

Buddhist Intellectual Collective India

Navayana Series



# **DIALOGUES ON PATICCA-SAM-UPPĀDA**

THE NAVAYANA (NEW VEHICLE) APPROACH

**bodhi s.r**  
**anuradha bele**



Dialogues on  
**paticca-sam-uppāda**  
The *Navayāna* (New Vehicle) Approach

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paticca-sam-uppāda  
The Navayāna (New Vehicle) Approach**

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# Navayāna Series

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## Series Editor

Santosh I. Raut (Maitriveer Nagarjuna), Postdoctoral Fellow, Harvard Divinity School, Harvard University, USA.

## *Series Preface*

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This book series, brought out by the Buddhist Intellectual Collective India (BICI), is envisaged to bring to academics and lay readers the teachings of the Buddha from an Ambedkarite perspective. They are written concisely to allow for easy reading of the book and also in ways that makes the text contemporary, and thereby relevant and meaningful to our times. While the thrust is academic, the books are also meant for the general reader. The series has many titles. While some have already been published, others are in the process of production. Each of the titles engages with different subject domains in Buddhism, such as *Buddhism- The Basics*, *Kamma and Rebirth*, *The Dhamma*, *Babasaheb Ambedkar, the Six Historical Buddhist Councils* and many more.

Buddhism has had a turbulent past. Born in a context characterized by great degree of ethnic diversity, it travelled across the world. As a philosophy and a practice, it had spread to every nook and corner of the Indian sub-continent. Ironically though, it experienced a disintegration and a near complete erasure in the lands of its origin. The search for answers concerning this historical erasure persist till today among many historians, and especially among

Ambedkarite theoreticians.

This difficult past of Buddhism has always troubled the followers of the Buddha. One, among many who took this question to heart, more as a truth-seeking endeavour rather than a mere academic exercise was Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. In a series of books and articles that he wrote, spanning over 20 years, he delved deep into the historical past and began unravelling intricate details that brought to light events that led to the banishment of Buddhism from the land of its birth. Attempts to reconstruct the history of Buddhism is ongoing and is also very much part of this book series by the Buddhist Intellectual Collective India.

However, this book, written by Dr. bodhi s.r. and Dr. Anuradha Bele, both Ambedkarite Buddhists, moves away from the historical deconstruction of Buddhism, and instead attempts a serious theoretical engagement with a fundamental concept in Buddhism, a theory so profound that the Buddha himself asserted as being the most foundational among his many other interconnected propositions. This theory, also accepted as a law among Buddhists, is called the *paticca-sam-uppāda*, a.k.a. the law of Dependent Origination.

The authors begin their inquiry by laying the context

and frame of their investigation, seeking to know (i) What is the context in which an interest has arisen among Ambedkarites about the law of dependent origination? (ii) What do the suttas of the Buddha say about this law? (iii) What have other thought leaders walking the path of the Buddha in India said about this law? (iv) and finally, what should Ambedkarites walking the Navayāna path take away in terms of understanding, and also bringing their practice in consonance with this law? This book is a journey of the two authors as they seek to engage with these questions.

Part of the vision of the Buddhist Intellectual Collective India is to attempt to engage more deeply, and to produce contextualized knowledge based on the teachings of Siddhatta Gotama and Babasaheb Ambedkar. The focus of the Navayāna Buddhism series thus cuts across the different knowledge domains of Buddhist ontology, epistemology, axiology, logic and Buddhist history.

Books in the series, are envisioned to provide readers a glimpse of different knowledge domains within Buddhism. The central aim of the book series is to inform, and engage followers of Babasaheb Ambedkar and Buddhism with contemporary debates concerning diverse aspects of their vision and

mission. For this specific book, as Series Editor, I acknowledge the commitment and insights of my colleagues Dr. bodhi s.r. and Dr. Anuradha Bele. Their deep interest on the subject has borne fruits in the form of this book. I also take this opportunity to thank Natraj Gangadharan, for the cover picture, painted during the Buddhist Aesthetics Workshop in NTI Nagpur, and to my dear friend Subodh N.W. who took charge of the production and publishing process at New Vehicle Publications. I also thank all others who have contributed to this book for their enthusiasm and continued support to the endeavour of the Buddhist Intellectual Collective India.

**Santosh I. Raut**

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# *Chapter 1*

## **LAYING THE CONTEXT AND FRAME**

Many members of the Buddhist community in India have often asked us: What is *paticca-sam-uppāda* (dependent origination)? Why is it central to understanding the Buddha Dhamma? How should one study this profound teaching in order to gain a deeper understanding of reality, existence, and truth from a Buddhist perspective?

Within the Buddhist Intellectual Collective India, whose members trace their lineage from Siddhattha Gotama through Babasaheb Ambedkar, discussions on *paticca-sam-uppāda* have taken many forms. Interpretations often differ, particularly when they are based on textual traditions. Such diversity reflects India's multilingual and multicultural context, as well as the varied intellectual traditions represented by Buddhist scholars and thinkers across the country. Among them are Lakshmi Narasu from Tamil Nadu, Bhadanta Ananda Kausalyayan from Punjab, Rahul Sankrityayan from Uttar Pradesh, Raja Dhale from Maharashtra, S. N. Goenka, who reintroduced the

Burmese meditation tradition to India, and the contemporary Buddhist thinker and theorist Santosh Raut (Maitriveer Nagarjuna) from Maharashtra. Each has contributed, in distinctive ways, to the understanding and interpretation of the Buddha Dhamma in the Indian context.

Over the years, as we have travelled across India delivering talks and engaging with Buddhist communities, we have encountered many sincere questions from practitioners and students eager to understand dependent origination more deeply. They ask: What is dependent origination, and why is it important today? What is its essential meaning, and how does it relate to the Buddha's teaching as a whole? What are the principles that constitute *paticca-sam-uppāda*? How should it be understood in relation to modern science? In what ways does it shape our understanding of reality, *dukkha*, and the human condition? Can it help us understand oppression and injustice, and does it offer a framework for addressing social problems? What practical relevance does it have in everyday life, and how can it be understood through ordinary human experience? What is its relationship to *kamma* and rebirth? Does wealth or power necessarily indicate good *kamma*, and if not, how should we understand the actions of those who

use power to harm others? What role does human agency play within dependent origination? How does this teaching compare with philosophical traditions such as consequentialism and existentialism? Can it help people discover meaning and purpose in life regardless of their personal beliefs? Does it provide an answer to existential suffering? Finally, is *paticca-sam-uppāda* best understood as a theory, a principle, a law, or a practice? If it is a practice, how does one cultivate and deepen it? These questions have emerged repeatedly throughout our years of engagement with Buddhism, particularly among practitioners of the *Navayāna* tradition. This book is our attempt to engage seriously with these questions by approaching *paticca-sam-uppāda* from multiple perspectives.

In Chapter Two, we return to the Buddha's own words as preserved in the suttas, allowing the original teachings to serve as the foundation for our inquiry. Chapter Three brings together the reflections of contemporary Buddhist scholars and thinkers, with particular emphasis on the Indian intellectual tradition. Chapter Four presents our own reflections, developed through years of dialogue, study, and collective inquiry within the Buddhist Intellectual Collective India. Finally, Chapter Five contains two

appendices that complement the main discussion. Appendix One presents an excerpt from a talk by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu on *paticca-sam-uppāda*, while Appendix Two includes a transcript of a lecture on the same subject by Dr. M. Punnañi Mahathera.

Although this book does not claim to provide the final word on dependent origination, it is offered as a sincere contribution to an ongoing dialogue. We hope it will encourage readers to engage more deeply with one of the Buddha's most profound teachings and inspire further study, reflection, and practice.

Before concluding, we wish to address an important issue: the concept of *Navayāna*. We are aware that this term has generated considerable discussion and, at times, misunderstanding. We therefore believe it is important to clarify how we use the term throughout this book, both as a concept and as the living tradition it represents.

From our perspective, *Navayāna* as a concept signifies a wholehearted commitment to the fundamental teachings of the Buddha. As a tradition, it represents a perspective and a mode of practice that has emerged organically from the social and historical realities of India, as interpreted, articulated, and re-envisioned by Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Within the Buddhist Intellectual Collective India, our engagement with *Navayāna* is rooted in Babasaheb Ambedkar's understanding of the Buddha's original teachings. On the eve of 14 October 1956, when he embraced the Buddha Dhamma through *Dhamma Dīkkhā* in Nagpur, Babasaheb used the term *Navayāna* to describe his understanding of Buddhism as a path of liberation and human emancipation for the oppressed people of India. It has also been argued that his use of the term distinguished his interpretation of the Buddha's teachings from the historically developed schools and traditions of Buddhism that had evolved in different geographical and cultural contexts.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that Babasaheb's engagement with the idea of *Navayāna* did not begin in 1956. Evidence suggests that he had encountered the concept much earlier. In 1948, while preparing the third edition of Lakshmi Narasu's *The Essence of Buddhism*, for which he wrote the preface, it is difficult to imagine that he overlooked Narasu's own observation:

"The crucial question for the Buddhist is not whether he shall be Mahayanik or Hinayanik, but whether Buddhism can come to terms with modern civilization which is animated, not by

ideals from antiquity, but by the awakening spirit of modern science." -Lakshmi Narasu, *The Essence of Buddhism*, Preface, p. xii

It is also likely that Babasaheb was familiar with J. E. Ellam's *Navayāna Buddhism and Modern Thought*, published in London in 1930. Ellam served as Secretary of the Buddhist Society and represented the Mahabodhi Society of India, Ceylon, and Burma in England. Significantly, a copy of this work was added to the library of Siddharth College on 12 November 1949, shortly after Babasaheb had written the preface to Narasu's book. In the introduction to his work, Ellam wrote:

"Indeed, there has arisen a new school of Buddhism, already described as the Navayāna, or 'New Vehicle,' which welcomes science, and looks to it, with confidence, as providing further evidence in support of Buddhism." -J. E. Ellam, *Navayāna Buddhism and Modern Thought*, Introduction, p. 17

These historical references suggest that Babasaheb was familiar with the category *Navayāna* and with the intellectual tradition associated with it well before he publicly adopted the term in 1956. When he eventually employed it to describe his own understanding of Buddhism, he appears to have done

so consciously, giving it a distinctive meaning grounded in his vision of a Buddhism that embraces scientific inquiry while responding directly to the social realities and moral challenges of the modern world.

For the sake of historical completeness, it should also be noted that the term *Navayāna* appeared in earlier Buddhist writings. It was used by Har Dayal in the late 1920s and later by Ernest Hunt in publications associated with the International Buddhist Institute of Hawaii, headquartered at the Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Honolulu. Although these usages differed in context and emphasis, they indicate that the term had already entered Buddhist intellectual discourse before Babasaheb Ambedkar adopted it.

Notwithstanding this broader intellectual history, our understanding of *Navayāna* is grounded fundamentally in Babasaheb Ambedkar's historical and philosophical interpretation of Buddhism, most fully expressed in his seminal work, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*. We regard this text as a unique and deeply significant contribution to Buddhist thought. More than twenty-five centuries after Siddhattha Gotama, Babasaheb offered a systematic, contextually grounded, and socially engaged interpretation of the Buddha Dhamma that speaks directly to the realities of

modern India.

For us, Babasaheb Ambedkar stands in the lineage of the *Tathāgatas*—an awakened and wise teacher who faithfully walked in the footsteps of the Buddha while illuminating the Dhamma for a new historical age. His interpretation of Buddhism continues to provide both intellectual guidance and practical direction for those seeking wisdom, justice, and human liberation.

Finally, we express our sincere gratitude to the Buddhist Intellectual Collective India for entrusting us with the responsibility of bringing together the available literature on the challenging subject of *paticca-sam-uppāda* and presenting our own reflections alongside it. We are equally indebted to the series editor and to all members of the Collective whose years of dialogue, discussion, and shared inquiry within the *Sanḅha* have enriched our understanding of this profound and foundational teaching. We hope that this volume will contribute, in however modest a way, to the continuing study, practice, and appreciation of the Buddha Dhamma.

Namo Buddhay ! Jai Bhim !

**bodhi s.r. and Anuradha Bele**

## *Chapter Two*

### **THE SUTTAS: THE WORDS OF THE BUDDHA**

In this chapter, we bring together five key suttas—the recorded words of the Buddha—that are directly related to *paticca-sam-uppāda*. While many suttas deal with this subject, we have selected these five because they provide the clearest understanding of the complex theory of *paticca-sam-uppāda*, reflecting the way the Buddha himself experienced, understood, and taught it.

It is important to note that these suttas are widely accepted as records of the oral teachings of Siddhattha Gotama and are indispensable for anyone seeking a serious understanding of his teachings and insights.

## SUTTA ONE

### Dependent origination translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi<sup>1</sup>

Thus! have I heard. On one occasion the Buddha was dwelling at Savatthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anathapindika’s Park. There the Buddha addressed the bhikkhus thus: “Bhikkhus!”

“Venerable master!” those bhikkhus replied. The Buddha said this:

“Bhikkhus, I will teach you the *paticca-samuppāda*. Listen to that and attend closely, I will speak.”— “Yes, venerable master,” those bhikkhus replied. The Buddha said this:

“And what, bhikkhus, is the *paticca-samuppāda*? With *avijjā* as condition, *saṅkhāra* come to be; with *saṅkhāra* as condition, *viññāna*; with *viññāna* as condition, *nāma - rūpa*; with *nāma - rūpa* as condition, *salāyatana*; with *salāyatana* as condition, *phassa*; with *phassa* as condition, *vedanā*; with *vedanā* as condition, *tanhā*; with *tanhā* as condition, *upādāna*; with *upādāna* as condition, *bhava*; with *bhava* as condition, *jāti*; with *jāti* as

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<https://suttacentral.net/sn12.1/en/bodhi?lang=en&reference=none&highlight=false>

condition, *jarā-maraṇa*, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of *dukkha*. This, bhikkhus, is called the *paṭicca-samuppāda*.

“But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of *avijjā* comes cessation of *saṅkhāras*; with the cessation of *saṅkhāras*, cessation of *viññāna*; with the cessation of *viññāna*, cessation of *nāma-rūpa*; with the cessation of *nāma-rūpa*, cessation of the *salāyatana*; with the cessation of the *salāyatana*, cessation of *phassa*; with the cessation of *phassa*, cessation of *vedanā*; with the cessation of *vedanā*, cessation of *tanhā*; with the cessation of *tanhā*, cessation of *upādāna*; with the cessation of *upādāna*, cessation of *bhava*; with the cessation of *bhava*, cessation of *jāti*; with the cessation of *jāti*, *jarā-maraṇa*, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of *dukkha*.”

This is what the Buddha said. Elated, those *bhikkhus* delighted in the Buddha’s statement.

## SUTTA TWO

### SN12:20 Connected Discourse on Causation

translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi<sup>2</sup>

At Savatthī. “Bhikkhus, I will teach you the *paticca-samuppāda* and dependently arisen phenomena. Listen and attend closely, I will speak.”

“Yes, venerable master,” those bhikkhus replied. The buddha said this:

“And what, bhikkhus, is *paticca-samuppāda*? ‘With *jāti* as condition, *jarā-maraṇa* comes to be’: whether there is an arising of Tathāgatas or no arising of Tathāgatas, that element still persists, the stableness of the Dhamma, the fixed course of the Dhamma, **specific conditionality**. A Tathāgata awakens to this and breaks through to it. Having done so, he/she explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, discloses it, analyses it, elucidates it. And he/she says: ‘See! With *jāti* as condition, bhikkhus, *jarā-maraṇa*.’

‘With *bhava* as condition, *jāti*’ ... ‘With *upādāna* as condition, *bhava* existence’ ... ‘With *tanhā* as

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2

<https://suttacentral.net/sn12.20/en/bodhi?lang=en&reference=none&highlight=false>

condition, *upādāna*’ ... ‘With *vedanā* as condition, *tanhā*’ ... ‘With *phassa* as condition, *vedanā*’ ... ‘With *salāyatana* as condition, *phassa*’ ... ‘With *nāma-rūpa* as condition, *salāyatana*’ ... ‘With *viññāna* as condition, *nāma-rūpa*’ ... ‘With *saṅkhāra* as condition, *viññāna*’ ... ‘With *avijjā* as condition, *saṅkhāra*’: whether there is an arising of Tathāgatas or no arising of Tathāgatas, that element still persists, the stableness of the Dhamma, the fixed course of the Dhamma, **specific conditionality**. A Tathāgata awakens to this and breaks through to it. Having done so, he/she explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, discloses it, analyses it, elucidates it. And he/she says: ‘See! With *avijjā* as condition, bhikkhus, *saṅkhāra*.’

“Thus, bhikkhus, the actuality in this, the inerrancy, the not other wiseness, **specific conditionality**: this is called *paticca-samuppāda*.

“And what, bhikkhus, are the dependently arisen phenomena? *Jarā-Maraṇa*, bhikkhus, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to destruction, vanishing, fading away, and cessation. *Jāti* is impermanent ... *Bhava* is impermanent ... *Upādāna* is impermanent ... *Tanhā* Craving is impermanent ... *Vedanā* is impermanent ... *Phassa* is impermanent ... *Salāyatana* are impermanent ... *Nāma-Rūpa* is impermanent ... *Viññāna* is impermanent ...

*Saṅkhāra* are impermanent ... *Avijjā* is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to destruction, vanishing, fading away, and cessation. These, bhikkhus, are called the dependently arisen phenomena.

“When, bhikkhus, a noble disciple has clearly seen with correct wisdom as it really is this *paticca-samuppāda* and these dependently arisen phenomena, it is impossible that he/she will run back into the past, thinking: ‘Did I exist in the past? Did I not exist in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what did I become in the past?’ Or that he/she will run forward into the future, thinking: ‘Will I exist in the future? Will I not exist in the future? What will I be in the future? How will I be in the future? Having been what, what will I become in the future?’ Or that he/she will now be inwardly confused about the present thus: ‘Do I exist? Do I not exist? What am I? How am I? This being—where has it come from, and where will it go?’

“For what reason is this impossible? Because, bhikkhus, the noble learner has clearly seen with correct wisdom as it really is this *paticca-samuppāda* and these dependently arisen phenomena.”

## SUTTA THREE

Samyutta Nikaya SN 12<sup>3</sup>

### Paticca-samuppāda-Vibhanga Sutta

Dwelling at Savatthi... "Bhikkhus, I will describe and analyze *paticca-samuppāda* for you.

"And what is *paticca-samuppāda*? From *avijjā* as a requisite condition come *saṅkhāra*. From *saṅkhāra* as a requisite condition comes *viññāna*. From *viññāna* as a requisite condition comes *nāma-rūpa*. From *nāma-rūpa* as a requisite condition come *salāyatana*. From *salāyatana* as a requisite condition comes *phassa*. From *phassa* as a requisite condition comes *vedanā*. From *vedanā* as a requisite condition comes *tanhā*. From *tanhā* as a requisite condition comes *upādāna*. From *upādāna* as a requisite condition comes *bhava*. From *bhava* as a requisite condition comes *jāti*. From *jāti* as a requisite condition, then *jarā-maraṇa*, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair come into play. Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress and *dukkha*.

