

Nagarjuna's Precious Garland
Chapter 1
High Status and Definite Goodness

Homage to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas

1. I bow down to the Omniscient,
Freed from all defects,
Adorned with all good qualities,
The sole friend of all beings.
2. King, I will explain practices solely
virtuous
To generate in you the doctrine,
For the practices will be established
In a vessel of the excellent doctrine.
3. In one who first practices high status
Definite goodness arises later,
For having attained high status,
One comes gradually to definite
goodness.
4. High status is considered to be happiness,
Definite goodness is liberation.
The quintessence of their means
Is briefly faith and wisdom.
5. Due to having faith one relies on the
practices,
Due to having wisdom one truly knows.
Of these two, wisdom is the chief,
Faith is its prerequisite.
6. One who does not neglect the practices
Through desire, hatred, fear, or
bewilderment
Is known as one of faith,
A superior vessel for definite goodness.
7. Having analysed well
All deeds of body, speech and mind,
Those who realize what benefit self and
others
And always perform these are wise.
8. Not killing, not stealing,
Forsaking the mates of others,
Refraining completely from false,

Divisive, harsh, and senseless speech,

9. Thoroughly forsaking covetousness,
harmful intent,
And the views of Nihilists-
These are the ten gleaming paths of
action;
Their opposites are dark.
10. Not drinking intoxicants, a good
livelihood,
Non-harming, respectful giving,
Honouring the honourable and love-
Practice in brief is that.
11. Practice is not done by just
Mortifying the body,
For one has not forsaken injuring others
And is not helping others.
12. Those not esteeming the great path of
excellent doctrine
Bright with giving, ethics, and patience,
Afflict their bodies, taking
An aberrant path like a cow path
(deceiving oneself and those following).
13. Their bodies embraced by the vicious
snakes
Of the afflictive emotions, they enter for
a long time
The dreadful jungle of cyclic existence
Among the trees of endless beings.
14. A short life comes through killing.
Much suffering comes through harming.
Poor resources, through stealing.
Enemies, through adultery.
15. From lying arises slander.
From divisiveness, a parting of friends.
From harshness, hearing the unpleasant.
From senselessness, one's speech is not
respected.

16. Covetousness destroys one's wishes,
Harmful intent yields fright,
Wrong views lead to bad views,
And drink to confusion of the mind.
17. Through not giving comes poverty,
Through wrong livelihood, deception,
Through arrogance, a bad lineage,
Through jealousy, little beauty.
18. A bad color comes through anger,
Stupidity, from not questioning the wise.
These are effects for humans,
But prior to all is a bad transmigration.
19. Opposite to the well-known
Fruits of these non-virtues
Is the arising of effects
Caused by all the virtues.
20. Desire, hatred, ignorance, and
The actions they generate are non-
virtues.
Non-desire, non-hatred, non-ignorance,
And the actions they generate are virtues.
21. From non-virtues come all suffering
And likewise all bad transmigrations,
From virtues, all happy transmigrations
And the pleasure of all lives.
22. Desisting from all non-virtues
And always engaging in virtues
With body, speech, and mind-
These are called the three forms of
practice.
23. Through these practices one is freed from
Becoming
A hell-being, hungry ghost, or animal.
Reborn as a human or god one gains
Extensive happiness, fortune and
dominion.
24. Through the concentrations,
immeasurable,
and formlessnesses
- One experiences the bliss of Brahma and
so forth.
Thus in brief are the practices
For high status and their fruits.
25. The doctrines of definite goodness
Are said by the Conquerors
To be deep, subtle, and frightening,
To the childish, who are not learned.
26. "I am not, I will not be.
I have not, I will not have"
That frightens all the childish
And extinguishes fear in the wise.
27. By him who speaks only to help beings,
It was said that all beings
Have arisen from the conception of I
And are enveloped with the conception
of mine.
28. "The I exists, the mine exists"
These are wrong as ultimates,
For the two are not (established)
By a thorough consciousness of reality
just as it is.
29. The mental and physical aggregates arise
From the conception of I which is false
in fact.
How could what is grown
From a false seed be true?
30. Having seen thus the aggregates as
untrue,
The conception of I is abandoned,
And due to abandoning the conception of
I
The aggregates arise no more.
31. Just as it is said
That an image of one's face is seen
Depending on a mirror
But does not really exist (as a face),

