

## Appendix B

### Author's Reply (2) to the Editor of *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Studies*

This is the second letter to the editor of *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Studies* from the author of *The Definition of Being in The Agama Sutras*.

**To: The Editor of *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Studies***

**Article's title: The Definition of Being in *The Agama Sutras***

The reviewer's comments on my article include three parts: 1. the comments on my first reply of the review result (referred as the Reply hereafter), 2. the first review comment letter (referred as the Comment Letter 1 hereafter), and 3. the second review comment letter (referred as the Comment Letter 2 hereafter). I would like to integrate and reply to their comments in this letter.

I agree with the reviewer that the three-ways-of-knowing are indeed the standards of evaluation. Nevertheless, I have reservations about the review statement of "The theoretical realization is enough for the discussion of the truth," which is deficient in empirical evidence to confirm this realization. As I emphasize in my paper the Western definition of the "truth" should be based on "personal realization" and that is a defect of Western theology. I appreciate the reviewer's valuable comments and I would like to respond in the following.

1. **The third paragraph in the Reply states, "The '-er' in the critical word of 'the true dweller' mentioned in your article and *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 37, is in fact a pronoun or auxiliary word rather than a 'noun.' 'True-dwelling' is used as an adjective 'dwelling' and is equivalent to 'sassata (permanently dwelling)' in Pali."**

My response:

It is true that the “-er” in the critical word of “the true dweller” in my article is certainly a pronoun. It means “the dharma of neither-arising-nor-ceasing.” The “-er” in the sutra, stated in the Reply as “*aviparinama-dhamma*,” represents an unchangeable thing. To avoid using the word “thing” for “the dharma of neither-arising-nor-ceasing”, I use the pronoun “dweller” because “the dharma of neither-arising-nor-ceasing” is not “a thing” in the three realms. All things in the three realms are “the arising-and-ceasing dharmas.” To avoid any possible misunderstanding, I use the pronoun “dweller,” which is consistent with the wording in the sutra. One should note that “permanency, everlastingness, unchangeableness and true dwelling” are all the attributes of “the neither-arising-nor-ceasing dharma.” Instead of using the “permanencer,” “everlaster” or “unchanger,” the “true dweller” is used in my paper to represent “the neither-arising-nor-ceasing dharma” for consistency.

**2. In the Reply, the reviewer discourses upon *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 37. Due to the limited space and for saving your time, I will not quote all comments.**

My response:

Basically, I agree with reviewer’s word-by-word explanation to *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 37. However, we should not overlook the philosophic meaning of the proposition of “being” in this whole sutra. Therefore, the comments in the Reply on the contents of *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutras 37 and 297, and *Samyutta-nikaya*, S.22:94 and S.12:20, are the problem of interpretation rather than textual contrast of translations.

*Atthi* is “being.” The third point of the Comment Letter 2 states, “*Na atthi* (equivalent to ‘*na asti*’ in Sanskrit) means ‘is not’ or ‘does not exist’ in English.” Therefore, *atthi* also has the meaning of “existence.” Obviously, the meaning of *atthi* is either “existence” or “being,” representing different terminologies in different fields for the same proposition of “being.” I use over thirteen hundred words in my paper to expound the philosophic proposition of “being” or “existence” and use “ontology (being/existence)” to express “being” or “existence.” Actually, both point to the same proposition. For instance, the word “being” is used in Europe and “existence” is used in the U.S.; “*sein*” is used in German, “*atthi*” is used in Pali and “*asti*” is used in Sanskrit. Despite many different terms, but they all point to the same proposition. But one must note that “being”, be, *atthi* or *asti* is usually ignored in the language and presentation due to its generality rather than its non-existence.

To address the proposition of “ontology,” one must clarify the feature of the contradiction in semantics. This contradiction in semantics, which is studied in the “analytic philosophy” mentioned in my paper, is the first topic that must be addressed in the proposition of “ontology.” Discussing on this kind of contradiction in semantics can also be found in *The Agama Sutras*. In the literature, the same research on the contradiction in semantics was first studied by Kant

(1724 – 1804) in the eighteenth century and then extensively explored in the twentieth century. Shi Yinshun was sensible of this kind of contradiction in semantics. For example, he stated:

**The existence of things always includes contradiction by its nature; the statement of “this arising causing that arising” has already decided the destination of the statement “this ceasing causing that ceasing.” This is the truth of all phenomena. Buddha did not create it. He just manifested and set it as the second rule of dependent-arising.<sup>1</sup>**

The treatment of the proposition of “being” in *The Kindred Sayings* is obviously compared with the whole passage to manifest its meaning. The theory of the analytic philosophy is, “If someone wants to express ‘something not existing’, in fact he must have an idea of ‘that thing existing’ in his mind already. If he does not have any idea about ‘the existence of something,’ it is impossible for him to understand ‘the non-existence of that thing.’” This is a basic knowledge of the analytic philosophy. In the book of *Being, Identity, and Truth*, by Williams, 1992, lots of supporting materials can be found. The example of the proposition of “being” can be also found in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 37, or *Samyutta-nikaya*, XXII. 94, as follows:

- (a) Form is an impermanent, suffering and changeable dharma (not the attributes of being); the mundane wise say it is being (*atthi/asti/be/exist*) and I say it is being as well.
- (b) Sensation, perception, formation and consciousness are impermanent, suffering and changeable dharmas (not the attributes of being); the mundane wise say they are being (*atthi/asti/be/exist*) and I say they are being as well.
- (c) Form is permanent, everlasting, unchangeable and truly dwelling (the attributes of being); the mundane wise say it is nothingness (*na atthi/na asti/not be/not exist*) and I say it is nothingness as well.
- (d) Sensation, perception, formation and consciousness are permanent, everlasting, unchangeable and truly dwelling (the attributes of being); the mundane wise say they are nothingness (*na atthi/na asti/not be/not exist*) and I say they are nothingness as well.

In the sutra, the contrast between “impermanent, suffering and changeable” (not the attributes of being) and “being” (*atthi/asti/be/exist*) is manifested, and the same for “permanent, everlasting, unchangeable and truly dwelling” (the attributes of being) and “nothingness” (*na atthi/na asti/not be/not exist*). This is exactly the proposition of “being.” It explains why I mention the statement of “Socrates exists” many times in my article. They are all the propositions of “being.” Both the statements of (a) and (b) do not have the attributes of “being”, but the mundane wise say they are “being” or “existence.” That represents very clearly the contradiction of the wording of the

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Yinshun, *Exploring the Theory of the Emptiness of Natures*, Zhengwen Publishing Co. (Taipei), 1992, p.55. Only the importance of contradiction in semantics is explored and proved here. I do not comment on whether Shi Yinshun’s discourse is correct or not.

mundane wise. The reviewer may only focus on the general meaning of the statements (c) and (d), but may neglect the real important meaning expressed in the entire four statements (a), (b), (c) and (d). These four statements manifest the contradiction of the wording of the mundane wise and imply their ignorance on the origin of the universe—"the being of Principle."

The examples and explanation can help people understand the meaning of the contrast. In *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 37, the adjectives of "permanent, everlasting, unchangeable and truly dwelling" are used to describe the attributes of the origin of the universe and life. Anything that conforms to these attributes is the origin of the universe and life. It is very valuable that Buddhism intensively explored the proposition of "being" in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 37, two thousand and three hundred more years earlier than the appearance of the Western "analytic philosophy."

The reviewer provides evidence in the Reply to support my viewpoint; as stated in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 264, "Self is unattainable; if it is attainable, it is the permanent, everlasting, unchangeable and truly dwelling dharma." Here, Buddha clearly explained that the "self" in the five-aggregates is unattainable. "If anyone can find the permanent, everlasting, unchangeable and truly dwelling dharma beyond the five-aggregates, it is the real 'self.'" This evidence conforms to my assertion. Then, the question is, "Can anyone find it?" The answer is "Yes." In *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 293, it states, "Buddha tells that *bhiksu* the saints and sages correspond with the supra-mundane emptiness and it is the dharma of following conditions for all dependent-arising." It means the persons who can find (correspond with) the supra-mundane emptiness are the saints and sages in Buddhism. This sutra clearly states that "the permanent, everlasting, unchangeable and truly dwelling dharma" is personally realizable.

In *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 293, it states, "Dependent-arising is very difficult to understand; but the leaving of grasp, exhausting of attachment, no-desire and tranquility, and nirvana are even doubly difficult. For such two kinds of dharmas, one is 'conditioned,' and the other is 'unconditioned.' The conditioned dharma is arising, dwelling, changing and ceasing; the unconditioned dharma is non-arising, non-dwelling, unchanging and non-ceasing. This is called the *bhiksu*'s all deeds being tranquility and nirvana."

The sutra states "all dharmas" and "nirvana" are "the conditioned" and "the unconditioned" dharmas respectively. Dependent-arising dharmas have the scope of "being" of all three realms, and thus they are called "all dharmas." On the other hand, "nirvana" is beyond "all dharmas." This is the set theory of Buddhism—the set of "the conditioned" dharmas versus the set of "the unconditioned dharma," the set of "all dharmas" versus the set of "nirvana," and the set of "being and nothingness" versus the set of "the true dweller." There is no intersection between any two corresponding sets. "All dharmas" do not include "nirvana." Because the World-honored One was the supra-mundane wise person, He could personally realize what the mundane wise could not see. Therefore, when the World-honored One told people to eliminate "all dharmas," He implied there

is “nirvana,” which is non-extinctive. This is the definition that all three-vehicle sutras follow. Thus, the contrast stated in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 37, is to describe the definition of “all dharmas” according to the scope of “the mundane wise.” This definition is the same as what the mundane wise define. Then, what do “the supra-mundane wise” see? What is the difference between “the supra-mundane wise” and “the mundane wise?” What “the supra-mundane wise” have seen is “the supra-mundane emptiness (nature).” This “supra-mundane emptiness,” “the true dweller,” is exactly the difference between the supra-mundane wise and the mundane wise. The definition of “all dharmas” is a basic knowledge in Buddhism. But obviously, in Item 2 of the Comment Letter 2, the reviewer disagrees with this common definition of “being and nothingness” (i.e., all dharmas) being the scope that the mundane wise can understand.