"Now what is *jarā-maraṇa*? Whatever *jarā*, decrepitude, brokenness, graying, wrinkling, decline of life-force, weakening of the faculties of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called *jarā*. Whatever deceasing, passing away, breaking up, disappearance, dying, death, completion of time, break up of the aggregates, casting off of the body, interruption in the life faculty of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called *maraṇa*.

"And what is *jāti*? Whatever *jāti*, taking birth, descent, coming-to-be, coming-forth, appearance of aggregates, and acquisition of [sense] media of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called *jāti*.

"And what is *bhava*? These three are becomings: sensual *bhava*, *rūpa bhava*, and *arūpa bhava*. This is called *bhava*.

"And what is *upādāna*? These four are *upādāna*: sensuality *upādāna*, view *upādāna*, precept and practice *upādāna*, and doctrine of self *upādāna*. This is called *upādāna*.

"And what is *tanhā*? These six are classes of *tanhā*: *tanhā* for *rūpas* /forms, *tanhā* for sounds, *tanhā* for smells, *tanhā* for tastes, *tanhā* for tactile sensations, *tanhā* for ideas. This is called *tanhā*.

"And what is *vedanā*? These six are classes of *vedanā*: *vedanā* born from eye-*phassa*, *vedanā* born from ear-*phassa*, *vedanā* born from nose-*phassa*, *vedanā* born from tongue-*phassa*, *vedanā* born from body-*phassa*, *vedanā* born from intellect-*phassa*. This is called *vedanā*.

"And what is *phassa*? These six are classes of *phassa*: eye-*phassa*, ear-*phassa*, nose-*phassa*, tongue-*phassa*, body-*phassa*, intellect-*phassa*. This is called *phassa*.

"And what is *salāyatana*? These six are *salāyatana*: the eye-medium, the ear-medium, the nose-medium, the tongue-medium, the body-medium, the intellect-medium. These are called *salāyatana*.

"And what is *nāma-rūpa*? *vedanā*/feeling, *sanna*/perception, intention, *phassa*/contact, and attention: This is called *nāma*. The four great elements, and the *rūpa* dependent on the four great elements: This is called *rūpa*. This *nāma* and this *rūpa* are called *nāma-rūpa*.

"And what is *viññāna*? These six are classes of *viññāna*: eye-*viññāna*, ear-*viññāna*, nose-*viññāna*, tongue-*viññāna*, body-*viññāna*, intellect-*viññāna*. This is called *viññāna*.

"And what are *saṅkhāras*? These three are *saṅkhāras*: bodily *saṅkhāras*, verbal *saṅkhāras*, mental *saṅkhāras*. These are called *saṅkhāras*.

"And what is *avijjā*? Not knowing *dukkha*, not

knowing the origination of *dukkha*, not knowing the cessation of *dukkha*, not knowing the way of practice leading to the cessation of *dukkha*: This is called *avijjā*.

"Now from the remainderless fading and cessation of that very *avijjā* comes the cessation of *saṅkhāras*. From the cessation of *saṅkhāras* comes the cessation of *viññāna*. From the cessation of *viññāna* comes the cessation of *nāma-rūpa*. From the cessation of *nāma-rūpa* comes the cessation of the *salāyatana*. From the cessation of the *salāyatana* comes the cessation of *phassa*. From the cessation of *phassa* comes the cessation of *vedanā*. From the cessation of *vedanā* comes the cessation of *tanhā*. From the cessation of *tanhā* comes the cessation of *upādāna*. From the cessation of *upādāna* comes the cessation of *bhava*. From the cessation of *bhava* comes the cessation of *jāti*. From the cessation of *jāti*, then *jarā-marāṇa*, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair all cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of stress and *dukkha*."

## SUTTA FOUR

### Maha-Nidana Sutta: The Great Causes Discourse<sup>4</sup>

I have heard that on one occasion the buddha was living among the Kurus. Now, the Kurus have a town named *Kammasadhamma*.

There Ven. Ananda approached the buddha and, on arrival, having bowed down to the Buddha, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Buddha: "It's amazing, Master, it's astounding, how deep this *paticca-samuppāda* is, and how deep its appearance, and yet to me it seems as clear as clear can be."

[The Buddha:] "Don't say that, Ananda. Don't say that. Deep is this *paticca-samuppāda*, and deep its appearance. It's because of not understanding and not penetrating this Dhamma that this generation is like a tangled skein, a knotted ball of string, like matted rushes and reeds, and does not go beyond transmigration, beyond the planes of deprivation, woe, and bad destinations.

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4

<https://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.15.0.than.html>

"If one is asked, 'Is there a demonstrable requisite condition for *jarā-maraṇa*?' one should answer, 'There is.'

"If one is asked, 'From what requisite condition do *jarā-maraṇa* come?' one should say, '*Jarā-maraṇa* come from *jāti* as their requisite condition.'

"If one is asked, 'Is there a demonstrable requisite condition for *jāti*?' one should answer, 'There is.'

"If one is asked, 'From what requisite condition does *jāti* come?' one should say, '*Jāti* comes from *bhava* as its requisite condition.'

"If one is asked, 'Is there a demonstrable requisite condition for *bhava*?' one should answer, 'There is.'

"If one is asked, 'From what requisite condition does *bhava* come?' one should say, '*Bhava* comes from *upādāna* as its requisite condition.'

"If one is asked, 'Is there a demonstrable requisite condition for *upādāna*?' one should answer, 'There is.'

"If one is asked, 'From what requisite condition does *upādāna* come?' one should say, '*Upādāna* comes from *tanhā* as its requisite condition.'

"If one is asked, 'Is there a demonstrable requisite condition for *tanhā*?' one should answer, 'There is.'

"If one is asked, 'From what requisite condition does

*tanhā* come?' one should say, '*Tanhā* comes from *vedanā* as its requisite condition.'

"If one is asked, 'Is there a demonstrable requisite condition for *vedanā*?' one should answer, 'There is.'

"If one is asked, 'From what requisite condition does *vedanā* come?' one should say, '*Vedanā* comes from *phassa* as its requisite condition.'

"If one is asked, 'Is there a demonstrable requisite condition for *phassa*?' one should answer, 'There is.'

"If one is asked, 'From what requisite condition does *phassa* come?' one should say, '*Phassa* comes from *salāyatana* as its requisite condition.'

"If one is asked, 'Is there a demonstrable requisite condition for *salāyatana*?' one should answer, 'There is.'

"If one is asked, 'From what requisite condition does *salāyatana* come?' one should say, '*Salāyatana* comes from *nāma-rūpa* as its requisite condition.'

"If one is asked, 'Is there a demonstrable requisite condition for *nāma-rūpa*?' one should answer, 'There is.'

"If one is asked, 'From what requisite condition does *nāma-rūpa* come?' one should say, '*Nāma-rūpa* comes from *viññāna* as its requisite condition.'

"If one is asked, 'Is there a demonstrable requisite condition for *viññāna*?' one should answer, 'There is.'

"If one is asked, 'From what requisite condition does *viññāna* come?' one should say, '*viññāna* comes from *saṅkhāra* as its requisite condition.'

"Thus, Ananda, from *saṅkhāra* as a requisite condition comes *viññāna*. From *viññāna* as a requisite condition comes *nāma-rūpa*. From *nāma-rūpa* as a requisite condition comes *salāyatana*. From *salāyatana* as a requisite condition comes *phassa*. From *phassa* as a requisite condition comes *vedanā*. From *vedanā* as a requisite condition comes *tanhā*. From *tanhā* as a requisite condition comes *upādāna*. From *upādāna* as a requisite condition comes *bhava*. From *bhava* as a requisite condition comes *jāti*. From *jāti* as a requisite condition, *jarā-maraṇa*, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair come into play. Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress.

### ***Jarā-Maraṇa***

"From *jāti* as a requisite condition come *jarā-maraṇa*.' Thus, it has been said. And this is the way to understand how from birth as a requisite condition come *jarā-maraṇa*. If there were no *jāti* at all, in any way, of anything anywhere — i.e., of *devas* in the state of *devas*, of celestials in the state of celestials, of spirits

in the state of spirits, of demons in the state of demons, of human beings in the human state, of quadrupeds in the state of quadrupeds, of birds in the state of birds, of snakes in the state of snakes, or of any being in its own state — in the utter absence of *jāti*, from the cessation of *jāti*, would *jarā-maraṇa* be discerned?"

"No, Master."

"Thus, this is a cause, this is a reason, this is an origination, this is a requisite condition for *jarā-maraṇa*, i.e., *jāti*.

### ***Jāti***

"From *bhava* as a requisite condition comes *jāti*.' Thus, it has been said. And this is the way to understand how from *bhava* as a requisite condition comes *jāti*. If there were no *bhava* at all, in any way, of anything anywhere — i.e., sensual becoming, *rūpa* becoming, or *rūpa*-less becoming — in the utter absence of *bhava*, from the cessation of *bhava*, would *jāti* be discerned?"

"No, Master."

"Thus this is a cause, this is a reason, this is an origination, this is a requisite condition for *jāti*, i.e., *bhava*.

## ***Bhava***

"From *upādāna* as a requisite condition comes *bhava*.' Thus, it has been said. And this is the way to understand how from *upādāna* as a requisite condition comes *bhava*. If there were no *upādāna* at all, in any way, of anything anywhere — i.e., *upādāna* to sensuality, *upādāna* to precepts and practices, *upādāna* to views, or *upādāna* to doctrines of the self — in the utter absence of *upādāna*, from the cessation of *upādāna*, would *bhava* be discerned?"

"No, Master."

"Thus, this is a cause, this is a reason, this is an origination, this is a requisite condition for *bhava*, i.e., *upādāna*.

## ***Upādāna***

"From *tanhā* as a requisite condition comes *upādāna*.' Thus, it has been said. And this is the way to understand how from *tanhā* as a requisite condition comes *upādāna*. If there were no *tanhā* at all, in any way, of anything anywhere — i.e., *tanhā* for sensuality, *tanhā* for *bhava*, *tanhā* for no-*bhava* — in the utter absence of *tanhā*, from the cessation of *tanhā*, would *upādāna* be discerned?"

"No, Master."

"Thus, this is a cause, this is a reason, this is an origination, this is a requisite condition for *upādāna*, i.e., *tanhā*.

### ***Tanhā***

"From *vedanā* as a requisite condition comes *tanhā*.' Thus, it has been said. And this is the way to understand how from *vedanā* as a requisite condition comes *tanhā*. If there were no *vedanā* at all, in any way, of anything anywhere — i.e., *vedanā* born of *phassa* at the eye, *vedanā* born of *phassa* at the ear, *vedanā* born of *phassa* at the nose, *vedanā* born of *phassa* at the tongue, *vedanā* born of *phassa* at the body, or *vedanā* born of *phassa* at the intellect — in the utter absence of *vedanā*, from the cessation of *vedanā*, would *tanhā* be discerned?"

"No, Master."

"Thus, this is a cause, this is a reason, this is an origination, this is a requisite condition for *tanhā*, i.e., *vedanā*.

### **Dependent on *Tanhā***

"Now, *tanhā* is dependent on *vedanā*, seeking is dependent on *tanhā*, acquisition is dependent on seeking, ascertainment is dependent on acquisition, desire and passion is dependent on ascertainment, attachment is dependent on desire and passion,

possessiveness is dependent on attachment, stinginess is dependent on possessiveness, defensiveness is dependent on stinginess, and because of defensiveness, dependent on defensiveness, various evil, unskilful phenomena come into play: the taking up of sticks and knives; conflicts, quarrels, and disputes; accusations, divisive speech, and lies.

"And this is the way to understand how it is that because of defensiveness various evil, unskilful phenomena come into play: the taking up of sticks and knives; conflicts, quarrels, and disputes; accusations, divisive speech, and lies. If there were no defensiveness at all, in any way, of anything anywhere, in the utter absence of defensiveness, from the cessation of defensiveness, would various evil, unskilful phenomena — the taking up of sticks and knives; conflicts, quarrels, and disputes; accusations, divisive speech, and lies — come into play?"

"No, Master."

"Thus, this is a cause, this is a reason, this is an origination, this is a requisite condition for the coming-into-play of various evil, unskilful phenomena — the taking up of sticks and knives; conflicts, quarrels, and disputes; accusations, divisive speech, and lies — i.e., defensiveness.

"Defensiveness is dependent on stinginess.' Thus, it has been said. And this is the way to understand how defensiveness is dependent on stinginess. If there were no stinginess at all, in any way, of anything anywhere, in the utter absence of stinginess, from the cessation of stinginess, would defensiveness be discerned?"

"No, Master."

"Thus, this is a cause, this is a reason, this is an origination, this is a requisite condition for defensiveness, i.e., stinginess.

(Similarly, back through the chain of conditions: stinginess, attachment, possessiveness, desire and passion, ascertainment, acquisition, and seeking.)

"Seeking is dependent on *tanhā*.' Thus, it has been said. And this is the way to understand how seeking is dependent on *tanhā*. If there were no *tanhā* at all, in any way, of anything anywhere — i.e., *tanhā* for sensuality, *tanhā* for becoming, *tanhā* for no becoming — in the utter absence of *tanhā*, from the cessation of *tanhā*, would seeking be discerned?"

"No, Master."

"Thus, this is a cause, this is a reason, this is an origination, this is a requisite condition for seeking, i.e., *tanhā*. Thus, Ananda, these two phenomena [the

chain of conditions leading from *tanhā* to *jāti*, *jarā-maraṇa*, and the chain of conditions leading from *tanhā* to quarrels, etc.], as a duality, flow back into one place at *vedanā*.

### ***Vedanā***

"From *phassa* as a requisite condition comes *vedanā*.' Thus, it has been said. And this is the way to understand how from *phassa* as a requisite condition comes *vedanā*. If there were no *phassa* at all, in any way, of anything anywhere — i.e., *phassa* at the eye, *phassa* at the ear, *phassa* at the nose, *phassa* at the tongue, *phassa* at the body, or *phassa* at the intellect — in the utter absence of *phassa*, from the cessation of *phassa*, would *vedanā* be discerned?"

"No, Master."

"Thus, this is a cause, this is a reason, this is an origination, this is a requisite condition for *vedanā*, i.e., *phassa*.

### ***Phassa***

"From *nāma-rūpa* as a requisite condition comes *phassa*. Thus, it has been said. And this is the way to understand how, from *nāma-rūpa* as a requisite condition comes *phassa*. If the qualities, traits, themes, and indicators by which there is a description of *nāma*-group (mental activity) were all absent, would

designation-*phassa* with regard to the *rūpa*-group (the physical properties) be discerned?"

"No, Master."

"If the permutations, signs, themes, and indicators by which there is a description of *rūpa*-group were all absent, would resistance-*phassa* with regard to the *nāma*-group be discerned?"

"No, Master."

"If the permutations, signs, themes, and indicators by which there is a description of *nāma*-group and *rūpa* - group were all absent, would designation-*phassa* or resistance-*phassa* be discerned?"

"No, Master."

"Thus, this is a cause, this is a reason, this is an origination, this is a requisite condition for *phassa*, i.e., *nāma-rūpa*.

### ***Nāma-rūpa***

"From *viññāna* as a requisite condition comes *nāma-rūpa*.' Thus, it has been said. And this is the way to understand how from *viññāna* as a requisite condition comes *nāma-rūpa*. If *viññāna* were not to descend into the mother's womb, would *nāma-rūpa* take shape in the womb?"

"No, Master."

"If, after descending into the womb, *viññāna* were to depart, would *nāma-rūpa* be produced for this world?"

"No, Master."

"If the *viññāna* of the young boy or girl were to be cut off, would *nāma-rūpa* ripen, grow, and reach maturity?"

"No, Master."

"Thus, this is a cause, this is a reason, this is an origination, this is a requisite condition for *nāma-rūpa*, i.e., *viññāna*."

### ***Viññāna***

"From *nāma-rūpa* as a requisite condition comes *viññāna*.' Thus, it has been said. And this is the way to understand how from *nāma-rūpa* as a requisite condition comes *viññāna*. If *viññāna* were not to gain a foothold in *nāma-rūpa*, would a coming-into-play of the origination of *jāti*, *jarā-maraṇa* and stress in the future be discerned?

"No, Master."

"Thus, this is a cause, this is a reason, this is an origination, this is a requisite condition for *viññāna*, i.e., *nāma-rūpa*."

"This is the extent to which there is *jāti*, *jarā-maraṇa*, passing away, and re-arising. This is the extent to

which there are means of designation, expression, and delineation. This is the extent to which the sphere of discernment extends, the extent to which the cycle revolves for the manifesting (discernibility) of this world — i.e., *nāma-rūpa* together with *viññāna*.

### **Delineations of a Self**

"To what extent, Ananda, does one delineate when delineating a self? Either delineating a self-possessed of *rūpa* and finite, one delineates that 'My self is possessed of *rūpa* and finite.' Or, delineating a self-possessed of *rūpa* and infinite, one delineates that 'My self is possessed of *rūpa* and infinite.' Or, delineating a self *arūpa* and finite, one delineates that 'My self is *arūpa* and finite.' Or, delineating a self *arūpa* and infinite, one delineates that 'My self is *arūpa* and infinite.'

"Now, the one who, when delineating a self, delineates it as possessed of *rūpa* and finite, either delineates it as possessed of *rūpa* and finite in the present, or of such a nature that it will [naturally] become possessed of *rūpa* and finite [in the future/after death], or he/she believes that 'Although it is not yet that way, I will convert it into being that way.' This being the case, it is proper to say that a fixed view of a self-possessed of *rūpa* and finite obsesses him.

"The one who, when delineating a self, delineates it as possessed of *rūpa* and infinite, either delineates it as possessed of *rūpa* and infinite in the present, or of such a nature that it will [naturally] become possessed of *rūpa* and infinite [in the future/after death], or he/she believes that 'Although it is not yet that way, I will convert it into being that way.' This being the case, it is proper to say that a fixed view of a self-possessed of *rūpa* and infinite obsesses him/her.

"The one who, when delineating a self, delineates it as *arūpa* and finite, either delineates it as *arūpa* and finite in the present, or of such a nature that it will [naturally] become *arūpa* and finite [in the future/after death], or he/she believes that 'Although it is not yet that way, I will convert it into being that way.' This being the case, it is proper to say that a fixed view of a self *arūpa* and finite obsesses him/her.

"The one who, when delineating a self, delineates it as *arūpa* and infinite, either delineates it as *arūpa* and infinite in the present, or of such a nature that it will [naturally] become *arūpa* and infinite [in the future/after death], or he/she believes that 'Although it is not yet that way, I will convert it into being that way.' This being the case, it is proper to say that a fixed view of a self *arūpa* and infinite obsesses him/her.

