

IN PRAISE OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION

By Lama Tsongkhapa

[For internal use only]

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A1. Opening

B1. Title

\\Geshe Thupten Jinpa's version// In Praise of Dependent Origination	\\Dr. Alexander Berzin's version// In Praise of Dependent Arising
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B2. Homage

C1. Homage in General

	Homage to (my) Guru, Manjughosha.
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C2. Homage in Particular

Verse 1

He who speaks on the basis of seeing, This makes him a knower and teacher unexcelled, I bow to you, O Conqueror, you who saw Dependent origination and taught it.	I bow to (you) the Triumphant (Buddha), who has seen and taught dependent arising, which, to see (makes you) a knower and to speak of (makes you) an unsurpassable instructor.
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A2. Main Text

B1. Praise the Buddha for Teaching the Theory of Dependent Origination

C1. The Seeing of Dependent Origination Can Eradicate the Root of Samsara

Verse 2

Whatever degenerations there are in the world, The root of all these is ignorance; You taught that it is dependent origination, The seeing of which will undo this ignorance.	Unawareness is the root of as much torment as there is in the world. Thus, you spoke of dependent arising, which, if seen, turns that back.
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C2. The Path of Dependent Origination Is the Essence of the Dharma

Verse 3

So how can an intelligent person
Not comprehend that this path
Of dependent origination is
The essential point of your teaching?

At that time, how could those with intelligence not have
comprehended the path of dependent arising as being the essential
point of your teachings?

C3. To Praise the Buddha for Having Taught Dependent Origination Is the Best Way of Praising

Verse 4

This being so, who will find, O Savior,
A more wonderful way to praise you
Than [to praise you] for having taught
This origination through dependence?

As that is so, how could anyone find as a gateway for praising
you, O Guardian, anything more wondrous than your statements
about dependent arising?

B2. The Buddha Is the Only Unimpeachable One for Those Who Seek Liberation

C1. Establish the Faultlessness of Buddhism

D1. Establish the Faultlessness of the Teaching of Dependent Origination and Emptiness

E1. Explain the Meaning of Dependent Origination and Emptiness

F1. Brief Explanation

G1. Emptiness Means Dependent Origination

Verse 5

“Whatsoever depends on conditions,
That is devoid of intrinsic existence.”
What excellent instruction can there be
More amazing than this proclamation?

“Whatever depends on conditions is devoid of a self-establishing
nature.” What could be a more amazing, excellent manner of
instructing than this statement?

G2. The Seeing of Dependent Origination Is the Key to Liberation

Verse 6

By grasping at it the childish
Strengthen bondage to extreme views;
For the wise this very fact is the doorway
To cut free from the net of elaborations.

This real fact (of dependent arising) which, if grasped at (as establishing true existence), makes infantile beings' bondage to grasping for extremes more firm, is the gateway for the learned to cut all the webs of their mental fabrication, without any exception.

G3. Thus Concludes the Statement that the Buddhist Teachings Exceed Other Doctrines

Verse 7

Since this teaching is not seen elsewhere,
You alone are the Teacher;
Like calling fox a lion, for a Tirthika
It would be a word of flattery.

As this teaching is not seen in others, then the title "Teacher" is really yours (alone); it's a sham word, however, if also (used) for those with heterodox (views), like "lion" for the species "fox."

Verse 8

Wondrous teacher! Wondrous refuge!
Wondrous speaker! Wondrous savior!
I pay homage to that teacher
Who taught well dependent origination.

How wondrous – a Teacher! How wondrous – a Safe Direction!
How wondrous – a Supreme Speaker! How wondrous – a Guardian! I prostrate to (you) that Teacher, who spoke excellently about dependent arising.

F2. Extensive Elaboration

G1. The Union of Dependent Origination and Emptiness Is the Ultimate Teaching of the Buddha

H1. One Cannot Comprehend the Buddha's Teachings if Misunderstanding Dependent Origination

Verse 9

To help heal sentient beings,
O Benefactor, you have taught
The peerless reason to ascertain
Emptiness, the heart of the teaching.