In the Reply, the reviewer claims the meaning in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 37, or *Samyutta-nikaya* as “Both the World-honored One and the mundane wise agreed there is no ‘permanent, everlasting, unchangeable and true dweller.’” In Item 2 of the Comment Letter 2, the reviewer also claims, “Subsequently, the sutra states, ‘What are the world and the mundane dharmas? I recognize and perceive it in person. I preach, expound and manifest it to the people. ...’ (*Taisho Tripitaka*, 2.8bc) This statement formally explains that the content of Buddha’s self perception, which the mundane wise cannot perceive, is only ‘the impermanent, suffering and changeable dharmas’ of form, sensation, perception, formation and consciousness. It does not state there is the being of Principle that is ‘permanent, everlasting, unchangeable and truly dwelling’ and is the permanent origin of the arising of the five aggregates.”

Nevertheless, in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 293, it states clearly that “nirvana” or named “supra-mundane emptiness” is the neither-arising-nor-ceasing dharma. This statement contradicts the reviewer’s claim of having no “permanent, everlasting, unchangeable, and truly dwelling” dharma. In addition, *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 37 states, “*Bhikshus!* What are the world and the mundane dharmas? I preach, expound and manifest to the people what I have personally realized and perceived. But the blind persons cannot recognize or see it.” (CBETA, T02, no. 99, p. 8, b29-c1) That is, “Why do this universe and life arise, cease and change like this way? I recognize it and expound it to the people with the hope that they can recognize and see it as well. The blind persons cannot recognize or see it (the origin of the universe and life that I want to tell them).” Here, the World-honored One clearly said that He differed from the mundane wise, but the reviewer claims, “There is no permanent, everlasting, unchangeable, and truly dwelling dharma.” The persons with this perception are exactly those whom the World-honored One blamed. Form, sensation, perception, formation and consciousness of the five aggregates are “suffering, empty and impermanent;” and all the mundane wise recognized them too. But only Buddha recognized and perceived what the mundane wise could not recognize or see. If what Buddha recognized but the

mundane wise could not recognize equals to what the mundane wise recognized, what kind of inferential logic is it?

If what Buddha recognized was the same as what the mundane wise recognized and nothing more than that, it implies that the World-honored One is a “mundane wise person” rather than a “supra-mundane wise person.” If this were true, the reviewer might kindly provide more evidence from the sutras to support this claim. Then, it would be a great discovery in the Buddhist academia.

My assertion of “all dharmas being dependant-arising means ‘the conditioned dharmas only’ and does not include ‘the unconditioned dharma’” is supported by Yang. The paper of “*Idappaccayata*” (*The Nature of Dependence*) of *Dependent-Arising*, by Yang Yuwen, *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal*, Issue no. 9,<sup>2</sup> states in the table of page 8, “All (conditioned) dharmas are dependent-arising.” Here, Yang correctively understands the definition of “all dharmas” in Buddhism. This definition also conforms to the important saying of “the conditioned” and “the unconditioned” dharmas in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 293. If *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 37 only stated “the conditioned dharmas” of “being and nothingness,” “the content that Buddha uniquely recognized” would equal to “the content that the mundane wise recognized” and it would become an irrational saying.

The above discussion reflects that the problem is caused by the interpretation rather than the textual contrast in Pali.

**3. In the Comment Letter 2, the reviewer brings up *Samyutta-nikaya*, XXII.94, the English version, stating “Form that is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change; this the wise in the world agree upon as not existing, and I too say that it does not exist.” Subsequently, the reviewer states, “That is to say, ‘there is no permanent, everlasting, truly dwelling and unchangeable form dharma.’ It is obviously a simple negative sentence, but the author explains that there exists ‘the permanent, everlasting, unchangeable and true dweller’ in the arising-and-ceasing of the five aggregates. Although the author uses the term ‘being’ or ‘the being of Principle,’ no document supports it because the original Pali ‘*na atthi*’ is a simple verb and there is no nounized form of it.”**

My response:

Since the “permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change” are the attributes of “being,” the proposition of “Form that is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change,” is exactly equal to the proposition of “Form that is being/existence.” I replace “permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change” with “being/existence” so that the reviewer can easily identify “being.” It does not need

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<sup>2</sup> Yang Yuwen, “*Idappaccayata*” of *Dependent-Arising*, *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal*, Issue no. 9.

to start the discussion of a “noun” with the condition of seeing exactly the “noun” in the sutras.

It is well known that if both a “thing” and “being” have exactly identical attributes, then it can be claimed that the “thing” is the “being.” This is very simple logic. It is groundless that the discussion of “being” must have the term of exactly “b-e-i-n-g” or the noun of *atthi/asti* to claim “being.” For example, when one describes a “sea wave” with the sentence of “running with no feet, roaring with no mouth, and doing a flip with no ass,”<sup>3</sup> it would be an academic joke if anyone says that there is no word like “sea” or “wave” in the sentence and there are only the verbs “run,” “roar” and “do a flip” rather than the nouns, and negates this sentence describing the noun “sea wave.” It is really regretful that the professors and scholars in the committee of The Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies cannot understand it at all. I would like to assume that the committee’s misunderstanding is just a single case.

Why is the discussion of “form” the proposition of “being?” In Greek philosophy, “earth, water, fire and wind” are claimed as “being.” In Indian philosophy, “the extremely minute heretics” regard “form” as the origin of the universe and life because of its continuous appearing. The statement of “Form that is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change,” in *Samyutta-nikaya*, XXII.94, is the proposition of “being” and used to refute the heretics. The World-honored One refuted the claim of “the extremely minute heretics” with the reason that the attributes of “form” do not conform to the attributes of “being.” The evidence shows that the supporting reference does exist in the literature rather than “There is no supporting reference in the documents,” as stated by the reviewer.

**4. Comment Letter 2 states, “The author uses much space to introduce the origin and the meaning of ‘being’ in Western philosophy. But during discussing the definition of ‘being’ in *The Agama Sutras*, he does not explain the usage and the origin of ‘being’ in the original text at all. It may cause the readers to have the impression that the author irrationally imposes the concept of Western philosophy on the explanation of the Buddhist sutras.”**

My response:

The preface of my article states, “For the phenomena of the universe and life that we observe, the truth of the origin should be unique.” The classification of the Eastern or Western philosophy, or others will not change this fact. For example, from the philosophic essence, what is the difference between the stars and life that the Easterners see in the west and that the Westerners see in the east? The truth or fact should be unique regardless of the Western or Eastern environment. This is the basic knowledge of philosophy but unfortunately the committee does not agree with it.

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<sup>3</sup> This is a Taiwanese riddle, “sea wave.”

Comment Letter 2 states, “The author uses much space to introduce the origin and the meaning of ‘being’ in Western philosophy.” Then, why do I “not explain the usage and the origin of being in the original text at all?” Does it imply the exploration of the origin of the universe and life in Western philosophy differs from that in Eastern philosophy? If the definitions of “the origin of the universe and life” in the Eastern and the Western philosophies are different, it means there are more than two kinds of “true reality” in the world and both the Eastern and the Western cause-and-effect rules should be different. But from the fact, we can find both are the same. That explains why I “use much space to introduce the origin and the meaning of ‘being’ in Western philosophy.” I think I have fulfilled my responsibility to “introduce” the definition of “being” in my article even though the reviewer may currently not agree with this interpretation. The nature of publication, however, is to encourage free discourse and discussion of controversial issues such as these. Only by publication and through public discourse can these issues and philosophies be developed and shared.

The reviewer states, “The author irrationally imposes the concept of Western philosophy on the explanation of the Buddhist sutras.” The reviewer’s argument results from his limited knowledge and wrong views. It is well documented that the research methods of philology, the publication of journals, the format of papers or the Buddhist academic research, etc., all are based on Western philosophy, rather than “irrationally imposed with the concept of Western philosophy.” The reviewer’s argument could imply the following studies of Shi Shengyen and Smart (1927 – 2001) all are irrational.

Shi Shengyen is trying to communicate with the world. The religionists and philosophers in the whole world also try to exceed their own fields, to resolve different opinions, and to improve mutual understanding in order to avoid religious wars. (In fact, the war between the U.S. and Iraq is another kind of religious wars.) For example, Smart, referred in my paper, is a famous international religious scholar, who endeavored to do the cross-religion research and has been called “the father of religious research.” Given the fact that many religious and philosophic scholars have done lots of cross-field research and writings, it is unfair to criticize them as “irrationally imposing the concept of Western philosophy on the explanation of the Buddhist sutras.”

**5. Comment Letter 2 states, “The so-called ‘the being of Principle’ and the according establishment of three necessary conditions are wrong and over-explanations to the sutras. The judging rules of ‘non-aggregate’ and ‘not-off-aggregate’ are very similar to ‘the self of neither-aggregate-nor-off-aggregate’ in *Vatsiputriya* of Sectarian Buddhism. The author’s explanation of ‘the true dweller’ is exactly the misunderstanding of Buddha’s saying in *Vatsiputriya*.”**

My response:

I cannot agree the reviewer's comment. It is not appropriate to comment on *Vatsiputriya* here since it is such a huge issue. Let's use another passage in *The Kindred Sayings of Sarvastivadah* (not *Vatsiputriya*), Sutra 293, to prove why the judging rules of "permanency," "non-aggregate" and "not-off-aggregate" are correct. *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 293 states that all dharmas are conditioned, while the supra-mundane emptiness is unconditioned; the supra-mundane emptiness is neither-arising-nor-ceasing with the "permanency;" because all dharmas can be extinguished but the supra-mundane emptiness cannot, the "supra-mundane emptiness is not an aggregate." The supra-mundane emptiness is "permanent" and always exists even before the extinction of all dharmas; the supra-mundane emptiness follows the dependent-arising conditions (will be explained later); it does not leave any aggregate. Therefore, the three judging rules of "permanency," "non-aggregate" and "not-off-aggregate" can be used to prove "the being of Principle" in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 293. These are the consistent operative definitions in three-vehicle Buddhism and do not belong to a specific sect or school.