## Non-Delineations of a Self

"To what extent, Ananda, does one not delineate when not delineating a self? Either not delineating a self-possessed of *rūpa* and finite, one does not delineate that 'My self is possessed of *rūpa* and finite.' Or, not delineating a self-possessed of *rūpa* and infinite, one does not delineate that 'My self is possessed of *rūpa* and infinite.' Or, not delineating a self *arūpa* and finite, one does not delineate that 'My self is *arūpa* and finite.' Or, not delineating a self *arūpa* and infinite, one does not delineate that 'My self is *arūpa* and infinite.'

"Now, the one who, when not delineating a self, does not delineate it as possessed of *rūpa* and finite, does not delineate it as possessed of *rūpa* and finite in the present, nor does he delineate it as of such a nature that it will [naturally] become possessed of *rūpa* and finite [in the future/after death], nor does he believe that 'Although it is not yet that way, I will convert it into being that way.' This being the case, it is proper to say that a fixed view of a self-possessed of *rūpa* and finite does not obsess him.

"The one who, when not delineating a self, does not delineate it as possessed of *rūpa* and infinite, does not delineate it as possessed of *rūpa* and infinite in the present, nor does he/she delineate it as of such a

nature that it will [naturally] become possessed of *rūpa* and infinite [in the future/after death], nor does he/she believe that 'Although it is not yet that way, I will convert it into being that way.' This being the case, it is proper to say that a fixed view of a self-possessed of *rūpa* and infinite does not obsess him/her.

"The one who, when not delineating a self, does not delineate it as *arūpa* and finite, does not delineate it as *arūpa* and finite in the present, nor does he/she delineate it as of such a nature that it will [naturally] become *arūpa* and finite [in the future/after death], nor does he/she believe that 'Although it is not yet that way, I will convert it into being that way.' This being the case, it is proper to say that a fixed view of a self *arūpa* and finite does not obsess him/her.

"The one who, when not delineating a self, does not delineate it as *arūpa* and infinite, does not delineate it as *arūpa* and infinite in the present, nor does he/she delineate it as of such a nature that it will [naturally] become *arūpa* and infinite [in the future/after death], nor does he/she believe that 'Although it is not yet that way, I will convert it into being that way.' This being the case, it is proper to say that a fixed view of a self *arūpa* and infinite does not obsess him/her.

## Assumptions of a Self

"To what extent, Ananda, does one assume when assuming a self? Assuming *vedanā* to be the self, one assumes that ' *Vedanā* is my self' [or] ' *Vedanā* is not my self: My self is oblivious [to *vedanā*]' [or] 'Neither is *vedanā* my self, nor is my self oblivious to *vedanā*, but rather my self feels, in that my self is subject to *vedanā*.'

"Now, one who says, '*Vedanā* is my self,' should be addressed as follows: 'There are these three *vedanā*, my friend — *vedanā* of pleasure, *vedanā* of pain, and *vedanā* of neither pleasure nor pain. Which of these three *vedanā* do you assume to be the self?' At a moment when a *vedanā* of pleasure is sensed, no *vedanā* of pain or of neither pleasure nor pain is sensed. Only a *vedanā* of pleasure is sensed at that moment. At a moment when a *vedanā* of pain is sensed, no *vedanā* of pleasure or of neither pleasure nor pain is sensed. Only a *vedanā* of pain is sensed at that moment. At a moment when a *vedanā* of neither pleasure nor pain is sensed, no *vedanā* of pleasure or of pain is sensed. Only a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain is sensed at that moment.

"Now, a *vedanā* of pleasure is inconstant, fabricated, dependent on conditions, subject to passing away, dissolution, fading, and cessation. A *vedanā* of pain is inconstant, fabricated, dependent on conditions, subject to passing away, dissolution, fading, and

cessation. A *vedanā* of neither pleasure nor pain is inconstant, fabricated, dependent on conditions, subject to passing away, dissolution, fading, and cessation. Having sensed a *vedanā* of pleasure as 'my self,' then with the cessation of one's very own *vedanā* of pleasure, 'my self' has perished. Having sensed a *vedanā* of pain as 'my self,' then with the cessation of one's very own *vedanā* of pain, 'my self' has perished. Having sensed a *vedanā* of neither pleasure nor pain as 'my self,' then with the cessation of one's very own *vedanā* of neither pleasure nor pain, 'my self' has perished.

"Thus he/she assumes, assuming in the immediate present a self inconstant, entangled in pleasure and pain, subject to arising and passing away, he/she who says, '*vedanā* is my self.' Thus, in this manner, Ananda, one does not see fit to assume *vedanā* to be the self.

"As for the person who says, '*vedanā* is not the self: My self is oblivious [to *vedanā*],' he/she should be addressed as follows: 'My friend, where nothing whatsoever is sensed (experienced) at all, would there be the thought, "I am"?"

"No, master."

"Thus, in this manner, Ananda, one does not see fit to assume that '*vedanā* is not my self: My self is

oblivious [to *vedanā*].'

"As for the person who says, 'Neither is *vedanā* my self, nor is my self oblivious [to *vedanā*], but rather my self feels, in that my self is subject to *vedanā*,' he/she should be addressed as follows: 'My friend, should *vedanā* altogether and every way stop without remainder, then with *vedanā* completely not existing, owing to the cessation of *vedanā*, would there be the thought, "I am"?"

"No, master."

"Thus, in this manner, Ananda, one does not see fit to assume that 'Neither is *vedanā* my self, nor is my self oblivious [to *vedanā*], but rather my self feels, in that my self is subject to *vedanā*.'

"Now, Ananda, in as far as a bhikkhu/bhikkhuni does not assume *vedanā* to be the self, nor the self as oblivious, nor that 'My self feels, in that my self is subject to *vedanā*,' then, not assuming in this way, he/she is not sustained by anything (does not cling to anything) in the world. Unsustained, he/she is not agitated. Unagitated, he/she is totally unbound right within. He/She discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'

"If anyone were to say with regard to a bhikkhu or

bhikkhuni whose mind is thus released that 'The Tathāgata exists after death,' is his/her view, that would be mistaken; that 'The Tathāgata does not exist after death'... that 'The Tathāgata both exists and does not exist after death'... that 'The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death' is his/her view, that would be mistaken. Why? Having directly known the extent of designation and the extent of the objects of designation, the extent of expression and the extent of the objects of expression, the extent of description and the extent of the objects of description, the extent of discernment and the extent of the objects of discernment, the extent to which the cycle revolves: Having directly known that, the bhikkhu or bhikkhuni is released. [To say that,] 'The bhikkhu or bhikkhuni released, having directly known that, does not see, does not know is his/her opinion,' that would be mistaken.

### **Seven *Dimensions* of Consciousness**

"Ananda, there are these seven dimensions of *viññāna* and two spheres. Which seven?

"There are beings with diversity of body and diversity of perception, such as human beings, some radiant one, and some beings in the lower state/dimensions. This is the first dimension of *viññāna*.

"There are beings with diversity of body and singularity of perception, such as the radiance of the Great Ones generated by the first [jhana] and some beings in the four realms of deprivation. This is the second dimension of *viññāna*.

"There are beings with singularity of body and diversity of perception, such as the Radiant Ones. This is the third dimension of *viññāna*.

"There are beings with singularity of body and singularity of perception, such as the Beautifully Radiant Ones. This is the fourth dimension of *viññāna*.

"There are beings who, with the complete transcending of perceptions of *rūpa*, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, and not heeding perceptions of diversity, [perceiving,] 'Infinite space,' arrive at the dimension of the infinitude of space. This is the fifth dimension of *viññāna*.

"There are beings who, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of space, [perceiving,] 'Infinite *viññāna*,' arrive at the dimension of the infinitude of *viññāna*. This is the sixth dimension of *viññāna*.

"There are beings who, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of *viññāna*, [perceiving,] 'There is nothing,' arrive at the

dimension of *sunyata*/nothingness. This is the seventh dimension of *viññāna*.

"The dimension of non-percipient beings and, second, the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. [These are the two spheres.]

"Now, as for the first dimension of *viññāna* — beings with diversity of body and diversity of *sanna*/perception, such as human beings, some radiant ones, and some beings in the lower states: If one discerns that [dimension of *viññāna*], discerns its origination, discerns its passing away, discerns its allure, discerns its drawbacks, discerns the escape from it, would it be proper, by means of that [discernment] to take delight there?"

"No, Master."

(Similarly, with each of the remaining dimensions of *viññāna* and two spheres.)

"Ananda, when knowing — as they actually are — the origination, passing away, allure, drawbacks of — and escape from — these seven dimensions of *viññāna* and two spheres, a bhikkhu or bhikkhuni is released through lack of *upādāna*, he/she is said to be a bhikkhu or bhikkhuni released through discernment.

## Eight Emancipations

"Ananda, there are these eight emancipations. Which eight?

"Possessed of *rūpa*, one sees *rūpas*. This is the first emancipation.

"Not percipient of *rūpa* internally, one sees *rūpas* externally. This is the second emancipation.

"One is intent only on the beautiful. This is the third emancipation.

"With the complete transcending of *sanna* of [physical] *rūpa*, with the disappearance of *sanna* of resistance, and not heeding *sanna* of diversity, [perceiving,] 'Infinite *paññati*,' one enters and remains in the dimension of the infinitude of *paññati*/space. This is the fourth emancipation.

"With the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of *paññati*/space, [perceiving,] 'Infinite *viññāna*,' one enters and remains in the dimension of the infinitude of *viññāna*. This is the fifth emancipation.

"With the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of *viññāna*, [perceiving,] 'There is *sunyata*/nothingness,' one enters and remains in the dimension of *sunyata*/nothingness. This is the sixth emancipation.

"With the complete transcending of the dimension of *sunyata*/nothingness, one enters and remains in the dimension of neither *sanna*/perception nor *asanna*/non-perception. This is the seventh emancipation.

"With the complete transcending of the dimension of neither *sanna* nor *assana*/non-perception, one enters and remains in the cessation of *sanna*/perception and *vedanā*. This is the eighth emancipation.

"Now, when a bhikkhu or bhikkhuni attains these eight emancipations in forward order, in reverse order, in forward and reverse order, when he/she attains them and emerges from them wherever he/she wants, however he/she wants, and for as long as he/she wants, when through the ending of the *saṅkhāras*/mental fermentations he/she enters and remains in the fermentation-free awareness-release and discernment-release, having directly known it and realized it in the here and now, he/she is said to be a bhikkhu or bhikkhuni released in both ways. And as for another release in both ways, higher or more sublime than this, there is none."

That is what the Buddha said. Gratified, Ven. Ananda delighted in the Buddha's words.

## SUTTA FIVE

### Bhikkhu Sutta (Sn 22:36)<sup>5</sup>

Near Sāvattthī. Then a certain bhikkhu went to the Buddha and, on arrival, having showed respect to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the buddha: “It would be good, venerable master, if the Buddha would teach me the Dhamma in brief such that, having heard the Dhamma from the Buddha, I might dwell alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute.”

“Bhikkhu, whatever one stays obsessed with, that’s what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that’s how one is classified. Whatever one doesn’t stay obsessed with, that’s not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn’t measured by, that’s not how one is classified.”

“I understand, Buddha! I understand, O One Well-Gone!”

“And how, bhikkhu, do you understand the detailed meaning of what I have said in brief?”

“If one stays obsessed with *māpa*, master, that’s what

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN22\\_36.html](https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN22_36.html)

one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that's how one is classified.

“If one stays obsessed with *vedanā*, master, that's what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that's how one is classified.

“If one stays obsessed with *saññā*, master, that's what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that's how one is classified.

“If one stays obsessed with *saṅkhāra*, master, that's what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that's how one is classified.

“If one stays obsessed with *viññāna*, that's what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that's how one is classified.

“But if one doesn't stay obsessed with *rūpa*, master, that's not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn't measured by, that's not how one is classified.

“If one doesn't stay obsessed with *vedanā*, master, that's not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn't measured by, that's not how one is classified.

“If one doesn't stay obsessed with *saññā*, master, that's not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn't measured by, that's not how one is classified.

“If one doesn't stay obsessed with *saṅkhāra*, master,

that's not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn't measured by, that's not how one is classified.

“If one doesn't stay obsessed with *viññāna*, that's not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn't measured by, that's not how one is classified.

“Master, this is how I understand the detailed meaning of what you have said in brief.”

“Good, bhikkhu. Very good. It's good that this is how you understand the detailed meaning of what I have said in brief.

“If one stays obsessed with *rūpa*, bhikkhu, that's what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that's how one is classified.

“If one stays obsessed with *vedanā*, bhikkhu, that's what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that's how one is classified.

“If one stays obsessed with *saññā*, bhikkhu, that's what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that's how one is classified.

“If one stays obsessed with *saṅkhāra*, bhikkhu, that's what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that's how one is classified.

“If one stays obsessed with *viññāna*, that's what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that's

how one is classified.

“But if one doesn’t stay obsessed with *rūpa*, bhikkhu, that’s not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn’t measured by, that’s not how one is classified.

“If one doesn’t stay obsessed with *vedanā*, bhikkhu, that’s not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn’t measured by, that’s not how one is classified.

“If one doesn’t stay obsessed with *saññā*, bhikkhu, that’s not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn’t measured by, that’s not how one is classified.

“If one doesn’t stay obsessed with *saṅkhāra*, bhikkhu, that’s not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn’t measured by, that’s not how one is classified.

“This is how the detailed meaning of what I have said in brief should be seen.”

Then the bhikkhu, delighting in and approving of the Buddha’s words, got up from his seat and bowed down to the Buddha, circled around him, keeping the Buddha to his right, and departed. Then, dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, and resolute, he in no long time entered and remained in the supreme goal of the life free of impurities for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, directly knowing and realizing it for himself in the here and now. He knew: “*Jāti* is ended, life free of

impurities fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world.” And thus, he became another one of the arahants.

## *Chapter Three*

### **THE PATICCA-SAM-UPPĀDA: VIEWS OF PRACTITIONERS AND THOUGHT LEADERS**

In this chapter, excerpts from the writings and a personal interview of five key Buddhist thinkers have been included. The reason for inclusion is because of the unique nature of the way they conceived and explained the minute details that constitutes the *paticca-sam-uppāda*. They are read widely in India among the followers of Babasaheb Dr.B.R.Ambedkar and are often quoted in public lectures and academic gatherings. While there are many more thinkers, we have decided to include only the following:

(L) P. Lakshmi Narasu

(L) Rahul Sankrityayan

(L) Bhante Ananda Kausalyayan

(L) Raja Dhale

Dr. Santosh I. Raut (Maitriveer Nagarjuna)

## VIEW OF POKKALA LAKSHMI NARASU (1881-1934)

Born Pokkala Lakshmi Narasu in 1861 in Madras (now Chennai), Professor Lakshmi Narasu was one of the earliest pioneers of a modern, rational interpretation of Buddhism in India. He sought to develop a *Navayāna* understanding of Buddhism that reconciled the teachings of the Buddha with modern science, grounding both within the realities of the modern world. He was a contemporary of other prominent Buddhist rationalists, including Iyothee Thassar and Singaravelu.

Narasu studied science at the University of Madras and, in 1894, joined Madras Christian College as an Assistant Professor. An inspiring and popular teacher, he actively participated in campus life and regularly contributed scientific articles to scholarly journals. In 1909, he joined Pachaiyappa's College as Professor, where he served with distinction for sixteen years. He retired from teaching in 1925 and passed away on 14 July 1934 at the age of seventy-three.

Professor Narasu is remembered today as one of the leading figures in the revival and reconstruction of Buddhism in modern India. He presented the

Buddha's teachings in a rational and scientific framework, making them relevant to the existential concerns of ordinary people in an age shaped by modernity. His work anticipated many of the ideas that later came to characterize socially engaged Buddhism. He is a pioneer of an 'engaged Buddhism', a movement that has now begun to reached its fullest expression beginning with the life and work of Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Babasaheb Ambedkar himself, regarded Professor Narasu as his intellectual forerunner. This admiration is reflected in Babasaheb's decision to write the preface to the third edition (1948) of Narasu's influential work, *The Essence of Buddhism*.<sup>6</sup>

Excerpts from the book *What is Buddhism?* Section titled *Dependent Origination*. p.35-39.

....The Buddhist doctrine of karma is very wide in its scope. *Karma* operates not only in the sphere of sentient life, but extends over the whole of phenomenal existence (*prapancha*). *Karma* is the reality which preserves the past and evolves in the future. *Karmajam loka vaichitryam*. All things are born of *Karma*,

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<sup>6</sup> Aloysius G. (2009). Introduction to What is Buddhism? P Lakshmi Narasu. Samyak Prakashan. p.6

change, movement and activity. Everything is in a state of continual transformation. The world is continual process of becoming. There is neither creation nor destruction; there is neither beginning nor end. Yet nothing happens without cause and reason; nor is anything produced by a single cause. Nothing exists which is autonomous. Everything depends upon another, and this other thing on which it depends is itself dependent. This dependent origination of all things is called *pratitya samutpada*. A correct understanding of this dependent origination is of the greatest importance in Buddhism. It is only *they* who sees that everything originates in a cause and ceases on the cessation of that cause will perceive the meaning of *Saddharma* and can grasp the essence of Buddhahood. If every change has a cause, and that cause again a cause, is there then no ultimate unchangeable or first cause? Replies the Buddha: "If a *human* should gather all the grasses and herbs, twigs and leaves of this vast continent of India, and arrange them in heaps, saying: this is my mother, this is the mother of my mother, and so on, there would be no end seen to mother of mother of this *human being*, even though

*he/she* might reach the end of all the grasses and herbs, twigs and leaves of this continent of India.