You, the Benefactor, prescribed it as a medicine for wandering beings, (since) it's the peerless line of reasoning for ascertaining voidness, the heart of your teachings.

Verse 10

This way of dependent origination,
Those who perceive it
As contradictory or as unestablished,
How can they comprehend your system?

How can those who see this manner (of reason) of dependent arising as contradicting (functionality) or as unestablished ever be able to comprehend your system?

H2. The Union of Dependent Origination and Emptiness Is the Ultimate Teaching of the Buddha

I1. When Understanding Dependent Origination One Realizes that to Possess Valid Functions Does Not Contradict Emptiness

Verse 11

For you, when one sees emptiness
In terms of the meaning of dependent origination,
Then being devoid of intrinsic existence and
Possessing valid functions do not contradict.

When you saw voidness as meaning dependent arising, (you saw that) voidness of a self-establishing nature and the performing of functions are not contradictory, but in fact reasonable (in terms of one another).

I2. Misunderstanding of Dependent Origination Will Lead One to Fall into a Dreadful Abyss

Verse 12

Whereas when one sees the opposite,
Since there can be no function in emptiness
Nor emptiness in what has functions,
One falls into a dreadful abyss, you maintain.

But if one sees the reverse of that, then since function would be inadmissible in terms of voidness, and there could be no voidness in terms of function, one would be asserting a plunge into an abyss of despair.

I3. Thus Dependent Origination Does Not Contradict Emptiness

Verse 13

Therefore in your teaching
Seeing dependent origination is hailed;
That too not as an utter non-existence
Nor as an intrinsic existence.

Because of that, excellent praise to the vision of dependent arising in your teachings! For that, in fact, nullifies (both) total nonexistence and existence by means of a self-establishing nature.

H3. The Standard State of the Realization of the Union of Dependent Origination and Emptiness

Verse 14

The non-contingent is like a sky flower,
Hence there is nothing that is not dependent.
If things exist through their essence, their dependence on
Causes and conditions for their existence is a contradiction.

Non-reliance is like a flower from empty space; therefore non-dependence does not exist. If the existence (of things) were established by their essential natures, then the establishment of that would contradict their depending on causes and conditions.

G2. The Reason Taught by the Buddha that Emptiness Is the Nature of All Phenomena

H1. All Phenomena Are Devoid of Intrinsic Existence

Verse 15

“Therefore since no phenomena exist
Other than origination through dependence,
No phenomena exist other than
Being devoid of intrinsic existence,” you taught.

(Thus) you said that because of that, since there are no phenomena other than what dependently arises, there are no phenomena other than what is devoid of a self-establishing nature.

H2. Nirvana Would Become Impossible if Phenomena Possessed Intrinsic Nature

Verse 16

“Because intrinsic nature cannot be negated,
If phenomena possess some intrinsic nature,
Nirvana would become impossible
And elaborations could not be ceased,” you taught.

You (further) said that because, if phenomena (actually) had a certain self-establishing nature, (the appearance of) self-establishing natures could not be turned back, nirvana would (then) become inadmissible, and all mental fabrication could not be turned back.

H3. No Reasonable Refutation Exists for Such Teaching

Verse 17

Therefore who could challenge you?
You who proclaim with lion’s roar
In the assembly of learned ones repeatedly
That everything is utterly free of intrinsic nature?

Because of that, in the crowd of learned ones, you spoke excellently, again and again, with a lion’s roar, that everything is parted from self-establishing natures. Who could get the better of this?

G3. Things without Intrinsic Existence Function in Accordance with Dependent Arising

H1. Dependent Origination and Emptiness Converge without Conflict

Verse 18

That there is no intrinsic existence at all
And that all functions as “this arising
In dependence on that,” what need is there to say
That these two converge without conflict?

There is no such thing as a self-establishing nature; also, the entire presentation is reasonable of “this” arising from depending on “this.” As these two (points) are non-contradictory, is there need to mention that they fit together?

H2. The Union of Dependent Origination and Emptiness Is the Most Supreme Teaching

Verse 19

“It is through the reason of dependent origination
That one does not lean towards an extreme;”
That you’ve declared this excellently is the reason
O Savior, of your being an unexcelled speaker.