Based on our agreement of using three-ways-of-knowing (personal experience, logical inference and ultimate teachings) as the criteria, the reviewer cannot find anything wrong with my proposed three operative judging rules. But the reviewer concludes, "It is very similar to 'the self of neither-aggregate-nor-off-aggregate' in *Vatsiputriya* of Sectarian Buddhism." The phrase "very similar to" may be positive or negative. The reviewer uses the uncertainty of "very similar to" to infer a certainty of "the misunderstanding of Buddha's saying in *Vatsiputriya*" in the conclusion and violates the common agreement on the three-ways-of-knowing. This comment of "wrong and over-explanations to the sutras" cannot be justified by my previous discourse and references.

**6. Comment Letter 1 states, "But the problem is, 'Buddhism, from *The Agama Sutras* to Sectarian or even to the Mahayana sutras, all discusses the dependent-arising dharmas and the existence of mundane phenomena only. Such as *The Great Sun Sutra*, *The Lotus Sutra* or *The Treatise on Awakening of Faith*, all states in this scope of dependent-arising dharmas although the substance, appearance and usage are mentioned.'"**

My response:

The reviewer's statement is questionable. For example, *The Lotus Sutra*, Vol. 2 states, "Tathagata has left the fire house of the three realms." "The fire house of the three realms" means the being of the three realms (i.e., "all dharmas"). "Tathagata" means the "dharma-body" and is the neither-arising-nor-ceasing dharma. The statement of "Tathagata has left the fire house of the three realms," shows there are two kinds of dharmas: the "*tathagata*" and the "three realms." After the extinction of the three realms, only *tathagata* is left; the intersection of these two kinds of dharmas is an empty set. Therefore, the standpoint of *The Lotus Sutra* is completely the same as mine. Due to the limited space, the other two sutras mentioned by the reviewer will not be

discussed here.

**7. Indeed, transmigration has been documented in the Buddhist sutras and we should discuss the substance of transmigration; however, “the being of Principle” cannot be found in the sutras at all. Although there are offering and worship to buddhas and bodhisattvas in Buddhist temples, there is, in these Buddhist sutras, absolutely no divine theory, which exists in Christianity, Islam or even folk divine religions.**

My response:

It is stated in my paper, “The true dweller is a kind of substance.” This explains “the true dweller” is exactly the substance of transmigration. That is the important difference between “the true dweller” and “divine theories.” Every sentient being possesses a “true dweller” and every true dweller contributes the same value as others to the material world of the universe; the number of “the true dwellers” is countless and neither increasing nor decreasing; however, the total number of the true dwellers is fixed due to the fact that the true dweller is neither-arising-nor-ceasing. On the other hand, the “God” of the divine theory is unique; the whole universe and lives are created by this unique “God;” this “God” has his five aggregates and the tempers of delight, anger, sadness and happiness; he is the commander and he negates the equality of all lives. “The true dweller” is not shared by all sentient beings and is not any aggregates of a specific sentient being, but does not leave any aggregates of a specific sentient being. In contrast, the “God” is shared by all sentient beings; he has his own aggregates, but leaves all aggregates of other sentient beings. “The true dweller” and “divine theories” are totally different on the viewpoints of number, contribution to the world, being the five aggregates or not, and being cooperating with the five aggregates or not, etc.

**8. The Reply has a different explanation on *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 296.**

My response:

All viewpoints of the reviewer about *Samyutta-nikaya* in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 296, seem from the article of ‘*Idappaccayata*’ of *Dependent-Arising* (by Yang Yuwen) in this Journal. Previously I quote only the correct viewpoint of his article. Here I would like to comment his some other viewpoints in order to manifest the proper interpretation of the Buddhist doctrine.

Yang thinks “the conditions-arisen dharmas” are “the dharmas created by conditions.” He states,

**The relation between two adjacent branches of a sentient being’s dependent-arising series is “*idappaccayata*” (the nature of dependence); each branch of the series is “the condition-arisen dharma” and is “the dharma created by conditions.” (Yang, p.20)**

Yang also thinks, “This condition and other conditions dependently arise mutually; it is

meaningless to trace back endlessly.” (Yang, p.24) Yang states,

**The fruition (A) results from some causes and conditions (A1); the generations of these causes and conditions (A1) need other causes and conditions (A2); ... If we express those by symbols, it is: (A) ← (A1) ← (A2) ← (A3) ← ... (An). In addition, each cause or condition of those also results from many other causes and conditions; it is meaningless to trace them back endlessly. Therefore, we should put aside those complicated indirect causes and conditions and only consider the direct observable causes and conditions for the generation of result.**

Obviously, Yang claims, “The conditions-arisen dharmas are the dharmas created by conditions.” But he also states, “it is meaningless to trace them back endless.” Since it is meaningless to trace them back, he overlooks those complicated indirect causes and conditions and traces the direct observable ones only. All these statements contradict each other and evade the critical point of the problem. They are just his indirect inefficient speculation and thus will make the concept of cause-and-condition be inferred endlessly. If his claims were ever true, nobody could continuously infer the causes and conditions and become a buddha or a solitary-realizer.

*The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 293 states, “Buddha tells that *bhiksu* the saints and sages correspond with the supra-mundane emptiness and it is the dharma of following conditions for all dependent-arising.” In other words, the World-honored One told the *bhiksu* that the Buddhist saints and sages must realize “the supra-mundane emptiness” and confirm “the supra-mundane emptiness” being “the dharma of following conditions for all dependent-arising.” As cited previously from *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 293, there are two kinds of dharmas—“all dharmas” versus “nirvana” or “the conditioned dharmas” versus “the unconditioned dharma.” I use these two kinds of dharmas to explain the condition of being a saint or sage stated by Buddha. Specifically, “all (conditioned) dharmas” are dependent-arising and conditions-arisen dharmas; “nirvana (unconditioned) dharma” is “the supra-mundane emptiness” and “the dharma of following conditions for all dependent-arising.” What is the meaning of “the supra-mundane emptiness being the dharma of following conditions for all dependent-arising”? The answer is in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 296:

**What are the conditions-arisen dharmas? They are ignorance, behavior, etc. This dharma permanently exists and dwells in the dharma realm regardless if Buddha appears in the world or not. Buddha personally recognizes and perceives It and attains the true enlightenment. He preaches, expounds and manifests It to others: “Ignorance conditions behavior and till birth conditions aging and death.”**

**This dharma permanently exists and dwells in the dharma realm regardless if Buddha appears in the world or not. Buddha personally recognizes and perceives It and attains the true enlightenment.**

**He preaches, expounds and manifests It to others: “Birth conditions aging, sickness, death, anxiety, sadness, annoyance and suffering. These dharmas have the properties of dwelling, emptiness, steadiness, and suchness. They neither leave nor differ from suchness.” These dharmas can be examined truly and are not topsy-turvy. They follow conditions for all dependent-arising and are called the conditions-arisen dharmas.**

The first paragraph defines the conditions-arisen dharmas as the dharmas of ignorance, behavior, etc. “This dharma” permanently exists regardless if Buddha appears in the world or not.<sup>4</sup> It makes the conditions-arisen dharmas dwell in the dharma realm of the permanently dwelling dharma. The World-honored One personally realized this “permanently dwelling dharma,” practiced continuously and became a buddha finally. He preached, expounded and manifested It to others: “Ignorance conditions behavior until birth conditions aging and death.” It clearly states that due to the existence of “the permanently dwelling dharma,” the dharma of ignorance branch of the conditions-arisen dharmas conditions the dharma of behavior branch. Hence, “*idappaccayata*” (i.e., “the nature of dependence”) is the functionality manifested by “the permanently dwelling dharma,” which is demonstrated by the conditions-arisen dharmas. Therefore, the more accurate words to describe “the conditions-arisen dharmas” are “the dharmas that the conditions have arisen.” What causes “the conditions-arisen dharmas?” The answer is “the permanently dwelling dharma.” Therefore, we can say, “Ignorance conditions behavior till birth conditions aging and death.” And “the nature of dependence should belong to the nature of the permanently dwelling dharma.”<sup>5</sup>

Many people misunderstand “the conditions-arisen dharmas” as “the conditions producing other conditions.” As a matter of fact, “the conditions-arisen dharmas” have two kinds of possible meaning in Pali or Sanskrit, “the dharmas that the conditions have arisen” or “the dharmas produced by the conditions.”<sup>6</sup> Bodhisattva Shi Xuanzang used the former rather than the later in all his translated sutras. Hence, my explanation in the paper is justifiable.

The second paragraph states “this dharma” permanently exists regardless if Buddha appears in the world or not. It makes the conditions-arisen dharmas dwell in the dharma realm of the permanently dwelling dharma. The World-honored One personally realized this “permanently

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<sup>4</sup> “This dharma permanently exists and dwells in the dharma realm regardless if Buddha appears in the world or not.” In fact, the word “Buddha” represents “dharma-body” and “This dharma permanently exists,” means “Tathagatagarbha permanently exists.” Because sentient beings do not have wisdom, the World-honored One spoke about It in secret so that the sentient beings can be protected from slandering It.

<sup>5</sup> CBETA, T16, no. 670, p.483, b11-13. *The Lankavatara Sutra* states that Tathagatagarbha possesses seven kinds of intrinsic-natures. As stated in *The Lankavatara Sutra*, Vol. 1, “Further more, Bodhisattva Great-wisdom! There are seven kinds of intrinsic-natures; they are called the intrinsic-nature on aggregation, the intrinsic-nature on characteristics, the intrinsic-nature on phenomena, the intrinsic-nature on element-seeds, the intrinsic-nature on causes, the intrinsic-nature on conditions and the intrinsic-nature on perfection.”

