

# Chapter 31

## NĀGĀRJUNA

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### Abstract

Nāgārjuna (c. second century CE) is the founder of the Madhyamaka school of Buddhist philosophy, and one of the most influential Indian Buddhist philosophers. His texts develop the doctrines of the emptiness of all phenomena of intrinsic nature; of the two truths and their identity; and a coherentist theory of knowledge. His corpus includes systematic philosophical texts, texts addressed to lay people and hymns. Nāgārjuna inspired a number of important commentaries composed in India, China and Tibet.

### Nāgārjuna's life, times and corpus

Not a great deal is known of the life of Nāgārjuna with certainty. The canonical biographies are entirely hagiographic. The best evidence suggests that he lived in the second half of the second century CE in the lower Krishna River valley in what is now Andhra Pradesh (Walser 2005). He appears to have been an influential Mahāyāna monk scholar residing in a mixed Mahāyāna-Śrāvakayāna monastery, and was apparently an advisor to at least one king, to whom several of his texts are addressed.

Several sets of texts are ascribed to Nāgārjuna by some or all of his principal Indian commentators (Buddhapālita, Bhāviveka, Candrakīrti and Avalokitavrata), later Indian Buddhist scholars, Tibetan and Chinese philosophers and doxographers. These include a set of systematic philosophical texts, including *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (*Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way*), *Sūnyatāsaptati* (*Seventy Verses on Emptiness*), *Yuktiṣaṣṭika* (*Sixty Verses of Reasoning*), *Vigrahavyāvartanī* (*Replies to Objections*), *Vaidalyāprakaraṇa* (*Devastating Discourse*), *Pratīyasamutpādayakārikā* (*Verses on the Heart of Dependent Origination*), *Ratnāvalī* and *Suḥṛllekha* (*Letter to a Friend*). All of these texts are widely attributed to Nāgārjuna by canonical sources; stylistic and content considerations suggest that they are written by a common author. A commentary on *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, *Akutobhayā*, is attributed by some to Nāgārjuna, but there are good reasons to doubt this attribution. The style of the text is very different from

those of the other two prose commentaries by Nāgārjuna (those to *Vigrahavyāvartanī* and to *Śūnyatāsaptati*); the text cites Nāgārjuna's student Āryadeva; and Nāgārjuna's most erudite Indian commentator, Candrakīrti, rejects the attribution.

Nāgārjuna may have composed two other texts of some philosophical interest. *Sūtrasammucaya* (*Collection of sūtras*) is probably Nāgārjuna's. His authorship of *Bodhicittavivarāṇa* (*Explanation of Bodhicitta*) is much less certain. The former is of interest because of its collection of early Mahāyāna texts, demonstrating the texts taken as authoritative by Mahāyāna scholars at this early stage; the latter because it would provide evidence of the development of a sustained theory of *bodhicitta* as early as the second century CE.

The second set of texts attributed to Nāgārjuna comprises devotional hymns (*stotras* or *stavas*). Four hymns (the *Catuḥstava*) are regarded as Nāgārjuna's by Candrakīrti and by Prajñākaramati, as well as by many Tibetan commentators. Those are *Lokātīstava* (*Hymn to the Supramundane*), *Nirauṣamyastava* (*Hymn to the Incomparable Lord*), *Acintyastava* (*Hymn to the Inconceivable One*) and *Paramārthastava* (*Hymn on the Ultimate*). There is little ground for doubt about the attribution of these hymns (see Lindtner 1982, 1986).

Dozens of other hymns are attributed to Nāgārjuna, but with less certainty. Most interesting among these, and of contested attribution is *Dharmadhātustava* (*Hymn on the Domain of Reality*). This text is stylistically consistent with Nāgārjuna's work, but doctrinally it appears at odds with the core philosophical texts. Bhāviveka attributes it to Nāgārjuna and it is represented as among his corpus in the Tibetan canon, suggesting broad Indian consensus. Finally, numerous alchemical, tantric and medical texts are attributed to Nāgārjuna. There is, however, little reason to be confident of any of these attributions, and we will not address these texts here.