What is the reason of this? Without beginning and end is this world-process (*samsara*).” Nature makes no sudden starts and, in the nature, there is no-absolute beginning ... ‘Why should the earth be made to stand on the serpent, the serpent on the eight elephants, the elephants on the tortoise and the tortoise on nothing? Why could not the earth itself stand on nothing? Is there then no *Isvara*? In a conversation with Sudatta, the helper of the orphans, the Buddha argued the matter as follows. If the world had been made by *Isvara*, there should be no change nor destruction, there should be no such thing as sorrow or calamity, as right or wrong, as all things pure and impure, must come from him. If sorrow and joy, love and hate, which spring up in all conscious beings, be the work of *Isvara*, he himself must be capable of sorrow and joy, love and hatred, and if he has these, how could he be said to be perfect? If *Isvara* be the maker, and if all beings have to submit silently to their maker’s power, what would be the utility of

practicing virtue? The doing of right and wrong would be the same, as all deeds are his making and must be the same with their maker. But if sorrow and suffering are attributed to another cause, then there would be something of which *Isvara* is not the cause. Why, then, should not all that exists be uncaused too? Again, if *Isvara* be the maker, he acts with or without a purpose. If he acts with a purpose, he cannot be said to be all perfect, for a purpose necessarily implies the satisfaction of a want. If he acts without a purpose, he must be like the lunatic or the suckling babe. Besides, if *Isvara* be the maker, why should not people reverently submit to him, why should they offer supplications to him when sorely pressed by necessity? And why should people adore more gods than one? Thus, the idea of *Isvara* is proved false by rational arguments, and all such contradictory assertions should be exposed. If *Isvara* is claimed to be too great for man's comprehension, then we can know nothing about *Isvara*; why then should we attribute to *Isvara* the quality of creator? The negation of soul leads to the negation of *Isvara* who is simply a replica of the human soul. Also, the doctrine of inability of a single cause to

produce an effect exclude theism as well as creation out of nothing from the pale of Buddhism. Hence the dependent origination, which has neither commencement nor end, has no lord presiding over it (*asvamikam*) and is free from all forms of animism (*anatmakami*). If the world has not been created by the *Isvara*, may not all existence be a manifestation of the Absolute, the Unconditioned the Unknowable behind all appearances? Said the Buddha to Sudatta:

“if the Absolute ... is something out of relation to all known things, its existence cannot be established by any reasoning. How can we know that anything unrelated to other things exists at all? For existence means the capacity for producing an effect. The whole universe, as we know it, is a system of relations; we know nothing that is, or can be, unrelated. How could that which depends on nothing and is related to nothing, produce things which are related to one another and depend for their existence upon one another? Again, the Absolute is one or many. If it be only one, how could it be the cause of, the different things which originate, as we know, from different

causes? If there be as many different Absolutes as there are things, how could the latter be related to one another? If the Absolute pervades all things and fills all space, then it could not also make them, for there is nothing to make.

Furthermore, if the Absolute be devoid of all qualities (*nirguna*), all things arising from it ought likewise to be devoid of qualities. But in reality, all things in the world are circumscribed throughout by qualities. Hence the Absolute cannot be their cause. If the Absolute is considered to be different from the qualities, how does it continually create the things possessing such qualities and manifest itself in them? Again, if the Absolute be unchangeable, all things should be unchangeable too, for the effect cannot differ in nature from the cause. But all thing in the world undergoes change and decay. How then can the Absolute be unchangeable? Moreover, if the Absolute which pervades all is the cause of everything, why should we seek liberation? For we ourselves possess this Absolute and must patiently endure every suffering and sorrow incessantly created by the Absolute.”

...The Buddhist denies the existence of an Absolute, but *they do* not deny the existence of the internal or external world. For *him/her* the world is an aggregate of conditions or relations, which are themselves not self-existent, but interdependent. Only when conceived in its totality has the word any meaning. Accepting the phenomenal world (*prapañcha*) and the empirical ego (*nāma-rūpa*), Buddhism teaches a consistent, incontrovertible, unitary view...

## VIEW OF RAHUL SANKRITYAYAN (1938-1963)

Although Rahul Sankrityayan returned to lay life in 1938 and never became an active preacher, he remained a deeply committed Buddhist scholar dedicated to the revival of Buddhism in India. He met Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar only twice. Their first meeting took place at Babasaheb Ambedkar's residence in Delhi while he was serving as the Law Minister, where they discussed Buddhism and Buddhist literature. Their final meeting occurred in Nepal, just two months before Babasaheb Ambedkar's passing, at a time when many of his transformative aspirations remained unrealized.

Sankrityayan believed that no individual in modern India had worked harder than Babasaheb Ambedkar to break through the mountain-like barriers of the caste system and chart a new path for social transformation. He enthusiastically welcomed Babasaheb Ambedkar's mass conversion to Buddhism in October 1956. In his 1957 pamphlet *Nav-deekshit Baudh*, he paid glowing tribute to Ambedkar, writing: "There is no doubt that Babasaheb Ambedkar has done the greatest service to the country by initiating a mass Buddhist revival movement in India. History will never forget him for

this unique role.”

Sankrityayan also expressed the hope that the Buddhist revival would lead to the restoration of India's neglected Buddhist monuments. The celebrations marking the 2500th Buddha Nirvana Centenary (May 1956–May 1957), together with the historic mass conversion movement, marked a decisive turning point in modern Indian Buddhism. Within a year, nearly five million people embraced Buddhism. The most significant event took place at Nagpur, where Dr. Ambedkar administered the *Trisharan* and *Panchsheel* vows to approximately 500,000 men and women. Before his death, while in Nepal, Babasaheb expressed his wish to bring nearly fifty million people into the Buddhist fold if he were granted another two years of life.

Sankrityayan admired the depth of Dr. Ambedkar's knowledge of the Buddhist scriptures. He recounts an incident in which a Member of Parliament sarcastically remarked, “May your soul rest in peace!” Ambedkar immediately replied, “I am a Buddhist. I do not believe in the soul.” For Sankrityayan, this response reflected Ambedkar's profound understanding of the Buddhist doctrine of *anattā* (non-self).

Sankrityayan observed that understanding the

Buddhist rejection of both a permanent soul and a creator God is difficult for people deeply rooted in conventional religious traditions. He believed that all communities, including those then referred to as *Dalits*, had contributed to the making of Indian civilization. While the rigid caste system was destined to collapse, he argued that abandoning India's entire cultural heritage merely to reject caste would be like “throwing the baby out with the bathwater.” In his view, Babasaheb Ambedkar chose Buddhism precisely because it enabled him to remain within the broad stream of India's civilizational heritage while unequivocally rejecting the caste hierarchy, social inequality, and discrimination embedded within it.

In September 1959, Sankrityayan was appointed Head of the Department of Philosophy at Vidyalankara University in Sri Lanka. After his health deteriorated, he returned to India in 1961. He passed away in Darjeeling on 14 April 1963, leaving behind an enduring legacy as one of modern India's foremost scholars of Buddhism and champions of its revival.

*Excerpts taken from page 4-6, in the book 'Buddhism. The Marxist Approach' published by the People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1970)*

## Theory of Causality

.... Having accepted the entire inner and outer world, without any exception, as noneternal it was necessary to have a different theory of causality too. Those who held the atoms or matter to be like immutable bricks could assert that by the assemblage of them the new objects arises. Their integration and disintegration correspond to the origination and destruction of things. But Buddhist philosophy did not believe in the existence of such immutable eternal bricks. Everything is void of eternal essence, i.e., there are not things (*vastu*) but events (*dharmas*). They could not be compared to gold which is a primary element and can be moulded into different shapes, such as bracelets or pendants. Buddha used a different terminology to explain the law of causality: dependent origination (*pratitya samutpada*).

Elucidating this terminology Buddha says “When this was, then this comes and it was then this becomes” (*asmin sati idam bhavati*). As the completion of this, this is born. What has just ended is the cause and what has emerged after the cause is the effect. The effect was wholly non-existent when the cause was there,

and when the effect came into existence the cause completely vanished. There was no eternal substance inside the cause which is transferred to the effect. Actually, they have no other relation to each other except that the one preceded or followed the other.

Having accepted the world in flux, as a conglomeration not of things but of events, the concept of dependent origination becomes inevitable. Dynamism and the theory that there is no eternal substratum forced them to look upon the world as made up of events. Rejection of the old ideas of the law of cause and effect inevitably led to the concept of dependent origination. In other words, dependent origination replaced the old theory of cause and effect.

Here Buddhist philosophy shattered another old concept, according to which one cause was supposed to beget one or several effects... Even in the material world one element was called the cause and the other element originating from it the effect. Buddhist philosophy contended that no object - or to use their nomenclature dharma - is born of one thing. No effect has only one cause, but several

causes together give birth to one effect (object). This theory is called collectivity of causes (*hetu-samagrivada*).

The great philosopher Dhammakirti says: “One (thing) is not born out of one but all is born of collective causes” (*na chaikam ekam ekasmat, samagrya sarva sambhava*). When several causes assemble then one effect is created. Though the doctrine of the unity of the opposites is not mentioned as in Marxist philosophy, yet it is clearly state that one effect is the result of the coming together of several causes and if the smallest of them is missing then that effect would result. According to Buddhist philosophy cause is entirely different from effect, in other words, the emergence of the effect is a qualitative change. And this qualitative change (emergence of an entirely different effect) cannot take place unless all the causes are pooled in the required measure-quantity. This concept of cause and effect includes qualitative change (the effect) and quantity which brings this about (collectivity of causes)...

**VIEW OF**

**BHADANTA ANANDA KAUSALYAYAN**  
**(1905-1988)**

Born as Harinam Das in Ambala in 1905, Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan was one of the foremost Buddhist scholars, bhikkhus, and revivalists of modern India. Orphaned at an early age, he was brought up by his maternal uncle. After completing his Bachelor of Arts degree, he took a vow of celibacy and embraced the life of a wandering seeker, dedicating himself to the service of society.

Kausalyayan was profoundly influenced by Rahul Sankrityayan and followed him to Sri Lanka to study Buddhism. There he learned Sanskrit under Sankrityayan's guidance and immersed himself in the study of Buddhist scriptures. Through this study, he came to the conviction that Buddhism rests upon reason, inference, and direct experience rather than unquestioned scriptural authority. This realization transformed his outlook, and he formally embraced Buddhism, receiving ordination and the name Anand Kausalyayan.

As a Buddhist bhikkhu, Kausalyayan travelled extensively across India and abroad, preaching the

Buddha Dhamma and contributing significantly to its revival. He translated numerous Buddhist texts into Hindi and other Indian languages, making them accessible to a wider audience and earning recognition as one of the leading Buddhist scholars of his generation.

Kausalyayan first met Babasaheb Ambedkar when the latter was serving on the Viceroy's Executive Council and had expressed a desire to meet Indian Buddhist monks. During their meeting, Kausalyayan asked Babasaheb what responsibilities he expected Indian bhikkhus to undertake. Their conversation extended over several hours and centred on the future of Buddhism in India.

Kausalyayan recounts an incident from this meeting that reveals Ambedkar's understanding of the Buddha's mission. Seeing a Buddha image in Ambedkar's cupboard, Babasaheb asked about it. Kausalyayan described the famous Buddha image in the Sarnath Museum depicting the *Dharmacakkeppavattana* (Turning of the Wheel of Dhamma) posture. Ambedkar responded, *"I want a statue of Lord Buddha in which he is shown always walking for the welfare of the people."* To Kausalyayan, this reflected Ambedkar's vision of Buddhism as a dynamic force dedicated to the welfare of humanity

rather than merely an object of worship.

Kausalyayan also narrates another memorable incident at the Buddha temple adjoining the Birla Mandir in New Delhi, where he stood alongside Babasaheb Ambedkar and the philanthropist Seth Yugal Kishore Birla. Birla proudly remarked, *"Look, we have built this temple for the greatest man of India."* Dr. Ambedkar immediately replied, *"You have built this tiny room for India's greatest man, and such a grand temple for those imaginary gods and goddesses!"* Kausalyayan later wrote that this single remark gave him an entirely new perspective on the place of the Buddha within India's religious and cultural landscape.

In 1950, Babasaheb Ambedkar attended the First World Buddhist Conference in Sri Lanka as a distinguished guest. Although he delivered speeches in Colombo, ill health prevented him from delivering his scheduled address in Kandy. During the conference, Kausalyayan referred to newspaper reports stating that Ambedkar had accepted the Three Refuges and Five Precepts at the Buddhist Vihara in New Delhi and was studying Buddhism. Babasaheb clarified his position:

*"I am more than a Buddhist; I am a propagator of Buddhism. If I declare myself a Buddhist now, people will go and tell my simple brothers that Dr. Ambedkar has become a Buddhist*

*now—what do you have to do with him? Therefore, I have decided to continue propagating Buddhism for a while. When I see that a sufficient number are ready to join me, only then will I publicly declare my Buddhist status."*

When Kausalyayan visited Bombay in the early months of 1956, Dr. Ambedkar was carefully considering the place, time, and officiating monk for his formal initiation into Buddhism. Ambedkar asked who the senior-most *Mahāsthavira* was at the time. Kausalyayan suggested Mahāsthavira Chandramani of Kushinagar, whom he regarded as his own teacher. He cherished the hope that he would personally escort Mahāsthavira Chandramani to initiate Babasaheb Ambedkar and his followers. Although that wish remained unfulfilled, Chandramani Mahāsthavira ultimately administered the *Dhamma Dīkḥā* to Babasaheb Ambedkar at Nagpur on 14 October 1956.

Following Babasaheb Ambedkar's demise, Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan served as the chief officiating Bhikkhu at his funeral ceremony held at Dadar, Bombay, in December 1956. Throughout his life, he regarded himself as a devoted soldier of Ambedkar's mission to rebuild India through the Buddha Dhamma. His lifelong commitment is captured in his well-known words: "*When I die, inscribe upon my grave*

*that this chivara-clad soldier of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was martyred while fighting the battle to build the India of Babasaheb's dreams."*

*(Dr. Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan Jivan Darshan by Dr. Bhadant Savangi Medhankar (Hindi))<sup>7</sup>. The following excerpt is taken from his Book - An Intelligent Man's Guide to Buddhism, Published by Buddha Bhoomi Prakashan, Nagpur. English Edition, 1980, 1967 Hindi Version and 1980 English Version)*

... Q.58. Did the Blessed One remain sitting for some time, under the Bodhi-tree, even after he had attained the Buddhahood?

A. Yes, the Blessed One sat cross-legged for seven days together at the foot of the Bodhi-tree, experiencing the bliss of emancipation.

Then the Blessed One, during the first watch of the night, thought over dependent origination both forward and back:

On ignorance depend intellectual differentiations;

On intellectual differentiations depends

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.dalitdastak.com/bhadant-anand-kausalyayan-a-follower-of-babasaheb-ambedkar/> (in Hindi)

consciousness;

On consciousness depend name and form;

On name and form depend the six organs of sense;

On the six organs of sense depends contact;

On contact depends sensation;

On sensation depends desire;

On desire depends attachment;

On attachment depends existence;

On existence depends birth;

On birth depend old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief and despair;

Thus does this entire aggregation of misery arise. But also, on the complete fading out and cessation of ignorance cease all intellectual differentiations; on the cessation of intellectual differentiations cease consciousness;

On cessation of consciousness cease name and form;

On the cessation of name and form cease the six organs of sense;

On the cessation of the six organs of sense

ceases contact;

On the cessation of contact ceases sensation;

On cessation of sensation ceases desire;

On the cessation of desire ceases attachment;

On the cessation of attachment ceases  
existence;

On the cessation of existence ceases birth;

On the cessation of birth, disease, old age, and  
death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief and  
despair.

Thus does this entire aggregation of misery  
cease.

Then the Blessed One, during the middle  
watch of the night, thought over dependent  
origination both forward and back: On  
ignorance depend all intellectual  
differentiations... Thus does this entire  
aggregation of misery arise. But on the  
complete fading out and cessation of ignorance  
cease all intellectual differentiations.... Thus  
does this entire aggregation of misery cease.

Then the Blessed one, during the last watch of  
the night, thought over dependent origination  
both forward and back: On ignorance depend

all intellectual differentiations... Thus does this entire aggregation of misery arise. But on the complete fading out and cessation of ignorance cease all intellectual differentiations.... Thus does this entire aggregation of misery cease.

It has to be noted that the Blessed One, during all the three watches of the night, thought over only dependent origination both forwards and backward. Hence, there is ample scope for the possibility and the doubt, that may it be, that the real “knowledge” attained by the Blessed One, did consist in the law of dependent origination alone, and “the knowledge of the previous existences” and the attainment of “divine eye,” might be just a “redundant edifice.” Had it not been so, then it was perfectly natural that the Blessed One, during the three watches of the night would have thought over all the three “knowledges” attained previously; why on “dependent origination” alone?

## VIEW OF RAJA DHALE (1940-2019)

Raja Dhale was a prominent social activist, writer, and one of the founding leaders of the Dalit Panther movement. He played a significant role in shaping the post-Ambedkar Buddhist movement, particularly in Maharashtra, and emerged as one of the leading interpreters of Babasaheb Ambedkar's understanding of the Buddha Dhamma.

Deeply influenced by Babasaheb Ambedkar's *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, Dhale consistently upheld what he regarded as its central principles: the primacy of intention (*cetana*) in ethical action, Dhamma as an ethical framework rather than a system of metaphysical beliefs, Dhamma as a social rather than a purely personal path, and the distinction that while the Buddha has Dhamma, the Dhamma does not belong to the Buddha. For Dhale, these principles formed the foundation of a modern, rational, and socially engaged Buddhism.

Throughout his life, Dhale remained committed to ensuring that the Dhamma articulated by Babasaheb Ambedkar for the liberation of humanity remained intellectually rigorous, socially relevant, and dynamic. To promote dialogue and strengthen the Buddhist

movement, he organized two All India Dhamma Conferences, in 1986 and 2008. The first conference, held in Mumbai, was presided over by the internationally renowned Buddhist scholar Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan.

In his address to the 14th Maharashtra Bouddha Sahitya Parishad (Maharashtra Buddhist Literary Conference) on 29 February 1976, Dhale clearly articulated his rationalist understanding of Buddhism. He argued that concepts such as God, heaven, hell, an eternal soul, a creator, incarnation, and other supernatural beliefs are incompatible with the Buddha Dhamma. He maintained that the Dhamma is not centred on rituals, prayers, pilgrimages, sacrifices, or other forms of religious observance. Rather, it is fundamentally concerned with how human beings ought to relate to one another in an ethical and compassionate manner.

Dhale further argued that the Buddha rejected doctrines such as belief in a creator God, an eternal soul, heaven, and liberation through supernatural means. He maintained that many metaphysical ideas found in later Buddhist literature should not be accepted uncritically but must be subjected to rigorous rational examination in the light of the Buddha's original teachings. In this respect, Dhale

sought to preserve and advance Ambedkar's vision of Buddhism as a rational, ethical, and emancipatory tradition suited to the modern world.

Below we share some of the poems by Raja Dhale that does not have a direct bearing on the *paticca-sam-uppāda*, but where the *paticca-sam-uppāda* resonates through every poem.

### Three Koans and Zen

Raja Dhale. (1986) *Astitvachya Resha. Three Koans*. P. 69

#### तीन Koan

एक

तो म्हणाता :

What is Buddha

मी म्हटलं :

I am not Buddha

माझी Comment :

If I were Buddha, then only I can explain.

दोन

परत एकदा म्हणाता :

What is Buddha

मी म्हटलं :

Nothing

माझी Comment :

The knowledge of nothing is everything

तीन

आणखी एकदा म्हणाता :

What is Buddha

मी म्हटलं :

What is not Buddha is Buddha

माझी Comment :

What is Buddha is Buddha. Buddha is

everything and also nothing. Buddha is only Buddha and not anything else.