<sup>6</sup> Lu Kaiwen, *An Analytic Discourse on the Concept of “Dependent-Arising” in Early Buddhism*, Ph. D. thesis, Institute of Philosophy, Fu Jen Catholic University, 2001, p.46. The explanation of “the conditions-arisen dharmas” in Pali can be referred in the thesis. But Lu Kaiwen contradictorily adopts the meaning of “the dharmas produced by the conditions.”

dwelling dharma,” practiced continuously and became a buddha finally. He preached, expounded and manifested It to others: “(Due to the existence of the permanently dwelling dharma) birth conditions aging, sickness, death, anxiety, sadness, annoyance and suffering. These dharmas (of conditions-arisen) have the properties of dwelling, emptiness, steadiness, and suchness. They neither leave nor differ from suchness (Buddha also called ‘the permanently dwelling dharma’ as ‘suchness’).” After closely and truly examining this fact, one can confirm that “the permanently dwelling dharma follows conditions for all dependent-arising” like this way. That is called the conditions-arisen dharmas. The “suchness” means “following” because “the permanently dwelling dharma” always follows the cleanness or filthiness of “the conditions-arisen dharmas” to produce all subsequent conditions-arisen dharmas.<sup>7</sup> This is exactly the true meaning of the conditions-arisen dharmas. It completely conforms to the teaching in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 293, which sets up two kinds of dharmas—the conditioned arising-and-ceasing dharmas versus the unconditioned neither-arising-nor-ceasing dharma.

*The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 296 states that there exists the “dharma” following the dependent-arising dharmas. In addition, *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 293, also states, “Buddha tells that *bhiksu* the saints and sages correspond with the supra-mundane emptiness and it is the dharma of following conditions for all dependent-arising.” This statement clearly states, “The supra-mundane emptiness is the dharma that follows conditions to produce the dependent-arising.” It is the rationale of the conditions-arisen dharmas—the supra-mundane emptiness “follows” the dependent-arising to produce the conditions-arisen dharmas. This is the consistent rationale in *The Kindred Sayings*, both Sutras 293 and 296, and completely conforms to all great-vehicle or small-vehicle sutras. Therefore, “the nature of dependence” is the nature of “the supra-mundane emptiness” or called the nature of “the unconditioned realm.”

The first paragraph of the *Paccaya* in *Samyutta-nikaya* states,

**“*Bhiksus!* I will expound both the dependent-arising and the conditions-arisen dharmas. Listen and contemplate carefully! *Bhiksus!* What is the dependent-arising dharma? It is birth conditioning aging and death. Regardless if Tathagata appears in the world or not, that realm firmly possesses the natures of dharma-dwelling, dharma-steadiness and dependence. Tathagata realized and recognized it.”**

The second paragraph states,

**“After having realized and recognized it, I teach, proclaim, expound, demonstrate, identify and show it.” And then Buddha say, “Look, all of you! *Bhiksus!* Birth conditions aging and death.**

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<sup>7</sup> “The permanently dwelling dharma” might “not produce” the subsequent conditions-arisen dharmas. The reason why It does not produce them is the lack of “dependence” (conditions)—self-view and self-attachment—rather than destroying Its function of producing the conditions-arisen dharmas.

**Bhiksus! Being conditions birth. Bhiksus! Grasp conditions being. Bhiksus! The six fields of sense condition contact. Bhiksus! Name and form condition the six fields of sense. Bhiksus! Consciousness conditions name and form. Bhiksus! Behavior conditions consciousness. Bhiksus! Ignorance conditions behavior.”**

The third paragraph states,

“Regardless if Tathagata appears in the world or not, that realm firmly possesses the natures of dharma-dwelling, dharma-steadiness and dependence. Tathagata realized and recognized it. After having realized and recognized it, I preach, proclaim, expound, demonstrate, identify and show it.” And then Buddha say, “Look, all of you! **Bhiksus! Ignorance conditions behavior. Bhiksus! Here, there exist the natures of suchness, non-illusion, non-differing-from-suchness, and dependence. Bhiksus! This is called dependent-arising.”**<sup>8</sup>

The first paragraph states the dependent-arising dharma is “birth conditioning aging and death.” The dependent-arising dharma is “the conditioned realm;” “that realm” is “the unconditioned realm.” Regardless if Tathagata appears in the world or not, the unconditioned realm “firmly possesses” the natures of dwelling, steadiness and dependence. Tathagata personally realized and recognized this true reality. If “that realm” is not “the unconditioned realm,” the statement will violate the evidence in *The Kindred Sayings*, both Sutras 293 and 296, which sets up “the conditioned and the unconditioned dharmas” as two different kinds of dharmas. That statement will also violate the ultimate teaching of the sixty-two realms in *The Middle-Length Sayings*: “Ananda! You can see two different realms—the conditioned and the unconditioned realms—and recognize both of them like real ones.”<sup>9</sup>

The second paragraph explains, based on the realization of “the unconditioned realm firmly possessing the natures of dwelling, steadiness and dependence,” the statements of the dependent-arising dharmas like “birth conditioning aging and death,” etc. It shows clearly that “*idappaccayata*” is stated based on the unconditioned realm and thus “*idappaccayata*” is a nature of the unconditioned realm.

The third paragraph states that the World-honored One reemphasized the realization of “the unconditioned realm firmly possessing the natures of dwelling, steadiness and dependence” is the premise. Based on it, He said, “Here exist the natures of suchness, non-illusion, non-differing-from-suchness and dependence. **Bhiksus! This is called dependent-arising.**” Only “the unconditioned realm” has these natures. It explains why the theory of dependent-arising can hold. All these natures should belong to the natures of “the unconditioned realm.” The sutra clearly expresses that the natures of “suchness, non-illusion, non-differing-from-suchness, dependence,

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<sup>8</sup> *Chinese Tipitaka of Theravada Buddhism*, Vol. 14, pp.29-30.

<sup>9</sup> CBETA, T01, no. 26, p.723, c11-12.

etc.” belong to “that realm” of permanently dwelling. Therefore, “*idappaccayata*” is one of many natures of “the permanently dwelling dharma.” This statement is completely consistent with the statement of *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 296.

Hence, “conditions,” based on the fundamental meaning of “*idappaccayata*”<sup>10</sup> in Pali and Sanskrit, should be explained as “the nature of dependence.” Besides, this nature should be one of many natures of “the permanently dwelling dharma” to consist with the teachings of the four Agama sutras and *Nikayas*. My paper has explained that, without the support of the meaning of “the conditions-arisen dharmas,” “the dependent-arising dharmas” can only be called “the relation of relativity” because one can only see the sequence of the appearance on the twelve links of dependent-arising. That sequence does not have any rationale to explain the relationship between the former and the latter existence, and thus cannot solve the contradiction of “tracing back endlessly.” This explains why the World-honored One must have kept on teaching the conditions-arisen dharmas after He had established the dependent-arising dharmas. Only in this way, it will conform to the fact of the worldly phenomena and solve all the problems that dependent-arising dharmas cannot deal with.

Because of neglecting the sequential implication of a sutra that the World-honored One wanted to express and the consistency with other sutras, Yang wrongly explains the passage of *Paccaya* of *Samyutta-nikaya* with error punctuation and paragraphing.<sup>11</sup> He does not understand the meaning of logical inference in the context of the sutras and thus results in the lack of overall interpretation. Similarly, this also explains why Lu Kaiwen, although knowing two possible meanings of “the conditions-arisen dharmas” as “the dharmas that the conditions have arisen” and “the dharmas produced by the conditions,” and having adopted the former for the definition of “the conditions-arisen dharmas,” inconsistently uses the latter explanation as the conclusion in his Ph. D. thesis. Consequently, they cannot generally and reasonably explain the logical sequence of the World-honored One’s doctrine due to the mistake in punctuation and paragraphing.<sup>12</sup>

Here I have provided the evidence in *The Agama Sutras* and *Nikayas*, and the corresponding logical inference to prove Yang’s claim in “*Idappaccayata*” of *Dependent-Arising* is contradictory and wrong; thus, the reviewer’s reference is questionable. Although I only cite a few viewpoints to discuss, there are many other errors in his paper. I respectfully request the reviewer not to review my paper based on those references, in which there are contradictions.

## **9. In the Reply, the reviewer cites some texts from *The Exploration of Emptiness* (by Shi**

<sup>10</sup> “*idappaccayata*” has more profound meaning. But due to its complexity, I will not discuss it in depth here.

<sup>11</sup> Yang Yuwen, “*Idappaccayata*” of *Dependent-Arising*, *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal*, Issue no. 9, p.19.

<sup>12</sup> Lu Kaiwen, *An Analytic Discourse on the Concept of “Dependent-Arising” in Early Buddhism*, Ph. D. thesis, Institute of Philosophy, Fu Jen Catholic University, 2001, p.78.

**Yinshun) as another evidence to support their comment on my paper.**

My response:

I do not want to criticize Shi Yinshun here, nor do I want to enlarge the topic and make the discussion unfocused. But Shi Yinshun did not correctively punctuate the sentence of “Buddha tells that *bhikṣu* the saints and sages correspond with the supra-mundane emptiness and it is the dharma of following conditions for all dependent-arising.” He misinterpreted the whole sentence, adopted different phrases in his different books and thus left some redundant non-understandable words.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, his credibility is questionable. Yang does not correctively punctuate the same sentence either,<sup>14</sup> so that he has the same dilemma as Shi Yinshun. I really doubt the credibility of the researchers who cannot even precisely punctuate the sentence and would like to suggest the committee not to adopt their opinions as the review standard.

**10. In the Reply, the reviewer states, “Nevertheless, in the forty-five years, (the World-honored One) had explained ‘Emptiness corresponding the dependent-arising dharmas.’ Then, the later developed Buddhism stated that ‘Dependent-arising dharmas are empty and have no intrinsic-nature.’”**

My response:

It is clear that the reviewer replaces the sentence of “Buddha tells that *bhikṣu* the saints and sages correspond with the supra-mundane emptiness and it is the dharma of following conditions for all dependent-arising,” by the wrong punctuation of “Buddha tells that *bhikṣu* the saints and sages appear in the world, and emptiness corresponds with the dependent-arising dharmas.” With the wrong punctuation, the statement of “... the saints and sages appear in the world,” becomes redundant and cannot be related to the referred context. It seems to me that the reviewer cites only one of Shi Yinshun’s many different interpretations.