32. So the conception of I exists
Dependent on the aggregates,
But like the image of one's face
The I does not at all really exist.
33. Just as without depending on a mirror
The image of one's face is not seen,
So too the conception of I does not exist
Without depending on the aggregates.
34. When the Superior Ananda
Heard what this means,
He attained the eye of doctrine
And repeatedly spoke of it to monastics.
35. As long as the aggregates are conceived,
So long thereby does the conception of I
exist.
Further, when the conception of I exists,
There is action, and from it there also is
birth.
36. With these three pathways mutually
causing
Each other
Without a beginning, a middle, or an end,
This wheel of cyclic existence
Turns like the wheel of a firebrand.
37. Because this wheel is not obtained from
self,
Other,
Or from both, in the past, the present, or
the future,
The conception of I is overcome
And thereby action and rebirth.
38. One who sees how cause and effect
Are produced and destroyed
Does not regard the world
As really existent or really non-existent.
39. One who has heard thus the doctrine
extinguishing
All suffering, but does not examine it
And fears the fearless state
Trembles due to ignorance.
40. That all these will not exist in nirvana
Does not frighten you.
Why does their non-existence
Explained here, cause you fright?
41. "In liberation there is no self and there
are no
aggregates"
If liberation is asserted thus,
Why is the removal here of the self
And of the aggregates not liked by you?
42. If nirvana is not a non-thing,
Just how could it have thingness?
The extinction of the misconception
Of things and non-things is called
nirvana.
43. In brief the view of nihilism
Is that, effects of actions do not exist.
Without merit and leading to a bad state,
It is regarded as a "wrong view".
44. In brief the view of existence
Is that effects of actions exist.
Meritorious and conducive to happy
Transmigrations
It is regard as a "right view".
45. Because existence and non-existence are
extinguished by wisdom,
There is a passage beyond meritorious
and ill deeds.
This, say the excellent, is liberation from
Bad transmigrations and happy
transmigrations.
46. Seeing production as caused
One passes beyond non-existence
Seeing cessation as caused
One also does not assert existence

47. Previously produced and simultaneously
Produced (causes)
Are non-causes; (thus) there are no
causes in fact,
Because (such) production is not
confirmed at all
As (existing) conventionally or in reality.
48. When this is, that arises,
Like short when there is long,
Due to the production of this, that is
produced,
Like light from the production of a
flame.
49. When there is long, there is short.
They do not exist through their own
nature,
Just as due to the non-production
Of a flame, light also does not arise.
50. Having thus seen that effects arise
From causes, one asserts what appears
In the conventions of the world
And does not accept nihilism
51. One who asserts, just as it is, cessation
That does not arise from conventions
Does not pass into (a view of) existence.
Thereby one not relying on duality is
liberated.
52. A form seen from a distance
Is seen clearly by those nearby.
If a mirage were water,
Why is water not seen by those nearby?
53. They way the world is seen
As real by those afar
Is not so seen by those nearby
For whom it is signless like a mirage.
54. Just as a mirage is seemingly water
But not water and does not in fact exist
(as water),
So the aggregates are seemingly a self
But not a self and do not exist in fact.
55. Having thought a mirage to be water
And then having gone there,
Someone would just be stupid to
surmise,
“That water does not exist”
56. One who conceives of the mirage-like
world
That it does or does not exist
Is consequently ignorant.
When there is ignorance, one is not
liberated.
57. A follower of non-existence goes to bad
transmigrations,
And a follower of existence goes to
happy transmigrations.
Through correct and true knowledge
Once does not rely on dualism and
becomes liberated.
58. If through correct and true knowledge
(Such wise persons) do not assert
existence and non-existence
And thereby (you think) that they follow
non-existence
Why should they not be followers of
existence?
59. If from refuting existence
Non-existence would accrue to them,
Why from refuting non-existence
Would existence not accrue to them?
60. They implicitly have no nihilistic thesis
And also have no nihilistic behaviour
And due to relying on (the path to)
Enlightenment have no nihilistic thought.
Hence how can they be regarded as
nihilists?
61. Ask the Samkhyas, the followers of
Kanada, Nirgranthas,
And the worldly proponents of a person
and aggregates,
Whether they propound
What passes beyond “is” and “is not”.

