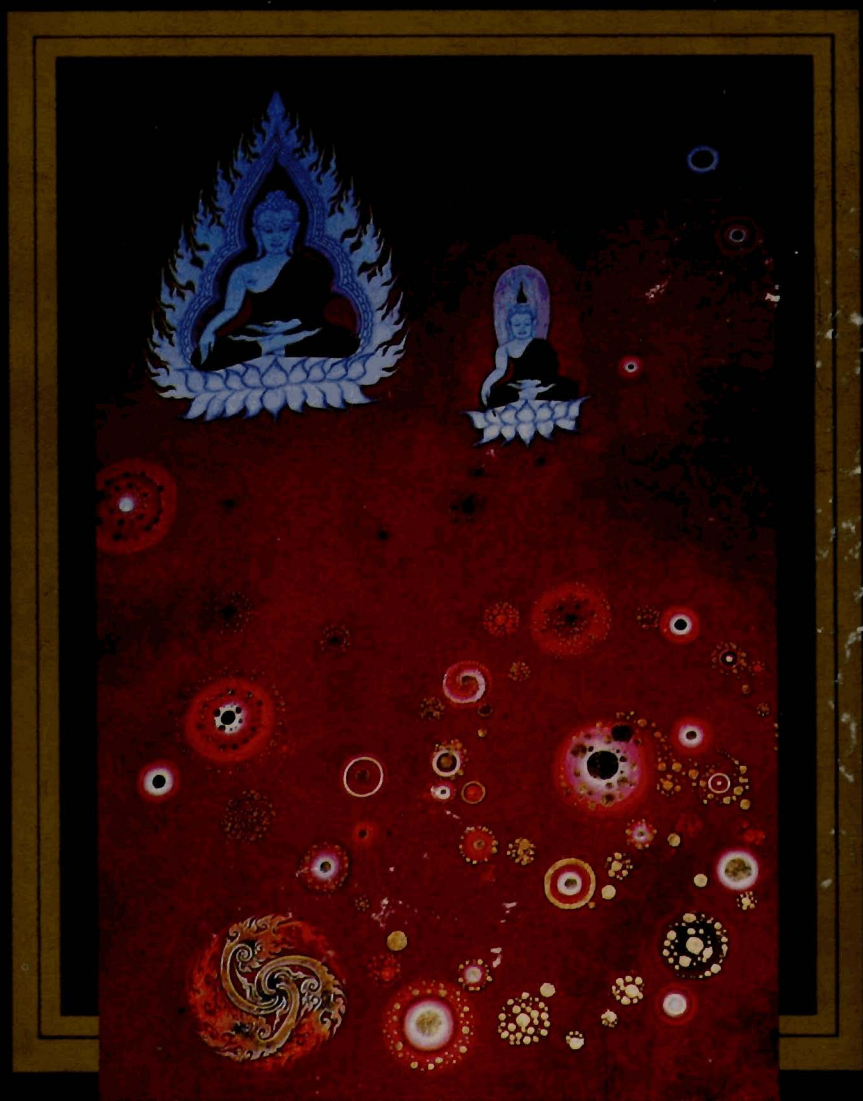


DEPENDENT ORIGINATION

The Buddhist Law of Conditionality

P. A. Payutto



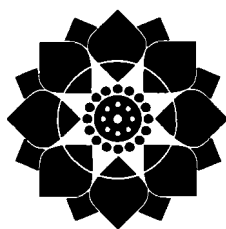
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Dependent Origination

The Buddhist Law of Conditionality

P. A. Payutto

Translated from the Thai by Bruce Evans



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FOREWORD

THE PRINCIPLE OF DEPENDENT ORIGATION (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*) is one of the most profound and intellectually intriguing of all the Buddha's teachings. While its basic principles are simple enough, when we start looking in depth at the twelve-linked chain of dependently arisen conditions which makes up the principle's standard format, we quickly encounter areas of doubt.

This standard format has two major interpretations: one is as a process continuing from lifetime-to-lifetime, the other a very immediate process, occurring in the space of moments of consciousness. But whether we interpret it as covering many life-times or occurring in one mind-moment, we are dealing with matters that are beyond normal perception. In the former, it is past and future lives, about which there is not only very little personal experience, but a great deal of doubt for minds with Western attitudes, conditioned as they are by centuries of Judeo-Christian influence and, more recently, by the mores of materialism. In the latter, we are dealing with the workings of consciousness on such

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a profound level that it is only after a great deal of training and contemplation that an understanding of the process on an experiential level is possible.

For the earnest but inexperienced student, then, the subject of Dependent Origination is likely to be one of awe, fascination, and some perplexity. It does require a good deal of reflection, and because so many of its teachings are open to interpretation, it is easy to go off on a tangent. This is why it is helpful to become acquainted with what the Scriptures and Commentaries of Buddhism have to say about it. Armed with a thorough understanding of the subject, and aided by the commentaries of those venerable beings who have thoroughly contemplated it, we are more assured of staying on the true path.

The subject of the present book, like others in the *Buddhadhamma* Series, is gleaned from the book *Buddhadhamma*, by P.A. Payutto (Venerable Phra Dhammapiṭṭhaka). It is a translation of one chapter, the fourth, of the original Thai work, with some material added from the sixteenth chapter. The reason for this addition is based on the layout of the original book, which I would like to explain.

Buddhadhamma is divided into two main divisions: the first is called *Majjhena-Dhammadesanā*, (the Middle Teaching) and describes the Buddha's teachings on 'the way things are,' or the nature of reality. This division includes, among others, chapters on *kamma* (already published in English by the Buddhadhamma Foundation as *Good, Evil and Beyond ... Kamma in the Buddha's Teaching*), the Three Characteristics (to be published) and the principle of Dependent Origination. It is divided into four sections, which are headed, What is life? How is life? How does life function? and How should life be?

The second division of the book is called *Majjhimā Paṭipadā*, and deals with the practical techniques for realising the truths outlined in the first division of the book and for putting the knowledge gained into good, practical use. Essentially this divi-

sion contains the teachings on the Eight-fold Path. It has one section, called How should life be lived? A final section, dealing with the Four Noble Truths, is used to summarise the entire book.

In all, the book has 22 chapters, 15 in the first division, six in the second, and a final chapter as summary.

Because *Buddhadhamma* is one unit, each of the chapters is a part of the whole, and each is related to the others. Some of the chapters can be easily made into books in their own right, as was the chapter on *kamma*, but others are more dependent on interaction with other chapters. The chapter on Dependent Origination, for instance, deals exclusively with the natural principle and excludes details of practical application, for which the reader of the original would turn to the second division of the book. When the first draft for this book, a translation of Chapter Four, was completed, it seemed a little inconclusive. This is only natural, considering that it was after all taken out of the middle of a larger book, but on its own it may have left readers wondering. In order to compensate for this, I added another chapter, gleaned from Chapter 16 of *Buddhadhamma*, called in the original "Introduction to the Middle Way." This new Chapter is called "Breaking the Cycle," and its purpose is to introduce the subject of practical application of the teaching.

However, the matter of practical application, as the author says, is a vast subject, for which detailed explanation must be left to another book. It will be dealt with in a volume soon to be published, comprising a translation of four more chapters of *Buddhadhamma*, dealing with the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eight-fold Path.

What this book offers is a description of the Buddhist teaching of Dependent Origination. The venerable author, one of Thailand's most gifted and highly acknowledged scholars, guides us through the Canonical and Commentarial material available, adding to this his own gift for sifting out the essential heart of the teachings. He gives us a foundation upon which to

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launch our own investigation. It may be sometimes painful, and not always clear, but whenever things begin to seem obscure, it is helpful to remember the basic essence of Dependent Origination: 'with this as condition, that arises; when that ceases, so does this.' What could be simpler?

The Translator

INTRODUCTION

THE TEACHING OF CAUSAL INTERDEPENDENCE is the most important of Buddhist principles. It describes the law of nature, which exists **as** the natural course of things. The Buddha was no emissary of heavenly commandments, but the discoverer of this principle of the natural order, and the proclaimer of its truth to the world.

The progression of causes and conditions is the reality which applies to all things, from the natural environment, which is an external, physical condition, to the events of human society, ethical principles, life events and the happiness and suffering which manifest in our own minds. These systems of causal relationship are part of the one natural **truth**. Human happiness depends on having some knowledge of this causal system and practising correctly within it, through addressing problems on the personal, social, and environmental levels. Given that all things are interconnected, and all are affecting each other, success in dealing with the world lies in creating harmony within it.

The sciences which have evolved with human civilization, and

which are influencing our lives so profoundly today, are said to be based on reason and rationality. Their storehouse of knowledge has been amassed through interacting with these natural laws of conditionality. But the human search for knowledge in modern scientific fields has three notable features: Firstly, the search for knowledge in these sciences, and the application of that knowledge, is separated into distinct categories. Each branch of science is distinct from the others. Secondly, human beings in this present civilization are of the belief that the law of conditionality applies only to the physical world, not to the mental world, or to abstract values such as ethics. This can be seen even in the study of psychology, which tends to look at the cause and effect process only in relation to physical phenomena. Thirdly, the application of scientific knowledge (of the laws of conditionality) is applied solely to serve self interests. Our relationship with the natural environment, for instance, is centred around trying to derive as much resources from it as we can with little or no regard for the consequences.

Underneath it all, we tend to interpret happiness, freedom, rights, liberty, and peace in ways that preserve self interests and encroach on others. Even when controlling other people comes to be seen as a blameworthy act, this aggressive tendency is then turned toward other directions, such as the natural environment. Now that we are beginning to realize that it is impossible to really control other people or other things, the only meaning left in life is to preserve self interests and protect territorial rights. Living as we do with this faulty knowledge and these mistaken beliefs, the natural environment is thrown out of skew, society is in turmoil, and human life, both physically and mentally, is disoriented. The world seems to be full of conflict and suffering.

All facets of the natural order—the physical world and the human world, the world of conditions (*dhamma*) and the world of actions (*kamma*), the material world and the mental world—are connected and interrelated, they cannot be separated. Disorder

and aberration in one sector will affect other sectors. If we want to live in peace, we must learn how to live in harmony with all spheres of the natural environment, both the internal and the external, the individual and the social, the physical and the mental, the material and the immaterial.

To create true happiness it is of utmost importance that we not only reflect on the interrelationship of all things in the natural order, but also see ourselves clearly as one system of causal relationships within the whole natural order, becoming aware first of the internal mental factors, then those in our life experiences, in society, and ultimately in the world around us. This is why, of all the systems of causal relationship based on the law "because there is this, that arises; when this ceases that ceases," the teachings of Buddhism begin with, and stress throughout, the factors involved in the creation of suffering in individual awareness — "because there is ignorance, there are volitional formations." Once this system of causal relationship is understood on the inner level, we are then in a position to see the connections between these inner factors and the causal relationships in society and the natural environment. This is the approach adopted in this book.

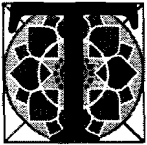
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May the good intentions involved in the production of this book serve to play some small part in creating well-being, both individual and social, in the world at large.

P. A. Payutto

1

AN OVERVIEW OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION



THE PRINCIPLE OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION is one of Buddhism's most important and unique teachings. In numerous passages of the Pali Canon, it was described by the Buddha as a natural law, a fundamental truth which exists independently of the arising of enlightened beings:

"Whether a *Tathāgata** appears or not, this condition exists and is a natural fact, a natural law; that is, the principle of conditionality.

"The *Tathāgata*, enlightened to and awakened to that principle, teaches it, shows it, formulates it, declares it, reveals it, makes it known, clarifies it and points it out, saying,

"See here, conditioned by ignorance are volitional impulses."

"This suchness, monks, this invariability, this irreversibility, that is to say, this law of conditionality, I call the principle of Dependent Origination."¹

The following excerpts indicate the importance which the Bud-

* For definitions of Pali and technical terms, see Appendix II.

** *Idappaccayatā*

INTRODUCTION

and aberration in one sector will affect other sectors. If we want to live in peace, we must learn how to live in harmony with all spheres of the natural environment, both the internal and the external, the individual and the social, the physical and the mental, the material and the immaterial.

To create true happiness it is of utmost importance that we not only reflect on the interrelationship of all things in the natural order, but also see ourselves clearly as one system of causal relationships within the whole natural order, becoming aware first of the internal mental factors, then those in our life experiences, in society, and ultimately in the world around us. This is why, of all the systems of causal relationship based on the law "because there is this, that arises; when this ceases that ceases," the teachings of Buddhism begin with, and stress throughout, the factors involved in the creation of suffering in individual awareness — "because there is ignorance, there are volitional formations." Once this system of causal relationship is understood on the inner level, we are then in a position to see the connections between these inner factors and the causal relationships in society and the natural environment. This is the approach adopted in this book.

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AN OVERVIEW OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION

Those who have studied the life of the Buddha may recall his reflections shortly after the Enlightenment, when he had not yet begun to expound the teaching. At that time, the Buddha was reluctant to teach, as is related in the Scriptures:

"Monks, the thought arose in me thus: "This truth which I have realized is profound, difficult to see, abstruse, calming, subtle, not attainable through mere sophisticated logic.

"But beings revel in attachment, take pleasure in attachment and delight in attachment. For beings who thus revel, take pleasure and delight in attachment, this is an extremely difficult thing to see: that is, the law of conditionality, the principle of Dependent Origination. Moreover, this also is an extremely difficult thing to see: the calming of all conditioning, the casting off of all clinging, the abandoning of desire, dispassion, cessation, *Nibbāna*. If I were to give this teaching and my words were not understood, that would simply make for weariness and difficulty."⁶

This passage mentions two teachings, the principle of Dependent Origination and *Nibbāna*, stressing both their profundity and also their importance within the Buddha's enlightenment and teaching.

Types of Dependent Origination found in the texts

The textual references dealing with the principle of Dependent Origination can be divided into two main categories. Firstly, those which describe the general principle, and secondly, those which specify constituent factors linked together in a chain. The former format is often used to precede the latter as a general outline. The latter, more frequently encountered, is mostly expressed on its own. This latter description may be regarded as the practical manifestation of the principle of Dependent Origination, showing as it does how the natural process follows the general principle.

Each of these two main categories can further be divided into two limbs, the first showing the process of origination, the second,

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the process of cessation. The first limb, showing the process of origination, is called the *samudayavāra*. It is the sequence in its forward mode, and corresponds to the second of the Four Noble Truths, the cause of suffering (*dukkha samudaya*). The second limb, showing the process of cessation, is called the *nirodhavāra*. It is the sequence in its reverse mode and corresponds to the third Noble Truth, the cessation of suffering (*dukkha nirodha*).

1) The general principle.

In essence, this general principle corresponds to what is known in Pali as *idappaccayatā*, the principle of conditionality.

A. Imasmim sati idaṃ hoti: When there is this,
that is.

Imasuppāda idaṃ upajjati: With the arising of
this, that arises.

B. Imasmim asati idaṃ na hoti: When this is not,
neither is that.

Imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati: With the cessation
of this, that ceases.⁷

2) The principle in effect.

A) *Avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā*

With Ignorance as condition, there are Volitional Impulses.

Saṅkhāra-paccayā viññānaṃ

With Volitional Impulses as condition, Consciousness.

Viññāna-paccayā nāmarūpaṃ

With Consciousness as condition, Body and Mind.

Nāmarūpa-paccayā saḷāyatanaṃ

With Body and Mind as condition, the Six Sense Bases.

Saḷāyatana-paccayā phasso

With the Six Sense Bases as condition, (sense)Contact.

Phassa-paccayā vedanā

With Contact as condition, Feeling.

Vedanā-paccayā taṇhā

With Feeling as condition, Craving.

Taṇhā-paccayā upādānaṃ

With Craving as condition, Clinging.

Upādāna-paccayā bhavo

With Clinging as condition, Becoming.

Bhava-paccayā jāti

With Becoming as condition, Birth.

Jāti-paccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ

With Birth as condition, Aging and Death,

Soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyāsā sambhavan' ti

Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief and Despair.

Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti

Thus is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.

B) *Avijjāya tveva asesa-virāga nirodhā saṅkhāra-nirodho*

With the complete abandoning of Ignorance, Volitional Impulses cease.*

Saṅkhāra-nirodhā viññāṇa-nirodho

With the cessation of Volitional Impulses, Consciousness ceases.

Viññāṇa-nirodhā nāmarūpa-nirodho

With the cessation of Consciousness, Body and Mind cease.

Nāmarūpa-nirodhā saḷāyatana-nirodho

With the cessation of Body and Mind, the Six Sense Bases cease.

Saḷāyatana-nirodhā phassa-nirodho

With the cessation of the Six Sense Bases, Contact ceases.

Phassa-nirodhā vedanā-nirodho

With the cessation of Contact, Feeling ceases.

* See Appendix I, A problem with the word 'nirodha.'

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Vedanā-nirodhā taṇhā-nirodho

With the cessation of Feeling, Craving ceases.

Taṇhā-nirodhā upādāna-nirodho

With the cessation of Craving, Clinging ceases.

Upādāna-nirodhā bhava-nirodho

With the cessation of Clinging, Becoming ceases.

Bhava-nirodhā jāti-nirodho

With the cessation of Becoming, Birth ceases.

Jāti-nirodhā jarāmaraṇaṃ

With the cessation of Birth, Aging and Death,

Soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyāsā nirujjan'ti

Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief and Despair cease.

Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti

Thus is there a cessation to this whole mass of suffering.⁸

Note that this format treats the principle of Dependent Origination as a process of the arising and cessation of suffering. This is the wording most commonly found in the texts. In some places, it is given as the arising and cessation of the world, using the Pali words *ayam khobhikkhave lokassasamudayo*—"Thus, monks, is the arising of the world," and *ayam kho bhikkhave lokassa atthaṅgamo*—"Thus, monks, is the dissolution of the world;"⁹ or *emamayam loko samudayati*—"Thus does this world arise," and *emamayam loko nirujjhati*—"Thus does this world cease."¹⁰ Both of these wordings in fact have the same meaning, which will become clear once our terms are defined.

In the Abhidhamma texts and Commentaries the principle of Dependent Origination is also known as *paccayākāra*, referring to the inter-dependent nature of things.

The extended form given above contains twelve factors, inter-dependently linked in the form of a cycle. * It has no beginning or ending. Putting ignorance at the beginning does not imply that it is the First Cause, or Genesis, of all things. Ignorance is put at the beginning for the sake of clarity, by intercepting the cycle and

*See Fig. 1, page 27

establishing a starting point where it is considered most practical. We are in fact cautioned against assuming ignorance to be a First Cause with the following description of the conditioned arising of ignorance—*Āsava-samudayā avijjā-samudayo, āsava-nirodhā avijjā-nirodho*—ignorance arises with the arising of the outflows,* and ceases with their cessation."

The twelve links of the standard principle of Dependent Origination format are counted from ignorance to aging and death only. As for 'sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair', these are actually by-products of aging and death for one with outflows and defilement, becoming 'fertilizer' for the further arising of outflows (*āsava*), and consequently ignorance, which turns the cycle once more.

The Buddha did not always describe the Dependent Origination cycle in one fixed form (from beginning to end). The extended format was used in cases where he was explaining the principle in general, but when he was addressing a particular problem, he often applied it in reverse order, thus: aging and death → birth → becoming → clinging → craving → feeling → contact → six sense bases → body and mind → consciousness → volitional impulses → ignorance.¹² In other descriptions he may have begun at one of the intermediate factors, depending on the problem in question. For example, he might have started at birth (*jāti*),¹³ feeling (*vedanā*),¹⁴ or at consciousness (*viññāna*),¹⁵ following the steps forward up to aging and death (*jarāmaraṇa*), or tracing backwards to arrive at ignorance (*avijjā*). Or he may have begun with some factor altogether different from the twelve links, which was then worked into the Dependent Origination chain.

Another point worthy of note is that the dependent origination of these links does not have the same meaning as 'to be caused by' as such. The determinants which make a tree grow, for instance, include not just the seed, but also the soil, moisture, fertilizer, air temperature and so on. These are all 'determinants.' Moreover,

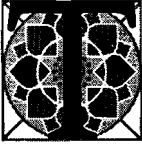
* *Āsava*: for a more detailed treatment of the *āsava*, see Chapter Six.

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being a determinant does not necessarily imply any sequential order in time. For instance, in the example of the tree, the various determinants, such as moisture, temperature, soil and so on, must exist together, not sequentially, for the tree to benefit. Moreover, some kinds of determinants are inter-dependent, each conditioning the existence of the other, as, for example, an egg is a condition for a chicken, while a chicken is a condition for an egg.

2

INTERPRETING DEPENDENT ORIGINATION



THE PRINCIPLE OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION has been interpreted in a number of ways, which can be broadly summarized as follows:

1. As a demonstration of life- or world-evolution, based on a literal definition of such phrases as *loka-samudaya*¹ (arising of the world).
2. As a demonstration of the arising and cessation of individual life, or individual suffering.

This second division can further be divided into two sub-categories:

- 2.1 Demonstrating the process over a very long period of time, from lifetime to lifetime. This is the more literal interpretation; it is also the explanation most often found in the commentarial texts, where the subject is expanded on in such minute detail that the newcomer is likely to be confused by the plethora of technical terms.
- 2.2 Demonstrating a process which is continually occurring. Although related to 2.1, this interpretation gives a more profound and practical definition of the terms with emphasis

on the present moment, which is considered to be the real objective of the teaching. This kind of interpretation is supported by teachings in numerous Suttas, and in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* there are passages which describe the entire Dependent Origination process in one mind moment.²

In the first interpretation given above, there are attempts to interpret the principle of Dependent Origination as a world-origination theory, treating ignorance (*avijjā*) as the First Cause* and tracing evolution through the whole twelve links. This kind of interpretation makes the teaching of Buddhism seem very similar to other religious teachings and philosophies, which postulate an origination principle, such as God. The interpretations differ only in that the latter teachings describe the birth and existence of the world as the workings of some supernatural force, whereas the teachings of Buddhism, as seen in this interpretation, would explain things as simply a form of evolution proceeding according to the natural laws of cause and effect.

However, this interpretation certainly contradicts the Buddha's teaching, because any teaching or school of thought which shows a world originating from a First Cause is contrary to the principle of conditionality, or Dependent Origination, which clearly states that all things are interdependent, arising continually through the influences of causes and conditions. Any First Cause, be it a Creator God or whatever, is impossible. Interpreting the Dependent Origination cycle as a description of life- or world-evolution can only be feasible when it presents a picture of the universe functioning according to the natural processes of growth and decline, ceaselessly unfolding at the dictates of cause and effect.

When assessing the plausibility of these interpretations, we must

* Some of those who interpret it in this way translate *avijjā* as the state of unknowing, which they go on to say is the fundamental base of existence; others define *avijjā* as 'the Unknowable,' which they say is God, and then go on to translate *saṅkhāra* as all conditioned things, and so: "With God as condition are all conditioned things."

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bear in mind the Buddha's objective in teaching Dependent Origination. In his teachings, the Buddha aimed to present only that which could be used to address the problems of life on a practical basis. He did not encourage trying to understand reality through conjecture, debate, or analysis of metaphysical problems, which he saw as impossible. For this reason, any assessment of a teaching as authentically Buddhist should involve an assessment of its value in terms of ethical principles.

A definition of the principle of Dependent Origination as a beginningless and endless process of evolution, although seemingly valid, can still be seen to have limited ethical value. What may be gained from it is:

1) A broader view of the world, as proceeding according to the flow of causes and effects and bound to the conditions found in the natural process. There is no Creator or Appointer, nor is the world a series of aimless accidents. Objectives cannot be realized through merely wishing, supplicating the gods, or luck, but must be effectuated through self-reliant effort based on an understanding of causes and conditions.

