Seeing the Interdependent Arising, the Dharma, and the Buddha
Introduction to and Translation of Professor Sempa Dorje’s Commentary
on the Ārya Śālistamba-Sūtra

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August 30, 2022
Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................................................. 4

INTRODUCTORY STUDY OF SEEING INTERDEPENDENT ARISING, THE DHARMA, AND THE BUDDHA ................................................................................................................................. 5

SUMMARY OF THE ŚĀLISTAMBA SŪTRA ........................................................................................................ 6

ANALYSIS OF THE ŚĀLISTAMBA SŪTRA ...................................................................................................... 7

INDIC COMMENTARIES ON THE ŚĀLISTAMBASŪTRA ................................................................................. 14

THE DEVELOPMENT AND RECEPTION HISTORY OF THE ŚĀLISTAMBA SŪTRA ........................................... 16

Tibetan Translations of the Sutra and its Commentaries ............................................................................ 25

Translations into Chinese ........................................................................................................................... 27

Translations into other Languages ............................................................................................................ 28

SEMPA DORJE’S BIOGRAPHY AND COMMENTARY .................................................................................. 28

Seeing Interdependent Origination, the Dharma, and the Buddha ............................................................. 31

The Introduction ......................................................................................................................................... 33

Quotations and Sources ............................................................................................................................ 34

Footnotes .................................................................................................................................................... 35

Punctuation and Numerals .......................................................................................................................... 36

Usage of Sanskrit terminology .................................................................................................................. 36

INTRODUCTION TO THE TRANSLATION ................................................................................................. 37

TRANSLATION OF SEEING INTERDEPENDENT ARISING, THE DHARMA, AND THE BUDDHA ............................................................................................................................. 39

INTRODUCTION BY THE AUTHOR ............................................................................................................. 39

The Śālistamba Sūtra ................................................................................................................................... 39

The time when the Sūtra was taught .......................................................................................................... 40

How this Sūtra has an implied meaning ...................................................................................................... 41

The Subject Matter of the Sūtra .................................................................................................................. 43

The Etymology of Interdependence .......................................................................................................... 43

The Definition of Interdependent Origination ............................................................................................ 45
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Essential Meaning</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutra Commentaries</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The commentary An Adornment to the ears of Those with Clear Minds</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Title</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Author's Homage</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Main Text</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Summary</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Introduction</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Introduction to the Discussion</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Subject which is to be Comprehended</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Result of Comprehension</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How that Should Be Comprehended</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Necessity for Teaching this Sūtra</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Purpose</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sequential explanation of 'The Meaning of the Words'</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Introduction</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the Discussion</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching the nature of topics which should be completely comprehended</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Setting forth thorough comprehension........................................................................................................ 75

The Result of Comprehension ...................................................................................................................... 79

How that should be comprehended ............................................................................................................. 81

How does one meditate having understood the ultimate way of dependent origination? .................... 81

The Purpose of this Sutra ............................................................................................................................... 87

B) How Dependent arising is presented in the relative manner ................................................................. 89

APPENDIX 1 .................................................................................................................................................... 95

BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................................................................................... 101
Abstract

This thesis engages the Śālistambasūtra through the lens of its most recent commentary—Dr. Sempa Dorje’s ‘phags pa sā lu'i ljang pa zhes bya ba'i mdo don legs par bshad pa blo gsal rna ba'i rgyan (hereafter “rGyan”, English: An Adornment to the Ears of those with Clear Minds, Elucidating the Meaning of the Arya Śālistamba Sūtra, or Seeing Interdependent Origination, the Dharma, and the Buddha: A commentary on the Ārya Śālistamba-Sūtra)—which is also the first and currently the only treatment of this fundamental text which was composed in Tibetan language by a Himalayan Buddhist scholar. While Sempa Dorje claims to merely restate Kamalaśīla’s commentary to make it more easily accessible to the contemporary Tibetan reader, but I argue that this modern commentary does more than just that. The Seeing is an exemplary work bridging the gap between traditional Tibetan composition and modern writing – exploring the potential of Tibetan writing to enter the conversation of academia. It also serves as an illustration of developments in literary Tibetan, and demonstrates the conservatisim on the one hand, the innovation in thought on the other, in terms of one of the most central topics in Buddhist thought –interdependent origination.

Jeffrey Schoening has provided the scholarly world with a thorough and comprehensive work about the Sūtra and its Indian commentaries. This thesis builds on Schoening this work by adding an account of yet another stage in the life of the Sūtra. The main part of my thesis will be a translation of Sempa Dorje’s commentary, the Seeing.
**Introductory Study of Seeing Interdependent Arising, the Dharma, and the Buddha**

Interdependent origination (*rten cing ’brel bar ’byung ba*, Sanskrit: *pratītyasamutpāda*) is as vast a topic in Buddhist thought as it is profound. In the following thesis we will see the profound impact that the Śalistambāsūtra (*’phags pa sā lu’i. ljarg pa zhes bya ba’i mdo, hereafter “Sūtra”*) and its commentaries so as to contextualize the main topic of the thesis—the late Professor Sempa Dorje’s (*sems dpa’ rdo rje; 1929-2022*) Seeing Interdependent Arising, the Dharma, and the Buddha (*’phags pa sā lu’i ljarg pa zhes bya ba’i mdo don legs par bshad pa blo gsal rna ba’i rgyan*; lit. translation: *An Adornment to the Ears of those with Clear Minds, Elucidating the Meaning of the Arya Śālistamba Sūtra; hereafter “Seeing”*). Discussing previous commentaries opens a discussion on how Buddhist communities understand and explain this important topic.

In his doctoral thesis and the following publication Jeffrey Schoening has thoroughly presented and discussed the Sūtra and its Indian commentaries.\(^1\) This thesis builds on Schoening’s work by adding an account of yet another stage in the life of the Sūtra – Sempa Dorje’s Seeing. While Sempa Dorje bases his commentary on its Indian predecessors, this thesis demonstrates the way his commentary explores the interface between traditional Tibetan writing and modern academic conventions, thus introducing the central Buddhist topic of interdependent origination to modern audiences. Along with my own discussion, this point will be illustrated through the included partial translation of Sempa Dorje’s text.

Before turning to these commentaries and their content, this thesis begins with a summary and discussion of central topics of the Sūtra. It will then provide a literature review followed by the reception history and a discussion of previous translations of the Sūtra and its

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\(^1\) Jeffrey D. Schoening, *The Śālistamba Sūtra and Its Indian Commentaries*, (Wien: Arbeitskreis Für Tibetische Und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 1995),
commentaries. It will then briefly introduce Prof. Sempa Dorje, the author of the *Seeing*, his work and specifically this commentary; here I also discuss my translation methodology. To complete this work, I will provide a translation of Sempa Dorje’s own introduction to the commentary and key sections of the *Seeing*.

**Summary of the Śālistamba Sūtra**

Given its fundamental importance for early Mahāyāna doctrinal identity, surprisingly little academic attention has been directed towards analysing the content, nature, and history of this Sūtra. While it is well known as one of the most in-depth studies of interdependent origination in Mahāyāna sūtra literature, it betrays surprisingly few completely novel concepts relative to non-Mahāyāna presentations. Several passages of the Sūtra can be traced to earlier sources. Non/pre Mahāyāna sources are of particular importance in such an analysis, but Mahāyāna texts are also to be included to show the gradual development that ideas and phrases have undergone. Notably, even the few novel concepts that are introduced in the Sūtra hold what I call a conservative viewpoint such that proponents of non-Mahāyāna systems would not reject. Despite this broad pedigree, the Sūtra rose in the ranks of Madhyamaka literature only once Nāgārjuna composed a versified form of the Sūtra and a commentary.

Even though the Sūtra itself was lost in India, it was important enough and so heavily quoted that the idea of reconstructing the Sūtra originated in India as early as the 16th century. The first translation of the Sūtra into Tibetan can be dated back to around 760C.E and was done from Chinese. The oldest version of the *Sutra* currently available one of Dunhang manuscripts

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2 A discussion of the Sūtra’s early development and particular characteristics will follow below. Note: Theravada is not to be understood as the early Buddhist textual tradition. The Theravada tradition itself has, counter to its claim, undergone several changes. Nor does Theravada encompass all past traditions of the Fundamental Vehicle (Hinayana). But due to its prominence nowadays and the lack of scriptural evidence of other hinayana traditions, Theravada serves as one of our main sources to distinguish early Buddhist ideas and later developments in the Mahāyāna

The Sūtra and Indian commentaries served as source material for nearly every treatment of interdependent origination in Tibet from its reception of Buddhism in the late eighth century. Numerous works have been composed that allude to interdependent origination as described in the Sūtra and it was continuously quoted in related works. Nevertheless, until 2017 no indigenous Tibetan commentary had been composed on the Sūtra itself. In 2017, Professor Sempa Dorje published the first commentary since Kamalaśīla's Śālistamba-ṭīkā in the eighth century. Traditionally, the Śālistamba-ṭīkā has served as the basis for teaching the Sūtra.

This new commentary—the Seeing—claims to merely restate Kamalaśīla’s commentary to make it more easily accessible to the contemporary Tibetan reader, but I argue that this modern commentary does more than that. Sempa Dorje’s Seeing is an exemplary work bridging the gap between traditional Tibetan composition and modern writing – exploring the potential of Tibetan writing to enter the conversation of academia. It also serves as an illustration of developments in literary Tibetan, and demonstrates the conservatism on the one hand, the innovation in thought on the other, in terms of one of the most central topics in Buddhist thought—interdependent origination.

Analysis of the Śālistamba Sūtra

Before turning to the primary commentaries at issue in this thesis, it is worth making some observations about the structure and contents of the Sūtra itself. The Sūtra is unique in several ways. Among all canonical sūtras, it combines the greatest number of different schemas of teaching interdependent origination considering the twelve-fold formula, the twelve links.⁵

⁴ Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 6.
⁵ Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 1-3.
A closer look at the Sūtra will also aid our understanding of the exceptional role that the plays within the Śālistamba Sūtra’s commentarial tradition and Tibetan literature.

The Sūtra is a detailed analysis of interdependent origination. This topic is a fundamental aspect for all Buddhist thought—Lamotte goes so far as to suggest that interdependent origination and the four noble truths are so closely connected that the concepts are effectively interchangeable.6 Buddhadarsha has identified sections in the Pāli canon that treat emptiness as a synonym of no-self/anatman and argues that emptiness is as such present in non-Mahāyāna sources.7 In the Mahāyāna—the main context of the Sūtra—it is primarily equated with emptiness.8 The Sūtra serves as a powerful source for the understanding of interdependent origination, especially within the Mahāyāna community. Nevertheless, as we will see, many key aspects presented in the Sūtra have originated from early Buddhist texts and can also be found in the Pāli canon.9 Furthermore, the Sūtra rises in importance as we understand that its content and style link the development of the Mahāyāna to the earliest teachings of the Buddha.

The Sūtra revolves around a statement by Buddha Shakyamuni early in his teaching career.10 Looking at a rice seedling he tells his disciples: "Bhikṣus, whoever sees [inter]dependent arising sees the Dharma. Whoever sees the Dharma sees the Buddha."11 Śāriputra does not understand this statement immediately and so asks Maitreya for clarification. Śāriputra recounts the Buddha's aphorism and requests a clarification on what is meant by the three terms, [inter]dependent arising, Dharma, and Buddha in an informal meeting with

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7 We can observe that in Buddhadasa’s work, for example in the Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree.
8 Early or pre-Mahāyāna does not mean Theravade, which was a later development itself. Nevertheless, lacking other sources the comparison with the Pali canon can tell us at least about possible common origins.
9 The introduction to the Sūtra starts with the translator's homage to all Buddha's and Bodhisattvas which indicates that it belongs to the Sūtra-pitaka. 1000 followers (psd intro)
Maitreya. He further asks for an explanation regarding nature of their relationship so that the latter of these concepts can be understood based on knowledge of the former.

The main section of the Sūtra, as reflected in the Tibetan translations, consists of Maitreya's detailed analysis of the Buddha's words, highlighting various aspects of interdependent arising. Maitreya starts by explaining interdependent arising in light of the twelve links. The treatment of the twelve links includes two aspects: the forward and the reverse progression—first in how the later link coming about from the presence of the previous one, and then how the cessation of the previous link leads to the cessation of the later ones. Then Maitreya defines the Dharma as the eightfold path of the noble ones, and the Buddha in light of his omniscience. Then he elucidates the connection between interdependent arising, Dharma, and the Buddha in terms of sixteen features of interdependent arising. When those 16 are correctly understood, it becomes clear that this also leads to the understanding of the nature of Dharma as well as Buddha.

After this summarized answer, Maitreya outlines the structure of the main part of the Sūtra. He presents the four categories of the causal and conditional relationships reflected in outer and inner interdependent origination and goes into more detail. The causal outer interdependent arising is exemplified by the progression from a seed to a flower without any volition or reflexivity on either side. The conditional relation in outer dependence focuses on the role of the six elements—earth, water, fire, wind, space and time (seasons)—in the development of the flower. Outer dependence is further highlighted by five aspects: not permanent; not discontinuous; not involving transmigration; the formation of a large result from a small cause and a continuity of similar type.

12 The 16 features of the ultimate nature of dependent arising are that it is permanent, life-less, free from a life-force, exactly how it is, unmistaken, unborn, not originated, uncreated, uncompounded, beginning-less, non-referential, peace, fearless, irremovable, inexhaustible, not utterly pacified.
Maitreya then moves on to inner interdependent origination, which he divides into “causal” (rgyu dang ‘brel ba) and “conditional” (rkyen dang ‘brel ba). Causal inner interdependent origination features the twelve links—from ignorance to old age and death—the former causing the latter without volition or conscious reflection. Conditional inner interdependent origination mirrors conditional outer interdependent origination regarding the six elements above, but time is replaced by consciousness. Going into more detail about the meaning of ignorance and how it brings forth the subsequent links, he defines the twelve links and their connections. To explain the twelve links of inner interdependent origination, he correlates them to the example outer interdependent origination. Then the same five aspects that have been applied to outer interdependent origination are applied to inner interdependent origination.

In the end, Maitreya prophesies that the benefit of truly understanding interdependent origination is that one will not grasp to any concept about a true existence in the past, present, or future anymore. Through that, wrong views will be eradicated, and subsequently perfect Buddhahood will be attained.13 The Sūtra concludes with Śāriputra, the gods, humans, asuras and gandharvas rejoicing and praising the explanations given by Maitreya.

The main thrust of the sutra is its explanation of the twelve links. The Sūtra divides them in terms of outer and inner interdependence; their causal and conditional origin; and applies the six elements; the five features’ forward and reverse progression.

Outer interdependence describes how phenomena come into being very much according to everyday experience. This is used, nevertheless, to introduce causal and conditional inner interdependence which functions in a similar way. Even though we nowadays think of the twelve-link formula as the standard description of interdependence, early Buddhist

13 This kind of prophecy is very typical for the Mahāyāna.
literature conveys less of a unified approach. Many lists in sutras—for example the Suttanipāta, the Saṃyuttanikāya, and the Bālapaṇḍitasutta—present interdependent origination from different perspectives but list the twelve links only partially. Bernhart argues for a conflation of two separate sets of lists (the first seven and the last five) making up the twelve links, while others, like Wayman argue that the standard formula must have existed as such already from the very beginnings of Buddhist thought. The Sūtra reflects the basic structure of an initial abstract statement followed by the elaboration on the twelve links. In 1.4 Maitreya uses exactly the structure described by Cox:

Well, the phrase dependent arising means that something arises because something else already exists; something is born because something else was already born. That is to say, ignorance causes formations. Formations cause consciousness. Consciousness causes name and form. Name and form cause the six sense sources. The six sense sources cause contact. Contact causes sensation. Sensation causes craving. Craving causes appropriation. Appropriation causes becoming. Becoming causes birth. And birth causes aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, despair, and anxiety. Thus does this entire great heap of suffering arise.

There are also two main modes for interpreting the twelve links that Wayman calls "discovery and seeing" and "a person's life." He explains that these relate to the first of these two is a generalized, logical principal, while the second one "shows the role of defilement and karma in successive lives." Interestingly, the Sūtra and its commentaries do not discuss the distribution of the links over one, two, or three lifetimes, but are presented as the insight into

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the nature of Samsara which leads to freedom from suffering. With that it follows a more conservative engagement with interdependent origination, in the way it is also reflected in the early Buddhist literature. Having analysed the early sūtras, Cox concludes that early accounts of interdependent origination are important to explain the existence of suffering and the possibility of its cessation, rather than an abstract principle to describe origination or the particular process of birth.²¹

This presentation of the twelve links is particularly innovative, as it is organized in four sections considering causal and conditional interdependent origination for both inner and outer phenomena. This is in contrast to how interdependence is presented in early Pāli sources, where the terms of cause and condition were used interchangeably and only later developed into distinct concepts.²² In the following paragraphs we will see the transition into Mahāyāna literature, which consists of conservative source material being re-envisioned in innovative new ways.

First, we can observe the Sūtra's distinction from the Pāli tradition in the fact that it equates interdependent origination with the Dharma and the Buddha, which is not in the Pāli suttas. This equation is made by the Buddha with opening statement "Bhikṣus, whoever sees dependent arising sees the Dharma. Whoever sees the Dharma sees the Buddha." With this, two well-known statements of the Pāli suttas are combined in a new way.²³ The first part of the statement resembles the conclusion of the Maha-hatthipadopama Sutta, which analyses aggregates as the causes for grasping to a self (of person) and perpetuation within Samsara.²⁴ The second part of the statement is similar to a section of the Vakkali Sutta where the Buddha

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²³ N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 3.
emphasises that not his physical form, but his realization, the Dharma, is important.  
Combined, as in the Sūtra, these statements imply that through thoroughly understanding interdependent origination, i.e. emptiness, one realizes and manifests the Dharmakāya-Buddha.

Furthermore, plant similes appear abundantly in Pāli literature, but do not take on the same meaning as in the Sūtra. For example, in the *Nidana Sutta*, the seed stands for the perpetuation of samsaric experience. One continues to suffer if actions are performed which are motivated by the three poisons. The reversal is said to be true if one is free from the afflictions. Nevertheless, in none of the early Pāli suttas is the example of a seed growing into a flower expounded upon with as much detail as in the Sūtra, nor are they used for pointing out the twelve-link presentation of interdependent origination in the particular way it is here. In this Sūtra, the *pratyayas* (conditions) are identified with the six *dhātus* (factors), a systemization that explicitly shows the parallels between botanical growth and rebirth of consciousness. This change can serve as an example of how the presentation of interdependent origination in the Sūtra is the result of a development of different ideas on the topic from early sources to Mahāyāna literature.

