since effects are not produced, conditions are also not produced.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Because (we have a situation requiring) antecedent conditions (in order to produce) subsequent effects. Since conditions and effects are nonexistent, all *karmically active dharmas* are empty. As *karmically active dharmas* are empty, *karmically inactive dharmas* are also empty. Because *karmically active* and *karmically inactive (dharmas)* are (all) empty, how can we speak of an existent self?

[End of Chapter Three of the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*]

[Commentary by Fa-tsang]

[The Name of the Gate]

Explaining this gate (we first note it contains) four ideas (which) are the same as the preceding. First, as for distinguishing (among) the designations (found in the chapter heading, that which) arouses effects is (designated as a) “condition.” (This gate) contemplates the lack of (self) nature of (those) conditions and hence (can be) considered a “gate.”

[Derivation of the Ideas]

Second, as for deriving the ideas (of this gate), the previous (gate) regarded seeking (effects) within causes (and found their) production is not attained. Now (this gate) regards seeking (effects) within conditions and also (finds they) lack

production. Therefore (these notions) sequentially (and logically) arrive (as a matter of systematic deliberation). Furthermore, by the many gates (one) drives off attachments (and) exhausts (them) as a result. Furthermore, (this process also) reveals that the (various) paths of (delusion inducing) sensation all lack production.

[The Propositions Clarified]

Third, as for elucidating (the propositions) clarified in the three categories (of existent effects in conditions), this means (by) investigating and seeking the four conditions (the analysis shows) each lacks the principle of production. (This point) is that which is the (main) proposition (of the chapter).

[Explanation]

Fourth, in the explanation section (there are) five (parts). First (he) presents the proposition. Second, (he) refutes the existence (of effects in conditions). Third, (he) refutes (their) nonexistence. Fourth, (he) refutes conditions (and effects). Fifth, (he) categorically dispels (the error).

[The Proposition]

In the first (part he shows that) various *dharmas* are effects and consequential conditions each do not complete (the production of such effects).

[Refutation of Existent Effects in Conditions]

Second, in refuting the existence (of effects in conditions there are) three (parts). First, (he) brings up a verse (and) briefly presents (the types of conditions). Second, (he lays) out the characteristics of those conditions. Third, (he) evidentially refutes (the key ideas and) clarifies (their) emptiness.

[The Verse]

In the first (he) initially establishes the verse then briefly explains. In the verse the top half is a refutation denying (the ideas at issue). The bottom half is a concluding rebuke. Furthermore, the top half reveals the principle (while) the bottom half inquires into sensations. In the brief explanation each individual condition is broadly (discussed and their) combination is briefly (discussed). In these two gates (he) seeks existent (effects in conditions and finds) production is not attainable.

[The Characteristics of Conditions]

In the second (part, the part that) distinguishes the characteristics of conditions, (there are) two (parts). Initially (he raises) a question, then (he provides) an answer. In the answer, initially (he quotes) a verse, then he explains it. In the verse, the top half settles (the question of the number of conditions, while) the bottom half lists (their) names. (He) considers the heterodox (view that) establishes a soul as the fifth (possible) condition and this (view) is accordingly lacking (here - having been refuted already).

[The Explanation of the Verse]

In the explanation (there are) two (parts). Initially he lists the names, then explains (their) characteristics. In explaining the characteristics (he) explains four conditions (and) accordingly (the explanation) takes four (parts). Herein each (explanation) has three points. That is to say, (each has a) presentation, an explanation, and a conclusion.

[Explaining Causal-Conditions]

In the first (part of the explanation), as for causal-conditions, (he) considers causes as conditions and hence refers to (them generally as) “causes.” (Given) this, accordingly (then) causes are conditions (and) consequently are designated “causal-conditions.” It is not (the case here that) proximate and distant (conditions) are both brought up (together and) designated as “causes (and) conditions.” That is to say, “that which derivatively produces” reveals the meaning of a “proximate producer.” Furthermore, this derivative producer is (an) effect *dharma* (whose) substance is *karmically* active as a result. The three time (periods) are simply encompassed (by that *karmic* functioning).

[Explaining Sequential-Conditions]

In the second (part), as for *dharmas* that are already extinct, (it means) the preceding mental *dharmas* are extinguished. As for the sequentially produced (*dharmas*, they are) due to mental *dharmas* of the previous mental (moment). Although (those *dharmas* are) extinguished, (they) thus have the (*karmic*) power of bringing forth, hiding away, drawing out, and taking away (subsequent *dharmas*). Now, subsequent mental *dharmas* are produced without interval. Therefore (he) refers to “sequential production.” Allowing that sequentially (produced) *dharmas* constitute conditions, therefore (we get the) designation. Newer translations designate (these as) “conditions arrayed without interval.” (With) this (view) only mental *dharmas* exist; all others are nonexistent.

[Explaining Conditioning-Conditions]

In the third, as for conditions, (they are) “that which is conditioned.” (But) because *dharmas* that are conditioned (in turn) conditionally arouse the mind that

can condition, (and all the associated) mental *dharmas* and so on, (they are all) designated as “conditions.” Accordingly, (*dharmas*) which are conditioned constitute (active) conditions and are therefore referred to as “conditions that condition.” (More) recently (these are) designated as “conditioning-conditions.” In the explanation [224a] “that which is thought” accordingly is “that which is conditioned.” Reasoning in fact only arouses the mind and (associated) mental *dharmas* (and they in turn) constitute the dependent resting (point) of the two (types of) *karma* of body and speech. The *dharmas* of conceptualization are established upon (these conditions) as a consequence. (They) also universally bring up the three (types of) *karmic* (activities).

[Explaining Augmenting-Conditions]

In the fourth, because this *dharma*, in regards to that *dharma*, has augmentative power, (he) refers to “augmentation.” Augmenting (*dharmas*) are conditions and so (he) refers to “augmenting-conditions.” These (conditions) have two types. 1. Augmenting(-conditions) that do not mutually obstruct. 2. Augmenting (-conditions) of superior power (that) assist in forming (other *dharmas*). This section broadly covers the two (but) explains based (only) upon the latter.

[Evidential Refutation]

The third (part here is the) investigative refutation (that) clarifies emptiness. Therein (we find) five (parts). First, (he) generally presents (the point). Second, (he) specifically proves (it). Third, (he addresses) both (and) demands (an answer). Fourth, (he) concludes (they) are lacking. Fifth, (he) concludes the proposition.

In the specific (proof), first by (using) conditions to take away causes (he) clarifies (the point) that in causes there are no (effects). Second, by (using) causes to take away conditions (he) clarifies that in conditions there are no (effects). Third, from “If it is the case...” (he takes both) together, inquires (about them), and demands (an answer). Fourth, from “For these reasons...” he concludes there are no (existent causes or conditions). Fifth, from “In this fashion,... in each individual...” (he) concludes the valid investigation of (conditions allegedly established by the) sensations. “Each individual” is a specific demand and so is a broad (point. Their) “combination” is a general inquiry (into the totality and) so is a brief (point).

[Refutation of Nonexistent Effects in Conditions]

Third, in (the next section that focuses on) refuting nonexistent (effects in conditions, there are) three (points). Initially (he) establishes (the key ideas by quoting a) verse. In the verse, the upper half displays the heterodox reckoning. (In) the lower half both (possibilities) are refuted by (means of) nonconditions.

Subsequently he explains and reveals (the main idea in the verse). That is to say, the (opponent’s) heterodox idea claims that (whether we) briefly or broadly seek (effects) in conditions (and) do not attain (them), how does that interfere with this effect being produced from (the) four conditions? (Nagarjuna) refutes this idea saying since conditions and nonconditions are likewise without effects, even as (effects allegedly) come to emerge from conditions, how is it (effects) do not come to emerge from nonconditions? (The components of the) established (syllogistic) reasoning are understandable (without further comment here).

Third, from “For this reason...” (he) concludes (with the) lack of production.

[Refutation of Conditions and Effects]

Fourth, in (this part that) refutes conditions (there are) two (points). Initially he presents the proposition. That is to say, because (they) produce effects, (these arisings) are called “conditions.” (But) since effects are not produced, how do (we) come to have conditions? Subsequently (he) explains (and) as for (the idea that) first (there are) conditions and then (there are) effects, (his treatment of) this is a refutation of noting the sensation and seeking the logic (of it). That is to say, if first there are conditions without effects, (then such “conditions”) are whose conditions? Therefore, (such “conditions”) are not (conditions for anything).

[Conclusion]

In the fifth (part, the part where he) categorically dispels (the erroneous notions, there are) three (points). Initially he categorically concludes *karmically* active (*dharmas*) are empty (of own being). Second, (he concludes) *karmically* inactive (*dharmas*) are empty. Third, (he concludes that the) self is (also) empty. For this reason the three emptinesses eliminate the two (notions) of self(-nature).

The Gate of Contemplating Characteristics

The Fourth (Gate)

[The *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*] [cont. 162c]

Again, all *dharmas* are empty (of self-nature).
(Question:) For what reason?
(Answer:)

Karmically active and *karmically* inactive,
the two (types of) *dharmas* both lack characteristics.
Because (they) lack existent characteristics,
the two (types of) *dharmas* accordingly are each empty.

Karmically active (*dharmas*) are not made manifest by means of characteristics.

Question: What sorts of (things) are *karmically* active characteristics?

Answer: The myriad things all have *karmically* active characteristics. Like, (for example, with an) ox. (We can) take the peak of the horns, their droop, rise (or even whether) the tip of the tail has hair as constituting the characteristics of the ox. Like (for example, with a) vase. (We can) take the flat bottom, the large belly, the slender neck, and the rough lip as constituting the characteristics of the vase. Like (for example, with a) cart. (We can) consider the wheels, axle, shaft, and yoke as constituting the characteristics of the cart. Like (for example, with a) person. (We can) consider the head, eyes, torso, spine, shoulders, arms, hands, and feet as constituting the characteristics of the person. (Now, given that things are) like this, (as for the three characteristics of *dharmas*, i.e., their) production, abiding, and extinction, if it is the case that these (three) are characteristics of *karmically* active *dharmas*, are they then (also) *karmically* active or are they *karmically* inactive?

Question: If (we say) they are *karmically* active, what error is there?

Answer:

If (the characteristic of) production is *karmically* active,
it should again have the three characteristics.

If (the characteristic of) production is *karmically* inactive,
why is it designated a characteristic of the *karmically* active?

If it is the case that (the characteristic of) production is *karmically* active, then it should (itself) have the three characteristics (of *karmically* active phenomena). Those three characteristics should then also have the three characteristics. In this fashion (the requirement) keeps turning over and accordingly forms (a regress) without end. (The characteristics of) abiding and extinction are also thus.

(On the other hand,) if it is the case (that the characteristic of) production is *karmically* inactive, how (can one) claim the *karmically* inactive participates with the *karmically* active to create characteristics? Separate from (the characteristics

of) production, abiding, and extinction, who could (possibly) understand (what actually) is production?

Again, as a result of differentiating between production, abiding, and extinction, there is (an identifiable characteristic of) production. The *karmically* inactive is not so differentiable. For this reason then there is no (identifiable characteristic of) production. (The characteristics of) abiding and extinction are also thus.

(The characteristics of) production, abiding, and extinction are empty (of a self-nature). Therefore *karmically* active *dharmas* are empty (of a self-nature). Because *karmically* active *dharmas* are empty (of a self-nature), therefore *karmically* inactive *dharmas* are also empty (of a self-nature). Because of the *karmically* active, therefore, there is the *karmically* inactive. Because *karmically* active and *karmically* inactive *dharmas* are empty (of a self-nature), hence all *dharmas*, each and every one, are empty (of a self-nature).

Question: You say the three characteristics each, in turn, (must also) have the three characteristics and therefore (the regress) is without end. (As a result, you claim,) production ought not (be considered) as *karmically* active. Now (in response I) must assert:

The producing (part of) of production's (characteristic of) producing is produced at (the point of) fundamental production.

The producing (part of) fundamental production is, in turn, produced at (the point when) production's (characteristic of) producing (arises).

When a *dharma* is produced, through the particular form (of that *dharma's* arising,) seven *dharmas* are produced together (as part of that arising. The seven are:) 1. the *dharma*, 2. production, 3. abiding, 4. extinction, 5. production's producing, 6. abiding's abiding, and 7. extinction's extinction. Among these seven *dharmas*, besides its particular form, production's (characteristic of) producing can (also) produce (the other) six *dharmas*. (So,) production's (characteristic of) producing can produce fundamental production and fundamental production, in turn, produces production's (characteristic of) producing. For these reasons, although the three characteristics are *karmically* active, even so there is not (a regress) without end. Abiding and extinction are also like this.

Answer: **[163a]**

If (one) claims that production's (characteristic of) producing can, in turn, produce fundamental production, (and if) production's (characteristic of) producing is (initially derived) from fundamental production, how can (production's characteristic of production) produce fundamental production (in the first place)?

If (one) claims production's (characteristic of) producing can produce fundamental production, (then that subsequent) fundamental production does not produce production's (antecedently existent characteristic of) producing.

(Even further though,) how can production's (characteristic of) producing produce (an antecedently necessary) fundamental production?

If (one) claims it is fundamental production
that can produce production's (characteristic of) producing,
(and if) fundamental production is (derived) from that producing,
how can (fundamental production) produce production's
(characteristic of) producing (in the first place)?

If (one) claims fundamental production can produce production's (characteristic of) producing, (and that) production's (characteristic of) producing (once) produced already in turn produces fundamental production, (then) this situation is not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) The *dharma* of production's (characteristic of) producing ought to produce fundamental production. This is the reason it is designated as "production's (characteristic of) producing." Yet, (given that scenario, at that time) fundamental production in fact is itself not yet produced. (So) how can one say (that even before it exists, fundamental production) can produce production's (characteristic of) producing?

(Alternately,) if (one) claims it is the case that when (fundamental production) produces production's (characteristic of) producing, (then at that moment production's characteristic of producing) can produce fundamental production, (then) this situation is also not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:)

(If) it is (the case that) when (fundamental production) produces production's (characteristic of) producing,
(production's characteristic of producing) will be able to produce fundamental production,
(then at the time when) production's (characteristic of) producing is still yet to be produced,
how can it produce fundamental production?

(If) it is (the case that) when (fundamental production) produces production's (characteristic of) producing (then it) will be able to produce fundamental production, (we must note that) while the form itself of this production's (characteristic of) producing is not yet produced it cannot produce the fundamental production (required as an antecedent cause for its own existence).

(Alternately,) if (one) claims it is (the case that) when (fundamental production) produces production's (characteristic of) producing (then it) can (simultaneously) self-produce and also produce (production's characteristic of

producing), just like a burning lamp that can (simultaneously) self-illuminate and illuminate other (things, then) this situation is (also) not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:)

In the (burning) lamp itself there is no darkness.

Nor is there darkness in that place where (it burns).

Destroying darkness is designated "illuminating."

(But as for the burning) lamp, what exactly is illuminated?

The form of the (burning) lamp itself lacks darkness. The place which is illuminated also lacks darkness. If in the (burning) lamp there is no darkness and there is also no darkness in the place where (it is burning), how can (one) speak of the lamp self-illuminating and also being able to illuminate that (place where it burns? Illumination) is designated "illumination" because it eliminates darkness. (However) the (burning) lamp does not eliminate (any) darkness of its own and also does not eliminate (any) darkness of that (place where it burns). For this reason the lamp does not self-illuminate and also does not illuminate that (place where it burns). For this reason, (as for) your previous assertion that the lamp self-illuminates and also illuminates that (place where it burns, and analogously) production, in this fashion self-produces and also produces that (other production), this situation is (simply) not the case.

Question: If (it is the case that) when a lamp is burning it can eliminate darkness, (that is) the reason why there is no darkness in the lamp and also that there is no darkness in the place where the lamp is located. (Given this, what is the difficulty?)

Answer:

How can (one) claim that when burning,
it is still able to eliminate darkness?

(Also,) when this lamp is initially lit,
it cannot extend to darkness.

If the lamp is not able to extend to darkness when it is burning, (then) if it is not able to extend to darkness (when burning, one) ought not claim it eliminates darkness (when initially lit).

Again:

If (one claims) it is the case the (burning) lamp does not extend to darkness,
but can still eliminate darkness,
(then) the lamp at this location,
ought to eliminate darkness everywhere.

If (one) claims it is the case that even though the (burning) lamp does not extend to darkness, it still has the power to eliminate darkness, (then) the burning lamp at this location should eliminate darkness over the entire world. (This follows

logically) because all (the world's darkness) does not extend to (the lamp in this location). Yet, in fact (we see that) the burning lamp in this location is not able to eliminate darkness throughout the entire world. For this reason (as for) your assertion that even though the (burning) lamp does not extend to darkness it still has the power to eliminate darkness, this situation is (simply) not the case.

Again:

If the lamp can self-illuminate,
and can illuminate other (places),
darkness also ought to be like this,
(such that it both) self-conceals and conceals other (places).

If (one) claims the lamp can self-illuminate and also illuminate other (places, since) darkness and (the burning) lamp are mutually opposed, (darkness) also ought to self-conceal and conceal other (places. Alternately,) if darkness and the (burning) lamp are mutually opposed (but one claims darkness) cannot self-conceal and cannot conceal other (places,) while still claiming it is the case that the (burning) lamp can self-illuminate and illuminate other (places, then) this situation is (simply) not the case. (If you make this claim) then your example is not (logically sound. This issue) is just like the case where (you claim) production can self-produce and also produce (that) other (production).

(We) should further note:

If this (characteristic of) production is not yet produced,
how can we say it self-produces?

If this (characteristic of) production has already self-produced,
(then in) being produced already, what is the use of producing (itself again)?

When this (characteristic of) production is not yet produced then (its subsequent production) must be either the production of (that which is) already produced or the production of (that which is) not yet produced. If the not yet produced is still (subsequently) produced, (since) the not yet produced is designated as not yet existent, how (can one) claim the (not yet existent) can self-produce?

(Alternately,) if (one) claims even though (it is) produced already it is still (subsequently) produced, the produced already is exactly the produced (so) what necessity is there (for its) further production? The produced already lacks further (need for production so) the already created production lacks further (need for) creation.

For these reasons the (already and not yet) produced do not self-produce. If (the already and not yet) produced do not self-produce, why claim they produce another? You assert it self-produces and produces another (but) this situation is (simply) not the case. Abiding and extinction are also like this.

For these reasons, (as for the claim that) production, abiding, and extinction are *karmically* active characteristics, (this) situation is (simply) not the case. (The idea of) production, abiding, and extinction as *karmically* active characteristics is

not (logically) established. Accordingly, *karmically* active *dharmas* are empty (of a self-nature). Because *karmically* active *dharmas* are empty (of a self-nature), therefore *karmically* inactive *dharmas* are also empty (of a self-nature).

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) (The state that results from) extinguishing the *karmically* active is designated as *karmically* inactive *nirvana*. For this reason *nirvana* is also empty (of a self-nature).

Again, nonproduction, nonabiding, nonextinction are designated as *karmically* inactive characteristics. In lacking (the characteristics) of production, abiding, and extinction (we) accordingly then lack *dharmas*. Non-*dharmas* should not (be able to) create characteristics.

(Now) if (one) claims lacking characteristics is the characteristic of *nirvana*, (then) this situation is (simply) not the case. If lacking characteristics is the characteristic of *nirvana*, (then) by reason of what characteristic (might we) know it is no characteristic? If [163c] it is by means of having characteristics (that we) know it is lacking characteristics, why designate it as lacking characteristics? If it is by means of lacking characteristics (that we) know there is no characteristic, (then that) lack of characteristics is (a way of indicating) nonexistence. (If it is) nonexistent, then it cannot be known (characteristically).

If (one) claims it is a case like a collection of clothes that all have characteristics (while) only one garment (in the group) lacks characteristics, (we can then) properly consider lacking characteristics as a characteristic. (Furthermore, assuming) so, (in that case if) someone says “Grab the garment without characteristics,” (then) in this fashion they can know the garment without characteristics and grab it. Similarly, (one might claim) production, abiding, and extinction are *karmically* active characteristics. The state of lacking production, abiding, and extinction accordingly should be known as the *karmically* inactive characteristic. Therefore, lacking characteristics is the (characteristic of) *nirvana*. (But, if one claims as much,) this situation is (simply) not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer: As for) production, abiding, and extinction, the assorted causes and conditions are all empty (of a self-nature. Consequently) we do not come to have *karmically* active characteristics. (Since we do not find any *karmically* active characteristics,) how can we say that due to these (*karmically* active characteristics we) know the *karmically* inactive? (By means of) what *karmically* active determinate characteristic (can) you come to know that state of lacking characteristics is the *karmically* inactive? For these reasons, as for your assertion that among the collection of clothes with characteristics (there is one) garment lacking characteristics, (and that this example) illustrates *nirvana*'s lack of characteristics, (well) this situation is (simply) not the case. Furthermore, the clothing example will be (more) broadly explained in a subsequent (section in) chapter five.

For these reasons *karmically* active *dharmas* are all empty (of a self-nature). Because *karmically* active *dharmas* are empty, *karmically* inactive *dharmas* are also empty. Because *karmically* active and *karmically* inactive *dharmas* are empty, the self is also empty. (These) three things are empty so all *dharmas* are empty.

[End of Chapter Four of the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*]

[Commentary by Fa-tsang]

(In) explaining this gate (I will divide it into) four sections just as (I have done with the) previous (gates).

[The Name of the Gate]

First, as for explaining the (gate's) name, (this section) contemplates (and) refutes that which can characterize and that which is characterized (so that) *dharmas* are exhausted. Because (one) thereby reaches true emptiness, (it is) referred to (by the given title).

[Derivation of the Ideas]

Second, as for deriving the ideas (of this gate), previously (Nagarjuna) refuted that which is characterized (so) next (he) refutes that which can characterize. The meanings are sequential and so consequentially arrive. Furthermore, for those who are attached to views, hearing the preceding gate's (conclusion that) conditions do not produce effects, some (then) claim characteristics can produce *dharmas*. In order to refute that (notion he) therefore brings up this gate. Furthermore, using numerous gates (he) reveals the principled (reasoning of the matter and) causes clarity as a result.

[The Propositions Clarified]

Third, as for that which the three categories clarify, (they) refute entirely the three characteristics, leading (one) to see that the mind lacks lodging, thereby completing valid contemplation as a result.