Most of Nāgārjuna's texts are written in elegant verse, with a very terse expository style. In two cases (*Śūnyatāsaptati* and *Vigrahavyāvartanī*) Nāgārjuna composed prose autocommentaries. The hymns are elegant devotional poetry. Nāgārjuna did compose two texts clearly addressed to a lay audience: *Ratnāvalī* and *Suḥṛllekha*. Each of these is primarily concerned with moral themes and the cultivation of the spiritual path. But each grounds its ethical account in Madhyamaka metaphysics.

### Nāgārjuna's philosophical context

Nāgārjuna wrote as Mahāyāna Buddhism was gaining momentum in India, and his work is foundational for what would become the Madhyamaka school. The Madhyamaka school finds its *sūtra* foundation principally in the Prajñāparamitā *sūtras* that appear around the beginning of the first millennium CE. These texts espouse doctrines that are in some ways revolutionary in the Buddhist context, and in some ways very continuous with earlier Buddhist theory (Veléz 2005). Fundamental Buddhist ideas such as the impermanence of all phenomena, the absence of a personal self, the absence of an intrinsic nature in ordinary phenomena and the dependently originated nature of all phenomena, familiar in pre-Mahāyāna (Śrāvakayāna)

Buddhism, are also to be found in the Prajñāparamitā sūtras, and in Madhyamaka philosophical texts.

On the other hand, these fundamental doctrines are subtly, but importantly reinterpreted, and this reinterpretation is central to Nāgārjuna's philosophical outlook. The Śrāvakayāna Buddhist philosophical schools by this time had been articulated through the detailed metaphysics, epistemology and psychology of the *abhidharma* literature. The accounts presented in this literature are in general reductionist on the metaphysical and psychological side and foundationalist on the epistemological side. Conventional phenomena, such as persons and ordinary physical objects, are regarded as ultimately unreal, but as reducible to causally interdependent, momentary, atomic entities which do exist ultimately and which have intrinsic natures; knowledge is grounded in perceptual contact with these phenomena and in inference from that perceptual given. Impermanence is understood in terms of the constant succession of macroscopic phenomena, and the emptiness of self or intrinsic nature in terms of the ultimate composition of macroscopic phenomena by non-empty, ultimately real entities.

This picture is challenged in Madhyamaka texts by the doctrine that *all* phenomena are empty of self or intrinsic nature; *all* phenomena are impermanent; *all* phenomena are interdependent, and there are neither ontological nor epistemological foundations to be found. Nothing exists ultimately. The other Mahāyāna innovation is ethical. Whereas the ethical ideal in Śrāvakayāna Buddhism is the *ārahat*, or the being who achieves *nirvāṇa*—cessation of suffering—through the cultivation of the Buddhist eightfold path, in the Mahāyāna that ideal is replaced with that of the bodhisattva, who develops the altruistic aspiration to attain full awakening (buddhahood) for the sake of benefiting all sentient beings by bringing them all to liberation from suffering. The central value of this form of Buddhist moral theory is *karuṇā*, or a compassionate resolve to be of benefit to others.

Despite these doctrinal continuities, this emerging philosophical school was controversial, and the texts on which it sought to ground itself were not universally regarded as authentic. The systematic development of Madhyamaka philosophical theory was accomplished by Nāgārjuna. His philosophical corpus constitutes a response to *abhidharma* Buddhism, a defense and systematic articulation of the doctrines announced in the Prajñāparamitā sūtras, and an attempt to demonstrate that these metaphysical, epistemological and ethical views represent the correct development of Buddhist philosophy.

### Outline of Nāgārjuna's philosophical views

Nāgārjuna defends a distinctive view of the nature of emptiness and of its relationship to dependent origination, encapsulated in his doctrine of the two truths, or two realities. Nāgārjuna argues that all phenomena are empty of *svabhāva*, a term we can translate in this context as *essence*, or *intrinsic nature*. To have *svabhāva* would be to exist independently; to have an inherent quality that makes a thing the thing that it is; to have an identity independent of language or conceptual imputation. Nāgārjuna

characterizes *svabhāva* in all of these ways and takes them to be equivalent, capturing the idea that for any real entity, we can say what it is that determines its identity, that its identity conditions are internal to it, and that when we know it, our knowledge and language reflect its nature, rather than the other way around.