In general, the Sūtra causes a shift within the Buddhist traditions in several other ways as well. The Sūtra moves beyond the presentations in Pāli literature by introducing new concepts like illusoriness and the related analogy of the reflected image, alluding to selflessness. Illusion is a synonym for delusion and ignorance in the Pāli canon. Nevertheless, only in the Mahāyāna does illusion develop into a standard illustration for selflessness. In addition, the Sūtra's treatment of certain topics even shapes the interpretation of the Pāli canon

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28 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 6.
29 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 14.
by Theravāda adherents themselves. For example, the link of 'name and form' in the Sūtra refers to the four great elements and the four non-material aggregates. Earlier Pāli sources define 'name' as the five mental factors of feeling, perception, volition, contact and attention. But later, the idea of the four elements and four non-material aggregates, i.e., feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness, becomes reabsorbed as an accepted presentation into later Theravāda Abhidhamma.30

As we have seen, the Sūtra clearly outlines different aspects of interdependent origination. Doing so, the Sūtra is distinct in structure and content. While it utilizes already existing concepts and terminology, it introduces a shift in Buddhist thought. The Sūtra is an important source for evidence of early Mahāyāna concepts, but at the same time it differs strongly from later Mahāyāna literature.

Before turning to the reception history, reconstructions, and translations of the Sūtra, this thesis will next introduce the main Indic commentaries on the text. These inform Sempa Dorje’s own work and therefore are central for an appreciation of his contribution.

**Indic Commentaries on the Śālistambasūtra**

The Sūtra is the basis for three Indian commentaries, none of which are currently available in Sanskrit but only in Tibetan and Mongolian translations.31 The first two of these commentaries, the Śālistambaka-kārikā and the Śālistambaka-mahāyāna-sūtra-ṭīkā, are attributed to Nāgārjuna.32 This attribution by the tradition is far from being proven. The first, the Śālistambaka-kārikā is a versification, an aid for memorization, and to be studied alongside the related prose commentary, the Śālistambaka-mahāyāna-sūtra-ṭīkā. This kind of versification of a Sūtra was not practiced widely but was only written for sūtras regarded as

30 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 12.
31 Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 11.
32 This attribution is far from being proven, but for dating the text this attribution can still hold evidence.
particularly important. If Nāgārjuna indeed composed the two commentaries, it must have been important and established enough in his lifetime to catch his attention and inspire him to the composition of a versification and a thorough commentary. According to Schöning only a few very important sūtras have received a versification as mnemonic tools for their study. Even if the two were not authored by Nāgārjuna, to be attributed to him retrospectively without evident reservation from within the tradition the Sūtra must have already been highly regarded before his time. Of course, here the dating of Nāgārjuna himself is disputed, and the insight we draw from the commentaries depends on that dating.

The Śālistamba-ṭīkā by Kamalaśīla is regarded by the tradition as an Indian commentary, but more investigation will have to be done to conclude whether this text ever really existed in Sanskrit. Since no Sanskrit manuscript exists, and the crucial role Kamalaśīla played in the transmission and translation of the Buddha's teachings into Tibet, the text could be an early case of what Davidson calls a “grey text.” A grey text is the result of transmission of the Buddha-dharma into Tibet and the collaboration of Indian pandits and Tibetan translators. Even though the authors were Indian, the texts never existed as such in India. Kamalaśīla might have worked alongside with the Tibetan translators to create and exemplary commentary on this important Sūtra following Vasubandhu's instructions. This was likely an attempt to not only standardize a framework for understanding the Sūtra, but also to set an example and teach Tibetans how to write a commentary in accord with the five-fold method outlined by Vasubandhu in the Vyākhyaṇyukti. Looking at the two Dunhuang manuscripts of the

33 Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 27.
34 Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra , 50.
36 Kamalaśīla is notable in terms of “grey texts,” several of his works (such as the Bhavanākramāḥ and Madhyamakāloka) were composed in Sanskrit while he was in Tibet and where brought to India much later, if at all.
37 Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 38.
Śālistamba-ṭīkā it appears as if the Tibetan translators working alongside Kamalaśīla took notes to supplement the main commentary.\textsuperscript{38} In any case, this commentary has succeeded to be the foremost source for reading the Sūtra.

The Development and Reception History of the Śālistamba Sūtra

As we have seen above, the Śālistamba Sūtra offers significant insight into the development of the Mahāyāna. Like the commentarial tradition of the past, in both India and Tibet, the contemporary Buddhist teachers and academics have published many works on the basic presentation of interdependent origination developed in the Sūtra. Most introductions to Buddhism will discuss the twelve links as presented in the Sūtra. Modern literature discusses interdependent origination to varying degree. Susan C. Stalker presents a literature review and discusses the reception of interdependent origination within the western academic community in her 1987 dissertation, \textit{A Study of Dependent Origination: Vasubandhu, Buddhaghosa, and the Interpretation of Pratītyasamutpāda}.\textsuperscript{39} I will focus merely on the reception history of the Sūtra – including reconstructions of the Sūtra in Sanskrit, the Sūtra’s commentarial tradition, and translations of the Sūtra and its commentaries.

The topic of interdependent origination is a vast one, and similarly vast is the modern literature that discusses the topic to a greater or lesser extent. The most thorough work written on the Sūtra so far is Jeffrey D. Schöning’s \textit{The Śālistamba Sūtra and Its Indian Commentaries}, published by Vienna University in 1995. In this work, Schöning presents annotated translations of the Sūtra and its three Indian commentaries, diplomatic editions of the Tibetan translations of the same, a study of the genre of Sūtra commentary in general, a study of Tibetan Buddhist

\textsuperscript{38} Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 83.
scriptural transmission and the initiation of a comprehensive study of interdependent origination. Schöning's work will serve as my main secondary source and jumping off point for my own investigations.

The Sūtra is not only interesting because, according to N. Ross Reat, it is the most thorough study of interdependent origination we can find within the collections of sūtras, but also because it is one of the oldest Mahāyāna scriptures known to us.40 Reat argues that the Sūtra started forming at least in the first century BC, if not earlier, since it shows many features in common with Pāli suttas.41 In this way we might consider the Sūtra as a valuable source for understanding the origins of Mahāyāna liturgy. In the following, I will discuss the different stages in the life of the Sūtra: its origination, transmission in India, transmission in Tibet, and other ancient translations. Finally, I will discuss the Sūtra's reception within modern academia and the tradition. The first part of this account is primarily based on Reat’s research.

In the introduction to his reconstruction and translation of the Sūtra Reat argues for a gradual development from early Buddhist textuality to Mahāyāna literature by identifying the Sūtra as evidence. Based on the way the Sūtra has been received within the tradition, he concludes that the early Buddhist texts are not identical with, but in close resemblance to the Theravādin Pāli canon.42 This section will outline some of the crucial considerations Reat presents with regard to the Sūtra resembling early Buddhism as well as Mahāyāna literature.

Reat argues that the Sūtra is— contrary to popular belief about the Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāpāramitā) corpus—the earliest Mahāyāna sūtra in existence. He argues that this implies a genuine, gradual development from an earlier form of Buddhism to various forms of Mahāyāna. In his opinion, Theravāda tradition closely resembles early Buddhism. He disagrees

40 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 1.
41 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 14.
42 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, Preface.
with the idea that Theravāda and Mahāyāna are two parallel developments, equally removed from one common source.\textsuperscript{43}

Reat notes that the Sūtra's full name, Śālistamba-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra, indicates its association with the Mahāyāna. However, as Reat notes, its content, structure, and style are not consistent with what we find in later Mahāyāna sūtras.\textsuperscript{44} Mahāyāna sūtras are generally typified by lengthy descriptions of Buddha-fields and the Bodhisattva-orator's supernatural attributes. In the Sūtra, the style of the introduction reads as a simpler account of the context, i.e. Maitreya explains the Buddha’s teachings in the way we generally find the Buddha's chief disciples do in Pāli suttas.\textsuperscript{45} They generally explain the Buddha's statements to the less experienced disciples. It is also notable that, unlike other Mahāyāna sūtras, the main interlocutor is not described as a “Bodhisattva Mahāsattva” (unlike, for example, Avalokiteśvara in the Heart Sūtra).

According to Reat’s introduction, the nature and content of the Sūtra is marked by consolidation, systematization, elaboration, and innovation of material scattered throughout Pāli suttas.\textsuperscript{46} Consolidation means that most ideas that make up the Sūtra are present in the Pāli suttas and were already present in the early days of Buddhism. The Sūtra systemizes many elements from the early sources by bringing them together and organizing them coherently. In this way, previously unrelated concepts are put in relation to each other. The Sūtra then elaborates on these topics by explaining them in detail and develops some ideas further in an innovative way. Reat argues that the Sūtra can only be recognized as a deviation from early non-Mahāyāna literature (which he sees reflected in Theravāda) according to a later Mahāyāna.

\textsuperscript{43} N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 5.
\textsuperscript{44} N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 3.
\textsuperscript{45} N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 3.
\textsuperscript{46} N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 4.
perspective. Retrospectively, we can see that the overall treatment of interdependent origination portrays a general shift towards Mahāyāna ideas.

Reat notes that no features in content classify the Sūtra as Mahāyāna. This classification appears to be based on the Sūtra being commonly accepted as as Mahāyāna.47 Poussin elaborates that Maitreya’s status as the orator and the prophecy of perfect Buddhahood in the conclusion are Mahāyāna features.48 The root text becomes identified with the Mahāyāna tradition not because of its fundamental doctrines, but because of the attribution of its versification and its earliest known commentary commentary to the quintessentially Mahāyāna Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna. The mere association of a text with a major Mahāyāna figure like Nāgārjuna will reassure the audience that the text itself belongs to the Mahāyāna. But as we will see, there are more indications for the Sūtra to be a Mahāyāna text than discussed so far.

An aspect of the Sūtra which stands out as Mahāyāna (or at least proto-Mahāyāna) aspects in the Sūtra is, first, the Bodhisattva Maitreya is the main orator. However, passages of an older version attribute the Sūtra to Śāriputra, not Maitreya. Śāriputra is one of two main Śrāvaka disciples of Buddha Shakyamuni. In the fundamental teachings,49 he is an important figure in propagating the Dharma and known for his great wisdom. The conclusion that predicts perfect and complete enlightenment is also a distinctively Mahāyāna feature.50

Reat highlights that Mahāyāna content can be found in the introductory part of the Sūtra when it is specified that the Sūtra is essentially a demonstration of progressive realization of the Dharmakāya. In a Mahāyāna context the Dharmakāya refers generally to the Buddha's

47 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 3.
Note that the cult of Maitreya also predates fully developed Mahāyāna and therefore the attribution to Maitreya cannot be identified as definitive proof for the Sūtra to be Mahāyāna.
49 Here I refer to what Mahāyāna often calls ‘Hinayana’ or ‘Lesser Vehicle’
50 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 3.
It is clearly Mahāyāna, but it also only appears in the later Chinese and Tibetan translations and not in the quotations in Sanskrit commentaries.
identification with the truth, which he realized and subsequently taught.\textsuperscript{51} Even though the terminology in the two sentences spoken by the Buddha use vocabulary acceptable to non-Mahāyānists, implicitly the statement is quite Mahāyāna.\textsuperscript{52} According to Reat, this hints at the fundamental Mahāyāna position that enlightenment represents the realization of Dharmakāya Buddhahood, but in words that can be accepted by non-Mahāyāna (which Reat conflates with Theravāda) audiences as well.\textsuperscript{53} Nevertheless, Harrison’s study on the term dharma-kāya reveals a much more complex picture. We find reference to the dhamma-kaya in the Pāli suttas and even within the Mahāyāna the term has undergone a gradual development.\textsuperscript{54} Again, more research has to be done to re-evaluate the understanding we can gain from these two passages.

According to Reat, another hint of novelty in the Sūtra is that it uses Mahāyāna concepts—specifically the reflections of the moon in water, a face in a mirror, and illusoriness.\textsuperscript{55} Depending on the commentary one follows, these concepts allude to Madhyamaka or Yogācāra philosophy.\textsuperscript{56} Each employs those examples to illustrate selflessness. Especially in Madhyamaka, one has to understand that there is no true nature to phenomena. For example, in Madhyamaka the appearance of phenomena is an illusion without a true existence. The way that they are an illusion is elaborated upon using eight examples, including the reflections in water.\textsuperscript{57} Even though the usage of it might be innovative, the term 'illusion' is not a novelty. Shi Huifeng discusses the changes it underwent from an early, pre-

\textsuperscript{51} Paul Harrison, "Is the Dharma-kāya the Real "Phantom Body" of the Buddha?" \textit{The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies} 15 (1992): 44.
\textsuperscript{52} N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 3.
\textsuperscript{53} N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 3.
\textsuperscript{54} Paul Harrison, Dharma-kāya, 46.
\textsuperscript{55} N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 10
\textsuperscript{56} According to Sempa Dorje (see translation of “Introduction by the Author” below) Nāgārjuna’s commentary interprets the Sūtra in light of Madhyamaka while Kamalaśīla incorporates both Madhyamaka and Yogācāra viewpoints.
\textsuperscript{57} For discussion of these examples, see: Westerhoff, Jan. \textit{Twelve Examples of Illusion}. 2010. Oxford: Oxford University Press.)
Buddhist, context until Nāgārjuna. Huifeng describes how the term “illusion” developed from the pre-Buddhist notion of creation, to the early Buddhist understanding of cognition, to an illustration of the bodies impermanence, and absence of a self of person, until it matured into a core illustration for prajñāpāramitā and emptiness. Again, more research has to be done to come to an understanding of the development and usage of these terms, and the relation of the Sūtra to various philosophical schools.

Bracketing these questions of its original provenance, for our purposes we can simply note that the Sūtra as we know it today is the result of a gradual development over centuries. Some elements of the Sūtra can be traced back to the time of the second Buddhist Council, the Council of Vaiśālī (ca. 340-380 BC), or even to the time of the Buddha. Reat argues that some passages reflect parallels which can also be seen between Mahāsāṃghika, Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda literature. These passages therefore predate the Council of Vaiśālī. The most evident example of how the Sūtra has developed is the introductory statement by the Buddha, "whoever sees interdependent origination sees Dharma. Whoever sees the Dharma sees the Buddha." This introductory statement, with its two parts, constitutes, according to Reat, the most ancient parts of the Sūtra.

A second phase, a development towards Mahāyāna doctrines, happened until around 100 B.C. This later development of the Sūtra happened gradually. Not long after 350 BC, the above-mentioned more ancient parts were organized and restructured. From then on its outline was based on the four-fold structure and the simile of the growth of a seed outlined the Sūtra. At some point after the Mahāsāṃghika schism, the principles of the Sūtra were applied specifically to the Mahāyāna concept of a gradual realization of the Dharma. Reat

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59 Shi Huifeng, Is ‘Illusion’ a Prajñāpāramitā Creation?, 221; 228; 230; 238
60 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 2.
61 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 3.
labels this stage as the actual birth of the Sūtra as we know it today. Other elements like the implication of illusoriness in the twelve links, the four limbs and five principals of subjective interdependent origination followed. An in-depth analysis of the terminology in the Sūtra will be necessary to the developments underlining this specific phase in the life of the Sūtra. These developments must have happened before 100 B.C., as they do not follow the terminological conventions of Mahāyāna rhetoric we find in text after that time. After 100 B.C. the Mahāyāna developed a more flowery and distinct form of expression than we find in the Sūtra.

Based on The Sūtra of Life and Death found in the Chinese canon, Reat suggests that a sūtra very similar to the Śālistamba must have existed in the 2nd century. The fact that The Sūtra of Life and Death was translated in the first half of the 3rd century C.E. into Chinese serves him as evidence. According to Reat, for the Sūtra to be regarded as authentic, it must have been available already at least one hundred years prior. This early Sūtra translation reflects the content of the Sūtra, but differs in style from the four Chinese translations of the Sūtra proper. The first one of those was done in the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420 C.E.). The Chinese translation of The Sūtra of Life and Death establishes the existence of a Sūtra very similar to the Sūtra we know today. Therefore, it likely reflects an earlier version and illuminate the developments of the Sūtra between the early 3rd and early 5th century.

Moreover, the latest additions in the Sanskrit version might have been made during the reconstruction of the Sūtra in the sixteenth century. Specifically, Chinese translations suggest some structural changes that happened between the third and fifth century of the common era and the Madhyamaka-Śālistamba Sūtra from the 16th century includes additional

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62 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 14.
63 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 14.
64 for example, in the Lotus Sūtra
65 Taisho 708
66 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 2.
Madhyamaka material. According to Reat we find "clearly extraneous Madhyamaka material" in the text he calls the "Madhyamaka-Śālistamba-Sūtra" edited by Gokhale in 1961. Gokhale's edition is based on a 16th century Nepalese Sanskrit manuscript that he obtained in Lhasa. The reconstruction is mainly based on quotations from the Śikṣāsamuccaya and the Bodhicaryāvatāra-pañjikā. This might indicate that there was a tendency to supplement the Sūtra up to the time of its reconstruction. As Reat doesn't mention the nature of this, "clearly extraneous Madhyamaka material," a close reading of the Sanskrit edition will be necessary to identify the nature and sources of these additions.

Gokhale, who found the sixteenth century manuscript, calls this text the Mādhyamaka-Śālistamba-Sūtra. Analysing the different passages, one can see that this manuscript is actually a reconstruction of the Sūtra, mainly based on the Bodhicaryāvatāra-pañjikā and the Śikṣāsamuccaya. Additionally, it was supplemented with Mādhyamaka material not found in other sources. There is a big gap between the time the Sūtra was translated into Tibetan and this reconstruction. Thus, one can only speculate how its understanding might have developed in India over time to justify the tendency to make it look more like a Madhyamaka text. It shows that the Sūtra was regarded as important enough to be subject to such a reconstruction in India, and this importance was further acknowledged by its preservation in Lhasa.

At the beginning of the 20th century, after the discovery of the Dunhuang manuscripts, the Sūtra attracted a lot of attention as "the earliest known relics of Tibetan literature." M. Aurel Stein included a reconstruction of the Sūtra by L.D. Barnett in his publication of Ancient Khotan in 1907. This was followed by a reconstructed Sanskrit text and an unidentified edition of the Sūtra in Tibetan by L. de la Vallée Poussain in 1913. In 1950 N. Aiyaswami Sastri

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67 Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 11.
68 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 16
70 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 15.
published another edition of the Tibetan text with a reconstruction of the Sanskrit, but he did not consult the earlier works mentioned above. V.V. Gokhale developed an edition of a 16th century Sanskrit manuscript which evidently transmits additional Madhyamaka material.  

While original Sanksrit manuscripts of the Sūtra remain unavailable to scholars, there have been several efforts to reconstruct it. As a result, roughly ninety percent of the Sūtra is available in Sanskrit, because one can find them in other Sankrit sources. The Sūtra has been quoted frequently on the topic of interdependent origination in main-stream Mahāyāna literature. A few famous texts which do this are the Prasannapadā by Candrakīrti, the Sikṣāsammuccaya by Śāntideva, the Bodhīcaryāvatāra-pañjikā by Prajñākaramati, the Vigrahavyāvartanī-vṛtti by Nāgārjuna and the First Bhavanakrama by Kamalaśīla. Even non Buddhist Indian scholars like Vācaspati Miśra have cited the Sūtra. The earliest evidence of reconstructing the Sūtra in Sanskrit is a manuscript from the sixteenth century, obtained by Gokhale in Lhasa. Western academics of the early to late twentieth century who endeavoured in reconstructing the Sūtra include M. Aurel Stein and L.D. Barnett in 1907, Louis de La Vallée Poussin in 1913, N. Aiyaswami Sastri in 1950, V.V. Gokhale in 1961, and N. Ross Reat in 1993.  