[Explanation]

Fourth, in the explanatory section (there are) four (parts). Initially he presents the proposition. Second, (he) establishes (the key ideas by quoting) a verse. Third, (he) explains and refutes (the errors). Fourth, (he) categorically dispels (the incorrect views).

In the verse, the first sentence brings up the (notion of an) essence of *dharmas*. The next sentence distinguishes the emptiness of *dharmas*. The lower half (of the verse) relies [224b] upon the emptiness of characteristics to dispel the (notion of an) essence of *dharmas*.

In the third (part, the) explanation (of the verse, there are) two (points). In the initial (part of the) explanation (he) presents (the point that) *karmically* active characteristics are empty. In the subsequent (part of the) explanation (he) presents (the point that) *karmically* inactive characteristics are empty.

[Refutation of *Karmically* Active Characteristics]

In the initial (part on *karmically* active characteristics there are) also two (subparts). Initially there are five stanzas refuting Sarvastivada masters' (notions of) major and minor characteristics that mutually produce and complete (the effect, so that) together (they) have the meaning of "cause." Subsequently (he adds) five (parts) refuting Mahasamghika masters' ideas which consider *karmically* active characteristics as producing (both) self and others.

[Refutation of Sarvastivada Masters]

In the preceding (of the above two there are) also two (parts). First is a valid refutation. Subsequently (he) refutes the (attempt at a) saving (rejoinder). In the first, the initial sentence establishes the proposition. That is to say, (as for)

karmically active *dharmas*, because (it is) not due to, nor in regards to characteristics that (arising) forms those *dharmas*, (he) says (they are empty). Second, in (the part that) correctly reveals (the error,) initially (there is) a question and answer that brings up a determination of characteristics. Subsequently (there is) a question and answer that uses principled (reasoning) to validly refute (the error).

In the first (question and answer section he) initially (raises the) question, then (he presents) the answer. In the answer (he) initially distinguishes various *dharmas* that each individually have (characteristic) forms. (For example, he lists *dharmas*) such as an ox, a vase, etc., that (presumably) do not require (additional) *dharmas* (which are) external (to), and other (than themselves), that can (functionally) characterize (them.) He (then) asks of the opponent's view, "As for your three characteristics, if they are *karmically* active characteristics we do not know (whether or not in regards to) these three (we) ought to treat their essence as constituting *karmically* active (*dharmas*), or as constituting *karmically* inactive (*dharmas*)." If it is as the Abhidharmins and Satyasiddi's similarly say, the three characteristics are existent *dharmas*. The Vibhajavadins say the essence of *karmically* active (*dharmas*) is incapable of self-determination. (If it is the case that they cannot even self-characterize,) how is it (they are) capable of characterizing another?

(Also, one) should know the third characteristic is a *karmically* inactive *dharma*. An eminent Dharmagupta (master) says the two characteristics of production and abiding are *karmically* active *dharmas* (while) the characteristic of

extinction is a *karmically* inactive *dharma*. For this reason the three characteristics are (then) both *karmically* active and *karmically* inactive.

In the second (part, the part that) uses principled (reasoning) to validly refute (the point, there are) two (parts). First, (he notes a) heterodox question that is (about) accepting the *karmically* active (viewpoint). Subsequently (he provides an) orthodox answer validly refuting (that view). Because the *karmically* inactive (view) and both (views combined together) await (later) refutation, (he) is using (the material) in this section only to refute the *karmically* active (possibility).

In (this) section (there are) two (parts). First he establishes (the point by quoting) a verse. The upper half refutes (the idea that) the three characteristics are *karmically* active (by) granting (it and noting it) gives off the error of (a regress) without exhaustion. The lower half refutes (the idea that) the three characteristics are *karmically* inactive (by) granting (that idea and noting it then) gives off the error of losing (the quality of being a) characteristic.

(Now to) further explain, the lower half refutes (a possible attempt at a) saving (rejoinder. He) says the substance of *karmically* active *dharmas* is necessarily characterized (as active). As for the necessary characteristic again not necessarily (characterized as active, allowing) this then the substance of *dharmas* is necessarily characterized, (such that) the characteristic (and the) essence of *dharmas* are (both) *karmically* active. (But with this hypothetical) the characteristic is then not necessarily characterized (as active. Accordingly) the characteristic ought to be (considered) *karmically* inactive. (Now) if the characteristic (of production) is *karmically* inactive (one must) explain how it establishes *karmically* active *dharmas*

that create the characteristic (of production). Therefore (he) says “What is called a *karmically* active characteristic (of production)?” In the explanation (he) accords with this (basic line of thinking).

Second, in the explanation (there are) two (parts). Initially he explains the verse then he categorically dispels (additional errors). In the preceding (he) first explains the upper half of the verse, then explains the lower half of the verse. In the preceding (of these two parts, the part where he explains the upper half, he) initially explains production. That is to say, first (he explains) the error of (a regress) without exhaustion. (This) is as the passage reveals. Second, (he explains that) if in production there is extinction, then (there is) mutual opposition. (But whatever) lacks extinction is not *karmically* active. Therefore, having extinction does not complete (production) and lacking extinction also does not complete (production). Therefore, production is empty (of either characteristic. In the) second (part of the explanation he) categorizes abiding and extinction as also thus.

Second, from “If production is *karmically* inactive,” (he) explains the lower half of the verse. Also (he) initially explains that production has three meanings.

1. (He explains a) refutation (based on the notion that) the two collections (of *dharmas* are) intractably opposed. That is to say, (if one) extinguishes the *karmically* active (collection, that means) then (that all *dharmas*) are *karmically* inactive. Ultimately, (they) mutually counter (one another) as a result. (It is) as (with) light and dark. How can light and dark [224c] constitute mutually (self-existent and independent characteristics)?

2. (Next he provides a) refutation that rebukes (this notion of) characteristics (by pointing out the) loss (of their) essence. That is to say, if they are *karmically* inactive then (they) lack (the characteristics of) production, abiding, and extinction. Apart from these three characteristics, who (can) understand the production of these *karmically* active *dharmas*?

3. From “Again...” (he provides a) refutation (based on the idea of) lacking differentiation. That is to say, this *karmically* inactive (state is) a single state (and) lacks dual (qualities. So) what circumstances (allow it) to have production that comes to differ from abiding and extinction? (Likewise,) from “For this reason there is no production...” (he applies this) rule to abiding and extinction and therefore says (they) are also thus.

In the second (part of the explanation, the part where he) categorically dispels (additional errors, there are) three (subparts). 1. Utilizing the nonexistence of characteristics (he) dispels (the notion of) *dharmic* essences. 2. (Next he) dispels (the notion of) *karmically* inactive (*dharmic* essences). 3. (Finally he) universally concludes (applying the point to) all (*dharmas*).

In the second (part of this broader section dealing with the verse, the part concerning the lower half of the verse that) refutes the saving (rejoinder), initially (he presents the) heterodox (view), then (he provides a) valid refutation. In the first (of these two sections there are) two (subparts). Initially he records the preceding errors. Second, (he) establishes the teaching of the principle (of emptiness). Therein initially (he provides a) verse, then (he) explains.

In the verse (he presents the) saving (rejoinder to) the preceding two difficulties. That is to say, the upper half (is the) saving (rejoinder to) the “*karmically* inactive” difficulty. (It claims that) because of the fundamental production of production’s producing, fundamental production (is derived) from the production of production’s producing. Therefore (these) are not *karmically* inactive *dharmas*. The lower half (presents the) saving (rejoinder to) the error of (a regress) without exhaustion. (It claims that) because of production’s producing of fundamental production, production’s producing is in turn (derived) from the production of fundamental production. For this reason there is no error of (a regress) without exhaustion. Therein the first phrase brings up the essence of production’s producing. Because it is that which is produced by fundamental production’s genus, (he) calls it “that which is produced.” The next phrase distinguishes the function of production’s producing. The lower two phrases counter and adjust this understanding.

Second, in the explanation (there are) three (parts). Initially (he) reveals the principle. Second (he covers the) error of the saving (rejoinder). Third (he ends with a) concluding distinction.

In (the part) concerning the error of the saving (rejoinder), as for (the opponent’s idea that) fundamental production eliminates a self-essence (because it is the collective process of) producing the six *dharmas*, considering the fundamental existence of proximate production as the essence of *dharmas*, (the opponent) therefore designates it as “fundamental production” (and) accordingly (claims there is) the production of a basis as a result. Furthermore, (the opponent) takes the

production of this basis (and) designates it as “production’s producing.” Accordingly (he claims there is) the producing of production. (These two are) also designated as “great production” (and) “small production.”

Together with the six *dharmas* this “great production” (allegedly) constitutes the characteristic of production. (According to the opponent, *dharmas*) only (work together and) do not (come) with the characteristic of individual creation. (This is the case) because (he) takes individual great production’s functioning (together with) small production’s (functioning) as (necessary to) constitute characteristics. Great abiding, and extinction are also (considered) thus. For this reason, the great characteristic (of collective production) can universally characterize (both) the great and small. It being so, (the opponent claims it is) only (the case that great production) does not individually characterize (while) small production does not universally characterize (both) the great and small. That being so (great production) only characterizes the one great (characteristic of collective production due to proximity). Because small (production) lacks (collective) power, producing *dharmas* sparingly, accordingly it is designated as “small.” (Because the) great characteristic (of collective production) has power (and) produces *dharmas* in abundance, accordingly it is designated as “great.” For example, within great production (the opponent) considers small production as the (individual, specific) characteristic of (a *dharma*’s) production. Great abiding and extinction constitute the characteristics of (collective) abiding and extinction. Great abiding takes small abiding as the (specific) characteristic of abiding. (Likewise) great production (takes) extinction as the characteristic of the extinction of production. Great

extinction takes small extinction as the characteristic of extinction. Great production (takes) abiding as the characteristic of the abiding of production. If, in small production, (it) completely has the three great characteristics, small abiding and extinction are also thus. For these reasons (the opponent claims) there is no error of that (regress) without exhaustion. (Given) this, then among the causes of the six collectively, there is causation. That is to say, when together, (they then) arise and therefore collectively exist. They furthermore mutually commission (one another and) therefore are designated as “causes.” Herein having collective existence is (understood as) collectively having causal (power. They) have collective existence even as they are not (individually powerful) causes.

If (one) takes up (the perspective of the) essences of (individual) *dharmas* and look at the six characteristics, (they) come to create (their) collective existence (and so) collectively have causal (power). If (one) takes up (the perspective of) great production (and) look at the six *dharmas*, (they) are also collectively existent (and) collectively have causal (power). Great **[225a]** abiding and great extinction are also (considered) thus.

(In contrast) if one takes up (the perspective of) small production and looks at great production, (again, it) collectively exists (and) collectively there is causal (power. If one takes up) small abiding and looks at great abiding, (or if we take up) small extinction and look at great extinction, (again they) also have collective existence (and) collectively have causal (power. Taking) small production to look at the (other) five *dharmas*, (they) collectively exist even as (they) are not (individual, independent) causes. (Taking) small abiding and small extinction to look at the

(other) five *dharma*s (it is) also thus. (This) being so, (considering) the two productions of great and small, that proposition (of the opponent) takes instantaneous, collective and mutual reliance (as) arising. Abiding and extinction are also (considered) thus. Therefore, (the opponent claims) there is no mistake of (necessary) antecedence.

Third, from “for this reason...” (is the) conclusion (that) departs from the error. Below (that, Nagarjuna) lists the two (further characteristics) of abiding and extinction.

From “Answer:...” (Nagarjuna presents a) refutation (that) validly dismisses (the points covered in the rejoinder above). Therein are two (parts). Initially there are two verses. (The points) clarified are, (firstly,) a refutation (which notes this idea means) that which (is produced is) lacking that which can (produce it). The subsequent verse (provides a) refutation (which notes) that which is not yet capable (of producing must) lack that which is produced. (Now,) further explaining, the first two are a refutation (showing) the preceding and subsequent do not produce (these results). The subsequent one is a refutation (showing) simultaneity (also) does not produce (these results).

[Problems of Antecedence]

In the preceding (there are) two verses. (The) first (notes) small (production) does not produce great (production). The second (notes) great (production) does not produce small (production. With) the initial (verse) then, small production is located antecedent (to great production, while) great production is located subsequent (to small. In this case) small production does not produce

great production. (With) the subsequent (verse) then, great production is located antecedent (to small, while) small production is located subsequent (to great. In this case) great production does not produce small production.

In the subsequent explanatory verse (there are) two (parts). First, (he) records (the opponent's) reckoning (and) generally negates (it). Second, (he) explains the wherefores of the negation.

[Problems of Simultaneity]

In the second (refutation, the) refutation (based on problems of) simultaneity, (there are) three (parts). Initially (he) records (the opponent's) reckoning and generally negates (it). Second, (he) establishes a verse (with a) valid refutation. That is to say, the upper half corresponds to hypothetically (allowing the stated) circumstances. The lower half then concerns depriving (the opponent) of the principle. Third, (he) explains the refutation. The point of the refutation states, "Certainly the logic of mutual production must (admit) there are substances that can produce (even when) there are no substances from production. Now, speaking of simultaneous (production,) it is (either the case that) both are existent (or) it is (the case that) both are nonexistent. If it is both exist, what necessity (is there for) mutual production? If it is both do not exist, who (or what is) mutually produced? If it is one exists and one does not exist, how do (they) come to be simultaneous? Furthermore, how (could they) come to reciprocally produce (one another)?"

[Refutation of Mahasamghika Masters]

The second (part of explanation) refutes Mahasamghika masters (who) reckon *karmically* active characteristics self-produce (and) produce others. Therein

(we find) two (parts). Initially (Nagarjuna) records (their) reckoning and generally negates (it). Second, (he provides a) refutation using the principle to dismiss (the point). Herein (there are) two (parts). Initially there are four verses refuting the example. Subsequently (there is) one verse refuting the principle.

In the preceding (of the above two parts there are) four (subparts). First (there is) a verse clarifying a refutation (that shows when something has) already been the case (it) does not extend to (another). The second verse clarifies a refutation (showing) when (something) is (presently) the case (it also) does not extend to (another). The third verse clarifies a refutation (based on the notion of) mutual derivation of proximate and distant (causes). The fourth (is a) refutation (based on) the contradictory combination of lamp (light) and darkness.

[Refuting the Example]

[First Form of the Refutation]

In the first (of the above four there are) three (parts). In the first, a verse, the upper half clarifies the reason there is no darkness illuminated by self and other. The lower half (shows it) consequentially follows there is no lamp that can illuminate. Second, (he) explains. Third, from “For this reason...” (he provides a) concluding negation, rebuking (the opponent and) ending (the matter). Both (the second and third parts) are understandable (without further comment here).

[Second Form of the Refutation]

As for the second (of the four above), the refutation (showing) when (something) is the case (it) does not extend to (another), first (he raises a) question. The point of the question notes that when lamp (light) is initially produced the

substance (of light) is not yet formed (and) therefore within the flame there is darkness. (This) clarifies the reason (the light) is not yet (fully) ripened. (For example, when that is the case,) within a house (the lighting) is still dim. (As) the substance of the lamp (light) gradually (becomes more) perfectly (developed,) the darkness is then exhausted. One should understand the destruction of darkness is the (moment of) initially producing the lamp (light). Therefore, it says “when it is the case,” (then the process) can destroy darkness. That is to say, self-illumination is (simultaneously) illuminating the other.

Second, in the answer (to the above idea) first (Nagarjuna provides) a verse. The upper half investigates (the opponent’s) reckoning (while) the lower half validly refutes (it). That is to say, since this (view holds) when initially producing the lamp (light), darkness is already faded and extinct, for this reason in the end there is no (time when the) [225b] initially produced lamp (light) and as yet faded darkness (overlap) together. Because they do not (overlap) together, (light) also does not extend to darkness. (As it) does not extend to darkness (we) therefore do not designate it as “destroying” (darkness. On the other hand though, even) if it extends to darkness (it) also does destroy (it). The (text’s) explanation of extended action (that follows) is understandable (without further comment here).

[Third Form of the Refutation]

In the third (of the four parts), the refutation (based on the idea of) the mutual derivation of proximate and distant (causes and effects), first (he provides) a verse. The upper half records the reckoning. The lower half validly refutes (it).

In the subsequent explanation, (if one) considers both (types of “causes”) that do not extend to (effects) as causes, there are four difficulties. 1. (We might) take a proximate (cause to be) the same as a distant (cause. Given this, it) ought to be (the case) both do not destroy (the darkness). 2. (We might) take a distant (cause to be) the same as a proximate (cause. Given this,) then (it) ought to (be the case that) both destroy (the darkness). 3. If both do not extend to (the effect, i.e., the) darkness, therefore (this option) destroys the proximate (and) does not destroy the distant. Alternately, it might (be the case that) because both do not extend to (the darkness, this) destroys the distant (but) does not destroy the proximate. 4. Since there is destruction (of darkness) and no destruction (of darkness), it ought (to be the case that) there is extension to (the effect) and no extension to (the effect).

In (this) section (there are) three (parts). First he records the reckoning. Second (he provides a) valid refutation. (In the refutation) initially (he) allows (the point hypothetically, then) subsequently takes it away. Third is a concluding dismissal.

[Fourth Form of the Refutation]

The fourth (of the four parts refuting the views of Mahsamghika masters is) the refutation (based on the idea of a) mutually opposed contradictory combination. Therein (we find) two (parts). First is a verse, then an explanation. In the verse the upper half records the reckoning (while) the lower half is a refutation by the (customary) usage of “darkness.” That is to say, brightness and darkness truly oppose (one another). Since brightness has the function of illuminating darkness, darkness also ought to have the power of blocking brightness. Because of having this

power (it) is (the case that) the lamp cannot destroy the darkness. Furthermore, if (you claim) since the lamp self-illuminates (it) also illuminates the darkness, (you must accept that since) darkness also ought to self-darken, (it will) also darken the lamp. (Now as for the) the lamp, if it is darkened, how might it be able to destroy darkness? Supposing that, (the attempted) saving (rejoinder) says, “ Because brightness is superior, (it) illuminates others while in turn self-illuminating. Because darkness is inferior, it darkens itself (but) does not darken the other.” (But, given this) then, again, (Nagarjuna notes) a difficulty saying, “Brightness is superior so it can oppose darkness. Darkness is inferior so it does not oppose brightness. If (we are) using (the idea that) both mutually oppose, why is it not necessary (that they) mutually destroy (one another)?”.

(If we) thoroughly discuss (the issue of) considering both mutually opposing (factors) as causes, (then) there are also four difficulties (to note).

1. (The first is a) refutation (based on) considering the lamp (light) from (the perspective of) darkness. (In that case) the lamp (light) ought not destroy the darkness because both mutually oppose. (This is) just as (in the case of) darkness not darkening the lamp (light).

2. (The second is a) refutation (that) considers darkness from (the perspective of) lamp (light). Darkness certainly can also obstruct lamp (light) because they mutually oppose. (This is) just as (in the case of) lamp (light) being able to destroy darkness.

3. (If) lamp (light) is exactly opposed to darkness, then while the lamp (is lit), it accordingly can destroy darkness. (In this case) darkness cannot darken lamp

(light. On the other hand, if it) is also possible darkness is opposed to lamp (light), then while darkening, it accordingly can darken the lamp (light. In this case then) lamp (light) cannot destroy darkness.

4. If one destroys and one does not destroy, it ought (to be the case that) one opposes and one does not oppose. If darkness does not oppose lamp (light, then) in the lamp (light it) ought (to be the case that) there is darkness, and in darkness (it) ought (to be the case that) there is lamp (light).

Together (these four points) are understandable (without further comment. Also) the conclusion of the explanation in this section is understandable (without additional comment. The section with various) examples of refutation is (now) finished.

[Refuting the Principle]

In the second (part that) refutes the principle (there are) two (points). Initially (he) presents the reckoning, then (he) dismissingly refutes (it). In the refutation initially (he provides a) verse, then (he) explains. In the verse (he) briefly brings up (the point that) individuals do not complete production. The upper half corresponds to bringing up a refutation of future production. The lower half brings up a refutation of past production.

In the explanation (there are) two (parts). Initially (he provides) a single verse, then (he) generally concludes the gate.

[Explanation Part 1]

In the preceding (of the above two there are) two (subparts). First (he) explains production. Then, (he likewise applies this) precedent to abiding and extinction.

In the preceding (of these two there are) three (additional parts). First, (he) explains, refuting self-production. Second, (he) explains, refuting (the notion of) producing another. Third, (he) combines (the two), concluding (with a) dismissal and negation.

[First Part of Part 1]

In the first (of the three above there are) three (points). First (he renders a) judgement (based on precedent). Second, from “If the not yet produced...” [225c] (he) validly refutes (the idea). The initial (part) corresponds to a refutation of future production. Since (before future production we do) not as yet have an individual, what can self-produce? (The section) from “If (one) claims... (it) is produced already...” brings up a refutation of past production. (He notes that in this case) since (it is) already produced, what necessity (is there to) self-produce again? Third, from “For these reasons...” (he provides the) conclusion.

Second, (in the section following the refutation of self-production), from “If (the already and not yet produced) do not self-produce...” (he) refutes producing another.

Third, (from) “You assert...” (the two are) combined (and he) concludes (with a) dismissal and negation.

[Second Part of Part 1]

Second, (the next part where he applies this) precedent to abiding and extinction is understandable (without further comment here).

[Explanation Part 2]

Second, from “For these reasons...” he generally concludes (this particular) single gate.

[Refutation of *Karmically* Inactive Characteristics]

In the second (part that) refutes (the notion of) *karmically* inactive (characteristics, there are) two (subsections). Initially (he) notes (the idea that) the preceding gives rise to the subsequent. That is to say, utilizing the precedent of the emptiness of characteristics (means) that which is characterized is also empty. These *karmically* (active *dharmas* are also) empty as a result (and the) *karmically* inactive (*dharmas*) aroused subsequently (are then) also empty.

Second, in the (part with the) valid refutation, first (he provides) a valid refutation, then (he) refutes the saving (rejoinder). In the preceding (of these two), first (he) presents (the refutation), then (he) explains.

[Explanation of the Refutation]

In the explanation (there are) two (points).