2) Creating the right causes for desired results can only be done when there is an understanding of those causes and the way they connect with their respective results. This necessitates the presence of an understanding (*paññā*) which is capable of discerning these complexities; life must be dealt with and related to with wisdom.

3) An understanding of the natural process as subject to the cause and effect continuum can be effective for reducing the delusion which causes clinging to, and identification with, things as self. Such a perspective enables a sounder and more independent relationship with things as they are.

The view of the principle of Dependent Origination as a world-evolution theory, although harmonious with the teachings of the Buddha, is nevertheless somewhat superficial. It lacks a profound, detailed, moment-by-moment analysis of physical and mental

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components. It is not strong enough or clear enough to unequivocally bring about the three results mentioned above, especially the third. In order to delve deeper into the truth, it is necessary to examine the unfolding of natural events in more detail, on a personal basis, clearly seeing the truth of this process as it actually occurs in our lives, even in very brief instances. With such a clear awareness, the three benefits mentioned above will be more likely to occur. Incidentally, this more immediate interpretation does not preclude the interpretation of the process as evolution on a long-term basis.

Any explanation of the principle of Dependent Origination as a world-evolution theory, whether in a basic or a more subtle sense, will lack depth. The second interpretation, which concerns personal life, and particularly the process of the continuation of personal suffering, is much more profound.

Of the descriptions of the Dependent Origination cycle as a personal process, the interpretation which covers several lifetimes (given in 2.1) is that which is most accepted and expanded on in the **Commentaries**.³ There it is treated in minute detail and greatly elaborated on, systematized and illustrated. However, at the same time this systematization tends to be rather rigid, and it tends to mystify the subject for the newcomer. Here it will be given its own chapter, followed by the partially related interpretation of Dependent Origination as occurring in a matter of mind moments (rendition 2.2)

The Essential Meaning

In essence, the principle of Dependent Origination is a description of the process of the arising **and cessation** of suffering. The word 'suffering' (*dukkha*) is a very important term in Buddhism. It figures in several of its most important teachings, such as the Three Characteristics (*tilakkhaṇa*) and the Four Noble Truths (*ariyasacca*).

In order to more clearly understand the principle of Dependent Origination, it is essential to first understand this word *dukkha*, or suffering.

The term '*dukkha*' in the Buddha's teaching is used in a much broader sense than is its English equivalent, 'suffering'. It is therefore necessary to discard the narrow meaning of the word as it occurs in the English language and reconsider it in the light of the very broad meaning of the Buddha's words, which divide suffering into three types.⁴ Together with their commentarial explanations,⁵ they are:

1. ***Dukkha-dukkhatā***: the suffering which is a feeling. This includes both physical and mental suffering — aches, pains, sadness and so on — much as is usually understood by the English word 'suffering'. This corresponds to the Pali word '*dukkhavedanā*' ('the feeling of suffering' which ordinarily arises whenever a disagreeable sensation is experienced).

2. ***Viparināma-dukkhatā***: the suffering which is inherent in change; the suffering concealed within the inconstancy of happiness. This is the suffering which is caused by the changes within, and the cessation of, happiness. This can be observed on a hot day when you have been working outside: you may not notice the heat if you are accustomed to it, but once you go into an air-conditioned room, the resulting pleasant feeling may cause an unpleasant reaction to take place when you go back **outside** — the heat feels unbearable. The original neutral feeling of heat **turns** into an uncomfortable one because of the pleasantness of the air-conditioned coolness. The pleasantness of the air-conditioning causes the subsequent feeling of heat to seem unpleasant. It's almost as if the suffering is dormant, only to reveal itself when the pleasant feeling fades. The more intense the pleasant feeling is, the more intensely does it change into suffering, and the suffering seems to expand in proportion to the intensity of the pleasant feeling. If the pleasant feeling had not arisen, the suffering dependent on it would likewise not have arisen. If pleasant feeling is accompanied

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by an awareness of its fickle nature, fear, worry and uncertainty tend to shadow it. When the pleasant feeling in time passes away, it is followed by the longing, "I used to have such happiness, now it is gone."

3. *Saṅkhāra dukkhatā*: the suffering which is inherent within all *saṅkhāra*, all things which arise from determinants; specifically, the five *khandhas*. This refers to the subjection of all conditioned things to the contrary forces of birth and dissolution, how they are not perfect within themselves but exist only as part of the cause and effect continuum. As such, they are likely to cause suffering (that is, the feeling of suffering, or *dukkha-dukkhatā*) whenever there is inflexible craving and clinging to them through ignorance (*avijjā-taṇhā-upādāna*).

The most important kind of suffering is the third kind, which describes the nature inherent to all conditions, both physical and mental. *Saṅkhāra-dukkhatā* as a natural attribute assumes a psychological significance when it is recognized that conditions are incapable of producing any perfect contentment, and as such will cause suffering for anybody who tries to cling to them.

The principle of Dependent Origination shows the inter-dependence and inter-relation of all things in the form of a continuum. As a continuum, it can be analysed from a number of different perspectives:

All things are inter-related and inter-dependent; all things exist in relation to each other; all things exist dependent on determinants; all things have no enduring existence, not even for a moment; all things have no intrinsic entity; all things are without First Cause, or Genesis.

To put it another way, the fact that all things appear in their diverse forms of growth and decline shows their true nature to be one of a continuum or process. Being a continuum shows them to be compounded of numerous determinants. The form of a continuum arises because the various determinants are inter-related. The continuum moves and changes form because the various

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factors concerned cannot endure, even for a moment. Things cannot endure, even for a moment, because **they** have no intrinsic entity. Because **they** have no intrinsic entity they are entirely dependent on determinants. Because the determinants are inter-related and inter-dependent, they maintain the form of a continuum, and being so inter-related and inter-dependent indicates that **they** have no First Cause.

To render it in a negative form: if things had any intrinsicity they would have to possess some stability; if they could be stable, even for a moment, they could not be truly inter-related; if they were not inter-related they could not be formed into a continuum; if there were no continuum of cause and effect, the workings of nature would be impossible; and if there were some real intrinsic self within that continuum there could be no true inter-dependent cause and effect process. The continuum of cause and effect which enables all things to exist as they do can only operate because such things are transient, ephemeral, constantly arising and ceasing and having no intrinsic entity of their own.

The property of being transient, ephemeral, arising and ceasing, is called *aniccatii*. The property of being subject to birth and dissolution, of inherently involving stress and conflict, and of being intrinsically imperfect, is called *dukkhatā*. The quality of voidness of any real self is called *anattatā*. The principle of Dependent Origination illustrates these three properties in all things and shows the inter-relatedness and inter-reaction of all things to produce the diverse events in nature.

The functioning of the principle of Dependent Origination applies to all things, both physical and mental, and expresses itself through a number of natural laws. These are:

Dhammaniyaṃma: the natural law of cause and effect;

Utuniyaṃma: the natural law pertaining to physical objects (physical laws);

Bījaniyaṃma: the natural law pertaining to living things and heredity (biological laws);

Cittaniyaṃma: the natural law governing the workings of the

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mind (psychological or psychic laws);

Kammaniyāma: the law of *kamma*, which is of particular importance in determining human well-being and is directly related to behaviour from an ethical perspective.

It is worth noting that *kamma*, as with all other cause and effect relationships, can only function because things are transient (*anicca*) and are void of intrinsic entity (*anattā*). If things were permanent and had intrinsic being in themselves none of the natural laws, including the law of *kamma*, could operate. Moreover, these laws support the truth that there is no First Cause, or Genesis.

Things have no intrinsic entity because they arise dependent on causes and are inter-related. A simple illustration: What we know as a 'bed' comes from the collection of numerous components to assume a known form. A 'bed' other than these components does not exist. When all the components are dismantled, no 'bed' remains. All that is left is the concept of 'bed.' Even that concept is without independent existence, but must relate to other concepts, such as 'sleeping', a plane surface, a base, an empty space and so on.

Concepts are formed in the mind through the association of relationships. For most people, once a set of relationships is formed into a concept, the habit of clinging to things through craving (*taṇhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*) attaches to those concepts as fixed entities. Such clinging isolates the concept from its relationship with other things, and stains perceptions with notions of 'me' and 'mine,'* leading to identification with them and thus preventing any true understanding.

Things have no root cause or first arising. Tracing back along the stream of causes *ad infinitum*, no root cause can be found for anything. Yet there is a tendency for people to try to find some kind of original cause; this kind of thinking conflicts with the way of nature and causes perceptions which are at variance with the truth. It is a form of self-deception, caused by the human habit of

* *Ahaṃkāra, mamaṃkāra*

stopping any inquiry into causes at the immediate one and going no further. Thus the usual understanding of cause and effect, believing in an original cause for things, is inaccurate and contrary to the laws of nature. Considering how things are, it is necessary to search further back by asking, "What is the cause of that so-called Original Cause?" and so on. None can be found. The question should rather be asked, "Why should things have a root cause anyway!"

Another kind of reasoning which contradicts nature and is related to the idea of a root cause is the belief that in the beginning there was nothing. This kind of idea arises from attachment to the concept of self (*attā*), which in turn is derived from attachment to concepts. From there, the deduction is that previously this did not exist, but then it became extant. This kind of **false** reasoning is the human habit of 'clinging to concepts,' or 'not knowing the truth of concepts,' which in turn is not knowing things as they are. This causes the attempt to find something eternal, a First Cause, Mover of All Things, or Creator, which in turn gives rise to a number of contradictions, such as: "How can that which is eternal create that which is non-eternal?" In fact, within the dynamic stream of cause and effect there is no need for a position either supporting or denying any static existence at all, whether 'in the beginning' or right now, except within the realm of spoken concepts. We should rather encourage fresh consideration with the question "Why must existence be preceded by non-existence?"

The common belief that all things have a Creator is another idea which contradicts reality. Such a belief is a result of deductive thinking, based on the observation of man's ability to create things and produce artefacts of various kinds, such as the arts and so on. The deduction follows that therefore all things in the world must have a creator. In this case, we are deceived when we isolate the concept 'building' or 'creating' from the normal cause and effect continuum, thus taking a falsehood as our basic premise. In fact, 'building' is only one phase of the Dependent Origination process.

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That we are capable of creating anything at all is through becoming determinants in the process of relationship which produces the desired result. We differ from the purely physical factors concerned **only** in that in our case there are some mental factors, involving intention, also present. Even so, those factors remain part of a totality of factors and must also proceed according to the cause and effect process. For instance, when we wish to build a skyscraper, we must become part of the stream of determinants, manipulating other determinants in the process to completion. If the thought of creation was capable of bringing things into existence independent of the cause and effect process, then we could create skyscrapers anywhere simply by thinking them into existence, which is impossible. Thus, the word 'creation' has no meaning beyond a description of part of a process. Moreover, when things proceed smoothly along the cause and effect process, the question of a creator is no longer relevant at any point along the way.

In any case, searching for the facts regarding the question of a First Cause, a Creator God, and such, have little value in the Buddhist view, because they are not essential to a meaningful life. And even though reflecting on these matters can provide a wider world view as mentioned above, such reflection can still be passed over, as the value of the teaching of Dependent Origination in terms of life fulfilment already covers the benefits desired. We should therefore direct our attention more toward that.

3

MAN AND NATURE



ALL OF LIFE IS MADE UP OF THE FIVE *khandhas* (groups): *rūpa* or material form; *vedanā*, feeling; *saññā*, perception; *saṅkhāra*, volitional impulses; and *viññāna*, consciousness. There is no owner or director of the *khandhas*, either within them or outside of them. In any examination of life, the five *khandhas* are a comprehensive enough base from which to work. The five *khandhas* proceed in conformity with the principle of Dependent Origination, existing within the continuum of inter-related and inter-dependent determinants.

In this context, the five *khandhas*, or life, are subject to the Three Characteristics: they are in a condition of *aniccatā*—impermanent and unstable; *anattatā*—containing no intrinsic self; and *dukkhatā*—constantly oppressed by arising and cessation, and primed to cause suffering whenever there is association through ignorance. The five *khandhas*, proceeding thus with constant change and free of any abiding entity, are subject only to the natural continuum of inter-related determinants. But for the most of us, resistance to the flow results from mistakenly clinging to one or

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another feature of the continuum as being the self, and wanting this 'self' to proceed in some desired way. When things don't conform with desires, the resulting stress causes frustration and subsequently more intense clinging. The vague awareness of the inevitability of change to that cherished self, or the suspicion that it may not in fact exist, causes this clinging and desire to become even more desperate, and fear and anxiety take root deeply in the mind.

These states of mind are *avijjā*—being ignorant of the truth, seeing things as self; *taṇhā*—wanting this imagined self to attain various things or states; and *upādāna*—clinging and attachment to these mistaken ideas and all that they imply. These defilements are embedded in the mind, from where they direct our behaviour, shape personality and influence the fortunes of our lives, both overtly and covertly. In general, they are the cause of suffering for **all** unenlightened beings.

In essence, we are here dealing with the discord between two processes:

1. The natural process of life, proceeding subject to the fixed, natural law of the Three Characteristics. These are expressed through birth (*jāti*), aging (*jarā*) and death (*maraṇa*), both in their basic and in their profound senses.

2. The contrived process of craving and clinging, based on ignorance of that true nature of life, which causes the mistaken perception of and attachment to a self—'creating a self with which to clog up the flow of nature.' This is a life bound by ignorance, lived with clinging, in bondage, in contradiction with the law of Nature, and lived with fear and suffering.

Life, from an ethical point of view, can be said to comprise two kinds of self. Any particular life continuum, proceeding along its natural conditioned course, although bare of any enduring essence, can still be identified as one continuum distinct from others. This is called the 'conventional self,' and this convention can be skilfully used in relation to moral conduct.

Then there is the 'contrived' self, fabricated by ignorance and held fast by craving and clinging. The conventional self is no cause for problem when it is clearly understood as such. The 'contrived' self, however, concealed within the conventional self, is the self of clinging, which must suffer the vicissitudes of the former self, and thus produces suffering. In other words, it is a process on two levels: on one level is the conventional self, on the other level is the deluded attachment to the conventional self as an absolute reality. If deluded attachment is changed into knowledge and understanding, the problem is solved.

A way of life founded on clinging to the notion of self implants fear and anxiety deeply into the psyche, from where they control behaviour and enslave the unsuspecting worldling. A life view based on attachment to the self-concept has many harmful repercussions, such as:

- clinging to selfish desires (*kāmuṣpādāna*), the endless search for their gratification, and the avaricious grasping of desire objects;
- unyielding adherence to and identification with views (*ditṭhupādāna*), evaluating them as self or belonging to self. It is like building a wall to block out the truth, or even running away from it altogether. This kind of clinging produces a lack of fluidity in reasoning powers and leads to arrogance and bigotry;
- adherence to superstitious beliefs and practices (*sīlabbat-upādāna*). Perceiving only a mystical or tenuous relationship in such practices, one can never be truly sure of them, but fear and concern for the contrived self produce a desperate attempt to grasp at anything as a source of security, no matter how mystical or obscure it may be;
- the notion of an independent self (*attavādupādāna*), to be held onto, supported and protected from damage or destruction. Suffering then arises as a result of the troubles placed on this oppressed 'self of clinging.'

In this context, stress and suffering not only arise within the individual, but also radiate outwards to society. This condition of

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clinging (*upādāna*) can be singled out as the main source of all man-made troubles occurring in society.

The cycle of Dependent Origination shows the origin of this stressful, self-centred life, and its inevitable result in suffering. With the breaking of the cycle, the stressful life is completely transformed, resulting in a life that is lived with wisdom, in harmony with nature, and liberated from clinging to self.

To live with wisdom means to live with clear awareness of the way things are and to know how to benefit from nature; to benefit from nature means to live in harmony with nature; to live in harmony with nature is to live freely; to live freely is to be free of the power of craving and clinging; to live without clinging means to live with wisdom, to know and relate to things through an understanding of the process of cause and effect.

According to the Buddha's teaching, there is nothing which exists beyond or separate from nature, either as a mystical power controlling events from without, or in any other way related to or involved in the proceedings of nature. Whatever is associated with nature cannot be separate from nature, but must be a component of it. All events in nature proceed at the direction of the inter-relationship of natural phenomena. There are no accidents, nor is there any creative force independent of causes. Seemingly astounding and miraculous events are entirely causally arisen, but because the causes are sometimes obscured from our knowledge, those events may appear to be miraculous. However, any sense of perplexity or wonder soon disappears once the cause of such events is understood. The word 'supernatural' is simply a contrivance of language referring to that which exceeds our current understanding, but in fact there is nothing that is truly 'supernatural.'

The same applies to our relationship with nature. The manner of speech which describes human beings as separate from nature, or as controlling nature, is simply a contrivance of language. Human beings are part of nature, not separate from it. To say that we control nature simply means that we become determinants

within the cause and effect process. The human element contains mental factors, comprising intention, which are involved in the process of act and result together known as 'creation.' However, mankind is not capable of creating **anything** out of thin air, independently of the natural causes. Our so-called control of nature arises from our ability to recognize the factors required to produce a particular result, and knowing how to manipulate them.

There are two stages to this process. The first is knowledge, which leads to the second stage, becoming a catalyst for the other factors. Of these two stages, it is knowledge that is crucial. Through this knowing, man is able to utilize and take part in the cause and effect process. Only by interacting with and influencing things with wisdom can man be said to be 'controlling nature.' In this case, man's knowledge, abilities and actions become additional factors within the natural process.

This principle applies to both physical and mental phenomena. The statement, 'to benefit from nature is also to live in harmony with nature' is based on the reality of the interdependent nature of both physical and mental phenomena. We could equally say 'controlling the mental aspects of nature' or 'controlling the mind' and these would also be valid. Wisdom in regard to both physical and mental phenomena is essential in order to really benefit from nature.

A life of wisdom can be looked at from two perspectives: inwardly, it is characterized by serenity, cheerfulness, awareness and freedom. Experiencing an agreeable sensation, the mind is not intoxicated or deluded by it. When deprived of comforts, the mind is firm, unshaken and untroubled. Happiness and suffering are no longer invested into external objects.

The outer level is characterized by fluency, efficiency, flexibility and freedom from cumbersome complexes and delusions.

Here is a teaching from the Buddha which illustrates the differences between the life lived with clinging and the life of wisdom:

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"The unlearned, unenlightened being (puthujjana), monks, experiences pleasant feelings, unpleasant feelings and neutral feelings. The learned, noble disciple also experiences pleasant feelings, unpleasant feelings and neutral feelings. In this case, monks, what is the distinction, the **contrast**, the disparity between the learned, noble disciple and the unlearned, unenlightened being?"

"When an unlearned, unenlightened being, monks, encounters unpleasant feeling, he grieves, laments, wails, beats his chest and is distraught and distracted therein: he experiences two kinds of feeling, namely, in the body and in the mind.

"It is as if an archer, having fired one arrow into a certain man, were then to fire a second arrow. That man would experience pain from both arrows. Such is the unlearned, unenlightened being. He experiences two kinds of pain, bodily and mental.

"Moreover, in experiencing an unpleasant feeling he feels displeasure. Displeased over that unpleasant feeling, latent tendencies to aversion (*paṭighānusaya*) contingent on that unpleasant feeling are accumulated. Confronted with unpleasant feeling he seeks delight in sense pleasures. Why so? Because the unlearned, unenlightened being knows of no other way out of unpleasant feeling than to seek the distraction of sense pleasures. Delighting thus in sense pleasures, latent tendencies to lust (*rāgānusaya*) contingent on those pleasant feelings are accumulated. He does not know the origin, the cessation, the attraction, the limitation and the release from those feelings as they really are. Not knowing these things as they really are, latent tendencies to delusion (*avijjīnusaya*) contingent on neutral feelings are accumulated. Experiencing pleasant feeling he is bound to it, experiencing unpleasant feeling he is bound to that, and experiencing neutral feeling he is bound to that. Monks, thus is the unlearned, unenlightened being bound to birth, aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. He is, I say, bound by suffering.

"As for the learned, noble disciple, monks, experiencing unpleasant feeling he neither grieves, laments, wails nor beats his chest. He is not distressed. He experiences pain only in the body, not in the mind.

"Just as if an archer, having shot one arrow into a certain man, were

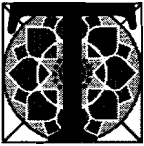
then to shoot a second arrow, but miss the mark: in this case that man would experience pain only on account of the first arrow. Such is the learned, noble disciple. He experiences pain in the body, but not in the mind.

"Moreover, he experiences no displeasure on account of that unpleasant feeling. Not being displeased over that unpleasant feeling, latent tendencies to aversion contingent on that unpleasant feeling are not accumulated. Experiencing that unpleasant feeling he does not seek distraction in sense pleasures. Why not? Because the learned, noble disciple knows of a way out of unpleasant feelings other than distraction in sense pleasures. Not seeking distraction in sense pleasures, latent tendencies to lust contingent on pleasant feelings are not accumulated. He knows the origin, the cessation, the attraction, the limitation and the release from feelings as they really are. Knowing these things as they really are, latent tendencies to delusion contingent on neutral feelings are not accumulated. Experiencing pleasant feeling he is not bound to it, experiencing unpleasant feeling he is not bound to that, experiencing neutral feeling he is not bound to that. Monks, thus is the noble, learned disciple, liberated from birth, aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. He is, I say, liberated from suffering.

"This, monks, is the distinction, the contrast, the disparity between the learned, noble disciple and the unlearned, unenlightened being."

4

THE STANDARD MODEL



THE STANDARD FORM FOR PRESENTING THE principle of Dependent Origination is quite complex, more a matter for the specialist than for the casual reader. It requires an extensive foundation in Buddhism and a comprehensive vocabulary of Pali terms to thoroughly understand it. There are also scriptures devoted exclusively to the subject.' Here I will briefly summarize the basic factors.

The Main Factors^Z

The main factors have already been covered in the Overview, so here they will be mentioned in brief only, given first in the Pali language, and followed by definitions of the Pali terms in English:

Avijjā → *saṅkhāra* → *viññāṇa* → *nāmarūpa* → *saḷāyatana* → *phassa* → *vedanā* → *taṇhā* → *upādāna* → *bhava* → *jiṭṭhi* → *jarāmarañā*
... *soka parideva dukkha domanassa upāyāsa* → The cause of suffering (*dukkha samudaya*).

The division on cessation proceeds according to the same headings.

THE STANDARD MODEL

Because the principle of Dependent Origination revolves in the form of a cycle, beginningless and endless, it would be more accurately represented as in Figure 1 below.