#### एक Zen

वर्ष्यादा तो माझ्याकडे येताना दिसला तेव्हा मी बुद्धासारखी मुद्रा करून आपोच बसलो. त्यानं तोच प्रश्न विचारला. मी गप्पगार. तो मग जास्त जास्तच. तसं मी फाडकन मुकटात दिली. तो कोसळलाच. हद् भ्योवोत्  
: What is this mister  
: This is Zen. मी बप्पड मारीन असं म्हणूनही बप्पड ही काय चिब कळणार नाही. अक्वमुली मारण्यानेच माझी बप्पड कळेल.

पुन्हा मी दुसरा वेळा उगारला मी म्हटलं :

: Do you enlightened?

: Yes sir !

: Then tell me what is Buddha

असं म्हटल्याबरोबर तो बुद्धासारखं शांत बसला. पुन्हा

जेव्हाही जावं तेव्हा तो तसाच.

: Now you enlightened !

मी म्हटलं. त्यानं ऐकलं की नाही कुणास ठाऊक.



### **One:**

He said:

What is Buddha?

I said:

I am not Buddha.

My comment:

If I were Buddha, then only I can explain.

### **Two:**

Again, he said:

What is Buddha?

I said:

Nothing.

My comment:

The knowledge of nothing is everything.

### **Three:**

Once again, he said:

What is Buddha?

I said what is not Buddha is Buddha.

My comment:

What is Buddha is Buddha. Buddha is everything and also nothing. Buddha is only Buddha and not anything else.

## One Zen:

When I saw him coming towards me the fourth time, already I sat in the posture of the Buddha. He asked the same question. I sat quietly, not speaking.

Then he became more and more. Then I immediately slapped him on his face. (Expletive)

: What is this, mister?

: This is Zen. Even if I say I will slap you, you will not understand what is a slap. Only after I actually slap you, will you understand my slap. I again raised my fist and said:

: Are you enlightened?

: Yes Sir!

: Then tell me what is Buddha.

As soon as I said this, he sat quietly like the Buddha.

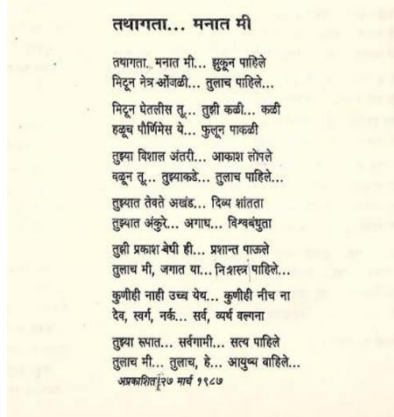
Whenever I went next, he was like that.

: Now you are enlightened!

I said, I don't know if he heard me.

## *Tathāgata in My Heart*

Raja Dhale (1987). *Tathāgata in my heart*.  
(Unpublished, 27 March 1987)



*Tathāgata*, I leaned over and looked inside my heart,  
I cupped my hands and closed my eyes in devotion  
And I saw only You.

You erased your very essence, petal by petal  
Came gently to the full moon, blossoming the petals  
into flowers

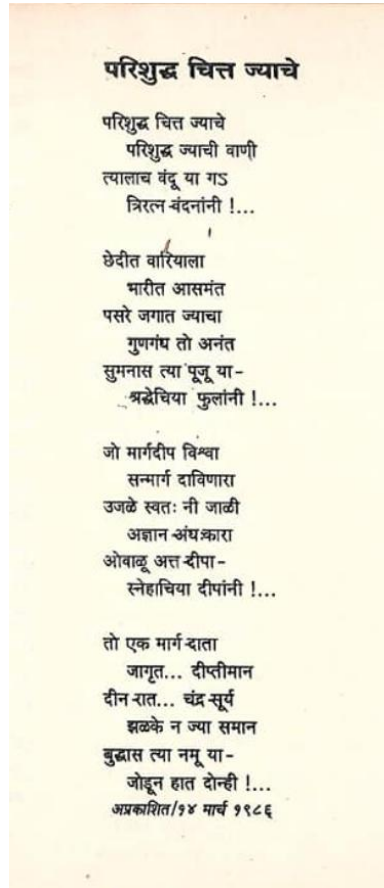
In your vast inside, hides the sky  
You turned around to look, and saw yourself.  
Within you glows divine peace  
Within you are sprouts of universal brotherhood.

Your calm footsteps which pierce the light  
In this world, it is only You whom I saw, without  
any weapons

Nobody is superior here, nobody is inferior  
God, heaven, hell, all useless boasts  
In your form, I have seen eternal truth  
Only to you, only to you, I dedicate my life.

### The One whose Mind is Pure

Raja Dhale (1986). *Astitwachya Resha*. ( Unpublished,  
14 March, 1986, p. 8)



Whose Mind is purified  
Whose Mind is purified,  
Whose Speech is immaculate (purified),  
Only Him we will venerate, dear woman  
With Tri-ratna Vandana!

Scent of whose virtues  
It pierces the air,  
the surroundings are laden  
It spreads endlessly in the world  
Come all, let us venerate him with flowers  
Flowers of devotion.

The one who is the light on the path,  
The one who showed the world the Right Way  
He himself glows and he burns the darkness of  
ignorance

Let us revere the Self-Illuminated (Atta-Deep)  
With lamps of love.

He is the One Guide,  
Enlightened, Radiant  
Day-Night, Moon-Sun,  
do not shine like Him.  
To that Buddha we will bow,  
by folding both our hands.

## VIEW OF SANTOSH I. RAUT (MAITRIVEER NAGARJUNA)

Dr. Santosh I. Raut (Maitriveer Nagarjuna) is one of the National Conveners of the Buddhist Intellectual Collective India (BICI). He holds a PhD in Philosophy from Jawaharlal Nehru University and completed postdoctoral research at Harvard University. His scholarship and public engagement have made him one of the leading contemporary exponents of the *Navayāna* Buddhist tradition, which traces its intellectual and spiritual lineage to the Buddha through the Nāga tradition and Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

As a philosopher, teacher, and meditation practitioner, Dr. Raut has played a significant role in advancing contemporary Buddhist thought by bringing the teachings of the Buddha into dialogue with philosophy, science, and the social realities of the modern world. His public lectures are widely attended by scholars, students, and lay practitioners, and his meditation workshops have contributed to the growing practice of *Navayāna* meditation in India and abroad.

Dr. Raut has also worked closely with Roma

communities in Hungary, promoting a deeper understanding of the Buddha Dhamma while exploring the historical and cultural continuities of the *Navayāna* tradition across geographical boundaries. His international engagements reflect a sustained commitment to fostering dialogue, scholarship, and social transformation grounded in the principles of the Buddha Dhamma.

An active participant in global academic and policy forums, Dr. Raut has represented the Ambedkarite Buddhist community at international platforms, including the United Nations. He has delivered lectures on the Buddha Dhamma across Asia, Europe, and North America, contributing to the global dissemination of *Navayāna* Buddhist thought and its contemporary relevance.

*Below we present a transcript sourced from a personal interview with Dr. Santosh I. Raut (Maitriveer Nagarjuna) conducted on September 2024 related to the paticca-sam-uppāda.*

...More than any other single teaching, the doctrine of Dependent Origination (also referred to as ‘conditioned co-production’, or more conveniently as ‘conditionality’) is what differentiates Buddhism from other philosophies and religions. In a sense though, there is nothing ‘religious’ about this doctrine. Dependent Origination is not a divine ordinance but

a natural law operative on all levels of existence, from the material to the transcendental.

In the Buddha's classic formulation, the doctrine of Dependent Origination is succinctly summarized thus:

*Imasmim sati, idam hoti;  
imassa' uppāda, idam  
uppajjāti.*

*Imasmim asati, idam na hoti;  
imassa nirodhā, idam  
nirujjhati.*

*This being, that becomes;  
from the arising of this, that  
arises.*

*This not being, that does not  
become;  
from the ceasing of this, that  
ceases.<sup>8</sup>*

Dependent Origination is a general principle that can be applied to anything in the phenomenal world. For

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<sup>8</sup> *MN: ii,32; SN: 12; SN: ii, 28; Ud: Bodhivaggo 1-1, 1-2, 1-3; and in many other places Buddha speaks about Dependent Origination, which is his one of the essential teachings.*

example, the formula of the Four Noble Truths applies the general principle to the specific phenomenon of suffering. The most commonly cited application of conditioned co-production, however, is in the formula of the twelve cyclic links (the *nidāna* chain). This is a complex exposition of the role of conditionality in the origins of suffering and rebirth. In Therāvāda or in Māhāyāna tradition, the term Dependent Origination (i.e. *paṭicca-samuppāda* or *pratitya-samutpāda*) is often understood exclusively (and therefore wrongly) in terms of these twelve links, which are in fact merely an application (though a vitally important one) of the principle itself.

The general principle of Dependent Origination says that whatever arises does so in dependence upon conditions. Each thing that arises is therefore the sum total of all the conditions that make it arise – and *nothing more*. Accordingly, when the specific combination of conditions that produces a thing ceases, the thing itself also ceases because it was never anything apart from the conditions that produced it.

It must be emphasized that the principle does *not* say that each thing is produced in a linear fashion by a different and preceding thing. It is true that some of the earlier Buddhist sources (e.g. the cyclic *nidāna* chain) can easily be misconstrued in this way. This

misunderstanding was what the later Madhyamaka teachings aimed to correct. Also, the principle of Dependent Origination does not go into the question of why or how certain conditions produce certain things. However, it does assert that there are certain patterns or regularities within the overall arising of things, which we might call laws of nature. Thus, when a certain set of conditions occurs, some specific thing will necessarily arise from it.

The principle of Dependent Origination is closely associated with the Middle Way (*Majjima Patipada*) or rather the two things are essentially one.<sup>9</sup> In the most general terms, the Middle Way is a principle that can be applied to resolve the false dichotomies that the human mind tends to create. For example, is it good or bad to enjoy the pleasures of the senses? Conversely, is it good or bad to subject the body to painful austerities? The truth, according to Buddhism, is the Middle Way that stands ‘between’ the two extremes. Of course, we must understand that the word ‘between’ in this case does not mean a ‘halfway house’ or compromise between the two (e.g. alternating periodically between self-mortification and

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<sup>9</sup> See for example the *Avijjā Paccaya Sutta* (SN: 12.35) the *Lokāyatika Sutta* (SN: 12.48) and the *Kaccāyana Gotta Sutta* (SN 12:15).

self-indulgence). Rather, the Middle Way stands both between and *above* the two extremes presented by the dichotomy. In the case of the sense pleasures, the Middle Way consists of a consistent but moderate asceticism that does not damage or enfeeble either the body or mind.

The crucial application of the Middle Way is to the dichotomy, mentioned above, between eternalism (*śāsvatavāda*) and nihilism (*ucchedavāda*). On the one hand, eternalism is wrong because there are (to borrow Kantian terms) no noumena that ‘underlie’ or are ‘represented by’ phenomena, and this means that there is no personal ‘self’ that abides unchanged beneath the appearance of birth and death. On the other hand, the bundles of mental conditions (*samskāra*) that we conventionally refer to as ‘self’ cannot simply vanish from the web of conditionality at the point of death, but must issue in rebirth somewhere in the realms of existence.

From all the foregoing, it is clear that Dependent Origination is a principle of *becoming* rather than *being*. The arising of something *is* also its passing away, and the arising and the passing away go on continuously and simultaneously. Nothing at any point is static or fixed, even for a millisecond. Thus, if we follow the logic of Dependent Origination to its ultimate point,

we reach the paradoxical conclusion that *nothing* arises or ceases. There is only a continuous process of change with no intervals of rest in which things might simply persist in being. And if this is true then the ‘things’ themselves have only a conventional existence. This realization is at the heart of the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts.

Within the framework of Dependent Origination, the Buddha outlined two distinct and opposed trends. The better-known of these trends is the set of twelve links that rotate endlessly from ‘ignorance’ (*avijjā*) to ‘decay and death’ (*jarāmarana*). Here we must note only that they constitute the *cyclic* pattern within Dependent Origination – the pattern to which all beings are subject until they enter the path that leads to enlightenment. That path is sometimes described in terms of the cessation of each link in the cyclic chain. By removing a condition, the thing that arose from that condition is also removed. For example, by the elimination of craving (*tanhā*), grasping or attachment (*upādāna*) will also cease to arise. The way to Enlightenment by way of the cessation of the twelve cyclic links is thus essentially a negative description of the Buddhist path.

## The *Spiral* (Positive) Modality of Dependent Origination

Despite the importance and profundity of this negative description of the path, the Buddha must have sensed a danger in relying exclusively upon a description formulated in wholly negative terms (i.e. as the mere cessation of the conditions of suffering). Such a presentation will inevitably sound unappealing to many people and might reinforce nihilistic misunderstandings of the Dhamma. Therefore, we also find the path described as a positive trend within Dependent Origination – a progressive accumulation of wholesome mental states, rather than the mere elimination of negative ones. This does not mean that there are two separate paths. There is in essence only one, but it can be described in two different ways, one negative and one positive. The positive formulation is equally canonical, though much less noted. We find it most fully set out in the ‘Discourse on Supporting Conditions’ in *Upanisa Sutta*, SN:23. As in the cyclic *nidana* chain, a total of twelve stages is described. In the first stage, recognition of the inevitability of suffering (*dukkha*) gives rise to faith (*saddhā*).

Faith then leads to ‘joy’ (*pamojja*) which is the condition for ‘rapture’ (*pīti*). Rapture produces ‘calm’ or ‘tranquillity’ (*passaddhi*), which in turn leads to ‘bliss’

(*sukha*). (Already, even from this partial description, the more positive and inspiring nature of this way of describing the path is apparent.) With bliss as a necessary condition, ‘concentration’ (*samādhi*) arises. This type of concentration is not the wilful focusing of conscious attention, but the full and harmonious integration of all the energies of the mind (which are no longer scattered in egoistic emotions) upon a single object. In the next step, the mind thus concentrated can now confront and even embrace the reality of existence, which would otherwise appear terrible to the ego, i.e. the impermanent, insubstantial and unsatisfactory nature of conditioned things. Thus ‘concentration’ is the necessary condition for the arising of ‘knowledge and vision of things as they really are’ (*yathābūta-nāna-dassana*). This leads to ‘withdrawal’ (*nibbida*) from the ordinary concerns of worldly life, which in turn is the condition for ‘dispassion’ (*virāga*), i.e. a serene imperturbability. In dependence upon dispassion arises ‘liberation’ (*vimutti*), and hence ‘knowledge of destruction of the poisonous fluxes’ (*āsavakkhayanāna*). These final two are equivalent respectively to enlightenment and the consequent happy knowledge that, being enlightened, one is utterly and irreversibly free of the perils of conditioned existence. As this exposition should make clear, the purpose of the Buddha’s exposition of

conditionality is not metaphysical speculation, but a means to liberation itself.

It is thus clear that the Buddha recognized the possibility of a positive trend within Dependent Origination. U Sangharakshita has suggested this could be called a 'spiral' path because it takes the form of a gradual transition 'upwards' from the merely cyclic trend of the twelve familiar *nidānas* (the 'endless round' of rebirth). The teaching was not merely theoretical but also practical – a step-by-step soteriology, demonstrating, at least in outline, how to make one positive mental condition arise out of another, and leading (as an initial destination) to a perfectly equanimous and concentrated state, i.e. *samādhi*. From that state one may progress onwards to a confrontation with the facts of reality that might otherwise be too daunting to contemplate, i.e. impermanence, etc. The twelve positive links of Dependent Origination can thus be divided into two broad divisions: mundane (*laukika*) and supramundane (*lokuttara*).

### **Conditioned Co-production Continued**

The three *lakṣhanas* are the fundamental expression of the Buddha's insight into the nature of conditioned existence. They are complemented by a more dynamic interpretation of it.

This way of expressing the principle makes clear that it concerns what arises, what appears. It makes no sense to apply it to what is unconditioned, which by definition cannot arise in dependence on conditions. Unconditioned reality, is free from both the *lakṣhaṇa* of *anityatā* or impermanence and from *duḥkha* or suffering. It is, again by definition, *anatman*, devoid of inherent existence, but here this is spoken of in terms of *śūnyatā*, usually translated as 'emptiness', which is what it literally means, but in Buddhist philosophy it refers to the lack of any fixed nature to all things. *Śūnyatā* is the lack of any definable nature to unconditioned reality, which is reality viewed from beyond the world of appearance.

*Pratitya-samutpāda* is the primary law underlying phenomenal reality, the world as it appears. It is all conditioned, whatever arises, arises in dependence on conditions. Whatever arises means whatever appears, whatever presents itself to us. So, whatever can present itself to us, must do so in dependence of conditions; and must itself provide a condition for further arising.

The statement *Whatever arises, arises in dependence on conditions*, implies regularity. The Buddha refers to this as *niyamatā*, orderedness or even 'law-bound', in the

scientific sense of 'law', *Dhamma-niyamitā*.<sup>10</sup> All conditioned relationships are ordered or regular: when the same set of conditions are present, the same phenomena arise. If this were not so, the principle of conditionality would have no meaning, since anything could follow anything else and the idea of conditions would be redundant.

It must be stressed that the principle of conditionality, *whatever arises, arises in dependence of conditions*, covers not merely objective appearances, but also the inner world of the *experiencer* – the one who knows appearance. According to Buddhism, the subject is also conditioned. One can't have subject without object and one cannot have object without subject. They are co-dependent, depending on each other as well as upon previous conditions.

The question then arises, what is it that makes the world appear as it does? Western thinkers simply *assumed* a preceding structure to consciousness. But they never made clear why that structure is there or where it came from. Their concern is more with an analysis of the experiential situation, analysing the pre-existing categories and forms that must be present for us to experience anything at all. They are looking at

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<sup>10</sup> Nidānavaggo, Sec.20; SN: 225

the moment of experience, rather than where that comes from. From the Buddhist perspective, the question is, what then are the conditions in dependence upon which consciousness is structured like that?

Buddhism argues that the particularity of the experience is itself conditioned, because consciousness itself is conditioned. Buddhism importantly, adds to the co-arising of subject and object; the co-arising of consciousness. Buddhism never speaks of the subject and object independent of consciousness. It does not conceive of consciousness as if it is simply part of subject. So, every moment of arising is *an arising of subject and object in consciousness*.

All three, subject, object, and consciousness, are conditioned by the previous moments. The analysis of the chain of conditions can be pushed much further, even to our entry into this life, even prior to this life. So that the particular ways in which experience arises now, are dependent upon the ways in which it has arisen in the past. This begs the question: *How did it ever start?* Here we come to the problem of *origins*. Buddhism suggests, beginning with the Buddha's own response to Vaccaghotta, mentioned above, that since the notion of origins is one that arises within the framework of our

conceptualising about experience, it is in principle impossible to get beyond it, and outside it. We can never come to something that originates origination. All we can do is to press the enquiry further and further back, from condition to prior condition. This is why the Buddha refuse to answer the question: 'is the world finite or infinite?', one the *Apyākṛitas*. It is in principle impossible to get to a first cause.