First (he) refutes the (notion of an) essence of the *karmically* inactive. That is to say, (he) clarifies (the point that) extinction retires the *karmically* active. (Given) this then there is no (remaining) thing. (So) what further *dharma* is there (to be) designated as creating the *karmically* inactive? As a result (of that, one then) lacks an essence of these *karmically* inactive *dharmas*. Furthermore, since the *karmically* active are (already) empty (and) lack extinguish-ability, as a result there are no

karmically inactive (*dharmas*). Second, from “Again...”, (he) refutes *karmically* inactive characteristics. That is to say, because there are no characteristics displayed, there is no essence (so characterized). Since the three characteristics are (the marks of the) *karmically* active, lacking the three is exactly (equivalent to) lacking *dharmas*. (Consequently,) how can (one) consider the lack of *dharmas* as a characteristic? Therefore, the lack (of such *karmically* inactive *dharmas*) is (certainly the case).

[Refutation of the Rejoinder]

Second, from “If (one) claims...” (he) refutes the saving (rejoinder). Therein (we find) two (parts).

[Refutation of Essences]

First (he) refutes (the idea that) treats the essence as displaying characteristics. Second, (he) refutes the contrary (condition as) revealing characteristics. In the preceding (there are) two (points). First he records (their) reckoning and generally negates (it). Second, (he) validly refutes (it). In the valid refutation (there are) three (parts). First, (he) generally investigates known characteristics. Second, (he is) specifically concerned (with) an investigation of existent characteristics. Third, (he is) specifically concerned with an investigation of nonexistent characteristics. That is to say, if (they) exist then (that) deviates from the proposition. If nonexistent, then (they) are erroneously displayed as a result. All (these points) are understandable (without further comment).

[Refutation of Opposites]

Second, from “If (one) claims...” (he) refutes (the idea of) the opposite (as) revealing characteristics. Therein (we find) four (parts).

First, (he) records the reckoning and generally negates (it). That is to say, initially (he provides) an example, then (he mentions the) *dharma* (in question). The heterodox idea (is that characteristics) are like clothes that all have specific, descriptively verifiable characteristics. (As) only one (article of) clothing lacks (such) descriptively verifiable characteristics (they) accordingly designate this (article of) clothing (by) naming (it) the “clothing without characteristics.” (They) do not claim there is no *dharma* of this clothing but (only) consider the contrasting clothing as having characteristics. (They) speak of this (type of clothing) as “nonexistent” (and consider) *karmically* inactive (*dharmas*) as also thus. Therefore, (they say this) is not (a case of a) nonexistent *dharma*.

The second (of the four parts) explains the refutation.

The third, from “For these reasons...”, (provides the) concluding negation.

Fourth, (he) points to the subsequent refutation. That is to say, in the gate after this (one he) refutes (the notion) that (*dharmas*) have characteristics and (that) lacking characteristics is (the case). The (following) four categorical (statements) dispelling (the notion that) all (types of *dharmas*) lack (essential characteristics and) do not return to emptiness are understandable (without further comment here).

The Gate of Contemplating Existent Characteristics and Nonexistent Characteristics

The Fifth (Gate)

[The *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*] [cont. 163c]

Again, all *dharmas* are empty (of a self-nature).

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:)

The characteristics of existent characteristics do not characterize.

Nonexistent characteristics also do not characterize.

Apart from the characterized and not characterized,

Characteristics are what (sort of thing) which characterize?

Among phenomena with characteristics, characteristics do not characterize (anything).

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If *dharmas* antecedently have characteristics, of what further use are (additional) characteristics?

Again, if it is the case that among phenomena with characteristics, characteristics (still) come to characterize (them), then there are two errors of characterization. The first is (the error of) antecedently existent characteristics (and) the second (is the error of) characteristics that come to characterize. Therefore, among phenomena that (already) have characteristics, characteristics lack that which (needs to be) characterized. Among phenomena without characteristics, characteristics also lack that which (can be) characterized. (This being the case,) what *dharma* (can be) designated as lacking characteristics even while still considering it as characterized by having characteristics? This is like an elephant that has two tusks, a hanging trunk, a head with three protuberances, ears like winnowing baskets, a spine like a curved bow, a belly that is large and droops, a tail with hair at the end, and four legs that are chunky and round. These constitute the characteristics of the elephant. If we depart from these characteristics then there is no other existent elephant that may be characterized by characteristics. In this fashion, amidst existent characteristics, characteristics lack that which (they) characterize. (Furthermore,) amidst a lack of characteristics, characteristics also lack that which (they) characterize. Apart from having characteristics and lacking characteristics there is no third (type of) *dharma* that may be characterized by characteristics. For these reasons characteristics lack that which (they) characterize. Because characteristics lack that which [164a] (they) characterize, *dharmas* that are characterizable are also not established.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) It is by means of characteristics that we therefore (come to) know these phenomena designated as characterizable. (But) for these causes and

conditions therefore the characteristics (which designate) and the characterizable (which is so designated) are both empty (of a self-nature). Because characteristics and the characterizable are (both) empty (of a self-nature), the myriad things are also (all) empty (of a self-nature).

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Apart from characteristics and the characterizable there is no further existent thing. Because (all such) things are nonexistent, nonthings are also nonexistent. It is by the extinction of a thing that (such a state is) therefore designated as lacking the thing. If it is the case that there is no thing, then what is that which is extinguished? For this reason, (such an absence of a thing) is designated as “lacking the thing.” Since things and the lack of things are both empty (of a self-nature), therefore all *karmically* active *dharmas* are empty. Since *karmically* active *dharmas* are empty, therefore *karmically* inactive *dharmas* are also empty. Since *karmically* active and *karmically* inactive (*dharmas*) are empty, therefore the self is also empty.

[End of Chapter Five of the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*]

[Commentary by Fa-tsang]

(There are) four sections (in this chapter, just) like the preceding (one).

[The Name of the Gate]

1. As for explaining the name, in regards to the two aspects of existence and nonexistence, (this gate) investigates and dispels their characteristics. (The chapter) consequently takes (its) name from the (errors) dispelled.

[Derivation of the Ideas]

2. As for deriving the ideas, while the preceding gate refuted characteristics, fearing (the reader) is still not yet awakened (to the key point, he) demands further (explanation. Namely,) among *dharmas* that may be characterized, existent characteristics therefore characterize; nonexistent characteristics (also) therefore characterize. As both (together) therefore characterize, for this reason (a need for further elaboration) arrives.

[The Propositions Clarified]

3. As for that which is clarified, existent and nonexistent (notions) are all [226a] exhausted. Without lodging, (a mindset) near to emptiness is (then possible).

[Explanation]

4. The explanatory section has four (parts). First, (he) presents (the point). Second, (he) explains (it). Third, (he) concludes (and) fourth, (he) categorically (negates the errors).

[Presentation of the Point]

Within the first (of the four parts above), as for (the reference to) “all *dharmas*,” (these) are the *karmically* active and the *karmically* inactive (*dharmas* which) are all empty.

[Explanation of the Point]

2. In the explanation (there are) two (parts). First, (he) investigates and presents (the key points and) briefly refutes (them). Subsequently he explains the verse and broadly refutes (the errors).

In the former (of the above two he) initially (considers the) rationale, investigating and presenting (the idea). That is to say, (he investigates the question of) how (one) comes to know that all *dharmas* are empty. Subsequently he establishes a verse and briefly explains. Therein the first section refutes existent characteristics. The second refutes nonexistent characteristics. The third refutes both and the fourth concludes (with) emptiness.

In the second (of the above two parts of the explanation, the part that) broadly explains, (there are) three (points). Initially he explains, refuting existent (characteristics). Second, (he) refutes (their) nonexistence. Third, (he) refutes both.

[Refutation of Existent Characteristics]

In the first (of these three parts there are) three (subparts). Initially (he notes that) taking away (defining characteristics) leads to losing the (the essential) characteristic and refutes (its) existence. The presentation and explanation (in this section) are understandable (without further comment here). Second, (he) grants (the hypothetical) then (shows that) the two characteristics are refuted. That is to say, (he addresses) the rationale for the two characteristics of “new” and “old.” Third, from “For these reasons...” (he provides a) concluding negation.

[Refutation of Nonexistent Characteristics]

In the second (part that) refutes nonexistent (characteristics), first (he) presents (the key point). Subsequently he brings up phenomena, explaining and revealing (the point). Previously, in (the section that) refutes existent (characteristics), by considering attachment to existence, (he shows) there is no (arising) that can characterize. Because of lacking that which can characterize, (one) also lacks that which is characterized. (Now) in this (part), by considering attachment to nonexistence, (he shows) there is no (arising) which is characterized. As a result of lacking that which is characterized, (one) also lacks (that which) can characterize. This is the point of the passage.

[Refutation of Both]

Third, from “In this fashion...” (there are) sentences explaining and refuting both (possibilities combined). Considering (the point that) apart from (the) two (possibilities already covered) there is no third (option), therefore emptiness is (finally the case).

[Concluding Negation]

Third, from “For these reasons...” (is) the third (point where he) generally (summarizes with a) concluding negation.

[Categorically Dispelling the Errors]

In the fourth (section where he) categorically dispels (the errors there are) six (points):

1. The presentation and explanation categorically dispelling the existence of *dharmas* by (means of) characteristics is understandable (without further comment).

2. (Here he provides) a presentation and explanation that uses one to categorically dispel the (notion that the) many are also existent.

3. By existence (he) categorically dispels nonexistence.

4. By (the notion of a) “thing” (he) categorically dispels (the notion of) *karmically* active (*dharmas*).

5. (He) categorically dispels (the notion of) *karmically* inactive (*dharmas*).

6. (He) categorically dispels (the notion of a) self.

Therefore (at this point he) completes the above (refutation of the errors and) presents the principle that all *dharmas* are empty.

The Gate of Contemplating Identity and Difference

The Sixth (Gate)

[The *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*] [cont. 164a]

Again, all *dharmas* are empty (of a self-nature).
(Question:) For what reason?
(Answer:)

(As for) characteristics and the characterizable,
neither their identity nor their difference is attainable.
If there is neither identity nor difference,
how can these two be established?

(As for) this (pair of) characteristics and the characterizable, if (their) identity is not attainable, (their) difference too is not attainable. If neither (their) identity nor (their) difference is attainable, then these two are not established. For these reasons both characteristics and the characterizable are empty (of a self-nature). Because characteristics and the characterizable are empty, all *dharmas* are empty.

Question: Characteristics and the characterizable are always established. Why (do you assert) they are not established? You assert that the identity or difference of characteristics and the characterizable is not attainable. Now (instead) you should assert that (in regards to) every thing either characteristics are exactly the characterizable, or characteristics are different from the characterizable, or (things are) partially characteristics and the remainder the characterizable.

(The first possibility is) like, (for example, where) the characteristic of consciousness is awareness and apart from the awareness which is functional there is no further consciousness. (Similarly,) the characteristic of sensation is sensing and apart from the sensing which is functional there is no further sensation. Just like this the various characteristics are exactly the characterizable.

(The second possibility is) like the Buddha said, extinguishing desire is designated *nirvana*. Desire is a *karmically* active *dharma* with *karmic* outflows.⁵³ Extinction is a *karmically* inactive *dharma* lacking *karmic* outflows. It is like a believer who has three characteristics: (he) enjoys approaching good people, joyfully wants to hear the *Dharma*, and enjoys practicing charity. Because these three phenomena are *karmas* of body and speech, (they) are that which the form *skandha* includes.⁵⁴ Because faith is a *dharma* of mental conditions, it is that which the *samskara skandha* includes. These designated characteristics and (their associated) characterizable are different.

(Furthermore, the third possibility is) like the right views which are a characteristic of the (Eightfold Noble) Path. In regards to that Path (right views) are (one) small part. Furthermore, production, abiding, and extinction are *karmically* active characteristics. In regards to *karmically* active *dharmas*, (these three) are

(one) small part (of the larger group). In this fashion, among the characterizable a part is designated as the characteristics.

For these reasons either characteristics are exactly the characterizable, or characteristics are different from the characterizable, or part of the characterizable constitutes characteristics. (Now, as for) your assertion that because the identity and/or difference of characteristics and the characterizable is not established, (and therefore) characteristics and the characterizable are not established, this matter is (simply) not the case. (So, what then is the problem here?)

Answer: You state, "either characteristics are the characterizable," (and illustrate claiming this is) like consciousness, and so on. But this matter is not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer: It must be so) because that which is knowable by characteristics is designated as the "characterizable" (while) that which functionally (indicates the knowable) is designated as the "characteristic." **[164b]** All things are not capable of self (-indicating) knowledge, just like a finger is not capable of touching itself (and) an eye is not capable of seeing itself. Therefore (as for) your assertion that consciousness is exactly a characteristic and the characterizable, this matter is not the case.

Again, if it is the case that the characteristic is the characterizable, we ought not be able to differentiate (between) this characteristic and (that) characterizable. If it is the case (we can) differentiate between this characteristic and (that) characterizable, (then we) ought not claim the characteristic is exactly the characterizable.

Again, if it is the case characteristics are exactly the characterizable, then cause and effect are one (and the same). How then (could we know the) characteristic is a cause and the characterizable is an effect? (In such a case) these two are one (and the same) when in fact they are not one (and the same). Therefore (as for the notion that) characteristics are exactly the characterizable, (well,) this matter is (simply) not the case.

(Alternately, if) you assert it is the case that characteristics differ from the characterizable, (then) this too is not the case. You assert that extinguished desire is a characteristic of *nirvana* (while) not asserting that desire is a characteristic of *nirvana*. If you assert that desire is a characteristic of *nirvana*, you should speak of a difference between the characteristic and the characterizable. (On the other hand,) if you say it is the case that extinguished desire is a characteristic of *nirvana*, then (you) do not get to speak of a difference between the characteristic and the characterizable.

Furthermore, you assert believers have three characteristics (but in fact) both (the believer and the characteristics) do not differ. If believers lack (the characteristics of) belief, (they) therefore lack these three phenomenal (characteristics that mark them as "believers"). As a result (we) do not attain a difference between characteristics and the characterizable.

Furthermore, as for (the notion of) a difference between characteristics and the characterizable, characteristics (themselves) also ought to have characteristics. (In that case this) then constitutes (a regress) without end. (In fact) though, this

matter is not the case. Therefore characteristics and the characterizable do not come to differ.

Question: Just like a lamp that can illuminate itself and also illuminate other (things), similarly a characteristic can characterize itself and also characterize other (things. So, what is the problem here?)

Answer: Your claim regarding the lamp example has been refuted already in (the earlier section dealing with the) three (types of) *karmically* active characteristics. Furthermore, you contradict yourself (with an) earlier assertion. Above you said characteristics and the characterizable differ. Now however you say characteristics can self-characterize and also characterize others. This matter (simply cannot) be so.

Furthermore you asserted that the parts amidst the characterizable are characteristics. (But) this matter (too simply cannot) be so.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) The meaning of this (point lies) either in their identity or in (their) difference. Because the notion of identity and/or difference has been previously refuted already, we should understand (that the notion of the characterizable, as) in part characteristics, is also refuted.

In this fashion (as for the) characteristics and/or characterizable (associated with) various causes and conditions, their identity may not be attained nor may their difference be attained. There is no further third *dharmā* that forms characteristics or the characterizable. Therefore characteristics and the characterizable are both empty (of a self-nature).

[End of Chapter Six of the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*]

[Commentary by Fa-tsang]

[The Name of the Gate]

First, as for explaining the name, (he uses this chapter title) because (notions of) identity and difference are that which are dispelled. (We can) further state (he) dispels identity and difference by advancing to true emptiness and therefore (this is) taken as a “gate.”

[Derivation of the Ideas]

Second, as for deriving the ideas, the preceding (gate) uses existence and nonexistence to refute characteristics (such that notions of) the characterizable are already exhausted. But, by yet again having a gate of identity and difference to

repeatedly refute (the error, he) causes the attached mind (to be) forever exhausted (while an understanding of) the true principle is stabilized. For this reason (he) concludes (by addressing) the identity and difference of characteristics and the characterizable, and (also) both (together) while yet again refuting (the error).

[The Propositions Clarified]

Third, as for that which is clarified, (it) is (the point that) by refuting the identity and difference of characteristics and the characterizable (so that) both are exhausted (he) leads the contemplative mind to illuminate the principle (of emptiness).

[Explanation]

Fourth, in explaining the passage (there are) two (parts). The first part presents the proposition. Subsequently he explains and refutes (the error). In the refutation (there are) two (points). Initially (he provides a) valid refutation. Subsequently (he) refutes the saving (rejoinder).

[Initial Refutation]

In the first (of the above two there are) three (subparts). Initially (he quotes a) verse. The upper half refutes (the notions of) identity and difference. The lower half refutes (the notions of) characteristics and the characterizable. (This part) also concludes (with their) nonexistence.

Second, (he) explains (the verse). That is to say, (the idea is) if they are identical, then characteristics lack the ability to display (the characterizable. This is) because (the characteristic) is the same as that which is characterized. (But) if they are different, (then that too) does not constitute displaying (the characterizable.

This is) because (characteristics then) do not mutually cause (the characterizable to be evident. This is) because (each) is the same as (the) other *dharma*. Consequently it says “(their) identity and/or difference is not attainable.” From “(their) identity and/or difference is not attainable...” explains the lower half (of the verse and) is understandable (without further comment here).

Third, from “For this reason...” (he) categorically dispels (the error,) [226b] concluding the proposition.

[Refutation of the Rejoinder]

Second, in (the part where he) refutes the saving (rejoinder, there are) two (points). Initially (he presents the) heterodox (response). Then (he) explains the refutation.

[The Rejoinder]

In the saving (rejoinder we see that) by hearing characteristics and *dharmas* are both empty and attachments to sensations lack support, (the opponent) consequently takes hold of forms like phenomena, (trying to) categorically save the two relations. Furthermore, in regards to the explanation, the verse dispelling phenomena is complete yet human sensations (create) many delusions. Consequently it is necessary to provisionally establish the heterodox saving (rejoinder to) broadly refute that which is misleading.

Therein (there are) three (parts). First (Nagarjuna) records the (opponent’s) frightened rebuke of (his initial) refutation. Second, (he shows how the opponent) establishes characteristics to save *dharmas*. Third (he) concludes, (showing that) the (opponent’s) refutation, (allegedly disproving Nagarjuna’s view,) is not the case.

In the second (of the above three, the) saving (rejoinder that) establishes characteristics, (there are) two (parts). First, (Nagarjuna) reveals three sections (that are) accordingly (intended to) overturn the above three parts (of his argument). Subsequently he explains three matters (in a discussion that) forms three sections.

[Identical]

In the first (part, the one which) explains identity, (there are) two (points). First, (the opponent) brings up the two examples of consciousness and sensation. Just as consciousness takes comprehension specifically as (its) characteristic, and also takes comprehension specifically as (its) essence, sensations are also like this. Second, from “In this fashion...” he concludes the proposition.

[Different]

In the second (of the three parts, the one which) explains difference, (there are) also two (points). First (the opponent) brings up the two examples of extinction and belief. Subsequently, from “These designated...” he concludes. In the preceding (of these two he first deals with) external (*dharmas*). That is to say, (he addresses) the (notion that the) extinction of desire differs from *nirvana*. Subsequently (he notes that) considering these three phenomena (as located) with the body and speech, (means they) belong to the form *skandha*. (But) belief is an (internal) mental *dharma* (and) belongs to the consciousness *skandha*. (Even so, he claims that) externally seeing there are these three (external) phenomena (of faith means one then) knows internally there is a faithful mind. For this reason, (*dharmas* of) form

and the mind create characteristics and consequently, (he claims, we) know (they) are different.

[Both Identical and Different]

In the third (of the three parts, the one which explains the idea that characteristics and the characterizable are) both the same and different, (there are) two (points). First (the opponent) brings up two examples. Subsequently (he) concludes (the point).

[First Example]

In the first (the opponent) initially brings up the example of Right Views. That is to say, Right Views are the essence of the (Eightfold Noble) Path and therefore (a) small part (of the whole) is characterizable (by that whole. Yet,) again it is a branch of the Eightfold Noble Middle Path and therefore a small part is, (in turn, that which) can characterize (the whole). Furthermore, Right Views are wisdom. Right (Views) are a universal essence of the Truth of the Path. (This being) the case, (it) is one number among the Eight (Noble Truths and) consequently is referred to as a “small part.” (But, it is) universal (to all eight and) consequently is (that which) can characterize (the whole. Even so, it is a) specific (part and) consequently constitutes a characterizable (element of the whole).

[Second Example]

(In the) second (of the above section’s two parts) he brings up examples of the three characteristics. That is to say, corresponding to the 75 *dharmas* of the *Hinayana* (schools) the division constitutes (the) two groups (of *dharmic* types). The preceding 72 are *karmically* active (*dharmas*). The subsequent three are *karmically*

inactive (*dharmas*. Now) in regards to (those *dharmas*) in the *karmically* active group, the three universal (aspects of) production, abiding, and extinction, along with all *karmically* active *dharmas*, create characteristics. (Their) particular substance is again, a small part within the count (of members) among the *karmically* active *dharmas*. For this reason, if it is the case that (these three), along with the *karmically* active (*dharmas*) which are characterized (by them), are not different, (then one) ought not, in regards to (the members) in the (group of) *karmically* active *dharmas*, expound these three (characteristics of production, abiding, and extinction. On the other hand) if it is the case that (these three), along with the *karmically* active (*dharmas*), are not identical, (then their) particular (substance then) ought not be encompassed by (the group of) *karmically* active (*dharmas*). For these reasons (one) ought to understand (they apparently must) be both identical and different. Subsequently, from “In this fashion...” (he) concludes.

[Conclusion of Both]

Third, from “For this reason either characteristics...” (he) generally concludes, (attempting to) negate and refute (Nagarjuna’s claims. This part) is understandable (without further comment here).

[Explanation of the Refutation of the Rejoinder]

In the second (part where Nagarjuna) explains the refutation, (he) refutes the above three reckonings. The section accordingly forms three (parts).

[Identical]

In the first (of those three, the part where he) refutes (their) identity, (there are) also three (subparts).

First is a refutation (based on the idea that) *dharmas* lack (the capability to) self-indicate. Therein (he makes) three (points). Initially (he) records the attachment and generally negates (it). Second, (he) explains the wherefores of the negation. Third, from “For these reasons...” (he) concludes the negation, rebuking (and) ending (the error). In (the part) concerning the explanation, (he) claims that which is characterized is certainly known by characteristics and hence is designated as the “characterizable.” The indicator which is functional is designated as the “characteristic.” For this reason the characteristic and that which is characterized are not identical. If it were the case (they were) identical (then) the individual could indicate (itself and that to which it) points ought [226c] to be the individual alone. (This) counters the counterproof.