“Because of the line of reasoning, dependent arising, one does not become founded in an extreme view.” This excellent statement (of yours) is the cause for your speech, O Guardian, being peerless.

G4. Emptiness Implies the Rationality of the Law of Causality and Leads One to Go Beyond Any Extreme

Verse 20

“All of this is devoid of essence,”
And “From this arises that effect” –
These two certainties complement
Each other with no contradiction at all.

All these (things) are devoid (of being established) by an essential nature, while from “this,” “this” arises as a result. These two certainties, without hindering one another, serve as (mutual) helps.

Verse 21

What is more amazing than this?
What is more marvellous than this?
If one praises you in this manner,
This is real praise, otherwise not.

What could be more amazing than this? What could be more marvelous than this? There is no other way of praising than to praise you in this way.

E2. Refute the Counter Assertion

F1. The Assertion that Dependent Origination Means Intrinsic Existence is Unreasonable

Verse 22

Being enslaved by ignorance
Those who fiercely oppose you,
What is so astonishing about their being
Unable to bear the sound of no intrinsic existence?

Enslaved by their muddle-headedness, some are hostile toward you. Is it any wonder they cannot bear the sound of “no self-establishing nature?”

Verse 23

But having accepted dependent origination,
The precious treasure of your speech,
Then not tolerating the roar of emptiness –
This I find amazing indeed!

But those who accept dependent arising, the cherished treasure from among your statements, and then cannot bear the roar of voidness – it is they who amaze me.

F2. Those Who Hold Such Assertion Cannot Be Led to the Path that Pleases the Tathagata

Verse 24

The door that leads to no intrinsic existence,
This unexcelled [door of] dependent origination,
Through its name alone, if one grasps
At intrinsic existence, now this person

It is just these people who grasp at self-establishing natures in the very name of dependent arising, but which, (in fact,) is the unsurpassable gateway leading to there being no self-establishing natures.

Verse 25

Who lacks the unrivalled entrance,
Well travelled by the Noble Ones,
By what means should one guide him
To the excellent path that pleases you?

By what method could they be led to this excellent pathway pleasing to you, which is a peerless fording passage well traveled by the Supreme Noble Aryas?

F3. Point Out the Self-contradiction of the Assertion

Verse 26

Intrinsic nature, uncreated and non-contingent,
Dependent origination, contingent and created –
How can these two converge
Upon a single basis without contradiction?

How can having a self-establishing nature, being unfashioned, and non-reliant, as well as being dependently arising, reliant, and fashioned both be what are gathered together with no contradiction on a single basis?

E3. Establish the View of Emptiness through Dependent Origination and Dispel All Interpolations and Repudiations

F1. The Reasoning Taught by the Buddha that All Phenomena of Dependent Origination are Illusion-like

Verse 27

Therefore whatever originates dependently,
Though primordially free of intrinsic existence,
Appears as if it does [possess intrinsic existence];
So you taught all this to be illusion-like.

Because of that, whatever dependently arises is, from the beginning, completely removed from having a self-establishing nature. Yet, since (things) appear to be there, you said that all of them are like illusions.

F2. Nobody Can Find Fault in the Buddha's Teaching of Dependent Origination

Verse 28

Through this very fact I understand well
The statement that, to what you have taught,
Those opponents who challenge you
Cannot find faults that accord with reason.

It is by this very (reasoning) that one can well understand the statement that even if opponents try to pick apart how you have taught, they can never find an occurrence (of fault) in the Dharma's consistency.

Verse 29

Why is this so? Because by declaring these
Chances for reification and denigration
Towards things seen and unseen
Are made most remote.

“Why is this so?” It's because, by this explanation, you've distanced afar any chances for interpolation or repudiation regarding any phenomenon, seen or unseen.

D2. Establish the Faultlessness of the Buddha's Other Teachings

Verse 30

Through this very path of dependent origination,
The rationale for your speech being peerless,
Convictions arise in me [also]
That your other words are valid too.

By this very path of dependent arising, which is the reason your speech is seen as peerless, one can develop certainty that your other statements are valid as well.

