

What Is Before One

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Here I refer to *Fundamental Wisdom Of The Middle Way* by Nagarjuna translated by Nishijima.

In chapter 7 (“Examination of the External World”) verse 16 Nagarjuna writes,

Things and phenomena existing clearly one by one are the world, and this world is subjectively thought of as a very stable existence.

Therefore situations that can be seen in front of us as very stable are just real existence, which is actually seen in front of us.

Here Nagarjuna may point to a way of orientation, to not get caught up in that which is “too full”. It points to that existence “which is actually seen in front of us.”, and perhaps we don’t get “carried away” with this or that, as a result, that real existence being situations that can be seen in front of us as very stable.

That is, to see things as “Things and phenomena existing clearly one by one are the world...” is itself a stable viewpoint.

The stability of view depends also on the one who views — how is it that things existing clearly one by one are seen as such? But they can be seen, and one can look for this. And, simply to consider carefully “things and phenomena existing clearly one by one are the world” can change one’s view, itself. Then one can look for other resonant dimension to the verse here.

This view may also inform action — and “awareness of action”.

This view can also be inferred in part from careful attention to chapter 2 — not yet having gone, going, and having gone (which we discuss a bit in the paper on “action”).

In a way, the commentary here infringes on the verse; and it might be of value to consider the verse alone, apart from the commentary, and to study it. That’s because the verse is so elegant. But the commentary may be helpful. You decide!