Second, from “Again, ...” (he presents a) refutation (based on) characteristics losing the capability to (characterize) or (to be) that which is (characterized). As for “If they are identical...” (this) means (one) ought not differentiate (between) “this is the characteristic” (and) “this is the characterizable.” (On the other hand though, he notes) if (you) neglect to differentiate, your (position) ought to be (considered) contradictory (and it) consequently has words without significance.

Third, from “Again, ...” (he presents a) refutation (based on) a confusion of causes and effects. Initially he presents (the point). Next, (he) explains (it). Subsequently (he) concludes. (All these three) together are understandable (without further comment).

[Different]

Second, in (the following part where he) refutes (their) difference (there are) two (points). Initially (he provides a) valid refutation. Subsequently (he) refutes the saving (rejoinder).

[Valid Refutation]

Within the first (there are) two (subpoints). Initially he records (their) reckoning and generally negates (it). Subsequently (he) specifically refutes (it and) explains the negation.

[Examples]

Therein initially (he) specifically refutes two examples. Subsequently (he) generally indicates (the associated problem of a regress) without exhaustion.

[First Example]

In the preceding (of the two parts just mentioned) initially he refutes the first example. That is to say, (if) desire is extinguished then (*nirvana*) lacks characteristics. (But if) desire exists (then) again (it) is not a characteristic of *nirvana*.

[Second Example]

Second, (in the section) refuting characteristics of the believer there are two (points). First is a refutation (based on their) lack of difference. That is to say, (suppose) there is a hypocrite (who) actually lacks a faithful mind and yet falsely presents (himself as) having these three characteristics, how is it (that he) has a faith whereby (in comparison) with the (truly) faithful, (his faith) is not distinguished? Consequently (Nagarjuna) says both (cases) are not different faiths. Furthermore the idea of this Treatise seemingly takes the three phenomenal

(characteristics) and faith as (if they are) not distinguished and consequently says (they) do not differ. (By doing so, the Author) thereby (skillfully) refutes their difference.

Second, (he presents a) refutation (based on the idea that the key criteria) are not determined. That is to say, (he notes) you know there is faith by means of the three phenomenal (characteristics. Given this,) then faith is the characterizable (and) the three are (that which) can characterize. Now, furthermore, by means of the principle (we can) deduce then that due to having faith, therefore (at that point in time one) begins to be able to produce these three phenomenal (characteristics). For this reason the three phenomenal (characteristics) contrarily are the characterizable. Therefore (he) states that lacking faith, (one) lacks the three phenomenal (characteristics. He) further demands (an answer of the opponent) saying, “(According to) your (view, when one) does not yet (have) charity, and so on, before (that time) is there this faithful mind or not? If there is, by what characteristics is it known? If not, (then) based upon what (does one) subsequently arouse charity?” Therefore (it) is said (that the opponent’s view is incorrect).

[Regress]

Second, in (the part with) the refutation (based on) indicating (a regress) without end, (he notes) the characterizable certainly is *karmically* active (and) specifically there are *dharmas* that can characterize (it. That which) can characterize is *karmically* active (and in turn) ought to also specifically have *dharmas* that can characterize (it). In this fashion then, (we encounter another regress) without end.

[Refutation of the Rejoinder]

Second, in (the next part where he) refutes the (attempt at a) saving (rejoinder), initially (he presents) the (attempted) save, subsequently (he) refutes (it). In the refutation (there are) two (parts). Initially (he) points out (this) is the same as the preceding refutation. Subsequently (he presents a) refutation (based on showing the opponent's) own language is contradictory. Furthermore, it is also possible (to interpret this section as) initially refuting an example and subsequently refuting the principle. (This section) is understandable (without further comment here).

[Both Identical and Different]

Third, in the part refuting both, first (he) presents (the idea and generally) negates (it). Subsequently he explains the refutation. That is to say, (he) points out (this) is the same as the refutations of the above two gates (concerning their possible identity or difference. This is the case) because (this third option) is not separate from (the possibilities of their) identity or difference.

Third, from "In this fashion..." (he finishes with a) concluding negation.

Fourth, from "For these reasons..." he categorically dispels (the opponent's views. Both the third and fourth parts here) are understandable (without further comment).

The Gate of Contemplating Existence and Nonexistence

The Seventh (Gate)

[The *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*] [cont. 164b]

Again, all *dharmas* are empty (of a self-nature).

(Question:) For what reason?

Simultaneous existence and nonexistence is not attainable. Nonsimultaneous (existence and nonexistence) are also not attainable. As the (text) states:

Existence and nonexistence do not simultaneously exist.

Separate from nonexistence, existence is also nonexistent.

(If) there is existence (which) is not separate from nonexistence, existence then ought to be eternally nonexistent.

The nature of existence and nonexistence is mutually opposed. (So) both should not exist within one *dharma*. (This is) just like at the time of production there is no [164c] extinction and at the time of extinction there is no production. This issue has already been discussed in (my) *Treatise on the Middle Way*.⁵⁵

(Now,) if (one) claims it is the case that there is no error (with the idea that) apart from nonexistence there is existence, (then) this matter is (simply) not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Apart from nonexistence how (could one) claim there is existence?

Just as previously stated, when *dharmas* are produced through (the arising of a) form itself the seven (types of) *dharmas* are (all) produced together. (This is just) like it states in the (various) *Abhidharma* texts. (So) existence and nonexistence are always produced together. The absence of permanence [i.e., abiding] is the characteristic of extinction. Therefore (extinction) is designated as lacking (abiding- the characteristic of existence). For this reason existence is not produced separate from nonexistence.

(Alternately,) if it is the case that there is a production of existence that is not separate from the absence of permanence [i.e., abiding], then existence is always (characterized by) the absence of (abiding). If it is the case that existence is always (characterized by) the absence (of abiding, then from the) beginning there is no abiding. (If this is the case,) then (the characteristic of) permanence [i.e., abiding] is destroyed. Yet, in fact, there is abiding. For this reason existence is not always (and simply) nonexistent.

(Now,) if (one claims) it is the case that there always is the production of existence separate from nonexistence, this matter (too is simply) not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Separate from nonexistence it is always (the case that) existence is, in fact, not produced.

Question: When existence is produced, (then at that time) there is already and always nonexistence even as it is not yet initiated. When extinction (arises),

then it initiates the destruction of this existent. In this fashion production, abiding, and extinction decline. (In order to) obtain, each awaits the (appropriate) time and (is then) initiated. When an existent arises, production is considered functional and this leads to the production of the existent. In the interval between production and extinction abiding is considered functional and (it) supports this existent. When extinction (begins, then) the absence of permanence is functional and so it extinguishes this existent. Decline changes production to abiding and changes abiding to extinction. (In this fashion,) the absence of permanence then comes to destroy permanence and leads to the completion of the four phenomena. For these reasons, although *dharmas* are produced together with the absence of permanence, existence is not always (produced with) nonexistence. (So, what is the problem here?)

Answer: You assert that the absence of permanence is the characteristic of extinction and (that it) is produced together with the existent. (If this is the case, then) when produced, the existent ought to decay and when decaying the existent ought to be produced.

Again, production and extinction are both nonexistent.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) When extinction (is the case we) ought not have production. When production (is the case we) ought not have extinction. (This must be the case) because of the mutual opposition of production and extinction.

Again, (according to) you the absence of permanence, (which is the characteristic of extinction,) and the abiding of *dharmas* are produced together. When the existent decays, it should (then) lack abiding. (On the other hand,) if it abides, then (it ought to) lack decay.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer: This is the case) because of the mutual opposition of abiding and decay. When the (*dharma* is) aging it lacks abiding. When (it is) abiding it lacks decay. Therefore (as for) your assertion that production, abiding, extinction, aging, and the absence of permanence originally come to be produced together, this (idea) is confused.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If this existent is produced together with the absence of permanence, (and) the absence of permanence is the characteristic of decay, (then) when (actually) produced all things also (and contradictorily) lack the characteristic of decay. (Furthermore,) when abiding (they) also (and contradictorily) lack the characteristic of decay. At such times is it not (the case that) there is no characteristic of the absence of permanence? (This is) like (that) which can be aware and is therefore designated as consciousness, (while that which is) not capable of awareness lacks the characteristic of consciousness. (Also, that which is) capable of sensing is designated as sensation, (while that which is) not capable of sensing lacks the characteristic of sensation. (Similarly, that which is) capable of reflection is therefore designated as thought, (while that which is) not capable of reflection then lacks the characteristic of thought. Arising is the characteristic of production. Not arising is then not the characteristic of production. Maintaining is the characteristic of abiding (and) not maintaining is then not the characteristic of

abiding. Transformation is the characteristic of aging. Not transforming is then not the characteristic of aging. The extinction of life is the characteristic of death. Life not ending is then not the characteristic of death. In this fashion decay is [165a] the characteristic of the absence of permanence (while any characteristic) separate from decay is not the characteristic of the absence of permanence. If (it is the case that) during the time of production and abiding, although there is the absence of permanence, it is not capable of decaying the existent, (while) subsequently it is the case that it can decay the existent, (then) what is the use of having (the absence of permanence) produced together with (production and abiding)? In this fashion it should (be the case that), in accord with when existence decays, then there is the absence of permanence. Therefore, as for (the idea that) the absence of permanence, although it is produced together with (production and abiding, only) subsequently decays the existent, this matter is not the case.

In this fashion existence and nonexistence are not established together and are also not established separately. Therefore existence and nonexistence are empty (of a self-nature). Existence and nonexistence are empty so all *karmically* active (*dharmas*) are empty. All *karmically* active (*dharmas*) are empty so *karmically* inactive (*dharmas*) are also empty. *Karmically* active and *karmically* inactive (*dharmas*) are empty so (all) collective productions [i.e., sentient beings] are also empty.

[End of Chapter Seven of the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*]

[Commentary by Fa-tsang]

[The Name of the Gate]

First, as for explaining the name (of this gate, the characteristics of) production and abiding are existent, (while) the characteristic of extinction is nonexistent. (If one) seeks these, (one finds) the principles of existence and nonexistence are not established, and therefore (this type of investigation) is considered a “gate.”

[Derivation of the Ideas]

Second, as for the derivation of the ideas, because the (previous) gate of identity and difference repeatedly revealed and lead to a firm (understanding) of the (correct) principle, it eliminated grasping views (and) as a consequence this

(next point) is broadly derived (from that). As for the specifics, the preceding (gate) corresponds to a refutation of the characteristic and the characterizable. This (gate) concerns a refutation (based on a) mutual opposition within that which is characterized. Consequently (the point here) is derived (from the earlier gate).

[The Propositions Clarified]

Third, as for that which is clarified, (we can) say (it) concerns the individual, mutual opposition of existence and nonexistence within the four characteristics. (They) do not obtain (in) the same, single [227a] moment. Accordingly, (one) loses (the) *karmically* active *dharmas*. By distinguishing true emptiness (the text) leads to establishing Right Contemplation as a result.

[Explanation]

Fourth, in explaining the text (there are) four (parts). First, (Nagarjuna) presents (the main point). Second, (he) explains (it). Third, (he) concludes (the refutation) and, fourth, (he) categorically (dismisses the error).

[Presentation of the Main Point]

In the first (of the above four parts there are) two (points). Initially he presents and explains (the notion of) ongoing (strings of *dharmic*) activity producing existents. Subsequently (he) establishes a verse briefly distinguishing (key points). Taking the Sarvastivada (view that) establishes the substance of the four characteristics as simultaneously complete, because (those characteristics) form *karmically* active (*dharmas*, they claim that by) utilizing the preceding, subsequent (*dharmas*) are brought forth. (They claim this is possible) because (such a process) departs from the (problems of) mutual opposition (among the

characteristics of *dharmas*. Nagarjuna) refutes this idea saying the preceding and subsequent are not *karmically* active. (This is an) error of the mutual opposition of (characteristics with) the same essence. Furthermore, in the (*Treatise on Establishing Mind Only*, the preceding three (characteristics occur in) the same one moment (while only) the subsequent moment then extends to extinction. (They claim) those (subsequent moments) thusly destroy the *karmically* active (preceding *dharmic* moment). As a result at each and every moment (in such a string one can) consider that the characteristics are not complete.

In the verse, the first part refutes simultaneity. The next part refutes (the temporal sequence of) preceding and subsequent. That is to say, separating (the (first three characteristics) from the nonexistence of the characteristic of extinction leads to (a situation where) the existence of production and abiding also does not attain existence. Therefore (Nagarjuna) says, “apart from nonexistence, existence also is nonexistent.”

From “Because (they) are not *karmically* active...” (the) second part (of Nagarjuna’s refutation) explains the verses of the first part. Because the existence of production and abiding is not separate from the nonexistence of the characteristic of extinction, accordingly then existence must constitute that which is harmed by nonexistence. Consequently (existence) is eternally nonexistent. Furthermore, (he) also ought to say (if) there is nonexistence that is not separate from existence, nonexistence then ought to constantly exist. (Even) further, (he) ought to have an explanation (concerning) the second part of the above (verse. This should include) an analysis of preceding and subsequent (temporal sequencing that) says, “If there

is existence apart from nonexistence, existence then is not *karmically* active.” But (as covered in the text, this point is) false (only) on account of the verse (itself).

[Explanation of the Main Point]

Second, in the explanation (there are) two (subparts). First (he provides a) valid refutation. Subsequently (he) refutes the (attempt at a) saving (rejoinder).

[Valid Refutation]

In the preceding (of these two there are) four (points). First (he) explains the first part of the verse. It is like the *Middle Treatise’s* chapter on “Formation and Destruction” states:

Apart from formation and even together with formation,
herein there is no destruction.
Apart from destruction and even together with destruction,
herein also there is no formation.

(In) the second (of the four parts, the part) from “If (one) claims...” (he) explains the second part of the verse. Therein (we find) two (points). Initially (he) records the attachment (and) generally negates (it). Second, in explaining the negation (he notes that) the characteristic of extinction within the seven *dharmas* is nonexistent, (while) the others are all existent. Furthermore, existence is the essence of *dharmas* (and) is produced along with the characteristic of the absence of permanence. With the absence of permanence, since (it) completes extinction, (we) clearly know that apart from nonexistence, existence does not come to be produced.

Third, from “If (it) is not separate from...” (he) explains the verses of the following two parts. Therein (we find) three (points). First (he) brings up the error. Subsequently (he provides) an explanation that inverts (the point). In the inverting explanation (he shows that) because (it) is not separate from the nonexistence of

extinction, this existence is eternally nonexistent. Because initial production is (immediately) destroyed (and) extinguished, (it) cannot come to reach (a point of) abiding. Therefore (he) says “From the beginning...” etc. Furthermore, is it not (the case that an existent *dharma* already and) for a while yet has (the characteristic of) abiding? Therefore (he) says, (“Yet, in fact, there is abiding”). Third, the concluding negation is understandable (without further comment here).

Fourth, from “If (it) is separate from...” (he) explains the passage on existents that should (be the case as described) in the verse. Considering (the notion that) apart from the characteristics of impermanence, extinction, etc, there is as yet still the production of *karmically* active *dharmas*, etc., (then in that case they are) all not possible.

[The Rejoinder]

In the second (part, the part where he) refutes the (attempted) saving (rejoinder, there are) two (points). Initially (he presents the) heterodox save. Then (he) explains the refutation. In the (presentation of the attempted) save (there are) three (parts).

First (the rejoinder) establishes the simultaneity of essences and consequently (claims this view) lacks the above error of nonproduction.

Second, from “In this fashion...” explains five matters, clarifying functional antecedence and subsequence as a result. That is to say, (the opponent claims the existence of *dharmas* occurs) when the functionality of circumstances exists. (That being so, he asks,) how (does this) allow for the rebuke that there is eternal nonexistence?

Furthermore, (the opponent claims) production restrains extinction and does not lead to a severing (of the two. Likewise) abiding can restrain production and not lead to **[227b]** an increase. (Finally,) extinction restrains abiding (but) does not lead to an (absolute) division. Difference pervades the (relationship between the) preceding and subsequent. That is to say, changing production leads to abiding, and so forth. Furthermore, that (view) reckons that in one moment the initiation of the moment is the functioning of the characteristic of production. The moment's next (instant) is the functioning of the characteristic of abiding. The moment's subsequent (and final instant) is the functioning of the characteristic of extinction. Consequently (*dharmic*) functions have an antecedent and subsequent (temporal progression). As for "(In order to) obtain...", (it claims) these four universal (characteristics) are designated as not correspondingly active. A *dharmas'* previous (characteristics such as) "obtaining" [i.e., initiation], and the like, (are all) like stringing things (together in a single sequence). That is to say, the major and minor characteristics obtain (and) lead to the constant completion of the four characteristics (in sequence).

Third, from "Therefore..." (the opponent provides the) concluding negation. (No further comment is required here).

[Refutation of the Rejoinder]

In the second (part here, the part with the) valid refutation (of the rejoinder), initially (Nagarjuna) refutes the simultaneous completion of essences. Subsequently (he) refutes the antecedent and subsequent issuance of functions.

[Refutation of Simultaneous Completion]

In the first (of the above two parts) initially (he) refutes the extinction of production. Subsequently (he) refutes the aging of abiding. In the preceding (of these two points there are also) two (subpoints). Initially (he provides a) refutation (showing that) the dismissal of change (means) reciprocity is lost. Second, from “Again,...” (he provides a) refutation clarifying (that) mutual opposition (means) both are lost. There is a presentation and explanation (of these points) that is understandable (without further comment here).

In the second (part where he) refutes abiding and aging, initially (he) presents the point and subsequently (he) explains it. Also there is a refutation (illustrating the) mutual opposition (arising from) dismissal of change.

Third, from “Therefore...” (he) generally concludes (the opponent’s view is) confused. (Here there is a) presentation and an explanation (that) are understandable (without further elaboration).

[Refutation of Sequential Functions]

Second, from “(This is) like (that which) can be aware...” (Nagarjuna) refutes the antecedent and subsequent issuance of functions. Therein (he makes) three (points).

The first (point) is a refutation that brings up phenomenal examples. That is to say, that heterodox reckoning claims at the time of production, although there is already the essence of destruction, (it) has not yet issued forth. (It also holds that) when (an arising is) extinct, then it is the case (destruction has) issued forth. (Nagarjuna) refutes (this) saying (it) is like (that which) cannot be aware is accordingly not designated “consciousness.” The remaining six (examples) are also

thus. In this fashion (that which) cannot destroy production is not designated as having (the characteristic function of) extinguishing.

Second, he brings up (key) principles to indicate the error. Therein (he) first brings up the principles. Secondly, from “If production and abiding...” (he) indicates the error. That is to say, (he discusses the) error of initially lacking the function (leading to) subsequently losing the absence (of permanence).

Third, from “Therefore...” (he provides the) concluding negation.

[Conclusion and Categorical Dismissal]

(In) the third (major part here), from “Therefore...” the general conclusion is completed. The fourth (major part is a) categorical dismissal (of the error). Both (these parts) are understandable (without further comment here).

The Gate of Contemplating the Nature (of *Dharmas*)

The Eighth (Gate)

[The *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*] [cont. 165a]

Again, all *dharmas* are empty (of a self-nature).
(Question:) For what reason?
(This is the case) because the various *dharmas* (all) have no (essential) nature. As (the text) states:

Seeing that (they) have changing characteristics,
(we know) the various *dharmas* lack (an essential) nature.
Dharmas without (an essential) nature also lack (essential) existence.
All the various *dharmas* are empty as a result.

The various *dharmas* should not change if they have an (essential) nature. Yet, (we) see that all *dharmas* change. For this reason we certainly know the various *dharmas* lack an (essential) nature.

Again, if the various *dharmas* have a fixed nature then (they) should not be produced from collected conditions. If it is the case that (their) nature is produced from collected conditions, (then that) nature is exactly the *dharma* constructed. (However, it is precisely that which is) not a (dependently) constructed *dharma*, (that) does not causally await (the *karmic* activities of others,) which is designated as (a *dharma's* essential) nature. Therefore, (since all *dharmas* actually are produced from conditions,) all *dharmas* are empty (of an essential nature).

Question: If all *dharmas* are empty then there is no production and there is no extinction. If there is no production and no extinction then there is no Truth of Suffering. If there is no Truth of Suffering, then there is no Truth of the Origin (of Suffering). If there is no Truth of Suffering (and no Truth of the) Origin (of Suffering), then there is no Truth of the Cessation (of Suffering). If there is no (Truth of the) Cessation of Suffering, then there is no Path which reaches the end of suffering. If the various *dharmas* are empty and lack (an essential) nature, then there are no Four Noble Truths. Because there are no Four Noble Truths, there are also no Four *Sramana* Fruits.⁵⁶ Because there are no Four *Sramana* Fruits, there are no virtuous sages. As a result of the nonexistence of (all) these matters, the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha are also nonexistent. (But, we clearly see) this is not the case. Therefore the various *dharmas* should not be (considered) completely empty (of an essential nature. This being the case, what is the error here?)

Answer: There are Two Truths: (namely,) 1. conventional truth, and 2. ultimate truth. Due to conventional truth (we) come to speak of ultimate truth. If (we) do not base (our discussion on) conventional truth, then (we) do not come to speak of ultimate truth. (However,) if (we) do not attain ultimate truth, then (we) do not attain *nirvana*. If one does not know the Two Truths, then (one) does not know (their) individual benefits, benefits for others, or collective benefits. In this fashion if (one) understands conventional truth, then (one) understands ultimate truth. (Also,

if one) understands ultimate truth, then (one) understands conventional truth. You now hear (me) speaking about conventional truths, (but you mistakenly) refer to it as ultimate truth. As a result (you) fall into an erroneous judgement. The various Buddhas' *Dharma* of causes and conditions is designated as the exceedingly profound ultimate truth. These [165b] causally conditioned *dharmas* lack a self-nature and so I assert that they are empty. (If) the various *dharmas* are not produced from collected conditions, then they should each have a fixed nature. (In that case, *dharmas* of) the five *skandhas* should not have the characteristics of production and extinction. (*Dharmas* of) the five *skandhas* that are not produced and not extinguished are then lacking the absence of permanence. If (they) lack the absence of permanence then there is no Noble Truth of Suffering. If there is no Noble Truth of Suffering, then there is no Noble Truth of the Origin (of) *dharmas* produced by causes and conditions. If the various *dharmas* have a fixed nature, then there is no Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer: If they have a fixed nature, then) their nature lacks change as a result. If there is no Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, then there is no Path that reaches the cessation of suffering. Therefore, if an individual does not accept emptiness, then there are no Four Noble Truths. If there are no Four Noble Truths, then there is no attaining the Four Noble Truths. If there is no attaining the Four Noble Truths, then there is no understanding suffering, (no) severing its origins, (no) realizing its extinction, (and no) cultivating the Path. As a result of the nonexistence of these phenomena there are no Four *Sramana* Fruits. As a result of there being no (set of) Four *Sramana* Fruits, then there is no one attaining progress towards (them). If there is no one attaining (progress) towards (them), then there are no *Buddhas*. As a result of refuting causally conditioned *dharmas*, then there is no *Dharma*. Because there is no *Dharma*, then there is no *Sangha*. If we lack *Buddha*, *Dharma*, and *Sangha*, then we lack the Three Jewels. If we lack the Three Jewels, then (that) destroys the *Dharma* of conventional worldly (truth. But since there obviously is a conventional world,) this is not the case. Therefore all *dharmas* are empty.