For his 1993 reconstruction, Reat consults all the previously mentioned reconstructions. He endeavors to recreate a version of the Sūtra resembling those that were available to Buddhist commentators in the ancient India. Along with this reconstruction, Reat presents a translation and an in-depth analysis of the information we can receive about the development of the Mahāyāna and the antiquity of Theravāda [non-Mahāyāna] ideas.
Tibetan Translations of the Sutra and its Commentaries

The Sūtra is well established within the Tibetan canon. It can be found in all Kangyurs (bka’ 'gyur) available. I was able to locate nine witnesses of the Sūtra's Tibetan translation on the Buddhist Digital Resource Center's homepage alone. Schöning used eighteen witnesses, thirteen Kangyur editions from all recensions and five Dunhuang manuscripts, in his diplomatic edition of the Sūtra.78 The colophons of the canonised versions of the Sūtra do not mention details about the transmission. Nevertheless, in the old Dunhuang manuscripts Yeshe De (ye shes sde; 8th-9th centuries CE) is mentioned as the main translator, editor, and reviser.79 Yeshe De was one of the three main translators in the imperial period, in the eight century.80 This attribution informs us that the Sūtra was translated during the early translation period.

According to Stein, the Sūtra was brought to Tibet early in the life of the later king Trisong Detsen (khri srong lde btsan).81 His father had initiated a mission to China to bring back a 'Chinese doctrine.' The three books that the envoy brought back to Tibet later served to convert the young king to Buddhism, thus shaping the history of Buddhism in Tibet. The three books were the Sūtra of the Ten Virtues (dge ba bcu’i mdo), the Vajrachhedikā, and the Śālistamba Sūtra.82 Even though there must have existed an early translation of the Chinese texts for the king, we do not have a Tibetan witness indicating a Chinese heritage at the present.83

78 Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 125.
79 According to tibscrit: in Lalou' Dunhuang catalogue nos.551 and 552 give colophons saying: band de ye shes sdes bsgyurd cing zhus te / skad gsar chad kyis kyang bcos nas / gtan la phab pa
80 https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Nanam-Yeshe-De/10904
83 Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 6.
All the Tibetan witnesses we have access to in the present reflect a very homogenous picture of the Sūtra. Even the early Dunhuang manuscripts show only minor variant readings.\textsuperscript{84} This might reflect a tendency of early standardization of the Sūtra at hand. Several early translations were incorporated into the version of the Sūtra that found its way into the canons.\textsuperscript{85} It is possible that over time, various translations from different Indian and Chinese languages have been produced. Nevertheless, the Sūtra was well known enough that processes and revisions led to a singular reading and phrasing. This reading was established early enough to be reflected in the Dunhuang manuscripts. As the Sūtra is generally taught together with Kamalaśīla's commentary, these two texts serve as corrective forces for each other. Since the phrasing of the commentary is strongly connected to the Sūtra, alterations in each become evident very quickly. Involuntary changes can be spotted and reversed easily, and voluntary edits have to happen in both texts in order to become accepted further.

Just as was the Sūtra itself, the three Indian commentaries on the Sūtra were translated and transmitted during the imperial period into Tibetan. The Dunhuang manuscripts mention Surendrabodhi and Yeshe De as translators for the Śālistamba-ṭīkā.\textsuperscript{86} The colophons in the Kangyur don't mention a translator or editor. The two commentaries by Nāgārjuna mention Dharmaśīprabhā\textsuperscript{87}, Legpe Lodro (legs pa'i blo gros), and Yeshe Zhonu (ye shes gzhon nu; jñānakumāra) as translators and Paltseg (dpal brtsegs) as reviser.\textsuperscript{88} The application of colophons in the Tengyur, as well as the mentioning in the Ihan kar ma catalogue indicate that either the two works attributed to Nāgārjuna were regarded as one, or the Śālistambaka-kārikā was added later to the collection. The Kārikā does not possess its own colophone when it is

\textsuperscript{84} Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 6.
\textsuperscript{85} Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 126.
\textsuperscript{86} tibscrit: Lalou's Dunhuang catalogue, no. 2103
\textsuperscript{87} The Peking and Narthang Tengyur list him as Dharmaśībhadrā
\textsuperscript{88} Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 51.
directly followed by the Tīkā in the same volume. The Han kar ma Catalog lists the Śālistamba-
Tīkā and the Śālistambaka-mahāyāna-sūtra-ṭīkā, but not the Śālistambaka-kārikā.

There are numerous commentaries on interdependent origination that closely abide by
the Sūtra's explanations and heavily quote it. An example of a scholarly work related to the
Sūtra is Butön's (Bu ston rin chen grub, 1290-1364) rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba'i bshad pa
lung kun las btus pa. In this work Butön compiles different texts on the topic of interdependent
origination. Along with the Daśabhūmika Sūtra, the sa sde kun las btus pa rtsa 'brel,
Abhidharmakośa, thub pa dgongs rgyan, the Sūtra is one of his main sources. In the gsung
'bum of Shākya mchog ldan a commentary on the Sūtra by Rong stong shes bya kun rig is
mentioned. However, there is no witness of this text available anymore, if it ever existed.

In the introduction to his reconstruction and translation of the Sūtra, Reat mentions that
manuscript fragments of the Sūtra count as one of the most ancient extant examples of Tibetan
language. Sadly, he does not mention any source for this statement, and I have not yet been
able to find evidence for it to be true.

Apart from the Seeing by Prof. Sempa Dorje, no other commentary which is written
directly on the Sūtra itself has been discovered during my research. This will be discussed
further below.

Translations into Chinese

The Taisho canon lists 4 translations of the Sūtra into Chinese. The earliest of the four
translations was done during the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420 C.E.) A fifth translation is

89 Butön Volume 20, folio 776.
It will be interesting to compare this text more closely to the commentaries on the Śālistamba Sūtra itself.
90 Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 12.
91 N. Ross Reat, Śālistamba, 1.
92 Taisho 709-712
93 Taisho 708
more ancient, from the third century and is named *The Sūtra of Life and Death*. The content is very similar to the later translations of the Sūtra, but it is arranged slightly differently. Kamalaśīla's Śālistamba-ṭīkā exists as Chinese translation and has been studied by Prof. Yoshimura.\textsuperscript{94} No translations of the Śālistambaka-kārikā and the Śālistambaka-mahāyāna-sūtra-ṭīkā exist or are mentioned in the Chinese sources.\textsuperscript{95}

**Translations into other Languages**

In *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue* by Lewis R. Lancaster lists four translations of the Sūtra into Korean as entries K 268, K 272, K 1191, and K 1297.\textsuperscript{96} Furthermore, A translation of the *Śālistamba Sūtra* is existent in the Mongolian canon. Schöning mentions that this translation has been produced by the latest in 1628-29.\textsuperscript{97} All three Indian commentaries—the Śālistambaka-kārikā and the Śālistambaka-mahāyāna-sūtra-ṭīkā, as well as the Śālistamba-ṭīkā—are available in Mongolian translation.\textsuperscript{98}

Apart from his own translations (see above) Schöning mentions that the Japanese scholar Ryūsho Ominami is said to have translated the three Indian commentaries into Japanese. He has published several articles in relation to the Sūtra and its commentaries from 1967 onwards. Nevertheless, without any Japanese language skills I have not been able to locate these publications yet. There are several other complete or partial translations of the Sūtra into English and other western languages.\textsuperscript{99}

**Sempa Dorje’s biography and Commentary**

\textsuperscript{94} Jeffrey D. Schoening, *The Śālistamba Sūtra*, 81.

\textsuperscript{95} Jeffrey D. Schoening, *The Śālistamba Sūtra*, 53.

\textsuperscript{96} http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/cat-kor-can.html

\textsuperscript{97} Jeffrey D. Schoening, *The Śālistamba Sūtra*, 6.

\textsuperscript{98} Jeffrey D. Schoening, *The Śālistamba Sūtra*, 53, 81.

\textsuperscript{99} Jeffrey D. Schoening, *The Śālistamba Sūtra*, 7-8.
The Sūtra has been and is still widely taught in a traditional setting, mainly accompanied with Kamalaśīla's commentary, the Śālistamba-tīkā. A prominent example was the teaching on the Sūtra by H.H. Dalai Lama in Bodh Gaya, India, in January 2018 to no less than 50000 devotees, monastic as well as lay from all over the world.¹⁰⁰

At Karmapa International Buddhist Institute, Delhi, the Sūtra has been part of the curriculum for many years. I personally found records and transcripts of oral teachings by Togpa Rinpoche, Khenpo Chödrak Thenpel Rinpoche, Khenpo Lobsang Tsurltrim (which I interpreted at the time), and Professor Sempa Dorje. Professor Sempa Dorje taught the Sūtra at K.I.B.I. at least twice, the first time was the occasion for writing the new commentary, and the second time he taught it alongside the commentary which was about to be published.

Even though the Seeing is not a transcript of Sempa Dorje’s explanations of the Sūtra, it was written in preparation to teach each lesson.¹⁰¹ According to Prof. Sempa Dorje the commentary is based on Kamalaśīla's Salistamba-tīka. It puts the archaic explanations into a modern light and language. He especially focuses on the philosophical aspects of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra understandings of the text.

Before providing a translation of the Seeing, Sempa Dorje’s commentary on the Sūtra, I would like to briefly introduce the author, Prof. Sempa Dorje, the special features of the Seeing, and my translation of the same.

The author and general editor of the Seeing, the late Acharya/Professor Sempa Dorje, was a contemporary scholar and highly regarded for his vast knowledge in all major areas of Buddhist learning, related languages, and Indian philosophical thought.

Even though I had the opportunity to speak with Sempa Dorje in person about his life, it is not easy grasp the depth of his knowledge and the intensity of his studies. Incredibly

¹⁰¹ Sempa Dorje, 'phags pa sA ēdu jiang pa zhes bya ba'i mdo don legs par bshad pa blo gsal rna ba'i rgyan zhes bya ba bzhugs so, (Kalimpong: Shri Diwakar Publications, 2017), 18.
humble, he hardly spoke about himself or his achievements. Only occasionally would he tell small anecdotes of his life, from his journey to Tibet, or studying at Varanasi where resources were scarce, and the teachers would explain the text using the only copy available and the students would hand copy the respective passage in the evening.

Sempa Dorje was born in approximately 1929 in Kinnaur (in what is now northwestern India). He is descendent of Rigzin Dūdül Dorje (rig ’dzin bdud ’dul rdo rje), an accomplished master of the great Nyingma monastery of Mindröl Ling (smin grol gling).102 His parents, Dorje Namgyal and Paldrön Zangmo lived in Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh, India. When he was about 17 years old, he left home to pursue his studies, and underwent the long journey to Tibet.

Sempa Dorje had initially intended to study at Mindröl Ling but became convinced that Tashi Lhünpo monastery was preferable. After thirteen years he graduated from Tashi Lhünpo with the “Geshe of the Ten Precepts” degree.103 In the early 1960s, Sempa Dorje was forced to return to India (where he is a citizen) due to the political turbulence of the times. As his education in Tibet mainly focused on Sūtra, upon returning to India he went to Ladakh to engage in tantric studies for several more years. In 1965 he enrolled in Sampūrṇānanda Sanskrit University in Varanasi, where he studied for nine years with Jagatanātha Upādhya. After graduating as an "Acharya" (ācārya, “master”) Sempa Dorje was appointed as a professor at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies at Varanasi and Chairman of the Composition and Editing Department in 1972. While he originally planned to retire in 1992, he yielded to the requests of the principal—Samdhong Rinpoche—along with students and other faculty and continued his work at CUTS (at that time known as CIHTS) until 1997. There is a well-known anecdote that when Sempa Dorje left CIHTS to follow the 14th Shamarpa’s104 request to join him in Kalimpong, Samdön Rinpoche lamented that Shamarpa had taken away his “library.”

102 For more information on Mindrolling, see Dominique Townsend’s recent Phd dissertation (Townsend, 2012).
103 The bka’ chen or bka’ bsu is the highest degree awarded at Tashi Lhunpo and is equal to a Geshe Degree.
104 14th Künzig Shamarpa Mipham Chökyi Lodrō, also known as Shamar Rinpoche, 1952-2014,
In 1998, Sempa Dorje was installed as the tutor of the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa, Trinley Thaye Dorje (phrin las mtha’ yas rdo rje) by the late Shamar Rinpoche. Since that time, along with serving as the Karmapa’s tutor, he held the position of Principal at the Kalimpong Shedra: Diwakar Buddhist Academy. In 2003 he was also appointed president and editor in chief of Shri Diwakar Publications. Until his recent passing on July 7th, 2022, Sempa Dorje lived at Karmapa International Buddhist Institute in Delhi where I had the pleasure and honor to personally work with him. When requested, he taught students of any level—from beginner students from the West, to Tibetan Geshes. Apart from this, his daily schedule focused on practice and composition. He published several works in Tibetan, Sanskrit, Hindi and Pali during his time at CIHTS with the university publishing house, as well as with Shri Diwakar Publications in Kalimpong.

*Seeing Interdependent Origination, the Dharma, and the Buddha*

As soon as one opens the Seeing one cannot but notice many innovative features in the texts. Modern elements like formatting, usage of footnotes, and employment of Arabic numerals as well as western punctuation marks are obvious. However, upon closer inspection we can see that the structure follows a traditional Tibetan outline. Throughout the commentary, Sempa Dorje chooses to include some western conventions while refraining from others and the degree to which he shows consistency in modern conventions varies considerably. the usage of footnotes to reference sources relates the text to modern academic conventions, the introduction and the commentary are clearly framed in a traditional way with verses of homage, a promise to compose, and dedications. In the following, I will highlight some features in formatting, structure, quotations and sources, usage of footnotes, as well as the usage of

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105 personal observation
numerals and punctuation marks to highlight the ways in which Sempa Dorje employs or explores the usage of both, traditional composition, and academic writing.

The overall formatting of the Seeing follows modern conventions. Traditionally, Tibetan texts are published in Pecha (dpe cha) format - loose leaves in landscape layout between a front and back cover, stored in a traditional cloth (dpe ras). After a title page, the different parts of the text are only minimally distinguished from each other, and often chapters are not even separated by line breaks. Recent Tibetan publications have adopted the more easily printable format of bound books. The Seeing follows modern international convention, having been published as a book in A5 format. It contains the title page, and publication references according to the conventions of modern publishing houses in English and Tibetan. This is followed by an introduction letter by H.H. The 17th Gyalwa Karmapa Trinley Thaye Dorje, and an introduction by the publishing house Shri Diwakar Publications. After a numbered outline with page numbers come a nineteen-page introduction, the Sūtra and the actual commentary. The Sūtra together with the commentary is 113 pages long. The more evident traditional aspect here is it concluding dedication verses by Prof. Sempa Dorje, along with a verse by the publishing house dedicating its publications to the welfare of beings.

The structure of the commentary is visually easy to identify for the modern reader. The biggest part of the commentary presents directly quoted passages of the Sūtra, marked by the heading mdo (“sutra”) in bold, quotation marks, and zhes bya ba gsungs te (the Tibetan way of concluding a quote). It than adds a commentary to each of these passages, which are headed by the word commentary (’grel ba), also in bold. Line breaks, paragraphs, and numberings are used as visual aids. Additionally, titles and headings are numbered and in bold. A header gives the page numbers in Arabic numerals and the title of the section—introduction, Sūtra, or

\[106\] See Appendix 1 for illustration.
commentary. These are very modern elements compared to the traditional formatting of usual *pecha* prints that usually consists of four to seven lines without any obvious demarcations.

The Introduction

The introduction gives a concise overview of important topics regarding the Sūtra. Prof. Sempa Dorje starts out with the traditional verses of homage and promise to compose. Then he introduces the context and content of the Sūtra and the following commentary. The introduction concludes with a dedication. In this introduction, Prof. Sempa Dorje doesn't follow a traditional model, but introduces the reader to several ideas and the context of the Sūtra to aid the understanding of the actual commentary.

Prof. Sempa Dorje introduces the structure of the *Seeing* by saying, "I will explain this Sūtra in five sections, according to the instruction of the past sage." This refers to a traditional structure which follows the Vasubhandu's model in five sections outlined in the *Vyākhāyukti*. Vasubhandu proposes to compose sūtra commentaries following a five-fold structure which includes the purpose (*dgos pa*), concise meaning (*bsdus pa'i don*), the meaning of the words (*tshig gi don*), connections (*mtshams sbyar ba*), and objections and answers (*brugal ba dang lan gnyis*). The second of these, the concise meaning, is outlined by: that which is to be comprehended (*ci shig yongs su shes par bya ba*), how [that] is to be comprehended (*ji ltar yong so shes par bya ba*), comprehension (*yongs su shes pa*), the result of comprehension (*yongs su shes pa'i 'bras bu*), vocalization [of the result] (*de rjod par byed pa*).

Prof. Sempa Dojre also indicates that the *blo gsal rna ba'i rgyan* is based on Kamalaśīla's *Śālistamba-ṭīkā*, in both its style and its content. For example, Kamalaśīla also clearly follows Vasubandhu's structure. Of the roughly eleven commentaries which follow

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107 de la dam pa gong ma'i man ngag ltar mdo 'di yan lag lnga'i sgo nas bshad par bya ste/_
110 here this reflects schöning's translation choices. but...
Vasubandhu's instructions, three were written by Kamalaśīla.111 The Śālistamba-ṭīkā is the sūtra-commentary which follows these instructions to the highest degree.112

After the explanation of the title, salutation, and an overview, the main body of the Śālistamba-ṭīkā consists of the concise meaning, purpose, meaning of the words, connections and response to objections, i.e. the five sections. The concise meaning again has seven parts: the prologue, introduction, subject to be comprehended, comprehension, result of comprehension, how that is to be comprehended, and the purpose of the Sūtra.113 It is to be noted that Kamalaśīla follows Vasubandhu's instructions closely, but reverses the order of the purpose and the concise meaning, and has seven instead of five topics within the concise meaning.114 Prof. Sempa Dorje adopts the structure of Kamalaśīla's Śālistamba-ṭīkā in the Seeing. In the structure of the main part of the commentary, Prof. Sempa Dorje is surprisingly conservative in following the exact outline of Kamalaśīla. Even the main of the commentary in which the Sūtra is explained in distinct sections, the traditional seven points are emphasised as outlined already in the summary (concise meaning).