Buddhism refuses to give a *meta*-answer to these questions, since that would lead only to a set of speculative views, which would inevitably be misleading. It simply says that this particular moment of appearance arises, because of the moments of appearance of subject, object and consciousness in the past. Most particularly, this particular appearance in the human world, arises because of our actions (karmas) in the past. We have a human body with human sense organs and a human consciousness because of the way we acted in the past, even in past lives. Our particular experience arises as it does, an experience of space and time, and causality within the human realm, because of our previous ethical conduct, and our previous ignorance or wisdom. Those previous conditions set up the conditions for us experience as we do now.

It is important to note that, when we speak of the

forms of appearance that consciousness takes as determined by actions (karmas) in the past, we do not mean that all features of that appearance are determined in that way. When it is said that consciousness determines being, it does not determine *absolutely*. Here the issue is the general form of appearance as a human rather than any other sort of being. The trace effects of positive (*kusala*) or negative (*akusala*) actions in the past are carried in one's present consciousness, determining whether it is a human consciousness or not. However, that does not determine all aspects of one's situation, which will be also be governed by laws operating under other *niyamas*. A good man can be born in bad circumstances, as poor and socially oppressed, and a bad man can be born in good circumstances, as rich and high in the social hierarchy.

### **Dr. Ambedkar's Perspective on Dependent Origination and the Illusion of Caste**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's profound understanding of Buddha's central teaching of *paṭicca-sam-uppāda* (dependent origination) provides a revolutionary framework for dismantling the false construct of caste. Through his interpretation of this fundamental Buddhist principle, Ambedkar demonstrates how the caste system represents a fundamental

misunderstanding of reality itself.

## **The Dynamic Nature of Existence**

Ambedkar's insight that "Being is becoming"<sup>11</sup> captures the essence of dependent origination—that all phenomena exist not as fixed entities but as processes in constant flux. This understanding directly challenges the rigid categorizations that underpin caste ideology. If being itself is a process of becoming, then the notion of fixed, inherent caste identities becomes philosophically untenable.

The Buddha's teaching of *Sunyata* (emptiness), as Ambedkar explains, does not advocate nihilism but rather reveals "the perpetual changes occurring at every moment in the phenomenal world."<sup>12</sup> This emptiness of inherent existence is not a void but the very condition that makes transformation possible. As Ambedkar observes, "it is on account of Sunyata that everything becomes possible; without it nothing in the world would be possible."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ambedkar, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches Vol. 11, Dr. Ambedkar Foundation Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2014, p. 240

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 241

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 241

## **Caste as Mental Construction**

Building upon his famous essay in *Annihilation of Caste* that caste is merely "a mental notion" and that "nothing is eternal,"<sup>14</sup> Ambedkar's Buddhist perspective reveals caste as fundamentally at odds with the law of dependent origination. Since all phenomena arise through interconnected causes and conditions, no social category can possess the fixed, inherent nature that caste ideology claims.

The classical Buddhist text *Vajrasuchi* by Ashvaghosha, which Ambedkar have known, provides "a masterly logical deconstruction of the notion of caste in all its aspects, showing it to be a mere mental construction, empty of any objective reality." This aligns perfectly with dependent origination's teaching that phenomena lack independent, unchanging essence.

## **Wrong View as the Root of Social Hierarchy**

From the perspective of dependent origination, caste represents a classic example of *micchaditthi* (wrong view)—the fundamental misperception of reality that

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<sup>14</sup> Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches Vol. 1, Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2014, p.68

the Buddha identified as the root of suffering. This wrong view manifests in several ways:

**Reification of the Impermanent:** Caste ideology treats fluid, conditioned social arrangements as permanent, natural categories. It mistakes temporary configurations of social, economic, and political conditions for eternal truths about human nature.

**Denial of Interconnectedness:** By creating rigid hierarchical divisions, caste obscures the fundamental interconnectedness that dependent origination reveals. It denies that all beings arise through the same web of interdependent conditions.

**Attachment to False Categories:** The caste system creates and reinforces attachment to artificial identities, preventing recognition of the empty, conditioned nature of all social constructions.

### **Karma Misunderstood**

Ambedkar's Buddhist understanding clarifies a crucial point often misused to justify caste oppression. While consciousness may carry traces of past actions (*kusala* and *akusala*), these do not determine one's social circumstances in the mechanistic way caste ideology suggests. A good human can be born in bad circumstances, as poor and socially oppressed, and a bad human can be born in good circumstances, as rich

and high in the social hierarchy.

Caste, therefore, as I would say *has nothing to do with karma based birth and is not a sanskara in the sense of a conditioned arising*. Rather than being a natural consequence of moral law, caste represents a distortion of understanding that actually perpetuates *akusala* (unwholesome) actions through systematic oppression.

### **The Possibility of Transformation**

Perhaps most significantly, Ambedkar's emphasis on impermanence offers hope for social transformation. His observation that "if things were not subject to continual change but were permanent and unchangeable, the evolution of all of life from one kind to the other and the development of living things would come to a dead stop"<sup>15</sup> applies equally to social systems.

The caste system's claim to permanence is not only false but actively harmful, as it attempts to freeze social relations in patterns that deny the fundamental

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<sup>15</sup> Ambedkar, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Vol. 11, Dr. Ambedkar Foundation Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2014, p. 241

Buddhist truth of change and interconnectedness. Recognition of dependent origination reveals that just as caste arose through particular historical conditions, it can be dismantled through different conditions.

Dr. Ambedkar's Buddhist perspective on dependent origination provides both a philosophical foundation for rejecting caste and a practical path toward social transformation. By revealing caste as a mental construction based on wrong view rather than natural law, dependent origination opens the possibility for creating social arrangements based on recognition of our fundamental interconnectedness and shared capacity for awakening.

In this light, the struggle against caste becomes not merely a political necessity but a spiritual imperative—part of the broader Buddhist project of overcoming ignorance and the suffering it creates. As Ambedkar understood, true liberation requires both individual awakening to the nature of reality and collective transformation of the social conditions that perpetuate illusion and oppression.

## *Chapter Four*

### **PATICCA-SAM-UPPĀDA: SOME KEY TAKE AWAYS**

According to the Buddhist tradition, Siddhattha Gotama spent forty-nine days in deep meditative contemplation before attaining direct insight into *paticca-sam-uppāda* (dependent origination). During the first seven days following his awakening, he contemplated this profound principle in both its forward and reverse order. In its forward sequence, he understood how phenomena arise in dependence upon necessary conditions. In its reverse sequence, he realized how the cessation of those conditions leads to the cessation of the phenomena that depend upon them. Through this contemplation, he clearly discerned the twelve links that explain the arising and cessation of conditioned existence.

In Chapter Three, we present the interpretations of *paticca-sam-uppāda* offered by a range of Buddhist scholars and thinkers. In the following section, we outline our own understanding as developed through years of study, dialogue, and collective reflection

within the Buddhist Intellectual Collective India. Presented in point form, these reflections represent the framework through which we approach *paṭicca-sam-uppāda* as one of the foundational principles for understanding the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha.

Before presenting our understanding of *paṭicca-sam-uppāda*, we wish to clarify that the approach developed within the Buddhist Intellectual Collective India (BICI) differs in important ways from the mainstream interpretation. Our perspective has emerged through sustained study of the Buddha's teachings as well as their contextualisation within our lived experience in India.

From our point of view, the dominant interpretation of *paṭicca-sam-uppāda* is primarily grounded in the perspective of *dukkha*. *Dukkha* is one of the three marks of existence in the Buddhist framework, the other two being *anattā* and *anicca*. From this perspective, the central concern is liberation from suffering, and *paṭicca-sam-uppāda* is understood principally as an explanation of the arising and cessation of *dukkha*.

We do not disagree with this interpretation. Indeed, many of us in the Buddhist Intellectual Collective

India (BICI) accept and appreciate it. However, we do not regard it as the only way of understanding *paṭicca-sam-uppāda*. Rather, we engage with other approaches that illuminate different dimensions of the Buddha's teaching.

Two such interpretations, offered by distinguished Buddhist teachers, are presented in Appendices 1 and 2. The first is by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, and the second by Bhante Punnañi Mahāthera. Both offer distinctive, intellectually rich readings of *paṭicca-samuppāda* that resonate deeply with our own perspectives and lived experience in the Indian context. Although both place *dukkha* at the centre of their analyses, they also provide profound insights into *anattā*. Their explanations of the nature of the self as *no-self* are both philosophically sophisticated and deeply illuminating.

Within the BICI, however, we seek to extend the discussion further. We study *paṭicca-sam-uppāda* not only as the law that explains the arising and cessation of *dukkha*, nor only as the principle that reveals *anattā*, but also as the law that discloses the nature of reality through the category of *anicca*.

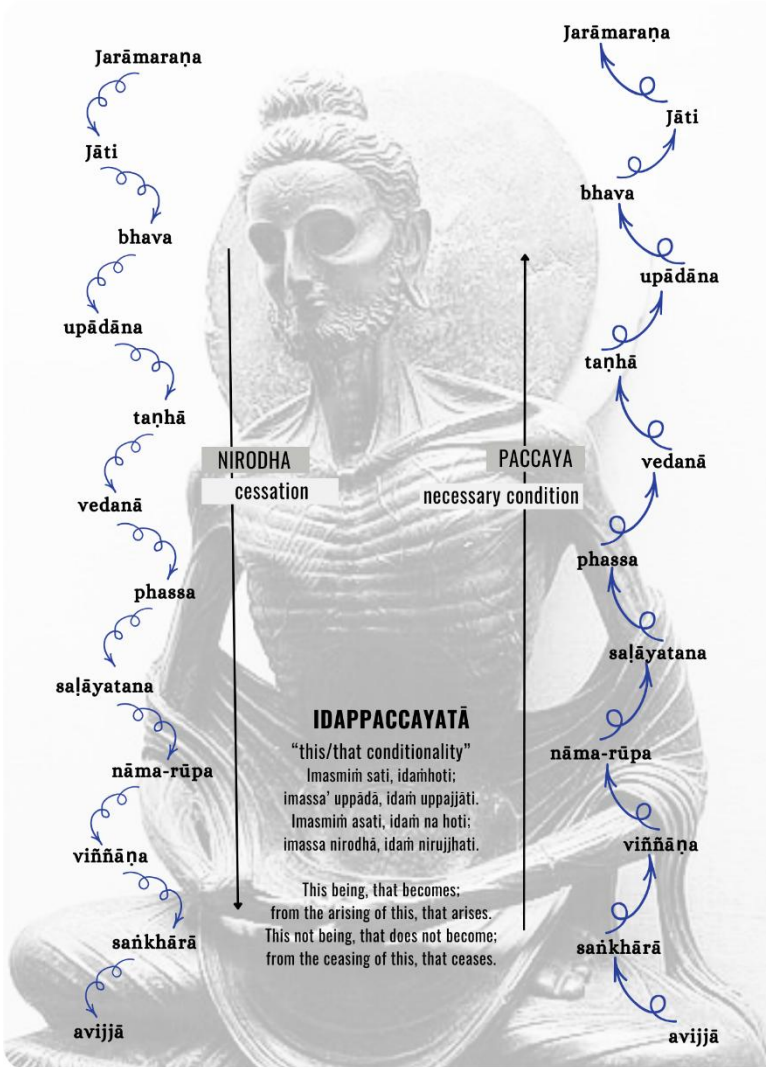
Accordingly, our inquiry begins with *anicca*, which we understand as dense energy in a continuous state of impermanence. We regard *anicca* as the fundamental

key to understanding the remaining aspects of dependent origination. From this standpoint, we investigate the nature of impermanence and explore *avijjā* as the most foundational and fundamental necessary condition underlying all other conditions and states described in *paticca-sam-uppāda*.

## PATICCA-SAM-UPĀDDA

### DUKKHA

DISCOMFORT, PAIN, LAMENTATION, GRIEF, SORROW, SADNESS, FEAR, ANXIETY,  
DEPRESSION, GUILT, HOPELESSNESS, DEJECTION, AGONY, AGITATION, DESPAIR,  
DISSAPOINTMENT ...



## A. Practice, Inquiry, and the Search for Truth

Many of us in the Buddhist Intellectual Collective India (BICI) are educators, researchers, and practitioners of *satipaṭṭhāna*. Most have completed the ten-day *Vipassanā* meditation course and have experienced, firsthand, both the physical and mental challenges that such intensive practice entails. Although our motivations for undertaking *Vipassanā* differ, we are united by a common commitment to understanding the Buddha Dhamma through both study and practice.

For some among us, meditation began as a means of understanding our thoughts, emotions, and lived experiences. For others, it has been fundamentally a truth-seeking endeavour—a sincere attempt to understand what Siddhattha Gotama himself discovered through direct experience. We seek to understand why he regarded *paticca-sam-uppāda* (dependent origination) as so central to his teaching that he identified insight into it with insight into the Dhamma itself.

For some practitioners, personal *dukkha* became the impetus for undertaking *Vipassanā*.

Others encountered deeper forms of *dukkha* during or even after meditation practice, as previously unnoticed patterns of attachment, craving, and suffering came into clearer view. These experiences have led us to reflect on a profound question: What inspired Siddhattha Gotama to persist in deep meditative contemplation for forty-nine days, enduring immense physical hardship while remaining unwavering in his search for truth? What was so significant that he continued his inquiry until he arrived at a direct insight and realization of the true nature of reality beyond appearance?

## **B. The Universality of Dukkha**

We believe that Siddhattha Gotama's unwavering commitment to deep meditative inquiry was possible only because the *dukkha* he experienced and witnessed was profound enough to compel him to seek its complete understanding and cessation. Such a sustained and demanding practice of *satipatṭhāna* was not undertaken out of mere intellectual curiosity, but out of an urgent need to understand the nature, causes, and cessation of suffering through direct experience.

Throughout the *suttas*, the Buddha describes *dukkha* in many forms. It encompasses not only physical pain but also grief, sorrow, lamentation, distress, anxiety, fear, despair, guilt, disappointment, frustration, helplessness, and the many forms of dissatisfaction that accompany human existence. Although these experiences differ in intensity and expression, they share a common characteristic: they are universal features of conditioned existence.

Regardless of our social location, economic circumstances, cultural background, or personal beliefs, no human being is entirely free from *dukkha*. While its forms and immediate causes vary from one individual to another, the reality of *dukkha* remains universal. It is this shared human condition that forms the starting point of the Buddha's inquiry and the foundation upon which the understanding of *paticca-sam-uppāda* rests.

### **C. The Body, the Self, and the Experience of Dukkha**

The universality of *dukkha* gives rise to a fundamental question: Where is *dukkha*

experienced, and who is it that experiences it? In ordinary experience, the immediate answer appears self-evident—it is "I" the “self” who suffer. Yet this seemingly obvious response conceals a deeper philosophical problem. Who is this "I"? What is the "self" to which we so readily refer?

Rather than accepting the existence of an independent enduring “self” as self-evident, the Buddha invites us to investigate it through direct observation. In ordinary experience, the “self” is commonly identified with the body and with the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, reason and memories associated with it. This identification appears so natural that it is rarely questioned.

The Buddha observed that *dukkha* is experienced through the body, which not only occupies space, but also occupies time. It is within the space of the body that the past, the present and the future experienced as birth (*Jāti*), ageing (*Jarā*), illness, pleasure, pain, and death (*Marana*), are encountered. Likewise, it is through the body and mind that craving, attachment, fear, grief, and other conditioned

experiences arise. The body is therefore not the cause of *dukkha* in itself; rather, it is the conditioned basis through which *dukkha* is experienced and understood in time.

Recognising this, Siddhattha Gotama turned his inquiry inward. Instead of seeking answers through metaphysical speculation or inherited belief, he investigated the body and mind through sustained meditative observation. By carefully attending to experience as it unfolded from moment to moment, he discerned the conditioned processes underlying the arising of *dukkha*. This investigation ultimately culminated in his realization of *paticca-sam-uppāda*, revealing that what we conventionally call the "self" is not a permanent or independent entity but a dynamic process that arises and ceases in dependence upon conditions confined to the boundary of the body.

#### **D. The Five Aggregates and the Process of Becoming**

This inquiry led to a deeper question: What is the body that we conventionally identify as the

"I," the "self," or the "person"? Through sustained observation of his own experience and careful meditative investigation, Siddhattha Gotama discerned that what we ordinarily regard as a person is not a single, permanent, or independent entity, but a dynamic collection of interdependent processes. He analysed these processes as the *pañcakkhandhā* (five aggregates): *rūpa* (form or the physical body), *vedanā* (feeling or sensation), *saññā* (perception), *saṅkhārā* (mental formations, volitions, and thought-emotion), and *viññāṇa* (consciousness).

These five aggregates arise and cease in dependence upon conditions. They are impermanent, continually changing, and subject to time. Yet it is through attachment to these conditioned processes that the notions of "I," "me," and "mine" emerge. In the Buddha's analysis, what we ordinarily regard as the self is merely a conventional designation for the ever-changing interplay of these five aggregates, each arising and passing away in accordance with conditions.

The Buddha further recognised that the

appropriation of the five aggregates as "I," "me," and "mine" gives rise to *bhava*—the conditioned personality, or ongoing process of becoming through which personal existence is continually constituted. Through this ongoing process of identification, appropriation, clinging and becoming, the cycle of *dukkha* is sustained. The Buddha called this process *upādāna*. To understand *paticca-sam-uppāda*, therefore, is to understand how attachment gives rise to clinging and appropriation, how clinging and appropriation conditions becoming, and how, with the cessation of these conditions, the process of becoming itself comes to an end.

## E. Craving and the Process of Clinging

This raises another fundamental question: What gives rise to the sense of personal identity? What causes us to appropriate and personalise the five aggregates as "I," "me," and "mine"?

Through careful investigation, the Buddha identified *upādāna* as conditioned by *taṇhā* (craving). He experienced *taṇhā* as the

necessary condition for the arising of *upādāna* (appropriation, clinging, or personalisation). Far more than a simple desire, *taṇhā* is a deeply conditioned tendency of the mind to seek, grasp, resist, and possess. It is the force that inclines the mind to identify with experience and to transform what is conditioned into what is perceived as "mine."

When craving remains unexamined, it develops into *upādāna* - the appropriation of experiences, views, identities, possessions, and relationships as "I," "me," and "mine," as though they truly belonged to a permanent independent self, existing in and for itself. Through this process of personalisation, the illusion of an enduring "I" is continually reinforced. Thus, *taṇhā* does not merely give rise to desire; it conditions *upādāna*, and *upādāna*, in turn, gives rise to *bhava* - the conditioned personality, or ongoing process of becoming through which *dukkha* is sustained.

