The Sálistamba Sutra

Homage to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

1. Thus have I heard: [At one time,] the Lord was staying at Rájagr(i)ha on Vulture Peak Mountain with a large company of monks, 1,250 monks, and many Bodhisattvas, [Mahasattvas. At that time, the Venerable Sariputra approached the place frequented by Maitreya Bodhisattva-mahasattva. When he approached, they exchanged many kinds of good and joyful words, and sat down together on a flat stone.]

2. [Then] the Venerable Sariputra spoke thus to Maitreya Bodhisattva [Mahasattva: "Maitreya, here, today, the Lord,] looking upon a stalk of rice, spoke this aphorism to the monks: `Whoever, monks, sees conditioned arising sees Dharma, and whoever sees Dharma sees the Buddha.' Having said this, the Lord became silent. What [Maitreya,] is the meaning of the aphorism spoken by the Lord? What is conditioned arising? What is Dharma? What is the Buddha? How is it that seeing conditioned arising one sees Dharma? [How is it that seeing Dharma one sees the Buddha?]"

3. When this was said, Maitreya Bodhisattva-mahasattva spoke thus to the Venerable Sariputra: [Reverend Sariputra,] regarding what was said by the Lord, the master of Dharma, the omniscient: "He monks, who sees conditioned arising, sees Dharma, and he who sees Dharma, sees the Buddha." Therein, what is conditioned arising? [The phrase "conditioned arising" means: this being, that occurs; from the arising of this, that a- rises.] That is to say: ignorance conditions (mental) formations. (Mental) formations condition consciousness. Consciousness conditions name-and-form. Name-and-form conditions the six (sense) entrances. The six entrances condition contact. Contact conditions sensation. Sensation conditions desire. Desire conditions grasping. Grasping conditions becoming. Becoming conditions birth. Birth conditions decay and death, and grief, lamentation, suffering, depression and anxiety [arise. Thus the arising of this entire great mass of suffering occurs.]

4. [Similarly, from the cessation of ignorance there is the cessation of (mental) formations. From the cessation of (mental) formations there is the cessation of consciousness. From the cessation of consciousness there is the cessation of name-and-form. From the
cessation of name-and-form there is the cessation of the six (sense) entrances. From the cessation of the six (sense) entrances there is the cessation of contact. From the cessation of contact there is the cessation of sensation. From the cessation of sensation there is the cessation of desire. From the cessation of desire there is the cessation of grasping. From the cessation of grasping there is the cessation of becoming. From the cessation of becoming there is the cessation of birth. From the cessation of birth, decay and death, grief, lamentation, suffering, depression and anxiety] cease. Thus is the cessation of this entire great mass of suffering. This is called "conditioned arising" [by the Lord].

5. [What is Dharma? It is the Noble Eight-fold Path, namely: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. This Noble Eight-fold Path, the attainment of (its) fruit(s) and Nirvana rolled into one is called Dharma by the Lord.]

6. [What, then is the Buddha, the Lord? He who, because he comprehends all dharmas, is called the Buddha, is endowed with the wisdom-eye and the Dharma-body. He sees the dharmas of both the learner and the learned.]

7. How, then, does one see conditioned arising? In this connection, it is said by the Lord: "Whoever sees this conditioned arising (which is), always and ever devoid of soul, truly undistorted, without soul, unborn, not become, not made, not compounded, unobstructed, inconceivable, glorious, fearless, ungraspable, inexhaustible and by nature never stilled, (he sees Dharma). And whoever sees Dharma (which is) also always and ever devoid of soul ... and by nature never stilled, he sees the unsurpassable Dharma-body, the Buddha, by exertion based on right knowledge in clear understanding of the noble Dharma."

8. Why is it called conditioned arising? It is causal and conditional, not non-causal and non-conditional, [therefore it is called conditioned arising.]

9. [In this connection, the characteristics of conditioned arising are given in brief by the Lord:] "Results (come about by) specific conditionality. Whether or not Tathagatas arise, constant is this Dharma-nature, the constancy of Dharma, the law of Dharma, suchness, true suchness, changeless suchness, actuality, truth, (reality,) undistorted and immutable."
10. Furthermore, this conditioned arising arises from two (principles). From what two (principles does it arise)? From a causal relation and a conditional relation. Moreover, it should be seen as two-fold: objective and subjective.