Quotations and Sources

In both the introduction and the actual commentary to the Śālistamba-Sūtra, Prof. Sempa Dorje draws from different sources to solidify his argument and presentation with direct and indirect quotations. Both traditional Tibetan works and modern academic writing uses secondary sources in that way. Nevertheless, the quotes used are entirely traditional, focusing on sūtras, Indian shastras, and earlier Tibetan commentaries, and do not evidently engage with modern academic works. Nine referenced quotes are taken from the Śālistamba-ṭīkā.115 These

111 Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 39.
112 Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 39.
113 Jeffrey D. Schoening, The Śālistamba Sūtra, 87.
114 Vasubandhu suggests five topics to be discussed within the summary. Those are: that which is to be comprehended, how that is to be comprehended, comprehension, the result of comprehension, vocalization of the result. Kamalashila and subsequently Sempa Dorje add: prologue, introduction and purpose of the sutra.
115 Specifically on the following pages: 28, 42, 52, 62, 73, 74, 102, and 104.
quotes reflect the close connection between these texts, but also the fact that the Seeing is not simply a restatement of Kamalaśīla's work. In some cases, relevant sūtra quotations are taken from the Śālistamba-ṭīkā instead of the sūtras themselves. Most quotations from sūtras are referenced merely by mdo in the footnotes, while for others the name and exact location in the Kangyur (bka’gyur) are indicated (e.g. page 29: dge slong la rab gce’i mdo -- shog 126/ba sa sde bka’).\textsuperscript{116} The sūtras quoted are the dge slong la rab gce’i mdo, ’phags pa sdud pa, klu sgrub rten snying, dkon brtsegs, ma dros pas zhus pa’i mdo, shes mdo, and the shes phyin rdo rje gcod pa. Indian Śāstras, especially Mādhyamaka and Abidharma texts are quoted: Mahāyāna Sūtrālāṃkāra, Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, Suhṛllekha, Prasanna-pada, Bodhicharyāvatāra, rnam ’grel tshad grub le’u, ’grel ba don gsal, Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, Abhidharma-sammuccaya, and the Abhidharmakośa-sphuṭārthā.

Reference and quotations from Tibetan literature derive from Patrul Rinpoche’s dge ‘dun rjes dran mdo ‘grel, Shakya Chokden’s rten ’brel bston pa las rstaw pa’i ’bel gtam, Sherab Gyaltsan's Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho, the dwags rgyud grub pa’i shing rta, the mngon rgyan ’grel ba mdo lugs ma, and the phyag chen smon lam. All of these reflect a traditional selection of sources.

Footnotes

In the Seeing Sempa Dorje employs modern conventions like footnotes to work in line with modern academic standards. He moves away from the traditional acceptance of unreferenced quotations and usage of other material. Instead, he references all his direct and indirect quotations, and gives sources for adopted ideas. He also uses footnotes for clarification.

\textsuperscript{116} The reason for these choices is not evident to me.
purposes. In several instances he uses the footnotes to show different readings in alternative Tibetan or Sanskrit witnesses (e.g. page 73, 74, 75, 64).

**Punctuation and Numerals**

Throughout the commentary, we can find Arabic numerals and different kinds of punctuation signs. Numerals are used to indicate parts of the outline and to identify items in lists. In section headings, the Arabic numerals are often combined with whole numbers of the outline or with letters of the Tibetan alphabet. Most numbers marking the outline are highlighted with brackets, while items of a list may be indicated with the bare numeral. Topic marking particles like *la ldon* and *ni sgra* are often accompanied with a semi-colon or an em-dash. Questions are marked with question marks and quotations are highlighted with double quotation marks in addition to the traditional particles that indicate quotes. Brackets are also used to enclose additional information or Sanskrit terminology. Occasionally, even equal signs are used. Not all the punctuation signs seem to clarify the reading of the text but might be rather additional visual aids. In his usage of punctuation and numerals Prof. Sempa Dorje thus does not use modern conventions instead of traditional once but introduces a way of reflecting both. This way he accommodates both, a modern and a traditional reader.

**Usage of Sanskrit terminology**

Throughout the *Seeing* we find Sanskrit terms in *Devanāgarī* script. This is interesting as most Tibetan texts use transliteration. Sometimes these transliterations can become difficult to read correctly and do not encourage further discussions between scholars in different languages. Indicating the Sanskrit equivalents of certain terms in brackets reflects modern convention. Furthermore, Sempa Dorje compares Tibetan and Sanskrit terminology as well as
Introduction to the Translation

As the Seeing was first published only in 2017, I will not be able to refer to alternative editions of the text. In the earlier stages of the translation stages of the translation Prof. Sempa Dorje was still alive and I was able to clarify some doubts and mistakes by the typist. Even though this opportunity does not present itself anymore due to his recent passing, if corrections of the text should be necessary, I will be able to suggest necessary editorial changes to the publisher for the next edition of the publication. In this way, my close reading of the text will contribute to producing an improved version of the text and a translation that, as much as possible, reflects the author’s intentions.

The commentary itself discusses interdependent origination, deploying technical philosophical terms. I stay as close to the Tibetan terminology as possible for the key terms. As much as possible, I will use English renderings that reflect the Tibetan meaning, especially when each syllable of the Tibetan term will be explained. For example, I chose to translate rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba as interdependent origination to reflect the three major parts of the Tibetan term. To reflect nuance in the Tibetan, I will consistently distinguish between synonyms. For example, I will translate rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba as 'interdependent origination' as mentioned above, but rten 'byung as 'dependent origination' and rten 'brel as 'interdependence'. The 84000 project has published the Sūtra’s translation in 2018 and here. I will not attempt yet another translation of the Sūtra but will base my translation as much as possible on the already existing 84000 translation. Instead copying the relevant sections into my translation of the commentary, I will indicate the paragraph the commentary is elucidating. Further, I will note when my translation choices might differ from those the 84000 translation.
A full translation of the *Seeing* would go beyond the limits of this thesis. Therefore, I will translate the *Introduction by the Author* and a significant portion of the actual commentary here to illustrate the points made above. The interested reader may refer to Appendix 1 for a draft translation of the remaining passages of the text.
Translation of Seeing Interdependent Arising, the Dharma, and the Buddha

Introduction by the Author

The supreme teacher has taught the unsurpassable meaning, origination in dependence and relatedly. I respectfully bow down to that supreme teacher who has taught unsurpassable dependent origination,

Seizing the jewel-like essential meaning of the teaching's ocean, is the source for the entire harvest of benefit and happiness. I will introduce Elucidating the Meaning of the Arya Salistamba Sutra, the offspring of the girl who takes hold of those jewels.

The presentation of dependent arising here summarizes the heart of all the general teachings, and especially the words of the Sugata and commentaries on those into its essence. It is the source of all the other teachings, and it is like a treasury of all precious jewels, the profound meaning. Likewise, the great charioteer, the Noble Nāgārjuna said:

Within the treasury of Buddha's words
There's none so precious, so profound as this.
And those who see that things dependently arise
Do see the Buddha, perfect knower of the truth.117

The truly complete Buddha has taught the Śalistamba Sūtra in order to elaborately teach such dependent arising.

The Śalistamba Sūtra

The actual Śalistamba Sūtra refers to the words of the Buddha which the Bhagavan personally taught118. Looking at the rice seedling in the fields of Rājagṛha the Bhagavan

117 Tibetan reference: bshes spring (Letter to a Friend) - Śloka 111
118 Traditionally three kinds of 'Speech of the Buddha' (sangs rgyas kyi bka' gsum) are explained. These are teachings which are: 1) personally taught (zhal nas gsungs pa), transmitted by the Buddha's blessings (byin gyis brlabs pa), and those which have the Buddha's assent (rjes su gnang ba)
summoned his principal retinue, the bhikṣus. and exclaimed, "Bhikṣus, whoever sees dependent arising sees the Dharma. Whoever sees the Dharma sees the Buddha."\(^{119}\)

Further, from "Thus have I heard at one time."\(^{120}\) to "together [they] sat on a stone slab."\(^{121}\) it is speech that has the Buddha's assent. And starting with "Then the venerable Śāriputra" until "will predict the unsurpassed perfectly complete enlightenment saying, 'You will become a perfectly complete Buddha.'"\(^{122}\) is speech transmitted by the Buddha's blessing.

Moreover, statements like, "...praised the explanation by the Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva Maitreya" are as well speech that has the Buddha's assent.

Thus, the entire body of this sutra is clear to be like a commentary to the above mentioned speech which the Bhagavān gave personally. Yet, it is not an explanation by the Protector Maitreya - it has been understood to be a sutra transmitted by the Buddha's blessing. The great charioteer, the noble Nāgārjuna, has also explained it to be this type of Sutra.

The time when the Sūtra was taught

This sutra is clear to be one which has been taught at Grdhṛakūṭa at Rājagṛha, Magadha, and as for the time when it was taught: It is clear that it has been taught in the very year when the Bhagavān attained complete and perfect enlightenment. The teacher reached complete and perfect enlightenment at the full moon day of Vaishakha\(^{123}\). Then, after the passing of two months, at the full moon day of the 6th Tibetan month he turned the wheel of Dharma for the first time in Varanasi. He established the Five Excellent Disciples etc. at the level of arhatship. Later, during the ceremony of releasing the summer retreat rules after three months, the teacher addressed the monks, "Bhikṣus! In order to delight many beings, in order to benefit many

\(^{119}\) Jeffrey D. Schoening, "The Śālistamba-sūtra and Its Indian Commentaries" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1991), 266. (revised translation)

\(^{120}\) Schoening, "The Śālistamba-sūtra and Its Indian Commentaries", 247. 84000 1.2

\(^{121}\) Schoening, "The Śālistamba-sūtra and Its Indian Commentaries", 266.

\(^{122}\) Schoening, "The Śālistamba-sūtra and Its Indian Commentaries", 437

\(^{123}\) This refers to the fourth Tibetan lunar month
beings, and in order to be loving towards the world, go and roam around." The teacher himself went in the direction of "Gaya'. Having gone to 'Gaya' he ordained Uruvelā Kaśyapa together with his retinue of 500 as bhikṣus. Likewise, he ordained Gayā Kaśyapa together with his retinue of 250 and Naḍī Kaśyapa together with his retinue of 250 as bhikṣus. Together with those 1000 bhikṣus he stayed at Grdhrajā. At that time Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana were staying in the presence of the teacher Belaṭṭhiputta (Sañjaya) at Nālandā. Converted by the noble Aśvajit they came before the Baghavan, and 250 other students, who were assigned to accompany the two, joined them. Thus, the Bhagavan ordained all of them as bhikṣus.

So, at that time the Bhagavan stayed at Grdhrajā together with 1250 bhikṣus who constituted the second assembly. Once, during that time, the Bhagavan, looking at the rice seedlings of the valley's fields taught this sutra with which we are presently concerned.

How this Sūtra has an implied meaning

The actual subject-matter of this Sutra is interdependent arising. How was this taught by the teacher? Looking at a field with rice-seedlings the teacher said, "Bhikṣus, he who sees dependent arising sees the Dharma. He who sees the dharma sees the Buddha." Then the teacher remained silent. The actual sutra taught by the teacher was just that. Generally, all the teachings of the teacher can be summarized into three categories in terms of how the subject-matter was taught: teachings which can be understood literally, teachings which have an implied meaning124, and teachings which were taught with a covert implied meaning125.

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124 There are four ways in which a teaching can have an implied meaning (dgongs pa can): 1) an implied meaning concerning fundamental a likeness (mnyam pa nyid la dgongs pa), 2) concerning other times (dus gzhans la dgongs pa) 3) concerning other aims (don gzhans la dgongs pa), and 4) concerning people's intentions (gang zag gi bsam pa la dgongs pa)

125 The four types of sutra with a covert implied meaning (Idem por dgongs pa bzhis) are: 1) covert implication with respect to entry into the teaching (gzhugs pa la Idem por dgongs pa), 2) in respect of characteristics (mtshan nyid la Idem por dgongs pa), 3) in respect of antidotes (gnyen po la Idem por dgongs pa), and 4) in respect of interpretation (bsgyur ba la Idem por dgongs pa)
The above-mentioned sutra can't be understood literally. The objects, dependent arising, dharma, and Buddha have distinct natures from each other. The Bhagavan himself taught causes and results like ignorance etc. and defiled phenomena using the term 'dependent arising'. He taught the undefiled path and uncompounded phenomena like nirvana etc. using the term 'dharma'. And the undefiled phenomena which constitute Buddhahood he taught using the term 'Buddha'. Therefore, all of these have distinct natures from each other. Accordingly, the following questions can be raised: How can one see the Dharma by seeing dependent arising which is something different? How can one see the Buddha by seeing the dharma which is [again] something different? It is just like that we don’t see sound when we are seeing form. If the sutra's meaning can't be taken literally like that, what is the other, the implied meaning?

It is true that, if taken literally, this sutra can't be understood easily, but it has an implied meaning. From the four types of sutras taught by the Buddha which have an implied meaning this is the explained to be the first type "implying fundamental a likeness" and, likewise, from the four types of teachings with a covert implied meaning it is explained as "covert implication in respect of characteristics" and more specific it is identified as "covert implication with respect to thoroughly established characteristics".

Likewise, this should be comprehended according to the explanation in Kamalaśīla's commentary: "The one who gains mastery in dependent arising (that which is the ultimate nature specified by the 16 characteristics like permanence and so forth) as it was explained, will directly realize the noble dharma of the noble ones. That is to 'gain mastery in the ultimate dharma'. The one who masters the ultimate dharma is endowed with authentic primordial wisdom. The one who is endowed with authentic primordial wisdom doesn't observe dependent arising, the dharma and the Buddha as being distinct, because he abides in the primordial wisdom of equality. Therefore, having directly realized the dharma of the noble ones, one is endowed with authentic primordial wisdom. Consequentially, if that yogi sees dependent
arising as it was explained, he will see the dharma and the Buddha. The Bhagavan explained it in this way. Thus, the Bhagavan is said to have taught this sutra implying fundamental a likeness and with the covert implication with respect to the thoroughly established characteristics."¹²⁶

Therefore, one should know that that Sutra which was taught by saying, "Bhikṣus, he who sees dependent arising sees the Dharma. He who sees the dharma sees the Buddha." has an implied meaning. It was taught implying the suchness of dependent origination and the suchness of Dharma. And it is a sutra which was also taught with a covert implied meaning regarding the thoroughly established characteristics.

The Subject Matter of the Sūtra

The subject matter of this Sutra is profound dependent arising. Intending to thoroughly teach both inner and outer interdependence the teacher taught this sutra while looking at a Śālu-rice seedling.

The Etymology of Interdependence

There are many different assertions with regard to the etymology of dependent arising by the scholars who advocate it. But the essential meaning of all is that 'interdependent arising' refers to pratityasamutpadaḥ in Sanskrit. prati means 'having encountered' and iti has the meaning of 'having become the root'. These two syllables are combined to form the participle pratiti (going towards). That word becomes a conditional by adding the conditional verbalizer lyap. This conditional particle is just a connection that comes from l and y and therefore means later on. In the mean while the a is left in the term prati+iti+a. When those are conjoined,

¹²⁶ Tibetan Reference: Kamalaśīla’s commentary - Tengyur section (ji)
pratītya is formed. The syllable iti here can apply to 'having become the root' and 'understanding' and so forth. Since the prefix prati has been conjoined, it leads to the meaning of meeting with, being reliant on, and so forth.

Consequently, it is explained in the commentary on the Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, [Candrakīrti’s] Prasanna-pada:

"Here, prati means meeting. iti means going. The syllable of pratītya which has the lyap in the end changes 'meeting' to being 'dependent', because the root of the word completely changes by the encounter."\textsuperscript{128}

Then, even though above the encountering syllables of sma and uda refer to a natural root, it leads to arising. And likewise, there are ways in which it can mean 'to exist', or 'to be established.' In the grammar texts it accordingly refers to: "padsattāyām"\textsuperscript{129}. If we conclude on an essential meaning of those: the arising of all entities, their existence and establishment is based on causes and conditions, that is interdependent arising.

No Sanskrit equivalent to the syllable 'inter' exist as an explicit word. But that is the understanding when the syllable 'sam' is joined. In the Abhidharmakośabhasya it says: "sam means to come together."\textsuperscript{130}

Further, here, in the all contexts of this Sutra and the commentaries on that, the entity which arises when saying 'the arising of entities' is often explained to refer to substantial entities such as seeds and sprouts. Nevertheless, this is only the main illustration. It is not exhaustive. This is similar to how on expresses existence by the synonym 'entity.' Accordingly, the ‘entity’ here is synonymous to existence.

\textsuperscript{127} Grammatically the lyab is referring to the ya in pratītya.
\textsuperscript{128} Tibetan reference: Prasanna-pada - p.2/ba; Tengyur: Madhyamaka section ('a)
\textsuperscript{129} Tibetan reference: dbyang can sgr mdo - refer to the jing mtha'i dbu
\textsuperscript{130} Tibetan reference: Abhidharmakośabhasya - p.129; Tengyur: Abhidharma section (gu)
The equivalent for entity is *bhāwa*. And that is established from the root-sound *bhu*. Therefore, the meaning of that root is explained in the grammar text as 'bhunbhāwane' and *bhusattāyām*. Likewise, it is explained as meaning both 'arising' and 'existing'. Therefore, it is perfectly clear that existence also entails interdependent origination.

Even though a few explain eleven etymologies of interdependent origination according to the Abhidharmasammucaya, these are not the etymology, but it is these are explained to be particularities of the characteristics.

*The Definition of Interdependent Origination*

To summarize the definition of interdependent arising the Buddha said: "This is the result of exactly those conditions. Whether a Tathāgata has come or not, this suchness of all phenomena always abides." (idampratyayatāphalam). Therefore, the definition of interdependent origination is ‘arising based on causes and conditions'. Consequently, an established basis implies that it is interdependent origination. What is called 'causes and conditions' is understood in terms of both, the generating and the establishing factors. It should not be understood as only the generating factor.

*Classifications*

There are different ways to classify interdependent origination: 1. In this Sutra it is explained that there two types – interdependent origination which has the characteristics of the ultimate and that which has the characteristics of the relative. Accordingly, it says: "Dependent arising should be understood in terms of the ultimate and relative manner." 2. Likewise, one can classify interdependent origination based on the category of cause and effect according to

131 Tibetan reference: dbyangs can sgra mdo - ting mtha'
132 Tibetan reference: dbyangs can sgra mdo - ting mtha'. This is as well cited in the *Abhidharmakośabhasya* and the *Prasanna-pada* (in the 3rd chapter 'Excellent Practice')
133 Tibetan reference: spyi don rol mtsho - p.350/deb. rje btsun
134 Tibetan reference: Śalistamba Sūtra
saying "Through the condition of ignorance comes formation," or based on interdependent labels such as 'here' and 'there'. 3. Further, there is inner interdependence which is embodied by the mind-stream, and outer interdependence which is not. 4. This sutra contains another twofold classification of interdependence: interdependence from the perspective of becoming afflicted, the origination in forward order, like that the condition of ignorance gives rise to formation, and interdependence from the perspective of complete purification according to saying "Through the ceasing of ignorance, formation ceases." 5. Furthermore, the Abhidharma-samuccaya mentions eight classifications of interdependence: "What are the classifications? They are the classification of originating cognition, the classification of death, transmigration and birth, …" The six classifications of interdependence in terms of the cause together with the two in terms of the result makes eight.

Following the positions of the individual textual traditions, there are five ways: 1) asserting dependent arising as permanent, 2) asserting it as impermanent and compounded, 3) asserting it as not existing in terms of non-entities being faulty objects, 4) asserting it as synonym of 'existence' or 'phenomenon', and 5) asserting it as the essence of both truths.