62. Thereby know that the ambrosia
Of the Buddha's teaching is called
profound,
An exclusive doctrine passing
Far beyond "is" and "is not".
63. How could the world exist in fact,
With a nature passed beyond the three
times,
Not going when disintegrating, not
coming,
And not staying even for an instant?
64. Because the coming, going, and staying
Of the world and nirvana do not exist
As (their own) reality, what difference
Is there in fact between the two?
65. If, due to the non-existence of staying,
Production and cessation do not exist as
(their own) reality,
How could production, staying,
And ceasing exist in fact?
66. If always changing,
How are things non-momentary?
If not changing,
How can they be altered in fact?
67. Do they become momentary
Through partial or complete
disintegration?
Because an inequality is not
apprehended,
This momentariness cannot be admitted
either way.
68. If momentary, then it becomes entirely
non-existent;
Hence how could it be old?
Also if non-momentary, it is constant;
Hence how could it be old?
69. Just as a moment has an end, so a
beginning
And a middle must be considered.
Thus due to this triple nature of a
moment,
- There is no momentary abiding of the
world.
70. Also the beginning, middle, and end
Are to be analysed like a moment.
Therefore beginning, middle, and end
Are also not (produced) from self or
other,
71. Due to having many parts there is no
unity,
There is not anything without parts.
Further, without one, there is not many.
Also, without existence there is no non-
existence.
72. If it is thought that through disintegration
or an antidote
An existent becomes non-existent,
Then how without an existent
Could there be disintegration or an
antidote?
73. Hence, in fact there is no disappearance
Of the world through nirvana.
Asked whether the world has an end
The Conqueror remained silent.
74. Because he did not teach this profound
doctrine
To worldly beings who were not
receptacles,
The All-Knowing is therefore known
By the wise to be omniscient.
75. Thus the doctrine of definite goodness
Was taught by the perfect Buddhas,
The seers of reality, as profound,
Unapprehendable, and baseless.
76. Frightened by this baseless doctrine,
Delighting in a base, not passing
Beyond existence and non-existence,
Unintelligent beings ruin themselves.

77. Afraid of the fearless abode,
Ruined, they ruin others.
O King, act in such a way
That the ruined do not ruin you.
78. King, lest you be ruined
I will explain through the scriptures
The mode of the supramundane, just as it
is,
The reality not partaking of dualism.
79. This profundity endowed with meanings
Drawn (from scriptures)
And beyond ill-deeds and meritorious
deeds
Has not been tasted by those who fear the
baseless-
The others-the fordere-and even by our
own.
80. A person is not earth, not water,
Not fire, not wind, not space,
Not consciousness, and not all of them.
What person is there other than these?
81. Just as a person is not real
Due to being a composite of six
constituents,
So each of the constituents also
Is not real due to being a composite.
82. The aggregates are not the self, they are
not in it,
It is not in them, without them it is not,
It is not mixed with the aggregates like
fire and fuel.
Therefore how could the self exist?
83. The three elements are not earth, they are
not in it,
It is not in them, without them it is not;
Since this also applies to each,
The elements, like the self, are false.
84. Earth, water, fire, and wind
Individually also do not inherently exist.
When any three are absent, an individual
one does not exist.
- When one is absent, the three also so not
exist.
85. If when three are absent, an individual
one does not exist
And if when one is absent, the three also
do not exist,
Then each itself does not exist.
How could a composite be produced?
86. Otherwise, if each itself exists,
Why without fuel is there no fire?
Likewise why is there no water, wind, or
earth
Without motility, obstructiveness, or
cohesion?
87. If (it is answered that) fire is well known
(not to exist without fuel but the other
three elements exist by way of their own
entities),
How could your three exist in themselves
Without the others? It is impossible for
the three
Not to accord with dependent-arising.
88. How could those-that themselves
exist individually-be mutually
dependent?
How could those-that do not themselves
exist individually-be mutually
dependent?
89. If it is the case that they do not
themselves exist individually,
But where there is one, the other three
exist,
Then if unmixed, they are not in one
place,
And if mixed, they do not themselves
exist individually.

90. The elements do not themselves exist individually,
So how could their own individual characters exist?
What do not themselves individually exist cannot predominate.
Their characters are regarded as conventionalities.
91. This mode (of refutation) is also to be applied
To colours, odours, tastes, and objects of touch;
Eye, consciousness, and form;
Ignorance, action, and birth;
92. Agent, object, and action,
Number, possession, cause and effect,
Time, short and long, and so forth,
Name and name-bearer as well.
93. Earth, water, fire, and wind,
Long and short, subtle and coarse,
As well as virtue and so forth are said by the Subduer
To be ceased in the consciousness (of reality).
94. Earth, water, fire and wind
Do not have a chance
In the face of that undemonstrable consciousness
Complete lord over the limitless.
95. Here long and short, subtle and coarse,
Virtue and non-virtue,
And here names and forms
All are ceased.
96. All those that earlier appeared to consciousness
Because of not knowing that (reality)
Will later cease for consciousness in that way
Because of knowing that (reality).
97. All these phenomena of beings
Are seen as fuel for the fire of consciousness.
They are pacified through being burned
By the light of true discrimination.
98. The reality is later ascertained
Of what was formerly imputed by ignorance.
When a thing is not found,
How can there be a non-thing?
99. Because the phenomena of forms
Are only names, a space too is only a name.
Without the elements how could forms exist?
Therefore even name-only does not exist.
100. Feelings, discriminations, compositional factors,
And consciousnesses are to be considered
Like the elements and the self.
Thereby the six constituents are selfless.