11. What, then, is the causal relation in objective conditioned arising? It is as when a sprout comes from a seed, from the sprout a leaf, from the leaf a shoot, from the shoot a stalk, from the stalk (a swelling, from the swelling) a bud, from the bud (a calyx, from the calyx) a flower, and from the flower a fruit. When there is no seed, a sprout does not occur, and so on until: when there is no flower, a fruit does not occur. But when there is a seed, the development of a fruit occurs. It does not occur to the seed, "I cause the sprout to develop." Nor does it occur to the sprout, "I am developed by the seed", and so on until: it does not occur to the flower, "I cause the fruit to develop". Nor does it occur to the fruit, "I am developed by the flower". But still, when there is a seed, the development, the manifestation of the sprout occurs, and so on until: when there is a flower, the development, the manifestation of the fruit occurs. Thus is the causal relation in objective conditioned arising to be seen.

12. How is the conditional relation in objective conditioned arising to be seen? As the coming together of six factors. As the coming together of what six factors? Namely, as the coming together of the earth, water, heat, wind, space and season factors is the conditional relation in objective conditioned arising to be seen.

13. Therein, the earth-factor performs the function of supporting the seed. The water-factor waters the seed. The heat-factor matures the seed. The wind-factor brings out the seed. The space-factor performs the function of not obstructing the seed. Season performs the function of transforming the seed. Without these conditions, the development of the sprout from the seed does not occur. But when the objective earth-factor is not deficient, and likewise the water, heat, wind, space and season factors are not deficient, then from the coming together of all these, when the seed is ceasing the development of the sprout occurs.
14. It does not occur to the earth-factor, "I perform the function of supporting the seed", and so on until: it does not occur to season, "I perform the function of transforming the seed". Nor does it occur to the sprout, "I am born by way of these conditions". But still, when there are these conditions, when the seed is ceasing the development of the sprout occurs. And this sprout is not self-made, not made by another, not made by both, not made by God, not transformed by time, not derived from prakrti (=material substance?), not founded upon a single principle, (yet not arisen without cause). From the coming together of the earth, water, heat, wind, space and season factors, when the seed is ceasing the development of the sprout occurs. Thus is the conditional relation in objective conditioned arising to be seen.

15. Therein objective conditioned arising is to be seen according to five principles: What five? Not as eternity, not as annihilation, not as transmigration (of any essence), as the development of a large fruit from a small cause, and as (a result) bound to be similar to that (its cause).

16. How is it (to be seen) as "not eternity"? Because the sprout is one (thing) and the seed another. That which is the seed is not the sprout. But still, the seed ceases, and the sprout arises. Therefore eternity is not (the case).

17. How is it (to be seen) as "not annihilation"? Not from the previous cessation of the seed does the sprout issue forth, nor indeed without the cessation of the seed. But still the seed ceases, and at just that time the sprout arises, like the beam of a scale rocking to and fro. Therefore annihilation is not (the case).

18. How is it (to be seen) as "not transmigration"? The seed and sprout are dissimilar. Therefore transmigration is not (the case).

19. How is it (to be seen) as the development of a large fruit from a small cause? "A small seed is sown, and it causes a large fruit to develop." Therefore it is (to be seen) as the development of a large fruit from a small cause.

20. How is it (to be seen) as (a result) bound to be similar to that (its cause)? "Whatever type of seed is sown, it causes that type of fruit to develop." Therefore it is (to be seen) as
Thus is objective conditioned arising to be seen according to five principles.

21. Thus subjective conditioned arising also arises from two principles. From what two? From a causal relation and a conditional relation.

22. What, then, is the causal relation in subjective conditioned arising? It is as follows: Ignorance conditions (mental) formations. (Mental) formations condition consciousness. Consciousness conditions name-and-form. Name-and-form conditions the six (sense) entrances. The six (sense) entrances condition contact. Contact conditions sensation. Sensation conditions desire. Desire conditions grasping. Grasping conditions becoming. Becoming conditions birth. Birth conditions decay and death, and grief, lamentation, suffering, depression and anxiety come to be. Thus the arising of this entire great mass of suffering occurs. Were there no ignorance, (mental) formations would not be known, and so on until: were there no birth, decay and death would not be known. But when there is ignorance, the development of (mental) formations occurs, and so on until: when there is birth, the development of decay and death occurs. Herein, it does not occur to ignorance, "I cause the (mental) formations to develop". Nor does it occur to the (mental) formations, "We are developed by ignorance", and so on until: it does not occur to birth, "I develop decay and death". Nor does it occur to decay and death, "I am developed by birth". But still, when there is ignorance, the development, the manifestation of (mental) formations occurs, and so on until: when there is birth, the development, the manifestation of decay and death occurs. Thus is the causal relation in subjective conditioned arising to be seen.