**Asserting dependent arising as permanent**

A sub-sect of the eighteen Buddhist schools, the Mahīśāsaka, assert dependent arising to be permanent, i.e. uncompounded. They do so, based on passages from the Śalistamba Sūtra itself which say: "That sprout has neither been created by itself, nor has it been created by another, nor has it been created by both…", and likewise, " Whether a Tathāgata has come or not, this suchness of all phenomena always abides." Likewise, it says in the Abhidharmakośabhāsya: "Other schools assert that dependent arising is uncompounded

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135 Tibetan reference: Śalistamba Sūtra
136 Tibetan reference: Abhidharma-samuccaya
137 Tibetan reference: 'each within the other school' refers to the Mahīśāsaka. mdzod 'grel don gsal, p. 283; Tengyur: Abhidharma section (gu)
because it was said, 'Whether a Tathāgata has come or not, this suchness of all phenomena always abides". Here the assertion of the Mahīśāsaka and the way to understand the implied meaning of the sutra is that it implicitly refers to the relative suchness of dependent arising. They explain that - whether a Tathāgata has come or not - formation etc. always arise based on ignorance and so forth. But dependent arising itself does or does not depend on something else. Therefore, they say that dependent arising is permanent. That can be accepted in this way and it can reasonably be the implied meaning of the above mentioned sutra. Asserting the essence of dependent origination as permanent on the contrary, it is explained in the Bhāsya to be illogical and something that needs to be refuted. It says: "Why? - Because origination defines compounded phenomena."  

**Asserting dependent arising as impermanent**

Those who assert dependent arising as impermanence are mainly the Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika. In the Prakaraṇapāda it says: "What is dependent arising? It refers to all compounded phenomena. What are the phenomena which originate interdependently? They are all compounded phenomena." Based on that they assert dependent origination as a compounded phenomenon. Dependent origination is said to entail impermanence and compounded-ness. If it is like that, how does that which has not come or that which has not been done, become interdependent? It becomes interdependent as explained in the Bhāsya: "How do that which has not come and that which has not been done become compounded at one point? They become compounded because of the intention of the mind which actually engages in formation. (If it is like that,) what are undefiled phenomena? Undefiled phenomena refer to intention purified by a virtuous mind, because that is what is to be obtained. (If it is like that,) does it imply nirvana as well? Especially nirvana has been classified as extremely

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138 Tibetan reference: Śalīstamba Sūtra; section (tsha)  
139 Tibetan reference: Abhidharmakośabhāṣya; p.129/na; Tengyur: Abhidharma section (ku)  
140 Tibetan reference: Cited in the Bhāsya - page 125/ba; Tengyur: Abhidharma section (ku)
similar because it is of a similar kind with undefiled phenomena. For example, in some contexts, that which is 'not liable to be form' has been called form because it is a similar kind. There is no flaw since it is similar to 'form'."

This means that, for example, something that will become liable to be form in the future, is not liable to be form now. But it is presented as form because generally forms of the three times are of similar kind as form. Likewise, considering dependent arising, all future phenomena can be presented as such as well.

If it is like that, don't undefiled phenomena of the future and nirvana become compounded and interdependently originated since one has the thought which desires to attain those? Undefiled phenomena of the future and nirvana are not presented as compounded. Nevertheless, as explained above, even though the future form is not form, by considering future form to be of a similar kind with form, it is presented as such. Therefore, those are interdependently originated as well. Like this it is explained in the Abhidharmakośa-sphuṭārthā.141

The traditions of the Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika assert interdependence as compounded based on the texts of the Seven Treatises on Abhidharma (Mahavibhāsha), like the Prakaraṇapāda. But it is not as if they didn't assert interdependence of being dependently established. This is explained in the Bhāṣya: "Even though it is like that, it is not something not presented by the particularity of dependence either."142 Further, Rājaputra Yaśomitra explained, "Still, it refers to dependent arising by the particularities of dependence and it is not something which would not abide in the aspects of dependent arising. It is like the interdependence of 'here' and 'there'."143

141 Abhidharmakośa-sphuṭārthā - p.280/ba; Tengyur: Abhidharma section (gu)
142 Tibetan reference: Abhidharmakośabhāṣya; p.128/na; Tengyur: Abhidharma section (ku)
143 Tibetan reference: 'grel ba don gsal - p.280/ba; Tengyur: Abhidharma section (gu)
Therefore, saying that these schools assert interdependence as impermanent refers mainly to engaging with and reversing from samsara. (It is not as if not both, dependent establishment and dependent arising were present).

The way in which interdependence is asserted as a non-entity

Generally, interdependence is explained in both, Sutra and Shastra, as being compounded, uncompounded, free of an inherent nature, not being a truly existent, and permanent. It is known as such to not only Indians and Tibetans, but others as well. But the position that interdependence, apart from being a mere confused appearance of the relative, is also baseless, a non-entity, and even in the mere relative not established by valid cognition, is a later development and accepted in Tibet.

A) Likewise, the Mahāpañḍita Shakya Chokden\textsuperscript{144} explained three reasons: "1) Mutual dependency generates the knowledge of something not being established. Therefore, an existence, like the birth in the context of dependent origination, can't logically make us understand the existence of birth and so forth. By what do we know it? Relying on something other and relative existence do not fulfill the requirement for an existence. 2) If relative interdependence like karmic causality and so forth existed, they wouldn't be illusion-like. Even though they are not existent, they appear, because we need to take the meaning of illusion into account. 3) If relative [interdependence] existed, it would need to be observed by the noble beings. But the omniscient ones who observe the ultimate don't see relative interdependence which is different than that."\textsuperscript{145}

B) Likewise, the great Jonangpa Sherab Gyaltshan\textsuperscript{146} explained that if something is interdependent, it possesses the characteristics of being false and deceiving, it needs to be

\textsuperscript{144} Wylie: shAkya mchog ldan (1428-1507)
\textsuperscript{145} Tibetan reference: Shakya Chokden - rten 'brel bston pa las rstam pa'i 'bel gtam, p.432
\textsuperscript{146} Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen (Wylie: (jo nang pa chen po shes rab rgyal mtshan) (1292-1361) was the fourth throne holder of Jonang Monastery
empty of itself (like for example 'The vase is empty of a vase'). And the dharmadhātu, emptiness, is undeceiving truth, other emptiness, naturally and spontaneously established. It is not interdependent.\textsuperscript{147}

C) Also, the eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje\textsuperscript{148}, explained that objects like arising and cessation of dependent origination are not presented as even mere relative by saying: "Well then, if 'arising' is base-less in the context of the Madhyamaka, will arising as well be refuted just as in the refutation of arising from the for extremes? - Yes, it is like that. No arising, which is different than arising from any of the four extremes, is possible. Thus are birth and birth from the four extremes, both, refuted to exist, not only ultimately but as well 'conventionally'." And likewise: "If one asks, 'Well then, isn't the arising etc. of dependent origination not established?'

- According to the \textit{Prāsaṅgika}, if one establishes arising and so forth because of the reason of being dependent origination, it becomes a contradictory reasoning which is established as a mistaken entailment. Therefore, the arising of dependent origination is not asserted as arising."\textsuperscript{149}

From those, the explanation by Shakya Chokden has been elucidated by Taktsang Lotsāwa\textsuperscript{150} within the "Burdens of Contradiction:"

If omniscient primordial wisdom were to perceive all phenomena, this would lead to the contradiction that the discernment of objects of knowledge would not be pramāṇa.\textsuperscript{151}

The explanation of the Jonangpas can be found in. the \textit{mdo lugs ma}, their commentary on wisdom: "Through the primordial wisdom of the conqueror of time, the manner of knowing

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{147} Tibetan reference: Jonangpa - ri chos nges don rgz mtsho, p.102; Delhi Press
\item \textsuperscript{148} Mikyö Dorje (Wylie: mi bskyod rdo rje, 1507–1554) was the eighth Karmapa, head of the Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism.
\item \textsuperscript{149} Tibetan reference: dwags rgyud grub pa'i shing rta - p.252-253. Note: Because many other commentarial notes have happened to enter the teachings of the Victorious Mikyö, it is to be analysed whether this is of the Victorious Mikyö!
\item \textsuperscript{150} Taktsang Lotsāwa Sherab Rinchen (Wylie: stag tshang lo tsA ba) (1405-1577)
\item \textsuperscript{151} Tibetan reference: Taksang Lotsāwa Sherab Rinchen explained the 'gal ba'i 'khur chen bco brgyad (the 18 great burdens of contradiction)
the abiding mode of both truths, the object, has been taught as it is.”¹⁵² It is clear that the relative is baseless because the relative is explained to be the object of omniscient primordial wisdom. The Victor Mikyö Dorje's explanation - that the arising of interdependence is not established even relatively - has been explained to be in terms of that arising of interdependence is not classified in terms of valid cognition and establishment from its own perspective or in terms of the particularities of being truly established. One needs to distinguish the two.

It needs to be understood according to the explanation in the *Bodhisattvacharyāvatāra:*  

It's not indeed our purpose to disprove  
Experiences of sight or sound or knowing.  
Our aim is here to undermine the cause of sorrow:  
The thought that such phenomena have true existence.¹⁵³

Lord Rangjung Dorje explained as well that both truths are the basis for freedom from the eternalistic and nihilistic extremes, and that the two accumulations are the focus of the path. Further he explains that the very interdependently originated mind while ultimately not having been seen even by the Victor, are the basis for both, Samsara and Nirvana, in the relative.¹⁵⁴ Therefore, one needs to look at it accordingly.

**The Assertion that Existence and Interdependence are synonyms**

Generally, the way that existence and interdependence refer to the same meaning is like the explanation above, in the context of the etymology. Yet, within our own (Buddhist) traditions of philosophical tenets the Mādhyamika explicitly state it the following manner.

The *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* states:

That which originates in dependence  
Is taught to be emptiness.  
This itself is dependent imputation  
And so the path of the Middle Way. [XXIV.18]

¹⁵² Tibetan reference: mngon rgyan 'grel ba mdo lugs ma - p.335, Shri Diwakar Publications  
¹⁵³ Tibetan reference: *Bodhicharyāvatāra, Wisdom Chapter, Verse 25*  
¹⁵⁴ Tibetan reference: *phyag chen smon lam* - Verse 6-11
Apart from what originates dependently,
There are no phenomena at all.
Therefore, apart from emptiness,
There are no phenomena at all. [XXIV.19]

It is explained that something being a phenomenon, implies that it is dependently originated,
and being dependently originated implies that it. Is empty by nature.

**Asserting interdependent origination as the essence of both truths:**

This dependent arising abides in the nature of both truths. The yogi needs to cultivate
those individually: Therefore, the ultimate essence of dependent origination is explained to be
endowed with sixteen features, like being permanent, life-less, free from a life force and so
forth, and as being free from mental construction in this very Sutra.

Likewise, because the world is ignorant concerning relative dependent origination it is
explained in this very sutra in this way: Relative dependent origination is endowed with five
characteristics. These five clear away the misunderstandings which are based on ideas that this
world, including the aggregates, etc., originated without a cause, originated from a discordant
cause and imaginarly constructed characteristics of those.

The mentioned five characteristics are:

1. Origination from having causes
2. Origination from causes which are impermanent and plural
3. Origination without having a self
4. Origination from potent conditions
5. Origination from conditions which do not have an agent

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155 **Tibetan Reference: Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, page 15, Tengyur section: Madhyamaka (tsa)**

156 The 16 features of the ultimate nature of dependent arising are that it is permanent, life-less, free from a life-force, exactly how it is, unmistakan, unborn, not originated, uncreated, uncompounded, beginning-less, non-referential, peace, fearless, irremovable, inexhaustible, not utterly pacified.
The Bhagavan, summarizing the characteristics of dependent arising, said: "This is the result of exactly those conditions. Whether a Tathāgata has come or not, this suchness of all phenomena always abides." And the explanation of these words is given in this very sutra.

This relative interdependence has two aspects: inner and outer interdependence. Inner interdependence is explained extensively in the Abhidharma and the like, with assertions of it being momentary, temporary, having connections etc. Even though there are a few contradictory explanations regarding those, because all come down to the profound essential point of dependent origination, their meaning doesn't show great discrepancies.

*This Presentation of dependent origination is a particularity of Buddhism*

This presentation of dependent origination is a particularity which is specific for Buddhists. Therefore, no other philosophical tenet system acceptance its presentation. The Mahāpanḍita Shākya Chokden\(^{157}\) said:

> By the explanation of interdependent origination
> Even to the worldly heretics,
> it becomes extremely illogical for something to exists,
> since a result is explained to originate from a cause.

Apart from those asserting arising without a cause, other non-Buddhists understand that results arise from causes. Therefore, they are said to understand and accept interdependence. But that is not an explanation applied to the meaning of this text. Saying, "those asserting arising without a cause" refers to "not arising from an obscure cause like previous actions, Ishvara, etc." They accept that arising does not happen from just anything because if something is an entity it implies that it arose from its own causes. Likewise, a Lokāyata teacher\(^{158}\) said:

> From the unconscious elements
> that which is conscious arises.
> Because it arises, it is like the power to intoxicate

\(^{157}\) Wyl. shākya mchog ldan (1428-1507)

\(^{158}\) Lokāyata is a synonym for the Indian philosophical school of the Cārvāka.
And fire coming from fire crystals.\textsuperscript{159}

Furthermore, merely asserting that results arise from causes is not sufficient as the meaning of interdependence. Even though outsiders might be said to understand and accept that, it is evident that they do not consider the meaning of interdependence as taught by the teacher.

Further, a great person states in the \textit{sTong thun bskal bzang mig 'byed}\textsuperscript{160}: “This common doctrine, the syllogism of interdependence, doesn't need to be proven because, apart from those asserting an entity to arise causelessly, it has already been established in the perspective of others.”\textsuperscript{161} Khedrub Je\textsuperscript{162} explained the way in which the non-Buddhists understand and subsequently accept interdependence based on the \textit{mTong thun} is not sufficient either. The implied meaning of the \textit{sTong thun} is as follows: It means that the non/Buddhists, too, have come to 'establish by accepting' the terminology of interdependence. What they teach in this context, the meaning of interdependence, is not the meaning which is established by valid cognition. Here they are opponents who incorrectly engage in with interdependence. Interdependence as it needs to be understood here [in our context] is referring to “the result of merely these [very] conditions. The non-Buddhist opponents do not understand that.

\textit{The particularities of interdependence}

Dependent arising is explained to have many profound particularities. Those may be applied to each of the two truths: If one discusses them in terms of the ultimate, the profound particularities of that [interdependent origination] and its nature - being free from conceptual elaboration - are to be taught. Therefore, [the ultimate aspect of dependent arising] is explained in line with the Bhagavan's teaching on the sixteen particularities as mentioned above, in the

\textsuperscript{159} Tibetan Reference: cited in the \textit{Madhyamakahridaya-karika}, page 51, Tengyur section: Madhyamaka (dza)

\textsuperscript{160} bskal bzang mig 'byed stong thun chen mo (Opening the Eyes of the Fortunate, the Great Quintessential Expositions)

\textsuperscript{161} Tibetan reference: \textit{stong thun}, page 126 (na), \textit{Collected Works/Tashi Lhünpa} (bkra shis lhun po dgon pa)

\textsuperscript{162} refers to Khedrubje Gelek Pelzang (mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang, 1385-1438)
context of the definition, where he said: "Who sees dependent arising as a nature which is permanent, life-less, without a life force, …, and not utterly pacified?"\textsuperscript{163}

And if one likewise elaborates on the profound suchness of the relative, it is as explained in the Šāstra: "How is it profound? See it as profound because of 1. a profound cause, 2. profound characteristics, 3. profound arising, 4. profound abiding, and 5. profound origination."\textsuperscript{164}

The establishment of the first: Relative interdependence has a profound cause because phenomena are established by specific conditions, while they are not without a cause, don't have discordant causes, like Īśvara, and have no creator.

Establishment of the second: Relative interdependence has profound characteristics because, even though being empty of a self of person, interdependence appears as if that self existed.

Establishment of the third: Relative interdependence is profound in terms of arising because phenomena depend on other causes and conditions. But even though [phenomena] originate distinctively, they are not created by causes and conditions with a preceding intention to give rise to them.

Establishment of the fourth: Relative interdependence is characterized by profound abiding because even though phenomena cease each moment, they appear as if they would abide.

Establishment of the fifth: Relative interdependence is characterized by profound origination because, even though phenomena originate from their own causes, if one examines the manner of origination from the four extremes, like the origination from self, other, etc., origination can hardly be comprehended.

\textsuperscript{163} The sixteen features were not mentioned in the definition, but in the context of how interdependent origination is identified as the essence of the two truths. See page 54.

\textsuperscript{164} Tibetan reference: Abhidharma-samuccaya - Cittamātra (ri)
The Essential Meaning

Like that, to correctly see the meaning of dependent arising which is free from the two extremes, eternalism and nihilism, in terms of considering both truths, is called "to see [inter-]dependent arising". And through seeing and understanding it like that, one knows the way to practice the path which is the unity of method and wisdom since one is free from superimposition and denigration. And to practice what one has come to know is called "seeing the Dharma". By practicing the path like that one gradually abandons the discordant factors, the obscurations. By gradually obtaining and seeing and actualizing the results the Dharma is seen. By seeing and actualizing the phenomena of the path in this way, one 'sees the Buddha'. This refers to seeing and manifesting the dharmakāya of complete and perfect Buddhahood. Like this the essential meaning should be known.

Sutra Commentaries

Even though the Rice Seedling Sutra is very famous, not so many Indian commentaries are available. The most detailed commentary of it is the Śālistamba-mahāyāna-sūtra-ṭīkā in 12000 sections, composed by Nagarjuna. A compendium in verse of this Sutra which was composed by the Noble One is also available. Both of these can be found in the Tengyur section concerned with sutra commentaries up to volume ji. Further, there is a less elaborate commentary by Pandita Kamalashila. The latter is very much in accord with the understanding of both, Madhyamaka and Chittamatra, and presents a good grasp of the sutra's meaning. Therefore, it is clearly of great importance for beginners. This as well can be found in the Tengyur until volume (ji).

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165 Derge Tengyur: mdo 'grel (ngi) 215, Location: ff. 20v-55v
166 The alternative title brgya phrag bcu gnyid pa nyid describes the length of the text, most frequently this would apply to the number of verses, but here we are concerned with prose. (Schöning, p.68)
167 Śālistambakarika, Derge Tengyur: mdo 'grel (ngi) 2015, Location: ff. 18r-20v
168 For more information on these two texts and the controversy of their authorship see Schöning, Chapter 3
169 Derge Tengyur: mdo 'grel (ji) 218, location: ff. 145v-163r
The commentary An Adornment to the ears of Those with Clear Minds

I composed the handwritten manuscript of this commentary in my own room in the Delhi Monastery\textsuperscript{170} while I was teaching [the Sutra] from 22nd February 2007 to 15th March. But for many years my notebook remained untended. In great voluntary effort, Lopon Karma Lekshe Gyatso copied that manuscript in \textit{Uchen} script later.

We recently obtained the opportunity to publish this commentary after inputting it into the computer and having printed a fine sample. Therefore, I would like to extend my extreme gratitude to the Venerable Lekshe Gyatso.