1. *Avijjā* = Unknowing, or ignorance of *dukkha*, its cause, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation (the Four Noble

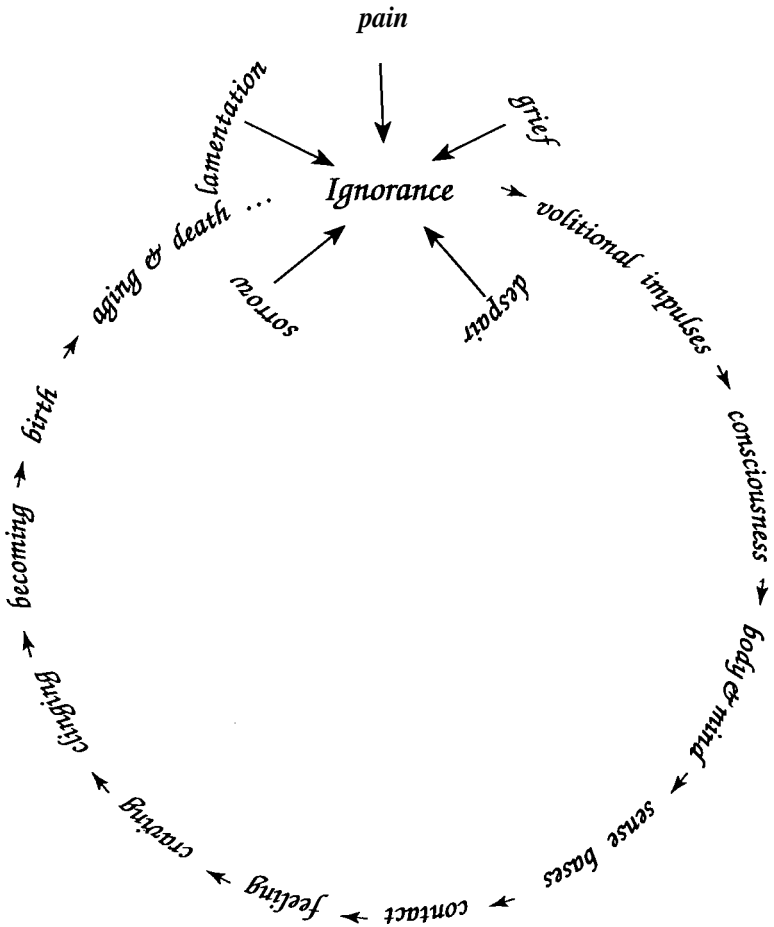


Fig. 1

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Truths); and, according to the *Abhidhamma*, not knowing what went before (the past), what comes after (the future), what came both before and after (the past and the future), and the principle of Dependent Origination.

2. **Saṅkhāra** = Volitional Impulses: bodily formations, or intentional actions; verbal formations, or intentional speech; mental formations, or **thoughts**;³ and, according to the *Abhidhamma*: meritorious formations, or good kamma (*puññābhisāṅkhāra*), non-meritorious formations, or bad kamma (*apuññābhisāṅkhāra*), and fixed or unmoving formations, or special meritorious kamma (*āneñjābhisāṅkhāra*).*

3. **Viññāṇa** = Consciousness through eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind (including the re-linking consciousness, *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*). (The six consciousnesses)

4. **Nāmarūpa** = Body and Mind: *nāma* (name or mind): feeling, perception, intention, contact, attention, **or, according to the *Abhidhamma*: the *khandhas* of feeling, perception and volitional impulses; and *rūpa* (body or materiality): the four elements, earth, water, wind and fire and all forms dependent on them.

5. **Salāyatana** = The six sense bases: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.

6. **Phassa** = Impingement or contact: eye contact, ear contact, nose contact, tongue contact, body contact and mind contact.⁴

7. **Vedanā** = Feelings (of pleasure, pain and indifference) arising from impingement on eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.'

8. **Tañhā** = Craving for sights; craving for sounds; craving for odours; craving for tastes; craving for bodily sensations; craving for mind objects: The six cravings.⁶

9. **Upādāna** = Clinging to sense objects (*kāmapādāna*), that is, sights, sounds, odours, tastes and bodily sensations; clinging to views (*diṭṭhupādāna*); clinging to rules and practices (*silabbatupādāna*); clinging to the concept of self (*attavādupādāna*).

* *Āneñjābhisāṅkhāra*: that which forms imperturbability, resulting from the attainment of the perfectly concentrated mind in the formless *jhānas*, or absorption states.

** *Vedanā*, *saffhā*, *cetanā*, *phassa*, *manasikāra*

10. **Bhava** = Becoming, the conditions which lead to birth; also realms of existence: the sense realm (*kāma*bhava); the realm of form (*rūpa*bhava); the realm of formlessness (*arūpa*bhava).

An alternative definition:

Kammabhava,* the realm of action, or actions which condition rebirth: meritorious actions (*puññābhisankhāra*); demeritorious actions (agufifiabhisankhiira); imperturbable actions (*āneñjābhisankhāra*); and **Upapattibhava**, the realms of rebirth: the sense realm; the realm of form; the formless realm; the realm of perception; the realm of non-perception; the realm of neither perception nor non-perception.

11. **Jāti** = Birth, the arising of the *khandhas* and the sense bases, birth; the appearance or arising of things⁷ (this latter interpretation used in explaining the Dependent Origination cycle in one mind moment).

12. **Jarāmaraṇa** = Aging and death: *jarā*: the aging process, the fading of the faculties; and *marāṇa*: the breaking up of the *khandhas*, the dissolution of the life principle, death; alternatively, the dissipation and dissolution of phenomena.⁸

Here are some examples of these general headings:

(Asava → **Avijjā**—Ignorance: Believing that this very self will be reborn in various states due to particular actions; that after death there is nothing; that life is a random process in which good and evil actions bear no fruit; that simply by adhering to a certain religion one will automatically be 'saved'; that material wealth will provide true happiness ... From there ...

→ **Saṅkhāra**—Volitional Impulses: Thinking and intending in accordance with those beliefs; considering and planning actions (*kamma*) in accordance with those intentions, some good, some bad and some neutral. From there ...

→ **Viññāṇa**—Consciousness: the perception and awareness of sensations, which will be related to particular intentions. Mind or consciousness is fashioned into specific qualities by intention. At

* Not to be confused with *kāma*bhava, the sensual realm.

death, the momentum of volitional impulses, propelled by the law of kamma, induces the so-fashioned re-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi viññāna*) to take a sphere of birth and level of existence appropriate to it. This is rebirth. From there ...

→ **Nāmarūpa**—Body and mind: The process of rebirth proceeds to create a life form primed to generate more kamma. As a result there are the *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, and *sankhāra khandhas* in their entirety, complete with the distinct qualities and defects endowed on them by the fashioning influence of conditions, or kamma, and constrained by the limitations of that particular sphere of existence (*bhava*), be it human, animal, divine, etc. ...

→ **Salāyatana**—The six sense bases: A sentient being must have the means to communicate with its environment in order to function and develop within it. Thus, supported by body and mind, and in conformity with kammic momentum, the organism proceeds to develop the six sense bases, the sense organs of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. From there ...

→ **Phassa**—Contact: The process of awareness now operates through the contact or impingement of three factors. They are: the internal sense doors (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind), external sense objects (sights, sounds, odours, tastes, bodily sensations and mind objects) and consciousness (eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, tactile-consciousness and mind-consciousness). Depending on this contact, there occurs ...

→ **Vedanā**—Feeling: The feelings, or the 'appreciation' of the qualities of sense contacts, be they of comfort (*sukhavedanā*—pleasant feeling), discomfort or pain (*dukkhavedanā*—unpleasant feeling) or indifference or equanimity (*adukkhamasukhavedanā*—neutral feeling; or *upekkhāvedanā*—equanimous feeling). In conformity with the nature of unenlightened beings, the process does not stop there, but goes on to ...

→ **Tañhā**—Craving: Comfortable feelings tend to produce liking and enjoyment, desire for and seeking after more of the

same; for stressful feelings or discomfort there is displeasure, a desire to destroy or get rid of them. Neutral feeling in this context is considered to be a subtle form of pleasant feeling because it does not disturb the mind and invokes a certain amount of complacency. From here ...

→ **Upādāna**—Clinging: As desire intensifies, it becomes a holding onto or clinging to the object in question. As long as an object is yet unattained there is craving; as soon as the object is attained it is held fast by clinging. This refers not *only* to sense objects (*kāmuṇupādāna*), but to ideas and views (*diṭṭhupādāna*), modes of practice or techniques (*sīlabbatupādāna*) and the feeling of self (*attavādupādāna*). On account of this clinging there follows ...

→ **Bhava**—Becoming: Intention and deliberate action to produce and control things in accordance with the directives of clinging, leading to the further rotation of the whole process of behaviour (*kammabhava*), being good *kamma*, bad *kamma* or neutral *kamma*, depending on the qualities of the craving and clinging which condition them. For example, one who desires to go to heaven will do those things which he or she believes will lead to rebirth in heaven, thus laying the groundwork for the five *khandhas* to appear in the realm (*bhava*) appropriate to those actions (*kamma*) (*upapattibhava*). With the process of creating *kamma* thus in full swing, one link gives rise to the next, which is ...

→ **Jāti**—Birth: Beginning with the re-linking consciousness, which is endowed with features contingent on its kammic momentum and connecting to a state appropriate to it, the five *khandhas* arise in a new life continuum, comprising name and form, the six sense bases, contact and feeling. When there is birth, what inevitably follows is ...

→ **Jarāmaraṇa**—Aging and death: the decay and dissolution of that life continuum. For the unenlightened being these things are constantly threatening life in either overt or covert ways.

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Therefore, in the life of the unenlightened being, old age and death inevitably bring with them ...

→ **Soka**—sorrow; **parideva**—lamentation; **dukkha**—pain; **domanassa**—grief; and **upāyāsa**—despair, which all in all can be summed up as simply 'suffering.' Thus we have in the final words of the principle of Dependent Origination formula: "Thus is the arising of this whole mass of suffering."

However, as the principle of Dependent Origination functions as a cycle, it does not stop there. The last factor becomes a crucial link in the further continuation of the cycle. Specifically, sorrow, lamentation and soon are all manifestations of the *outflows*. These outflows are four in number, namely: the concern with the gratification of the desires of the five senses (*kāmāsava*); attachment to views and beliefs, for example that the body is the self or belonging to self (*diṭṭhāsava*); desire for various states of being and the aspiration to attain and maintain them (*bhaviisava*); and ignorance of the way things are (*avijjāsava*).

Aging and death inflame the outflows. Where *kāmāsava* is involved, aging and death cause the unenlightened being to feel deprived of that which is loved and cherished. With *diṭṭhāsava*, the changes in the body called aging and death cause disappointment and despair. With *bhaviisava*, aging and death deprive the unenlightened being of cherished states of being. In relation to *avijjāsava*, which is a lack of understanding on the primary level (such as not understanding the nature of life, aging and death and how they should be related to), aging and death cause the unenlightened being to experience fear, melancholy, despair and superstitious grasping. These outflows are therefore the determinants for sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair to arise as soon as aging and death appear.

Sorrow and suffering affect the mind in negative ways. Whenever suffering arises, the mind becomes confused and muddled. The arising of sorrow is thus commensurate with the arising of ignorance, as is written in the *Visuddhi Magga*:

'Sorrow, pain, grief and despair are inseparable from ignorance, and lamentation is the **norm** for the deluded being. For that reason, when sorrow is **fully** manifest, so also is ignorance **fully** manifest.'⁹

* * *

'As for ignorance, know that it arises with the arising of sorrow ...'¹⁰

* * *

'Ignorance is present as long as sorrow is present.'"

* * *

'With the arising of the outflows, ignorance is arisen.'¹²

Thus it can be said that for the unenlightened being, aging and death, together with their retinue—sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair—are factors for producing more ignorance, thus turning the **cycle** once more.

The cycle of Dependent Origination is also known as the Wheel of Becoming (*bhavacakka*), or Wheel of *Samsāra*. This model covers three lifetimes—ignorance and volitional impulses are in one lifetime, consciousness to becoming are in a second lifetime, while birth and aging and death (with sorrow, lamentation and so on) occur in a third. Taking the middle life-span as the present one, we can divide the three life periods, with the entire twelve **links** of the Dependent Origination cycle, into three time periods, thus:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| 1) Past life | - | Ignorance, volitional impulses |
| 2) Present life | - | Consciousness, body and <i>mind</i> , sense bases, contact, feeling, craving, clinging, becoming |
| 3) Future life | - | Birth, aging and death (<i>sorrow</i> , lamentation, pain, grief <i>and</i> despair) |

Among these three periods, the middle period, the present, is our base. From this perspective, we see the relationship of the past section as purely a causal one, that is, results in the present are derived from causes **in the past** (past cause + present result), whereas the future section specifically shows results, that is extending from causes in the present to results in the future (present cause + future result). Thus the middle section, the present, contains both causal

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and resultant conditions. We can now represent the whole cycle in four sections:

- 1) Past cause = Ignorance, *volitional* impulses
- 2) Present result = *Consciousness*, body and mind, sense bases, contact, feeling
- 3) Present cause = Craving, clinging, becoming
- 4) Future result = Birth, aging and death (sorrow, *lamentation, etc.*)

Some of the links in this chain are related in meaning, and they can be grouped as follows:

1) Ignorance and craving-clinging

From the description of ignorance (*avijjā*), it appears that craving (*taṇhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*) are involved, especially the clinging to self, which is present throughout. Not knowing the truth of life, and mistakenly believing in a self, leads to craving on behalf of that self, together with its various forms of clinging. In the words 'With the arising of outflows there is the arising of ignorance,' *kāmāsava* (the outflow of sensual desire), *bhavāsava* (the outflow of desire for being) and *ditṭhāsava* (the outflow of attachment to views) are all types of craving and clinging. Thus, when speaking of ignorance, the meaning invariably includes craving and clinging.

The same applies to any descriptions of craving and clinging—ignorance is always connected to them. The deluded assumption of conditions to be real entities is the determinant for any wanting and clinging that arise. The more craving and clinging there are, the more is discernment cast aside and mindfulness and rational behaviour impaired. Thus, when speaking of craving and clinging, ignorance is automatically implied.

In this light, ignorance as a past cause, and craving and clinging as present causes, mean much the same thing. But ignorance is

classed as a past determinant, while craving and clinging are classed as present determinants, to show each of those factors in its prominent relationship with the other factors in the Wheel of Becoming.

2) Volitional *impulses* and becoming

Volitional impulses (*saṅkhāra*) appear in the past life segment while becoming (*bhava*) occurs in the present life segment, but each plays a decisive role in the realm, or *bhava*, life is to appear in, and so they have similar meanings, differing only in their emphasis. *Saṅkhāra* refers specifically to the factor of intention (cetanā), which is the predominant factor in the creation of *kamma*. *Bhava* has a broader meaning, incorporating both *kammabhava* and *upapattibhava*. *Kammabhava*, like *saṅkhāra*, has intention as its principal motivating force, but it differs from *saṅkhāra* in that it covers the entire process of the generation of action. *Upapattibhava* refers to the five *khandhas* arising as a result of *kammabhava*.

3) *Consciousness to feeling, and birth, aging and death*

The segment of the cycle from consciousness to feeling is the present life, described point by point in order to illustrate the cause and effect relationship of the factors involved. Birth, together with aging and death, are 'future results.' The cycle at this point tells us that causes in the present must generate future results, in this case aging and death. This is a repetition, in condensed form, of the consciousness to feeling segment of the cycle, emphasizing the arising and cessation of suffering. Aging and death also act as connecting points for a new cycle. It can be said, however, that the segments from consciousness to feeling, and from birth to aging and death, are virtually synonymous.

Bearing this in mind, the four stages of cause and effect can be divided thus:

- 1) Five past causes : Ignorance, *volitional* impulses, craving, clinging, becoming

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- 2) Five present results : *Consciousness, body and mind, sense bases, contact, feeling* (= birth, aging and death)
- 3) Five present causes : Ignorance, *volitional* impulses, craving, clinging, becoming
- 4) Five future results : *Consciousness, body and mind, sense bases, contact, feeling* (= birth, aging and death)

Because of the relationship between the twelve links of the Dependent Origination cycle, they can be divided into three groups, called the *vaṭṭa*,¹³ or cycles.

1) Ignorance-craving-clinging (*avijjā-tanhā-upādāna*)—These are *kilesa* (defilements), the instigating forces for the various kinds of deluded thought and action. This section is accordingly called the *kilesavaṭṭa*.

2) Volitional impulses (*sankhāra*, and re-birth conditioning actions (*[kamma-] bhava*))—These are kamma, the process of action based on *kilesa* which conditions life. This segment is called the *kammavaṭṭa*.

3) Consciousness, body and mind, six sense bases, contact, feeling (*viññāṇa, nāmarūpa, salāyatana, phassa, vedanā*)—These are *vipāka*, the events of life resulting from the effects of kamma. These then become food for kiksā, which then become the causes for the creation of more kamma. This segment is thus called the *vipākavaṭṭa*.

These three *vaṭṭa* are continuously propelling each other around in the cycle of life. Diagrammatically, they can be represented as in Fig. 2.

Because defilements (kiksā) are the prime motivators of life conditions, they are positioned at the starting point of the cycle. Thus we can distinguish two starting points, or activating agents, in the wheel of life:

- 1.) Ignorance is the agent from the past which influences the present up until feeling.
- 2.) Craving is the agent in the present time, extending the cycle from feeling up until the future, aging and death.

The reason that ignorance appears in the former section while

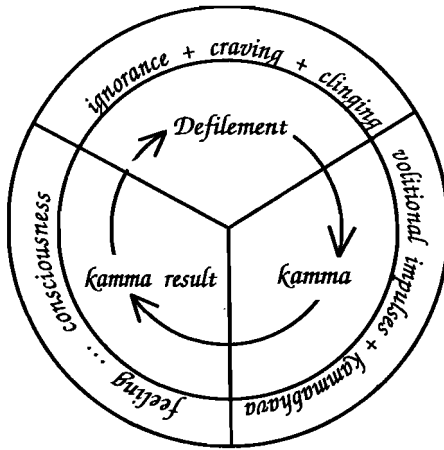


Fig. 2

craving appears in the latter is because ignorance follows on from sorrow, lamentation, and so on, while craving follows on from feeling. Ignorance and craving are the predominant defilements in each respective case.

Regarding rebirth into new spheres of existence, the present model of the Dependent Origination cycle distinguishes between cases where either ignorance or craving is the predominant factor in the following ways:

- Ignorance is the main cause of birth into woeful states, because the mind enveloped in ignorance is unable to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong, useful and harmful. As a result there is no standard for behaviour, actions are random and bad *kamma* is more likely to result than good *kamma*.

- Craving for being (*bhavataṇhā*) is more likely to lead to birth in pleasant states. With it as the motivating force, there is an aspiration for a better station in life. As far as a future existence is concerned, the desire might be for rebirth in a heavenly or divine state. Where the present existence is concerned, the aspiration may be for wealth, fame, or a good reputation. Actions to bring

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about the desired results follow on from these initial aspirations. If the aspiration is for rebirth in a divine state, then it may involve the development of refined meditation states; if the aspiration is for rebirth in a heavenly realm, then there may be maintenance of moral precepts and performance of generous actions; if the aspiration is for wealth, there may follow the industriousness required to that end; if the aspiration is for a good reputation, then there will be the performance of good works and so on. * All of these actions must be based on a certain amount of self discipline, heedfulness and diligence. As a result, good actions are more likely to arise than with a life lived under the sole control of ignorance.

Although ignorance and craving for being have been placed at starting points in the cycle, they are not the prime movers of it. This is borne out by the Buddha's words:

"No beginning can be found, monks, to ignorance, thus: 'Before this point there was no ignorance, but then it arose.' In this case, it can only be said, 'Dependent on this, ignorance arises.'"¹⁴

There are identical words for *bhavataṇhā*.¹⁵

That ignorance and craving are major determinants and arise together in the process of Dependent Origination is borne out by the following quotation:

"Monks, this body, so arising in its entirety, whether to a fool or a wise man, enshrouded in ignorance and bound by craving, together with external physical and mental properties (*nāmarūpa*), make two things. Dependent on these two things is impingement on the six sense bases. The fool or wise man, receiving impingement through one or other of those sense bases, experiences pleasure or pain."¹⁶

In conjunction with the above explanations, the following schematic representations may be useful:

* This does not mean, of course, that good works, for example, are always performed out of desire for a good reputation.

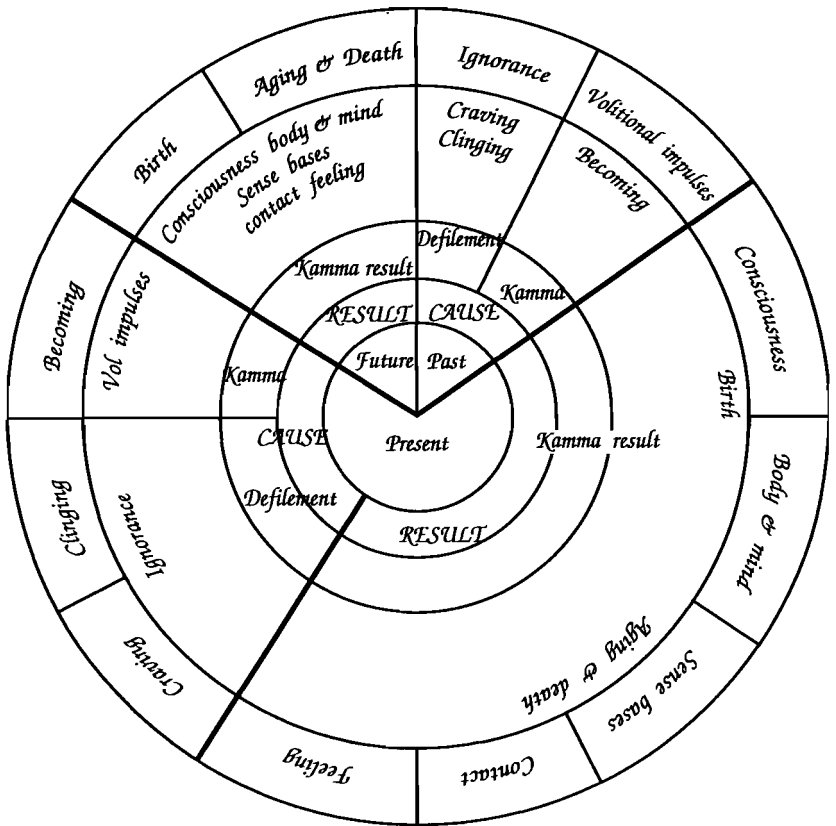


Fig. 3

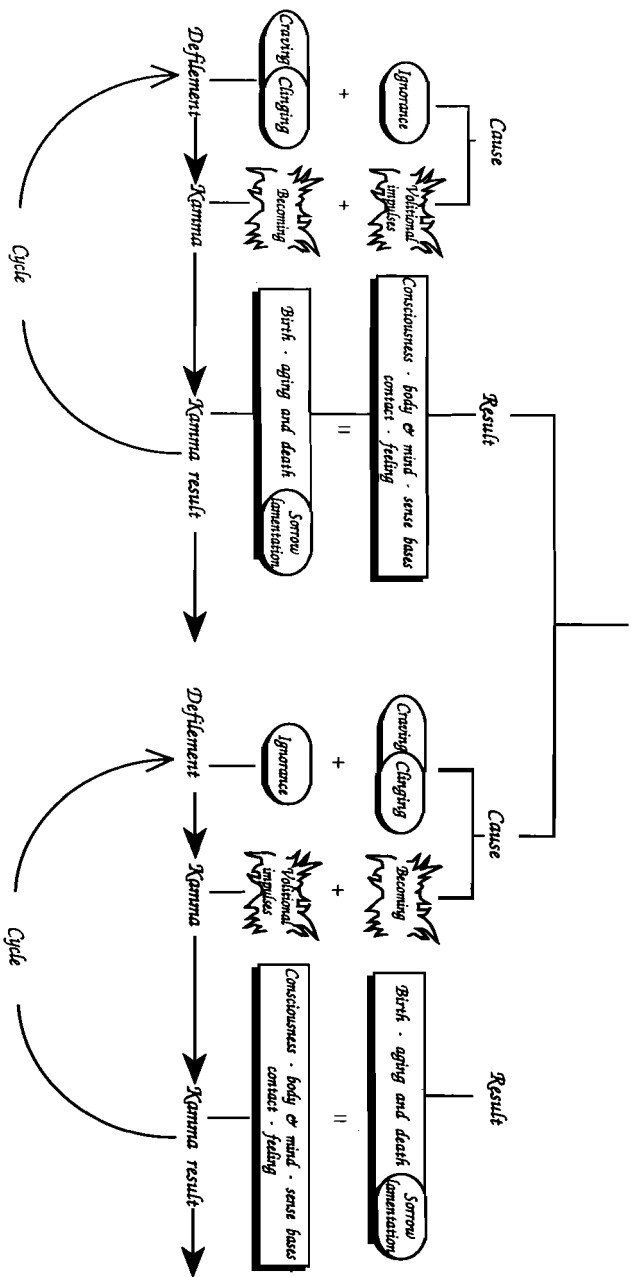
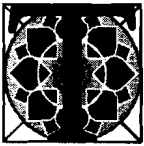


Fig. 4

5

OTHER INTERPRETATIONS



THE DESCRIPTION OF DEPENDENT ORIGIN-
tion given in the previous chapter is that most often
found in the scriptures and commentaries. It seeks to
explain Dependent Origination in terms of the
saṃsāravatṭa, the round of rebirth, showing the connections
between three lifetimes—the past, the present and the future.