Again, if the various *dharmas* have a fixed nature, then there is no production, no extinction, and no good or evil. Without the (*karmic*) fruit and retribution of good and evil, the world will be always (marked by) one characteristic. For this reason (we) should know the various *dharmas* lack (an essential) nature.

(Alternately,) if (one) claims the various *dharmas* lack a self-nature and (are a type of) existent derived from other-natures, this (view) also is not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If (they all) lack a self-nature how (can their) existence be derived from (some) other-nature? This is because due to self-nature there is other-nature. Furthermore, (the so-called) "other-nature" is also exactly (a kind of) self-nature.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Because an other-nature is exactly a self-nature of "other." If self-nature is not established, other-nature is also not established. If self-nature and other-nature are not established, separate from self-nature and other-nature, with

what further circumstance (could) there be *dharmas*? If existence is not established, nonexistence is also not established.

Therefore, (having) now examined the lack of a self-nature and lack of an other-nature, (and finding) there is no existence and no nonexistence, accordingly (we know) all *karmically* active *dharmas* are empty. Because (all) *karmically* active *dharmas* are empty, (all) *karmically* inactive *dharmas* are also empty. (As all) *karmically* active and inactive (*dharmas*) are, as before, empty, how much more so the self?

[End of Chapter Eight of the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*]

[Commentary by Fa-tsang]

[The Name of the Gate]

First, as for explaining the name (of this chapter), “nature” is (a reference to) “essential nature.” (The chapter) inquires (after it, finds it) is not existent, (and) connects it to true emptiness. Therefore it constitutes a “gate.” That which is dismissed [i.e., “nature”] and that which is trusted [i.e. “contemplation”] constitute (the key elements of) the name.

[Derivation of the Ideas]

Second, as for deriving the ideas, the general idea is as (with the) preceding (chapter). Specifically (though), the first three parts refute *dharmic* (essences). The next four gates refute (the idea of) that which can characterize. Now (this chapter) further refutes (the notion of an) essential nature and therefore (naturally) is derived (from the preceding).

Furthermore, heterodox individuals’ (tendencies toward) grasping at meaning has two types. The first is phenomena, then, the second is (an essential) nature. (The meaning of an essential) nature relies upon future completion (while that of) phenomena relies upon present (manifestation). The preceding gate on existence and nonexistence refutes present phenomena (showing they) are not

established. But, grasping at sensations is difficult to disperse. That is to say, (this means grasping at the idea that) various *dharmas*, not yet complete, antecedently have an essential nature. (This error) relies on present causes and conditions to arouse an (essential, antecedently existent) nature and complete phenomena. If it is thus, the (opponent considers) various *dharmas* are still established and (wonders) why (Nagarjuna) comes to say all *dharmas* are empty. This gate refutes that (notion and) therefore successively derives from (the preceding). Furthermore, (the material that) came above refuted characteristics. Heterodox individuals say, (what we mean) to say is, although external characteristics have perished, the internal nature is still real. As a result, this gate arrives in order to refute that reckoning.

[The Propositions Clarified]

Third, as for that which is clarified, (by) refuting a nature (Nagarjuna) clarifies emptiness. The contemplative mind lacks lodging because (his argument) completes valid (understanding.)

[Explanation]

Fourth, (in the part) explaining the chapter's (point there are) four (subparts: i.e.,) 1. a presentation, 2. an explanation, 3. a conclusion, (and) 4. a categorical (dismissal of the erroneous view). **[227a]**

In the (section) concerning the explanation (there are) three (points). First (he opens with *dharmic*) arising. Second, (he) establishes a verse. Third, (he) explains the verse. In the verse the upper half refutes (the notion that *dharmas*) have a nature. The lower half refutes (the notion that *dharmas*) lack a nature.

[Explaining the Verse]

In the third (part that) explains (the verse, there are) two (points). First he explains (and) refutes (the notion that) there is a nature (in *dharmas*). Then he refutes (the notion that they) lack a nature.

In the preceding (of these two there are) three (parts). Initially (he) refutes a self(-nature). Second, (he) refutes other(-nature). Third, both are (refuted and he) concludes.

[Refutation of Self-nature]

In the first (of the above three there are) two (points). Initially (he provides a) valid refutation. Subsequently (he) refutes (the attempt at a) saving (rejoinder).

[Valid Refutation]

In the first (of the above two points there are) three (parts). Initially (Nagarjuna provides a) refutation of (a) varying, deviating nature. (He) refutes (that notion saying), “As for your idea, if the not yet formed already has a nature, that future nature’s (aspect of) ‘does not alter’ constitutes its significance. (However, if you allow variation, the significance of (that) nature rests upon (this notion).” Therefore (this point) is stated (as we find in the text).

Second, (Nagarjuna presents a) refutation (showing) conditional creation (means one) loses (any essential) nature. Initially (he presents an) explanation according with (the idea in question). That is to say, (if a *dharma's*) nature has a true, (essential quality) how, supposedly, is it conditionally formed? Now, since (you claim) conditional creation (is also the case), clarify (why) it is not the existence of an (essential) nature. Second, from “is not created...” (he provides a) counter explanation. That is to say, (that which) is not created is designated as (the

“essential) nature.” Therefore (we) know (if something is) created then it is not (such a nature).

Third, from “For this reason...” (he) concludes the proposition.

[Refuting the Rejoinder]

Second, in (the part that) refutes (the attempt at a) saving (rejoinder, there are) two (points). Initially the heterodox (opponent) records a refutation indicating errors and difficulties (in Nagajuna’s view). Subsequently the Author reveals the answer (to the idea that the preceding) section still has errors.

In the first (of the above two), the heterodox (proponent,) hearing that (the existence of) present phenomenal *dharmas* is already a refutation of the (Author’s) rebuke, (holds that) completing the essential nature (of *dharmas*) in the future, further refutes the extinction (of presently existent *dharmic* natures). Accordingly, (the opponent) raises an understanding that considers the (text’s allegedly) error (prone) Author as (holding a) perspective of great heterodoxy.

In (this) section (there are) two (parts). First (Nagarjuna) records the (opponent’s) refutation indicating (his alleged) error. The heterodox (view) is due to considering the impermanence of production and extinction as the Truth of Suffering. The remaining (part of this) section is comprehensible (without further elaboration here). Secondly, from “(if) these phenomena...” is the (opponent’s) concluding negation rebuking (Nagarjuna) to stop (spreading erroneous views).

In (Nagarjuna’s) answer (there are) five (parts). First (he) brings up the *Dharma* of the Two Truths. Initially (he) lists the names. Subsequently, (he notes that) based upon conventional (truth one) comes to (understand) ultimate (truth).

That is to say, Noble (Ones) expound the *Dharma* of the causes and conditions of conventional truths. (When) compared with this *Dharma*, the above leads to (seeing the) collective lack of essential nature. In order that (one might) come to the ultimate emptiness (of arisings they) therefore expound conventional truth. (They) do not mean (one ought to) preserve this conventional truth while not entering the ultimate. Therefore it states (as much in Nagarjuna's reply).

Second, (the part) from "If an individual..." clarifies the benefit of knowing the *Dharma*. Therein, first (he notes that) knowing the *Dharma* completes two benefits. That is to say, to expound the ultimate based upon the conventional constitutes benefiting others. Acquiring the effects of illuminating the ultimate constitutes personal benefits. Furthermore, as for the completion of a single activity with the two benefits, it is a combination (of both benefits resulting from knowledge). Secondly, (he) clarifies the mutual assistance of the Two Truths. (They mutually assist) because (they) are not a duality even while (they are) still two (distinct truths). This clarifies the benefit of correctly understanding the *Dharma*.

Third, from "You now..." (Nagarjuna) clarifies an error of delusion about *dharmas*. That is to say (he notes,) "You hear (me) speak of the *dharmas* of the *skandhas*, *dhatu's*, etc. and do not understand (they) are only the vacant falsities of conventional truth. (Instead you) mistakenly grasp at the meaning (as if they) constitute the truth of foremost significance. For this reason, hearing the refutation (and misunderstanding it), means the self (which) desires (such falsities) has fallen into lost circumstances. Countering this accordingly (indicates my response) certainly lacks defect."

Fourth, (Nagarjuna) explains and reveals the meaning of *Dharma*. Therein, initially (he) presents the exceeding profundity of the *Dharma*. In regards to the causes and conditions expounded by the Buddha, (he notes that) the *Dharma* that is profound is not that expounded by your Two Vehicles. Furthermore, matched with the treatises on the Buddhas' Wisdom, "causally conditioned *dharmas*" then comes to be called the "*Dharma* of causes and conditions." Therefore it says the Buddhas' *Dharma* of causes and conditions is designated "exceedingly profound." Secondly, from "these causes and conditions..." (he) explains the reasons for the exceeding profundity of completion. Further, this *Dharma* of causes and conditions moreover and rightly ought to be (understood as) conventional truth. (If that is the case, one might reasonably ask) for what reason then (does he) refer to (it) as (the truth of) foremost significance? (He) explains (this by) saying because (they) lack a self-nature, there is no nature (there) even as (one conventionally) [228a] speaks of causes and conditions. For this reason it is "profound."

Question: Previously, (when) speaking to the heterodox individual (Nagarjuna said) "You, hearing of worldly truth, (take it) to mean it is (the truth of) foremost significance." Now (however) the text's Author also says (the *Dharma* of) causes and conditions is the (truth of) foremost significance. Well, what is the difference (of this claim) with that (earlier assertion)?

Answer: The heterodox individual (takes it) to mean the phenomena of causes and conditions are (the truth) of foremost significance. The text's Author takes the principle of causes and conditions as ultimate truth. Furthermore, the idea of the text's Author (is that) every Buddha expounds *dharmas* of the worldly truth of

causes and conditions. (The) desire (behind this) idea is to lead (others) to know the lack of a nature and thereby realize ultimate truth. It does not mean (they seek) to preserve these *dharmas* of causes and conditions. Further, above (he) said, due to worldly truth (one comes to) know (the truth of) foremost significance. Therefore, in the *Treatise on (the Sutra Concerning the Ten) Stages*, (it notes that) if one accords with and contemplates worldly truth then (one can) enter the truth of foremost significance. This is (the Author's) meaning (here).

Fifth, from "If the various *dharmas*..." (he) correctly returns to an error in regards to that (heterodox idea). That is to say, if (*dharmas*) have a nature then (they) do not derive from conditions. (But) because (they) do not derive from conditions, then there are no (such) various *dharmas*. For this reason the *Treatise on the Middle Way* says, "Because there is the significance of emptiness, therefore all *dharmas* come to be formed. If there is no significance of emptiness, all *dharmas* do not (come to be) formed." Furthermore, (the text notes, "You) ought to know there are a multitude of errors and afflictions (that) you personally do not understand (even as you) contrarily come to answer me (with your mistakes). Therefore the *Treatise on the Middle Way* says, "You now personally have (committed) errors even while (you) thereby turn back towards me. This is like a man riding a horse (even) while (he is) personally mistaken in regards to that which he is riding. Now (it is clear that) this (notion of) destroying the six phenomena is still, (in fact,) your error."

Regarding the middle (portion of this section, there are) six (points). First (he notes how the error) destroys the Four (Noble) Truths. Second, from "If the Four

Noble Truths...” clarifies the action of destroying the four. Third, (he notes how it) destroys the eight (fruits of) the virtuous and the *Arhats*. Fourth, (he notes it) destroys the Three Jewels. Fifth, (he notes it) destroys worldly conventions. Sixth, (he notes it) destroys cause and effect. (These six) together are understandable (without further comment here).

[Refuting Other-nature]

Second, in (the next part that) refutes other-nature, (there are) two (points). Initially (he) records the reckoning (in question and) generally investigates. Subsequently (he provides a) valid refutation. In the refutation first (he provides a) refutation (which points out that) a self of forms deprives (one of an) other-(nature). That is to say, (that which stands) in contrast to “self” is designated “other.” Since a self(-nature) is indeed lacking, (then) in contrast to what (might one) designate an “other” (-nature)? Secondly, (he provides a) refutation (that points out if other-nature) is the same as self(-nature, then) there is no other(-nature). That is to say, (when) looking toward an individual [i.e., “self”] it still is an (individual) “self” (nature). For this reason a self(-nature) without an other(-nature) is also nonexistent. There is a presentation (and) explanation (of these points that is) understandable (without further explanation here).

[Both Combined]

Third, from “If self-nature and other-nature...” (he) combines (them) to conclude (and) both are negated.

[Conclusion and Categorical Dismissal]

The third (major part of this chapter, the part) from “If existence is not established...” (he) generally concludes, establishing the proposition.

The fourth (major part, the part that) categorically dismisses (the opponent’s point) is understandable (without further explanation).

The Gate of Contemplating Causes and Effects

The Ninth (Gate)

[The *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*] [cont. 165b]

Again, all *dharmas* are empty.
(Question:) For what reason?
(Answer: Because) the various *dharmas* individually lack a nature (and) also do not come from some other (set of) circumstances. (This is) as stated:

An effect among collected conditions,
in the end, may not be obtained.
It also does not come from some other (set of) circumstances.
How then (can) there still be effects?

[165c] As for collected conditions, whether among them individually or whether among them combined, both (alternatives) lack effects. (This is just) as previously stated. Furthermore, these effects do not come from other (sets of) circumstances. If it was the case that they came from other circumstances then they would not be produced from causes and conditions. Also (then), there is no power (found in) the combination of collected conditions. If it is the case that effects are lacking among collected conditions and also do not come from other circumstances, (then) this is exactly (the state of being) empty (of a nature.) Because effects are empty, all *karmically* active *dharmas* are empty. Because *karmically* active *dharmas* are empty, *karmically* inactive *dharmas* are also empty. As even *karmically* active and *karmically* inactive (*dharmas*) are empty, how much more so the self?

[End of Chapter Nine of the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*]

[Commentary by Fa-tsang]

[The Name of the Gate]

First, as for explaining the name, there are two meanings. First, supposing causes produce effects (Nagarjuna) refutes (the notion that) effects, deriving from other circumstances, individually (and particularly) [i.e., essentially,] even so still arrive. Secondly, again, contemplating (what is found) among causes and conditions, (he) also (finds) there are no effects. Because of lacking effects, there are no causes. For this reason causes and effects are both refuted. Corresponding to the first

meaning and derived from “that which can refute” (we get the first possibility that can be considered) as the name (of this chapter). Corresponding to the latter meaning and derived from “that which is refuted” (we get the second possibility that can be considered) as the name (of this chapter).

[Derivation of the Ideas]

Second, as for deriving the ideas, (they are) derived from the preceding (chapter). Although (before he) also broadly revealed that causes and effects derived from conditions lack a nature, even so madly deluded followers again claim (they) individually (and particularly) [i.e., essentially] yet exist. In order to refute this attachment therefore (we) have the arrival of this gate.

[The Propositions Clarified]

Third, as for that which the categories clarify, this (chapter) clarifies that internal and external effect *dharmas* are both empty. Causes, and so forth, are all also thus. Thereby (he) establishes the contemplation of emptiness.

[Explanation]

Fourth, in the explanation section **[228b]** (there are) three (parts). First (he) presents the proposition. Second, (he) explains and reveals (the error). Third, (he) categorically dismisses (the erroneous viewpoint).

In the explanation (there are) three (points). Initially (he deals with the) arising (of effects). Second, (he) establishes a verse. The upper half refutes internal production. The lower half refutes external derivation. Furthermore, the upper half records the preceding gate’s meaning that conditions do not produce effects. The lower half correctly clarifies the essence of this gate. Based only upon the preceding

(does a cause) give rise to a subsequent and therefore (he) necessarily expounds (the refutation as given).

Third, in the explanation that reveals (the key ideas there are) two (points). Initially he explains, subsequently he connects (the points). In the explanation (there are) two (parts). Initially (he) explains the upper half (of the verse and) refutes (the notion that) there is production within conditions. (This is) the same as (the arguments covered) above. Secondly, (he) explains the verse's lower half. (Here he) refutes (the notion that effects from) other circumstances are individually derived. That is to say, there is reckoning which, when examining the nature of the world, then (concludes it) is that which has been constructed by a God. Now, (he) refutes (this idea noting) if it is thus, then (those things) are not produced from conditions. (In that case) conditions also lack the efficacy of combination. For this reason (they) are not derived from external (circumstances).

Second, from "if effects are lacking within collected conditions..." (he) generally concludes (with the) emptiness of (essential) nature.

Third, (he) categorically dispels (the error). Both (the second and third sections) are understandable (without further explanation here).

The Gate of Contemplating Agency

The Tenth (Gate)

[The *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*] [cont. 165c]

Again, all *dharmas* are empty.

(Question:) For what reason?

Because made by self, made by other, made by combination, made without cause, none (of these options) is obtainable. As (the text) says:

Made by self, made by other,
made by combination, and made without cause,
(a thing) like this is not obtainable.
Given this then there is no suffering.

Suffering that is made by itself is not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If it is made by self, that is, (if it) makes its (own essential) essence, (then) by means of this (self made) phenomena (we) do not obtain (a situation where) that (self made phenomena) then creates the (very same) phenomena. (This is) just like a consciousness cannot self-cognize and a finger cannot touch itself. For this reason we do not get to speak of (things as) made by self.

(Alternatively,) made by other is also not the case. (As for any hypothetical other, how can it create suffering (for an entirely different thing)?

Question: Collected conditions are designated as “other.” Because collected conditions create suffering, (this form of causation) is designated as “made by other.” Why (do you) say (that suffering) is not made from others?

Answer: If it is the case that collected conditions are designated as “other,” then suffering is made from collected conditions. This suffering (that is) produced from collected conditions is then (of the very same) nature as collected conditions. If it is then exactly the (same) nature as collected conditions, why designate them as “other”? (This is) like a clay jar – the clay is not designated as “other” (than the jar). Furthermore, (this is) like a gold bracelet – the gold is not designated as “other” (than the bracelet). Suffering is also like this. Because it is produced from collected conditions, collected conditions do not get to be designated as “other.”

Continuing, these collected conditions, because they also are not an existent that has a self-nature, they do not come to attain sovereign independence.⁵⁷ For these reasons we do not get to speak of effects produced from collected conditions. (This is) like it states in the *Treatise on the Middle Way*:

Effects are produced from collected conditions.
(But) these conditions are not self-(existent).
(If) conditions are not self-existent,
how do conditions produce effects?

In this fashion suffering does not come to be made from another.

(Alternatively,) made by both self and other is also not the case. (It cannot be so) because there are two errors (combined in this alternative). If (one) asserts suffering is both made by self and made by other then there are the (previously indicated) errors of made by self and made by other (combined). Therefore suffering made by combination is also not the case.

(Alternatively,) if (one) claims suffering is produced without cause, that is also not the case. (It cannot be so) because (in that case) there is the error of limitless (possibilities. This is) as the *sutra* states:

A naked ascetic [166a] asked the Buddha, "Is suffering made by self?" The Buddha was silent and did not answer. (The naked ascetic then continued,) "World Honored One, if it is the case that suffering is not made by self, is it not made by other?" Again the Buddha did not answer. (So the naked ascetic continued,) "World Honored One, if such is the case then is it not so that suffering is made by self and made by other?" Again the Buddha did not answer. (So the naked ascetic continued,) "World Honored one, if such is the case then is it not so that suffering is made without causes and without conditions?" Again the Buddha did not answer.

Just as with these four questions and the Buddha not answering each, we should (also) know suffering is empty.

Question: The Buddha expounded this *sutra* (but notably) did not state that suffering is empty. He created this exposition in accord with (the needs of) the sentient beings who can be saved. (So, why do you claim this text expounds the emptiness of suffering?)

(Answer:) This naked ascetic claims that people are the cause of suffering. Those (who claim) there is a self, assert that the beautiful and the ugly are that which is created by an eternal soul.⁵⁸ (They say) the soul is eternally pure and does not have suffering or vexations. (They claim) that which knows and that which is known are all the soul. (They claim) the soul creates the beautiful and the ugly, suffering and joy, and in turn (*karmically*) receives assorted (*karmically* associated) bodies. As a result of this heterodox view (the naked ascetic) questioned the Buddha, (asking whether) suffering is not made by self. For this reason the Buddha did not answer. In fact suffering is not made by self. If the self were the cause of suffering, the self then would lack permanence because of the self producing suffering.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If *dharmas* are causes and (also) produced from causes, (then) all *dharmas* also lack permanence. If the self lacks permanence, then the *karmic* recompenses of (being) blameworthy and/or blessed are all (eventually) extinguished. (This means) the positive recompenses (that come with) cultivating the *Brahmanic* practices also should be empty. (So) if the self is the cause of suffering then there is no liberation.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If the self creates suffering (then) apart from suffering there is no self. (This is because the self,) which is that which can create suffering, (would) therefore lack a form (apart from suffering). If it is the case that even without form (the self) can still create suffering, then as for attaining liberation, (since it lacks form as well,) it also ought to be (a state with) suffering. (A state) like this is then not liberation. And yet, in fact, there is liberation. Therefore suffering that is made by self is not the case.

(Alternatively,) suffering made by other is also not the case. (If we consider) suffering apart (from the self), how is it (possible) that there is a (separate) individual who then creates suffering to give to another?

Again, if it is the case that suffering is created by other, then (such) is (apparently a case of) God created (suffering).⁵⁹ As a consequence of questions like these heterodox views the Buddha did not answer. Yet, in fact, (suffering) is not created from God (either).