Nāgārjuna takes it that in our ordinary pre-reflective engagement with the world we take ourselves as well as other persons and objects to exist in this way; he also notes that much Buddhist and non-Buddhist metaphysics (particularly the Sarvāstivāda *abhidharma*), while it denies this status to macroscopic objects, posits a more fundamental reality of entities that exist in this way. Nāgārjuna argues that *nothing* exists in that way and that the very idea of *svabhāva* is incoherent. That is, things are *empty* of any such intrinsic nature. This is not to say that macroscopic entities do not exist **at all**; it is to say that actual existence is a merely conventional, nominal, relational, dependent existence. This conventional reality is not, Nāgārjuna argues, a second-class reality, but is rather the only kind of reality possible. This doctrine of emptiness is hence continuous with earlier Buddhist accounts of the emptiness of ordinary phenomena, but runs much deeper, both in terms of the account of that of which things are empty and in terms of the scope of the analysis.

To say that phenomena are empty of essence in this sense, according to Nāgārjuna, is to say that they are dependently originated (*pratītya-samutpāda*) or are merely dependent designations (*prajñaptir-upadāya*). In particular, he holds that wholes are ontologically dependent upon their parts, and that parts are reciprocally dependent for their identities on the wholes in which they figure; that events and objects depend for their existence on a variety of causes and conditions; and that the identities of the phenomena we encounter as events, enduring objects, classes, etc. are dependent upon our conceptual processes and interests. This multi-dimensional structure of interdependence guarantees that nothing has any independent existence or intrinsic nature that makes it the thing that it is. Interdependence and emptiness are thus, Nāgārjuna argues, the same thing, and they are universal characteristics of all phenomena.

This identity of dependent origination and emptiness underlies Nāgārjuna's distinctive account of the two truths, or realities (*satya*). Nāgārjuna argues that there are two truths, or ways the world is: a conventional truth (*samvṛti-satya* or *vyavahāra-satya*) and an ultimate truth (*paramārtha-satya*). The conventional truth comprises the world as we ordinarily experience it. The ultimate truth is the emptiness of all conventional phenomena. The perception of conventional truth is conditioned by confusion, in that we experience conventional phenomena as though they exist independently, with intrinsic natures. In this sense they are *deceptive*, for they are in fact empty of that independence and of those natures; this is the ultimate truth, which is non-deceptive. Conventional truth and ultimate truth are hence, from an epistemic perspective, according to Nāgārjuna, very different from one another.

Despite this difference, however, they are, from an ontological perspective, *identical*. For conventional phenomena are not, in virtue of being interdependent and essenceless, *nonexistent*. Their emptiness is not a separate reality that replaces them, but is their very mode of existence. Since they are dependently originated, they exist, and are empty. One important implication of this is that emptiness itself is

dependent: rather than constituting a separate independent reality, the emptiness of any phenomenon, as a property of that phenomenon, is dependent for its existence on the existence of that which is empty. Just as the rectangularity of a table depends upon the table, so does its emptiness. Emptiness is thus, like every other phenomenon, empty. This doctrine of the identity of the two truths and of the emptiness of emptiness is perhaps Nāgārjuna's most original and important contribution to Buddhist and to world philosophy. (See Burton 1999; Garfield 1995, 2002; Siderits 1988; and Westerhoff 2009 for more detail.)

This ontology lies behind Nāgārjuna's metaphysical and epistemological anti-foundationalism. Because Nāgārjuna argues that **all** phenomena are empty and interdependent, there can be no ultimate ontology to which all others reduce. Any ontology one proposes will comprise only entities which themselves are interdependent and essenceless. Moreover, since epistemological foundationalism requires either that objects of knowledge (*prameya*) or instruments of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) be taken as the foundation of knowledge, and since these, Nāgārjuna argues, are themselves interdependent and empty of essence, depending on one another for their epistemic status, there can be no epistemological foundations, either. (See Siderits 1980; Garfield 2002.)

Nāgārjuna did not write much on ethics—only *Ratnāvalī* and *Suḥṛllekha* (and perhaps *Bodhicittavivaraṇa*)—but enough that the outlines of his views are clear, and are clearly Mahāyāna in character. Nāgārjuna argues for the cultivation of care grounded in the realization of one's own emptiness and of universal interdependence and defends a welfare state in which the king is responsible for assuring adequate food, shelter, health care and comfort to citizens, and even to provide for the welfare of animals.