23. How is the conditional relation in subjective conditioned arising to be seen? As due to the coming together of six factors. As due to the coming together of what six factors? Namely as due to the coming together of the earth, water, heat, wind, space and consciousness factors is the conditional relation in subjective conditioned arising to be seen.

24. Therein, what is the earth-factor in subjective conditioned arising? That which, by conglomeration, causes the solid nature of the body to develop, is called the earth-factor. That which performs the cohesion-function of the body is called the water factor. That which digests what is eaten, drunk or consumed for the body is called the heat-factor. That
which performs the body's function of inhalation and exhalation is called the wind-factor. That which causes hollowness to develop inside the body is called the space-factor. That which causes name-and-form to develop (mutually supported) like reeds in a sheaf is called the consciousness-factor, associated with the five consciousness bodies and defiled mind-consciousness. Without these conditions, the arising of the body does not occur. But if the subjective earth-factor is not deficient, and likewise the water, heat, wind, space and consciousness factors are not deficient, then, because of all these factors coming together, the arising of the body occurs.

25. Therein, it does not occur to the earth-factor, "I cause the solid nature of the body to develop". Nor does it occur to the water-factor, "I perform the cohesion-function of the body". Nor does it occur to the heat-factor, "I digest what is eaten, drunk or consumed for the body". Nor does it occur to the wind-factor, "I perform the body's function of inhalation and exhalation". Nor does it occur to the space-factor, "I cause hollowness to develop inside the body". Nor does it occur to the consciousness-factor, "I cause the body to develop". Nor does it occur to the body, "I am born by way of these conditions". But still, when there are these conditions, because of their coming together, the arising of the body occurs.

26. Therein, the earth-factor is not self, not a being, not a soul, not a creature, not human, not a person, not female, not male, not neuter, not "I", not "mine", and not any other's. Likewise the water-factor, heat-factor, wind-factor, space-factor, and consciousness-factor are not self, not a being, not a soul, not a creature, not human, not a person, not female, not male, not neuter, not "I", not "mine", and not any other's.

27. Therein, what is ignorance? That which perceives these same six factors as a unit, as a lump, as permanent, as constant, as eternal, as pleasant, as self, as a being, a soul, a person, a human, a man, as making "I" or making "mine" and so on into manifold misapprehension, that is called ignorance. When there is this ignorance, greed, hatred and delusion develop in (relation to) the (sense) spheres. Greed, hatred and delusion in (relation to) the (sense) spheres are called (mental) formations. The discrete appearance of objects is consciousness. The four non-material grasping-aggregates which arise together with consciousness are name. (Name) together with the four great elements and
derived matter is name-and-form. The (sense) faculties connected with name-and-form are the six (sense) entrances. The conjunction of three things is contact. The experience of contact is sensation. Clinging to sensation is desire. The expansion of desire is grasping. Action, born out of grasping and giving rise to rebirth, is becoming. The manifestation of the aggregates caused by becoming is birth. The maturing of the born aggregates is decay. The perishing of the worn out aggregates is death. The internal burning of the deluded, attached, dying (person) is grief. Giving vent to grief is lamentation. The experience of unpleasantness associated with the five consciousness bodies is suffering. Mental suffering associated with the mind is depression. And whatever other subtle defilements there are of this sort are anxiety.

28. (It is called) ignorance in the sense of making a great blindness, (mental) formations in the sense of formation, consciousness in the sense of causing to know, name-and-form in the sense of mutual support, six (sense) entrances in the sense of entrance doors, (sensual) contact in the sense of contacting, feelings in the sense of experiencing, desire in the sense of thirsting, grasping in the sense of grasping, becoming in the sense of giving birth to repeated becoming, birth in the sense of manifestation of the aggregates, decay in the sense of maturing of the aggregates, death in the sense of perishing, grief in the sense of grieving, lamentation in the sense of verbal lamentation, suffering in the sense of bodily torment, depression in the sense of mental torment, anxiety in the sense of subtle defilement.