This commentary is based on the very commentary which was composed by the Bodhisattva Pandita Kamalashila. I have made the literary style of the Indian commentary fit stylistic demands of Tibetan. Apart from having composed the commentary based on the modern art of composition, it doesn't contain explanations made up by me or others, or refuting and establishing elaborations. Furthermore, the other two commentaries are explained considering the declarations of the \textit{Mādhyamika}, but because this commentary of Kamalashila reflects the common understanding of \textit{Madhyamaka} and \textit{Chittamatra}, its scope is broader. Therefore, apart from pretending to clarify it a little bit, I have employed any methods of explanation or alternation.

"The path of dependent arising occupies the space of sky. It is the sphere in which supreme beings experience entities. Just being inclined to that direction by having seen this side, the yogi has to be considered to be of great fortune."

This has been manually written by Sempa Dorje in his own room in the Delhi Monastery on the auspicious day or 3rd December 2016.

May auspiciousness prevail!

\textsuperscript{170} Karmapa International Buddhist Institute, Delhi, India
The Commentary: Seeing Interdependent Arising, the Dharma, and the Buddha

The Title

[The title is:] Seeing Dependent arising, the Dharma, and the Buddha: A commentary on the Ārya Śālistamba-Sūtra171 (The Noble Rice Seedling Sūtra).

The Author’s Homage

With my three doors I respectfully prostrate to the feet of the Guru and the Supreme Deity who are indivisible.

They have churned the ocean of the two172 accumulations for incalculable eons, have created oceans of pure lands for incalculable lifetimes. In an ocean-like manner they are Victors in incalculable lands. I bow down to the ocean-like power of incalculable supreme teachers.

When the supreme teachers, the thousand sun rays, appear, from the white glad oceans of disciples being the fields where ripened crops sway. I will elaborate on dependent origination, the Rice Seedling Sūtra.173

The Main Text

First, there are four topics to the explanation of the sūtra's meaning: 1. the title, 2. the translator's homage, 3. the main text, and 4. the conclusion. The first two have already been considered. In the third topic, the main text, I will explain this Sūtra in five sections,

172 Transl.: gnyi is the old spelling of gnys so that a 'brel sgra can be connected.
173 SST: gang gis dngos po rten 'byung bstan pa yis_/yang dag mchog dang mchog min bka' stsal pa/_chos kyi rgyal po de la phyag 'tshal te/_/sA lu ljang pa'i don ni ci nus bshad/ Kamalaśīla's verse of homage and his pledge to compose are shorter and much less poetic then Sempa Dorje's.
according to the instruction of the past sage:174 3.1. the summary, 3.2. the purpose, 3.3. the meaning of the words, 3.4. the connections, and 3.5. the reply to objections.175

The Summary

This Sūtra's summary should be understood in seven topics: First - the introduction, second - introduction to the discussion, third - the subject which is to be comprehended, fourth - comprehension, fifth - the result of comprehension, sixth - how that should be comprehended, seventh - the necessity for teaching this Sūtra.176

The Introduction177

This is expressed by the passage that goes from "Thus have I heard at one time. …"178 [1.2.] until "…with a great many Bodhisattva mahāsattvas." [1.2]

The Introduction to the Discussion

This is expressed by the passage that goes from "At that time, venerable Śāriputra went…” [1.2] until "…How does one see the Buddha by seeing the Dharma?" [1.3]

174 Transl.: This refers to the five element in composing a sūtra commentary as outlined by the "past sage" Vasubhandu in the Vyākhyaśāstra. See: Schöning, 49. See "Introduction by the Author" for the connection between the Vyākhyaśāstra, the Tikā, and the blo gsal rna ba'i rgyan with regard to the structure. SST: doesn't outline the first level of the commentary, but goes straight into the five-fold structure.

175 SST: same order of the five-fold structure mdo sde 'chad par 'dod pas thog mar thams cad du bsdzus pa'i don dang*/ tshig gi don dang*/ mtsams sbyar ba dang*/ brgal ba'i lan brjod par bya'ov In the manuscript the tshigs after dang are not visible. Do I have to mention these minute corrections?

176 Transl.: A misspelling in the Tibetan, which I clarified with Prof. Sempa Dorje: instead of mdo 'di dgongs pa gang gi don du bshad pa it is supposed to read mdo 'di dgos pa gang gi don du bshad pa.

177 SST: Kamalasila doesn't indicate the passages in the Sutra but mentions the function of the passages. For example: 1.1 The Prologue - In that [connection], the prologue is the cause of the sūtra occurring; that, moreover, is always stated by the compiler, in order to induce belief in one. (Schöning, 194)

178 I will use the translation published by the 84 000 project whenever the Śālistamba-Sūtra is quoted in the commentary, unless marked differently. I will mark each passage with the paragraph numbers given in the translation.
The Subject which is to be Comprehended

This is expressed by the passage that goes from "The Bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya then replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, …" [1.4] until "…This is what the Bhagavān has called the Dharma". [1.5] This [passage] teaches dependent arising in its forward and reverse\textsuperscript{179} progression. Since these [two progressions] should be comprehended by discriminating wisdom, it is called "that which is to be comprehended."

Suchness of total affliction—the characteristics of afflicted emotions, karma and life—and suchness of complete purification—characteristics of the reverse progression of dependent arising—are the main objects.\textsuperscript{180} Therefore, they are the main topics which are to be understood here by these [lines].\textsuperscript{181}

Comprehension

This is expressed by the passage from "What is the Dharma?" [1.6] until "is what the Bhagavān has called the Dharma." [1.6] That is the very path to understanding the suchness of the above mentioned thorough affliction and the suchness of complete purification. Since it is the path to the comprehension suchness, this 'dharma' is comprehension.\textsuperscript{182}

The Result of Comprehension

The result of comprehension is also two-fold—the surpassable and the unsurpassable. The surpassable results are expressed by the 'Dharma'. They refer to the four results of the path of the Shravaka and Pratyekabuddhas and so forth.\textsuperscript{183} The unsurpassable result is

\textsuperscript{179} SST: lugs su mi 'byung ba vs. PSD lugs las ldog pa
\textsuperscript{180} SST: very similar, only slight changes in wording. go na vs. PSD go na nyid
\textsuperscript{181} SST: no summarizing last sentence: PSD uses this like a conclusion sentence of a paragraph, i.e. might be influenced by academic writing style.
\textsuperscript{182} SST: very similar, only slight changes in wording.
\textsuperscript{183} Transl.: The four results of the path refer to:
complete and perfect Buddhahood. This is expressed by saying [1.7.] "Who is the Bhagavān Buddha?" and so on.\textsuperscript{184}

**How that Should Be Comprehended**

How should one understand dependent arising in its forward and reverse progression? It should be understood in line with how it is explained in the Ārya-saṃdhi-nirmocana-sūtra:

"Those should be understood as ultimately being without nature and relatively performing functions."\textsuperscript{185} This is also the case since [dependent arising] is taught as the method for obtaining the two types of results of comprehension.

**The Necessity for Teaching this Sūtra\textsuperscript{186}**

The necessity for this Sūtra is to dispel the obscurations of all disciples and to make them enter the path towards non-abiding nirvana. What is this path towards non-abiding nirvana? It is the unity of the Bodhisattva's wisdom and great compassion, because through wisdom one does not fall into samsara, and through compassion one doesn't abandon samsara or fall into the sphere of nirvana, which is peace.\textsuperscript{187}

**The Purpose**

The necessity is as explained above in the context of the summary. And in particular [the objective] is that the disciples, the Bodhisattvas for whom this Sūtra was taught, will be undeluded regarding the path and levels. The path to achieving this is based on the two

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\textsuperscript{184} SST: de gnyis kyis ni blang bar bya ba'i yan lag kho na thabs dang bcas pa bstan to// Those two indicate the reality that is to be acquired together with the method. (Schöning 196)

\textsuperscript{185} Tibetan reference: saṃdhi-nirmocana-sūtra

\textsuperscript{186} Translator' note: The seventh point was mentioned previously as, 'the intent with which this sutra was taught' but the heading of the according section is 'the objection' which might be a mistake.

\textsuperscript{187} SST: D3/292-1-3: + the bodhisattva who abides in dependent arising, in order to increase with discriminating insight and to have the great compassion arise for beings who are bewildered and enter [samsara], enters the path of nirvana that is not clung to/dwelled in; [that] is the purpose for that [sutra]. Because by that path also the two obscurations of bodhisattva are easily completely removed, that too is the purpose. (Schöning, 198)
modes of dependent arising. Based on that they can ultimately easily rid themselves of the two obscurations. The ultimate objective is Buddhahood. The meaning of the words, providing the connections, and the reply to objections will be relevant when explaining the actual text, and therefore, I will spell them out in the according context.

The sequential explanation of 'The Meaning of the Words'

The Introduction

"Thus" – This was placed there by the compiler at the council of those who compiled the Buddha's teachings. Having been asked to compile it, the qualified compiler said "thus" which indicates the entire Sūtra which is to follow.\textsuperscript{188} Further, by this expression, [suspicions for] assumptions and omissions with regard to that which was to be explained were rejected.\textsuperscript{189}

"have I heard" – [This means:] "I directly heard it, and it was not transmitted from one who heard it to someone else. Further, I have completely heard it and I have not directly realized it [myself], because it is impossible that anyone, but the Buddha independently realizes such meaning." This causes trust. If one explains a topic which is otherwise impossible, trust will not come about.

"At one time"—"time" appears as \textit{samaye}\textsuperscript{190} in the Indian manuscripts. That can mean both time and gathered audience. Therefore, it refers to: "The occasion at one time when the above mentioned \textbf{1250} monks etc. assembled around the teacher to listen to the Dharma." It does not refer to the occasions of \textit{any} times and assemblies. A precious Sūtra like

\textsuperscript{188} SST: shorter, less explicit

\textsuperscript{189} Tibetan note: Here both faults of 'assumptions and omissions', \textit{i.e.} the assumptions which are mistakes because of not being conscientious, and the omissions which means to leave expressions out because of an unclear memory, are dispersed.

\textsuperscript{190} T: locative singular of \textit{samaya} (m) which has a range of meanings: coming together, convention, agreement, treaty, appointment, stipulation, oath, concurrence of circumstances, right moment, time, leisure, law, rule and many more (Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English dictionary). The term \textit{samaya} is thus not restricted to the meaning of "time" as we understand the Tibetan \textit{dus}.  

62
that was not heard at all times and by all assemblies. Saying "one time" points out that it is extremely hard/rare to hear this [Sūtra].

"The Bhagavān"191—Because he defeated the four Maras, he is the conqueror. This is reflected in the Sanskrit manuscripts as "Bhagavān." 'Bhag' here can mean both, the conqueror and the supreme sovereign.

How can [the term bhagavān] be understood in the light of the second, the supreme sovereign?

1. He is the sovereign in terms of outshines others.
2. [He is sovereign in terms of] having mastered the dharmas of the ten powers192, etc.
3. [He is sovereign in terms of] having mastered the nature of mirror-like primordial wisdom, the form-bodies.
4. Glorious means that he possesses the space-like treasure of all phenomena, the nature of primordial wisdom of equality.
5. Mastery in primordial wisdom refers to possessing discriminating primordial wisdom. Therefore, it is the mastery regarding seeing at all times all the entirety of phenomena, and how phenomena are, names, characteristics, etc.
6. Mastery in perfected diligence refers to the nature of all-accomplishing wisdom. This is the mastery in terms of accomplishing the entire benefit of those to be tamed—who are equal to space—spontaneously without effort without delay.

And because he is the sovereign in these six points he is called "Bhagavān—the transcendent perfect conqueror.

Likewise, it is as expressed by saying:

The complete sovereign entails
perfect dharma, renown, supremacy,

191 literally: "transcendent perfect conquerer."
192 that are: see dharmathavibhangha
primordial wisdom and diligence.\textsuperscript{193}

"Rājagrha" - This is a specific village. It is the name of the village which is famous for the fact that it was previously observed there that non-human beings did not harm the householders which bore the name of the king, so they were named [after the king].\textsuperscript{194}

Because Rājagrha is a big village, it doesn't clarify where [the Bhagavan] exactly stayed. So, in order to clarify the particular place where stayed it says: "Vulture Peak Mountain" It is called Vulture Peak mountain since there is a bulky peak of a mountain the shape of which is like a vulture sitting on the ground.\textsuperscript{195}

By mentioning these two places, it is shown that he benefitted all—the householders and monastics. He benefitted the world and taught the perfect benefit for self and other.

"saṅgha of … bhikṣus" In the Sanskrit manuscripts, "bhikṣu" is used for monks. That applies to someone who has "fallen," "extinguished," "conquered," "abides in peace," is "worshipped," "enticing," "uplifting" etc. They are called "bhikṣu" because they beg for food, adopt virtue and abide in peace. Likewise, it is said in a Sūtra: "Because they completely exhausted afflictions, take up virtue, beg for food, abide in peace, engage in the path and are enticing, they are Bikshus."\textsuperscript{196}

"saṅgha"—Those pursuing the virtuous are unshakable by the Maras and hostile forces. Since they abide in an assembly which perfectly observes faith, the trainings, the path and the rules, they are unaffected by those [maras] and thus they are the saṅgha—those pursuing the virtuous.\textsuperscript{197}

\textsuperscript{193} Tibetan Note: Salistamba-tika by Kamalashila, page 147/na, Sutra commentaries, section ji, Tengyur.
\textsuperscript{194} Rājagrha means "house of the king" or "family of the king".
\textsuperscript{195} Tibetan Note: Further regarding "Vulture Peak mountain": This Sutra is said to be difficult to understand, since it is a high teaching. This "mountain" is taught to be unshakable by the winds of non-Buddhists, because it is unwavering. Salistamba-tika by Kamalashila, page 147/na, Sutra commentaries, section ji, Tengyur.
\textsuperscript{196} Tibetan Note: dge slong la rab gce'i mdo (bhikṣupriya sutra), page 126/ba, sa section, Kangyur
\textsuperscript{197} Tibetan Note: dge 'dun rjes dran mdo 'grel (samghanusmrti), page 16/na, ngi section, Tengyur; Asanga
"great"—This applies amongst other things to great power, great qualities, and the particularity of number. [The members of the saṅgha] have defeated the side of the afflicting emotions. And they are enriched by the qualities of scripture and realization of the three trainings—the training in discipline, [the training in meditative absorption, and the training in wisdom]. And the specific, [the saṅgha is called "great" because they] number 1250.

From that, the "1250" is explained in the following way: The Buddha has tamed Uravelā Kāśyapa with his retinue of 500; Naḍī Kāśyapa with his retinue of 250; Gayā Kāśyapa with his retinue of 250; and the noble Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana together with their retinue of 250. Together with his early retinue of [these] 1250 bhikṣus the Buddha stayed at Vulture Peak Mountain, Rājagrha.

Why did Śrāvakas abide within the retinue to which this Mahāyāna Sūtra was taught? Why are their names mentioned first?

1. It is to induce faith towards those who have properly compiled this Sūtra.
2. [It is] in order to show that the Śrāvakas, too, are to enter the Mahāyāna.
3. Based on having tamed the chief followers, the other followers also enter the Mahāyāna.
4. This path of meditating on dependent arising is in common with the Śrāvakas.

Therefore, it is presented in this way. Why does it speak of the Śrāvaka saṅgha first? It is thus expressed because:

1. It is said that the Śrāvakas, having devoted themselves to their own benefit, always attend the Bhagavān,
2. and because it is taught that one needs to pay respect to monastics.
It is said here, that the retinue of Bodhisattvas totally outnumbered the retinue of Śrāvakas, because they were the main audience here in the context of teaching this Mahāyāna Sūtra. Those are called "Bodhisattvas" [heroes of the enlightened mind], because they have a heroic mind set towards enlightenment. The Śrāvakas, too, have a heroic mind-set towards their own enlightenment. So, in order to distinguish the two the [Bodhisattvas] are called Mahāsattvas [i.e. great beings].

They are called "Mahāsattvas," because they are endowed with seven types of greatness:

1. The greatness of their Dharma: This refers to the 8000 lines Prajnaparamita etc.
2. The greatness of their Bodhicitta: They give rise to the intention towards unsurpassable perfect enlightenment.
3. The greatness of their inclination: They are inclined towards the profound and vast dharma.
4. [The greatness of their motivation:] They intend to benefit and bring happiness for all sentient beings.
5. The greatness of their accumulation: They gather the immeasurable accumulation of merit and wisdom.
6. The greatness in terms of time: they practice to attain enlightenment for three incalculable eons.
7. The greatness of their authentic accomplishment: They will be endowed with the authentic accomplishment of the result—unsurpassable, authentic, perfect enlightenment.
"he stayed together with"—Who stayed, at which time, together with whom?

There are three aspects to staying: staying in a code of conduct, staying and expounding the Dharma, and staying in complete absorption. To stay perfectly means to abide in the characteristics of Brahmanic abodes, to abide by the characteristics of divine abodes, and to abide by the characteristics of the abodes of noble beings. This concludes the introduction, the context for the Sūtra.

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198 Here the term bzhugs is translated as 'stayed', but the usage of 'staying' doesn't cover the whole range of meaning. Therefore, I have to alternate between 'staying' and 'abiding' in the translation.

Introduction to the Discussion

'At that time,'—It is the time at which the Bhagavān stayed together with the mandala of his retinue as explained above. It refers to staying in the three ways [mentioned above].

'venerable Śāriputra'—From the Supreme Pair this is Śāriputra, the foremost in wisdom. Here 'Śāriputra' is the name given after his mother's name. His real name is 'Upatisya', and that was his name when he stayed at home.

'venerable Śāriputra went to the place frequented by the Bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya'—'Bodhisattva' and 'mahāsattva' are as explained above. After 'Maitreya' first gave rise to the bodhicitta, he gained mastery in the samadhi of loving kindness. He received the prediction that he would attain enlightenment through the characteristics attained by this mastery. Subsequently, he was named [Maitreya].

'the place frequented by the Maitreya'—This is the place where people were walking about later on, in order to come to an understanding of this dharma.

'to'—This indicates the direction he went.

'went'—This indicates that, having gone there, he arrived there.

'exchanged courtesies'—This summarizes the conversation which arouses supreme delight. Because it is an expression of authentic practice, it brings total joy. Since both the Bodhisattva and the renunciate are to be respected, they exchange courtesies with each other. However, they don't prostrate etc. to each other.

'upon meeting each other'—This refers to coming together from not very far away.

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\*mchog zung gnis refers to the two main disciples of the Buddha, Shariputra and Maudgaliyana. Shariputra is called 'supreme' as he is known for his supreme wisdom, and Maudgaliyana is called 'supreme' as he is known for his supreme magical displays.\*
'they both sat down on a flat rock'—At that time, a flat stone was close by. [Śāriputra and Maitreya] intended to come to an understanding of the dharma. They did not do so on a special seat.

'then'—This indicates what follows that time.

The noble Śāriputra is the supreme of all who possess wisdom. And Maitrya is extremely close to enlightenment. Therefore, here, there is nobody else who elaborates on the question.

'here today'—'today' refers to that which directly preceded the present moment. 'Here' refers to 'us, this assembly which has come together in order to listen to the dharma here at Vulture Peak Mountain and at this place'.