Nāgārjuna's philosophical method has drawn considerable philosophical and hermeneutical attention in India and Tibet (Tsongkhapa 2005), and more recently in the West (Hayes 1994; Garfield 2002; Westerhoff 2009). Most of his texts are developed primarily through the use of *reductio ad absurdum* reasoning (*prasaṅga*) in which an opponent's position (often an *abhidharma* Buddhist position, but sometimes non-Buddhist positions) is reduced to absurdity. Nāgārjuna rarely argues directly for a thesis of his own, and in fact importantly denies that he asserts any philosophical thesis (*pratijñā*), arguing that Madhyamaka consists in the rejection of all philosophical views (*dṛṣṭi*).

This method, and the assertion that he defends no view, has occasioned considerable debate. Some in India and in Tibet have denied that Nāgārjuna is committed to the *reductio* method as a matter of principle, and some commentaries (most notably those of Bhāvaviveka) reconstruct the *reductio* arguments as positive, direct arguments; others (most notably Candrakīrti) argue that this method is essential to Nāgārjuna's philosophical purport. Some (for instance Tsongkhapa) argue that the claim to positionlessness cannot be taken literally. Others (Candrakīrti or Phatshab) claim that it must be.

There is a straightforward way to take these claims seriously. Nāgārjuna is arguing against the enterprise of providing an account of the fundamental nature of reality, because he thinks that there simply is *no* fundamental nature of reality. He argues that

emptiness is not the fundamental nature of things, but the *absence of any such nature*. This is why he refuses to assert any thesis about the nature of reality. His use of a *reductio* method is intended to show that *any* account of the nature of reality can be demonstrated to be absurd simply because such accounts always are incoherent.

### Nāgārjuna's major philosophical works

Nāgārjuna's most influential work is *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. This work, divided (by Candrakīrti) into twenty-seven chapters, comprises over 400 sometimes cryptic, but always densely argued, verses. It addresses all major Buddhist ontological categories. In each case, Nāgārjuna argues that the relevant phenomena are empty of inherent existence or intrinsic nature, but nonetheless exist conventionally. The central chapter is the twenty-fourth, the examination of the four noble truths, in which Nāgārjuna articulates and defends his distinctive doctrine of the two truths.

*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* is the subject of numerous Indian commentaries (as well as many Tibetan commentaries). The earliest of these, *Akutobhayā* (a text, as we noted, of uncertain authorship) is a terse gloss, expanding Nāgārjuna's verses into slightly more explicit arguments, but offering little general commentary on its purport. Much of *Akutobhayā* is reproduced in the earliest major Indian commentary, that of Buddhapālita (c. 500 CE), which offers an extensive interpretation of the text and account of Nāgārjuna's *reductio* method in early chapters, but which simply replicates *Akutobhayā* in the later chapters.

Bhāviveka (sixth century CE) responds to Buddhapālita in his *Prajñāpradīpa* (*Lamp of Wisdom*) and its sub-commentary *Tarkajvālā* (*Blaze of Argument*). Bhāviveka's are in general more detailed discussions of Nāgārjuna's arguments, and differ, as noted above, from Buddhapālita's analysis of the structure of those arguments. Candrakīrti (sixth to seventh century CE), in his commentary *Prasannapadā* (*Lucid Exposition*) defends Buddhapālita's view and thematizes this dispute over argument structure as a central philosophical issue within Madhyamaka. Candrakīrti's interpretation became the dominant reading of Nāgārjuna's view in Tibet. Avalokitavrata (c. eighth century CE) composed the last major Indian commentary on *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, a massive subcommentary on *Prajñāpradīpa*.

*Vigrahavyāvartanī* is a reply to objections raised to the arguments in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. The opponent in this text is a Nyāya interlocutor who raises a number of objections, which cluster around two issues: first, Nāgārjuna is charged with undermining his own claim that all phenomena are empty on the grounds that his words and arguments would, if empty of intrinsic nature, fail to have any meaning; second, he is charged with undermining any claim to justification of his conclusions in virtue of having rejected the intrinsic reliability of the *pramāṇas* (epistemic instruments). Nāgārjuna responds by arguing that even if they are empty of intrinsic nature, words and arguments can perform semantic and pragmatic functions (and indeed, that were they not, they could not), and that it is the very interdependence of *pramāṇas* and *prameyas* (objects of knowledge) that makes epistemic activity, including justification, possible.