Those who do not agree with this **interpretation**, or who would prefer something more immediate, can find alternatives not only in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, where the principle of Dependent Origination is shown occurring in its entirety in one mind moment, but can also interpret the very same words of the Buddha used to support the standard model in a different light, giving a very different picture of the principle of Dependent Origination, one which is supported by teachings and scriptural references from other sources.

The arguments used to support such an interpretation are many. For instance, the immediacy of the end of suffering and the sorrow-less life of the *Arahant* are states which can arise in this

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present life. It is not necessary to die before realizing the cessation of birth, aging and death, and thus sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Those things can be overcome in this very life-time. The whole of the Dependent Origination cycle, both in the arising of suffering and in its cessation, is concerned with this present life. If the cycle can be clearly understood as it operates in the present, it follows that the past and the future will also be clearly understood, because they are all part of the one cycle.

For reference, consider these words of the Buddha:

"Udayi, whosoever can recall the *khandhas* he has previously occupied in great number, of such a person would it be fitting to question me about past lives, or I could so question him; that person could satisfy me with an answer thereof, or I him. Whosoever sees the passing away of beings and their subsequent arisings, of such a person would it be fitting to ask me about future lives, or I could so question him; that person could satisfy me with an answer thereof, and I him. "Enough, Udayi, of former times and future times. I will teach you the essence of the Dhamma: When there is this, there is that. With the arising of this, that arises. When there is not this, that cannot be; when this ceases, so does that."¹

* * *

The householder, Gandhabhaga, having sat down at a respectful distance, addressed the Blessed One thus, "May the Blessed One teach me the origin and the cessation of suffering."

The Blessed One replied, "Householder, if I were to teach you the origin and the cessation of suffering by referring to the past thus, 'In the past there was this,' doubt and perplexity would arise in you thereof. If I were to teach you the origin and the cessation of suffering by referring to the future thus, 'In the future there will be this,' doubt and perplexity would arise in you thereof. Householder, I, here and now, shall teach you, here and now, the origin and the cessation of suffering."²

* * *

"Sivaka, some feelings arise on account of irregularities in the bile ... some on account of irregularities in the phlegm ... some on account of wind ... some on account of the confluence of numerous factors ... some on account of changes in the weather ... some on

account of irregular exercise ... some on account of external dangers ... some on account of kamma results. That feelings arise dependent on these different causes is something you can see for yourself and that people everywhere acknowledge. On this account, any recluse or holy man who claims that 'All feelings that arise, be they pleasant or unpleasant, are entirely the result of previous *kamma*,' can be rightly said to have spoken in excess of what is obvious to people everywhere, and I say that such views are wrong.")

* * *

"Monks, when there is intentional, fixed and steady deliberation on any theme, that theme becomes an object for sustaining consciousness. Where there is an object, consciousness has an abiding. When consciousness is so firmly established and developed, birth in a new sphere (*bhava*) ensues. When there is arising into a new sphere of existence, birth, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair follow. Thus is there the arising of this whole mass of suffering."⁴

Although this interpretation of the principle of Dependent Origination must be understood in its own right, we nevertheless do not discard the pattern established by the standard model. Therefore, before going into its meaning, we should first reiterate the standard model, adapting the definitions in keeping with this interpretation.

Preliminary Definition

1. **Ignorance**—ignorance of the truth, or things as they are; being deluded by nominal realities; the ignorance behind beliefs; lack of wisdom; failure to understand cause and effect.
2. **Volitional Impulses**—mental activities, wilful intent, intention and decision, and their generation of actions; the organization of the thinking process in accordance with accumulated habits, abilities, preferences, and beliefs; the conditioning of the mind and the thinking process.
3. **Consciousness**—the awareness of sensations, namely: seeing,

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hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and cognizing; the basic climate of the mind from moment to moment.

4. Body and **mind** (the animated organism) — the presence of corporeality and mentality within awareness; the state of coordination between the body and the mind to function in line with the stream of consciousness; the bodily and mental changes as a result of mental states.
5. The **six** sense bases — the functioning of the sense bases.
6. Contact — the point of contact between awareness and the outside world.
7. Feeling — of pleasure, pain or indifference.
8. Craving — the desire to seek pleasurable sense objects and to escape the unpleasant. Craving is of three kinds: wanting to have and enjoy, wanting to be and wanting to destroy or be rid of.
9. Clinging — attachment and grasping to either pleasant or unpleasant feelings, to the conditions of life which precipitate such feelings, and the evaluation of and attitudes toward those things in terms of their potential to satisfy desires.
10. Becoming — the entire process of behaviour generated to serve craving and clinging (*kammabhava*—the active process); also the conditions of life resulting from such forces (*upapattibhava*—the passive process).⁵
11. Birth — clear recognition of emergence in a state of existence; identification with states of life or modes of conduct, and the resulting sense of one who enjoys, occupies or experiences them.
12. Aging and death — the awareness of separation, or deprivation of the self from a state of existence or identity; the feeling or threat of annihilation or separation from such states of being; from there, the resulting experience of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair (even in their most subtle forms).

How the links connect

1-2. Ignorance as a determinant for *volitional impulses*: With no knowledge or awareness of the truth, no clear understanding or wise reflection on experiences, the result is confused thinking based on conjecture and imagination, and conditioned by beliefs, fears and accumulated character traits. These consequently condition any decisions to act, speak or think.

2-3. Volitional impulses as determinants for *consciousness*: With intention, consciousness is conditioned accordingly. We have a tendency (or are conditioned) to see, hear, etc., what our background intentions influence us to. Moreover, the context within which we see, hear, and so on, will also be conditioned by those intentions. Intention will lead the consciousness to repeatedly recollect and proliferate about certain events. It will also condition the basic state of mind, or consciousness, to assume either fine and good or base and evil qualities; consciousness is conditioned in conformity with good or evil intentions.

3-4. Consciousness as a determinant for *body and mind*: Cognition, sight, hearing and so on, entail physical properties (*rūpadhamma*) and mental properties (*nāmadhamma*) that we know and see. In addition, when consciousness operates, the relevant physical and mental properties (these being the 'cohorts' of consciousness—the *khandhas* of form, feeling, perception and volitional impulses), must also function accordingly and in coordination with the nature of that consciousness. For instance, when consciousness is fashioned by anger, perceptions arising as a result will be correspondingly negative. The body will take on features in conformity with the hostile intention, such as aggressive facial expressions, tensing of the muscles, and high blood pressure. Feelings will be unpleasant. When consciousness takes on any particular feature repeatedly and habitually, the subsequent mental and physical properties will become the corresponding bodily and mental traits of bearing and character.

4-5. Body and mind as determinants for **the six sense bases**: When body and mind function the relevant sense bases will be activated to meet their demand (in seeking relevant information or in enjoying sensations). Those sense doors will function in accordance with the bodily and mental states conditioning them.

5-6. The six sense bases as determinants for **contact**: With the functioning of the various sense doors, contact (*phassa*), the impingement on them, or full awareness of sensations, arises, dependent on the sense door functioning at the time.

6-7. Contact as a determinant for **feeling**: Together with the awareness of sensations there must also be feelings of one kind or another: if not pleasant or unpleasant, then neutral.

7-8. Feeling as a determinant for **craving**: With the experience of pleasant sensations there follows liking and attachment. This is sense craving (*kāmatanḥā*). Sometimes desire is for a position from which it will be possible to control and indulge in those pleasant feelings. This is craving for being or for states of being (*bhavatanḥā*). Experiences which produce feelings of discomfort or suffering usually cause thoughts of aversion and the desire to be rid of the source of those feelings. This is craving for non-being (*vibhavatanḥā*). Within neutral feelings, such as indifference or dullness, there is a subtle attachment, so that indifference is regarded as a subtle form of pleasant feeling, liable to evolve into desire for more overt forms of pleasure at any time.

8-9. Craving as a determinant for **clinging**: As desire becomes stronger it develops into clinging, a kind of mental preoccupation, creating an attitude toward and evaluation of the object of desire (with *vibhavatanḥā*, a negative evaluation will be formed). A fixed position is adopted towards things: if there is attraction it precipitates a binding effect, an identification with the object of attraction. Whatever is connected with that object seems to be good. When there is repulsion, the object of that repulsion seems to affront the self. Any adopted position towards these things tends to reinforce clinging, which will be directed toward, and in turn reinforce the value of:

- Sense objects (*kāma*)
- Ideas and beliefs (*diṭṭhi*)
- Systems, models, practices and so on (*silavatta*)
- The belief in a self (*attavāda*) to either attain or be thwarted from its desires.*

9-10. Clinging as a determinant for becoming: Clinging conditions *bhava*, life states, both on the level of behaviour (kammabhava), and as regards character and the physical and mental properties (upapattibhava). These could, for example, be the pattern of behaviour (*kammabhava*) and character traits (upapattibhava) of one who aspires to be rich, or who desires power, fame, beauty, or who hates society, and so on.

10-11. Becoming as a determinant for birth: Given a life state to be occupied and possessed, a being arises to fill it as enjoyer or experiencer. This is the distinct feeling of occupation or possession of that life state. There is a perception of one who acts and one who reaps the fruits of actions, one who succeeds and one who fails, one who gains and one who loses.

11-12. Birth as a determinant for aging and death: Birth into a life state necessarily entails the experiences of prosperity and decline within it. These include the imminent degeneration of that state, the experiences of adversity and ruin within it, and the separation from and destruction of it. There is a constant threat of danger, and a constant need to protect and maintain the self. The inevitability of decline and dissolution, together with the constant anxiety and effort to protect that state from them, combine to cause sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair, or suffering.

Examples

1-2. Ignorance ... volitional impulses: Not knowing the truth, the mind proliferates and imagines accordingly, like a man who, believing in ghosts (ignorance), is frightened (volitional impulse)

* These are **the four bases of clinging**

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by the light reflected from the eyes of an animal at night; or like a person speculating about something held in another's closed fist; or like a person who believes that celestial beings can create anything they wish, and devises ceremonies or mystic phrases to supplicate them; or like one who, unaware of the true nature of conditioned things as unstable and subject to determinants, sees them as attractive and desirable, and aspires to obtain and control them. As long as any trace of ignorance is still present, volitional impulses or proliferation will be produced.

2-3. Volitional impulses ... consciousness: With *cetanā*, intention, along with mental coloration, consciousness, as seeing, hearing and so on, is conditioned accordingly. Without intention or interest, consciousness may not arise, even in a situation where it is possible for it to do so. For example, when we are reading an absorbing book, our attention does not wander, but acknowledges only the matter being read into consciousness. Even a loud sound or bites from mosquitoes may go unnoticed. When we are intent on searching for a particular object, we may not notice other objects.

One and the same object looked at in different circumstances, with different intentions, may be seen differently, depending on the context of the intention. For example, a vacant plot of land to a child may appear as a great playground; to a man intending to build a house it may seem like a prospective retirement home; to a farmer, different features again will seem important, while to an industrialist, still different features will be prominent.

If we look at the same object at different times, in the context of different thoughts, different features will appear prominent. When thinking wholesome thoughts, the mind is influenced by those thoughts, and interprets the object of awareness in their context. Thinking in a harsh and injurious way, the mind takes note of, turns toward and interprets the meaning of its associated objects of awareness in the light of those destructive thoughts. For example, amidst a collection of objects placed together might be

a knife and some flowers. A flower lover might notice only the flowers and none of the other objects **placed** nearby. The more intense the interest and attraction to those flowers, the more intense will be the awareness of them to the exclusion of everything else. Another person in need of a weapon might notice only the knife. In the case of a number of people seeing the same knife, for one there might be the perception of a weapon, while for another there might be the perception of a kitchen utensil, while yet another might see it as a piece of scrap metal, all depending on the background and intention of the observer.

3-4. **Consciousness ... body and mind:** Consciousness and body and mind are inter-dependent, as Venerable Sariputta said:

"Like two sheaves of reeds standing, supporting each other, with body and mind **as** condition there is consciousness; with consciousness **as** condition, **body** and mind. If we remove the first of those sheaves of reeds, the other falls down. If we remove the other sheaf, the first will tumble. In the same way, with the cessation of body and mind, consciousness ceases; with the cessation of consciousness, body and mind **cease**."⁶

In this context, with the arising of consciousness, body and mind will arise, and must arise. As volitional impulses condition consciousness, they also condition body and mind, but because body and mind depend on consciousness for their existence, being properties of consciousness, it is thus said: "volitional impulses condition consciousness, and consciousness conditions body and mind." Thus, we could analyse the way **consciousness** conditions body and mind in the following way:

1. When the mind is said to cognize any particular sensation, such as in seeing or hearing, in fact it is simply the cognition of body and mind (specifically, the *khandhas* of form, feeling, perception and volitional impulses). All that **exists on** an experiential level is what is cognized by consciousness from moment to moment, the physical and mental properties apparent to the senses. When there is cognition there are relative mental and physical

properties that are experienced. The existence of a rose, for example, is the cognition by the visual or cognitive sense at that time. Apart from this, there is no 'rose' as such, other than as a concept in the mind. The 'rose' is not independent of the feelings, perceptions and concepts occurring at that time. Thus, when there is consciousness, body and mind will simultaneously and independently be there.

2. Body and mind, especially mental qualities, dependent on any instant of consciousness will assume qualities harmonious with that consciousness. Whenever mental activities, or volitional impulses, are wholesome, the consciousness resultant on them will be subsequently cheerful and clear, and bodily gestures will be buoyant. When volitional impulses are unwholesome they lead to the cognition of sensations from a harsh and harmful perspective. The mental state will be negative, and bodily gestures and behaviour will be influenced accordingly. In this state, the constituent factors, both mental and physical, are in a state of readiness to act in conformity with the volitional impulses that condition consciousness. When there is a feeling of love and affection (volitional impulse) there arises the cognition of pleasing sensations (consciousness), the mind (*nāma*) is cheerful and bright, as are facial features (*rūpa*). With anger there is the cognition of unpleasant sensations, the mind is depressed and facial features are sullen and aggressive.

On the sports field, the footballer focuses his attention and interest on the game being played. His awareness arises and ceases with an intensity proportional to the strength of his interest in the game. All the necessary components of body and mind are primed to function and perform their duties as directed. The inter-relationship in this case refers to and includes the successive arising and ceasing of body and mind (or physical and mental properties). The active properties of body and mind converge to form the overall state of being as it is directed by consciousness and volitional impulses (note the similarity to *bhava*).

All the events taking place at this stage are important steps in the generation of *kamma* and its results. The cycle, or *vaṭṭa*, has completed one small revolution (ignorance is defilement, or *kilesa* ... volitional impulses are *kamma* ... consciousness and body and mind are kamma-results, or *vipāka*) and is preparing to begin a new cycle. This is a significant stage in the building of habits and character-traits.

4-5. *Body and mind ... six sense bases:* Body and mind must function through awareness of the outside world, which, together with previously acquired experience, is in turn used to serve the intention or volitional impulses. Thus the components of body and mind which serve as transmitters and receivers of sensations (the sense bases) are in a state of alertness to function in conformity with their determinants. For instance, in the case of the footballer on the field, the sense organs responsible for receiving the sensations directly concerned with the sport being played, such as eye and ear, will be primed to receive those sensations. At the same time, those senses not **immediately** concerned, such as taste or smell, will be dormant, or in a state of suspended activity.

5-6. *The six sense bases ... contact:* Awareness arises through the sense bases, based on the co-ordination of three factors: internal sense bases (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind), external sense objects (sights, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily feelings and mental impressions), and consciousness (through eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind). Awareness arises in conformity with each particular sense base.

6-7. *Contact ... feeling:* Wherever there is contact there must be the experience of one of the three kinds of feelings: comfort or happiness (*sukhavedanā*), discomfort or pain (*dukkhavedanā*), or indifference, neither happiness nor pain (*upekkhā* or *adukkhamasukhavedanā*).

The third link to the seventh, that is, from consciousness to feeling, is known as the *vipāka*, or kamma-resultant, section of the Dependent Origination cycle. Links 5, 6 and 7, in particular, are

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neither wholesome nor unwholesome in themselves, but can be catalysts for the arising of wholesome and unwholesome thoughts and actions.

7-8. Feeling... craving: When pleasant feeling is experienced, desire usually follows. With unpleasant feeling, the reaction is one of stress, a desire to have the unpleasant object removed or annihilated. There is also a desire to seek distraction in pleasant feeling. Neutral feelings, or indifference, induce a condition of dullness or complacency. Both are subtle and deluding forms of pleasant feeling which the mind tends to attach to. They can also act as catalysts for the generation of desire for further pleasant feeling.

Craving can be divided into three distinct kinds, thus:

- 1) *Kāmatanḥā* — Craving for desirable sense objects.
- 2) *Bhavatanḥā* — 'Craving for being,' craving for particular life situations; on a deeper level, this includes the life instinct and the desire to maintain a particular condition or **identity**.
- 3) *Vibhavanḥā* — 'Craving for non-being,' the craving to escape from or be free of disliked objects or situations; this kind of craving usually expresses itself in feelings such as despair, depression, self-hatred and **self-pity**.⁷

Craving thus appears in three main forms: as craving for sense objects, craving for life situations, and craving to be free of unpleasant situations. This last form of craving is particularly noticeable when desires are thwarted or opposed, and expresses itself in resentment, anger and aggression.

8-9. Craving ... clinging: Objects of desire become objects of attachment, the more intense the desire, the more intense the attachment. Craving develops into specific attitudes and values. With unpleasant feeling, clinging manifests as an obsessive aversion to the object of that feeling and an obsessive desire to seek escape from it. In this way, there is clinging to objects of the senses, to the life situations which can provide them, to identities, opinions, theories, and methods and to the concept or image of a

self to enjoy or suffer from those situations.

9-10. Clinging ... becoming: Clinging naturally affects life situations in one way or another, and its effects occur on two levels. Firstly, clinging ties the self to, or causes it to identify with, particular life situations which are believed to either fulfil desires or provide the means to escape from things not desired. If there are desired situations, there will naturally be situations not desired. Such grasped-at life situations are called *upapattibhava*.

Attachment to any life situation will produce thoughts or intentions to either become or avoid it. These thoughts will include the machinations to invent ways and means of effectuating those desires. All of this thinking and activity is moulded by the direction and mode of clinging. That is, they operate under the influence of accumulated attitudes, beliefs, understandings, values and likes or dislikes. Some simple illustrations:

- Desire for rebirth in a heavenly realm will cause clinging to teachings, belief systems or practices which are believed to effectuate such arebirth, and behaviour will be conditioned accordingly.

- Desire for fame will produce clinging to those values and the relevant behaviour assumed to be required to attain fame, and to the self which is going to attain it. Behaviour which results is conditioned by that clinging.

- Desire to acquire possessions belonging to another will condition the thought processes accordingly. Clinging **habitualizes** the thought pattern, which may eventually, for one lacking circumspection and moral conscience, lead to theft. The original aim of becoming an owner becomes the actuality of being a thief. In this way, through seeking to attain objects of desire, people will either create unskilful actions and develop bad habits, or create skilful actions and develop virtue, depending on the nature of their beliefs and understanding.

The specific **pattern of behaviour** resulting from the influence of clinging, including the events and characteristics of things so conditioned, is called *kammabhava* (actions conditioning rebirth).

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The life situations resulting from such modes of behaviour, be they desired or not, are called *upapattibhava* (states of rebirth).

This stage of the Dependent Origination cycle is pivotal in the creation of *kamma* and its results, and on a long term basis plays a crucial role in the development of habit and character traits.

10-11. Becoming ... birth: At this point there arises the distinct feeling of a self, an identification with a certain situation or condition, either desired or undesired. In Dhamma language we might say that a being has arisen within that state (*bhava*), resulting in the feeling of one who is a thief, an owner, a success, a failure, a nobody and so on. In the case of the ordinary person, birth, or the arising of the sense of self, can be most easily observed in times of discord, when clinging tends to arise in very extreme ways. In arguments, even intellectual debates, if defilements are used instead of wisdom, a distinct sense of self will arise in the form of such thoughts as 'I am superior,' 'I am the boss,' 'he is my subordinate,' 'he is inferior,' 'this is my view,' 'my view is being contested,' 'my authority is being questioned' and so on. These are all instances where the identity is being discredited or threatened. Birth is therefore most obvious at times of *jarāmaraṇa*, decay and death.

11-12. Birth ... aging and death: Given a self which occupies or assumes a certain position, it follows that this self will also be sooner or later deprived of or separated from it. The self is threatened by alienation, frustration, misfortune, conflict and failure. While it seeks to maintain its position indefinitely, all that arises must inevitably experience decay and dissolution. Even before dissolution sets in, the self is surrounded by the threat of impending doom. This intensifies clinging to life situations. Fear of death arises from the awareness of danger. The fear of death and dissolution is embedded deeply within the mind and is always influencing human behaviour, causing neuroses, insecurity, the intense and desperate struggle for desired life situations, and despair in the face of suffering and loss. Thus for the ordinary

person, the fear of death haunts all happiness.

In this context, when the self appears in any undesired life situation, is deprived of a desired situation, or is threatened with the possibility thereof, it is left with disappointment and frustration, or, in the Pali language, *soka* (sorrow), *parideva* (lamentation), *dukkha* (pain), *domanassa* (grief) and *upāyāsa* (despair). Surrounded by all this suffering, the result is distraction and confusion, which are functions of ignorance. Most efforts to relieve suffering are thus directed by ignorance, and so the cycle continues.

A simple example: For the average person living in a competitive world, success does not stop at merely the social phenomenon of success, with all its trappings, but includes clinging to the identity of being a successful person, which is a 'becoming,' or life state (*bhava*). Occasionally the feeling of self will manifest as thoughts of "I am a success," which in effect means "I have been born (*jāti*) as a successful person." However, such success, in its fullest sense, is dependent on external conditions, such as fame, praise, attainment of special privileges, admiration and recognition. Birth as a "success," or "being successful," depends not only on recognition and admiration from others, but the presence of a loser, someone to succeed over. As soon as a successful being is born, he or she is threatened with fading, obscurity and loss. In this situation, all the feelings of depression, worry and disappointment which have not been properly dealt with by mindfulness and clear comprehension will become accumulated in the subconscious, and they will exert an influence on subsequent behaviour in accordance with the Dependent Origination cycle.

Whenever there is the arising of the self-concept, there is an occupation of space; when there is occupation of space, there must be a boundary or limitation; when there is limitation, there must be separation; when there is separation there must be the dualism of 'self' and 'not self.' The self will grow and extend outwards through the desire to attain, to act and to impress others. However, it is not possible for self to grow indefinitely according to its desires.