'the Bhagavān, gazing at a rice seedling'—At that time the teacher beheld with his eyes the rice seedlings, the crops of the Salu rice on the fields of Rājagṛha. How did he behold them? He saw that there is no distinction between outer and inner dependent arising, because both are the same in being self-less and dependent on causes and conditions.

'(gaz)-ing'—This is a particle201 which leads to what comes below.

Now, the time had come to pronounce this dharma-teaching to the assembled retinue headed by the bikshus, and the circumstances were right to explain it to the assembly. He spoke this Sūtra to [his disciples]. How did he teach it? [The Buddha said:] `

'Bhiksus, whoever sees dependent arising sees the Dharma. Whoever sees the Dharma sees the Buddha.' Having said this, the Bhagavān fell silent."

Why did the Bhagavān fall silent? Someone like me is not able to know the thoughts of the Bhagavān, but if I'm to share what I have considered:

201 in Tibetan this is a lhag bcas kyi sgra, a continuative particle.
1) He did so in order to abandon the pride of any monk who was proudly thinking: 'I have understood by being told just the beginning.'

2) He did so in order to expressed the greatness [of what he had said], since the Bodhisattvas would expound the intended meaning of the Sūtra's extremely profound profoundness.

3) And by explaining the meaning of the extremely profound Sūtra, they would thoroughly give the necessity for teaching this Sūtra as well.

'Maitreya, what is the meaning of this aphorism spoken by the Sugata?'

The questions are what the covert intention and the implied meaning are. The Bhagavān has taught the Dharma by means of the four covert intentions and the four implied meanings. The four covert intentions are: 1) the covert intention regarding the entrance, 2) the covert intention regarding the characteristics, 3) the covert intention regarding the antidote, and 4) the covert intention regarding interpretation. And the four implications are: 1) the implication of equality, 2) the implication of another meaning, 3) the implication of another time, and 4) the implication of another individual.

Does Śāriputra ask: 'I have perceived a certain contradiction in the above mentioned Sūtra by the Buddha. Is it a Sūtra with a covert intention or implication?' Śāriputra thought: "'Dependent arising' refers to ignorance and so forth - cause and effect, and defiled phenomena. 'Dharma' refers to the undefiled paths and uncompounded phenomena, Nirvana etc. Therefore, 'Buddha' refers to Buddha-hood which is brought about by the undefiled Dharma. Because all of these have different natures from each other, how will one see the dharma by seeing this dependent arising which is different [than the Dharma]? How will one see the Buddha by seeing this dharma which is different than the Buddha? Just as, for
example, one won't see sound by seeing form. Likewise, how will one see the dharma by seeing dependent arising, as mentioned above, since they have different natures, just as form and sound?" And [Śāriputra] had doubts about how [these three] were to be understood at that time thinking: "If here dependent arising, dharma, and Buddha are not in accord to my above mentioned understanding, what is their alternative meaning?" Therefore, he asked: "What is dependent arising? What is the Dharma? What is the Buddha?"

He asked: "And if dependent arising, the dharma etc., are not as I have identified them above, according to this Sūtra and this context, how does one see the Dharma by seeing dependent arising? How does one see the Buddha by seeing the Dharma?" They were the questions. And with that, the introduction to the discussion was given.
Teaching the nature of topics which should be completely comprehended

The question is: 'What are the topics that should be thoroughly comprehended here in this context? What are the convert intention and the implied meaning of the Bhagavan?'

'by the Bhagavan'—[These] are words of respect or veneration.

'The Lord of Dharma'—This implies that he has gained mastery over all dharmas. Because he is the lord of dharma, the Bhagavan has analysed and mastered all dharmas. Therefore, all these words are to be taken as authentic. This is stated in order to establish him has the Lord of Dharma.

'the Omniscient One'—This means that because he is the Omniscient One he is completely and authentically accomplished in the abiding mode of all phenomena. Therefore, since the teacher doesn't have any confusion, he proclaimed, 'whoever sees dependent arising…'

[Maitreya] elucidated: These lines are in accord with dependent arising and in forward progression.

'That is to say, ignorance causes formations.'—Because of the specific power of ignorance etc., the resultant entity arises definitely from the cause. Based on the cause the result which is related to it will arise. That is dependent arising.

Furthermore, in terms of inner interdependence which perpetuates samsara, that which has become cause and result does not exist as something else, different from ignorance and so forth. They are nothing else than [cause and result]. The definition of ignorance etc. will be explained below.

'heap of suffering'—This means a lot of suffering

203 Tibetan Note: 'definitely' means without interference, without obstacle, undoubtedly.
'great'—It is called 'great' because there are many causes and many different kinds and because it exists since beginning-less time.

The cessation of ignorance etc. is also explained as dependent arising here. It is valid to ask how that is dependent arising. Since something that has ceased does not exist as an entity, the connection of cause and result is not established here. Nevertheless 'ignorance and so forth cease,' is not a non-affirming negation. Well, what is it then? Like the recipient recovers by taking the medicine, by the power of cultivating the paths, a context which opposes ignorance comes about. The 'arising of knowledge' is referred to as 'cessation of ignorance.' This 'cessation of ignorance' here, is a statement which expresses an implicative negation. Therefore, alongside with refuting the object of refutation itself, the arising of another phenomenon, the opposite of ignorance, knowledge is implied.

Formations and so forth should be understood likewise. The arising of a context which opposes formation is called 'cessation of formation'.

Therefore, interdependence in forward progression is compiled from the perspective of affliction. This is taught to free those from Samsara who are ignorant regarding their involvement in it. And dependent arising in reverse progression constitutes the perspective of complete purification. This is taught in order to free those from Samsara who are ignorant regarding the stages of reversing it.

From the [twelve links] 1) the first three, ignorance and so forth are the links which impel samsara, 2) name and form, the six sense sources, contact, and sensation are the impelled links, 3) craving, appropriation, and becoming are the links which cause establishment, 4) birth is the link of establishment, and 5) old-age, death, and so forth are the link of shortcomings.

Regarding those: By teaching the links which impel samsara the long-term causes are taught. By teaching the links which cause establishment the proximate causes are taught.
If these two are lacking, birth won't be established. Therefore, these are explained as the two [types of] causes.

By the 'karma' which arises from the cause (or ability) of ignorance consciousness is sullied. Thus, the birth which will come about in the future is impelled. Then, because that 'karma' is urged forth and nourished by craving and appropriation, birth will be established from becoming. Something impels something and that which has been impelled establishes something. And from that all shortcomings are certain to originate. Therefore, the twelve links are definite—no less, no more.

If those [twelve links] are set forth as aspects of suffering and origination it should be understood according to the following quote:

The first, eight, and ninth are afflictions,  
the second and tenth are karma,  
the remaining seven are suffering.\(^{204}\)

According to others there are three aspects of delusion which delude regarding the engagement with Samsara. The three aspects are the delusion with regard to the past, the delusion with regard to the future and the delusion with regard to the present entity. The antidote to those, dependent arising, has three according sections, or parts. The teacher has explained it in this way:

1. Regarding the past—1. ignorance, and 2. Formation
2. Regarding the future—1. birth, and 2. aging and death
3. Regarding the present—1. consciousness, 2. name and form, 3. the six sense sources, 4. contact, 5. sensation, 6. craving, 7. appropriation, and 8. becoming.

Some might wonder: "This doesn't present a cause for ignorance. Therefore, Samsara turns out to have a beginning. Ignorance also becomes causeless." That is not logical. If

\(^{204}\) Tibetan Note: Nagarjuna, *Heart of Dependent Arising*, page 146/\(ba\), verse 2/\(dbu\ ma\), section tsa, Kangyur.
ignorance needs another cause, which is not of the same type, that cause will need another cause again. It will be an infinite regress. And it is not as if ignorance becomes causeless. [Ignorance] arose and arises from causes and condition of the same type which have continued since beginning-less time.

In the links other than ignorance, apart from merely conditions of the same type, also conditions of another type are included. But ignorance does not have a condition of another type.

In a few Sūtras, improper mental engagement or conceptual thinking are said to be the cause [for ignorance]. Nevertheless, the Sūtras teach that as the developed cause or the developing cause. They don’t teach that as the actual cause or the cause of a similar type. Therefore, the improper mental engagement and so forth are also by nature ignorance because it is improper engagement with the object. They are not different kinds or contradictory. Therefore, Samsara doesn't become beginning-less. It is just like a seed. Because one accepts that a sprout comes from the condition of a seed, the seed doesn't come to have a beginning and isn't causeless.

Setting forth thorough comprehension

It says "What is the Dharma?" Here the 'dharma' has again two aspects - the dharma of which is practiced and the dharma which pertains to the result.

The dharma that is to be practiced refers to the eight-fold noble path. That is what is to be thoroughly comprehended here. The dharma of the result has two further aspects due to the specifics of compounded and uncompounded phenomena.

205 Salistamba-tika by Kamalashila, page 150/na, Sutra commentary, section ji, Tengyur
The results which pertain to compounded phenomena are the four results of virtuous conduct which are the nature of the path of complete liberation.\textsuperscript{206}

[The result which pertains to] uncompounded phenomena refers to nirvana which is characterized by having abandoned the afflicting emotions. Alternatively, that what is completely pure suchness is asserted to be nirvana here, because it is devoid of afflicting emotions.

The purpose for teaching the result in this context in order to be taught according to the progression outlined by the quote, "Through these very paths the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas will realize the result after having correctly cultivated the selflessness of person and phenomena." These are surpassable results.

What is the eightfold path of the noble ones, the dharma that is to be practiced? This is explained [in the next section]:

1. Right view is to correctly realize suchness exactly as it is.
2. Right thought\textsuperscript{207} is to correctly conceptualize and analyse that [view].
3. Right speech is to correctly explain that to others and words which forsake negativities.
4. Next, to abandon the wrong doing like killing etc., and having completely pure physical actions refers to right action.
5. Refraining from earning one's livelihood by means of 1. hypocrisy, 2. flattery, 3. hinting,\textsuperscript{208} 4. using force, and 5. seeking reward for a favor, one fully engages in completely pure actions of body and speech. That is right livelihood.

\textsuperscript{206} complete liberation from the two obscurations
\textsuperscript{207} While 84 000 translates yang dag pa'i rtog pa as "right intention" the commentary explains it in a way that "right thought" is more fitting. The difference in understanding is so vast that here I have to move away from the terminology of the 84 000 translation in light of the commentary.
\textsuperscript{208} praising the wealth of others in the hope to get it
6. Being genuinely enthusiastic about abandoning the remaining wrong-doings/faults is right effort.

7. Not forgetting suchness or the key points regarding what is to be rejected or adopted is right mindfulness.

8. Placing the mind one-pointedly on the object of focus in order to accomplish the further and further increasing of distinct qualities is right concentration. This is the eightfold noble path.

If this is the eightfold noble path, how do right speech etc. arise in meditative absorption on the path? How do these become the eightfold noble path?

There is no flaw. In the context when the practitioner rests in meditative absorption on the transcendental path, he abides without wavering on the object of self-awareness. Therefore, he abides inwardly endowed with the eightfold noble path. The essence of the path is wisdom; it has the nature of superior insight. Therefore, the practitioner possesses right view (1). Meditative absorption is congruent with remembering that [right view], thus he has right mindfulness (2). He has meditative concentration (3) and since that is by essence wisdom which perfectly distinguishes phenomena, he is endowed with right thought. (4) Since it is the inner expression which recognizes the ultimate meaning he possesses right speech. (5) Since his body abides in the seven-fold posture of Vairocana he possesses right action (6). He has right effort. (7) And since he is sustained by the nourishment of meditative concentration and the bliss of pliancy etc. he has right livelihood. (8) Therefore the practitioner is endowed with the eightfold [noble path].

When he rises from resting in this meditative absorption—during post meditation—the practitioner engages in the aspects which are connected to the outer conduct of right view.
etc. based on these causes. Therefore, those [aspects of the outer conduct] are called the eightfold noble path as well. They are the results of the [former].

The way those are considered factors [of the noble path]:

1. Here right view is the factor of determination because by that ascertains suchness, as it is experienced.

2. Right thought is the factor of making others understand because having rested the mind on the suchness of the object as it has been realized, one expresses it in words. This is as well called "the factor of taking care of others."

3. Right speech, right action, and right livelihood—are factors that make others develop trust. Respectively, they make others develop trust in the practitioner's view, discipline, and few and pure possessions.

   1. Further, through right speech which perfectly answers questions they will trust in the perfect view. This is the activity of speech.

   2. Right action relates to not doing wrong actions and maintaining right conduct. Therefore, they will trust in completely pure discipline. This is the activity of the body.

   3. Through right livelihood one justly strives for the conditions of livelihood, like clothes and so forth. Therefore, others will develop trust in having few and pure possessions. This has the nature of both physical and verbal action.

4. Through right effort—the afflictive obscurations of both the Śrāvakas and the Bodhisattvas are completely purified. Therefore, this is the factor of purification.

5. Right mindfulness—is the factor which totally purifies the related afflictive emotions which become dullness and agitation in the practitioner. Because of the close
application of mindfulness and investigating the right signs there will be no occasion of engaging/involvement with/in dullness, agitation etc.

6. Right concentration—is the factor of completely purifying all obscurations which obscure the accomplishment of special qualities, like miraculous displays, clairvoyance and so forth, because one manifests the qualities of clairvoyance and so forth through that [right concentration].

In this way they are respectively:

1. The factor of determining the meaning (1)
2. The factor of making others understand (2)
3. The factors of making others trust (3)
4. The factor of purifying the afflictive obscurations (1)
5. The factor of purifying the related afflictions (1)
6. The factor which makes one manifest qualities. (1)

Together the noble path has six special factors.

The Result of Comprehension

Here this result of comprehension entails the surpassable result and the unsurpassable result. From within the two ultimate results, first, the surpassable result is mentioned in the [passage of the] sutra above--"combined with the attainment of its results and nirvāṇa, is what the Bhagavān has called the Dharma." The explanation of this has already been included in the context of the Dharma.

Agreeing to explain the unsurpassable result, [Maitreya] answers [the presented] question "Who is the Bhagavān Buddha?" by saying, "A buddha, so-called because of comprehending all dharms…"

He is called Buddha because he directly perceives correctly in all aspects the entirety of phenomena as they are in their nature and extent, just like the seed of a amalaki plant
placed in the palm of one's hand. Therefore, since he has realized the meaning of all entities just as they are, he is called "buddha."

One might ask: "Does 'comprehending' here mean that it is achieved if one has a body and eyes, but not by something else?" That would be illogical. Not all phenomena are suitable as the object of the eyes, because one determines each object individually. How does one then comprehend? The answer is given by saying "with the wisdom eye of the noble ones." The agent is the Bhagavān Buddha.

With the wisdom eye of the noble ones - This is to say that [the Buddha] comprehends [the Dharma] with the undefiled wisdom eye of the noble ones, and not with a physical eye. The undefiled wisdom eye of a Buddha is the unsurpassable eye. Therefore, all dharmas are suitable to be the object of that [metaphorical eye].

body of Dharma - This teaches the cause. It means that the perfectly pure primordial wisdom or perfectly pure suchness will become the cause or support for all the Buddha's teachings, which are the body of Dharma. That is the cause for the unsurpassable wisdom eye. Because it teaches this it says "body of Dharma" here.

endowed with - This is to say that he comprehends with the wisdom eye which is endowed with the body of Dharma.

What does he comprehend? [He comprehends] "the dharmas of those still in training and those beyond training." The dharmas of those still in training are all trainings on the path of the noble ones like the path of accumulation, joining, and seeing the truth. [The dharmas of those] beyond training refer to the dharmas of the noble ones who abide in the result. This is just an illustration. He also [directly comprehends] the points of the knowables

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209 Here the 84000 translation is problematic as with the translation 'comprehending' wordplay of 'seeing with eyes' gets lost in the translation of the sutra.

210 According to Wayman other texts constantly use the word for seeing, but agree that it is not concrete seeing. Only the Sutra introduces the clarification of the wisdom eye/ eye of insight.
that are not included in the [dharmas of those] still in training and those who are beyond training; [he comprehends] the entirety of all dharmas.

How that should be comprehended

"One who sees dependent arising [...]" answers the question: "How should one understand dependent origination?" Here dependent arising should be understood in two ways—the relative and ultimate. Because, if one does so, both extremes of superimposition and denigration will be eliminated. Elsewhere this is explained as follows:

1) If one meditates having only understood the ultimate way, one will fall into the extreme of denigration, will abide within a nihilistic view and will exert oneself in the nirvana of the śrāvakas.

2) If one meditates having only understood the relative way there will be the following faults: one will fall into the extreme of superimposition, will fall into the extreme of eternalism, will not be liberated from existence, and fall into the extreme of existence.

3) Therefore, if one meditates with those two in union, having correctly understood the nature of both, one will enter the middle way which abstaining from the two extremes, and one will manifest the result, the level of unity which unites the two bodies of dharma and form.

How does one meditate having understood the ultimate way of dependent origination?

Regarding that: Ignorance [and the other links] have originated in dependence on conditions, just like illusions, reflections, and so forth. But things do not arise by their own nature even in the three times. That which has not arisen in the three times is the ultimate way
here. Accordingly, it is said: "Non-arisen phenomena are true phenomena, others are false."\textsuperscript{211}

It is the individual knowledge of the Buddhas because it is beyond all elaborations. The Bhagavān explained that all that expresses and that is expressed is only relative. In order to explain that it says "\textbf{On this point the Bhagavān said...}"

1) Dependent arising is \textbf{constant}, because it is explained to be an unborn phenomenon at all times as such (Skt. \textit{satatasamitam}). Further, by this it is explained that [dependent arising] is unchanging because ultimately it is of one taste in the three times.

2) Someone may ask: "If it is like that, is this similar to the [position of the] proponents of a self?" In order to show that this is not the case it says, "\textbf{without life force}" because it is not the nature of a personal self. They impute a life force only on a self because it is alive.\textsuperscript{212}

3) \textbf{Devoid of life force}-- This means that [dependent arising] is different from [life force] because it is not blessed by that self which is called 'life-force'. This teaches that, "Interdependence is constant in terms of being uninterrupted. Nevertheless, since it is free from a self, it is not like the self." This is since the other [schools] impute permanence on the self which doesn’t exist. Therefore, [dependent arising] is not like a self.

4) Since it is shown that this dependent arising is ultimately not labelled as permanent in the way of the self, etc., it is called "\textbf{true}"\textsuperscript{213} (Skt. \textit{yathāvad}). It is 'conceptually imputed.'

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{211} Tibetan Reference: Sutra
\textsuperscript{212} Tibetan reference: "Others" should be understood to refer to the non-buddhist Jains—life force, lifeless, defiled, and tātwArthasUtra 1/4/, Jain.
\textsuperscript{213} Tibetan Reference: Tibetan text—p.117/2, Sutra, tsha), Derge Sanskrit reading: p. 100/ in the book- \textit{mahāyana sutra saṃgraha}
\end{flushright}
5) By what reason is it unimputed? Because it presents the reason and syllogisms of that (being unimputed) it is called "unmistaken." Dependent arising is established as being unimputed by pramāṇa. This teaches that that nature which is not imputed, is un-erroneous.