Regarding being empty and having no intrinsic nature of dependent-arising dharmas, the reviewer adopts the viewpoint of Yang (“*Idappaccayata*” of *Dependent-Arising*, p.24). Yang thinks dependent-arising dharmas had “the intrinsic nature” (i.e., “the nature of dependence” being the intrinsic nature of dependent-arising dharmas) at the beginning of Buddhism; it developed into

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<sup>13</sup> Shi Yinshun did not consistently punctuate the statement of “The saints and sages supra-mundane emptiness corresponds to the dharmas of following conditions for dependent-arising.” He adopted different phrases of that in his different books or even in the same book as follows:

1. “The supra-mundane emptiness corresponds dependent-arising,” *A General Discourse on the Buddha Dharma*, Zhengwen Publishing Co., 1992, p.158.
2. “The saints and sages supra-mundane emptiness corresponds dependent-arising,” *The Origin and Developing of Early Mahayana Buddhism*, Zhengwen Publishing Co., 1992, p.241.
3. “The supra-mundane emptiness corresponds to the dharmas of following conditions for dependent-arising,” *The Exploration of Emptiness*, Zhengwen Publishing Co., 1992, pp.8-9.
4. “Emptiness corresponds to dependent-arising,” *A General Discourse on the Buddha Dharma*, p.247 and *The Origin and Developing of Early Mahayana Buddhism*, p.241 and p.729.

<sup>14</sup> Yang Yuwen, “*Idappaccayata*” of *Dependent-Arising*, *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal*, Issue no. 9, p.4.

“being empty and having no intrinsic nature” later. On page 24 of his paper, Yang states,

**Then, we will witness, “All these causes and conditions—which have no intrinsic nature—will lead to the formation of a new thing and produce the “result” through mixture, integration, combination and unification.**

If each of the conditions-arisen dharmas in the dependent-arising dharmas were one of “the causes and conditions without any intrinsic nature,” how could these conditions-arisen dharmas “mix, integrate, combine and unify” each other? If the conditions-arisen dharmas could “mix, integrate, combine and unify” each other by themselves, then the functions of “mixing, integrating, combining and unifying” should be the functions of the conditions-arisen dharmas. If it were true, all hydrogen would automatically mix with oxygen to become water until all hydrogen was used up and there was no more hydrogen in the air (oxygen being more than hydrogen in the air). But it is not true in reality. Therefore, the dependent-arising dharmas should gather some of the conditions-arisen dharmas so as to let the next conditions-arising dharma arise (Note: not produce<sup>15</sup>); this already implies the meaning of “the empty nature of dependent-arising.” What the World-honored One wanted to expound is the cause of the functionality of “mixing, integrating, combining and unifying.” Even the conditions-arisen dharmas have been arisen, there should exist “the permanent dharma” to provide the functionality of “dependence” for those dharmas so that they can be depended on each other to make the next conditions-arisen dharma arise. Thus, we can know the reason why all the conditions-arisen dharmas can become “the dependence” is the manifestation of the functions of “the permanently dwelling dharma.” Based on the functionality of “dependence,” the permanently dwelling dharma “produces” the conditions-arisen dharmas. Since all sentient beings are unable to recognize and realize this permanently dwelling dharma, they can only wrongly recognize the conditions-arisen dharmas “producing” another conditions-arisen dharma. But if there were no functionality of “the permanently dwelling dharma,” all dharmas would be created without cause and formed randomly. If it were true, all the virtuous or evil cause-and-effect would become meaningless arguments, all seeds and permeation would come to the fruition based on probability, and nirvana would become nihilistic. I believe all wise Buddhist researchers will agree on the certainty of the existence of “the permanently dwelling dharma” and not deny it. Therefore, Yang’s discourse has proved that there must exist the “dharma” of non-dependent-arising dharma to accomplish the functions of “mixing, integrating, combining and unifying.” This “dharma” is surely not the dependent-arising dharma.

As stated on page 15 of Yang’s article,

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<sup>15</sup> The meaning of “arising” is “the dependence to induce the function of generation” Therefore, arising is an indirect and accessory function for producing things, and the subject of producing has the direct and major function for producing them.

**With such profound theory, one can really observe that the phenomena of “arising and ceasing” or “being and nothing” between “these (causes and conditions)” and “that (result)” can be summarized as the form of “these resulting in that.” All relations and sustained states between “these” and “that” are “*idappaccayata*,” i.e., the dependent-arising dharmas.**

Yang interprets “*idappaccayata*” as all relations and sustained states between cause-and-condition and the result. Obviously, he does not answer the basic question of “How can the relationship between cause and effect hold?” It is understandable that Yang is opposed to the Japanese scholars’ claim of “the nature of dependence” being the nature of “interdependence” or “relationship.” The only difference between Yang’s article and the Japanese scholars’ claim is that he insists “the nature of the sequence,” which cannot be manifested in the nature of “interdependence” or “relationship.” Therefore Yang is opposed to using the term of the nature of “interdependence” or “relationship” but claims to use “*idappaccayata*” instead. However, his interpretation of “*idappaccayata*” is still in the frame of relations and sustained states (i.e., the nature of time sequence), which is essentially the same as the Japanese scholars’ claim. In my article, I use the term of “correlation” to include all discourses and to question the base of “relation” and “sequence.” The explanation of this base is the critical reason for the Word-honored One to expound the conditions-arisen dharmas. The “correlation” is a statistical term and has a wide definition; it includes the relation with time sequence, the relation without time sequence, the relation with cause-and-effect, the relation without cause-and-effect, etc. Yang’s article and the Japanese scholars’ claim are only based on the definition of “dependent-arising dharmas” and cannot touch the critical reason why the World-honored One expounded “the conditions-arisen dharmas.” Thus they cannot answer the question: “Where is the base of ‘relation’ and ‘sequence’ of the dependent-arising dharmas?” Nevertheless, in the sutras, the World-honored One expounded “the dependent-arising dharmas” as “the relation of cause-and-effect” based on “the relation of cause-and-effect” to be able to hold. The rationale of the conditions-arisen dharmas is embedded in the base of the cause-and-effect relation, which cannot be interpreted by “the dependent-arising dharmas.” This is the meaning of “the conditions-arisen dharmas” Buddha expounded and the reason why He had to explain it.

Both the Sutra 296 of *The Kindred Sayings* and *The Sutra of Condition in Samyutta-nikaya* explain the base of why “the dependent-arising dharmas” can be deemed the cause-and-effect relation, and what the base of these cause-and-effect relations is. Thus “*idappaccayata*” is definitely not from any dependent-arising dharmas; there must be another dharma, not a dependent-arising dharma, that can explain the base of why dependent-arising dharmas can be established. Obviously the argument of Yang’s article is contradictory and insufficient. Based on this wrong argument, he cannot help but infer that “*idappaccayata* being the nature of dependent-arising dharmas” was the teaching of initial Buddhism, and developed into “being

empty without any intrinsic nature” later on. Yang does not know that the definition of dependent-arising dharmas itself has embedded the meaning of “being empty without any intrinsic nature,” and only needs to be expounded rather than to be developed.

If “being empty without any intrinsic nature” was developed later, there are two kinds of possibility: (a) dependent-arising dharmas being empty without any intrinsic nature, (b) dependent-arising dharmas having intrinsic natures (at least “*idappaccayata*” in spite of the correctness of interpretation). If (a) is correct, i.e., it was developed afterward, that means when the World-honored One brought up the dependent-arising dharma and defined it as “the gathering of some of the conditions to produce the next dharma of the twelve links,” He did not even know His definition has included the meaning of “being empty without any intrinsic nature.” If it were ever true, the World-honored One should not qualify for His ten aliases because of not knowing everything. If (b) is correct, the argument of “the causes and conditions of being empty and having no intrinsic nature” in Yang’s article is wrong and the meaning of subsequence “being empty without any intrinsic nature” is wrong too; it should not be published in this Journal. Since this Journal has published Yang’s “*Idappaccayata*” of *Dependent-Arising* and adopts his opinion to review my article, it implies that the Institute has agreed to Yang’s claim of “the World-honored One being unable to understand His own definition of dependent-arising dharmas, which has already embedded the meaning of ‘being empty without any intrinsic nature.’” If that were true, I would announce your claim for you so that the general public can know this innovative idea. Then the three-ways-of-knowing, which the committee has agreed, will become two ways only because of missing the way of knowing by ultimate teachings.