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer: This must be the case) because their respective natures mutually contradict (one another. The combination would be) like a calf that is yet a cow. If the ten thousand things are produced from God, they should all resemble God because they (are all) its offspring.

Again, if it is the case that God created sentient beings, (then God) should not take suffering and impart it to the children. For these reasons (one) ought not claim God creates suffering.

Question: Sentient beings are produced from God. Suffering and/or joy are also that which is produced from God. Because (sentient beings) are not aware of the causes of joy (God) gives them suffering. (This being the case, why do you say we ought not claim suffering comes from God?)

Answer: If it is the case that sentient beings are God's children, (God) should only use joy to check (their) suffering. (God certainly) should not give them suffering. Also it should (be the case that) whenever (one) worships God then (one definitely) extinguishes suffering and attains joy. Yet, in fact it is not so. (It is) only when (one) individually engages the causes and conditions of suffering and/or joy that (one) individually receives (the associated and appropriate) *karmic* recompense. Those (results then) are not created by God.

Again, as for that (idea of God), if he is **[166b]** self-existent there should not be (anything) he requires. (If) there is (anything) made by itself which requires (anything additional to be itself, then that thing) is not designated as self-existent. (Now) if (a self-existent thing) lacks (anything additional) which is required, what is the use of transforming and creating the ten thousand things? (Any being who does so would) be like a small boy (simply) playing around (to no real purpose).

Again, if it is the case that God creates sentient beings, who, in turn, created God? If (one claims) God is self-created, then that is not the case. (This must be so because God) is like (all other things that) are not able to self-create. If there is a further creator, then (one would) not designate (this God as) self-existent.

Again, if God is the creator then in regards to creating (things) there is no obstacle and (even) a thought can create (everything). But as the *Isvara sutra* states:

God wanted to create the ten thousand things (so he) engaged in ascetic practices and produced the insects that move on their belly. (God) again engaged in ascetic practices and produced the various flying birds. (God) again engaged in ascetic practices and produced humans and the demi-gods.

If (the *karma* of) engaging in ascetic practices initially produced poisonous insects, next produced flying birds, and finally produced humans and demi-gods, we should (clearly) understand that sentient beings were produced from *karmic* causes and conditions and not from (God) having an ascetic practice.

Again, if it is the case that God created the ten thousand things, what place did he abide in to then create those ten thousand things? This place where he abided, was it for God's creation or for the creation of other (things)? If it is the case it was for God's creation, where did he abide to create (it)? If he abided in another place (to create the place where he created the ten thousand things), then again, who created that other place? In this fashion (the regress) is without end.

(Alternatively,) if it is the case that (God) is made by other, then there are (at least) two Gods. (Even by your own views though) this situation is not the case. For (all) these reasons the world's ten thousand things are not that which God made.

Again, if it is the case that God made (all things), why did (he need) ascetic practices (that require) worshipping another? (Could it be due to) a desire to cause pleasure and accordingly (he) beseeched (another for) that which he wanted? If ascetic practices (were used to) beseech another, we should know he is not God.

Again, if God made the ten thousand things, in that case (that which is) initially created is fixed and should not change. Horses then are always horses and men are always men. Yet, now (we certainly know) that in accord with *karma* there is change (in all these things. Therefore we) should know they are not that which is made by God.

Again, if it is the case (the ten thousand things) are that which is made by God, then (they should) lack (variations over time in the qualities of) bad and good. (This would have to be the case) because good and evil, beauty and ugliness are all created by God (and hence should not vary over time within a thing). Yet, in fact there are (variations in) bad and good so they are not that which God created.

Again, if it is the case that sentient beings are produced from God they should all revere and love (God) like children love their father. Yet, in fact it is not so. (We can clearly see that) there is dislike and there is love (of God by different people) so we must know they are not that which God made.

Again, if it is the case that God made (sentient beings), why not make entirely happy or entirely unhappy people? Yet (in fact) there are (those who are) happy and unhappy. (Given this fact we) must know (those mindsets) are (*karmically*) produced from dislike and affection and therefore are not (from) God. (As they) are not (from) God, (they) are not that which God made.

Again, if it is the case that God makes (everything, then) sentient beings each ought not have that which (they individually) made. Yet, (in fact,) sentient beings (have) skills and each has that which (they) made (using those skills). Therefore we should know (all those things) are not that made by God.

Again, if it is the case that God [166c] makes (everything), matters of good, evil, suffering, and joy are not (*karmically*) made but are derived from God. If (things are) like this (then that) destroys the worldly *Dharma* (and as a consequence), maintaining discipline and cultivating the *Brahmana* practices all lack that which benefits (one's development). Yet, in fact (we clearly see) that is not the case. Therefore (we) should know they are not that made by God.

Again, if (God) is great among sentient beings as a result of the causes and conditions of *karmically* (produced) happiness, (then) other sentient beings (likewise) practicing the *karma* of happiness also ought to be great. (So) why (especially) honor God (on this count)? If it is the case that even without causes and conditions God is (great), all sentient beings also ought to be (like) God. Yet, in fact, (we clearly see) it is not thus. (Therefore we) should know (these things) are not that made by God.

(Furthermore,) if God is obtained from another, then in turn that other (must be obtained) from another. In this fashion then there is no end (to the regress). If there is no end (to the regress), then there is no (original) cause. Similarly, (this point is) equally (valid regarding) the various and assorted causes and conditions. (So, we) should know the ten thousand things are not products of God. Furthermore, there is no God. Because of this (when the) heterodox (believer) questioned (the Buddha about the possibility of) made by other, the Buddha also did not answer.

(Furthermore, the possibility of) made by combination is also not the case. (This must be so) because (this option) has both errors (combined).

(Furthermore,) because (things) are produced from causes and conditions combined, they are not produced from an absence of causes. (Consequently) the Buddha also did not answer (the heterodox believer when he asked about production without causes).

(Question:) That is why this *sutra* only refutes the heterodox views of the four types (of causation). It does not expound (the idea that) suffering is empty. (So why do you claim as much?)

Answer: Although, in this fashion, the Buddha did assert that suffering is produced from collected causes and conditions, refuting heterodox views of the four types (of causation) is exactly (a form of) expounding emptiness. (This is true because) expounding (the idea that) suffering is produced from collected causes and conditions is exactly (a form of) expounding the meaning of emptiness.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If (something) is produced from collected causes and conditions then it lacks a self-nature. Lacking a self-nature is exactly (the same as being) empty. Since suffering is empty, (we) should know that *karmically* active (*dharmas*, *karmically*) inactive (*dharmas*), and collective productions [i.e., sentient beings] are all empty.

[End of Chapter Ten of the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*]

[Commentary by Fa-tsang]

[The Name of the Gate]

First, as for explaining the name, in regards to the four (possible) circumstances of (agency by) self and other, because (when) seeking the agent (one) does not obtain (one, Nagarjuna) takes (this idea) as the name (for the chapter).

[Derivation of the Ideas]

Second, as for deriving the ideas, by means of internal and external (causes and conditions) the preceding (chapter) briefly sought (a source of production). Now, broadly, (and) in regard to the four (possible) circumstances (of agency by self, other, both self and other, and neither self nor other, he continues) to search for (an agent). Therefore, (the chapter's topic) is derived (naturally from that which precedes). Furthermore, one (explanation) states the above nine chapters already and for once refuted causes and effects. Individually the following three chapters are (then) the second time (Nagarjuna) refutes causes and effects. As for what difference there is with the preceding (refutations), the preceding was broad and this is therefore brief. The first two chapters (of the final three) refute (the notion of an agent) that can produce. The following (and final chapter of the Treatise) refutes (the notion of) that which is produced. Therefore (these ideas naturally) are derived (from the preceding).

[The Propositions Clarified]

Third, as for that which is clarified by the chapter, (it) refutes these four (notions of) agency (and) has two gates.

[Refutation of That Which is a Cause]

First, (it) reveals refutations of that which is (a cause. This part) also (has) two (points).

The first corresponds to heterodox path (views) concerning an individual (as agent. There are four forms of this idea.) 1. Made by self. 2. Made by God. 3. (Made by combination.) For example, (the idea that) at the beginning of an eon one man and one woman together produce sentient beings is (a form of the) made by combination (idea). 4. (Causeless creation.) For example, the causeless heterodox path (that) grasps at spontaneous production is (an example of a tradition advocating) causeless creation. (Their idea is) like (claiming) disgusting things are not infectious.

The second (type of notions refuted) correspond to Hinayana (views) concerning *dharmas*. (There are also four forms of these ideas.) 1. Causal production of the individual unit. 2. Recompensive causation. (That is to say, according to this idea) the cause is (*karmically*) good or bad (while) the effect lacks (*karmic*) mark. Therefore this is a (form of) “other” (causation). 3. (The third is a notion) like collectively existent causation. That is to say, seven *dharmas* together produce (an effect). 4. Causeless production. Some say (that according to) Sautrantika masters the branching of ignorance (reflects the fact that) preceding supports (are) empty even as arising (still occurs). Consequently (this is) also (a view of) causeless (production).

[Refutation of That Which Can Produce Causation]

Secondly, in (the part revealing) refutations of (that which) can (produce causation, there are) also two (parts). The first is a refutation of (the idea that the causal connection) is only concealed. (This point is the same) as the (quote from the) *Middle Way Treatise* and this text’s (explanation at the beginning of the

chapter). The second (is a refutation of the causal connection as) both concealed and manifest. (This point is) like the *Treatise on the (Ten) Grounds* says:

(The claim is) the cause does not produce because conditions produce. (But also) conditions do not produce because individual causes produce. (Either way arisings are) not collectively produced. There is no knower as a result (and) the time of creation does not abide as a result. (If this) is not causeless production (then it must) accordingly conform to (notions of) existent (causes).

Furthermore, the *Treatise on Comparing Dharmas* says:

(If the) self (-created) type (of arisings) exist, (they) therefore do not derive from others. (If they) await collected conditions (to arise then they) therefore are not self-created. Lacking creative functioning (they) therefore are not collectively produced. (But, if) there is the capacity to achieve (production, then) therefore (arising) is not causeless. (If) it is the case (that) all conditioned arisings lack both (possible basic) clauses, (it) already is then exceedingly profound. How much more so (if it) generally lacks **[228c]** the four (possible) clauses (of a complete tetralemma)? For this reason conditioned arising is the most exceedingly profound (principle).

(We can) explain (this) saying the idea these two Treatises (focus upon) considers the cause as the particular (existent which) utilizes conditions as the other (requirements for successful production). These causes and conditions mutually await (one another) and therefore each has two meanings. 1. (They take the) meaning of having power (to effect causation). 2. (They have the) the meaning

of lacking the power (to effect causation). Considering the causes' lack (of power) as the conditions' having (power), consequently (means that causes) do not self-produce. Considering conditions' lack (of power) as causes' having (power), consequently (means arisings are) not produced from others. The lack of duality of one having (or) one lacking consequently (means arisings) do not collectively produce (one another). The "not both" (possibilities) of both having (power or) both lacking (power) consequently also (means they) do not collectively produce (one another). Accordingly, due to this lack of a nature, then (we) attain the arising of these effects that do not arise. Consequently (arisings) do not lack causes and are not nonexistent. In this fashion, this is the reason (they are) not self (causes), not other (causes, and) not collective causes. If (we) concisely (summarize this with) the exposition of the gate that reveals the nonobstruction of the interfusion and interpenetration of the dependent arising of the nature of *dharmas*, the four gates together have creative (power).

(Question:) How so?

(Answer:) That is to say, causes and conditions each have three meanings. (Namely, they are) 1. Existent, 2. Nonexistent, (and) 3. Both existent and nonexistent. Because each, [i.e., causes and conditions] specifically reveals the first meaning, (they) self-create and (are) other-created. Because (they) combine the third meaning (they are) collectively created. (Because they) combine the second meaning (they are) causelessly created. (These latter two options are) because each (individually) lacks (causal) power. This likewise (follows) from (issues with) a non-abiding basis establishing all *dharmas*. Consider it and (it will be) evident.

After this (part, that which) the Text expounds is not a Three Treatise (school) idea. Because it is simply a type of (commonly) circulating (idea, he) just quotes (it and briefly) expounds (on it).

[The Explanation]

Fourth, in the explanation section (of the chapter there are) three (main parts). First (he) presents (the point). Second, (he) explains it. Third, (he) categorically (refutes it).

In the explanation (there are) three (points). First, (there is) an opening section inquiring (about and) presenting (the key points). Second, (he) establishes a verse briefly refuting (the errors). The upper half records the four gates. The lower half reveals that all (the options) are not (the case). Third, based on (the above) section (he) broadly explains. (Therein we find) two (parts). Initially (he) explains the valid refutation of the verse. Subsequently (he) quotes the Teachings (and the proof is completed).

In the first (of the above two parts, he) explains the gates of the four sections (and) accordingly, (the explanation) constitutes four (parts).

[Made by Self]

Regarding the first (part of the) explanation, in refuting (the notion of) made by self (there are four points). First he records a negation. Second, (he provides an) explanatory refutation. Third, (he provides an) illustrative refutation. Fourth, (he) summarily negates (the error). Also (these four) are (parts that) establish the proposition, elicit a reason, raise an example, (and) summarily (conclude) the proposition. (These are) also understandable (without further comment).

[Made by Other]

In the second (part, the part that) explains and refutes (the idea of) made by other, (there are) two (points). Initially (he provides a) valid refutation, subsequently (he) refutes (the attempt at a) saving (rejoinder).

In the first (of these two parts) initially (he) presents (the point and) negates (it). Secondly (he) explains and refutes. Speaking of (made by) other, as for (the question) "What can create?", (the point) is to say (that if the) individual cannot even (self-create), how is it that another can create? Furthermore, since the individual is not yet existent, (please) explain what constitutes the other? Furthermore, apart from the individual there is no particular other. Therefore an individual without an other is also nonexistent. Therefore (the text) asks, "What can create?".

In the second (part, the part that) refutes the (attempt at a) saving (rejoinder), initially (he presents the attempted) save, subsequently (he) refutes (it). The idea of the (opponent's attempted) save is, "I consider the cause oriented towards the effect as the other. (It) is not an other of remaining (associated) *dharmas*."

In the refutation (there are) two (parts). Initially (he provides) a valid refutation, subsequently, from "In this fashion suffering..." (he) summarily negates (the error).

In the refutation (there are) two (further points). First is a refutation (pointing out that a cause which) is the same as the effect is not an other. Therein (he) initially (presents the) principle, next (he provides) an example, then he

combines (the points to conclude). That is to say, if combining collective conditions thereby completes effects, how does it come (to be the case that) conditioned effects constitute an other? Second, in the refutation of the other as lacking individual independence, first (he provides a) valid refutation, then (he) quotes a verse of the *Middle Way Treatise*. That is to say, (as for) these collected conditions, since (they are) still formed dependent upon conditions, this accordingly (means) they lack the existence of a self-nature. Therefore, (given that, they) do not come to be individually independent. Because they are not individually independent, they cannot produce effects.

Second, the concluding section is understandable (without further comment here).

[Made by Combination]

Third, in (the next section that) refutes collective creation **[229a]** (there are) three (parts). 1. (He) records a negation. 2. (He) validly refutes (the idea). That is to say, together (they combine) the preceding two errors. For this reason (he) indicates (this error) is the same as the preceding. 3. From “For this reason...” (he) concludes.

[Causeless Creation]

Fourth, (he) refutes causeless creation. Therein (we find) two (parts).

Initially he records the attachment and generally negates (it). As for having immeasurable errors, it is because those *Hinayana* propositions are also the same and (therefore) not permissible. Furthermore, because of (their notion of the) haphazard production of various *dharmas* there are many errors.

Second, in (the next part that) draws upon evidence (there are) four (points). First, he brings up the (heterodox) teaching. Second, (he) assembles the (key) ideas. Third, (he presents the) heterodox (attempt at a) saving (rejoinder). Fourth, (he) assembles (all the elements of) the refutation (of the rejoinder).

[The Heterodox View]

In the first (of the above four), the heterodox (questioner suggests) because the four propositions preserving production do not penetrate the real nature of suffering, the Buddha set (them) aside and did not answer.

[Nagarjuna's Response]

Second, from "Like these (four)..." (he) assembles (the key) ideas, clarifying emptiness. There are two types of reasons (for their emptiness). 1. (They) are produced from conditions therefore (they) are empty. 2. The Buddha did not answer therefore (they) are empty. In this (part), considering the substance of suffering is fundamentally empty, from what circumstances (then does one) get the production of suffering from self, other, etc.? Isn't it rather like asking whether a hare's horns are produced from self, other, etc.? If (the Buddha) had answered then (he would) have fallen into a defeat.

(Question:) How so?

(Answer: Well,) that is to say, if it was the case (he) answered saying (for example, they) are not self-produced, etc., that then would mean the hare's horns are existent. (In that case they) are not produced from self, other, etc. (But) if it were the case he answered by saying (we) lack these hare's horns, (he would have missed the point because the) other (individual) originally asked about production from (a

particular source. He) did not ask about (their) existence or nonexistence. (In that situation) the question (would have) differed from the answer (and) consequently (that answer) also is not then (appropriate). Therefore, in the *Sutra* (the opponent) questions the Buddha, (claiming) if it is the case the *Tathagata* [i.e., Buddha] is not able to answer the fourteen difficult (questions), why call (that) the “wisdom of everything?” (In reply) the Buddha says “If the *Tathagata* did answer the fourteen difficult (questions), then (that) is not the wisdom of everything.” For this reason one should know that as for the point of not answering, it was to clarify the emptiness of those *dharmas*. (One can then see they) are, as a result, lacking (essential existence).

[The Rejoinder]

Third, in (the part that covers the) heterodox (questioner’s attempt at a) saving (rejoinder there are) three (points). First, (The questioner notes the above point) is not in (their) understanding of the (text’s) ideas. Second, (he) explains the *Sutra* to reveal their idea. Third, (he) summarily (concludes that Nagarjuna’s point) is not proof.

In the first (of the above three points) the heterodox (opponent) claims the Treatise’s Author completely failed to get the Buddha’s idea. (He rhetorically asks,) has it ever been the case that the Buddha, (while) speaking of reasons, did not answer and therefore expounded (the notion that) suffering is empty? It is just that the Buddha did not answer (questions about the) specific idea of self-existence. (That) specific idea has two (key parts).

1. It is just that (for) those sentient beings (on the Path he) rightly ought not answer while (they are just) acquiring entry to the *Dharma*. Therefore (he) must not answer (at that critical time. That being the case,) why must (Nagarjuna claim he) thereby clarifies emptiness?

2. In order to refute the heterodoxy's four perverse expositions, therefore (the Buddha's approach) must be so.

[Refutation of the Rejoinder]

The passage refuting the four attachments (found in the rejoinder) accordingly constitutes four (subsections).

First, (he) brings up the attachments to understand the *Sutra's* (point).

Second, from "suffering, in fact is not...," (he) uses the principle to validly refute (the idea). In the valid refutation (there are) two (parts).

First is a refutation (based on the idea that the) self likewise lacks permanence. Therein (we find) two (points). Initially (he) presents (the refutation,) then (he) explains it. In the explanation (there are) two (further subpoints). Initially (there) is a refutation (based on the notion of) losing that which can create. That is to say, if (the self) is impermanent, then (that entails) losing the essence of a self and there is nothing that can create. Second, from "if the self is impermanent..." is a refutation (based on the notion of) losing that which is created. That is to say, (this is a problem) because of lacking that upon which (*karmic* recompense) depends.

Second is a refutation (based on the idea that in such a case) suffering lacks (a final) release. Therein (we find) two (subparts). First (he) presents (the point). Second, from "How so?..." (he) explains. That is to say, if one speaks of the self

creating suffering, the capability must be located in the antecedent (self). And yet, in fact, apart from the suffering which has been created, previously there is no self that can create (that) suffering.

(Question:) Why?

(Answer:) Because, (at that time) there is not yet the body of *skandhas* upon which the (result) depends. (That being the case, at the earlier time, in) what place does the self reside? If (one claims) it is the case that (even) without this body of *skandhas* the self alone still can create suffering, (then) as for obtaining release (from suffering), [229b] it also lacks a body. An existent self also ought to constantly be suffering. This (is a situation where the) preceding time [i.e., before release] lacks a body (of *skandhas*) and yet creates suffering. The subsequent time [i.e., release from suffering] also lacks a body (of *skandhas*) and also ought to then eternally be suffering. (This occurs) because (the two situations) [i.e., before and after release from suffering] lack different causes.

(The meaning of) the concluding section is evident (without further comment here).

[Made by God]

Second, [*sic*] in (the following section that) refutes (the idea of a divine) made by other, (there are) two (points). First (he) refutes (the error, then) subsequently (he) concludes. In the refutation there are fifteen iterations (of the argument).

(1.) First is a refutation (based on the idea that an arising with) one and the same substance is not an “other.” (So, for example,) how are there other individuals

who create suffering that is received by this (essentially different) person?

Therefore it is stated (as in the text).

2. (Second is a) refutation (based on the idea that) causes and effects do not mutually resemble (one another). This is the heterodox (notion that) causes are not (all) equivalent causes. Therein (he) initially brings up the attachment to understand the *Sutra's* (point). Subsequently, from "Yet, in fact..." (he) utilizes the (key) principle to validly refute (the opponent's point). The presentation and explanation (that follow) are understandable (without further comment here).

3. (Third is a) refutation (based on the notion that) pleasure and pain mutually oppose (one another). That is to say, the father (referred to by the opponent) ought to grant (his children) pleasure, (so) how then (does he) come to allow (their) suffering? Also, (this) is a refutation (based on the notion that this view) perversely loses the (nature of the) father-child (relationship). Therein (he) initially (provides a) valid refutation. Subsequently (he) reveals (the attempt at a) saving (rejoinder). That is to say, if (the father) cannot produce children who understand (the causes of the) merciful mind, how (can one) designate God (as that which) can produce the myriad things? Furthermore, if it is the case (he) can in fact produce (those pleasurable results) while therefore (he) does not (produce them, that) is then a lack of mercy. (If there is no mercy,) what is it which is (then) discerned (as such)? Furthermore, the ignorant type (of person) makes offerings to heaven and accordingly (are said to) discern (God's) mercy. Why (do they) not avoid suffering? (As they) still have the sufferings of poverty, and so on, (we) therefore know (this) is not the case. In this section the first (part) corresponds to a

hypothetical refutation (focused on) feelings. The second (part), from “Yet, in fact...” is a dispelling refutation concerned with the (key) principle. (These points are) understandable (without further explanation here).

