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The *Mahānidāna-sūtra* in Chinese Sources

The Chinese canon contains four translations corresponding to the Pāli *Mahānidānasutta* (D II, pp. 55-71), one of the most important early scriptures on dependent origination (*pratīyasamutpāda* / *paṭiccasamuppāda*). All these witnesses form what we could provisionally call the “*Mahānidāna* textual family”, and the Chinese versions (T 14, T 26 no. 97, T 1 no. 13, and T 52), representing different recensions, constitute the most important sources for studying its historical development. Of particular interest from this point of view is the last of these translations, the *Da sheng yi jing* 大生義經 T 52, ascribed to Shihu (*Dānapāla?), active in China during the Northern Song period between the late 10th and early 11th century CE. This late version presents some unique features among the members of the *Mahānidāna* family, and will be discussed in the first part of the presentation.

Even if there is little evidence that this scriptural family ever exerted any significant influence on Chinese Buddhism, one of the earliest surviving Buddhist exegetical texts composed in China is devoted precisely to the **Mahānidāna-sūtra*. This is an interlinear commentary (T 1693) composed by the celebrated 4th century master Dao'an 道安 to the *Ren ben yu sheng jing zhu* 人本欲生經 (T 14), An Shigao's 安世高 2nd century version of the **Mahānidāna-sūtra*. Dao'an's little-studied commentary is a document of exceptional importance for studying the intellectual history of early Chinese Buddhism, and will be the focus of the second part of the presentation.