**11. The Reply refers to *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 854, *The Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra* and *The Maharatnakuta Sutra* to prove that “being empty without any intrinsic nature” was developed afterward.**

My response:

In fact, in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 854, *The Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra* and *The Maharatnakuta Sutra* all prove the correctness and consistency of my point: “In addition to ‘dependent-arising dharmas,’ there exists ‘the permanently dwelling dharma.’” Since the mundane wise do not personally realize “the permanently dwelling dharma” and do not agree to the existence of It, which is stated in the sutras, they can only attribute all natures of “the permanently dwelling dharma” to “dependent-arising dharmas,” which possess the nature of arising-and-ceasing. Here I refer the ultimate teaching about the existence of “the permanently dwelling dharma” to disprove Yang’s wrong argument that “‘the nature of dependence being the nature of dependent-arising dharmas’ was the teaching of initial Buddhism, and developed into ‘being empty without any intrinsic nature’ later on.” *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 854 states,

**Buddha tells the *bhiksus*, “Due to the passing away of someone, you ask where the deceased goes; it is a meaningless question and I do not like to answer it. Anyone is born and will face the death soon or later; it is not a thing special. Regardless of Buddha’s existence, the nature of dharma permanently exists; Tathagata has personally realized it and obtained the perfect true enlightenment.”** (CBETA, T02, no. 99, p.217, c6-9)

In the sutra, the World-honored One said it was meaningless to ask where the deceased would go and He did not like to talk about that. Because any birth will lead to the death later, it is not a special case. In spite of Buddha’s existence, “the nature of dharma” dwells permanently. Tathagata had personally realized this everlasting “nature of dharma” and attained Buddhahood finally. Buddha’s teaching proves that there exists “the nature of dharma,” which is permanent and is not the dependent-arising dharmas that have the phenomena of birth and death. “The nature of dharma,” which is everlasting, permanent and totally different from dependent-arising dharmas, is exactly what Buddha liked to say. This teaching supports my standpoint on the interpretation of both “the arising-and-ceasing dharmas” and “the permanently dwelling dharma.” *The Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra*, Vol. 365 states,

**“All dharmas have the property of the nothingness nature. This nothingness nature has functioned like that way since the beginningless time. It is not created by Buddha, solitary-realizers, sound-hearers or others because every dharma does not have the maker in it and departs from the maker.”** At that time Subhuti spoke to Buddha, “The World-honored One! Does that mean all dharmas depart from all natures of dharmas?” Buddha said, “Subhuti! Yes, it is just as you said. All dharmas depart from all natures of dharmas.” Subhuti spoke to Buddha again, “The World-honored One! If all dharmas depart from all natures of dharmas, how can the departing dharma recognize another departing dharma? The World-honored One! The nothingness dharma should not recognize another nothingness dharma; the being dharma should not recognize another being dharma; the nothingness dharma should not recognize the being dharma; the being dharma should not recognize the nothingness dharma. The World-honored One! Every dharma has the nature of not-recognizing.” (CBETA, T06, no. 220, p.882, c2-13)

In the sutra, “all dharmas” and “every dharma” stand for all dependent-arising dharmas with the arising-and-ceasing nature. On the other hand, “the nature of dharma” is the everlasting, permanent and dwelling dharma. It states repeatedly “all dharmas” depart from all “natures of dharmas.” That means “all dharmas,” including “the nature of dependence,” do not have their intrinsic natures. It has been so since the beginningless time. Another explanation for “all dharmas departing from all natures of dharmas” is that both of them are totally different sets. The intersection of both is empty. This teaching also supports my standpoint on the interpretation of “the arising-and-ceasing dharmas” and “the permanently dwelling dharma.”

*The Maharatnakuta Sutra*, Vol. 39 states,

The state of no more dharmas being able to be extinguished is unconditioned. Due to the unconditioned nature, it is not arising, not ceasing, and not dwelling. Thus it states, “Whether the Tathagata appears in the world or not, the everlasting nature of dharma permanently exists in the dharma realm.”

The above statement of “The state of no more dharmas being able to be extinguished is unconditioned,” has explained that after one extinguishes all dharmas and leaves none that can be further extinguished, the left dharma is “the unconditioned dharma.” This teaching completely consists with the judging rule of “permanency” in my article, “In the phenomena of arising and ceasing of the five aggregates, there exists the everlasting, permanent and unchangeable ‘true dweller.’” Although in Items 2 and 3 of the Comment Letter 2, the reviewer opposes my viewpoint of “In the phenomena of arising and ceasing of the five aggregates, there exists the everlasting, permanent and unchangeable ‘true dweller,’” in the Reply, the reviewer refers to the statement of *The Maharatnakuta Sutra*, “The state of no more dharmas being able to be extinguished is unconditioned. Due to the unconditioned nature, it is neither arising nor ceasing.” The above means after one extinguishes all dharmas and no more dharmas can be extinguished, the only left everlasting and permanently dwelling dharma, which cannot be further extinguished, is the real “unconditioned dharma.” “The unconditioned dharma” is the everlasting “permanently dwelling dharma.” The definition of “the unconditioned dharma” in this sutra (Note: not the *Vatsiputriya* sutra) consists with the definition of my judging rules of “permanency,” “non-aggregate,” and “not-off-aggregate.” It also proves the correctness of my interpretation on “the arising-and-ceasing dharmas,” “the permanently dwelling dharma,” and the three judging rules.

From all contents of *The Agama Sutras*, *The Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra* and *The Maharatnakuta Sutra* that the reviewer cites, we can find the consistent standpoints of “all dharmas” versus “the natures of dharmas,” “every dharma” versus “the natures of dharmas,” “conditioned” versus “unconditioned,” “the arising-and-ceasing dharmas” versus “the permanently dwelling dharma,” etc. All those passages manifest the correctness of my proposition of “the true dweller” existing, and prove that my interpretation on *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 296, conforms to the consistent teachings in the sutras of *The Agama Sutras*, *Nikayas*, etc.

**12. The Reply states, “As manifested in *Avyakata samyuttam*, *Samyutta-nikaya*, S.44:1-11, *Vacchagotta samyuttam*, *Samyutta-nikaya*, S.33:1-55, and *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutras 957-964, *The Correspondence of Vacchagotta Leaving Home*, the academia notices that the World-honored One put aside and did not comment on the topic of “the being with intrinsic natures.” Those are “the fourteen *avyakatas* (no-identifications).”**

My response:

The reviewer uses “the fourteen *avyakatas*” as the review criteria with the reason that they are noticed by the academia. This reason does not have the features of judgment and evidence. What is the exact meaning of “the fourteen *avyakatas*?” It is, “For those practitioners who pursue the liberation and the quick attainment of the remainderless nirvana, the World-honored One will not identify the way to pursue the truth for them.” That is because “the fourteen *avyakatas*” are in fact the practice contents for those bodhisattvas who want to explore the true reality of the dharma realm; in order to understand the contents, they should stay in this world to teach others and study for long eons. For example, if someone wants to go to Kaohsiung this afternoon and brings a world map to ask the way to travel around the world, can it be possible to identify the way to Kaohsiung for him? It is impossible because “the exposition of the world map” is useless for “the way to Kaohsiung this afternoon;” the way cannot be identified and thus it is called “no-identification.” As another example, if someone has an excellent technique of art, can he be identified for his future rebirth accordingly? It is impossible because the future rebirth is decided by the virtue or evil karma rather than the excellent technique of art. Therefore, the excellent technique of art has no identifiable function for future rebirth. But it does not mean that the excellent technique of art does not have its future influence on this person’s next life; it still can function and enable this person to learn and recover his technique fast in his next life. Thus “the fourteen *avyakatas*” are the contents for those who want to attain Buddhahood, not for those sound-hearers who want to enter the remainderless nirvana quickly. This is the true meaning of “no-identification,” but it is not that the World-honored One put aside and did not comment on it. The contents of *Avyakata samyuttam*, *Samyutta-nikaya*, S.44:1-11, *Vacchagotta samyuttam*, *Samyutta-nikaya*, S.33:1-55, and *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutras 957-964, *The Correspondence of Vacchagotta Leaving Home* all explain this same rationale.

Another case of no-identification is for those who do not have good thinking and judgment. For example, as stated in the above passage of *Paccaya of Samyutta-nikaya*, “I now explain the dependent-arising dharmas and the conditions-arisen dharmas for you. If you can listen carefully to, well understand and memorize them, I will tell you.” It means the World-honored One only tell those who can well understand and memorize the teachings. Otherwise, He will not tell them. Therefore, “the fourteen *avyakatas*” do not mean that “the being with intrinsic natures” is not the topic that the World-honored One put aside and did not want to comment on. For example, in *The Kindred Sayings*, Vol. 34, about the fourteen *avyakatas*, Buddha said,

Jue Dijia asks Buddha, “Gautama! Does the world have a border?” Buddha replies, “No-identification.” He asks again, “Does the world have no border? Does the world either have a border or have no border? Does the world neither have a border nor have no border?” Buddha replies, “No-identification.” Then Jue Dijia asks, “Gautama! What kind of dharma can be identified?” Buddha tells him, “Only for those who can recognize it or are wise. I identify the way

**for my followers, make them correctly extinguish all sufferings, and reach the edge of them.”**

(CBETA, T02, no. 99, p.247, c20-24)

In the sutra, the World-honored One answered Jue Dijia that the fourteen *avyakatas* were told only for the recognizing and wise people. Buddha did not tell them the fourteen *avyakatas* in order to enable His followers to correctly extinguish all sufferings and depart from the sufferings so that He could identify their liberation fruition. Let us refer to Buddha’s some other teachings about the fourteen *avyakatas* to prove He did explain them. The *Sutra of the Sixty-two Views of Brahma Net of The Agama Sutras* states,

**Buddha says, “Some heretics say, ‘Limited.’ Some others say, ‘Unlimited.’ Some others say, ‘Either limited or unlimited.’ Some others say, ‘Neither limited nor unlimited.’” Both self and the worldly people fall into these four kinds of views and cannot exceed them. But Buddha recognizes all these views, exceeds the heretical views and has wonderful understanding of them. Buddha does not ridicule or slander them and thus attained the unconditioned.**

The sutra clearly states that the World-honored One did explore “the world being limited, unlimited, either limited or unlimited, and neither limited nor unlimited” of the fourteen *avyakatas*. He had fully recognized all four kinds of views and even exceeded the understanding of the heretics. Due to completely understanding all these heretical views, exceeding them and not jeering or slandering the heretics, He could realize the unconditioned that goes beyond the worldly scope. From the above reference, we can know the sixty-two views in fact include “the fourteen *avyakatas*” and even exceed the scope of them. We also can find there are many records on discussing the sixty-two views in *The Agama Sutras*. Therefore, the reviewer’s comment of “The academia noticing that the World-honored One put aside and did not comment on the topic of ‘the being with intrinsic natures,’” is an irresponsible saying that shifts the responsibility to the academia.

The above ultimate teachings and inference prove that my argument on *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 296, consists with the teaching in *Samyutta-nikaya*. The real meanings of the sutras support my explanation and argument on *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 296. The major difference between my argument and the reviewer’s comment is that I have a general view on the whole sutra and also refer and link other sutras to support my rationale. However, the reviewer refers to the wrong conclusion of an article as the review criterion for my paper.