4. (Fourth is a) refutation (focused on the idea that God) ought not (lack anything) which is required (for completeness and creation). That is to say, (as for) that God, what more is required while (he) creates sentient beings? If it is the case there is that which is required while creating, this then is not (any commonly understood notion of) God. If it is creation without (anything additional) which is required, then (this is) the same as the (trifling) play of small children.

5. (The fifth is a) refutation (focused on the notion of an) agent that counters (a regress without) end. That is to say, if God self-creates, sentient beings also ought to be thus. (But) if God is made by other, then (God) is not God, (but rather) is like sentient beings (who cannot self-create). The two types of comparative inference (found in this section) are understandable (without further explanation).

6. (The sixth is a) refutation (focused on the notion of) a God (whose creations) *karmically* deviate (from causal principles). Therein (we find) three (parts). Initially by means of a valid examination (he raises the problem). Second, (he) quotes a heterodox teaching. Third, (he) refutes that heterodox teaching. By maintaining that the activities of suffering can then create things (we) clearly know (such creation) is not God’s. Furthermore, (as found in the heterodox text, given just) one type of activity of suffering, why (is there) not just one type of received effect? This being so, (as mentioned in the text), upon first creating poisonous insects, (one) ought to know that due to *karma* (that event) is not connected to the

activities of heterodox (forms of ascetic) suffering. The first (point) then dispels God (from the place of a cause) by means of the activities of (ascetic) suffering. The subsequent (point) then dispels the activities of (ascetic) suffering (from the place of a cause) by means of valid (understanding of) *karma*. (These points) are understandable (without the need for further comment here).

7. (The seventh is a) refutation (showing that) investigating the circumstances (of God's creative activity entails) losing (the conditions for) creation. Therein (we find) three (parts). Initially (he) determines the circumstances of creation. Second, by the relation of two (possible circumstances for creation he) demands (an answer to the problem). Third, he explains the error of the two (types of) creation. First (of those two) is a refutation (based on the notion that) self-creation does not complete (the conditions required for creation). That is to say, it is just that the circumstances (required for the) circumstances (of self-creation form a regress) without end. The second (of the above two is a) refutation (based on the notion that) other-creation deviates from the proposition (about God's essential nature). "Circumstances" means the realm of the material world.

8. (The eighth is a) refutation (pointing out) the lack of power of (whomever must) beseech another. Adjusting this (section of the heterodox text, it) ought (to be the case) in that text, (that it) says the circumstances of God have (qualities missing and) which are prayed for (by God) and consequently (God) is not God. Furthermore, this section should be inverted. It ought to say if (this) is God, why is there one (engaged in) ascetic practices (and) making the offerings (that) follow from beseeching for that which is wished? (This) reveals the good (result) goes with

the wish since (it) is received from the request. Clearly (anyone so engaged) is not God.

9. (The ninth is a) refutation (based on the idea that) that which is created is not fixed. **[229c]** That is to say, (it) is like (when) an individual makes a cart (and once) it is already complete, (he) cannot subsequently transform it to make a boat. God first creates humans and after these humans (he) ought to create animals, and such. Yet, in fact (the appearance of humans and animals) accords with the various transformations of *karma*. Therefore, (they) are not (that which) God created.

10. (The tenth is a) refutation (based on the idea of) bringing up effects to examine the cause. Therein, first (he provides a) hypothetical refutation. That is to say, if God created (humans) each one ought to be a single type and there ought not be differences such as being pretty, ugly, etc. Furthermore, (variations in) sinfulness and blessedness ought to both be lacking. Second, in the refutation that dismisses (the mistake he notes that even given the point just made) still yet, in fact, there are those who are sinful and blessed. Because that and this both admittedly exist, (this) is a refutation that dismisses (the error) by means of the principle.

11. (The eleventh is a) refutation (based on a) proposition (concerning) the opposition of hate and love. That is to say, (if God created everyone then) everyone ought to be loving, (so) how does there come to be hatred? Furthermore, because there are the (*karmically* generated) attachments of the delusions of hatred and love, (one knows these) are not God's (creations. If that is the case, then) how (is God) able to create the myriad things?

12. (The twelfth is a) refutation that examines delusion by means of (emotional) matters. That is to say, how do we know that (or this person) has (the characteristics of) love or hate? It is because (in the world we find) two (different) individuals who create suffering or pleasure (and hence) do not simply create happiness. Furthermore, because (they also, individually) cannot create (only) one type (of emotion), clearly (they) are not God's (creations).

13. (The thirteenth is a) refutation (based on the notion that) skillful means loses creative (power). That is to say, if it is the case (everything is) God's creation, sentient beings ought not (be able to) further create things such as clothing, food, etc., (or) furthermore, create various good and bad *karmas*.

14. (The fourteenth is a) refutation (based on the notion that) without causes (one) loses effects. Therein (he) first (presents a) refutation with a hypothetical. That is to say, (if) first (there is) the effect, (then one) lacks (an effect) derived from a cause. (Alternately, if) subsequently (there is the) cause, (then one) lacks the capabilities (associated with subsequent) beneficial effects. Then (following the above points he presents a) refutation using the principle to dismiss (the error. This point) is understandable (without further comment).

15. (The fifteenth is a) refutation (based on the notion of) *karmic* equality between existent and nonexistent (causal conditions). Therein (we find) three (parts.) Initially (Nagarjuna presents the idea of their) equal existence. Second, (he presents the idea of their) equal nonexistence. Third, (he points out the problem of a regress) without end. (In that case a regress) without end accordingly (also) lacks a beginning. (If it) lacks a beginning (it) accordingly lacks a cause. Each of the above

(points) has an (associated) inferential (conclusion. Those conclusions are) also understandable (without further comment).

[Concluding Negation]

The second (part of this section, the part) from “In this fashion...” (he provides the) concluding negation.

The second (part of the concluding negation, the part) from “In this fashion (when) heterodox...” (he explains how to properly) understand the *Sutra’s* point.

In the third (part of the concluding negation, that part that) refutes combined creation, (he shows this is a problem) because of including the preceding two errors. It is like two blind (men who, when) combined, do not form one (person with) sight.

In the fourth (part of the concluding negation, the part that) refutes causeless (creation, he notes) because suffering is produced from sentient beings, it is not causeless.

[Rejoinder]

Third, from “For this reason...” the heterodox individual’s conclusion (attempts to) negates the Author’s (view) as (a form of) evidence that does not complete (the proof).

[Refutation of the Rejoinder]

Fourth, from “Answer:...” the Author suggests the *Sutra’s* (meaning to) reveal the idea.

(Question:) How?

(Answer:) That is to say, The Buddha said suffering is produced from conditions (and) there are two intentions (in this). 1. (He taught this) in order to

refute heterodox views such as previously mentioned. 2. (He taught this) in order to clarify that suffering is empty (of a self-essence. This is) because suffering (produced) from conditions certainly lacks a (self-)nature. (Nagarjuna is saying,) “You only understand the one but do not understand the second. Furthermore, refuting heterodox views is the shallow intention (while) revealing true emptiness is the profound intention. You only get the shallow but do not get the profound. Furthermore, clarifying the emptiness of *dharmas* is the true (point). Refuting heterodox views is the associated (point). You understand the associated (point but) do not understand the true (point).”

In (this final) passage (there are) three (points). First, (he) marks the shallow (to) reveal the profound. Second, from “Expounding (the idea that) suffering is (produced) from collected conditions...” presents the proposition of the emptiness of arisings. Third, from “For what reason?...” (he) explains and reveals the meaning of emptiness.

[Categorical Dismissal]

The third (and final part of this chapter, the part that) categorically dismisses (the error) is understandable (without further explanation).

The Gate of Contemplating the Three Times

The Eleventh (Gate)

[The *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*] [cont. 166c]

Again, all *dharmas* are empty.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Because (in regards to) cause *dharmas* and *dharmas* that have causes, (their) antecedent, subsequent, or simultaneous production cannot be obtained. (This is) as (the text) states:

Whether *dharmas* are antecedent, subsequent, or both,
these (possibilities) are each not established.

(That being so, as for) these *dharmas* produced from causes,
explain how they have (come) to be established.

Antecedent causes and subsequent (effects) with causes, this situation is (simply) not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If it is the case that there is an antecedent cause and subsequent product from that cause, at the time of the antecedent cause there is (then) no (subsequent effect) with that cause. (That being the case,) for what (exactly does that antecedent event) constitute a cause?

If it is the case that antecedently there is (the product of) a cause, and subsequently the cause, at the time when there is no cause, the effect is already established. (At that point then) what is the use of the cause?

If it is the case that the cause and the *dharma* with a cause are simultaneous, this (relationship) also lacks causal (relation). Left and right do not mutually cause (one another). In this fashion due to simultaneous production, the cause is not the effect's cause and the effect is not the cause's effect.

Therefore causes and effects of the three time (periods) are all unobtainable.

Question: Your refutation of cause and effect *dharmas* of the three time (periods) is also not established. If antecedently there is refutation and subsequently there is [167a] the refutable, then (at the time of the refutation you) do not as yet have the refutable. (In that case) what does this refutation refute?

If initially there is the refutable while subsequently there is the refutation, the refutable is already established so what is the use of the refutation?

If the refutation and the refutable are simultaneous, this is also (a situation) without a cause. (It would be) like the horns of an ox simultaneously producing (one another). Because left and right are not mutual causes, in this fashion the refutation does not cause the refutable and the refutable does not cause the refutation.

Answer: Your (notion of) the refutation and the refutable also has this (same) error. If the various *dharmas* are empty then there is no refutation and there is no refutable. You now (actually) expound (their) emptiness and accordingly establish that which I assert. If it was the case that I asserted that the refutation and the

refutable certainly exist, I would (thereby) create this (very) difficulty. Because I do not assert that the refutation and the refutable certainly exist, it ought not (be claimed that I have) created this difficulty.

Question: (We do) perceive antecedent causes – like a potter (who) creates a jar. Also, there are subsequent causes – like (the case where) due to the pupil there is then a teacher. Also, after educating pupils (then one) knows they are pupils. Also, there is simultaneous causation – like a lamp and illumination. (Therefore,) if (you) assert antecedent causes, subsequent causes, and simultaneous causes are not obtainable, this is (simply) not the case. (So, why do you make such a claim?)

Answer: Like a potter creates a jar? – this example is (definitely) not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) If (we) do not yet have a jar, (then in regards) to what does the potter make a cause? Just like (such a) potter, all preceding causes cannot be obtained. Similarly, subsequent causes also cannot be obtained. If as yet there are no pupils, who (would we take) as this teacher? Therefore, subsequent (causes) are also not obtainable. If (one) asserts simultaneous causation, like a lamp and illumination, this also is similarly doubtful causation. (If) the lamp and illumination are simultaneously produced, (please) explain how they are mutual causes?

In this fashion causes and conditions are empty. Therefore (we) must know *karmically* active *dharmas*, *karmically* inactive *dharmas*, and collective productions [i.e., sentient beings] are all empty.

[End of Chapter Eleven of the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*]

[Commentary by Fa-tsang]

[The Name of the Gate]

[230a] First, as for explaining the name, in regards to the three times of present, past, and future, (if one) seeks the *dharmas*, extending (even) to time, both (the *dharmas* and their times) cannot be acquired. Therefore (this investigation) is taken as a “gate.”

[Derivation of the Ideas]

Second, as for deriving the ideas, the overall idea (of the chapter) is like the preceding (chapters). The specific ideas (though) were previously sought by the four phrases (of the tetralemma). Here (he) demands (further answers) by

(considering) the three times. Therefore (this chapter) is derived (from the preceding).

[The Propositions Clarified]

Third, as for that which is clarified, (he) refutes *dharmas*, extending (the point even) to time, (and) thereby reveals true emptiness. As a result of completing contemplation, there is no lodging (for these misconceptions).

[The Explanation]

Fourth, in explaining (this) section (of the text there are) three (parts). First (he) presents the proposition. Second (he) explains the causes. Third, (he) concludes, categorically (dismissing the error).

In regards to the second (part of this fourth section), the explanation, (there are) three (points). First, (he) investigates and presents (the key points in order to) open the section. Second, (he) establishes a verse (to) briefly reveal (the correct view). Third, (he) explains the verse to broadly set out (proper understanding).

[Key Points]

In the first (of the above three parts of the explanation,) as for (the phrase) “*dharmas* that have causes,” (such *dharmas*) are effect *dharmas*. (He uses this phrase) because of a desire (to show) hidden (and/or) manifest causes are not antecedent to effects. It must be (the case that) owing to the effect (one) therefore then speaks (of a preceding *dharma*) as a cause. For this reason (he) speaks of effects designating (them) as “(*dharmas* that) have causes”. (He does so) because (that which) leads to a cause becoming existent is the effect *dharma*.

[The Verse]

Second, the upper half of the verse brings up the valid principle. The lower half investigates the existence of the circumstances (that would be required). That is to say, causes and effects are antecedent, subsequent, (or) both present. Since it is the case (that for all those possibilities the key relationship) is not established, (regarding) *dharmas* that are produced from causes, (the opponent must explain) how (they) come to be established.

[Explanation of the Verse]

Third, in the explanation (of the verse there are) two (points). Initially (he presents a) valid refutation. Subsequently (he) refutes (the attempt at a) saving (rejoinder).

[Valid Refutation]

In the first (he) explains and refutes causes and effects of the three times. The section, accordingly, constitutes three (parts).

(First,) the Sarvastivada claims causes are antecedent and effects subsequent. Furthermore, in *tathagatgarbha* (thought),⁶⁰ antecedently there exists the essence of the effect *dharma*. (According to both views) during subsequent periods (the effect) awaits conditions that assist with arising (but these) also are (a type of) “effects are antecedent and causes subsequent” (view).

(Second,) furthermore, as (the notion of) collectively existent causes is extended to the Satyasiddhi school’s (view that) defilements of fertile production and (their) effects both (arise at the same) time, (this issue) also (includes) the simultaneity of cause and effect.

(Third,) furthermore, like seeds in the fundamental consciousness of (texts like the Vijnanavada's) *Treatise on Establishing Mind Only*, (since with) the extinction of the preceding (there) is then (and only then the initiation of) producing the subsequent, (at that latter time the preceding) ought to be (already) dead (and gone). Comparative inferences (about the problem drawn from examples such as a) songbird that can sing are understandable (without further comment). Furthermore, (there is the notion that) antecedently there are seed-causes (which) subsequently then produce presently active effects. (This sort of idea) is also an antecedent-subsequent (cause to effect viewpoint). Furthermore, similarly, the "seeds anticipate seeds" (views) are antecedent-subsequent (causation views). The sense (of this idea is that the) anticipatory (function) is simultaneous – it is as if both (cause and effect) have (the) significance (of anticipating one another).

Now, (Nagarjuna) carefully overcomes (the notions of the) three times and together (they) do not establish (causation). Even if (one) wanted to settle (the matter), in the end there is no road (that leads there). For this reason *dharmas* such as causes and effects are, in the end, empty. The passage (explaining this point) is also understandable (without further comment here).

[Refutation of the Rejoinder]

Second, in (the next part where he) refutes the (attempt at a) saving (rejoinder) there are four (parts). 1. The heterodox (opponent) brings up a proposition, an example, and (attempts to) refute the difficulty. 2. The Author counter-refutes, completing an answer to the proposition. 3. The heterodox

(opponent) brings up the difficulty of present causal phenomena. 4. (The Author presents an) answer examining present causelessness.

[The Rejoinder]

In the first (of the above four) the point of the heterodox (opponent's rejoinder) considers the Author's (view that) the three times of cause and effect do not establish production. The example (notes that) the Author's (view of) the three time (periods found in the relations between that which is) refuted and (that which) may refute does not establish (the activity of) refutation. That is to say, (he claims) "If your three time (periods allow for) attaining mutual refutation, (then) the three time (periods) of my (view of) causes and effects (allow for) attaining mutual production. If your three time (periods pertaining to that which is) refuted and (that which) may refute do not complete (refutation), refutation, again, also does not attain (completion. So, in) refuting my meaning, my meaning is still, accordingly, established." The heterodox (opponent's) point is like this.

[Counter Refutation]

Second, in the answer (that follows) there are three (parts).

Initially (Nagarjuna) counters and displays the (opponent's) error. (He notes,) "Your current (view of) this difficulty also bears this charge." Therefore, (he also) notes, "You also have (committed) this error."

Second, (Nagarjuna points out that the opponent) has helped complete (his) proposition. That is to say (he notes:)

"If you consider the three time (periods view) as rebuking my ability to refute, leading to a lack of refutation, **[230b]** I now accept your charge and

do not attach to having an ability to refute. If my ability to refute is destroyed, your meaning of production is then saved and for this reason there is no production of the three time (periods). Lacking a refutation of the three time (periods, we) clearly know (they) are empty. (As they) are empty, (this) therefore helps complete my proposition. How does it come to form a difficulty?"

Furthermore, (he notes:)

"If you utilize the three time (periods) to refute my refutation, you have already accepted that the three time (periods) do not come to be produced after all. (Hence you have) already completed my meaning in full. I lack (of nothing) more which is expounded."

Also, the *One Hundred Verse Treatise* says, "The refutation is as that which is refuted."

Also, the *Nirvana Sutra* says: "By my inequality (you) refute your (own thesis of) inequality. If equality (is the case) then (that notion) is my equality (as well)."

All (the points in this text) are the same as these examples. Therefore (Nagarjuna) says. "If the various *dharmas* are empty...", and so on.

Third (Nagarjuna) selects a negative example. That is to say, (he tells the opponent:)

"If I, like you, definitely grasp at the production of the three time (periods), (it) would come to be (as refutable) as my charge and refutation of your (position). Now (however, and) only for your erroneous attachment, I therefore refute your (position but do not commit the same error). In regards

to my (refutation,) in fact there is no refutation. For this reason (the two approaches) are not comparable (and) your (claim) is not necessarily a difficulty (I must address).”

Therefore (this is why the text) says “If I asserted...”.

[Presently Caused Phenomena]

Third, the heterodox opponent brings up the difficulty of presently caused phenomena. That is to say, previously (the opponent) relied upon words to expound (the notion that Nagarjuna’s view) is not established. Now (he) uses the perceptions of (objects by) sight as real. Therein (we find) two (parts). Initially he verifies there are three (types of) causes. Subsequently he concludes (these three) are not (part of) the Author’s (view).

In the preceding (of the above two parts there are) three (subpoints). In the first, the heterodox idea considers an antecedently existent pottery master as a cause and the subsequently created jar as the effect. In the second (the heterodox idea) considers the master as an effect and the student as a cause. Due to creating students, (the teacher) acquires the designation of “master.” Accordingly, taking this evidence there are effects antecedently and causes subsequently. In the third, (cause and effect) are like the brightness of a lamp (which), even though (it) has arisen at one time, thusly must cause the lamp to have (the quality of) brightness. (Given) this (we) know (they) are simultaneous even as together there is cause and effect.

The second (of the two parts mentioned above, the part that) concludes (these three types of causes) are not (part of) the Author’s (view), is understandable (without further comment here).

[Present Causelessness]

Fourth, the Treatise's Author investigates the answer of present causelessness. Therein, he explains and refutes the preceding three (points). The section accordingly constitutes three (parts).

In the first (part he) initially records the reckoning and generally negates it. (In the) second (part he) explains the negation and validly refutes (the errors. In the) third (part, the part) from "Like a pottery master...," (he) illustratively refutes the remaining *dharmic* (principles).

In the second (of the above three parts) the presentation, explanation, and conclusion are all understandable (without further comment here).

In the third (of the above mentioned three parts,) as for the doubtful causation of simultaneity, since the lamp (and its) brightness exist (in the same) single (moment of) time, accordingly (we) certainly understand (that the problem is) in order to cause a lamp, there (must) be brightness, (but) in order to cause brightness, there (must) be a lamp. Due to this (the cause) is not determined and (Nagarjuna) consequently refers to the doubtful causation of simultaneity.

Furthermore, (Nagarjuna) notes (that if) the lamp and brightness are existent (at the same) one time, (and) as before (we) take the lamp as the cause of brightness, (we) do not (also) get brightness as the cause of the lamp. (This point) counters (and) rebukes (the notion of) the lamp and brightness existing (as causes in the same) one (moment of) time. (This shows) brightness is a cause that cannot create a lamp and a lamp is also a cause that cannot create brightness. (Given this

the precise cause of this relationship) cannot be determined after all. For this reason (he) refers to the doubtful causation of simultaneity.

Furthermore, the first section (of Nagarjuna's work) already refuted the simultaneity of cause and effect as not established. (So, he is pointing out) your [i.e., the opponent's] past doubt is not complete and the present circumstance drawing upon the simultaneity of lamp and brightness as proof is again, like before, doubtful. Consequently it is stated (as in the text). As for (the text) saying "(if) the lamp and brightness (are simultaneously produced...)," it determines that both (together) are not a cause.

[Conclusion]

The third (of the previously mentioned three parts of the explanation,) the categorical dismissal (of the errors) is understandable (without further comment here).

The Gate of Contemplating Production

The Twelfth (Gate)

[The *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*] [cont. 167a]

Again, all *dharmas* are empty.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) Because produced, not produced, and a time of production (all) cannot be attained. The presently produced already is not produced (as it already exists). The not (produced) is also not produced. A time of production is also not produced. (This is) as (the text) states:

A produced effect is not then produced.

The not produced is also not produced.

Apart from this produced and not produced,

a time of production is also not produced.

“Production” designates the effect’s arising emergence. “Not yet produced” indicates (an effect) is not yet arisen, not yet emerged, and not yet existent. The “time of production” designates (the time when) the initial arising is not yet (fully) established. Among these, as for the nonproduction of an effect of production, this produced (effect) is produced already and (so) not (in need of) production.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer: This must be the case) because there is the error of (a regress) without end. (The regress occurs) because the already created is created again. If there is) the production of the produced already, (that production) produces a second production (of the first). The second product, produced already, (in turn) produces a third production (of the second). The third product, produced already, produces a fourth production (of the third. In all these cases it) is like the initial production (wherein) already there is the second [167b] product. Production like this lacks an end and this situation is (simply) not the case. For these reasons the produced does not produce.