*Yuktiṣaṣṭikā* is a short text devoted to arguing against positive understandings of canonical Buddhist characterizations of phenomena. Nāgārjuna argues that ascriptions of interdependence, emptiness, impermanence, arising and ceasing should not be understood as indicating that phenomena possess properties inherently, but rather as negative assertions, implicating neither the inherent existence of the phenomena themselves, nor of the properties ascribed. *Śūnyatāsaptatī* is a brief treatise on emptiness, emphasizing its consistency with dependent origination and the conventional reality of the world.

*Ratnāvalī* is an extensive text (500 verses), probably addressed to a Śātavāhana king in the lower Krishna valley, to whom Nāgārjuna may have been an advisor (Walser 2005). The text covers a number of topics, but consists primarily of advice to a lay leader regarding Buddhist life and the Buddhist administration of a kingdom, advocating a kind of welfare state. But the text also involves a great deal of advocacy for support of the Mahāyāna *saṅgha* and for the publication of Mahāyāna texts. *Ratnāvalī* is also important as an early account of the relationship between the Madhyamaka view of emptiness and the practice of Mahāyāna ethics and the bodhisattva path.

*Vaidalyaprakaraṇa* is a sustained attack on Nyāya which argues that neither the epistemology nor the theory of argument to which that school is committed are coherent. He follows the argument in *Vigrahavyāvartanī* closely in his attack on Nyāya epistemology, but breaks new ground in criticizing Nyāya argument forms and accounts of reasoning in detail.

### Nāgārjuna's minor works

In addition to these well-known and influential works, a number of less-often-cited works are ascribed to him. Of these, perhaps the best known is *Suhr̥lekha*. Like *Ratnāvalī*, it is addressed to a lay audience, and most specifically to a king, perhaps the same one to whom *Ratnāvalī* is addressed. But *Suhr̥lekha* is more personal and more pastoral in character. Instead of developing broadly philosophical or policy themes, it provides advice on the abandonment of vice, on the cultivation of virtue, and in general on personal practice, incorporating a fair amount of admonition regarding the benefits of religious practice and rectitude and the dangers of a vicious life for future rebirths.

Two short texts—*Pratītyasamutpādaḥḍayakārikā* and *Vyavahārasiddhi*—of the latter of which only fragments exist—are of contested attribution but, given their style and content, as well as regular canonical attribution, are quite likely the work of Nāgārjuna. The former argues that the traditional Buddhist formula of the twelve links of dependent origination is consistent with the doctrine of the emptiness of all phenomena, and the latter, at least from the evidence of the few surviving verses, argues that conventional reality exists only dependently, but nonetheless, exists. (See Lindtner 1982, 1986.)

The attribution of *Bodhicittavivaraṇa* to Nāgārjuna is more dubious. For one thing, despite being attributed to him by Tibetan biographers and by several minor Indian commentators, it is not mentioned by any of his principal Indian commentators. For

another, it at least appears to be anachronistic in content, beginning with a sustained critique of the idealistic Cittamātra/Yogācāra school and its doctrine of three natures—regarded by most scholars as first articulated about a century after Nāgārjuna’s death—and it then addresses the moral cultivation of a bodhisattva’s compassion, a theme Nāgārjuna never develops elsewhere. If it is authentic, it is a very significant text indeed, demonstrating a much earlier appearance of Buddhist idealism than one would otherwise suspect, as well as an earlier systematic development of the bodhisattva ideal than is generally accepted.

There is sound reason to accept the *Sūtrasammuccaya* as authentic. For one thing, it is attested by Candrakīrti. For another, it makes good sense for Nāgārjuna, who seems to have been an active polemicist for the Mahāyāna, to have composed a compilation of sūtra quotations in order to grant an imprimatur to Mahāyāna *sūtras* that would have been of controversial authenticity in his time. This text is extant only in Tibetan, and provides important information regarding the *sūtras* that early Mahāyāna philosophers took to be important.