C2. Establish the Authenticity of the Buddha's Guidance for Those Who Seek Liberation

D1. Point out the Difference between the Buddha and Teachers of Other Doctrines

Verse 31

You who speak excellently by seeing as it is,
For those who train in your footsteps,
All degenerations will become remote;
For the root of all faults will be undone.

In training, in your footsteps, in what you have said so well, after you saw in accord with fact, one puts all one's troubles far away, because one turns back the root of all one's faults.

Verse 32

But those who turn away from your teaching,
Though they may struggle with hardship for a long time,
Faults increase ever more as if being called forth;
For they make firm the view of self.

(On the other hand,) those who face away from your teachings, even should they devote themselves wearily for a long time, are like inviting one mistake after the next, because of their firm view of identity natures.

D2. Cultivate Reverence for the Buddha by Being Aware of the Difference

Verse 33

Aha! When the wise comprehend
The differences between these two,
Why would they not at that point
Revere you from the depths of their being?

How wondrous! How could any learned person, when he has comprehended the difference between these two, not develop, at that time, respect for you from the depth of his heart?

Verse 34

Let alone your numerous teachings,
Even in the meaning of a small part,
Those who find ascertainment in a cursory way,
This brings supreme bliss to them as well.

What need to mention many of your statements, when finding
merely a rough certainty about even only the meaning of a single
portion bestows supreme bliss.

D3. Understanding the Difference Evokes the Author's Reverent Faith in the Buddha

Verse 35

Alas! My mind was defeated by ignorance;
Though I've sought refuge for a long time,
In such an embodiment of excellence,
I possess not a fraction of his qualities.

Alas! My mind is so overwhelmed with being muddled that
although I've long taken safe direction from (you, who are) a mass
of excellent qualities like this, I cannot show even a tiny speck of
good qualities (in myself).

Verse 36

Nonetheless, before the stream of this life
Flowing towards death has come to cease
That I have found slight faith in you –
Even this I think is fortunate.

But until the flow of my life-force toward the direction of the
mouth of the Lord of Death comes to an end, I shall consider
myself fortunate even in just this: the slight amount of confident
belief (I've developed) in you.

D4. Conclusively Establish the Buddha as the Only Holder of Truth and the Dharma as the Only Valid Knowledge

Verse 37

Among teachers, the teacher of dependent origination,
Amongst wisdoms, the knowledge of dependent origination –
You, who're most excellent like the kings in the worlds,
Know this perfectly well, not others.

Like a commander of the triumphant in the worldly realms, your
omniscient mind has no other (match) in its magnificence and
excellence, in that both, among teachers, you are a teacher of
dependent arising, and among discriminating awarenesses, you
have an awareness of dependent arising.

B3. Only Buddhism Can Show the Path to Liberation

C1. All the Buddha's Teachings Are Skillful Means of Attaining Nirvana

Verse 38

All that you have taught
Proceeds by way of dependent origination;
That too is done for the sake of nirvana;
You have no deeds that do not bring peace.

However much has been proclaimed by you has originated and proceeded from dependent arising itself. And, moreover, it's been for the purpose of nirvana (a release from suffering). You do not do anything that doesn't bring about (such) pacification.

C2. Thus One Should Accept All the Buddha's Teachings

Verse 39

Alas! Your teaching is such,
In whosoever's ears it falls,
They all attain peace; so who would not be
Honoured to uphold your teaching?

How wondrous! Because your teachings bring about a pacification (of suffering) to all those in whose ears it passes, who could not respect upholding your teachings?

C3. The Author Feels Joyful by Realizing the Three Distinctive Characters of Buddhism

Verse 40

It overcomes all opposing challenges;
It's free from contradictions between earlier and latter parts;
It grants fulfilment of beings' two aims –
For this system my joy increases ever more.

My delight ever increases in this system (of yours), which defeats every kind of challenging opponent, is devoid of contradictions from top to bottom, and bestows the two aims of the nine kinds of beings.

B4. Recollect the Buddha's Great Kindness with Gratitude

C1. The Author's Recollection of the Buddha's Great Kindness

D1. Recollect the Buddha's Sacrifice for Seeking the Dharma in his Causal Stage

Verse 41

For its sake you have given away,
Again and again over countless eons,
Sometimes your body, at others your life,
As well as your loving kin and resources of wealth.