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The expanding self will inevitably meet with obstruction in some form or other, and desires will be thwarted, if not externally then from within. If one has any sensitivity to the esteem of others, opposition will arise in the form of one's own sense of conscience. If there is no suppression of these desires and they are allowed to express themselves fully, opposition will appear from external sources. Even if it were possible to indulge every desire to the full, such activity is weakening. It only serves to increase the power of craving itself, together with its attendant feeling of lack. Not only does it increase dependence on externals, but it increases internal conflict. When desires are unfulfilled, tension, conflict and despair are the natural result.

An example of Dependent Origination in everyday life

Let us take a simple example of how the principle of Dependent Origination operates in everyday life. Suppose there are two school chums, named 'John' and 'Ian.' Whenever they meet at school they smile and say "Hello" to each other. One day John sees Ian, and approaches him with a friendly greeting ready, only to be answered with silence and a sour expression. John is peeved by this, and stops talking to Ian. In this case, the chain of reactions might proceed in the following way:

1. Ignorance (*avijjā*): John is ignorant of the true reason for Ian's grim face and sullenness. He fails to reflect on the matter wisely and to ascertain the real reasons for Ian's behaviour, which may have nothing at all to do with his feelings for John.

2. Volitional Impulses (*saṅkhāra*): As a result, John proceeds to think and formulate theories in his mind, conditioned by his temperament, and these give rise to doubt, anger, and resentment, once again dependent on his particular temperament.

3. Consciousness (*viññāṇa*): Under the influence of these defilements, John broods. He takes note of and interprets Ian's

behaviour and actions in accordance with those previous impressions; the more he thinks about it, the surer he gets; Ian's every gesture seems offensive.

4. Body and mind (*nāmarūpa*): John's feelings, thoughts, moods, facial expressions and gestures, that is, the body and mind together, begin to take on the overall features of an angry or offended person, primed to function in accordance with that consciousness.

5. Sense bases (*saḷāyatana*): John's sense organs are primed to receive information that is related to and conditioned by the body-mind organism's state of anger or hurt.

6. Contact (*phassa*): The impingement on the sense organs will be of the activities or attributes of Ian which seem particularly relative to the case, such as frowning expressions, unfriendly gestures, and so on.

7. Feeling (*vedanā*): Feelings, conditioned by sense contact, are of the unpleasant kind.

8. Craving (*taṇhā*): *Vibhavaṭaṇhā*, craving for non-being, arises, the dislike or aversion for that offensive image, the desire for it to go away or to be destroyed.

9. Clinging (*upādāna*): Clinging and obsessive thinking in relation to Ian's behaviour follows. Ian's behaviour is interpreted as a direct challenge; he is seen as a disputant, and the whole situation demands some kind of remedial action.

10. Becoming (*bhava*): John's subsequent behaviour falls under the influence of clinging and his actions become those of an antagonist.

11. Birth (*jāti*): As the feeling of enmity becomes more distinct, it is assumed as an identity. The distinction between 'me' and 'him' becomes more distinct, and there is a self which is obliged to somehow respond to the situation.

12. Aging and death (*jarāmaraṇa*): This 'self,' or condition of enmity, exists and flourishes dependent on certain conditions, such as the desire to appear tough, to preserve honour and pride,

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and to be the victor, which all have their respective opposites, such as feelings of worthlessness, inferiority, and failure. As soon as that self arises, it is confronted with the absence of any guarantee of victory. Even if he does attain the victory he desires, there is no guarantee that John will be able to preserve his supremacy for any length of time. He may not, in fact, be the 'tough victor' he wants to be, but rather the loser, the weakling, the one who loses face. These possibilities of suffering play with John's moods and produce stress, insecurity, and worry. They in turn feed ignorance, thus beginning a new round of the cycle. Such negative states are like festering wounds which have not been treated, and so continue to release their 'poisoning' effect on John's consciousness, influencing all of his behaviour, and causing problems both for himself and for others. In John's case, he may feel unhappy for the whole of that day, speaking gruffly to whoever he comes into contact with, and so increasing the likelihood of more unpleasant incidents.

In this case, if John were to practise correctly he would be advised to start off on the right foot. Seeing his friend's sullenness, he could use his intelligence (*yoniso-manasikāra*: considering in accordance with causes and conditions) and reflect that Ian may have some problem on his mind—he may have been scolded by his mother, he may be in need of money, or he may simply be depressed. If John reflected in this way no incident would arise, his mind would be untroubled, and he might even be moved toward compassionate action and understanding.

Once the negative chain of events has been set in motion, however, it can still be cut off with mindfulness at any point. For instance, if it had continued on up to sense contact, the awareness of Ian's actions in a negative way, John could still set up mindfulness right there: instead of falling under the power of craving for non-being, he could instead consider the facts of the situation and thereby gain a fresh understanding of Ian's behaviour. He could then reflect wisely in regard to both his own and his friend's actions, so that his mind would no longer be weighed down by

negative emotional reactions, but instead respond in a clearer and more positive way. Such reflection, in addition to causing no problems for himself, could also serve to encourage the arising of compassion.

Before leaving this example, it might be useful to reiterate some salient points:

— In real life, the complete cycles or chains of events, such as that mentioned in this example, take place very rapidly. A student finding out that he has failed an exam, someone receiving bad news, such as the death of a loved one, or a man who sees his wife with a lover, for example, may all feel intense sorrow or shock, even going weak at the knees, screaming or fainting. The more intense the attachment and clinging, the more intense the reaction will be.

— It should be stressed once again that the inter-determination within this chain of events does not necessarily have to be in sequential order, just as chalk, a blackboard, and writing are all indispensable determinants for the white letters on a blackboard's surface, but do not have to appear in sequential order.

— The teaching of Dependent Origination attempts to clarify the workings of nature, to analyse the unfolding of events as they actually occur, so that the causes can be more easily identified and corrected. As for the details of how that correction can be effectuated, they are not the concern of the teaching of Dependent Origination, but are rather the domain of *magga* (the Path), or the Middle Way.

In any case, the examples given here are very simplified and may seem somewhat superficial. They are not sufficiently detailed to convey the full subtlety of the principle of Dependent Origination, especially such sections as ignorance as a determinant for volitional impulses, and sorrow, lamentation and despair conditioning the further turning of the cycle. In our example, it may appear that the cycle only arises occasionally, that ignorance is a sporadic phenomena, and that the ordinary person may spend

large periods of his or her life without the arising of ignorance at all. In fact, for the unenlightened being, ignorance of varying degrees is behind every thought, action and word. The most basic level of this ignorance is simply the perception that there is a self which is thinking, speaking and acting. If this is not **borne** in mind, the true relevance of the teaching to everyday life may be overlooked. For this reason some of the more profound aspects of this chain of events will now be examined in more detail.

6

THE NATURE OF DEFILEMENTS



FOR THE UNENLIGHTENED BEING, EXPERIENCES and situations are normally interpreted and evaluated through the following biases or influences:

1. The concern for desires for the five kinds of sense objects (*kāma*—sights, sounds, smells, tastes and bodily sensations).
2. The concern for the existence and preservation of the self, its identities and desired situations (*bhava*).
3. Views, beliefs, and ways of thinking (*diṭṭhi*).
4. Delusion or ignorance (*avijjā*): not clearly knowing the meaning of things as they are, which leads to the perception of self.

The third and fourth conditions, in particular, are obviously related: without wisdom or understanding, it follows that behaviour will be guided by habitual and misguided views and beliefs. These two conditions cover very broad areas of influence, including political, social and religious ideals and practices based on temperament, habit, training, and social conditioning. They are related to the first and second biases and exert an influence over them, thus controlling all personal feelings and behaviour. They

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condition everything, from likes and dislikes to means and methods chosen to gratify desires. Ignorance and views are concealed deeply within consciousness and are quietly and continually exerting their influence.

According to common perception, we are in control of our actions and are able to pursue desires of our own free will. Closer observation will tell us that this is an illusion. If we were to ask ourselves, "What do we really want? Why do we want such things? Why do we act the way we do!" we would find nothing which is really our own. We would find instead inherited behaviour patterns, learned from schooling, religious upbringing, social conditioning and the like. Individual actions are simply chosen from within the bounds of these criteria, and although there may be some adaptations made, these will again be at the direction of other influences. Any choices or decisions made are part of a stream of conditions, and these are themselves influenced by other factors. What people feel to be their self is none other than the sum total of these influences or biases. These conditions, in addition to having no self of their own, are powerful forces over which most people have little or no control, so that there is really very little chance for true independence.

The four qualities mentioned above are called in Pali *āsava*.¹ Translated literally, *āsava* means 'that which floods,' or 'that which pickles or festers,' because these things 'pickle' or poison the mind. They also 'flood' the mind whenever it experiences a sensation, and so we will call them 'outflows.' No matter what may be experienced, be it through any of the sense doors or conceived in the mind itself, these outflows insinuate themselves into and spread their influence over it. Sensations or thoughts, instead of being functions of the pure mind, become instead products of the outflows, in turn polluting subsequent mental states and causing, as a result, suffering.

The first outflow is called *kāmāsava*, the second, *bhavāsava*, the third *diṭṭhāsava*, and the fourth *avijjāsava*. These outflows lie be-

hind the behaviour of all unenlightened beings. They create the delusion of self-view, which is ignorance at its most basic level. In this sense **they** control and direct thinking and behaviour. This is the very first level of the Dependent Origination cycle: ignorance is conditioned by the outflows. From there the cycle continues —with ignorance as determinant, volitional impulses arise accordingly.

While, under the influence of delusion, most people believe that they themselves are performing actions, the irony is that **they** are not their own masters at all —their behaviour is totally controlled by intentions which are lacking in reflexive awareness. Essentially, ignorance is blindness to the Three Characteristics as **they** are shown in the principle of Dependent Origination, especially the third one, not-self (anattii). Specifically, ignorance is not clearly knowing that the conditions usually taken to be an individual or self, 'me' or 'you,' are simply a stream of physical and mental phenomena, constantly arising and ceasing, related and connected by the cause and effect process. This stream is in a state of constant flux. We could say that a 'person' is **simply** the overall result of the feelings, thoughts, desires, habits, biases, views, knowledge, beliefs and so on, at any particular point in time, that are either inherited from social and environmental factors, such as through learning, or formed from personal, internal factors, all constantly changing. Not clearly knowing this, there is clinging to one or another of these conditions as self or belonging to self. To cling to conditions in this way is in effect to be deceived and controlled by them.

This is "ignorance as a determinant for volitional impulses" on a more profound level than given previously. As for the remaining headings, from here up until *vedanā*, feeling, there should be no difficulty understanding them from the explanations already given. Therefore we will pass on from there to another important section, "craving (*taṇhā*) as a determinant for clinging, (*upādāna*)," another of the sections dealing with *kilesa*, or defilement.

The three kinds of craving already mentioned are all expressions of the one craving, and all are commonly experienced in everyday life, but they can only be seen when the workings of the mind are carefully analysed. At the root of all ignorance is ignorance of things as a natural process of inter-related causes and effects, which gives rise to the perception of a self. This leads to a very important and fundamental desire, the desire to be, the desire to survive, to protect and preserve the illusion of self. Wanting to be is related to wanting to have—desire is not simply for existence, but existence in order to consume those objects which will produce pleasant feelings. Thus it can be said that desire for existence depends on the desire to have, and desire to have intensifies the desire to exist.

As craving intensifies, a number of situations may result: if the desired object is not obtained at the desired time, the *bhava*, or state of existence, at that time becomes intolerable. Life will seem difficult, resulting in a desire for annihilation of that undesirable situation. At the same time, desire to acquire will once again arise, based on fear of no longer being able to experience pleasant feeling, and from there desire to be once more. A second possibility might be not obtaining the desired object at all; a third, obtaining it, but in insufficient quantity; while a fourth might be obtaining it, but then desiring something else. The process may take various forms, but the basic pattern is one of ever-increasing craving.

When the workings of the mind are examined closely, human beings seem to be embroiled in a constant search for a state that is more fulfilling than what they have. Unenlightened beings are constantly being repelled from the present moment—each moment of present time is a state of stress, an unendurable situation. The desire to extinguish this situation, to free the self from the present and find a state which is more fulfilling, is constantly arising. Wanting to get, wanting to be and wanting to not be are constantly occurring in the daily life of unenlightened beings (on a level that few are aware of). Personal life thus becomes a constant

struggle to escape the present state of being to search for some future fulfilment.

Tracing back along the process, we find that these desires originate from the fundamental ignorance of things as they really are—in short, ignorance of the principle of conditionality and Dependent Origination. This ignorance gives rise to the basic misconception of self in one form or another: either seeing things as separate entities, fixed and enduring,* or as being completely and utterly annihilated.** All unenlightened beings have these two basic wrong views at the root of their consciousness, and these give rise to the three kinds of desire. The desire for existence (*bhavataṇhā*) springs from the distorted perception of things as separate and enduring entities (and thus desirable and worth attaining). Alternatively, there is the misconception that these separate entities are destructible (and as such are not worth having and must be escaped from), which is the basis for the desire for annihilation (*vibhavataṇhā*).

These two basic wrong views prepare the way for craving. If there was understanding of the stream of events as a process of inter-related causes and effects, the perception of a separate entity which endures or is destroyed would be baseless. All craving is naturally based on these two basic views.

Fear of loss of pleasant feeling leads to the frantic search for more, and the perception of a separate entity leads to the struggle to procure for that entity and to preserve it. On a coarser level, craving expresses itself as the struggle to seek out objects of desire, life situations which provide such objects, boredom with those objects already obtained, and the despair with, or inability to endure, the lack of new objects of desire. The picture that emerges is of people unable to be at peace with themselves, constantly craving objects of desire and experiencing melancholy, loneliness, alienation and distress in the struggle to escape from unendurable boredom. When desires are thwarted there is disappointment and despair.

* *Sassatadiṭṭhi*: the eternalist view.

** *Ucchedadiṭṭhi*: the annihilationist view.

For most people happiness and suffering depend entirely on external conditions. Free time becomes a bane, both individually and socially, a cause for boredom, misery and loneliness.* This basic dissatisfaction increases in proportion to the amount of desire and the intensity of the search for sensual gratification. In fact, looking from a more introspective viewpoint, we find that the most important cause for social problems, such as drug addiction and juvenile delinquency, is the inability of people to be at peace with the present moment and their subsequent struggles to escape it.

In the event of having studied and trained in a religious teaching, and developed right views, craving can be turned in a good direction, aimed at realising more long-term goals, which entails the performance of good works and, ultimately, the use of craving to abandon craving.

The defilement (*kilesa*) which follows on from craving is clinging, of which there are four kinds:

1. *Kāmuṣpādāna*: Clinging to sensuality. Desire and effort to seek out sense objects are naturally followed by clinging and attachment. When an object of desire is obtained, the wish to gratify that desire even more and the fear of losing the object of such gratification will produce clinging. In the event of disappointment and loss, attachment is based on yearning. Clinging becomes even stronger and generates further action in the quest for fulfilment because desire-objects provide no lasting satisfaction. Because nothing can ever really belong to the self, the mind is constantly trying to reaffirm the sense of ownership. The thinking of unenlightened beings is thus constantly clinging to and obsessed with one object of desire or another. It is very difficult for such a mind to be free and unattached.

2. *Diṭṭhupādāna*: Clinging to views. Desire to be or not to be produces bias and attachment to views, theories or philosophical systems, and in turn methods, ideas, creeds and teachings. When views are clung to they become identified with as part of one's self.

* Significantly, this only becomes truly apparent when there is an attempt to stop, or an obstruction to, the habitual seeking of objects of desire.

Thus, when confronted with a theory or view which contradicts one's own, it is taken as a personal threat. The self must fight to defend its position, which in turn gives rise to all kinds of **conflicts**. The process tends to bind the mind into tight corners where the functioning of wisdom is impaired. Such thoughts and views do not provide knowledge, but rather obstruct it.

3. *Sīlabbatupādāna*: Clinging to mere rules and rituals. The desire to be and the fear of dissolution, together with attachment to views, in turn lead to blind adherence to those practices and methods, such as magic and occultism, which are believed to effectuate the desired result. The desire for self-preservation and self-expression manifest outwardly as blind attachment to modes of behaviour, traditions, methods, creeds and institutions. There is no understanding of their true value or meaning. This in effect means that the creation of these methodologies and practices leads to stricture and confusion, making it difficult to effect any self-improvement or to derive any true benefit from them.

On the subject of *Sīlabbatupādāna*, the late Venerable Buddhadasa, one of the most influential Buddhist thinkers in contemporary Thailand, has given an explanation which may be of interest here:

Practising moral restraint, or any other form of Dhamma practice, without knowing its aim or reflecting on its meaning, but simply believing that such practices are auspicious and automatically productive of benefit, leads to strict adherence to precepts according to beliefs, customs or examples handed down from previous generations. Rather than penetrating to the real reasons for these practices, people simply cling fast to them through tradition. This is a kind of clinging (*upādāna*) which is very difficult to redress, unlike the second kind of clinging, attachment to views, or wrong thoughts and ideas. This kind of clinging fixes on to the actual forms of practice, its external applications.²

4. *Attavādupādāna*: Clinging to the ego-idea. The feeling of a true self is delusion on its most basic level. There are other factors

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which enhance this feeling, such as language and communications, which produce an attachment to concepts and a tendency to see the stream of causal phenomena as fixed entities. This feeling develops into clinging when craving becomes involved. Implicit in craving is the clinging to a self in order to obtain the object of desire. Both craving to be and craving to cease are dependent on the perception of self. Fear of disintegration intensifies the desire for being and the struggle to survive, and thus the sense of self.

Craving is dependent on a powerful and independent self of some form or other. Sometimes it seems that things can be controlled, and this supports the illusion of self, but in fact such control is only partial and temporary. The so-called self is merely one factor among countless other factors within the cause and effect stream. It is beyond any person's power to completely direct or control objects of clinging. The feeling of ownership or control over things may at times seem to be well-founded, but it can never be totally or completely real, with the result that clinging and the struggle to reaffirm the sense of self are intensified.

Clinging to the self makes it difficult to organize things in conformity with the true cause and effect process. When action is not in accordance with cause and effect, and conditions do not behave in accordance with desires, the self is frustrated and confronted with impotency and loss. Clinging to self is the most fundamental kind of clinging, and is the foundation for all the other kinds.

With the experience of pleasant feeling, craving follows. This leads to *kāmuṇṇā*, clinging to desired sense objects. *Diṭṭhupādāna*, clinging to views, is present in the form of clinging to the idea that a particular object is good, that only by obtaining it will there be happiness, and that only the methods and teachings which encourage the search for and procurement of this object are correct. *Sīlabbatupādāna* manifests as clinging to the methods and techniques which are considered necessary for the attainment of the

objective. *Attavādūpādāna* appears as clinging to the self which is to own the object.

In short, clinging causes confusion. The thinking of unenlightened beings does not flow smoothly as it should in accordance with reason but is instead short-sighted, distorted and convoluted. Suffering arises from adherence to the idea of self or ownership. If things were really the self or owned by the self, then they could be controlled at will, but instead they follow causes and conditions. Not being in the power of desire, they become contrary. The self is opposed and thwarted by them. Whenever the clung-to object is attacked, the self is also attacked. The extent of the clinging, that is the influence of the 'self' in our actions, and the extent of disturbance experienced by this self, are all proportional. The result is not only suffering, but a life that is lived and operated under the power of craving and clinging, rather than with wisdom and intelligence.³

From clinging, the process continues up to becoming, (*bhava*), birth, (*jāti*), aging and death (*jarāmaraṇa*), and from there to sorrow, lamentation, and so on, as has already been explained. Any attempt to find a way out of this predicament is conditioned by habitual thought patterns, and dictated by biases, preferences, and views. Without awareness of the true state of things, the cycle begins once again at ignorance and continues on as before.

Although ignorance can be seen as the root cause and creator of all other forms of defilements, in terms of their actual expression through behaviour, craving plays the more dominant role. Thus, in practical terms, it is said in the Four Noble Truths that craving is the cause of suffering.

Under the blind and confused influence of ignorance and craving, bad kamma is more likely to exceed good kamma. But as ignorance is tempered by skilful beliefs and right thinking, and craving directed and trained by noble aims, good kamma is more likely to exceed bad kamma, and will lead to beneficial results. If craving is wisely directed it becomes a valuable tool in the ultimate

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destruction of ignorance and defilements. The former way is that of unwholesomeness, unskillful behaviour and evil, while the latter is the way to goodness, skill and purity. Both good people and bad people have their own kinds of suffering, but only the path of goodness is capable of leading to the cessation of suffering, to liberation and freedom.

"Sister, a monk in this Teaching and Discipline hears that such and such a monk has realised the deliverance of mind through wisdom, which is void of outflows. He then considers to himself, 'When will I also be able to realise that deliverance of mind through wisdom!' Later, that monk himself, relying on craving, abandons craving. It was on account of this that I said, 'This body is born of craving. Relying on craving, one should abandon craving.'"⁴

Given a choice between different kinds of craving, the good kind is the preferable incentive for action. However, the transcendence of both good and evil desires, the path of wisdom, is the ideal path to purity, freedom and perfect happiness.

7

DEPENDENT ORIGINATION IN SOCIETY



THE LONGEST SUTTA DEALING WITH DEPEND-ent Origination in the Pali Canon is the *Mahānidāna Sutta*.¹ In it, the Buddha explains the principle of conditionality both on an individual basis, as it occurs within the mind, and also in a social context, as it occurs in human relationships. So far we have dealt exclusively with the principle of Dependent Origination as it occurs in individual human consciousness. Before passing on from this subject it would therefore seem appropriate to mention briefly how Dependent Origination works on the social scale.

The Dependent Origination cycle describes the arising of social ills along the same lines as the arising of personal suffering, but from craving onwards it diverges in to a description of external events:

"In this way, Ananda, conditioned by feeling is craving, conditioned by craving is seeking, conditioned by seeking is gain, conditioned by gain is valuation, conditioned by valuation is fondness, conditioned by fondness is possessiveness, conditioned by possessiveness is ownership, conditioned by ownership is

of gain).⁴

This sequence illustrates a process connecting individual mind experience with external events, showing how the origin of social problems and suffering lies within human defilements. The sequence is very basic, showing only an outline of the unfolding of events. More detailed explanations, emphasising more specific situations, appear in other Suttas, such as the *Aggañña*,⁵ the *Cakkavatti*⁶ and the *Vāsetṭha*⁷ Suttas. These Suttas are the working models of the principle of Dependent Origination on the social level. They explain the development of events in human society, such as the arising of class structures, as the result of the interaction between people and the environment around them. In other words, these phenomena are a result of an interaction between three levels: human beings, human society and the whole of the natural environment.

The feelings that we experience depend on sense impingement, which, in addition to existing internal factors such as perception, depends on social and environmental factors. Dependent on feeling, craving arises, resulting in the variations of human behaviour towards both other people and the world around them, within the restrictions specified by social or natural circumstances. Results of those actions further affect all other factors. Human beings are not the only determinants in social or environmental development, and the natural environment is not the only determinant in conditioning human beings or society. Rather they all constitute an inter-dependent process of relationship.

