



The Wisdom of Arya Nagarjuna
Course One: The Eight Invisibles
Class 6—Starting to Come & Go
Homework Master

1) As he wraps up his explanation of the very famous first chapter of *Wisdom*, Choney Lama—following the Arya—uses the example of yarn and wool cloth to demonstrate how a result cannot lie in the separate conditions which create it. Explain.

[Choney Lama says: “Look, the finished wool cloth is not lying there inside the yarn used to make it; anyone can see that. And if a finished wool cloth that was *not* in the yarn used to make it could just pop out of the yarn, then it could pop out of anything else too—say, from reeds that we use to make a mat.”]

2) In the next verse to the wrap-up of Chapter 1, the opponent changes his story. Instead of saying that the result lies within the cause, he says that the result *is* the cause, but just in a different shape and form. That is, the cause (a seed) “changes its clothes” in a way, and now looks like its result. (This is an idea from a non-Buddhist of ancient India.) How does Nagarjuna address this idea?

[He says that if the result were, in actuality, the cause—but just in another form; then because it existed “in actuality,” it could never be the cause *or* the result.]

3) At this point, Arya Nagarjuna’s opponent says that things really *do* have a nature of their own. If certain causes didn’t have their *own* nature of producing their specific result, then you could get milk—instead of sesame oil—from sesame seeds; or sesame oil—instead of butter—from milk fat. How does Nagarjuna answer this objection?

[Nagarjuna points out that saying that something is a cause for one thing (like milk for butter) actually *depends* on saying that it is not a cause for another thing (like milk for sesame oil). If something were *by nature* a cause for something, it would be that way without comparison to not being a cause for something else.]

*4) Buddhism says that there are two ways to prove things: either use iron-tight logic; or reference a source which is undeniably authoritative. We know that in his 27 Examinations, Nagarjuna is obviously an indisputable disputator. But what does Choney Lama have to say about scriptural authority and *Wisdom*, here at the end of the first examination?

Wisdom of Arya Nagarjuna, Course 1
Homework Master 6

[Choney Lama points out that “the fact that nothing grows through any nature of its own is not only proven by sound reasoning; this chapter is a summary of all the many scriptures by Lord Buddha which present this same teaching.” In saying so, he uses the exact same language that Je Tsongkapa uses in his own great commentary to *Wisdom*, for many of the chapters.

This in turn comes from the second great commentary upon *Wisdom* (the first being *Entering the Middle Way*) by Master Chandrakirti, called *A Clarification of the Verses*.

Here—in wrapping up the first chapter—Chandrakirti points out that the content of the first chapter is found for example in a sutra. He then quotes the *Sutra of the Source of the Jewel* (as does Je Tsongkapa), which includes many exquisite references to exactly the points being made by Arya Nagarjuna. We can thus be assured that the Arya’s presentation is based firmly upon the enlightened words of the Buddha.]

*5) Just a final question about the first chapter of *Wisdom*, before we move on to the second. One of the synonyms for a self-existent thing is “a thing which exists through some nature of its own”; to put it briefly, anything which is “natural.” Choney Lama says that—for things to be “natural” in this sense—they have to have three different qualities. Name them, and then give an alternate expression that would mean the same thing as “natural.”

[Choney Lama says that something which “exists through some nature of its own,” or is “natural,” would (1) first of all have to possess a nature which had always been there, and was not created fresh. (2) Secondly, that nature would have to be innate, and not created, in the sense that it could never depend upon the presence of something else. And (3) finally, that nature would have to be forever unchangeable.

In modern terms, this entire sense is covered, when we say that “this thing has no nature or quality which is *in* it; rather, the nature is coming from me, from my seeds.” How this fits Choney Lama’s “natural” is a useful subject of contemplation.]

6) As we know, there are two great divisions of emptiness, which relate directly to what we choose to study for an intellectual understanding of emptiness, and what we see during our first direct experience of emptiness. Please give the names of the first two chapters of *Wisdom*, and relate them to this division.

[Emptiness is divided into the emptiness of the person, and the emptiness of things (which can include the parts of the person). The first of these is the emptiness that we perceive directly for the first time, especially in one of its versions (the emptiness of “me,” whoever you happen to be). The second is the one which is easier to start with, for our intellectual study of emptiness.

The first chapter of *Wisdom*, “An Examination of Conditions,” teaches us about the emptiness of things. The second chapter—which we are beginning now, and which is called “An Examination of Going & Coming”—instructs us in the emptiness of the person.]

7) In the beginning of his discussion of going & coming, Choney Lama says, “Let’s agree on one thing: we’re only talking about one particular part of going & coming.” Which part does he say is the main problem, and the part we’re going to examine especially?

[Honey Lama discusses going in three parts: having already *gone*; and *going* now; and *going to go* in the future. In trying to understand the emptiness of going, he wants us to focus on the *present act of going*. Why so, we are about to learn.]

*8) Now Nagarjuna has another problem! Although he’s comfortable with saying there’s a part of a path that we have already walked; and a part of a path where we have yet to walk; he’s not sure about the path where the *walking* is being done now. Explain!

[Arya Nagarjuna says here:

Okay. So there is a part of the path that you’ve already walked on—and that’s no problem. And then there’s the part of the path that you haven’t reached yet (the one that you’re headed towards), and that you’re *going* to walk on. That’s no problem either.

But which part of the path is the part you’re walking on *now*? Where is the line that divides “walked on” and “walking on” and “to be walked on”? Since not all of your foot goes down on the path at once, are we going to call the path “being walked on” as the part where the front of your foot touched down, or the part where the back of your foot touched down?

And when all of your foot is down, does that whole area under the foot suddenly changed to “walked on,” even though you’ve already *walked* on part of it, when you first stepped down? Or should we say the place *being walked on* is that imaginary line of no width, between the front and back of your foot? Again, we begin to get the feeling that the act of walking itself is impossible—and that our perception of walking must be coming from somewhere else!]

9) We asked our opponent for the chapter on Going & Coming to tell us what “being in the act of going” consisted of. He said it was “lifting up your foot, and putting it down: walking.” We told him that—in that case—being in the act of going was impossible. Why?

[If something like the act of going somewhere on a path exists in and of itself, then it can only be accurately referred to with that single expression: “the act of going.” This is

Wisdom of Arya Nagarjuna, Course 1
Homework Master 6

because this expression would be attached to it by nature (as we have discussed the three qualities of “nature” above in this Class 6 of the course: something that has always been there in a thing, and not created fresh; something that was innate, and not created fresh, in the sense of never having to depend upon the presence of something else; and something that was forever unchangeable).

If things like going existed with self-natures like this, then they would have a single expression which described them, and never more than that. Thus the “act of going” could never be defined as “the *action* of stepping,” because “act” and “action” are different words—as are “going” and “stepping.” So if we agree that going (as we go) is stepping, then it can’t be “going” anymore!]

Meditation assignment:

Twice a day, do again all 5 rounds of the Lion’s Dance in a careful, enjoyable way spending as long as you have time to at each level—but still staying comfortable and inspired.

Meditation dates and times:

Please note that homeworks submitted without dates & times will not be accepted.

RealApp Assignment

Create a RealApp to accompany the material taught in this class. This is a principle derived from the material that relates to people's *real life* and is easily *applicable* to that life—a concept they might usefully meditate on, or utilize at work or in their family life.

1) Catchy title for your RealApp:

2) Description of the RealApp, in one or two sentences:

3) Description of the IDIM for your RealApp which you will look for on the internet, after the silent retreat period:

For grader's use only

Quality	Grade	Comments
Important?		
Creative?		
Authoritative?		
Use in real life?		
Total		