It is for this purpose that you offered over and again, through
countless eons, at some times your body, at others your life, as
well as your dear relations and your stores of wealth.

D2. Recollect the Sadness of Not Being Able to Receive the Dharma Directly from the Buddha

Verse 42

Seeing the qualities of this teaching
Pulls [hard] from your heart,
Just like what a hook does to a fish;
Sad it is not to have heard it from you.

What poor fortune not to have heard that Dharma (directly) from
you, to whose mind I am drawn, like a fish to a hook, by seeing
your good qualities.

Verse 43

The intensity of that sorrow
Does not let go of my mind,
Just like the mind of a mother
[Constantly] goes after her dear child.

By the strength of that sadness, my mind shall never give up (its
regard for you), like the mind of a mother continually following
after her dear child.

D3. Recollect the Joyfulness that the Buddha Had Taught the Teaching of Dependent Origination

Verse 44

Here too, as I reflect on your words, I think,
"Blazing with the glory of noble marks
And hallowed in a net of light rays,
This teacher, in a voice of pristine melody,

And so, for this, when I think of your statements, I think of (you,
that Teacher, radiant with the glory of the physical signs and
exemplary features, surrounded completely by an aura of light,

Verse 45

Spoke thus in such a way.”
The instant such a reflection of the Sage’s form
Appears in my mind it soothes me,
Just as the moon-rays heal fever’s pains.

And, in that manner, proclaiming these (teachings) with your
Brahma-like voice. The mere arising in my mind of the image of
your physical form, O Sage, is a medicine like moonlight for the
torment of my fever.

C2. The Author Exhorts All Beings to Recollect the Buddha

D1. Exhortation to Seek the Profound Teaching of Dependent Origination

E1. One Should Rely on the Writings of the Learned

F1. One Should Not Rely on the Words of the Unlearned

Verse 46

This excellent system, most marvellous,
Some individuals who are not so learned
Have entangled it in utter confusion,
Just like the tangled balbaza grass.

Although this excellent system of yours is so wondrous, yet
unlearned people have made contentions over so many points, like
tangled vines.

F2. One Should Follow the Teachings of the Learned

Verse 47

Seeing this situation, I strove
With a multitude of efforts
To follow after the learned ones
And sought your intention again and again.

Seeing this manner (of theirs), I have followed with a great deal of
effort (only) the learned and thereby have repeatedly sought your
intended meaning.

E2. Other Doctrines Cannot Dispel Doubts

Verse 48

At such times as I studied the numerous works
Of both our own [Middle Way] and other schools,
My mind became tormented ever more
Constantly by a network of doubts.

At that time, when I studied the many various texts of the systems
of our own and others’ tenets, my mind was completely tormented
by a web of one doubt after the next.

E3. Illuminating the Meaning of Dependent Origination Should Depend on the Treatises of Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti

Verse 49

The night-lily grove of Nagarjuna's treatises –
Nagarjuna whom you prophesied
Would unravel your unexcelled vehicle as it is,
Shunning extremes of existence and non-existence –

(49–51) But, my mind found relief from its exhaustion when,
through the kindness of my gurus, I beheld the garden of
moonflowers of the textual tradition of Nagarjuna – whom you
prophesied would comment correctly upon the ways of your
unsurpassable vehicle, getting rid of the extremes of existence and
nonexistence

Verse 50

Illuminated by the garland of white lights
Of Candra's well-uttered insights –
Candra, whose stainless wisdom orb is full,
Who glides freely across scriptures' space,

– illumined by the array of white light of the excellent
explanations of the Glorious Moon, Chandrakirti – the full orb of
whose stainless understanding passes without hindrance through
the sky of the scriptural pronouncements, dispelling the darkness
of the heart of grasping for extremes and outshining the
constellations of the speakers of distorted (views).

E4. One Should Rely on Qualified Teachers Who Can Expound These Treatises

Verse 51

Who dispels the darkness of extremist hearts
And outshines the constellations of false speakers –
When, through my teacher's kindness, I saw this
My mind found a rest at last.