One section of the *Aggañña* Sutta illustrates the sequence of social evolution according to cause and effect thus:

People become lazy and begin to hoard rice (previously rice was plentiful and there was no need to hoard it) and this becomes the preferred practice → people begin to hoard private supplies → unscrupulous people steal other's shares to enlarge their own → censure, lying, punishment, and contention result → responsible people, seeing the need for authority, appoint a king → some of the

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people, being disillusioned with society, decide to do away with evil actions and cultivate meditation practice. Some of these live close to the city and study and write scriptures; they become the Brahmins. Those who have families continue to earn their living by various professions; they becoming the artisans. The remaining people, being vulgar and inept, become the plebeians. From among these four groups a smaller group breaks off, renouncing tradition and household life and taking to the 'homeless life.' These become the *samaṇas*.*

The aim of this Sutta is to explain the arising of the various classes as a matter of natural development based on related causes, not as commandments from an almighty God. All people are equally capable of good and evil behaviour, and all receive results according to the natural law; it follows that all beings are equally capable of attaining enlightenment if they practise the Dhamma correctly.

The *Cakkavatti* Sutta shows the arising of crime and social ills within society according to the following cause and effect sequence:

(The ruler) does not share wealth among the poor → poverty abounds → theft abounds → the use of weapons abounds → killing and maiming abound → lying abounds → slander ... sexual infidelity ... abusive and frivolous speech ... greed and hatred ... wrong view → lust for what is wrong, greed, wrong teachings disrespect for parents, elders and religious persons, disrespect for position abound → longevity and appearance degenerate.

It is interesting to note that in modern times, attempts to resolve social problems are rarely attuned to their real causes. They seek to provide stopgap solutions, such as establishing counselling for drug addicts and delinquents, but they do not delve deeply into the social conditions which affect the emergence of such problems

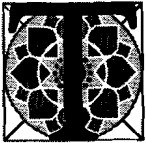
* These social classes are of course based on the society in India at the time—the Royalty, the Brahmins, the artisans and the plebeians. *Samaṇas* were religious mendicants, or ascetics, and they were 'outsiders,' considered beyond the four castes.

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in the first place, such as consumerism and mass media. In this respect, the Buddhist teaching of Dependent Origination on the social scale offers an invaluable precedent for intelligent and truly effective social analysis and reform.

8

THE MIDDLE TEACHING



TO UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLE OF DEPENDENT Origination is said to be Right View (*sammādiṭṭhi*). This Right View is a very balanced kind of view, one which does not tend to extremes. Thus the principle of Dependent Origination is a law which teaches the-truth in a median and unbiased way, known as the Middle Teaching. The 'median-ness' of this truth is more clearly understood when it is compared with other teachings. In order to show how the principle of Dependent Origination differs from these extreme views, I will now present some of them, arranged in pairs, using the Buddha's words as explanation and keeping further commentary to a minimum.

- First Pair:
1. **Atthikavāda:*** The school which upholds that all things really exist (extreme realism).
 2. **Natthikavāda:** The school which upholds that all things do not exist (nihilism).

"Venerable Sir, it is said 'Right View, Right View'. To what extent is view said to be right!"

"Herein, Venerable **Kaccāna**, this world generally tends towards two extreme views—atthitii (being) and *natthitā* (not being). Seeing the cause of the world as it is, with right understanding, there is no 'not being' therein. Seeing the cessation of this world as it is with right understanding, there is no 'being' therein. The world clings to systems and is bound by dogmas, but the noble disciple does not search for, delight in nor attach to systems, dogmas or the conceit 'I am'. He doubts not that it is only suffering that arises, and only suffering that ceases. When that noble disciple clearly perceives this independently of others, this is called Right View.

"Kaccana! To say 'all things exist' is one extreme. To say 'all things do not exist' is another. The *Tathāgata* proclaims a teaching that is balanced, avoiding these extremes, thus, 'With ignorance as condition there are volitional impulses; with volitional impulses as condition, consciousness ... with the complete abandoning of ignorance, volitional impulses cease; with the cessation of volitional impulses, consciousness ceases ...' "¹

* * *

A Brahmin approached the Buddha and asked, "Venerable Gotama, do all things exist?"

The Buddha replied, "The view that all things exist is one extreme materialistic view."

Question: Then all things do not exist?

Answer: The view that all things do not exist is the second materialistic view.

Question: Are all things, then, one?

Answer: The view that all things are one is the third materialistic view.

Question: Are all things, then, a plurality?

Answer: The view that all things are a plurality is the fourth materialistic view.

"Brahmin! The *Tathāgata* proclaims a teaching that is balanced, avoiding these extremes, thus, 'With ignorance as condition there are volitional impulses; with volitional impulses as condition, consciousness ... with the complete abandoning of ignorance, volitional impulses cease; with the cessation of volitional impulses, consciousness ceases...' "²

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- Second Pair: 1. **Sassatavāda:** The school of eternalism
2. **Ucchedavāda:** The school of annihilationism
- Third Pair: 1. **Attakāravāda or Sayanikāravāda:** The school which upholds the view that happiness and suffering are entirely self-determined (kammic autogenesisism)
2. **Pārakāravāda:** The school which upholds the view that happiness and suffering are entirely caused by external factors (kammic heterogenesisism). These second and third pairs are very important to the fundamental teaching of Buddhism. If studied and clearly understood they can help prevent a lot of misunderstandings about the law of *kamma*.

Question: Is suffering caused by the self?

Answer: Do not put it that way.

Question: Is suffering then caused by external factors?

Answer: Do not put it that way.

Question: Is suffering then caused both by oneself and external factors?

Answer: Do not put it that way.

Question: Is suffering then caused neither by oneself nor external factors?

Answer: Do not put it that way.

Question: In that case, is there no such thing as suffering?

Answer: It's not that there is no such thing as suffering. Suffering does exist.

Question: In that case, is it that Venerable Gotama does not see or know suffering?

Answer: It's not that I do not see or know suffering. I do indeed know and see suffering.

Question: May the Blessed One please tell me then, please instruct me, about suffering.

Answer: To say 'suffering is caused by the self,' is the same as saying 'he who acts receives the results (suffering).' This tends to the eternalist view (*sassatadiṭṭhi*). Saying 'suffering is caused by other agents,' as a person who experiences sharp and painful feelings would feel, is just like saying, 'one person acts, another suffers.' This tends to the

annihilationist view (*ucchedaditṭhi*). The Tathāgata, avoiding those two extremes, proclaims a teaching that is balanced, thus, 'With ignorance as condition there are volitional impulses; with volitional impulses as condition, consciousness... with the complete abandoning of ignorance, volitional impulses cease; with the cessation of volitional impulses, consciousness ceases ...'”³

* * *

Question: Are happiness and suffering caused by the self?

Answer: Do not put it that way.

Question: Are happiness and suffering caused by external factors?

Answer: Do not put it that way.

Question: Are happiness and suffering caused by both the self and external factors?

Answer: Do not put it that way.

Question: Are then happiness and suffering caused by neither the self nor external factors?

Answer: Do not put it that way.

Question: In that case, then, do happiness and suffering not exist?

Answer: It is not that happiness and suffering do not exist. Happiness and suffering do exist.

Question: In that case, does the Venerable Gotama neither know nor see happiness and suffering?

Answer: It is not that I neither see nor know them. I do indeed both see and know happiness and suffering.

Question: May the Blessed one please inform me, please instruct me, about happiness and suffering.

Answer: Understanding from the outset that feeling and self are one and the same thing, there is the clung-to notion that happiness and suffering are self-caused. I do not teach thus. Understanding that feeling is one thing, self is another, there is the clung-to idea that happiness and suffering are caused by external factors. I do not teach thus. The *Tathāgata*, avoiding those two extremes, proclaims a teaching that is balanced, thus, 'With ignorance as condition there are volitional impulses; with volitional impulses as condition, consciousness... with the

complete abandoning of ignorance, volitional impulses cease; with the cessation of volitional impulses, consciousness ceases ... '4

* * *

"Ananda, I say that happiness and suffering are dependently arisen. Dependent on what? Dependent on contact (*phassa*).

"Dependent on body and volition in relation to the body, internal happiness and suffering can arise. Dependent on speech and speech-volition, internal happiness and suffering can arise. Dependent on mind and mind-volition, internal happiness and suffering can arise.

"With this very ignorance as condition, bodily actions which are a cause for internal happiness and suffering are created. Dependent on other people (at the instigation of another person or external force), bodily actions, a cause for internal happiness and suffering, are created. With awareness, volitional bodily activities, the cause of internal happiness and suffering, are created. Without awareness, volitional bodily activities, the cause of internal happiness and suffering, are created. ... volitional speech is created ... volitional thoughts are created ... instigated by another ... with awareness ... without awareness. In all these cases, ignorance is present."5

Fourth Pair: 1. ***Kāraṅkavedakādi-ekattavāda***: The belief that the doer and the experiencer of the fruit of actions are one and the same (the monistic view of subject-object unity).

2. ***Kāraṅkavedakādi-nānattavāda***: The belief that the doer and the experiencer of the fruit of actions are separate things (the dualistic view of subject-object distinction).

Question: Are the doer and the receiver one and the same thing?

Answer: Saying that the doer and receiver are one and the same thing is one extreme.

Question: Are, then, the doer one thing, the receiver another?

Answer: To say the doer is one thing, the receiver of results another, is another extreme. The *Tathāgata*, avoiding these two extremes, proclaims a teaching that is balanced, thus, 'With ignorance as condition there are volitional impulses; with volitional impulses as condition, consciousness... with the complete abandoning of ignorance, volitional impulses cease; with the cessation of volitional

impulses, consciousness ceases ...⁶

* * *

Question: Revered Gotama, what are aging and death? To whom do they belong?

Answer: You have asked the question improperly. To say both, 'What are aging and death, to whom do they belong,' or 'aging and death are one thing, the experiencer another,' have the same meaning, they differ only in the letter. When there is the view, 'life and the body are one and the same thing,' there can be no Higher Life (*brahmacariya*). When there is the view, 'life and the body are two different things' there can be no Higher Life. The Tathigata, avoiding these two extremes, proclaims a teaching that is balanced, thus, 'With birth as condition are aging and death.'"

Question: Revered Sir, birth... becoming... clinging... craving... feeling ... contact ... the sense bases ... body and mind ... consciousness ... volitional impulses ... What are they? To whom do they belong?

Answer: You have asked the question wrongly. ... (same as for aging and death) ... Because of the complete abandoning of ignorance, whatsoever views there be that are confused, vague, and contradictory, such as 'What are aging and death, to whom do they belong?', 'Aging and death are one thing, the experiencer another,' 'The life principle and the body are one thing,' 'The life principle and the body are separate', are done away with, finished with, abandoned and unable to arise again.⁷

* * 0

Question: Who is it who receives contact?

Answer: You have put the question wrongly. I do not say 'receives contact'. If I were to say 'receives contact', you could, in that case, rightly put to me the question 'Who is it who receives contact?' But I do not say that. To ask 'on what condition does contact rest!' would be to ask the question rightly. And the correct answer would be, 'With the sense bases as condition, there is contact. With contact as condition, feeling.'

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Question: Who is it who experiences feeling? Who is it who desires?
Who is it who clings?

Answer: You have put the question wrongly ... To ask 'On what condition does feeling rest? What is it that conditions desire? What is it that conditions clinging?' would be asking the question in the right way. In that case, the correct answer would be, 'With contact as condition there is feeling; with feeling as condition, craving; with craving as condition, clinging.'⁸

* * *

"Monks, this body does not belong to you, nor does it belong to another. You should see it as old *kamma*, something conditioned and concocted by volitional impulses, a base of feeling."

"In regard to this, monks, the learned, noble disciple wisely considers the dependent arising of all things, thus, 'When there is this, this comes to be. With the cessation of this, this ceases. That is, with ignorance as condition are volitional impulses; with volitional impulses as condition, consciousness ... With the complete abandoning of ignorance, volitional impulses cease; with the cessation of volitional impulses, consciousness ceases.'⁹

The teaching of Dependent Origination demonstrates the truth of all things in nature as having the characteristics of transience, suffering and not self,* and as faring according to cause and effect. There is no need for questions about the existence or non-existence of things, whether they are eternal or whether they are annihilated and so on, as such questions do not pertain to what is truly useful. However, without clear understanding of Dependent Origination, the Three Characteristics, especially not-self, will also be misunderstood. Quite often the teaching of not-self is taken to mean nothingness, which conforms with the nihilist (*natthika*) view, a particularly pernicious form of wrong understanding.

In addition to helping to avoid such views, a clear understanding of the principle of Dependent Origination will prevent the arising of views about a Genesis or First Cause, such as mentioned in the beginning of this book. Some of the Buddha's words in this

*The Three Characteristics: *aniccam*, *dukkham* and *anattā*.

connection:

"Monks, for a noble disciple who sees the dependent arising of things in conformity with the principle of Dependent Origination, it is impossible to fall into such extreme views as, 'What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what in the past did I become thus?'; or such views as, 'In the future, will I be? In the future what will I be? In the future how will I be? In the future what will I become?'; or, 'Am I? What am I? How am I? Where did this being arise from, and where will it go?'—none of these doubts can arise for him. Why? Because that noble disciple has seen the dependent arising of things in accordance with the principle of Dependent Origination, clearly, as it is, with perfect wisdom."¹⁰

In this context, one who sees the principle of Dependent Origination will no longer be inclined to speculate about the questions of metaphysics. This is **why** the Buddha remained silent on such issues. He called such questions *abyākatapañhā*—questions better left unanswered. On seeing the principle of Dependent Origination, and understanding how all things flow along the cause and effect continuum, such questions become meaningless. Here we may consider some of the reasons why the Buddha would not answer such questions:

"Revered Gotama, what is the reason that, while recluses of other sects, being questioned **thus**—

1. Is the world eternal?
2. Is the world not eternal?
3. Is the world finite?
4. Is the world infinite?
5. Are the life principle and the body one thing?
6. Are the life principle and the body separate?
7. Do beings exist after death?
8. Do beings not exist after death?
9. Do beings both exist and not exist after death?
10. Do beings neither exist nor not exist after death?

—give such answers as 'The world is eternal,' or 'the world is not eternal,' ... 'Beings neither exist nor do not exist after death,' but the

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Revered Gotama, being so questioned, does not answer thus!"

"Herein, Vaccha, these recluses of other sects believe either that the body is the self, or that the self has a body, or that the self is in the body, or that the body is in the self, or that the self lies in the body; or that feeling... perception... volitional impulses... consciousness is the self, or that the self is consciousness, that consciousness lies in the self or that the self lies within consciousness. It is for this reason that those recluses, being so questioned, answer in such ways.

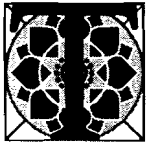
"But the Tathigata, Arahant, Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha, does not apprehend the body to be the self or the self to be the body, or that the body lies in the self, or the self within the body ... that consciousness is the self, or that consciousness lies within the self, or the self within consciousness. For this reason, the Tathigata, Arahant, Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha, being so questioned, does not make such statements as 'the world is eternal' or 'the world is not eternal.'"

There are a number of other theories or schools of thought which have a special relationship to the concept of *kamma*, and which also clash with the principle of Dependent Origination, but those points are covered in another work,* so I will not go into them here.

* See 'Good, Evil and Beyond ... *Kamma* in the Buddha's Teaching', by the author.

9

BREAKING THE CYCLE



THE TEACHING OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION is part of what is known as the Middle Teaching (*majjhena-dhammadesanā*). It is taught as an impersonal, natural truth, a description of the nature of things as they are, avoiding the extreme theories or biased views that human beings are wont to fall into as a result of their distorted perceptions of the world and their attachments and desires within it. The cycle of Dependent Origination which describes the problem of human suffering comes in two limbs: the first limb, called the *samudayavāra* (origination mode), is a description of the arising of suffering, corresponding with the second Noble Truth, the cause of suffering; the second limb, called the *nirodhavāra* (cessation mode), is a description of the cessation of suffering, corresponding with the third Noble Truth.

In essence, then, the Middle Teaching¹ describes two processes:

I. *Samudaya*: the origination mode of the Dependent Origination cycle: ignorance → volitional impulses ... becoming → birth → aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair = the arising of suffering

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2. *Nirodha*: the cessation mode of the Dependent Origination cycle: cessation of ignorance → cessation of volitional impulses → cessation of consciousness... cessation of aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair = the cessation of suffering

The reason we must deal with the cause of suffering (*samudaya*) is because we are confronted with a problem (*dukkha*), the solution of which demands a search for its causes. When the cause of suffering is understood, we recognize that the solution of the problem consists in the eradication of those causes. Thus the process of cessation of suffering (*nirodha*) is described. In the Middle Teaching, the cessation of suffering includes not only the process for bringing about the cessation of suffering, but also the state of cessation itself, which is *Nibbāna*.

A discussion of the subjects of suffering, the cause of suffering, the process of the cessation of suffering and the state of suffering's cessation would seem to be a comprehensive description of the Buddha's teachings, but in fact it is not. This is because the Middle Teaching describes only natural phenomena, functioning according to natural causes and conditions. It is not geared to practical application. This is why the process of the cessation of suffering, or *nirodha*, which is included within the Middle Teaching, is simply a description of impersonal phenomena and their interrelated functioning to produce the cessation of suffering. It does not address the details of practical application in any way. It states simply that in the attainment of the goal, the cessation of suffering, the factors must proceed in this way, but it does not state what we must do in order to make this process take place. The Middle Teaching is simply a description of natural processes within the natural order. Studying the mechanics of the process of cessation may lead to an understanding of the basic principles involved, but we still lack practical guidance. What methods are there for realising this solving of problems which we have now studied? This is the point at which the natural processes must be connected to practical application.

It is imperative that practical application be in conformity and harmony with the natural process—it must work in accordance with the natural process in order to produce results. The principle at work here is, first, to know and understand the natural processes, and then to practise in accordance with a humanly devised method based on that knowledge and understanding. In other words, as far as the natural processes are concerned, our only duty is to know them, while in relation to the practice, our responsibility is to formulate techniques that conform with that understanding, and thereby graduate from mere knowledge of the natural processes to practical application.

Practice, techniques and methods of practice in this context are known by the specialized term of *paṭipadā*—the methods of practice, the way of life or life-style which leads to the cessation of suffering. The Buddha laid down methods of practice which are in harmony with the natural process, or the Middle Teaching, and called this practice the Middle Way (*Majjhimā paṭipadā*), consisting of techniques which are balanced, in conformity with the natural processes, and perfectly attuned to bringing about the cessation of suffering. The Way avoids the two extremes of sensual indulgence and self torment which lead to stagnation or digression from the true goal.

The Middle Way is known in short as *magga*, the Way. Because this Way has eight factors or components, and transforms the one who successfully travels it into a noble one (*ariya*), it is also known as the Noble Eight-fold Path. The Buddha stated that this Way, this Middle Path, was a time-honoured way upon which many had previously travelled and attained the goal. The Buddha was merely the discoverer and proclaimer of this ancient way. His duty was simply to point it out to others.²

The Way is a technique for realising the objective, which is the cessation of suffering, in conformity with the natural processes. It works within causes and conditions, guiding them to interact and produce the desired result. When we talk about the Way, we are

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no longer talking about an impersonal process of suffering's cessation, but a humanly devised technique, the Eight-fold Path. In other words, we have transcended the level of bare knowledge and are entering into the field of practical application.

In order to understand this transference from a natural process to a formulated technique, we may refer to the following schematic representation:

Nirodha: ignorance ceases → volitional impulses cease → consciousness ceases → body and mind cease → sense bases cease → contact ceases → feeling ceases → craving ceases → clinging ceases → becoming ceases → birth ceases → aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain grief and despair cease → the cessation of suffering

Magga: Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration → cessation of suffering

We can summarise the connection between the natural process of the cessation of suffering and the human techniques for implementing it, known as the Way, as follows:

- Cessation is a natural process, as opposed to the Way, which is a humanly formulated technique for bringing about a result in accordance with that natural process.

The Way arises from the use of knowledge of the natural processes of cessation to formulate a method of practice. It is essential to know and understand this natural process to some extent, and this is why the Way begins with Right View.

- Cessation is a natural process subject only to the relationship between causes and conditions. When we talk about the cessation of suffering, we really mean the cessation of the causes and conditions which support the existence of suffering. Thus the process of the cessation of suffering is in clear and absolute terms—the removal of problems, the absence of problems, or the state which is diametrically opposed to problems, in which problems do not arise.

The Way proposes techniques of practice which can be adapted to time and place. It can be explained in many levels, from simple to difficult. The eight factors of the Way can be further divided into many sub-factors, making the path of practice very complex. The Way is a technique which gradually leads to the state of no problems, slower or faster, and more or less effective, in accordance with the level of practice used.

- Cessation illustrates the cessation of suffering in terms of impersonal causes and conditions, and the utter removal of those conditions. As such it does not concern itself with questions of good and evil.

The Way is a graduated system of practice of human invention, relying on the gradual accumulation of goodness in order to overcome the power of evil conditions which obstruct or hold back the attainment of the goal. For this reason the Way puts emphasis, especially in the earlier stages, on the abandoning of evil and the cultivation of the good.

- Cessation is a principle, the Way is a technique, a method and a tool.

Cessation can be compared to the principles for extinguishing fire, or the natural conditions which cause fire to go out, which may be summarised as: lack of fuel, lack of oxygen, or loss of temperature.

The Way can be compared to the practical techniques for putting out fire, which must operate in accordance with the natural principles. These will concern ways of depriving the fire of fuel, depriving it of oxygen or bringing the temperature down. When these three simple principles are transferred to practical application, they become major concerns: techniques must be devised and devices invented for the purpose. For instance, the kinds of materials and tools to be used must be considered in terms of whether it is an electrical, oil, gas or ordinary fire, and the techniques best suited to each case must be adopted. People may have to be specially trained for

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the purpose of extinguishing fires.

To use another analogy, cessation can be compared to the principles for curing an illness, which describe the cure by removing the cause, such as by destroying the bacteria which caused it, removing the poison or foreign matter from the body, or by addressing the mal-function or degeneration in the organs of the body. The Way can be compared to the techniques and methods for curing the illness. Compared to these, the principles of curing illness appear minuscule. The techniques for curing them are enormous, beginning with the observation of the illness's symptoms, the diagnosis, the application of medicines, the techniques of surgery, for nursing the patient, and for physiotherapy; the invention and production of surgical instruments; the building of hospitals and nursing homes; the hospital administration system, and the training of doctors and nurses—to name a few—which altogether present a vast and complex picture.

Although the Middle Way is said to have eight factors, these factors are simply the basics, and they can all be further divided into many other factors and classified into numerous different systems and levels in accordance with different objectives, situations, and temperaments. Thus, there are copious and highly detailed teachings dealing with the Way, which require a great amount of study. The Middle Way is a vast subject, needing an explanation in its own right. Its study may be divided into two main sections: firstly, dealing with the factors of the Path, which is the basic system, and another section defining and analysing those factors into various forms for use in specialized circumstances. Here I will deal only with a fundamental description of the factors of the Path.

Before beginning to describe the Path itself, let us look at some ways of illustrating the step up from a natural state to practical application, or from a natural process to a human technique.

In the texts, these two kinds of practice are described:

1. *Micchā-paṭipadā*, wrong practice or the wrong way, being the way leading to suffering

2. *Sammā-paṭipadā*, right practice, or the right way, being the way which leads to the cessation of suffering.