Seen in this way, *taṇhā* is not simply an emotional impulse but one of the pivotal conditions within *paticca-sam-uppāda*. To understand the arising of *dukkha*, therefore, is

to understand how *taṇhā* (craving) conditions *upādāna* (clinging and appropriation), how clinging and appropriation gives rise to *bhava*, and how *bhava* perpetuates the cycle of conditioned existence.

## **F. Contact and the Arising of Feeling**

This leads to another important question: What is the necessary condition for the arising of *taṇhā*?

Through careful investigation, the Buddha identified *vedanā* (feeling or sensation) as the necessary condition for the arising of *taṇhā*. Craving does not arise independently or without cause. Rather, it arises in dependence upon feelings that are experienced as pleasant, unpleasant, or neither pleasant nor unpleasant at the level of sensations.

This, in turn, raises a further question: How do these sensation/feelings arise? According to the Buddha, their necessary condition is *phassa* (contact).

In the Buddha's analysis, *phassa* arises through the coming together of three conditions: a

sense faculty, its corresponding object, and the consciousness associated with that encounter. When these three converge, contact arises; from contact arises *vedanā*—the immediate experience of feeling, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

Feeling itself is not the problem. It is a natural and unavoidable dimension of human experience. However, when feelings are not observed with wisdom and mindfulness, pleasant feelings condition craving for more, unpleasant feelings give rise to aversion and resistance, and neutral feelings become the ground for indifference and non-knowing. In this way, *phassa* becomes the necessary condition for *vedanā*, and *vedanā*, when left unexamined, becomes the necessary condition for *taṇhā*, thereby sustaining the cycle of *paticca-sam-uppāda*.

## G. The Six Sense Bases

This raises a further question: Contact between what? The Buddha explained that *phassa* (contact) arises when each of our sense faculties encounters its corresponding object. He referred to these as the *saḷāyatana* (the six

sense bases). They consist of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, together with the visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangible objects, and mental phenomena with which they come into contact.

Our engagement with the world is therefore mediated through these six sense bases. Every sight we see, every sound we hear, every smell, taste, bodily sensation, and thought enters experience through one of these channels. It is only when a sense faculty meets its corresponding object, together with the appropriate consciousness, that *phassa* (contact) arises. From contact arises feeling (*vedanā*), and from feeling, when not observed with wisdom, craving (*taṇhā*) follows.

The Buddha's insight was that our experience of reality is not immediate or independent. Rather, it is a conditioned process that unfolds through the six sense bases. Understanding this process is essential for understanding how experience itself arises and how the cycle of *dukkha* is continually sustained.

## H. Name-Matter-Form (Nāma-Rūpa)

But what is the necessary condition for *saṁāyatana*? Through careful observation, the Buddha realized that the six sense bases arise in dependence upon *nāma-rūpa* (concept-substance-form). Existence (as in what exist in the universe) is constituted through the dynamic relationship between material substance form (*rūpa*) and the conceptual processes (*nāma*) that manifest as physical difference in reality. Together, they provide the necessary conditions for the rise and functions of the six sense bases.

From the standpoint of ordinary experience, reality presents itself in countless material forms—differing in shape, size, texture, movement, breath, and other physical characteristics. Yet the Buddha recognized that these forms are always experienced in relation to the mind that perceives them. In other words, our experience of reality is shaped by the inseparable interplay of mentality and materiality.

The meditative attainments known as the *arūpa*

*jhānas* further illuminate this insight. As attachment to material form (*rūpa jhānas*) is progressively transcended and dissolved, the meditator enters increasingly subtle states of awareness, beginning with the sphere of infinite space. These experiences demonstrate that perception itself is conditioned and that the way reality is experienced depends upon the conditions through which it is known.

## I. Consciousness (**Viññāṇa**)

As Siddhattha Gotama continued his investigation of *nāma-rūpa*, he turned his attention to *viññāṇa* (consciousness), recognising consciousness as an indispensable dimension of reality, inseparable from the dynamic interplay of *nāma-rūpa*. He realised that reality cannot be understood solely in terms of materiality or conceptuality. Rather, experience arises through the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between *nāma-rūpa* and *viññāṇa*, each conditioning and sustaining the other. Material form becomes meaningful only in relation to consciousness, while consciousness itself arises only in dependence upon *nāma-rūpa*. Neither exists as an independent or self-

sufficient reality.

This insight is further illuminated through the *arūpa jhānas*. As attachment to material form and conceptual constructions is progressively transcended, the practitioner enters increasingly subtle dimensions of meditative awareness. One such attainment is the sphere of infinite consciousness, in which consciousness itself becomes the object of direct observation. This meditative experience reveals that consciousness is itself conditioned rather than permanent or self-existing, deepening the understanding that both *viññāṇa* and *nāma-rūpa* arise only in dependence upon conditions.

## J. Volitional Formations (*Saṅkhāra*)

This leads to another fundamental question: What is the necessary condition for the arising of *viññāṇa* (consciousness)? The Buddha explained that consciousness arises in dependence upon *saṅkhārā*. Although *saṅkhārā* is commonly translated as "volitional formations," "mental formations," or "conditioning activities," we understand the

term more broadly. From our perspective, *saṅkhārā* refers to the subtle conditioned processes that underlie the arising of conscious experience. In this sense, we find it helpful to draw an analogy with what contemporary science describes as the dynamic activity of the quantum realm. We offer this comparison not as an equation between Buddhist doctrine and modern physics, but as a conceptual analogy that may help contemporary readers appreciate the conditioned and processual nature of reality.

Later Buddhist traditions also describe *saṅkhārā* in terms of *kalāpas* - extremely subtle units of materiality characterised by *uppāda* (arising), *ṭhiti* (momentary persistence), and *bhaṅga* (dissolution). These are understood as the smallest observable constituents of conditioned existence, continually arising, persisting for a brief moment, and dissolving with extraordinary rapidity. Whether interpreted literally or phenomenologically, this description highlights the impermanent and dynamic nature of all conditioned phenomena.

This understanding is further enriched through the meditative attainments of the *arūpa jhānas*. As perception becomes increasingly refined, the practitioner transcends attachment to material form and enters progressively subtler dimensions of experience. One such attainment is the sphere of Nothingness (*ākāṅkakhāyatanā*), in which the apparent solidity of phenomena gives way to the direct experience of the absence of any substantial or enduring "thing." From this perspective, reality is understood not as a collection of permanent entities (*nāma-rūpa*) but as an ongoing process of conditioned arising and ceasing.

Viewed in this way, *saṅkhārā* are not static objects but dynamic conditioned processes that make the arising of consciousness possible. Understanding their conditioned nature is therefore essential to understanding *paṭicca-sam-uppāda* and the Buddha's analysis of experience.

## **K. Non-Knowing (Avijjā)**

But what is the necessary condition for *saṅkhārā*? The Buddha traced their arising to

*avijjā* (non-knowing). In the context of *paticca-sam-uppāda*, *avijjā* does not simply mean the absence of information or knowledge. Rather, it refers to a fundamental misapprehension of reality - a failure to see things as they truly are. From our perspective, this state of non-knowing is characterised by the collapse of the distinction between subject and object. The observer becomes inseparable from what is observed, and the perceiver becomes identified with what is perceived. Instead of seeing experience as a conditioned process, one experiences it as an enduring and independent reality. It is from this fundamental misunderstanding that the entire chain of conditioned existence unfolds.

The Buddha further described increasingly refined states of meditative experience, culminating in the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*). This attainment points to the extraordinary subtlety of consciousness and the limits of ordinary conceptual thought. Yet even this exalted state remains conditioned. It is not liberation itself but a profound meditative experience that reveals how deeply conditioned

awareness can become.

Understanding *avijjā* is therefore essential to understanding *paticca-sam-uppāda*. When non-knowing is present, conditioned formations arise; when non-knowing is fully understood and brought to an end through wisdom (*paññā*), the entire chain of dependent origination begins to cease.

## **L. The Nature of Non-Knowing**

However, what is the nature of *avijjā*? The Buddha described *avijjā* as the failure to perceive reality as it truly is. It is a state in which the impermanent, conditioned, and selfless nature of phenomena remains unseen. For this reason, insight into *anicca* (impermanence) becomes indispensable to the dissolution of non-knowing. As one observes the continuous arising and ceasing of all conditioned phenomena, the illusion of permanence gradually gives way to wisdom.

From our perspective, this dynamic process may be understood as pointing toward a reality characterised by constant change and relational

existence rather than fixed and enduring entities.

In this sense, the Buddhist notion of *suññatā* (emptiness) may be understood as the absence of inherent or independent existence in all conditioned phenomena. This philosophical insight was later developed with remarkable depth by Nāgārjuna, who argued that all phenomena are empty of intrinsic nature because they arise only in dependence upon causes and conditions.

Seen in this way, *avijjā* is not merely a lack of knowledge or ignorance (as is generally understood) but a fundamental misperception of the conditioned nature of reality. Wisdom (*paññā*) arises when this misperception is replaced by direct insight into impermanence, dependent origination, and emptiness.

## **M. After Thought**

The Buddha identified *dukkha* as a universal characteristic of conditioned existence and made it the starting point of his inquiry. In seeking to understand its origin, he discovered

that what we conventionally call the "self" is not a permanent or independent entity but a conditioned process arising in dependence upon causes and conditions. Through this investigation, he realised that all conditioned phenomena are marked by *anicca* (dense energy in a state of impermanence), *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness), and *anattā* (non-self). These three characteristics form the foundation of the Buddha's understanding of reality.

The direct realization of these truths through wisdom and meditative insight brings about the cessation of ignorance, craving, and suffering. This is the realization of *Nibbāna* - the end of the cycle of dependent origination and the complete liberation taught by the Buddha.

Before we close our brief on the *paticca-sam-uppāda*, we want to direct the attention of the reader to Babasaheb Ambedkar's very profound description of *anicca* as explicated in the Buddha and His Dhamma under the title "To Believe that all compound things are impermanent is Dhamma". He asserts:

This doctrine of impermanence has three aspects. There is the impermanence of

composite things. There is the impermanence of the individual being. There is the impermanence of the self nature of conditioned things. The impermanence of composite things has been well explained by the great Buddhist philosopher Asanga. "All things," says Asanga, "are produced by the combination of causes and conditions and have no independent noumenon of their own. When the combination is dissolved, their destruction ensues. "The body of a living being consists of the combination of four great elements, viz., earth, water, fire and air, and when this combination is resolved into the four component elements, dissolution ensues. "This is what is called the impermanence of a composite entity." Impermanence of the living individual is best described by the formula—being is becoming. In this sense a being of a past moment has lived, but does not live nor will he live. The being of a future moment will live but has not lived nor does he live; the being of the present moment does live but has not lived and will not live. In short, a human being is always changing, always growing. He is not the same at two different moments of his life. The third phase of the doctrine of

impermanence is somewhat difficult for a common man to follow. To realize that every living being will die sometime or other is a very easy matter to understand. But it is not quite so easy to understand how a human being can go on changing—becoming— while he is alive. “How is this possible?” The Buddha’s answer was, “This is possible because all is impermanent.” This later on gave rise to what is called *Sunnya Vad*. The Buddhist *Sunnya* does not mean nihilism out and out. It only means the perpetual changes occurring at every moment in the phenomenal world. Very few realize that it is on account of *Sunnya* that everything becomes possible; without it nothing in the world would be possible. It is on the impermanence of the nature of all things that the possibility of all other things depends. If things were not subject to continual change but were permanent and unchangeable, the evolution of all of life from one kind to the other and the development of living things would come to a dead stop. If human beings died or changed but had continued always in the same state what would the result have been? The progress of the human race would have come to a dead halt. Immense difficulty

would have arisen if *Sunnya* is regarded as being void or empty. But this is not so. *Sunnya* is like a point which has substance but neither breadth nor length. All things are impermanent was the doctrine preached by the Buddha. What is the moral of this doctrine of the Buddha? This is a much more important question. The moral of this doctrine of impermanence is simple. Do not be attached to anything. It is to cultivate detachment, detachment from property, from friends, etc., that he said “All these are impermanent.”

## **N. Concluding Remarks**

To conclude, our interpretation of the *paticca-sam-uppāda* is that *avijjā* represents a primordial state of non-knowing in which the ordinary distinction between observer and observed dissolves. At this most fundamental level of *paticca-sam-uppāda*, subject and object are no longer experienced as separate realities. The observer becomes inseparable from what is observed, and what is observed is no longer distinguished from the observer. Experience exists simply as it is, prior to the conceptual distinctions through which ordinary consciousness constructs reality.

From this perspective, *avijjā* is not merely the absence of knowledge but a condition in which there is no independent observer standing apart from experience. All that remains is conditioned being itself, unfolding according to its own nature. Our endeavour, as seekers of truth within the Buddha Dhamma, grounded fundamentally in the path carved out by Babasaheb, is to investigate what *anicca* ultimately signifies and what this understanding reveals about the true nature of reality that, as the Buddha asserted, leads to *Nibbāna*; a state of freedom of mind and axiological stability.

Within the Buddhist Intellectual Collective India, our approach to understanding and explaining *paticca-sam-uppāda* is informed by both the Buddha's teachings and contemporary scientific inquiry. We believe that the Navayāna tradition must do more than simply engage in dialogue with science, as envisioned by Babasaheb Ambedkar. Its propositions should also be open to critical examination and capable of withstanding rigorous scientific scrutiny. In our view, such an approach not only honours Babasaheb's vision of a rational and socially engaged Buddhism but also keeps the Buddha Dhamma relevant to the intellectual challenges of the modern world.

This, however, does not mean that we dismiss or undervalue other interpretations of *paticca-sam-uppāda*. The Buddhist tradition has long accommodated diverse perspectives on dependent origination, each highlighting different dimensions of the Buddha's teaching. For example, some scholars and practitioners understand *paticca-sam-uppāda* primarily as a framework for liberation from suffering, interpreting *avijjā* as ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. Others understand *avijjā* more broadly as a state of non-awareness or insentience. While our interpretation differs in certain respects, we recognise these perspectives as valuable contributions to the continuing study and understanding of the Buddha Dhamma.

## *Appendix*

In this section we bring together two critical interpretations of the *paticca-sam-uppāda* by two Buddhist Bhikkhus. One by

Buddhadasa on *Dependent Co-arising Controversies. Buddhas's Original Vision of Dependent Co-rising*. Under the Bodhi Tree (2017) Buddhahasa Bhikkhu (Translated edited and introduced by Santikaro. Chapter 15, Pp.123-126 and 129-130. This text is published in Appendix I.

The second is by Bhante Dr.M. Punnaaji Mahathera, another Bhikkhu who provides a refreshing and unique view on the *paticca-sam-uppāda*. We have transcribed his talk titled ***paticcasamuppada in a nutshell*** in original and accessed the same on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 from the link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kBw8TSzB3Q>. This transcript is published as Appendix II.

The reason that we have incorporated these two talks into this book is because both these thought leaders are much discussed within the Buddhist Intellectual Collective India. Further we belief it is critical for members of the BICI to deepen and contrast the

Navayāna perspective in the light of these two very insightful Buddhist practitioners and theorist as we begin to think through about the *paticca-sam-uppāda* within the Navayāna tradition.

The *paticca-sam-uppāda* constitutes the foundational theory of Buddhism. When the Venerable Ānanda noted to the Buddha that the dependent origination was easy to understand and somewhat shallow, the Buddha replied:

Ānanda! Ānanda! Don't say such a thing! Don't ever say such a thing! *paticca-sam-uppāda* is a profound teaching. Its characteristic feature is that it is profound. The various groups of sentient beings don't understand what we teach about this; they are not able to penetrate the *paticca-sam-uppāda* and so their minds are befuddled just like a ball of twine which becomes all tangled up and knotted; just like a disorderly pile of tangled pieces of short threads; just like an untended thicket of grass or reeds which become all interwoven and entangled – just so are those beings ensnared and unable to free themselves from the wheel of existence, the conditions of suffering, the states of hell and ruin. (Nidana Sutta SN 12.60)

## *Appendix I*

Excerpts from “Buddhahasa Bhikkhu (Translated edited and introduced by Santikaro Under the Bodhi Tree- Buddhas’s Original Vision of Dependent Co-riasing (2017). Chapter 15 - Dependent Co-arising Controversies. Pp.123-126 and 129-132.”

Buddhadasa is interesting in the ways he begins discussing the *paticca-sam-uppāda*. He states

...Friends, that young child, relying upon the growth and development of the sense faculties plays with childish playthings, namely, with toy plows, with pots and pans, with spinning tops, with pinwheels, at scooping sand with leaves, with toy carts, and with toy bows and arrows. Friends, that child, relying upon the growth and development of the sense faculties is delighted with and immersed in the five sensual values. These, cause him to pander to himself through the eyes with forms, through the ears with sounds, through the nose with odors, through the tongue with flavors, and through the body with touches, all of which are desirable, delightful, pleasing, loveable, provocative of sensuality, and the bases of lust.

That child, on seeing a form with the eyes . . . , on hearing a sound with the ears . . . , on smelling an odor with the nose . . . , on tasting a flavor with the tongue . . . , on experiencing a touch with the body . . . , on cognizing an “idea” with mind, is lustily pleased with the form, sound, or whatever that is agreeable and is offended by the form, sound, or whatever that is disagreeable. Consequently, that child’s mind is deficient in virtue, lives without mindfulness regarding body, does not clearly realize according to reality the liberation of mind and liberation through wisdom that are the remainderless quenching of the multitude of evil, unwholesome dhammas. That child, once conditioned by liking and disliking in this way, when partaking of any feeling whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant, becomes infatuated with, indulges in, and is intoxicated by that feeling. When infatuated with, indulging in, and intoxicated by that feeling, lustful delight in one’s desire arises. Any such delight toward any of these feelings is clinging. Dependent on the child’s clinging, there is becoming. Dependent on becoming, there is birth. Dependent on birth, aging and death, sorrow, grief, pain,

lamentation, and despair arise completely. The dependent co-arising of the entire mass of *dukkha* naturally happens in just this way.

Buddhadasa provides us an important insight concerning how the *paticca-sam-uppāda* is related among Buddhist as contained in the Pali Sutta. He explains

In the Pāli suttas there are two descriptions of what occurred under the Bodhi tree at the time of the Buddha's great awakening (*sambodhi*). In one version, appearing in various texts, the Buddha realized the three supreme knowledges (*tevijjā*). In the first true knowing, as it is generally understood, he recollected his former lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*, lit. "knowledge through recollection of previous dwellings"). In this account, as traditionally understood, he is able to recall his own previous births far into the distant past. These are invariably described as happening to the same person. In the second true knowing, he reviewed how beings carry on according to their actions (*cutūpapātañāṇa*), how beings pass away and reappear according to the karma they have done. Through the third true knowing, he realized the destruction of the

impulses (*āsavakkhyañāṇa*). The out-flowing fermentations (*āsavas*) are the deepest level of defilement; when they are completely ended, no further defilement, egoism, or suffering is possible. This is the more commonly recounted description of the night of the Buddha's awakening.

