

# The Significance of Dependent Origination in Theravada Buddhism

By

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## Preface

The author of this essay, the late Venerable Nyanatiloka Mahāthera (1878–1957), founder of The Island Hermitage, Dodanduwa (Ceylon), is widely known for his profound scholarship and hardly needs an introduction to students of Buddhist literature.

When, in the year 1937, the present instructive treatise was written, the venerable author had been in the Saṅgha for thirty-three years. The essay is the product not only of his extensive and deep study of the Pali texts but also of his own insights developed by mature thought and meditation. Those who had the benefit of meeting him know that his was a mind by no means shackled by commentarial or any other tradition, but, in the essential features of the Dhamma, his penetrative mind confirmed the understanding embedded in those ancient sources. This applies, in particular, to the subject of this treatise, the doctrine of Dependent Origination, the profundity of which the Master himself had stressed. The author found support for the commentarial interpretation of it in the oldest Sutta texts, which are quoted in this treatise.

In this essay, reference is made to the interpretation of Dependent Origination put forward by Dr. Paul Dahlke. As the views of the latter have recently been revived by some contemporary writers, it was felt opportune to present this essay again. It should be mentioned that, in other respects, the writings of Dr. Dahlke were held in high esteem by the venerable author.

There always have been those who, in a rather sweeping manner, have questioned the value of the ancient Pali Commentaries, and this hyper-critical attitude seems to be gaining popularity again in certain quarters. Regarding this, the Venerable Nyanatiloka once remarked that there are those who reject the Commentaries because they prefer to make their own.

This essay was first published in Ceylon for Vesak 1937, by The Buddhist Brotherhood of Kandy, under the title *Paṭicca Samuppāda: The Law of Dependent Origination Explained in accordance with the Pali Tradition*. In the present publication has been incorporated some additional matter taken from a later version, appearing as an Appendix to the author's *Guide through the Abhidhamma Piṭaka* (First Ed., Colombo 1938; reprinted by BPS 2008). The original title has been changed in this new edition.

Nyanaponika Thera  
Kandy, July 1969

# Introduction

None of all the teachings of Buddhism has given rise to greater misunderstandings, to more contradictory and absurd interpretations than the doctrine of Dependent Origination (*Paṭicca-Samuppāda*). This is especially true with regard to some Western writers and scholars who too often did not possess even the rudiments of knowledge required for treating such a difficult subject. Obviously some of them did not even understand the correct meaning of the twelve basic terms of the formula, and, instead, based their interpretations on their own imagination.

In many cases (especially in the older Western literature on Buddhism), there was the attempt to present the Dependent Origination as an explanation of the primeval beginning of all things; and one saw in “Ignorance” (*avijjā*, Sanskrit: *avidyā*) the causeless first principle out of which in the course of time all conscious and physical life had evolved. All that in spite of the Buddha’s repeated and definite declaration that an absolute first beginning of existence is something unthinkable (*Anamatagga Saṃyutta*) and that all such speculations may lead to insanity (*Aṅguttara Nikāya IV, 77*); and that one could never imagine a time when there was no Ignorance and no Craving for existence (*ib. X, 64*; quoted in *Visuddhimagga*, ch. XVII, and similarly in *Milindapañhā*, ch.2).

In the *Prajñāpāramitā*, according to Burnouf, *Introduction a Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien* (p. 473), we find, for example, the following statement: “*Et comme elles (les conditions) n’existent pas (sic!), a cause de cel on les appelle Avidyā, c’est a dire ce; qui n’existe pas(!), ou l’ignorance.*” And in Kern, *Indian Buddhism*, we read: “*Avijjā, ignorance, is the state of not knowing, of sleep. Man at first awaking enters into a state of half-consciousness; his mind is affected by vague impressions (saṅkhārā) before he has reached the state of clear consciousness. Then the phenomena appear to him, and the activity of his organs of sense commences, etc.*” And, again, in Burnouf, *Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi*: “*De l’ignorance proceda la faculte de la reflexion (saṅkhārā); de la faculte de la reflexion proceda la connaissance (viññāna); de la connaissance proceda l’union de l’esprit et de la matiere (nāma-rūpa), etc.*”

In more recent times, again, quite a number of authors, chiefly Germans, led by Dr. Dahlke, call the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* a “Simultaneous” Dependent Origination and even go so far to assert that “the whole chain of the (twelve) conditions of origination represents one single karmic(!) moment of personal experience (*karmisches Erlebnismoment*)”!<sup>1</sup> Now does this not really amount to the senseless assertion that Cause and Effect, i.e. the Karmic Process of Becoming (X=II)<sup>1</sup> and Rebirth (XI=III), Birth (XI) and Death (XII), the wholesome and unwholesome Karma-formations (II), the physical Sense Organs (V) and the (conscious) Impression (VI)—that all these things arise together at the very same moment, and that thus the Karma (i.e. action) of the preceding birth takes place simultaneously with its effect (*vipāka*) in the succeeding birth? Now let me state that simultaneity, in fact, plays an important part in the *Paṭicca-Samuppāda*, as we shall see later on, but that it is only one of the twenty-four modes of conditioning that come into operation here.