**13. The Reply brings up the question about *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 39, as follows:**

**“Those five kinds of seeds are the simile for the consciousness staying together with the aggregates.’ In *Taisho Tripitaka*, 2,9a6, it is similar to ‘*seyyathapi pabca-bijajatani evam vibbanam saharam datthabham* (Those five kinds of seeds are the simile for the**

**consciousness with food.)’ It is the paraphrase of 〈 S 〉 iii.54<sup>3</sup> and means the ‘consciousness’ is conditioned by birth and away from form, sensation, perception and formation. There is no ‘sole, intrinsic and permanently dwelling consciousness’ either.”**

My response:

I have used around twenty thousand words to explain the reviewer’s questions about the understanding of *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutras 37 and 296. I think it is unnecessary to explain the reviewer’s another question about the understanding of *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 39, again. From the reviewer’s understanding on *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutras 37 and 296, it reflects the reviewer cannot correctively connect and explain the meanings among many different sutras of *The Agama Sutras* and *Samyutta-nikaya*. The evidence and viewpoints that I bring up in a few days can be in fact written into several papers. For three reasons, I cannot help but neglect the argument on *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 39, which involves more complicated discourse on the Consciousness-only theory. Firstly, from the reviewer’s question, it seems that the reviewer is unfamiliar with the Consciousness-only theory. Secondly, I am a rebutter rather than a teacher; for the enlarged scope of the questions, although I am an applicant, I do not have the obligation to understand the reviewer’s knowledge background and to explain those questions which are brought up due to their lack of general knowledge. Lastly, the reviewer can have two months to review my article, but I am restricted to have only several days to rebut the review comments.

The meaning of the simile in Pali is “the consciousness staying together with food.” *The Seed Sutra* explains “food” as four kinds of food—the segmented food, the food with contact, the food with thought and the food with consciousness respectively. “The food with consciousness” means the attachment to “the six consciousnesses,” i.e., the attachment to the discriminating functions of the six consciousnesses. After eliminating all four kinds of food, one can obtain the fruition of *arhat*. Yet the “food” in “the consciousness staying together with food” already includes the attachment to “the six consciousnesses.” If the word “consciousness” in the phrase of “the consciousness staying together with food” is a kind of “food,” the word “consciousness” will be redundant. Furthermore, if it were true, the “consciousness” would become nihilistic after eliminating all kinds of “food,” and *The Seed Sutra* would become the nihilism sutra. This conclusion will violate the premise of the statement of “These five kinds of seeds do not stop, spoil, perish or get paralyzed and are new, matured and firm.” Hence the word “consciousness” in “the consciousness staying together with food” should not be included in the “food.” *The Seed Sutras* of both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism use “attachment” as the central meaning. The objects of attaching, from the explanation of *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 39, seem to be the four aggregates of “form, sensation, perception and formation” only. But from the explanation of “the consciousness staying together with food” in *The Seed Sutra*, we can know the “food” is the attachment to “the five-aggregates.” Therefore the sutra translators of Mahayana Buddhism

translated the sutras by paraphrasing its meaning in order to redress the literal meaning of the desire for only four aggregates by using “the consciousness staying together with the aggregates” to also include “the desire for the five aggregates.” Thus it can avoid the misunderstanding that “the consciousness aggregate” should not be eliminated. Both the “consciousness” of “the consciousness staying together with the aggregates” and the “consciousness” of “the consciousness staying together with food” should not be explained as “the six consciousnesses” only. Mahayana Buddhism used paraphrased translation and Theravada Buddhism used literal translation due to different sutra structures of these two systems. But both of the translations deliver the consistent meanings and are all good and useful ones. I hope that I have shed some light on this issue, and that the reviewer can approach this issue with the same interpretation as I do.

Furthermore, the reviewer does not expound his viewpoint of consciousness-only but brings up the result of textual contrast only and makes the conclusion accordingly. Let me comment on his conclusion of “no sole, intrinsic and permanently dwelling consciousness” by referring to the ultimate teaching. *The Long Sayings*, Vol. 10 states,

**“Ananda! Name and form are conditioned by the consciousness. What does that mean? If the consciousness does not enter a mother’s womb, is it possible the name and form can be produced?” Ananda answers, “Impossible.” “If the consciousness enters the womb but does not leave it with the newborn baby, is it possible the name and form can be produced?” Ananda answers, “Impossible.” “If the consciousness leaves the womb and the fetus perishes, is it possible the name and form can grow?” Ananda answers, “Impossible.” “Ananda! Without the consciousness, is it possible the name and form exist?” Ananda answers, “Impossible.”** (CBETA, T01, no. 1, p. 61, b8-13)

According to science, we all know a fertilized egg in a mother’s womb does not have the first six consciousnesses. Therefore, the “consciousness” of “the consciousness entering the womb” is certainly not any of the first six consciousnesses. In addition, the “consciousness cannot leave the womb.” If the “consciousness” leaves the womb, the fetus will perish. Even after the baby is born and grows up, the “consciousness” still cannot leave the “name and form.” Otherwise, the “name and form” cannot grow up. The “name and form” are the five aggregates. “Form” is the form aggregate. Name is the sensation, perception, formation and consciousness aggregates. After someone’s death and his intermediate existence body entering a mother’s womb, the six consciousnesses of his previous body are extinguished permanently. At that time, the “consciousness” enters the womb. Since the fertilized egg does not have the first six consciousnesses at the beginning, which “consciousness” can dwell in and hold the fertilized egg for several months and let it not perish? Let me ask another question: “When does this “consciousness” arise or cease?” If no one can identify the time when the consciousness arises or

ceases, this “consciousness” must be the “permanently dwelling consciousness,” i.e., the “true dweller.” The reviewer cannot well understand *The Seed Sutras* of both Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism to identify their difference, but arbitrarily concludes, “There is no true dweller.” Contrarily, the reviewer excludes my argument although I can completely explain those sutras.

In fact, the demonstration of “the four kinds of food” in *The Treatise on Completing the Doctrine of Consciousness-Only* supports the existence of “the eighth consciousness.” The reviewer can read it and I will not explain it anymore. It must be noted that *The Treatise on Completing the Doctrine of Consciousness-Only* states the four kinds of food coexist with the eighth consciousness, rather than include it. The following passage in *The Treatise on Completing the Doctrine of Consciousness-Only*, Vol. 4, supports this rationale:

The sutras state that all sentient beings, relying on food, can survive. Without the consciousness, the substance of the food with consciousness will not exist. The sutras state that there are four kinds of food. The first kind is “the segmented food” that has the appearance of perishing; those smell, taste and tactile objects in the desire realm, when perishing, can be absorbed by the body; the vision function is not included because vision is useless when the food perishes. The second kind is “the food with contact” that has the appearance of contact; the flawed contact senses the objects, receives the joy and can become a kind of food; although this contact corresponds with each consciousness, it is mainly for the first six consciousnesses because the contact feeling of joy, happiness, smoothness, ease or dislike can nourish them. The third kind is “the food with thought” that has the appearance of wish; it means the flawed thought, influenced by desire, wishes some good states and that becomes a kind of food; although this thought corresponds with each consciousness, it is mainly for the mind-consciousness because the mind-consciousness has a strong wish for good states. The fourth kind is “the food with consciousness” that has the appearance of sustaining; it means the flawed consciousnesses, due to the segmented food, the food with contact and the food with thought, enhance their functions and become a kind of food; although this consciousness relates to the substance of all consciousnesses, it is mainly for the eighth consciousness because the eighth consciousness has the function of continuous sustaining. Therefore, the treatise states that the four kinds of food include three aggregates, five fields and eleven divisions. These four kinds of food can sustain each sentient being’s body and life, and thus are called food. (CBETA, T31, no. 1585, p.17, b11-26)

14. Comment Letter 2 states, “Having many preconceived concepts in mind, the author refers to other aliases of ‘the true dweller’ unconvincingly. For example, he regards “the consciousness staying together with the aggregates” and “the seed consciousness” as the true dweller; he completely neglects that “consciousness” is a conditioned arising-and-ceasing dharma. The simile of seed contains the impression of arising-and-ceasing too. The author refers to the theory of Tathagatagarbha to support

**his idea of “the true dweller” and confuses the doctrine of the original Buddhism with the Tathagatagarbha doctrine of great-vehicle. He has problems with citation and his discourses are not conscientious either.**

My response:

The meaning of “consciousness” is “discrimination.” There is a narrow sense of “discrimination” like “the six consciousnesses;” there is another broad sense of “discrimination” like “the eighth consciousness.” *The Treatise on Completing the Doctrine of Consciousness-Only*, Vol. 2 states,

**What does the behavioral appearance of this consciousness condition? Those are the unrecognized sustaining, field and discrimination. Discrimination is the behavioral appearance because the behavioral appearance of the consciousness is discrimination. Field is the place where we live; it is the place where all sentient beings rely on.** (CBETA, T31, no. 1585, p.10, a11-14)

*The Treatise on Completing the Doctrine of Consciousness-Only* cites the statement of “The realm, which comes from past beginningless time, being the object that all dharmas rely on equally,” from *The Abhidharma Sutra* to explain the definition of “the eighth consciousness.”

About the statement of “The simile of seeds contains the impression of arising-and-ceasing too,” it is the thing that ordinary people cannot get rid of. According to Buddha’s ultimate teaching, the mundane wise can only see the arising-and-ceasing “conditioned dharmas;” but they expand their recognition by thinking that they can see “all dharmas.” Therefore, Buddha followed their definition of “all dharmas” as “the scope that all mundane wise can see” to discuss this topic and brought up the simile of seeds to explain the permanent dharma to understand easily. Since it is only a simile, we should not truly regard the seeds of worldly plants as Buddha-mentioned seeds that do not stop, spoil, perish or get paralyzed and are new, matured and firm. The reviewer’s comment above provides further support for my explanation of the definition of “being and nothingness” (i.e., all dharmas) in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 37, which conforms to Buddha’s true meaning.

