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Excerpt from Nāgārjuna’s “Mūlamadhyamakakārikā (“Fundamentals of the Middle Way” or “Verses of the Center”)

Self

Were mind and matter me,
I would come and go like them.
If I were something else,
They would say nothing about me.

What is mine
When there is no me?
Were self-centeredness eased,
I would not think of me and mine –
There would be no one there
To think them.

What is inside is me,
What is outside is mine –
When these thoughts end,
Compulsion stops,
Repetition ceases,
Freedom dawns.

Fixations spawn thoughts
That provoke compulsive acts –
Emptiness stops fixations.

Buddhas speak of “self”
And also teach “no self”
And also say “there’s nothing
Which is either self or not.”

When things dissolve,
There’s nothing left to say.
The unborn and unceasing
Are already free.

Buddha said: “It is real,”
And “it is unreal,”
And “it is both real and unreal,”
And “it is neither one nor the other.”

It is all at ease,
Unfixatable by fixations,
Incommunicable,
Inconceivable,
Indivisible.

You are not the same as or different
from
Conditions on which you depend;
You are neither severed from
Nor forever fused with them –

This is the deathless teaching
Of buddhas who care for the world.

When buddhas don’t appear
And their followers are gone,
The wisdom of awakening
Bursts forth by itself.