29. Otherwise, not arriving at reality, arriving at falsehood, misapprehension is ignorance. Thus, when there is ignorance, the three-fold (mental) formations develop: leading to advantage leading to disadvantage, and leading to stability. (As a result) of the (mental) formations leading to advantage, advantageous consciousness occurs. (As a result) of the (mental) formations leading to disadvantage, disadvantageous consciousness occurs. (As a result) of the (mental) formations leading to stability, stable consciousness occurs. This is called consciousness conditioned by (mental) formations. As for consciousness-conditioned name-and-form, the four non-material aggregates, sensations etc., cause bending into existence here and there, and so are called name. (This) name, which accompanies form, plus form (itself) is called name-and-form. By the growth of name-and-form, through the six (sense) entrance doors, activities develop. This is called, the six (sense) entrances conditioned by name-and-form. Because of the six (sense) entrances,
the six contact bodies develop. This is called contact conditioned by the six (sense) entrances. Whatever type of contact occurs, that type of sensation develops. This is called sensation conditioned by contact. That which, by discriminating those sensations, causes one to relish, that which delights, clings, and clinging remains, that is called desire conditioned by sensations. (Thus) relishing, delighting and clinging, there is non-renunciation, the repeated wish: "May these dear forms, delightful forms not be separated from me". This is called grasping conditioned by desire. This wishing causes rebirth-producing karma to arise by means of body, speech and mind. This is called becoming conditioned by grasping. The development of the aggregates born (as a result) of that karma is called birth conditioned by becoming. Due to increase and maturity, the perishing of the aggregates developed by birth occurs. This is called decay and death conditioned by birth.

30. Thus, this twelve-fold conditioned arising with interdependence of causes and interdependence of conditions, not impermanent, not permanent, not compounded, not uncompounded, not without cause, not without condition not an experiencer, not a destructable thing, not a ceasing thing, not a perishable thing, not proceeding from premordial time, not cut off, rolls along like a flowing stream.

31. As this conditioned arising, not cut off, rolls along like a flowing stream, four limbs of this twelve-fold conditioned arising develop through (the process of) causality for (performing) the action of assembling. What four? Namely: ignorance, desire, karma and consciousness.

32. Therein, consciousness is a cause by being of the nature of a seed. Karma is a cause by being of the nature of a field. Ignorance and desire are a cause by being of the nature of defilement. Karma-defilements cause the consciousness-seed to be born. Therein, karma performs the function of being the field of the consciousness-seed. Desire waters the consciousness-seed. Ignorance scatters the consciousness-seed. Without these conditions, the development of the consciousness-seed does not occur.

33. Therein, it does not occur to karma, "I perform the function of being the field of the consciousness-seed." It does not occur to desire, "I water the consciousness-seed." It
does not occur to ignorance, "I scatter the consciousness-seed." Nor does it occur to the consciousness-seed, "I am born by (way of) these conditions."

34. And so, the consciousness-seed grows, standing in the karma-field, watered by the moisture of desire, scattered by ignorance. Here and there in the entrances of arising, it causes the sprout of name-and-form to develop through rebirth in a mother's womb. And this sprout of name-and-form is not self made, not made by another, not made by both, not made by God, not transformed by time, not derived from prakrti, not founded upon a single principle, yet not arisen without cause. And so from the union of the mother and father in the (fertile) period, and by the conjunction of other conditions, the consciousness-seed, permeated by appetite, causes the sprout of name-and-form to develop in a mother's womb, in (relation to) things (which are) not governed, not "mine" not possessed, (not opposed,) like space, of the nature of the marks of illusion, due to the non-deficiency of causes and conditions.

35. Furthermore, eye-consciousness arises by way of five principles. What five? Namely, conditioned by eye, form, light, space, and appropriate attention, eye-consciousness arises. Therein, the eye performs the function of being the basis of eye-consciousness. Form performs the function of being the object. Light performs the function of illumination. Space performs the function of uncovering. Appropriate attention performs the function of reflection. Without these conditions, eye-consciousness does not arise. But if the subjective eye-entrance is not deficient, and form, light, space and appropriate attention are not deficient, then, from the conjunction of all these, eye-consciousness arises. Therein, it does not occur to the eye, "I perform the function of being the basis of eye-consciousness". Nor does it occur to form, "I perform the function of being the object of eye-consciousness". Nor does it occur to light, "I perform the function of the illumination of eye-consciousness." Nor does it occur to space, "I perform the uncovering-function of eye-consciousness". Nor does it occur to appropriate attention, "I perform the reflection-function of eye-consciousness". Nor does it occur to eye-consciousness, "I am born by way of these conditions". But still, there being these conditions, the arising of eye-consciousness occurs because of their conjunction. Thus, a corresponding (analysis) of the remaining (sense) faculties should be done.
36. Therein, there is nothing whatsoever that transmigrates from this world to another world. There is (only) the appearance of the fruit of karma, because of the non-deficiency of causes and conditions. It is, monks, like the reflection of a face seen in a well-polished mirror. No face transmigrates into the mirror, but there is the appearance of a face because of the non-deficiency of causes and conditions. Thus there is nothing departed from this world, nor arisen elsewhere. There is (only) the appearance of the fruit of karma, because of the non-deficiency of causes and conditions.