The doctrines of both small and great vehicles with different levels of depth are all consistent. We should not say they are different or inconsistent because of their different levels, and cut these sutras into two totally different doctrines. From the study and comparison between *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutras 37, 39, 293 and 296, and *Samyutta-nikaya*, I find these doctrines explain and support each other, and always keep consistent among all of them. It also proves the conscientiousness and precise citation of my article.

**15. The Reply, by referring to the theory of Shi Yinshun, states that it is improper to compile *Avgulimaliyasutra* into the Agama divisions.**

My response:

To explain that Shi Yinshun's claim is completely unreasonable, I state in the Author's Reply as follows:

Shi Yinshun wrote *Exploring the Origin of the Consciousness-Only Theory*, which explores the origin of "the illusive consciousness-only school," one of the three schools of great-vehicle, from *The Agama Sutras*. Why cannot the origin of "the true permanent mind-only school," another one of the three schools of great-vehicle, be explored from *The Agama Sutras*?

In addition to the school of "consciousness-only," Shi Yinshun also wrote *The Exploration of Emptiness* to explore the origin of "Prajna Middle Way" from *The Agama Sutras*. Why cannot the origin of "the true permanent mind-only" be explored from *The Agama Sutras*? From my study, there are lots of evidence of "the true permanent mind-only" in *The Agama Sutras*. It is unreasonable that the reviewer thinks I should not explore the real meaning of "the true permanent mind-only" from *The Agama Sutras* and submit the article. I request the reviewer to provide the explanation that conforms to the three-ways-of-knowing, which have been the academic standards already. Otherwise, it will reflect that the reviewer may only take his personal viewpoints to judge the arguments of my paper.

**16. Comment Letter 2 states, "The article states that 'the true dweller' is 'the object of perceiving' and 'the true dweller' possesses the important function to produce the five aggregates too. It is the origin that the consciousness can arise as well as the object that the consciousness can perceive. How can it be possible?"**

My response:

The reviewer takes personal religious beliefs as the review criteria. It conflicts with the principle of objectivity in academia and the agreement of using three-ways-of-knowing as criteria. The reviewer should not question me about "How can it be possible?" on the basis of the standpoint of personal religious beliefs. If any one challenges others only from his religious belief without any documental evidence, it will become an irrational argument and will not be the correct attitude of reasonable discussion in academia. Since the committee has agreed to use the three-ways-of-knowing as the review criteria, the reviewer should review the article based on the ultimate teachings, personal realization and logical inference rather than the viewpoint of personal religious beliefs. I have cited *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 293, "Buddha tells that *bhiksu* the saints and sages correspond with the supra-mundane emptiness and it is the dharma of following conditions for all dependent-arising," to explain "the saints and sages corresponding with the neither-arising-nor-ceasing supra-mundane emptiness" and "the supra-mundane emptiness being the dharma of following conditions for all dependent-arising." In addition, there are many historic records about the saints and sages who had gotten enlightened; those are all their personal

realizations. The passages of *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutras 293 and 296, and other sutras that the reviewer cites all provide the evidence to support the consistency and correctness of my explanation based on the three-ways-of-knowing. I hope that the reviewer can review my paper objectively and put aside his personal viewpoints and beliefs.

**17. Comment Letter 2 states, “The title is ‘*The Definition of Being in The Agama Sutras*’ but the author often departs from the topic to discuss many other questions of Eastern and Western philosophies. The contents of article are too disordered and defocus the main topic.”**

My response:

My above citation explains that I always expound the kernel of the proposition of “being.” The reason why the reviewer feels disordered may be that the reviewer is neither familiar with the proposition of “being” nor unable to catch the trend of its history.

In my article, I use more than thirteen hundred words to introduce the origin and meaning of “being” in Western philosophy, conclude the major difference between Buddhism and other religions to be the cognition of personal realization, and summarize three major reasons why other religions cannot realize the origin of the universe and life; all of these closely relate to the kernel of the title. My article does not defocus the main topic at all. Although the viewpoints of this article challenge the reviewer’s religious beliefs, I would like to ask the reviewer to open his mind and review the article with rational attitude. It is really out of my expectation that this situation happened in The Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies. I think the Institute, founded by Shi Shengyen, will respect the ultimate teachings of *The Agama Sutras*. Now I still believe it will be so. I hope these minor differences in interpretations can be resolved.

**18. Comment Letter 2 states, “The author only focuses on his own explanation of philosophy but does not carefully analyze the sutras. He seems to build a castle on sand.”**

My response:

I do not have my own explanation of philosophy but only faithfully explain both *The Agama Sutras* and *Nikayas* according to the three-ways-of-knowing without any viewpoint of personal speculation. Therefore, for the statement in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 39, of “These five kinds of seeds do not stop, spoil, perish or get paralyzed and are new, matured and firm,” I will not add my personal viewpoints as “The simile of seed contains the impression of arising-and-ceasing too.” For the statement in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 293, of “Buddha tells that *bhiksu* the saints and sages correspond with the supra-mundane emptiness and it is the dharma of following conditions for all dependent-arising,” I will not say, “How can it be possible?” Because I completely follow the standards of three-ways-of-knowing, my article conforms to the consistency among sutras. If

someone regards the ultimate teaching of “These five kinds of seeds do not stop, spoil, perish or get paralyzed and are new, matured and firm,” as “The simile of seed contains the impression of arising-and-ceasing too,” or regards the ultimate teaching of “Buddha tells that *bhiksu* the saints and sages correspond with the supra-mundane emptiness and it is the dharma of following conditions for all dependent-arising,” as “How can it be possible?” one will depart from the three-ways-of-knowing and be the person who “only focuses on his own explanation of philosophy but does not carefully analyze the sutras.” Thus, his viewpoint is likely “to build a castle on sand.”

Summary:

1. I appreciate that the Institute agrees to use three-ways-of-knowing as the base of communication.
2. In my above response 1, I clarify that the usage of “the true dweller” is for the “neither-arising-nor-ceasing dharma.” I use it, as Buddha used many different names in different places, for easily explaining the context.
3. In the responses 2 to 7, I reply the reviewers’ questions about the proposition of “being” in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 37, and clarify the reviewers’ misinterpretations.
4. In the responses 8 to 12, I explain “the conditions-arisen dharmas” in *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 296, “*idappaccayata* (the nature of dependence),” “the fourteen *avyakatas*,” and the reviewers’ challenge on the history of “the empty nature of dependent-arising,” and clarify the reviewers’ misunderstanding.
5. In the responses 13 and 14, I bring up the explanation and supporting information for the reviewers’ challenge on the textual comparison of *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 39, versus *The Seed Sutra*, and the induced consciousness-only related questions.
6. In the responses 15 to 18, I clarify all the other questions that the reviewers bring up.
7. In summary, I find the different viewpoints between the reviewers’ and mine are not from the translation deviation between Chinese and Pali, but from the following reasons:
  - (1) Due to the unfamiliarity and prejudice on Western philosophy, the reviewers cannot undertake reasonable review.
  - (2) It seems the reviewers are unfamiliar with the basic definitions of the Buddhist terms and the correct Buddhist history.
  - (3) The reviewers guess the meanings of sutras by only separating words or sentences and cannot catch the whole structure of them.
  - (4) The reviewers use the conclusions of the wrongly inferred paper and the questionable theory as the review standards.
  - (5) The reviewers might have their own religious beliefs and cannot fairly review my article

because its conclusions conflict with their beliefs.

(6) The reviewers cannot follow the standards of three-ways-of-knowing and thus do the review based on their personal religious beliefs.

According to these reasons, I think the committee's review conclusion is questionable.

8. I have brought up the documental evidence and my explanations as much as possible in the limited time and space. But since this is only a reply letter rather than a paper, I cannot submit all evidence and detailed supporting information in time. Nevertheless, I believe these documents and explanations are enough to let the reviewers understand that the discourse of my article is conscientious, consistent and correct. It is written based on the standards of three-ways-of-knowing.
9. In order to make my article easier to understand for the readers, I would like to suggest adding some supplementary explanations like the modern translation of *The Kindred Sayings*, Sutra 296, the textual comparison on *Samyutta-nikaya* and the introductory explanation of the proposition of "being."
10. I highly value the reviewers' comments. Although the wording in my reply is somewhat straightforward, it is only the way that I express my viewpoints in the limited time. If the committee feels it is rash, I apologize for it. For the strict criticism from the reviewers, I really appreciate it and will contemplate them in order to improve my discourse. Among the committee, I would like to especially thank the second reviewer because he or she brings up many concrete and helpful comments, which let me to have the opportunity to provide further evidence, clarify my viewpoints and enhance mutual communication. I would like to express my thanks and respect to him or her again.
11. Although the review result is my personal business, the review standard of the Institute should be cautious in order to keep high quality of the Journal. I sincerely hope the Institute and committee can keep the mind open, put aside the personal religious beliefs, and review my article based on the objective criteria of three-ways-of-knowing—the fact, the correct inference and the evidence in the sutras. Based on these criteria, we can have more reasonable communication and resolve our disagreements of viewpoints. I strongly believe that the knowledge of any person, including me, is limited. Only through opening the mind and pursuing the fact, we can advance further in the academic area.
12. In the first review letter, I have only the result without any reason or explanation; it is really a bad example in academia. If the review judgments could not be disclosed, that would depart from the academic spirits of pursuing facts, taking challenge and being responsible. Without those spirits, the quality of Taiwanese academia will not be able to upgrade to the worldwide

level. Now I have got the reviewers' letters of judgment reasons and the appealing process. Based on them, I have written this *Author's Reply (2)* to reply to the committee's judgment reasons item by item in only a few days. Its volume is similar to that of a paper. I sincerely hope the Institute, according to the spirits of the cautious attitude, open mind and tolerance for different viewpoints, can reevaluate my article based on the explanations that I provide. Finally I really appreciate your time and effort on reviewing my article and reply letters, and wish all of you to advance with your wisdom, virtue and merit!

**Best Regards,**

**Tsai Lichen**

**The author of *The Definition of Being in The Agama Sutras***

**March 3rd, 2006**