In some places the origination mode of the Dependent Origination cycle is said to be *micchā-paṭipadā*, and the cessation mode is said to be *sammā-paṭipadā*, represented like this:

Micchā-paṭipadā: ignorance → volitional impulses → consciousness → body and mind → sense bases → contact → feeling → craving → clinging → becoming → birth → aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain grief and despair → suffering

Sammā-paṭipadā: cessation of ignorance → cessation of volitional impulses → cessation of consciousness → cessation of body and mind → cessation of sense bases → cessation of contact → cessation of feeling → cessation of craving → cessation of clinging → cessation of becoming → cessation of birth → cessation of aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair → cessation of suffering³

In another place, however, the Buddha explained the practices which are directly opposed to the Eight-fold Path as *micchā-paṭipadā*, and the Eight-fold Path itself as *sammā-paṭipadā*, thus:

Micchā-paṭipadā: Wrong view, wrong thought, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, wrong concentration

Sammā-paṭipadā: Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration⁴

The cycle of Dependent Origination is a description of a natural process, not a path of practice. However, the first set of right and wrong practices described above describes practice in terms of the cycle of Dependent Origination. Is there a contradiction here? It may be answered that the Dependent Origination cycle illustrated here (and it is only illustrated as a form of practice in this

one Sutta) seeks to describe practical application. The Commentators to this Sutta ask the question: ignorance may be a condition for good actions, or merit (*puññābhisankhāra*), or it may serve to generate the state of highly stable concentration (*āneñjābhisāri-khāra*); why then is it said to be wrong practice? Answering their question, the Commentators state that when people are motivated by a desire to be or to get something, no matter what they may do—whether they develop the five higher knowledges or the eight attainments (*samāpatti**)—it is all wrong practice. On the other hand, those who are motivated by an aspiration for *Nibbāna*, who are aiming for relinquishment, or the liberated mind, rather than attaining or obtaining something, will always have right practice, even when doing such minor actions as making offerings.⁵

However, my intention in presenting these two kinds of right and wrong practice for comparison is simply to incorporate them into an examination of the progression from the natural process of cessation to the humanly devised technique known as the Path, as has been explained above. Note that apart from describing the process and practical path to goodness, those which are harmful or wrong are also described.

There is another way in which the Buddha described the cycle of Dependent Origination in its cessation mode which differs from those explained above. The beginning half describes the arising of suffering in accordance with the normal Dependent Origination cycle in forward or origination mode, all the way up to the arising of suffering, but from there, instead of presenting the cycle of Dependent Origination in the regular sequence, it describes a progression of skilful conditions which condition each other in another sequence that culminates in liberation. This is a wholly new sequence of conditions which does not refer to the cessation of conditions in the origination mode at all. This sequence is a very important example of how the Path factors may be applied to a

* The five higher knowledges—psychic powers, such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, etc.; *samāpatti*, the eight attainments, are profound levels of meditation or *samādhi*.

practical, real-life system. In other words, it is a sequence which may arise for one who successfully treads the Path and attains to the goal. This process of liberation is mentioned in several places in the texts, differing somewhat from place to place. I would like to present each of them, as follows:

Ignorance → volitional impulses → consciousness → body and mind → sense bases → contact → feeling → craving → clinging → becoming → birth → **suffering** → faith → gladness → rapture → calmness → happiness → concentration → knowledge and insight of things as they are → disenchantment → dispassion → liberation → destruction of the outflows⁶

Note that the progression begins with ignorance and proceeds to suffering, which is the origination mode of Dependent Origination, or the arising of suffering, but then, having reached suffering, instead of the sequence beginning again at ignorance as is usual, it continues with faith, which proceeds to take the flow from ignorance into another direction, a skilful one, leading ultimately to knowledge of the destruction of the outflows, no longer returning to ignorance at all. Note that when suffering is taken as the middle factor, the number of factors preceding it and succeeding it is the same.

For one who understands the nature of ignorance, the progression above will not seem strange: if we divide it into two sections, we find that one is the sequence from ignorance to suffering, while the other is the sequence from faith to knowledge of the destruction of the outflows (enlightenment). In the latter sequence, faith takes the place of ignorance. Faith here refers to a modified or diluted form of ignorance. At this stage, ignorance is no longer the totally blind kind, but is imbued with a grain of understanding, which prods the mind to proceed in a good direction, eventually leading to knowledge of things as they are and liberation.

Simply speaking, this means that once suffering has arisen, in accordance with the normal channels, one searches for a way out. In cases where one has a chance to hear the true teachings, or one

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develops an understanding of moral rationale, this leads to gladness and rapture, which then encourage one to strive for the development of progressively higher good qualities.

In fact, this latter sequence corresponds with the cessation mode of the standard Dependent Origination format (with the cessation of ignorance is the cessation of volitional impulses, etc.), but here a more detailed picture is given, seeking to illustrate how the sequence of the arising of suffering connects with the sequence of the cessation of suffering.

In the *Nettipakaraṇa*,⁷ the following passage attributed to the Buddha is said to be a description of the cessation mode of the Dependent Origination cycle:

"Ananda, in this way, skilful moral conduct* has absence of remorse as its objective, absence of remorse has gladness as its objective, gladness has rapture as its objective, rapture has calmness as its objective, calmness has happiness as its objective, happiness has concentration as its objective, concentration has knowledge and insight into things as they are as its objective, knowledge and insight into things as they are has disenchantment as its objective, disenchantment has dispassion as its objective, dispassion has knowledge of liberation as its objective. It is thus that skilful moral conduct brings about the fulfilment of these respective factors for the attainment of arahant-ship."⁸

According to this passage, the sequence goes like this:

Skilful moral conduct → absence of remorse → gladness → rapture → calmness → happiness → concentration → knowledge and insight into the way things are → disenchantment → dispassion → knowledge of liberation

It can be seen that this sequence is the same as that mentioned previously, except that it mentions only the section dealing with the cessation of suffering, and excludes the section dealing with

* The phrase 'skilful moral conduct' (*kusala sīla*) refers to moral conduct based on skilful mental states, rather than unskilful ones such as pride or wrong views.

the arising of suffering. Let us look once more at the previous sequence:

Ignorance → volitional impulses → consciousness → body and mind → sense bases → contact → feeling → craving → clinging → becoming → birth → *suffering* → faith → gladness → rapture → calmness → happiness → concentration → knowledge and insight into things as they are + disenchantment → dispassion → liberation → destruction of the outflows

Although both these sequences are the same, they are not identically worded. One sequence begins with faith, the other begins with skilful moral conduct and continues with absence of remorse. From there they are the same. In fact the only difference is in the wording and in terms of emphasis. The first sequence illustrates the situation in which faith plays a prominent role. However, in this kind of faith, the mind has full confidence in rationality, is inspired by goodness, and assured of virtue. This mental state will also be affected by behaviour. Faith being so supported by skilful and good behaviour, it is followed by gladness, as in the other sequence, which begins with skilful moral conduct and absence of remorse. This sequence gives prominence to moral practice. In this situation, a foundation of confidence in rationality and a predilection for goodness are essential in order to maintain good moral conduct. With morality and absence of remorse, self-assurance arises in the quality of one's behaviour, which is a characteristic of faith. This gives the mind confidence and clarity, and becomes a condition for the arising of gladness, just as in the previous sequence.

One of these sequences finishes up with 'liberation and destruction of the outflows,' while the other finishes up with 'knowledge of liberation.' They are both the same, except that the latter sequence includes liberation and the destruction of the outflows under the one heading of 'knowledge of liberation.'

Another illustration of the process of liberation proceeds like this;

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intelligent reflection (*yoniso-manasikāra*) → gladness → rapture
→ calmness → happiness → concentration → knowledge and
insight into things as they are → disenchantment → dispassion →
liberation⁹

This sequence differs only in that it begins with intelligent reflection, or knowing how to think and reason for oneself, instead of faith, which relies on outside influences for instruction. When one thinks properly and in accordance with reality, one sees the way things really are, and the result is gladness. From there, the factors of the progression are the same as in the previous sequences.

These sequences show more clearly the path of practice in relation to the cycle of Dependent Origination. Even so, they are only a rough outline of practical techniques. There are still many points that need to be clarified, such as what needs to be done to initiate the arising of such a sequence. That is a concern of the Path, the fourth of the Noble Truths, or the Middle Way, which deals with the Buddhist ethical system, moral practice based on knowledge of the natural processes. However, that is a vast subject which must be dealt with in a later book.

destruction of the outflows

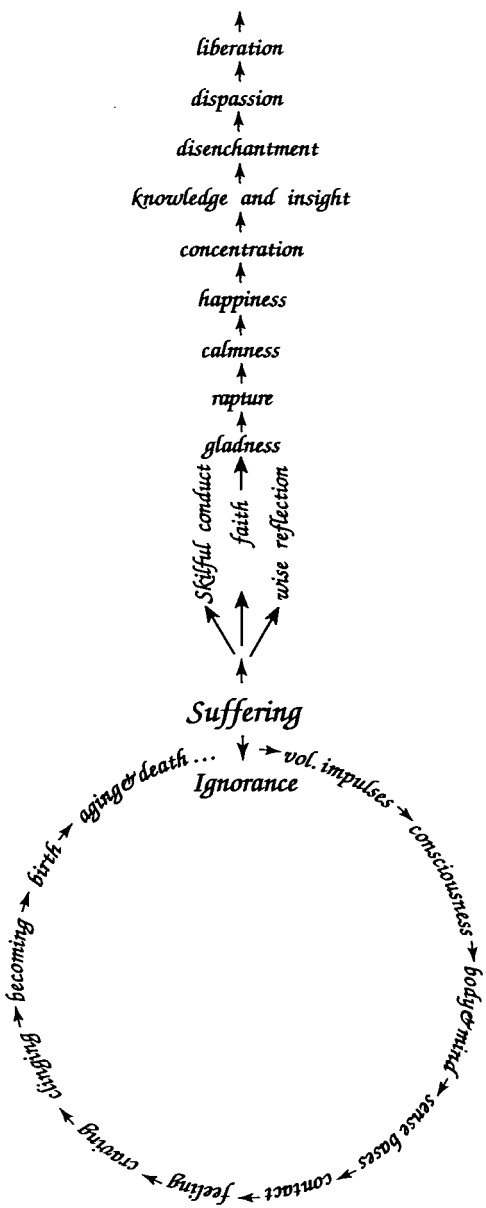


Fig. 5

APPENDIX I

A Note on Interpreting the principle of Dependent Origination

It has been mentioned that in the commentary to the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka (Sammohavinodanī)* the principle of Dependent Origination is shown occurring entirely within the space of one mind moment. This point needs to be reiterated, because modern day study of the teaching (at least in traditional scholastic circles) interprets it completely on a lifetime-to-lifetime basis. Accordingly, when there are attempts to interpret the Dependent Origination cycle as a process occurring in everyday life, those who adhere to the traditional interpretations are wont to dismiss them as baseless and in contradiction to the scriptures. For mutual comfort and ease of mind, therefore, I have included this reference to show that such an interpretation is not without scriptural basis.

Indeed, it is worth noting that what evidence there is for this interpretation is possibly only a shadow from the past which has become well-nigh forgotten, and which is still in existence only because the *Tipiṭaka* stands as an irrefutable reference.

The commentarial description of the cycle of Dependent Origination as a lifetime-to-lifetime process, which is generally

taken to be the authority, comes from the *Visuddhimagga*, written by Ācariya Buddhaghosa around the fifth century AD. However there is another commentary which deals with the principle of Dependent Origination, and that is the *Sammohavinodanī* mentioned above. The explanation here is divided into two sections, the first dealing with the principle of Dependent Origination on a lifetime-to-lifetime basis, as in the *Visuddhimagga*, and the second explaining it as an event occurring in one mind moment.

The *Sammohavinodanī* is also the work of Ācariya Buddhaghosa, and is believed to have been written after the *Visuddhimagga*. The difference between the two is that whereas the *Visuddhimagga* was authored by Buddhaghosa himself, the *Sammohavinodanī* is a commentary by him on the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. In his introduction to the *Sammohavinodanī*, Buddhaghosa writes, "I will glean this work from the ancient commentaries." Even in the *Visuddhimagga*, when it comes to the section dealing with the principle of Dependent Origination, he reveals "An explanation of Dependent Origination is extremely difficult," and, "Now I would like to expound on the *paccayākāra* (principle of conditionality), even though I haven't a foot to stand on, like a man stepping into a flowing river with no stepping stone. However, the Dependent Origination is rich with teachings, not to mention the commentaries handed down from the ancient teachers in an unbroken line. Relying on these two sources, I will now expound the principle of Dependent Origination."²

The explanation of the principle of Dependent Origination given in the *Visuddhimagga*, unlike the *Sammohavinodanī*, contains only an explanation of the principle on a lifetime-to-lifetime basis. This explanation is almost identical to that given in the *Sammohavinodanī*. This being the case, it may be asked, 'Why is there no explanation of the principle of Dependent Origination in one mind moment given in the *Visuddhimagga*!' It may be that even in the time of Buddhaghosa, scholastic circles generally described the principle of Dependent Origination on a lifetime-

to-lifetime basis. It may also be that the author felt more comfortable with this interpretation, because, difficult as it was, as he noted in his introduction, still there existed the commentaries of the teachers handed down till that time. The one-mind-moment interpretation, on the other hand, was not only very difficult, but had disappeared from scholastic circles. This can be surmised from the *Sammohavinoduni* itself, where the description of this interpretation is extremely brief. That any explanation of it occurs at all may be simply due to the fact that it is mentioned in the *Tiṭṭaka* and as such demanded an explanation. The author was able to make use of the traces of commentary still remaining to formulate his own commentary.

Now let us consider the explanation given in the *Sammohavinoduni* itself. The *Sammohavinodanī* is a commentary on the *Vibhanga*, which is the second volume of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. The section of the *Vibhanga* which describes the principle of Dependent Origination is called the *Paccayākāra Vibhanga*. It is divided into two sections: the first is called *Suttantabhājanīya* (definition according to the *Suttas*), the second, the *Abhidhammabhājanīya* (definition according to the *Abhidhamma*). The *Sammohavinodani*, the commentary to this book, is likewise divided into two sections. It describes the difference between the two sections thus:

"The Founder expounded the *paccayākāra* in terms of numerous moments of consciousness in the *Suttantabhājanīya*, but as the *paccayākāra* is not limited to numerous minds, but can occur even in one mind moment, he now seeks to explain the *paccayākāra* as it occurs in one mind moment, and this is the *Abhidhammabhājanīya*."³ And elsewhere: "In the *Suttantabhājanīya* the *paccayākāra* is divided into different lifetimes. In the *Abhidhammabhājanīya* it is expounded in one mind moment."⁴ In regard to the principle of cause and effect as it functions in one mind moment in everyday life, it is said: "... birth, (aging and death) for example, here refer to birth (aging and death) of *ariipa* (immaterial) things, not to the

decaying of the teeth, the greying of the hair, the wrinkling of the skin, dying, the action of leaving existence.”⁵

One final point deserves a mention: In the *Vibhaṅga* of the *Tipiṭaka*, the section which describes the lifetime-to-lifetime interpretation contains only five pages of material. The section which describes the principle of Dependent Origination in one mind moment contains seventy-two pages.⁶ But in the *Sammohavinodanī*, Buddhaghosa's commentary, it is the reverse. Namely, the section dealing with the lifetime-to-lifetime interpretation is long, **containing ninety-two pages**, whereas the section dealing with the one-mind-moment interpretation contains only nineteen pages.⁷ Why the commentary on the one-mind-moment version of Dependent Origination is so short is possibly because the author did not have much to say about it. Perhaps he thought it had been already explained sufficiently in the *Tipiṭaka*, there being no need for further commentary. Whatever the case, we can affirm that the interpretation of Dependent Origination in everyday life is one that existed from the very beginning, and is founded on the *Tipiṭaka*, but only traces of it remain in the Commentaries.

Birth and death in the present moment

Those who would like to see a reference to the cycle of rebirth within the present moment, in the present life, might like to refer to the Sutta presented below:

"The deep-grained attachment to the feeling of self does not arise for one who is endowed with these four conditions (*paññā*, wisdom; *sacca*, integrity; *cāga*, generosity; and *upasama*, calm). With no perception of self clouding one's consciousness, one is said to be a *munī*, a peaceful one." On what account did I say this? Perceptions such as 'I am,' 'I am not,' 'I will be,' 'I will not be,' 'I will have form,' 'I will not have form,' 'I will have perception,' 'I will not have perception,' 'I will neither have nor not have perception,' monks, are an afflic-

tion, an ulcer, a dart. By transcending these perceptions one is a *muni*, a peaceful one.

"Monks, the *muni* is not born, does not age, does not die, is not confused, he does not yearn. There are no longer any causes for birth in him. Not being born, how can he age? Not aging, how can he die? Not dying, how can he be confused? Not being confused, how can he be desirous?" The deep-grained attachment to the feeling of self does not arise for one who is endowed with these four conditions. With no perception of self clouding one's consciousness, one is a *muni*, a peaceful one¹—it was on this account that this statement was made."⁸

Dependent Origination in the Abhidhamma

In the Abhidhamma many different models of Dependent Origination are presented, sorted according to the various kinds of skilful, unskilful and neutral mental states involved in producing them. These are further analysed according to the levels of mental state involved, be they of the sensual realm (*kāmāvacara*), the realm of form (*rūpāvacara*), the formless realm (*arūpāvacara*) or the transcendent realm (*lokuttara*). This is because the Abhidhamma studies the mind on the level of 'mind moments,' and thus analyses Dependent Origination according to the kind of specific mental state involved. The factors occurring within these models will vary according to the kind of mind-state.

For example, in some skilful mind states, the model might begin at *sankhāra*, volitional impulses, ignorance not being present, or it may even start with one of the roots of skilfulness (non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion) instead of ignorance. Especially noteworthy is the fact that craving will only occur in the models based on unskilful mental states. In some instances, craving is replaced by *pasāda*, inspiration, or is excluded altogether. Ignorance and craving are suppressed at these times—they do not appear in their standard forms, but in other forms, if not excluded

altogether. Moreover, in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka the various factors are presented as components of a whole or as reversing actions (such as "ignorance conditions volitional impulses, volitional impulses condition ignorance; volitional impulses condition consciousness, consciousness conditions volitional impulses," etc.). Here I will present only the more important descriptions:

A. 12 Unskilful mental states (Akusala cittas)

Ignorance	conditions	volitional impulse
volitional impulse	conditions	consciousness
consciousness	conditions	mentality (nāma)
mentality	conditions	the sixth sense base'
the sixth sense base	conditions	contact
contact	conditions	feeling
feeling	conditions	craving
or		
feeling	conditions	aversion ²
or		
feeling	conditions	doubt
or		
feeling	conditions	restlessness
or		
craving	conditions	clinging
or		
craving	conditions	conviction ³
or		
aversion	conditions	conviction
or		
restlessness	conditions	conviction
or		
clinging	conditions	becoming
or		
conviction	conditions	becoming
or		
doubt	conditions	becoming
or		
becoming	conditions	birth
or		

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birth	conditions	aging and death
	= the arising of the whole	mass of suffering

B. Skilful mental states (only those occurring in the sensual realm, the realm of form and the formless realms)

ignorance	conditions	volitional impulse
or		
skilful root ⁴	conditions	volitional impulse
volitional impulse	conditions	consciousness
consciousness	conditions	mentality
mentality	conditions	sixth sense base
sixth sense base	conditions	contact
contact	conditions	feeling
feeling	conditions	inspiration ⁵
inspiration	conditions	conviction
conviction	conditions	becoming
becoming	conditions	birth
birth	conditions	aging and death
	= the arising of the whole	mass of suffering

C. Vipāka (resultant) and kiriyā (functional) mental states (only those occurring in the sensual realm, the realm of form and the formless realms)

(skilful root	conditions	volitional impulse)
volitional impulse	conditions	consciousness
consciousness	conditions	mentality
mentality	conditions	sixth sense base
sixth sense base	conditions	contact
contact	conditions	feeling
feeling	conditions	becoming
or		
feeling	conditions	conviction
conviction	conditions	becoming
or		
feeling	conditions	inspiration

inspiration	conditions	conviction
conviction	conditions	becoming
becoming	conditions	birth
birth	conditions	aging and death
	=the arising of the whole mass of suffering	

D. Transcendent mental state (skilful and resultant)

Skilful

ignorance	conditions	volitional impulse
or		
skilful root	conditions	volitional impulse

Resultant

(skilful root	conditions	volitional impulse)
volitional impulse	conditions	c~nsciousness
c~nsciousness	conditions	mentality
mentality	conditions	sixth sense base
sixth sense base	conditions	contact
contact	conditions	feeling
feeling	conditions	inspiration
inspiration	conditions	conviction
conviction	conditions	becoming
becoming	conditions	birth
birth	conditions	aging and death
	=the arising of all these dhammas	

1. *Chattāyatana*: the sixth sense base, which is **mano**, or mind.
2. *Paṭigha*: aversion
3. *Adhimokkha*: conviction
4. *Kusalamūla*: Bases of skill, that is, non-greed, non-aversion and non-delusion
5. *Pasāda*: inspiration, faith.

Note that the transcendent skilful mental state may begin at ignorance or a skilful root, but the resultant transcendent mind state begins at a skilful root or, if not, then at a volitional impulse. In addition, the final phrase, "and thus arises the whole mass of

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suffering," is changed to "the arising of all these dhammas."

A Problem with the word '**nirodha**'

The word *nirodha* has been translated as 'cessation' for so long that it has become standard practice, and any deviation from it leads to queries. Even in this book I have opted for this standard translation for sake of convenience and to avoid confusing it for other Pali terms (apart from lack of a better word). In fact, however, this rendering of the word *nirodha* as 'ceased' can in many instances be a mis-rendering of the text.

Generally speaking, the word 'cease' means to do away with something which has already arisen, or the stopping of something which has already begun. However, *nirodha* in the teaching of Dependent Origination (as also in *dukkhanirodha*, the third of the Noble Truths) means the non-arising, or non-existence, of something because the cause of its arising is done away with. For example, the phrase "when *avijjā* is *nirodha*, *saṅkhāra* are also *nirodha*," which is usually taken to mean, "with the cessation of ignorance, volitional impulses cease," in fact means that "when there is no ignorance, or no arising of ignorance, or when there is no longer any problem with ignorance, there are no volitional impulses, volitional impulses do not arise, or there is no longer any problem from volitional impulses." It does not mean that ignorance already arisen must be done away with before the volitional impulses which have already arisen will also be done away with.

Where *nirodha* should be rendered as cessation is when it is used in reference to the natural way of things, or the nature of compounded things. In this sense it is a synonym for the words '*bhaṅga*,' breaking up, *anicca* (transient), *khaya* (cessation) or *vaya* (decay). For example, in the Pali it is given: *imam kho bhikkhave tisso vedanā aniccii sankhatii paṭiccasamuppannā khayadhammā vayadhammā virāgadhammā nirodhadhammā* — "Monks, these three kinds of

feeling are naturally impermanent, compounded, dependently arisen, transient, subject to decay, dissolution, fading and cessation."⁹ (All of the factors occurring in the Dependent Origination cycle have the same nature.) In this instance, the meaning is "all conditioned things (*saṅkhāra*), having arisen, must inevitably decay and fade according to supporting factors." There is no need to try to stop them, they cease of themselves. Here the intention is to describe a natural condition which, in terms of practice, simply means "that which arises can be done away with."

As for *nirodha* in the third Noble Truth (or the Dependent Origination cycle in cessation mode), although it also describes a natural process, its emphasis is on practical considerations. It is translated in two ways in the *Visuddhimagga*. One way traces the etymology to 'ni' (without) + 'rodha' (prison, confine, obstacle, wall, impediment), thus rendering the meaning as 'without impediment,' 'free of confinement.' This is explained as 'free of impediments, that is, the confinement of *saṃsāra*.' Another definition traces the origin to *anuppāda*, meaning 'not arising,' and goes on to say '*nirodha* here does not mean *bhaṅga*, breaking up and dissolution.'