37. It is, (monks,) like the moon-disk which wanders 4,000 leagues above, and yet again the moon's reflection is seen in a small pool of water. It does not depart from its station (in the sky) above and transmigrate into the small pool of water, but there is the appearance of the moon-disk, because of the non-deficiency of causes and conditions. Thus, there is nothing departed from this world, nor arisen elsewhere. (There is (only) the appearance of the fruit of karma, because of the non-deficiency of causes and conditions.)

38. Just as when there is fuel as a condition, fire burns, (and) if fuel is deficient, it does not burn; even so does the consciousness-seed, born of karma-defilements, cause the sprout of name-and-form to develop here and there in the entrances of arising, through rebirth in a mother's womb, in (relation to) things (which are) not governed, not "mine", not possessed, (not opposed,) like space, of the nature of the marks of illusion, due to the non-deficiency of causes and conditions. Thus is the conditional relation in subjective conditioned arising to be seen.

39. Furthermore, subjective conditioned arising is to be seen according to five principles. What five? Not as eternity, not as annihilation, not as transmigration, as the development of a large fruit from a small cause, and as (a result) bound to be similar to that (its cause).

40. How (is it to be seen) as "not eternity"? Because the aggregates on the edge of death are one thing, and the aggregates sharing arising are another. The aggregates on the edge of death are not (identical to) those sharing arising. But still, the aggregates on the edge of death cease, (and) the aggregates sharing arising become manifest. Therefore eternity is not (the case).
41. How (is it to be seen) as "not annihilation"? The aggregates sharing arising do not become manifest from the previous cessation of the aggregates on the edge of death, nor without this cessation. But still, the aggregates on the edge of death cease, and at just that time, the aggregates sharing arising become manifest, like the beam of a scale rocking to and fro. Therefore, annihilation is not (the case).

42. How (is it to be seen) as "not transmigration"? Dissimilar species cause birth to develop in a common category of birth. Therefore transmigration is not (the case).

43. How (is it to be seen) as "the development of a large fruit from a small cause"? A small deed (karma) is done, and a large resultant fruit is experienced. Therefore, "the development of a large fruit from a small cause" is (the case).

44. How (is it to be seen) as "(an effect) bound to be similar to that (its cause)". Whatever type of deed (karma) is done, that (same) type of result is experienced. There, (the effect) is bound to be similar to that (its cause). (Thus is subjective conditioned arising to be seen in five ways.)

45. Whoever, Venerable Sariputra, with perfect wisdom, sees this conditioned arising, perfectly set forth by the Lord, as it actually is: always and ever without soul, devoid of soul, truly undistorted, unborn, not become, not made, not compounded, unobstructed, unobscured, glorious, fearless, ungraspable, inexhaustable and by nature never stilled, (whoever) sees it well and fully as unreal, as vanity, void, unsubstantial, as a sickness, a boil, a dart, as dangerous, impermanent, suffering, as empty and without self; such a one does not reflect upon the past (thinking): "Was I in the past, or was I not? What was I in the past? How was I in the past?" Nor again does he reflect upon the future (thinking): "Will I be in the future, or will I not be? What will I be in the future? How will I be in the future?" Nor again does he reflect upon the present (thinking): "What is this? How is this? Being what, what will we become? Where does this being come from? Where will it go when departed from here?"

46. Whatever dogmas the common world's ascetics and priests hold, that is to say, (dogmas) related to: belief in self, [belief in a "being"] belief in soul, [belief in a "person"] rites and rituals, these (dogmas) were abandoned at that time, fully recognized (as false),
cut off at the root, withered like the plume of a Taliput palm, dharmas never to arise or cease (again) in the future.

47. [Whosoever, Venerable Sariputra, thus endowed with patience in the Dharma, understands conditioned arising perfectly, for him the Tathagata, the Noble One, the perfectly, completely enlightened one, endowed with (perfect) wisdom and conduct, the Wellfarer, knower of (all) worlds, incomparable charioteer of men needing taming, teacher of gods and men, the Buddha, the Lord, predicts unsurpassable perfect, complete enlightenment (saying): "He will become a perfect, complete Buddha!"

48a. (Then indeed, the Venerable Sariputra, delighted and joyful at the words of Maitreya Bodhisattva-mahasattva, rose from his seat, and the other monks also departed.)

48b. [Thus spoke Maitreya Bodhisattva-mahasattva, and the Venerable Sariputra, together with the world of gods, men, titans and sprites, delighted, rejoiced at the words of Maitreya Bodhisattva-mahasattva.]

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