Most of the hymns attributed to Nāgārjuna are of little philosophical interest. The four collected in the *Catuḥstava* break no new philosophical ground, but repeat in devotional register many of the conclusions defended in his more systematic works. The *Dharmadhātustava*, on the other hand, is of considerable philosophical interest if it is authentic. This hymn attributes a number of positive properties to ultimate reality (Dharmadhātu), such as permanence, purity, etc. This text may pose interesting hermeneutical challenges, forcing us either to reject its authenticity, to read it in a way consistent with Nāgārjuna’s more negative approach in his other texts, to treat its language as merely metaphorical in a devotional context or to attribute a change of view to Nāgārjuna prior to its composition.

### Nāgārjuna’s impact

Nāgārjuna’s philosophical texts were enormously influential in Buddhist India, in Tibet and in East Asia. (But see Hayes 1994 for a contrary position.) As noted above, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* was the subject of numerous influential Indian commentaries. It is widely cited in a much larger Madhyamaka literature and is influential, if only as a foil, in Yogācāra. *Madhyanta-vibhāga* (*Discriminating the Middle from the Extremes*), for instance, attributed to Maitreya, and probably composed by Aśaṅga, and its commentary by Vasubandhu reference Nāgārjuna’s text obliquely, as does Vasubandhu’s *Trisvabhāva-nirdeśa* (*Treatise on the Three Natures*). Nāgārjuna was also influential for the great Advaita Vedānta philosopher Śāṅkara—though whether he was a direct influence or a close *pūrvaṅpakṣa* is a difficult hermeneutical question.

Nāgārjuna’s disciple Āryadeva also composed a magisterial Madhyamaka text, *Catuḥśataka* (*Four Hundred Stanzas*) connecting Nāgārjuna’s analysis of emptiness and its relation to conventional reality to Mahāyāna ethics, extending the analysis in *Ratnāvalī* (and possibly that of *Bodhicittavivaraṇa*). Candrakīrti’s *Madhyamakāvatāra* (*Introduction to the Middle Way*) and its autocommentary owe a clear debt to

Nāgārjuna. As late as the eighth and ninth centuries, such prominent Madhyamaka scholars as Śāntideva and Śāntarakṣita advanced arguments that clearly derived from *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*.

Tibetan doxography ranks the school of philosophy deriving from Candrakīrti's interpretation of Nāgārjuna (*thal 'gyur pa/prāsaṅika\** *madhyamaka* / *reductio*-wielding middle-way philosophy) as the most advanced Buddhist doctrine. As a consequence, Nāgārjuna's texts are accorded enormous prestige and are the subject of numerous commentaries.

Nāgārjuna's student and exegete Kumārajīva traveled to China, where he became an influential teacher and translator. In China a much-admired commentary on the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (*The Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra in Eight Thousand Verses*) probably composed by Kumārajīva is widely attributed to Nāgārjuna. The Tiantai school of Buddhism takes *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* as foundational, and its doctrine of the three truths is grounded on a reading of verse XXIV:18 of that text. Nāgārjuna is also recognized as an Indian patriarch of Chan/Zen, for which his account of emptiness and its consistency with empirical reality is influential.

### Recent and contemporary literature on Nāgārjuna

Most of Nāgārjuna's important philosophical texts are now available in reliable English translations. Several commentaries on his work, as well as many texts influenced by Nāgārjuna, have also been translated. As a consequence, and as a consequence of the increasing philosophical sophistication of the vast historical and philological literature on Madhyamaka, the past fifty years have seen increasing attention to Nāgārjuna's work in specifically philosophical (as opposed to philological) literature in the West. That attention has accelerated dramatically in the last two decades.

Western philosophers have developed connections between Nāgārjuna's thought and that of Kant (Murti 1960), Wittgenstein (Gudmunsen 1977; Garfield 1995, 2002), James (Kalupahana 1986) and others. Some (Robinson 1964; Hayes 1994) have criticized Nāgārjuna's arguments severely; others (Garfield 1995; Garfield and Priest 2003; Westerhoff 2009) defend his analysis. He has been read as a nihilist (Wood 1994), an idealist (Murti 1960), as a Pragmatist (Kalupahana 1986), a sceptic (Garfield 1995, 2002) and as an anti-realist (Siderits 1988). Tuck (1990) provides a survey of interpretative trends in Nāgārjuna scholarship over the twentieth century. Walser (2005) has recently contributed to our knowledge of Nāgārjuna's probable dates and location.

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