Therefore, translating *nirodha* as 'cessation,' although not entirely wrong, is nevertheless not entirely accurate. On the other hand, there is no other word which comes so close to the essential meaning as 'cessation.' However, we should understand what is meant by the term. In this context, the Dependent Origination cycle in its cessation mode might be better rendered as 'being free of ignorance, there is freedom from volitional impulses ...,' or 'when ignorance is gone, volitional impulses are gone ...' or 'when ignorance ceases to give fruit, volitional impulses cease to give fruit ...' or 'When ignorance is no longer a problem, volitional impulses are no longer a problem.'

Even in the forward mode there are some problems with definitions. The meanings of many of the Pali terms are too broad to be translated into any single English word. For instance, '*avijjā*-

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paccaṃyā saṅkhāra ... ' also means 'When ignorance is like this, volitional impulses are like this; volitional impulses being this way, consciousness is like this; consciousness being this way, body and mind are like this; ... '

APPENDIX II

Glossary of *Pali* terms

Technical terms, for which in Theravada Buddhism the Pali language is normally used, have been translated where possible into English. This has not always been easy, due in part to the technical nature of the book, and also to the difficulty of translating some of the Pali terms. English words are rarely satisfactory as direct translations of the Pali, and may seem strange to readers familiar with different translations. This Glossary has been compiled in order to show the technical terms used in the text in their Pali and translated forms, together with definitions and explanations of some of the subtle nuances of the terms which are not conveyed by the English. Where a number of English translations have been given for Pali terms, that given in italics is the one used throughout the book. The translations which follow it can be incorporated to further clarify the meaning.

Abhidhamma: Higher Teaching, one of the three Piṭaka, or baskets, of the Buddhist scriptures, containing detailed and systematic analyses of the main points of the Buddha's teachings (See *Tipiṭaka*)

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abyākatapañhā: questions which the Buddha would not answer, and which he considered were not conducive to real benefit

aḥamkāra: the creation of the 'I,' ego consciousness (See also *mamaṅkāra*)

anāgāmī: non-returner, one who has achieved the next-to-highest level of transcendent insight, having destroyed five of the ten fetters (belief in a self, doubt, attachment to rules and practices, sensual desire and aversion)

anatta: (adj.) not self, soulless

anattata: (noun) not-self, the state of voidness of self, soullessness

anicca, aniccama: (adj.) impermanent, transient

aniccatā: (noun) impermanence, transiency, the state of impermanence

anusaya: *latent* tendency, mental habits, proclivities, which occur when defilements are acted upon until they become habits.

arahant: lit., worthy one, one who is fully enlightened, having destroyed all ten of the fetters that bind to worldly existence (belief in a self, doubt, attachment to rules and practices, sensual desire, aversion, craving for form [states of *jhāna*], craving for formless states, restlessness, conceit and ignorance [*avijjā*])

ariya: Noble, enlightened (as in *ariya-puggala*, a Noble One, one who has experienced transcendent insight into reality, and *ariyasāvaka*, a Noble Disciple.) The word also occurs in ariyasacca, the Noble Truths, and ariyamagga, the Noble Path.

āsava: *outflow*, canker, or taint: the ingrained seedbeds of defilements

attavādupādāna: clinging to the (concept of) self (See *upādāna*)

Aṭṭhakathā: the Commentaries on the Pali Canon. (See also *Tipiṭaka*)

avijjā: ignorance, nescience, delusion; refers, in the context of the *Paṭicca-samuppāda*, specifically to ignorance of the Four Noble Truths, or the nature of reality (the Three Characteristics or the **principle** of Dependent Origination)

avijjā-taṇhā-upādāna: ignorance-craving-clinging; a phrase commonly used to convey the total spectrum, or the main types, of defilements.

avijjānusaya: latent ignorance; ignorance acted upon and built into a habit or character trait (See anusaya)

avijjāsava: the *outflow* of ignorance; one of four *outflows* (See *āsava*)

āyatana: sense bases; often distinguished as internal (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind) and external (sight, sound, smell, flavour, bodily sensation and mental objects)

bhava: *becoming*, state of existence, precondition for birth;

bhavāsava: the outflow of desire for states of becoming (See *āsava*)

bhavataṇhā: craving for being, craving for states of becoming. (See *taṇhā*)

bhikkhu: a Buddhist monk

bījanīyāma: the natural law of cause and effect pertaining to heredity, or biological laws; one of five *niyāma*, or natural laws, specified in the commentaries

brahmacariya: the *Higher Life*, the Holy Life, the Divine Life: the life of celibacy and religious training

Brahmin: one of the four castes in ancient (and modern) India; in the time of the Buddha the term was also used to denote a religious man, one who was worthy of respect

cetanā: *intention*, choice, volition

cittaniyāma: the natural law of cause and effect pertaining to the workings of the mind, psychic laws; one of five *niyāma*, or natural laws, specified in the commentaries

clinging: See *upādāna*

Commentaries: See *Aṭṭhakathā*

craving: See *taṇhā*

D

Dhamma: truth, (the Buddha's) teaching, ethic, any phenomenon (this one word has the widest meaning of all in the Pali language)

dhammanīyāma: the universal natural law of cause and effect.

diṭṭhupādāna: clinging to views and opinions, one of four bases of clinging (See *upādāna*)

diṭṭhāsava: the outflow of (attachment to or delusion in) views (See *āsava*)

diṭṭhi: views, beliefs, preferences, ideals; can be good or bad, right or wrong, but the term used on its own usually connotes views which are clung to, and are thus bad or wrong

domanassa: *grief*

dukkha: suffering, unsatisfactoriness, stress, conflict, imperfection. In this book we have opted for the traditional translation, 'suffering', which, although irksome to some, when compared to the definitions and examples of the texts, is nevertheless **appropriate**. It must be **borne** in mind, however, that the word denotes not only a feeling, but a condition in nature. The definitions given on pages 13 and 14 are probably the most comprehensive and accurate that could be found.

I

idappaccayata: 'when there is this, then there is **that**': the **law of conditionality**,

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or cause and effect

jarāmaraṇa: *aging* (or old age) *and death*

jāti: *birth:* both this term and the one above have more subtle meanings in the one mind-moment interpretation of the Dependent Origination cycle, *jāti* meaning the arising of the sense of self, or identity, and *jarāmaraṇa* meaning the loss, separation from, and dissolution of, that identity.

jhana: absorptions, advanced states of meditation practice in which the mind is totally absorbed in its object of concentration

kamma: volitional action

kammaniyyāma: the law of cause and effect as it relates to **personal** behaviour. For a comprehensive treatment of this subject, see '*Good, Evil and Beyond ... Kamma in the Buddha's Teaching*' by the author.

kammavaṭṭa: the kamma-section of the cycle of rebirth (See *vaṭṭa*)

kammabhava: actions which condition rebirth; pattern of behaviour, actions which condition life states or situations.

kāmupādāna: clinging to the sense world, or sights, sounds, tastes, smells and bodily sensations (See *upādāna*)

kāmāsava: the outflow of sensual desire (See *āsava*)

kāmatanḥā: sensual craving (See *tanḥā*)

khandhas: groups or aggregates: five *khandhas* make up the sum total of existence: ¹⁾ (material) form, ²⁾ feeling, ³⁾ perception, ⁴⁾ volitional impulses, and ⁵⁾ consciousness.

kilesa: *defilements*, mental impurities, contaminants; the Pali word connotes a staining agent, and thus might be more accurately rendered as 'spoilants' or even 'dust', but in this book the commonly accepted translation has been used.

lokiya: *mundane*, not transcendent

lokuttara: *transcendent*, beyond defilements and attachment

M

mamaṅkāra: the notion of 'mine', selfish attachment (See also *ahaṅkāra*)

muntī: a 'silent one', a sage

N

nāmarūpa: *mind and body*, mind and matter, name and form; 'name' referring

to that which has no form, abstract or mental conditions. In the context of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, all the definitions seem to treat *nāmarūpa* basically as body and mind.

nāmadhamma: mental properties or phenomena

Nibbāna: the unconditioned, the state of liberation, the extinction of the fires of greed, hatred and delusion.

nirodha: cessation (See Appendix I, A problem with the word 'nirodha')

Noble Eight-fold Path: the systematized methods of Buddhist practice, consisting of Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.

Noble Ones: See ariya.

Noble Truths, Four: See ariya.

P

Pali Canon: the Theravada Buddhist Scriptures. See *Tiṭṭaka*

Paṭiccasamuppāda: the principle of Dependent Origination

paṭighānusaya: latent tendency to aversion; aversion acted upon and built into a habit or character trait (See anusaya)

paccayākāra: inter-dependence

paññā: wisdom

parideva: lamentation

paṭisandhi viññāṇa: *re-linking consciousness*, the consciousness which links the last one in one life to the first one in another

phassa: sense contact

puthujjana: **the** unenlightened being, an unenlightened person, a *worldling*, one with defilements

rāgānusaya: latent *rāga*, or lust; lust acted upon until it has become a habit or character trait (See anusaya)

riipa: *form* or materiality, one of the five *khandhas*, or groups of conditions, both mental and physical, which make up existence

riipadhamma: **physical** properties or phenomena

sakadāgamī: *once-returner*, one who has attained the second level of transcendent insight, destroying the first three fetters and mitigating the next two (sensual desire and aversion)

saḷāyatana: the six sense bases

samaṇa: a recluse or mendicant, one who has left the home life to pursue the Higher Life (*brahmacariya*).

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sammādiṭṭhi: Right View, the first factor of the Noble Eight-fold Path.

saṃsāra: lit., wandering, the wandering through rebirth, the world of delusion

saṃsāravatṭa: the cycle of wandering, the round of rebirth

saṅkhara: volitional impulses, mental **formations**; and also, conditioned things, compounded things. Broadly speaking, the word refers to all that is conditioned, or all that conditions; in the context of the **principle** of Dependent Origination and the five khandhas, it refers to the conditioners of the mind, specifically intention, in which case it is defined as 'volitional impulses'; in the context of the Three Characteristics, its meaning includes all compounded things, both physical and mental.

sañña: perception, one of the five *khandhas*, or groups of conditions which make up existence

sasatadiṭṭhi: belief in an (eternal) self

sati: mindfulness, recollection

sati-pañña: mindfulness and wisdom

sati-sampajañña: mindfulness or recollection and clear comprehension or awareness.

sekha: lit., learner, initiate: one who has attained any of the three lower levels of transcendent insight (*soṭāpanna*, *sakadāgāmī*, *anāgāmī*), but, not having reached the highest **stage**, **still** has some learning to do. Those who have not yet attained transcendent insight are not yet called *sekha*, because, lacking true insight into the Path, their learning is not yet assured.

sīlabbatupādāna: clinging to rules and practices, one of the four bases of clinging. (See *upādāna*)

sīlabbataparāmāsa: mistreatment, abuse or overestimation of rules and practices

soka: sorrow

soṭāpanna: stream *enterer*, one who has attained the first level of transcendent insight, having destroyed three of the fetters (belief in a self, doubt, attachment to **rules** and practices) and is assured of full enlightenment in no more than seven lifetimes, if not before

sukha: happiness, pleasant feeling

suffering: See *dukkha*

Sutta: a discourse, the name given to the teachings occurring in the Sutta *Piṭaka* of the Pali Canon (See *Tipiṭaka*)

T

taṇhā: craving, wanting, desire: the Pali word literally includes all kinds of wanting which are directed or influenced by delusion, from the mildest (taking one more mouthful of a delicious meal even though one has already eaten sufficiently, an action which might be unconscious) to the most intense

(wanting to murder, rape, steal etc.). The English word used here, 'craving', is not entirely appropriate, because it **seems** to imply more intense **forms** of wanting, but it was opted for in preference to the word 'wanting' to convey the sense of a specific condition which should be recognized. It should be understood as entailing all unskilful modes of wanting.

taṇhā-upādāna: craving and clinging; an oft-used grouping of two important defilements which work closely together. (See also *avijjā-taṇhā-upādāna*)

Tathagata: the 'Thus Gone One', a term used by the Buddha to refer to himself
 tilakkhaga: the Three Characteristics of existence: impermanence, suffering and not-self.

Tipiṭaka: 'Three Baskets', the Buddhist Pali Canon, consisting of Vinaya, the rules of Discipline for monks and nuns, Sutta, teachings of the Buddha, and Abhidhamma, systematic analyses of the teachings.

ucchedadiṭṭhi: the annihilationist view: usually coupled with *sassatadiṭṭhi*, the eternalist view, because it is still based on attachment to self (the idea that there is a self which is going to be destroyed or denied).

upādāna: clinging, attachment, grasping, of which there are four types: to sensuality, to views, to self and to practices

upekkha: 1. equanimity; 2. indifferent feeling

upapattibhava: state of rebirth (referring to a physical realm or situation)

upayasa: *despair*

utuniyāma: the natural law of cause and effect pertaining to the physical world, or physical laws; one of five *niyāma*, or natural laws, specified in the commentaries.

V

vaṭṭa: cycle

vedana: feeling, one of the five *khandhas*, or groups of conditions which make up existence: not to be confused with emotion, but referring to the 'appreciation' of sense data as pleasant, unpleasant or indifferent

Vinaya: discipline; one of the three books of the *Tipiṭaka* dealing with the monks' and nuns' rules of discipline

viññāṇa: consciousness

vibhavataṇhā: craving for annihilation, craving to be rid of unpleasant situations.

vipaka: results of *kamma*

vipākavaṭṭa: the kamma-resultant section of the cycle of rebirth

Y

yoniso-manasikāra: *intelligent reflection, wise consideration, careful consideration*

NOTES AND REFERENCES

Chapter One

1. S.II. 25
2. M.I. 191
3. S.II. 79
4. S.II 15, 45, 129
5. S.II 92
6. Vin.I.4; M.I. 167
7. S.II 28, 65
8. Vin.I. 1-3; S.II. 1, 65
9. S.II 73
10. S.II 78
11. M.I. 55
12. See S.II. 5-11, 81
13. **As** in S.II.52
14. **As** in M.I. 266
15. **As** in S.II. 77

Chapter Two

1. As in S.II. 73

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2. Abhidhammabhājan~y of the **Paccayākāra-vibhaṅga**: Vbh. 138ff.
3. See Visuddhimagga Vism. 517-586; **Vbh.A.** 130-213 (**approx.**) (pp. 199-213 [approx.] describe the one-mind-moment process).
4. D.III. 216; S.IV. 259; S.V. 56
5. Vism. 499; **Vbh.A.** 93

Chapter Three

1. S.IV. 207-210

Chapter Four

1. See **Paccayākāra-vibhaṅga**, Vbh. 135ff.; Vism. 517-586; **Vbh.A.** 130-213; Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha, Chapter 8.
2. For a reference to the descriptions given below, see S.II.2-4; Vbh. 135; For commentary, see Vism. 517-586; **Vbh.A.** 130-213
3. Pubbanta – aparanta – **pubbantāparanta** (the past, the future, both the past and future)
4. Phassa is the contact between sense organ, sense object and consciousness
5. **Vedanā** can also be classified as three kind — pleasant, unpleasant and neither pleasant nor unpleasant; or as five **kinds**—**pleasant** bodily feeling, unpleasant bodily feeling, pleasant mental feeling, unpleasant mental feeling, and neutral or indifferent feeling.
6. Craving can also be classified as of three kinds: sensual craving, craving for being and craving for annihilation. When these three are multiplied by the six sense doors, there are eighteen kinds; when again multiplied by two (internal and external), there are thirty six; when this is **again** multiplied by three (past, present and future), there are altogether 108 kinds of craving: A.II.212
Vbh. 145, 159, 191 This latter interpretation is used to explain the Dependent Origination cycle in one mind moment
8. Ditto
9. Vism. 576
10. Vism. 577
11. Vism. 529
12. M.I. 54
13. The three **vaṭṭa** are from the Commentaries. They explain the principle of Dependent Origination in a very simplified form: when there is kilesa,

such as a desire to obtain something, it is followed by kamma, action to obtain it, and **vipāka**, the **pleasant** feeling that results. This pleasant feeling is in turn a cause for more kilesa, such as the desire to experience more of it, and so on. Alternatively, with kilesa there is effort, kamma, and the desired object is not obtained. The result, **vipāka**, is **unpleasant** feeling, which causes the arising of more kilesa, this time aversion, which in turn generates more actions, kamma, leading to a different kind of **vipāka**, and so on.

14. A.V. 113; Vism. 525; According to this Sutta, ignorance is nurtured by the five hindrances.
15. A.V. 116; Vism. 525; Craving for being is said to be nurtured by ignorance.
16. S.II. 23

Chapter Five

1. M.II. 31
2. S.IV. 327
3. S.IV. 230
4. S.II. 65
5. The term upapattibhava comes from the Abhidhamma. In the later Suttas, the term used is pafisandhipunabbhava (See Nd² 569)
6. S.II. 114
7. Scholars are divided over interpretations of these two terms, bhavatanha and vibhavatanha. Two or three groups of definitions of the terms are given in the Scriptures and Commentaries (Vibh. 365; Vism. 567). Some scholars compare bhavatanha with Freud's life instinct or life wish, and vibhavatanha to the death instinct or death wish. (See M. O'c. Walshe, *Buddhism for Today*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1962, pp. 37-40) A particularly lucid definition occurs in the Itivuttaka (It. 43-44).

Chapter Six

1. Asava: three outflows, **kāmāsava**, **bhavāsava**, **avijjāsava**, are given in D.II.81; S.IV. 256; etc. Four outflows, **kāmāsava**, **bhavāsava**, **diṭṭhāsava** and **avijjāsava**, are given in the Abhidhamma, See Vbh. 373. In M.A.I. 56 it is said that **diṭṭhāsava**, views, can be included within **bhavāsava**, becoming, because desire for being and attachment to **jhāna** states are

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linked with either the eternalist or annihilationist view. For a general explanation, see Nd.² 274; D.A.III 989 (approx.); Vin. Tikā (Thai edition) 1/476 (unpublished in Romanized Pali).

2. Phra Ariyanandamuni, *Luk Phra Buddhasāsanā* (Suvijahn, 1956), p. 60.
3. The four bases of clinging occur in D.III.230; Vbh. 375, etc. *Attavādupādāna*, clinging to self, is essentially clinging to one or another of the five *khandhas*, as is said in the Scriptures, "The unenlightened being perceives that form (body) is self, or that self has form, or that form is within self, or that self is within form. He perceives that feeling ... perception ... volitional impulses ... consciousness is the self, or that self has consciousness, or that consciousness is within the self or that self is within consciousness."
4. A.II. 145

Chapter Seven

1. D.II. 55-71
2. D.II. 58; These nine conditions occur elsewhere under the title of the nine conditions rooted in craving (*taṇhāmūlakadhamma*), such as in D.III. 289; A.IV. 400; Vbh. 390
3. D.III. 289; Ps.I. 187; The word 'elements' (*dhātu*) here refers to the eighteen elements: six internal sense bases (sense organs), six external sense bases (sense objects) and six consciousnesses.
4. S.II. 140-149
5. D.III. 80-98
6. D.III. 58-79
7. Sn. 594-656

Chapter Eight

1. S.II. 16-17, 76; III. 134
2. S.II. 77
3. S.II. 19
4. S.II. 22
5. S.II.39; For further study, see D.I. 53; S.I. 134; D.III. 137
6. S.II. 75
7. S.II. 61
8. S.II. 13
9. S.II. 64

10. S.II. 26
- 11 S.IV. 395: The reasons that the Buddha refused to answer questions dealing with **metaphysics** are many. Most importantly, such questions are based on wrong assumptions, such as the concept of self. They do not correlate with reality. As the Buddha would say, "You have asked the question wrongly." Another reason for his silence is that the truths these questions seek to answer are not accessible to the logical mind and cannot be answered in words. It is like trying to look at a picture with one's ears—a waste of time. Another reason is that, being inaccessible to rational thinking, debating these questions would yield no practical results. The Buddha's main interest was in giving teachings which would yield results on a **practical** basis, and so he swept aside the questions of metaphysics and instead guided the questioner to more **practical concerns**. If the question was one which could be **answered** by personal experience, the Buddha would explain how the questioner could experience it personally rather than prolonging the conjecture or debate, like the blind men groping the elephant. Lastly, the Buddha was born at a time when these questions were the subject of intense interest, and teachers and philosophers were debating them heatedly all over the country. Whenever people approached religious teachers or philosophers, they would tend to ask these questions. Such questions had become so much of an obsession that **people** had gotten out of touch with **practical** reality, and so the Buddha would remain silent when presented with them. His silence was not only a check on such discussion, but also a powerful jolt to the listener to take heed of what the **Buddha** did have to teach. For references to these reasons for not answering, see M.I. 426,484; S.II. 222-3; S.IV. 375; A.IV. 68; A.V. 193

Chapter Nine

1. The phrase **majjhena-dhammadesanā**, or Middle Teaching, comes from the Pali sentence "majjhenadhammamdeseti," which occurs frequently throughout the **Nidānavagga** of the **Samyuttanikāya**, from S.II. 17 to S.II. 77
2. S.II. 106
3. S.II. 4
4. S.V. 18
5. See S.A.II. 14
6. S. 11.31
7. Nanamoli, *The Guide*, Pali Text Society, 1962, p. 97

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7. A.V. 311. In A.V. 1, the same passage occurs, except that it puts *nibbidā* and *virāga* together as one. Compare also A.III. 19.
8. D.III. 288

Appendix I

1. Vbh.A. 1 (Approx.)
2. Vism. 522; identical to Vbh.A. 130 (Approx.)
3. Vbh.A. 199 (Approx.)
4. Vbh.A. 200 (Approx.)
5. Vbh.A. 208 (Approx.)
6. Suttantabhājanīya Vbh. 135-138; Abhidhammabhājanīya Vbh. 138-191
7. Suttantabhājanīya Vbh.A. 130-198 (Approx.); Abhidhammabhājanīya Vbh.A. 199-213 (Approx.)
8. M.III.246; See also M.III.225; S.III.228; S.IV. 14; (old age = degeneration or loss); Thag. 247.
9. S.IV. 214

A.	=	<i>Anguttara-nikāya</i>
D.	-	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>
D.A.	=	<i>Dīgha-nikāya Aṭṭhakathā</i>
It.	-	<i>Itivuttaka</i>
J.	-	<i>Jātaka</i>
M.	=	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
M.A.	=	<i>Majjhima-nikāya Aṭṭhakathā</i>
Nd ¹	=	(<i>Mahā-</i>) <i>Niddesa</i>
Nd ²	=	(<i>Cūḷa-</i>) <i>Niddesa</i>
S.	-	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
S.A.	=	<i>Samyutta-nikāya Aṭṭhakathā</i>
Sn.	=	<i>Suttanipāta</i>
Thag.	=	<i>Theragathā</i>
Ud.	=	<i>Udāna</i>
Vbh.	=	<i>Vibhaṅga</i>
Vbh.A.	=	<i>Vibhaṅga Aṭṭhakathā</i>
Vin.	=	<i>Vinaya Piṭaka</i>
Vin. <i>Ṭīkā</i> .	=	<i>Vinaya Piṭaka Ṭīkā</i>
Vism.	=	<i>Visuddhimagga</i>

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"All facets of the natural order—the physical world and the human world, the-world of conditions (dhamma) and the world of actions (kamma), the material world and the mental world—are connected and interrelated, they cannot be separated. Disorder and aberration in one sector will affect other sectors. If we want to live in peace, we must learn how to live in harmony with all spheres of the natural environment, both the internal and the external ... This is why, of all the systems of causal relationship ... the teachings of Buddhism begin with, and stress throughout, the factors involved in the creation of suffering in individual awareness—"because there is ignorance, there are volitional formations." Once this system of causal relationship is understood ... we are then in a position to see the connections between these inner factors and the causal relationships in society and the natural environment."

—From *the Introduction*



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