D2. Remember the Buddha through His Teaching of Dependent Origination

Verse 52

Of all your deeds, your speech is supreme;
Within that too it is this very speech;
So the wise should remember the Buddha
Through this [teaching of dependent origination].

Of all your enlightening deeds, the deeds of your enlightening
speech are supreme. Because that indeed is (in reference to) this
very (teaching), learned ones, be continually mindful of Buddha
from this!

B5. Summary

Verse 53

Following such a teacher and having become a renunciate,
Having studied the Conqueror's words not too poorly,
This monk who strives in the yogic practices,
Such is [the depth of] his reverence to the great Seer!

In the footsteps of (you,) this Teacher, I became a monastic, and my study of (your) statements, Triumphant One, has not been poor. As a monk who makes effort in the actions of a yogi, I pay respect like this to (you,) that Great Seer.

A3. Ending

B1. Aspiration and Dedication

C1. Dedicate the Merits for All Beings to Be Sustained by Qualified Spiritual Masters

Verse 54

Since it is due to my teacher's kindness
I have met with the teaching of the unexcelled teacher,
I dedicate this virtue too towards the cause
For all beings to be sustained by sublime spiritual mentors.

To have met like this with the teachings of (you,) the Unsurpassable Teacher, is due to the kindness of my gurus. Thus, I dedicate this constructive force as a cause for all wandering beings, barring none, to be upheld by hallowed spiritual masters.

C2. Dedicate the Merits for the World to Be Filled With Those Who Find Conviction in the Dharma

Verse 55

May the teaching of this Beneficent One till world's end
Be unshaken by the winds of evil thoughts;
May it always be filled with those who find conviction
In the teacher by understanding the teaching's true nature.

Till the end of existence, may the teachings, as well, of (you,) that Benefactor, remain unshaken by the winds of misconception. And may they always be filled with those who have found confident belief in (you), their Teacher, by having understood this manner of (your) teachings.

C3. Dedicate the Merits for Having the Courage to Sacrifice Life to Uphold the Dharma in All Lifetimes without Slacking Off

Verse 56

May I never falter even for an instant
To uphold the excellent way of the Sage,
Which illuminates the principle of dependent origination,
Through all my births even giving away my body and life.

In all my lifetimes, may I uphold, even at the cost of my body or life, this excellent system of (you,) the Sage, which clarifies reality in terms of dependent arising, and never loosen (my hold), for even a mere instant.

C4. Dedicate the Merits for Being Able to Constantly Reflect on Skillful Means of Spreading the Dharma

Verse 57

May I spend day and night carefully reflecting,
“By what means can I enhance
This teaching achieved by the supreme savior
Through strenuous efforts over countless eons?”

May I spend day and night in examination, thinking of methods by which I can further these (teachings), which (you,) that Supreme Guide, realized by taking earnestly to heart immeasurable hardships.

C5. Dedicate the Merits for Being Protected by Dharmapalas When Practicing and Spreading the Dharma

Verse 58

As I strive in this with pure intention,
May Brahma, Indra and the world’s guardians
And protectors such as Mahakala
Unswervingly, always assist me.

When I make efforts in that manner, with pure exceptional resolve, may I always be unswervingly assisted by worldly protectors, such as Brahma and Indra, and guardians (of the Dharma), like Excellent Mahakala and the rest.

B2. Conclude by the Five Perfections of Writing Background

This hymn entitled “Essence of Well-Uttered Insights,” praising the unexcelled Teacher – the great friend to the entire world [even] to the unfamiliar – for teaching the profound dependent origination, was composed by the well-read monk Lobsang Drakpai Pal. It was written at the heavenly retreat of Lhading on the towerng mountain of Odé Gungyal, otherwise known as [Ganden] Nampar Gyalwai Ling. The scribe was Namkha Pal.

Translated from the Tibetan by Geshe Thupten Jinpa.

Geshe Thupten Jinpa’s version

This has been composed by the Buddhist monk Lozang-dragpa (Tsongkhapa).

Dr. Alexander Berzin’s version

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