Further he points out the following:

Elsewhere the Pāli texts state that the Buddha awakened to dependent co-arising. There also are accounts of the Buddha contemplating dependent co-arising immediately after his awakening, while he was still sitting under the Bodhi tree. Together, these give a second description of the Buddha's great awakening. In the immediate aftermath, during the first four hour watch one night, the Buddha examined dependent co-arising in the forward order (*anuloma*), starting with ignorance, then concoctings, and so on, one after the other. During the second watch of the night, he reviewed dependent co-arising in the reverse order (*paṭiloma*), starting from suffering, then birth, becoming, clinging, and so on all the way back to ignorance. Then for the third watch, he

examined dependent co-arising in both forward and reverse orders until dawn. ...Between these two versions, the second is more reasonable and acceptable in light of the overall themes and threads of the Pāli suttas. In the other account, the first knowledge concerning the recollection of past lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*) is in the language of eternalism (*sassataditt~~hi~~*), just as in the pre-Buddhist Upanishads, which speaks of a self or individual being born again and again over many lives. The belief that the same person is repeatedly reborn is eternalism, which Buddhism aims to eliminate. This idea has more in common with popular beliefs and the philosophy of the Upanishads than with the core of the Buddha's message.

The second knowledge is about beings passing away and reappearing according to karma (*cutūpapātañāṇa*). This is generally understood in people language to mean that the same being disappears from one existence (*bhava*) and reappears in another according to karmic influences somehow carried over from one existence to the next. However, this is not directly or specifically a Buddhist teaching. At

heart, Buddhism teaches the end of karma, living beyond karma, rather than carrying on according to karma. The noble path is for freedom from karma; living under the sway of karma is limiting, distressful, and burdensome. It is not good enough to merely surrender to karma, to die and be reborn according to the fruits of our actions. In Buddhism, liberating insight must go further than that.

Buddhadasa then asserts that

Neither of these first two knowledges can be considered truly Buddhist principles. Why then are they included in the Pāli scriptures? My own view is that perhaps the compilers of the discourses may have included these passages for the benefit of ordinary people. They are expressed and commonly understood in people language. For those people unable to understand dependent co-arising and the end of karma, these passages were included for the sake of morality. Consequently, this is an account of the Buddha's awakening for the moral benefit of ordinary people.

The second account puts dependent co-arising at the center of the Buddha's awakening. Not

only did he express his awakening in these terms, he described how he pondered and contemplated dependent co-arising both before the awakening and immediately after. After experiencing the bliss of liberation for a week, he examined and investigated dependent co-arising throughout at least one night, the first watch of which focused on how dependent co-arising occurs. He repeatedly investigated this in the forward order from ignorance to concoctings on through suffering. He spent four full hours thoroughly penetrating this truth. In the next four hours, he investigated the causality of *dukkha* in careful detail all the way back to ignorance. In the final four hours, he examined dependent co-arising in both directions, forward and backward. This shows the central importance of dependent co-arising. The formula recorded is brief and succinct; the Buddha looked into it forward and backward for twelve hours without a break. He had the most profound spiritual experience of this through each of the watches: forward order, reverse order, and both forward and backward, each for four full hours. Please consider how profound, how difficult, how subtle, and how important this is.

This ought to be of great interest to all serious meditators. The words we have translated as “forward order” and “reverse order,” or “forward” and “backward”—anuloma and paṭiloma—can be understood rather broadly. Thus, for clarity’s sake, we can explain anuloma, with the hairs, as the examining of the arising sequence, that is, dependent co-arising. The reverse, paṭiloma, against the hairs, is the quenching of dependent co-arising, that is, dependent quenching (paṭiccanirodha). In the first watch, the Buddha investigated and reviewed how dependent co-arising arises. In the second watch, he investigated and reviewed how it quenches. In the final watch, he investigated and reviewed both. This understanding is eminently reasonable and fully supported by the core themes of the discourses...

For practitioners he provided two unique paths to understand the theory of *paticca-sam-uppāda*. He notes

Dependent co-arising also has these two levels or two models. The choice of which to follow is yours...Have you ever before heard dependent co-arising explained in terms of this

life here and now? Most of the literature explaining dependent co-arising—whether Singhalese, Indian, Tibetan, European, or American—follow the interpretation of Venerable Buddhaghosa, the chief commentator of Thera-vāda Buddhism, in the hugely influential Path of Purity (*Visuddhimagga*). This interpretation of dependent co-arising is in terms of past lives, present lives, and future lives. We call it “the three life-times interpretation.” In it, birth is understood literally, materially, as physical birth from a mother’s womb. Further, as we are already alive now, birth is assumed to mean a “rebirth” into another lifetime. Becoming and other terms are taken in the same literal way. Thus, dependent co-arising is dragged out over at least three lifetimes—past, present, and future.<sup>16</sup>

Noting that many interpretations of *paticca-sam-uppāda* rely on Venerable Buddhaghosa commentary he argues

When you consider these descendants of the Visuddhimagga, ask yourself if their

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<sup>16</sup>

pp.129-130

explanations can be applied to the complete quenching of suffering. Can you apply their explanations in actual practice today? I think you will find that it is not possible. This multiple lifetime interpretation is not, however, without value. While it is not applicable to ultimate truth, we can credit it with certain ethical benefits. As it speaks in terms of a self—the same person being born and reborn, which is relative truth—it is not the dependent co-arising of the Awakened One. In the Buddha's time, there was only one explanation of dependent co-arising—the Buddha's. Later, the alternative explanation appeared in the relative language that ordinary people could understand more easily. It supports a moral worldview considered necessary for people to see future benefits in doing good and refraining from evil—happy, heavenly rebirths and woeful, hellish rebirths. Such conventional truths, explained in terms of selves, are valuable but do not qualify as the ultimate truth that can quench *dukkha*. For that, we need an interpretation and understanding of dependent co-arising that we can study and practice right now, here in this life and at this moment, without reference to beings that carry over

from one life to the next. We ought to hold onto the later version for its moral value, but do not confuse it with the Buddha's original understanding, which is of ultimate value...

In the Pāli suttas—the primary source of Buddhist teachings—we find the Buddha's original system of describing dependent co-arising. The later explanation is from Venerable Buddhaghosa's commentarial system, which we must admit is a dependent co-arising outside the suttas. Now, we have both the sutta version for the sake of ultimate truth and the commentarial version for the sake of relative, moral truth. Relative truth speaks in terms of selves, persons, and beings, while the Buddha's ultimate truth is in terms of not-self—all things are not-self. The Buddha's original teaching is for the sake of eliminating self, for removing the sense of being a separate self. On the other hand, the later commentarial teaching affirms that there is self in order to promote people being good, that is, good selves. This is a simple means to distinguish between the two main explanations of dependent co-arising. If the genuine dependent co-arising, it must lead to realizing not-self and letting go of self. If it

seeks moral benefits and fruits, it affirms self, a person or being who acts and receives the fruits of those actions in this life or the next... We are not suggesting that you should choose one version over the other or argue about which one is right. Rather, we are concerned to understand the proper application of each version. Personally, I am most interested in the original version, as it is most directly relevant to the quenching of suffering. The version that is most appropriate for you, and in what ways, and when, is for you to determine yourself.

Please review dependent co-arising all the way through from the very beginning: starting with ignorance, then concocting, consciousness, name and form, sense organs, sense contact, feeling, clinging, becoming, birth, and aging and death. In the true dependent co-arising there is nothing that can be taken as self. Each is conditioned by and dependent upon other things. Further, it clearly shows how craving gives birth to clinging, to grasping at me and mine, that there is merely an illusion of self-concocted by craving. A truly existing and lasting self cannot be found anywhere. There is only the delusional self of clinging that has

been concocted by ignorance. The entire sequence of dependent co-arising demonstrates that there is no self to be found anywhere.

For our practical purposes, we uphold the principle that the true dependent co-arising must eliminate views about and clinging to the existence of self. This is the heart of Buddhism, which emphasizes not-self and emptiness. All the Buddha's teachings are centered on not-self and emptiness, so the genuine teachings must clearly illuminate the truth of not-self and emptiness. By now, you will have seen that the teaching of dependent co-arising will destroy the concept that there is self. Eliminating the belief in self eliminates suffering, because *dukkha* comes from clinging to notions and concepts about self.

Whenever there is clinging to any aspect or combination of the components of life as me or mine there is distress. Traditionally, we describe the components of life as the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*), namely, body, feeling, perception, thought-emotion, and consciousness. These are the five basic

components or functions that make up a human being. A human being is just these five subsystems functioning interdependently. When we realize dependent co-arising, we see that none of these aggregates or functions can be self, they all are not-self, they are all void of selfhood. Clear, correct understanding of dependent co-arising removes clinging to the concept of self in regard to any of the aggregates, so we stop taking them personally, stop seeing them as me or mine, and thus dissolve *dukkha*. Penetrating dependent co-arising gets rid of suffering directly. This is the essential import of the dependent co-arising that the Buddha intended us to understand.<sup>17</sup>

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## *Appendix Ii*

Bhante Dr. M. Punnañi Mahathera is another Buddhist thinker who has a unique view on the *paticca-sam-uppāda*. We have transcribed in original his talk titled *paticca-sam-uppāda in a nutshell* accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 from the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kBw8TSzB3Q>

Today people are getting interested in the teachings of the Buddha because Buddha brought this message to the world, that everything happens due to the presence of the necessary conditions. And therefore, the world is not governed by Gods and Devils, but by this law and that law is what is called the *paticca-sam-uppāda*. The *paticca-sam-uppāda*, if properly understood, all suffering can be brought to an end. That's what the Buddha pointed out. And how is that? He pointed out that although the existential philosophers thought that we exist, that existence is the most fundamental thing, the Buddha pointed out that existence is a delusion. That is a wrong concept. We do not really exist. Now that he understood by freeing the mind of emotions. It is the emotions that

make us think that we exist. The emotions are not able to think, and the emotions desire things or hate things, it is only by getting rid of emotions and purifying the mind, freeing the mind of emotions, that the idea of existence will disappear.

So, he purified the mind, and around the concept of *jhanas* are concentrated levels of mental purity. There is the first level of mental purity, second level of mental purity, third level of mental purity, fourth level of mental purity. And then we go beyond the fourth level into infinity of space, infinity of perception, infinity of no existence, the infinity of neither perception nor neither sensation nor sensation. And ultimately, he stopped the process of sensation and perception. That means he stopped that activity called mind. And when that activity called mind is stopped, there is no consciousness. You are not aware of anything. Now from that state again he woke up, and when he woke up from that state, he began to understand how the Mind begins to work.

So, from a state of no-mind, he started the first activity of the mind was what is called feeling

and sensation. To understand what sensation is, it is important to understand that for instance we said we have eyes, and when light falls on the eye, we begin to see. But what do we see? What we see is only light, because the eye can see the light and this light comes in the form of waves, and these waves come in different frequencies. So, it is very difficult to explain this if you don't know the meaning of a frequency.

So, for that if you know a little about science you'll begin to understand that the frequency means it is simply the light that comes in different frequencies and therefore you begin to see different colors. And this color is what we see. And at the same time, we begin to see this color either as pleasant or it can be unpleasant. Some colors look beautiful; some colors look ugly. So that is what we call feeling.

So, the sensation is the color and the feeling is whether it is pleasant to unpleasant. So that is the first thing that we see. But when we open our eyes, what we see doesn't look like seeing colors. We are able to see objects. How do we see objects? It is simply an object that is

constructed by putting the colors together. When a person draws a picture on the wall or in a paper, that person is only putting colors on the picture. And it is when we look at those colors that we see it in the form of a face or in the form of a tree or maybe in the form of a table or bottle or whatever. We are seeing objects by putting the colors together. It is a construct. So, every object that we see is a construct, a mental construct. So, we put the colors together and form a construct. And we not only form a construct, we identify it. We are able to look at a thing and say, "Oh, this is a face." How do I know that it is a face? Because I have seen faces before. So that object that we see is put into a category of objects that I have seen. That is called categorization. It is by categorization that we are able to identify an object. I can look at an object and say that is a chair or that is a clock or that is a door. All that is because I am categorizing what I look at. So, this identification means we are also giving a name to that. So, every object has been given a name to identify that. When we say clock that is a name given to that object. When we say table, we are giving a name to that object. So, there is an image and a name. Now this is what

we call *nāma* and *rūpa*. *Rūpa* means the image and *nāma* means the name. So, these are the words that we use.

*Vedanā*, *Sanna*, *sañkhāra*, *viññāna*. That *viññānavin* word is perception but perception means identifying the object. That is the meaning of perception. We are not only seeing things, we are also able to identify and say this is such and such. That is the meaning of perception. So, we are making use of these things. So, it is very important to understand that now I use these words that I am just using but these are not the words used by Rhys Davids who translated these things. There they use the *Vedanā* and *Sanna* are called feeling and perception. I am using the word feeling and sensation. Sensation is not the same thing as perception. Then that word *sañkhāra*, they translate as volition. That word volition has a different meaning. Now I call it a construct. Construct gives the meaning that it has been constructed by putting the colors together. That is the mental construct.

The word *sañkhāra* means construct. So only when you put the proper words that you get

the meaning out of it. And so, once you have constructed and you are then identifying it, and that identification is really the perception, you are able to say this is such and such, that is the perception. So, once we have perceived, what we have perceived is simply an object which comes in the form of an image and a name. A name for it. An image and a name for it. Then once that image has been made and the name. Then we talk about *salāyatana*.

Now *salāyatana* means we are not only looking with our eyes. We are also hearing with our ears, and smelling with our nose. We are also tasting with our tongue, and we are also touching with our body. This is why you give something to a small child, that child will want to put it in the mouth and touch in various ways to get all the impressions. So that is why all those things are put together to form an object. So, it is not only the eye that we are using, when I look at this bottle here, I see it as a bottle, but I know that if I touched the bottle, this is how I'll feel it. Even if I have never touched it, I still know when I touch it, I'll feel it like this. That is because I am using my memory. I have touched bottles before. So, you

see because we have used using all the five senses we put together all that to form an object. That forming an object is what is called *phassa*. *Phassa* means the formation of an object. Today the word *phassa* is translated as contact. *Phassa* is not contact. *Phassa* is the formation of an object. The object is formed by making use of all the five senses, not just one sense. So that complete object is formed. That is *phassa*. Once the object is formed, we are going to make use of the feeling in the object. You may get a pleasant feeling in the object, or you may get an unpleasant feeling in the object. And the moment you get the feeling; you react to that object with a desire or hatred. You see it is an emotional reaction to the object. That emotional reaction, the Buddha called *Tanhā*. *Tanhā* is not craving today Rhys David used the word craving, but *tanhā* is not craving. *Tanhā* is the emotional reaction. A craving is wanting something. But here we not only wanting, if we dislike something we don't want it, we want to get rid of it. So therefore, it is not a craving. It is the emotional reaction.

Now the moment the emotional reaction occurs another interesting thing happens. You

see we first formed an object out there. Once the object is there, you begin to react to that object emotionally, then there are two things; the object and the reaction. Earlier there was no reaction but now there is a reaction. The moment the reaction comes up, the object is out there, the reaction is inside here. And what is inside? What do we do to what is inside? We say this reaction is mine. It is my reaction. The moment we say this reaction is mine, that is called personalizing the reaction. That is the meaning of the word *upādāna*. Rhys David used the word grasping or clinging. This is not grasping or clinging. It is calling that mine, that means personalizing. So, the moment it is personalised, what happens? How can there be something mine if there is no I? The moment you say this is mine; you have created the 'I'. 'I' comes into being, that 'I' coming into being is called *bhava*. The word *bhava* means coming into existence. The 'I' have come into existence.

Earlier there was no 'I' here. There was only an object. The moment a desire or a hatred came, mine came and with the mine came the 'I'. You understood? So, the 'I' come into being by

personalizing. So, the moment the 'I' has come into being, another question arises. What did you call the 'I'? Where is the 'I'? The 'I' is only just a concept. But what are you referring to as 'I'? There must be an object to call the 'I'. To refer to the 'I', what is the object? The 'I' has to exist. How can the 'I' exist? What is the meaning of existence?

Existence has to be understood. Existence means, now if you say this cup exists, what does it mean? The cup occupies space, it occupies time. To exist is to occupy space and time. So, what is the 'I' that is occupying space and time. The only 'I' that can be occupying space and time is the body. So, the body becomes the 'I'. The body is the thing that is occupying space and time. When the body begins to occupy space and time, you can say the body is so many inches tall, is fat, and all kinds of things you can talk about the body. You see, that is occupying space the volume of the body- length, bread and height. But occupying time means it has a past, a present and future. To occupy time is to have a past, a present and a future. Now the 'I' is not only just 'I' but the 'I' has been identified as the

body. The body has become the 'I'. So, the body has become the 'self'. So once the body has become the 'self', it has a past, present and future.

What is the past of the body? Birth! Birth is the past of the body. What is the future of the body? Death! Death is the future of the body. And in between birth and death is what we call aging. So, you see, now you are not only having a body, you are not only having a self, you are also having birth, old age, and death. With the coming of birth old age and death what happens? grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow and despair. By creating a 'self' you have created suffering.

...That is how the Buddha says this is how this whole mass of suffering has come into being. So, there is an explanation of how suffering comes to an end, how suffering comes into being. But what the Buddha pointed out was if we can see this properly, we begin to understand this whole thing has been created. By this mental process, not only the self, the world is also created by this mental process. The whole world and the 'self' and the

suffering was created by this mental process. And by understanding this fully, by reflecting on this ultimately the thought of world and the self and the eye everything disappears when you have fully understood this.

So, becoming aware of that brings about what is called a paradigm shift. A paradigm shift. a different way of thinking. And the different way of thinking is to realize that this is all mental creation, not a fact. So, the existential philosophers thought we are existing but actually existence is a delusion. That is, when we have understood properly, we awakened from the dream of existence, and that is what is called *nirodhasamapatti*.



This book is an attempt by two followers of the Buddha Dhamma to equanimously reflect on the paticca-sam-uppada from their lived experience as Indian Buddhists. Drawing their historical lineage from Siddhattha Gotama, and located within the framework of Babasaheb Dr.B.R.Ambedkar, they attempt interpretations of this very difficult subject based on their personal practice, field observations, and readings. Most textual content in this book are sourced from the theoretical and dialogical processes within the Buddhist Intellectual Collective India. For anyone seeking different perspectives of the paticca-sam-uppada, this book would be a meaningful read. The text is divided into four chapters and an appendix. It contains suttas, view of practitioners, reflections by the authors and two appendices. This book would be useful for lay Buddhists, truth-seekers and the serious practitioner of the Buddha movement. It will also be useful for scholars of Buddhism looking to get a deeper insight into the Navayana tradition in Buddhism as theorized by its adherents in the said context.

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