6) Someone may think: "How can it be permanent in the manner of being unborn, because [dependent arising] is of the nature which is born?" [Addressing that] it says that it is unborn, which means that ultimately, [dependent arising] lacks a nature which is born. It is thought of as being, for example, like a reflection. Likewise, it is said:

Whatever originates from conditions is unborn.
That has no essential birth.\textsuperscript{214}

In the Sutra itself it says:

That which is born from conditions is unborn.
It has no essential birth.\textsuperscript{215}

7) Someone may think: "Even if one takes it as currently unborn, it still endowed with arising because it was born before." [Addressing that] it says that it is not arisen which means that, just as it doesn't arise in the present moment it has not done so previously.

8) Someone may think: "Dependent arising is unborn and not arisen because it has not arisen by itself. But is it not created by someone else, like Īśvara?" [Addressing that] it says that it is uncreated which means that there is no such permanent cause, because it would be a contradiction to create an object in order or reversed order. This [dependent arising] refutes causeless [arising] and [arising from] dissimilar causes.

9) Someone may think: "Even though dependent arising has not been created by Īśvara or the like, it has been created because it was indeed created by the assemblage of causes and conditions." [Addressing that] it says that it is uncompounded. This means that

Schöning, p.250: That which arose from conditions was not born; That is unborn by essential nature.

\textsuperscript{215} Tibetan Reference: Sutra Requested by Anavatapta—p. 130/\textit{ba}, Sutra, \textit{pha} Derge Kangyur.
causes and conditions, by which it would be compounded are not ultimately existing either, because they are as well in accordance with transgression and imputation. Those also, are not created or compounded from their own perspective, because all phenomena are unwavering. They are not arisen from something other because it is impossible that entities arise or are given rise to ultimately at the same or different times.

10) Someone may think: "Although, in this way dependent arising is endowed with the dharma/characteristic of being born, why would it not be born in another way?"

[Addressing that] it says that it is unobstructed. This is because all entities are pervaded by emptiness. Therefore, that which is unborn is always unobstructed. This shows that it is thoroughly or completely transient. Likewise, it is said:

Always unborn phenomena are the Tathāgata.
Also, all phenomena are like the sugata.\(^{216}\)

11) Someone may think: "If it is like that, why isn't dependent arising which is endowed with the special qualities mentioned above known by all to be like that?"

[Addressing that] it says that it is imperceptible, because it is empty of the aspects of perceiver and perceived. Therefore, the consciousnesses which are totally attached to perceiver and perceived cannot know it like that. Similarly, even though it is imperceptible, it can be known by the consciousness which is free from elaborations—transcendental primordial wisdom. Therefore, it is said, "Without seeing any phenomena suchness is seen."\(^{217}\) Likewise, dependent arising is perceived in the manner of not perceiving.

12) Someone may think: "Why should one meditate on the ultimate way in accordance to this explanation?" [Addressing that] it says that it is tranquil. If one meditates on the ultimate way, it will be tranquil, as one is free from all harm. Further, since

\(^{216}\) Tibetan Reference: dbu ma—la\} p.146/ Derge

\(^{217}\) Tibetan Reference: Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra
incorrectness is the root of all all-afflicting emotions, those will be abandoned by meditation on the ultimate way of dependent origination. It is said, "If one meditates like that all all-afflicting emotions will be absolutely pacified, therefore all who want to abandon the afflicting emotions meditate like that!" Likewise, it is said:

Through conceptual thinking you will know, the worldly objects according to the world. Wanting to abandon the all-afflicting emotions you should know endeavour with the ultimate meaning.²¹⁸

13) Someone may think: "That which is without a self or that which belongs to the self, and which is free from perceiver and perceived is the opposite of all experience and conventions. Therefore, it is very frightening. Who would be inspired to meditate like that?"

[Addressing that] it says that it is fearless, because there is no fear with regard to that. To hold onto entities as being real and to hold the self to be real, is the root for all fear. If one has those one will be afraid. But if one sees the true nature in [dependent arising], one will disengage from grasping to all entities as real and one will become fearless, because all fears are cut from the root. Therefore, meditate like that!

14) Someone may think: "Even though one sees the ultimate way of the dependent arising, if one meets with non-virtuous friends, non-virtuous spiritual teachers, etc. later on one will get habituated to incorrect mental engagement. Therefore, the all-afflicting emotions like desire-attachment and so forth will increase. That becomes the cause for being afraid."

[Addressing that] it says that it is incontrovertible. This means that having seen the ultimate regarding interdependence, no one will be able to deceive you. Therefore, one is incontrovertible.

15) **inexhaustible**—(*athyam* = without decline) is taught seeing that the suchness of dependent arising cannot be exhausted or diminished by incorrect mental engagement like the confused appearances of incorrect engagement, confused cognition, etc. That is because it is a mind which engages with the abiding mode of the object. It is a pervasion.

Likewise, it is said:

> No-harm and the authentic truth won't be counteracted even by endeavoring incorrectly in the nature because the mind has taken the side.\(^{219}\)

16) Someone may think: "It is true that the manifested suchness of dependent arising cannot be crushed by misapprehensions such as incorrect mental engagement. Nevertheless, even if that is so, if the elaborations of the inner afflictions are not pacified, they will [cause the actualization of suchness] to diminish and exhaust" [Addressing that] it says: "**The one who sees dependent arising as [...] never stilled.**"

Further, the afflictions which exist in any given thing will be stilled by the power of their antidotes. This is called 'stilling'. That is applicable if we presume that there is something to be stilled in the nature. But that which doesn't have anything to be stilled in its nature has a nature that is never to be stilled. (*avyupaśamasvabhāva* = nature which lacks something to be stilled). The [actualization of suchness] doesn't have a mistaken nature to be stilled by the power of the antidote at all, because it is by nature luminous. Misconceptions have never been born [within] the *dharmadhātu*.

Likewise, it is said: "Nothing can be added (*ārepita*) by ordinary beings to the true nature. The Buddhas don't eliminate (*apanīta*) anything either." This comes down to nothing

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\(^{219}\) Tibetan Reference: *rnam 'grel tshad grub le'u*—verse 2/3/ Shri Diwakar Publications.
but authentically viewing the authentic. There is nothing at all to be abandoned or eliminated.

Nagarjuna explained:

Nothing is to be cleared away here,
Nothing at all is to be added.
If correctly looking at suchness,
reality is seen, one will be liberated.\textsuperscript{220}

Likewise, it is explained in the \textit{Entrance to the Two Noble Truths}: "The afflicting emotions will be stilled, just as the poison of being bitten by a snake in a dream is being stilled."\textsuperscript{221}

Therefore, if one is habituated to suchness, one will realize the \textit{dharmadhātu}, which is of a luminous nature. Therefore, since it lacks any seeds for mistakes one abides within the suchness of only that, and there are no circumstances in which the adventitious afflictions arise.

In a few texts you can find, "The nature (of which is) with complete stilling […]." Like that, ignorance and so forth are naturally, since beginningless time of a stilling nature. That is to be stillled. Since that is by nature co-emergent with stilling, it is to be stillled. The nature of that is stillled. In that sense dependent arising has the nature of stilling.

The Purpose of this Sutra

The Teacher said, "\textit{Bhiksus, whoever sees dependent arising sees the Dharma} […]" With this the convert intention regarding the meaning of the Sutra is presented.

\textsuperscript{220} \textit{Tibetan Reference: \text{pratītyasamutpāda hṛdaya kārikā, Nagarjuna, Verse 7/ Madhyamaka, tsā} Derge Tengyur}

\textsuperscript{221} \textit{Tibetan Reference: It appears in the Sutra itself, but comes from the \textit{Sutra Teaching the Relative and the Ultimate Truth, Sutra, phā} p.406/ Derge Kangyur.}

The \textit{Entrance to the Two Noble Truths} as translated by 84000 reads: Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, this is how it is. Imagine a man who has a nightmare in which he is bitten by a venomous viper. Although he is suffering, he is treated with an antidote and recovers. As the poison is neutralized, his pain disappears. Divine son, what do you think? Was this man actually bitten or not?”
Therefore, the one who sees dependent arising in the manner of having the above-mentioned nature of sixteen aspects, perfectly sees the dharma of accomplishment—like the explained [eightfold] noble path—and other dharmas of cause and effect. Therefore, like this way of dependent arising, other dharmas are also seen to be constant, devoid of a life-force, etc., and never stilled, and one directly realizes the noble Dharma. Through being endowed with authentic primordial wisdom which realizes it in this way, one comes to see the unsurpassable body of the dharma, the Buddha. Likewise, it is explained in the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra:

"All Buddhas are the bodies of the dharma.
All Guides view dharmatā."

The phrase "by thus acquiring such right knowledge" is a logical expression:

Whoever sees dependent arising as it was explained has comprehended the ultimate dharma. Therefore, they acquire right knowledge/are endowed with authentic primordial wisdom. Whoever has acquired the right knowledge of the noble ones, abides within the knowledge of equality. One doesn't individually focus on dependent arising, the dharma and the Buddha as distinct [entities]. If the practitioner who is endowed with such knowledge "sees dependent arising [she] sees the Dharma and sees the Buddha." as it is explained. The Bhagavān taught that with the implication of equality and the covert intention regarding the ultimate characteristics. Therefore, there is no contradiction in the words of the Bhagavān.

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222 Tibetan Reference: Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra—page 54, shes phyin sna tshogs ka) krung deb/
223 right knowledge reflects the Tibetan term yang dag pa'i ye shes. To distinguish between ordinary knowledge (shes pa) and the pristine, undefiled and uncontrived awareness/wisdom of a Buddha, I would rather translate ye shes as primordial/pristine wisdom. Otherwise the terms shes pa, shes rab, and ye shes, which all have particular meanings and connotations in Tibetan collude.
B) How Dependent arising is presented in the relative manner

If, ultimately, this dependent arising is not compounded by causes and conditions, why is it called 'dependent arising'? Dependent arising in the relative manner is understood as such. And presenting the way in which one should meditate upon that it says, "Why is it called dependent arising?" Because it is dependent arising, ultimately it is unborn. But in the relative it certainly depends on the different individual causes and conditions just like for example an illusion or a reflection. Also, they exist as labelled conventions. Therefore, even though ultimately it doesn't have a nature and it is not truly established, in the relative all presentations of causes creating results are correct as they are renown in the world. Therefore, there is no contradiction.

Well then, what is this suchness of relative dependent arising? We are confused regarding the way that relative dependent arising works in the world. Subsequently we have miscomprehensions about the world, which is summarized by the aggregates, like the [the miscomprehension that the world] arises without a cause, arises from an unrelated cause, and [miscomprehensions regarding the] characteristics of those [aggregates]. It is the suchness of relative dependent arising that clears away these [miscomprehensions]. It is taught that one needs to meditate on [phenomena] to have five characteristics [in order to clear these miscomprehensions away]. Those five characteristics are:

[The five characteristics of outer relative interdependent origination]

1  The characteristic of arising alongside causes
2  The characteristic of having arisen from impermanent and manifold causes
3  The characteristic of arising without a self
4  The characteristic of having arisen from potent conditions/ conditions
5  The characteristic of having arisen from conditions which do not have a creator

From those:

The first characteristic: Presenting the characteristic of arising from having outer causes
'causal and conditional' - This indicates the first characteristic of [dependent arising] which is the arising from having causes. This dispels the views of the non-Buddhists, like the Cārvāka and so on, that entities are causeless. Further, since [arising] is causal and conditional it is inter-dependent arising. It is not without causes or conditions.

Someone might think, "Even though it is causal, how does something become conditional, as it doesn't have a result?" To answer this doubt "the Bhagavān concisely taught the characteristics of dependent arising as follows: "Results come from just their own conditions (Derge Tengyur: Results come from their own specific conditions." This is called the conditions of that which is conditioned. The entity of that are these conditions. (idampratyayatā). Further, by whatever condition the result of some condition is understood. That is taught by saying, 'the result of that condition' and it is as explained by saying, 'if this condition exists this result will come about.' Just by that the term of dependent arising is explained. This is called 'dependent arising'. Dependent arising is "pratītyasamutpāda". There are many explanations for the way how this term is formed. But if explained in line with the explanation above, here the entire meaning abides accordingly. There is no contradiction regarding the meaning. To answer the doubt of someone thinking: "Why is that dependent arising here called causal?" the following is explained:

1) Whether tathāgatas appear or not, this true nature of things will remain.  

It is the true nature - This refers to the true nature of dependent arising. 'the constancy of Dharma' and so forth are synonyms. Even though something is expressed as the realization by means of some or another synonym, one will realize it by means of a specific synonym according to one's inclination. Because all are beneficial, all synonyms are expressed.
2) the constancy of Dharma - This refers to the Dharma of dependent arising. That very true nature is constant. 3) the immutability of Dharma - That is to say that [the Dharma of dependent arising] is certain to be only that while it will not change into something else. This explains also that it depends on its own particular causes. 4) consistent with dependent arising - There is never going to be any arising which doesn't depend on causes and conditions. It is to be understood that it is always, in all aspects, relying on causes and conditions. 5) suchness - One should meditate entirely in this way because it is the cause for understanding suchness. 6) unmistaken suchness - That negates everything mistaken. 7) unchanging suchness/ suchness which is not something else - This is to abandon deceitfulness. If some entities were not interdependently originated, then the nature of those would be deceitful. There is nothing like that, because all phenomena are pervaded by dependent arising. 8) actuality - This means that it is logical, because it is undeceiving. 9) and truth - It is [truth] at is included in the truths of the noble ones. 10) unmistaken - It is [unmistaken], because it is not considered as mistaken. 11) and unerring - It is [unerring] as it is the object of authentic primordial wisdom. These are expressed in the manner that the earlier terms are explained and clarified by the later ones.

The second outer characteristic: Presenting the characteristic of having arisen from impermanent and manifold causes

Here, "dependent" means to depend on causes and conditions. As it relies on those. "Inter" shows the connection in the sense that if one doesn't exist the other won't arise. "Origination" refers to the arising or the attainment of its own being. By this it is taught that [phenomena] have arising and will arise from impermanent and manifold causes. Therefore, permanent and singular causes, incongruent causes, are negated. As it says, "causes and

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225 teaching
conditions" here, the cause is the perpetuating cause—it is the special cause. The conditions in "conditional relation" refer to the causes which help to give rise to the result simultaneously. They are common.

The third outer characteristic: Presenting the characteristic of arising without a self

"Furthermore" refers to the dependent arising which arises from causal and conditional relations. Disciples grasp the inner ayatanas (sense sources) as the self. And they grasp to the outer sense sources as belonging to the self. Then they engage in karma and actions. Therefore, in order abandon the grasping to these two, the two aspects of dependent arising are taught. Selflessness and both types of interdependence that are in accordance with selflessness abide. If there were a self, inner and outer interdependence were impossible. There would be a blessed being as a permanent self and based on that all inner phenomena would exist permanently. Outer phenomena would come to be of that nature. Therefore, they would likewise come to be permanent. But as the inner and outer sense sources are not like that, it is certain that [phenomena] arise selflessly.

The fourth outer characteristic: Presenting the characteristic of arising from potent conditions

By this the seed and so forth are presented as the definitive individual causes. Therefore, it is taught as a potency in terms of following and reversing this cause. By this it is also explained that not everything will arise from anything, because the potential is definitive in each. The implication of this is also taught. Further, there is no particularity which always follows or reverses them. Because of that this also eliminates those assertions of the result to arise from something permanent, without potency.

The fifth outer characteristic: Presenting the characteristic of arising from conditions which are without creator
"In that process, the seed does not think, 'I form the sprout'…" - By this it is taught that the entities are not the self, and they are not the creator/actor. The passage, "Yet…" teaches that the causes for all entities are not non-existent. There are causes. But even though there are causes it is taught that there is no other creator/actor. If there were another creator, like Shiva, and the arising of entities would depend on him, such a creator would be permanent. Therefore, he would be unconnected to the entity and wouldn't have any influence. If the mere existence of a creator, or the mere existence of a self assists [the arising], then all results must be permanent as well. This is because no contrary result can come from a sufficient cause.

One might ask, "If something like the self or Shiva assists the cause, they are not just existing themselves. But could [the result arises when] a creator and another condition which is simultaneous to the mind etc. meet?" Since those as well need to depend on something else, we end up with an infinite regression. Because of that it is said, "All phenomena are without a creator."226

This clears away the assertion that Shiva etc., 'karma,' 'particles', and so forth are causes which have a creator.

" "The earth element does not think, ‘I support the seed.’" and so forth – By the ability/potential of earth and so forth the ability of bringing transforming the nature of the seed is taught. Therefore, this presents the meaning of the four characteristics of the arising from outer, potent conditions. Here, the earth refers to the earth element. It should be understood as that which has the nature of color and form.

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226 Tibetan Note: Sutra
The water element is the nature of moisture. The fire element is the nature of heat and burning. The wind element is the nature of movement. Those [elements] manifest the sprout. The element of space refers to an empty inner space which is without tangible objects. Further, that should be known to be like an illuminated and a dark path. Time is the very thorough distinguishing by the particularities in the context of the phenomena like earth. It is applied to the context of formation, birth, cessation and so forth.
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5) རེ་ཐོའ།
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3 ིན་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ།
4 ིན་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ།
5 ིན་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ།
6 ིན་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ།
7 ིན་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ།
8 ིན་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ།
9 ིན་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ།
10 ིན་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ།
11 ིན་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ།
12 ིན་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ།

10) "ཉིད་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ། ིན་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ། ིན་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ། ིན་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ།" དགེ་སྦྱོར་བསྡུས་གྱི་187/7 འདོར་ཆེན་པོ་ལྷ་མོག་ལྷེན་
11) ིན་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ། ིན་ཐོགས་ཕགས་པས་ཕྱིན་dadདུ་བྱེད་པ།

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62 ཁེས་པ་བོད་ཡིག་མཁའི

"དྲེག་པའི་གཏོད་ལ་ཐེག་པར་བྱས་པའི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་། དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་ཇོ་ནང་དོན་དངོས་པོ་རེད། དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་ཐེག་པར་བྱས་པའི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་སྤྱོད་པར་བྱས་པའི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་ཆུང་པོ་ཡིན། དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་ཐེག་པར་བྱས་པའི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་ལྟོས་པར་བྱས་པའི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་སྤྱོད་པར་བྱས་པའི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་ཆུང་པོ་ཡིན། བེད་དག་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་dB

1) "དེ་བཙོལ་བོགས་བསྡུས་བསྡུས་པར་བྱས་པའི་ཐེག་པར་བྱས་པའི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་ཚེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་dB

2) ཀོན་ཁྲུང་བོད་ོང་ཆི་བོད་; དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་dB

3) ཀོན་ཁྲུང་བོད་ོང་ཆི་བོད་; དེ་ཤེས་བྱུང་པ་འདི་dB

31) དོན་དོན་དོན་"ཐོབ་མི་སྤྲོད་པར་དོན" གཞན 117/7 འདོད། ཏོག་ཁུངས་
དོན་དོན་དོན་"ཐོབ་མི་སྤྲོད་པར་དོན" གཞན 155/7 འདོད་ཁུངས་

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