Again, if you claim the produced already is produced (again), the product that is utilized to produce is (obviously already) produced. (Alternately, the idea that something that is) not produced (already) is still yet produced, this situation is (also simply) not the case.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer:) The initial product is not produced but is (still) produced. (If this (is the case) then there are two types of production because the produced already is produced and the not yet produced is (also) produced. (If this is the case then) your previous definitive assertion is now not definitive. (The problem is obvious if we note this) is like the created already that does not need to be created (again) and the burned already that does not need to be burned (again. Furthermore) the proven already does not need to be proven (again.) Similarly the produced already does not

need to be further produced. Therefore, produced *dharmas* are not (further) produced and *dharmas* that are not produced also are not produced.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer: This must be the case) because (the not produced) is not united with production. Furthermore, (there is) the error of all the not produced having products. If not produced *dharmas* produce then there is production apart from a product. (Given) this then (the produced) does not produce. If there is product apart from production, then there is the created apart from creating, gone apart from going, and eaten apart from dining. (If things work) like this then that destroys the worldly, conventional *Dharma*. (Clearly though,) this situation is not the case. Therefore *dharmas* (that are) not produced do not produce.

Again, if *dharmas* (that are) not produced are produced, (then) all *dharmas* (that have) not been produced should be produced. (Given this then) all ordinary people who have yet to produce supreme perfect enlightenment should (have) produced it. (Also) though the defilements of an Arhat of Indestructible *Dharma* are not produced, they still (ought to be) produced. The horns of hares and horses, though not produced, still (ought to be) produced. (Obviously though) these situations are not the case and therefore (one) ought not assert that the not produced is produced

Question: As for the not produced still being produced, (this is) as when there is a combination of causes and conditions – time, place, agent, skillful means, implements, etc., (such that) then the not produced is produced. It is not (the case that) all the not produced are still produced. Therefore (you) should not consider (the idea that) all the not produced are still produced as a difficulty. (So why do you assert the contrary?)

Answer: If *dharmas* produce as time, place, agent, skillful means, and collected conditions combine to (initiate) production, among these an antecedent, definitive existent does not produce (the effect.) An antecedently nonexistent (thing also) does not produce (the effect). Furthermore, an (antecedently) existent and nonexistent (thing) also does not produce (the effect. So,) seeking production (among) these three types (of possible causes) we do not attain it. (This is just) as previously explained. Therefore *dharmas* not produced are not produced. The time of production also is not produced.

(Question:) For what reason?

(Answer: This must be the case) because (otherwise) there is the error of producing the produced and the error of the not produced still being produced. For *dharmas* at the time of production, the produced part is not produced – as previously stated, and the part not produced also is not produced – as previously stated.

Again, if there is a time of production apart from producing, then there ought to be a production of the time of production. Yet, in fact, apart from production there is no time of production. Therefore the time of production also is not produced.

Again, if one asserts the time of production is produced, then there are two (times of) production. (In that case,) first (we would have) to consider the time of production as a production and second, (we would have) to consider the production of the time of production (as a production. Yet, in fact) there are not these two

dharmas. (Accordingly,) how can we claim there are two productions? For these reasons the time of production also is not produced.

Again, when there is as yet no production, there is no time of production. (Given this, then) what realm is production active within? If there is no realm of activity, then there is no production [167c] of the time of production. For this reason the time of production also is not produced.

In this fashion the produced, not produced, and the time of production are all not established. Because *dharmas* that are produced are not established, there is no production, abiding, or extinction. Similarly, because production, abiding and extinction are not established, accordingly *karmically* active *dharmas* are not established, and *karmically* inactive *dharmas* are also not established. Because *karmically* active and *karmically* inactive *dharmas* are not established, sentient beings are also not established. Therefore (one) should know all *dharmas* lack production and, as a result, are in the end empty, quiescent.

[End of the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*]

[Commentary by Fa-tsang]

[The Name of the Gate]

First, as for explaining the name, (Nagarjuna) investigates and refutes the production of *dharmas*, thereby reaching (the conclusion) there is no production. Consequently (this section) takes (“production”) as the gate’s (name).

[Derivation of the Ideas]

Second [230c] as for the derivation of the idea, the preceding two gates incline towards refuting that which can produce. (So) this gate specifically refutes that which is produced. Therefore (this gate) derives (from the preceding two).

[The Propositions Clarified]

Third, as for that which is clarified, the correct contemplation of non-production is that which this (gate) expounds.

[The Explanation]

Fourth, as for explaining (this) section, (there are) four (parts. That is to say,) initially (he) presents (the point), secondly, (he) explains it, third (he) concludes, (and) fourth, (he) categorically (refutes the error).

In the second (of the above four parts, the) explanation, (there are) three (points). Initially, (he) examines the proposition (to) open the section. Second, (he) establishes a verse (and) briefly presents (the key ideas). Third, (he) explains the verse and broadly distinguishes (among the key ideas).

[Distinguishing the Key Ideas]

In (the part that) broadly distinguishes (among the key ideas, there are) two (points). First (he) explains and reveals the three times. Subsequently (he) uses (key) principles to validly refute (the error). Therein (we find) three (subpoints).

[The Already Produced]

Initially (he) explains the already produced is not (further) produced. In this (part), initially (he provides a) valid refutation, then (he) refutes (the attempt at a) saving (rejoinder).

In the preceding (of the aforementioned two parts, that is to say, the valid refutation, there are) three (subpoints). Initially, (he) presents (the idea). Second, from "How so?...", (he) explains the refutation. That is to say, (he presents) a refutation (based on the fact that the heterodox idea) creates (a regress) without end. Because the previously produced is produced already, (this view entails) further producing the already produced. In this fashion (he follows the regress) up to the fourth (iteration) revealing it is an error of (a regress) without end. Third,

from “For this reason... (he) concludes (noting that the produced already) is not produced.

[The Rejoinder]

(In the) second (of the two parts mentioned earlier, the part that begins) from “Again...”, (he) refutes (the attempt at a) saving (rejoinder). Therein (he) initially records the saving (rejoinder and) generally negates it. That is to say, the heterodox individual (attempts) to save the preceding error of (a regress) without end and consequently says:

“I (hold that) although the product is already produced, even so the product which is utilized to produce is not (yet) produced, even as (it) produces. As a result, this is not (a case of) the production of the already produced and consequently (there is) only one (sequence of) production without the error of (a regress) without end.”

[Refutation of the Rejoinder]

Second, in the valid refutation (of the above rejoinder) first (Nagarjuna) refutes (the point), then (he provides) an illustration, then (he) concludes.

In the first (of the above three parts,) as for (the notion that) the product is not (yet) produced and still produces, this is (the notion that) the nature of the product which is utilized (to produce) is the product of future production. Because (of this notion) there are two productions (- i.e., production of what is already produced and production of what is not yet produced). Earlier (though), it is the case that (the heterodox opponent) said there is only the production of the already produced. Given this, then (the heterodox viewpoint) is not settled. If (the heterodox

attempt at the) saving (rejoinder) is allowed, it still falls into the earlier error. Therefore (Nagarjuna follows this point by) saying “The created already is not (further) created,...”, etc.

[The Not Produced]

Second in (the next part) explaining and refuting that the not produced does not produce, (there are) two (points). Initially (he provides a) valid refutation. Then (he) refutes (the attempt at a) saving (rejoinder).

In the first (of the above two parts there are) four (subparts). The first concerns a refutation (that) dismisses erroneous characteristics. That is to say, if (one) allows for the combination of production and *dharmas* (we ought) not designate it “production of the not produced”. If (one) does not allow the combination of production and *dharmas* then (those *dharmas*) are *dharmas* lacking production. What (then is being) designated as “production”? Consequently it is stated (as we find in this section).

The second (subpart of this section) corresponds to a refutation (that points out the) hypothetical dependency (between the unproduced and the product) is (*karmically*) inactive. That is to say, if it is the case that *dharmas* which are not (yet) produced have productive (power, then) *nirvana*, (which) is a *dharma* lacking (present) production, also ought to create products. Emptiness, and so on, are also thus.

The third (part of this section is a) refutation (based on the notion that the idea) destroys (*karmically*) active (*dharmic* relations). (This) is also a refutation (pointing out this idea leads to) erroneous *dharmas* that deviate from (the

traditional) stages (of *karmic* development. This part) is understandable (without further comment here).

The fourth (part of this section is a) refutation (pointing out that the idea leads to) causelessly produced *dharmas*. Arhats of Indestructible *Dharma* are of an unmoveable nature. (They are) Arhats (who) choose to withdraw from (negative) characteristics, and so on. (But) by that proposition's allowance, withdrawing (from) arousing defilements is not the cause of this (state of spiritual attainment). Furthermore, the (future) insight of common people ought to produce (what is) not (yet) produced. (This) creates a rebuttal of (what) ought to be produced. The defilements of Arhats are (a case of that which) ought not to be produced still yet being produced. (Again, this) creates a rebuttal of (what) ought to be produced.

[Refutation of the Rejoinder]

Second, in (the next part where he) refutes (the attempt at a) saving (rejoinder), initially (he presents the) heterodox (attempt at a) save. The idea of the save is that earlier the Author (himself) created the difficulty of (that which) ought not to be produced still yet being produced. The heterodox proponent does not accept (this characterization and) consequently (in essence) says,

“It is not that everything not produced is still produced. There is a combination of causes and conditions (which was) originally nonexistent, (but) presently existent, (and that present combination is) designated “production”. How do (you) come to say (every) one (of these cases) inclines to nonexistence? (With) the nonexistence in my proposition there are two types. One is the nonexistence of the potentially existent. The second is

absolute nonexistence. Among these two I expound on the nonexistence of the potentially existent. **[231a]** How is it (you) come to take absolute nonexistence as the difficulty? (For example, what I mean) is like the above (mentioned) common person's insight which is (currently) not yet produced, yet still (will be) produced (in the future when the correct conditions obtain). That is to say, (when) there are causes and conditions like meeting good friends, and so on, then (insight) is produced."

(The) second (part of this section is the part with the) valid refutation. In the refutation (there are) three (points). Initially (Nagarjuna) records the (attempt at a) saving (rejoinder). Secondly, he inquires about and rebuts (the idea). Third, (he) concludes and negates (the error).

In the part concerning the rebuttal, if it is the case (one) says (this view) is not the same as absolute nonexistence, even while it is the nonexistence of the possibly existent, among conditions of this type, (those) that are existent are consequently produced, (and likewise, those) that are nonexistent are (also) consequently produced. Both (of these) are negative type (conditions and accordingly they) each do not complete production. (This conclusion) is as expounded in the previous gates.

[The Time of Production]

Third, in (the next part that) refutes the production of the time of production (there are) four (points).

First is a refutation (of a time of production) apart from the already and not yet (produced). The presentation and explanation (of this point) is understandable (without further comment here).

Second is a refutation (pointing out that) apart from *dharmas*, there is no time. That is to say, if there is time apart from production, (then that time) potentially has the capability of producing *dharmas*. (But) since there is no time apart from the production (of *dharmas*), how is there the production of the time of production?

Third is a refutation (pointing out the problem of) two productions (that must characterize any production) of *dharmas* of the three times. That is to say, since there is a time of production (it must be the case that) again there is (a time of) producing *dharmas*. Given this, then there are two (levels of) production. (With the) preceding part, because the time (of a *dharma's* production) is nonexistent, *dharmas* are also nonexistent. (With) this (next) part, because *dharmas* exist, the time (of *dharma's* production) also exists.

Fourth is a refutation (pointing out that) production lacks a realm of activity. That is to say, the realm of activity of that production is designated as the time of production. Since there is not yet that time, production lacks (the active circumstances that are referred to as) producing.

[Conclusion]

Third, from "Like this..." (Nagarjuna) generally concludes there is no production.

Fourth, (in the next part that) categorically dismisses (the error there are) five (points). 1. (He) categorizes production and dismisses (notions of) abiding and extinction. 2. (He) dismisses (the notion of) *karmically* active (*dharmas*). 3. (He) dismisses (the notion of) *karmically* inactive (*dharmas*). 4. (He) dismisses (the notion of) collective production. 5. (He) generally concludes everything is empty (of own-being).

(End of) the second (section) of the roll (containing) *A Record Conveying the Meaning of the Tenets of the Treatise on the Twelve Gates*.

[End of this *Commentary* explaining the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*]

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Endnotes

1. Translation from *Taisho* #1826. Western temple of the Great Vow: One of the T'ang empire's five great temples. The Western temple was located in Ch'ang-an.
2. The binomial translated here as "providing proofs" has an old meaning of giving silver rather than grain in payment. In other words, providing something of enduring value.
3. "Central tenets and paths that are expounded": The character I have translated as "paths" more literally means to "advance towards." In Buddhist literature it is often used to refer to both the process of advancing and the destination.
4. First of the ten *bhumi's*. Fa-tsang's reference here is probably based in the 26th chapter of the 80 chapter version of the Hua-yen ching. That chapter titled the "Ten Stages" includes a lengthy description of the ten. The first, the stage of "joy" is characterized by, amongst others, a series of "great vows" – noteworthy here are the 5th - "to fully develop all beings... to establish them in omniscience" and the 6th - "direct knowledge of the innumerable distinctions..." Due to these great vows *Bodhisattvas* at this stage also "based on compassion, kindness, and relinquishment," acting for the "sake of the salvation and liberation of all beings..." "become expert in all learning" (See Thomas Cleary's translation of the *Hua-yen sutra*, pg 20., for the full text)
5. The binomial phrase rendered as "discursive" means "*sastras*", "*upadesas*", etc.
6. Divakara: originally from central India he arrived in China in 676 and stayed until his death in 688. He helped translate numerous Buddhist texts during those years.
7. Silabhadra: Early 7th century. Famous monk of Nalanda monastery in India. He taught Vijnanavada doctrines to the Chinese monk Hsuan-tsang. Jnanaprabha; a student of Silabhadra who later became an advocate of Madhyamaka doctrines.
8. This long phrase refers to the objects grasped at by *parikalpita* – the imagined/constructed nature. The following terms refer to *paratantra*, the dependent nature, and *parinispanna*, the perfected nature. These "Three Natures" are basic Vijnanavada teachings.
9. Aryadeva: @ 2nd century ce. The foremost student of Nagarjuna. Bhavaviveka: 490-570ce. A key interpreter of Madhyamaka doctrines.
10. *Ta-ch'eng miao-chih ching*: It is unclear what text Fa-tsang is referring to here. He also refers to this in his *Commentary on the Awakening of Faith*.
11. Direct and inferential reasoning: These are the two types of knowledge that traditionally count as valid understanding in the Buddhist logical traditions. Direct reasoning is derived directly from and in correspondence with sense perception. Inferential reasoning is a more complicated category of knowledge that requires the use of a "mark" that logically connects the object perceived with the object inferred. A traditional example in the Indian logical traditions is the inference to a fire that is not directly perceived by means of the "mark" of the smoke which is perceived.
12. Four Fruits of the *Arhat* Path: stream enterer, once returner, non-returner, and *Arhat*.
13. *Tathagata*: "Thus Come One" – an appellation for the/a Buddha.

14. Initial Teaching of the Mahayana; a reference to Fa-tsang's own hierarchical ranking of Buddhist teachings. The five are: *Hinayana*, Initial *Mahayana* (Vijnanavada and Madhyamaka), Final Mahayana (Tathagatagarbha and Buddha-nature), The Sudden Teaching (Ch'an), The Perfect Teaching (Hua-yen).
15. There are various versions of this classification of the *karmic* nature of different people. A common version has the following list of five: Fixed Hearer, Fixed Solitary Buddha, Fixed *Tathagata* (aka, *Mahayana, Bodhisattva*), Undetermined, and No Nature. The idea is that the *karmic* conditions of various individuals dispose them towards one of the five associated teachings.
16. Transformation body: Once *Bodhisattvas* reach a certain stage of development they are *karmically* transformed in a way that also allows them to transform in order to help others.
17. The long nailed Brahmacharin: member of the Vatsiputriyah – a controversial later subschool of Buddhism that advocated the existence of a *karmic* substratum for the self.
18. Formal reasoning: *pramana* - valid forms of knowledge. See note #11.
19. Senika heresy – the view that there is an essential nature (mind, soul, spirit) in the body.
20. Five worldly illuminations: grammar and composition, the arts and mathematics, medicine, logic, and philosophy
21. The word “burdened” also connotes the pole slung across the shoulders to carry a load – hence the following sentence.
22. Great Assembly: Mahasamghika – an early subschool of Buddhism in India. This school may have played a role in the later emergence of *Mahayana*.
23. See note #8.
24. *Dharmadhatu* of one flavor: the emptiness of a self-nature of the entire realm (*dhatu*) of *dharmas*.
25. Ten Stages: *bhumis*. See note #4.
26. Dependent on other arisings nature: See note #8. This is *paratantra*. Later, starting on page 50, he will address the other two natures – *parikalpita* (the “constructed/imagined” nature) and *parinispanna* – the “perfect” nature.
27. “that to which general reckoning is attached.” – this refers to “*parikalpita*” – see note 26.
28. “The nonexistence of the real within the principle (of emptiness)” – this refers to *paratantra*. See note 26.
29. He refers to *parinispanna*. See note 26.
30. *Ayatanas* – the six senses and their six respective, associated objects.
31. Universal reckoning – *parikalpita*. See note 26. Here the point is that notions of essentially existent senses/sense objects and/or nihilistic emptiness are both objects constructed by delusion.
32. See note #4.
33. I have flipped the order of the ideas in these two sentences. It seems to fit better with what follows.
34. The *Treatise on the Twelve Gates*.
35. Translated from *Taisho* #1568. I've omitted the summary of contents and Seng-jui's preface as they do not factor into Fa-tsang's explanation. Please note again that

Fa-tsang's Commentary does not include Nagarjuna's text. I have inserted it in the hopes it will make it easier to follow Fa-tsang's explanation. Please note as well all references to *Taisho* page numbers within the translation of Nagarjuna's text refer to that text, not Fa-tsang's *Commentary*. You may wish to consult Hsueh-li Cheng's translation/explanation of this text for another point of reference. It is available on the web under the title *Nagarjuna's Twelve Gate Treatise*.

36. According to *Taisho*, this phrase, the title of the first section of Nagarjuna's text, was originally attached to the title of the entire text.

37. *Karmically* functional *dharmas* – a reference to the category of “*sanskrita*” *dharmas*. For the Sarvastivadins, *sanskrita dharmas* comprise 72 of the 75 total types of *dharmas*. *Sanskrita* – “conditioned”, subject to and productive of conditioned arising. Also, subject to compounding or “collective conditioning.” These *dharmas* are *karmically* functional in the sense that they are dependently produced effects and they produce subsequent such effects. These types of *dharmas* are variously categorized into groups such as the five *skandhas* (“heaps”, “collections”), twelve *ayatanas* (“domains”, – the six senses and their corresponding objects), and eighteen *dhatas* (“realms”, “spheres” – the preceding twelve plus the associated six awarenesses). I have translated this as (*karmically*) “functional” because the text (as typical) uses the binomial “*yuwei*” (- to be active, productive, functional) to render this Sanskrit term. Shortly both Nagarjuna and Fa-tsang will bring up the topic of *asanskrita dharmas* (*karmically* “nonfunctional” – the opposite of the above).

38. *Agamas* – collections of early Buddhist texts roughly corresponding to the *Nikayas*.

39. “*Dharma*” – The Chinese character also refers to rules, patterns, and laws.

40. “Analysis” – *pramana*, valid sources of knowledge.

41. See Fa-tsang's *Commentary on the Awakening of Faith* for more on this. His discussion can be found on page 95 of my translation of the text (*An English translation of Fa-tsang's Commentary on the Awakening of Faith*, the Edwin Mellen Press, 2004).

42. This binomial also means “to carry,” “transport towards,” “turn towards,” etc.

43. Here the translation uses a few secondary meanings because they fit better with the actual verse and what Fa-tsang says below.

44. Proposition – same character translated above as “principle.” As is clear from the context that follows, here Fa-tsang is referring to the parts of the three-part formal syllogism (proposition, reason, example). This form of reasoning is a *pramana* if all the parts are logically sound.

45. “Rejoinder” – the Chinese character literally means “to save,” “to rescue.”

46. The adjective here rendered “mooting” has primary meanings of “small, minute, etc.” Mooting is a loose rendering of secondary meanings associated with the connotations of questioning, judging, meaning, and hypothetical negatives. This meaning more clearly fits the nature of Nagarjuna's questions in these two sentences.

47. Fundamental consciousness – *alayavijnana*. This is the “storehouse consciousness” that stores *karmic* impressions and serves as the basis upon which the other forms of consciousness arise.

48. Samkhya and Vaiseshika – schools of Hindu philosophy. Nigrantha and Jnanaputra - Hindu thinkers.
49. Sarvastivada, Sautrantika, Mahasamghika, Fa-hsiang *Mahayana* – schools of Buddhist philosophy.
50. “Fa-tsang has “yet, in fact...” The corresponding sentence in *Taisho* reads “Therefore effects such as a jar are not attainable **after all.**”
51. Fa-tsang has “not yet transformed.” The *12 Gate Treatise* has “already transformed.” Fa-tsang seems to have lost his place here and confused this and the preceding sentence with two that are found just earlier towards the end of the previous refutation (i.e., refutation of the attempted save in the sixth iteration of the argument).
52. The phrase for “refined butter” also can refer to the refined qualities of the Buddha and Dharma.
53. *dharmas* with *karmic* outflow = *asrava dharmas*. Those *dharmas* produced by and in turn producing a stream of outflows associated with the passions, delusion, suffering, etc.
54. The Five *Skandhas* (collections/heaps) = five categories of *dharmas*. The five are: *rupa* (form), *vedana* (sensation/feeling), *samjna* (idea), *samskara* (assorted/miscellaneous other), *vijnana* (consciousness/awareness).
55. *Treatise on the Middle Way* – the *Mulamadhyamakakarika*. For a translation see, for example, Jay I. Garfield’s *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* (New York, Oxford Univ. press, 1995).
56. Four *Sramana* Fruits: *sramana* – one who makes efforts towards enlightenment. Four fruits: stream-winner, once-returner, never-returner, Arhat. All such individuals are considered “noble persons” – *Arya-pudgala*.
57. Sovereign Independence – This binomial is also used later to reference the Hindu notion of *Isvara*, or God.
58. Eternal soul – *atman*.
59. God - *Isvara*.
60. *Tathagatagarbha* thought - a cluster of related ideas centered on the notion that everyone already has within them the “seed” (*garbha*) of Buddhahood. Becoming a Buddha (*tathagata*) is then the realization and manifestation of that antecedently existent potential.