Truly, not one of all these authors ever seems to have put to himself the question, for what earthly reason the Buddha should have thought it necessary to teach such a doctrine. It was surely not for the sake of mere mental gymnastics! It was to show, through which causes and conditions suffering comes into being, now and hereafter. For the Buddha shows in the formula of the Dependent Origination that it is through our life-affirming wholesome and unwholesome volition, i.e. Karma-formations (II), performed through Ignorance (I), Craving (VIII) and Clinging (IX) in the past birth, that this present conscious existence (III, etc.), with all its woe and suffering, has been caused; and that our present Karmic Process of Becoming (X) is the cause for future Rebirth (XI) and suffering; and that after the extinction of all Ignorance (I), Craving (VIII) and Clinging (IX), no further life affirming Karma (II=X) is produced, and therefore no future Birth and Suffering will arise again. In order to demonstrate this, it is indeed necessary—against those aforementioned interpreters—to speak of three successive lives, of past, present, and future life. And this is not “merely a commentarial

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<sup>1</sup> The Roman numerals refer to the formula of the Dependent Origination, which is reproduced below at the start of the next section.

interpretation”, but it is also clearly, in a most unambiguous manner, supported by canonical Sutta texts, e.g., the Mahā-Nidāna Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya, where it is said:

*“Once all Ignorance (I) and Clinging (IX) are extinguished, neither karmically meritorious, nor imperturbable Karma-formations (II=X) are produced, and thus no Consciousness (III=IX) will spring up again in a new mother’s womb.”*

And,

*“For if Consciousness were not to appear in the mother’s womb, would in that case Mentality and Corporeality (IV) arise?”*

Now, let it here be said, once for all, that the Paṭicca-Samuppāda is nothing but the teaching of conditionality and interdependence of all the manifold phenomena of existence, that is, of everything that happens, be it in the realm of the physical or the psychical. It shows how that combination of phenomena known by the ‘conventional name’ of ‘I’, ‘person’, etc., is not at all a mere play of blind chance, but how each phenomenon in this process of existence is entirely dependent upon other phenomena as its conditions, so that with the removal of those phenomena that form the conditions of rebirth and suffering, rebirth, and therewith also all suffering, will perforce cease and not arise again. And this is the vital point, the goal of the Buddha’s teaching: deliverance from the cycle of rebirths with all its woe and suffering. Thus, the Dependent Origination serves to elucidate the second and third Noble Truth regarding the Origin and Extinction of Suffering, by explaining them from their very foundations upwards, and giving them a definite philosophical form.

Of the Sutta Piṭaka, it is the Nidāna Saṃyutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya (Nid. Saṃy.), and the Mahā Nidāna Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya (Nid. Sutta), which provide most details for an explanation of the Dependent Origination.

Of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, it is the Paccayākāra Vibhaṅga, and above all, the Paṭṭhāna, that come here into consideration. In the latter work, however, there is no express reference to the Paṭicca-Samuppāda formula, but all conditioned phenomena are arranged there from a quite different point of view, that is, with reference to the twenty-four conditions (see below, Chapter 1).

The most detailed, and coherent systematical exposition of the Dependent Origination is given in *Visuddhimagga (The Path of Purification)*, Ch. XVII, on which, to a great part, the present essay has been based, whilst, at the same time, also the aforementioned, and other, canonical sources have been used. Moreover, I have consulted the commentaries on the Abhidhamma and the *Visuddhimagga*, as well as Sinhalese treatises, such as Dharmaratna’s *Vishesa-vistarārtha-sahita-paṭicca-samuppādaya* and *Sattvotpatti-Viniscaya*, and others.

Hence, this short essay, being entirely based on authentic Pali texts and Commentaries, reflects the true position of Theravāda Buddhism in its canonical sources and in its well-tested exegetical works. For the sake of brevity, often a terse diction has been adopted in this treatise. But a careful study and a growing familiarity with the true significance of the terms here employed, will finally make the subject matter quite intelligible and self-evident.

# PATICCA-SAMUPPĀDA

## The Dependent Origination

- I-II. *Avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā*  
II-III. *Saṅkhāra-paccayā viññāṇaṃ*  
III-I. *Viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpaṃ*  
IV-V. *Nāma-rūpa-paccayā saḷāyatanaṃ*  
V-VI. *Salāyatanaṃ-paccayā phassa*  
VI-VII. *Phassa-paccayā vedanā*  
VII-VIII. *Vedanā paccayā taṇhā*  
VIII-IX. *Taṇhā-paccayā upādānaṃ*  
IX-X. *Upādāna-paccayā bhava*  
X-XI. *Bhava-paccayā jāti*  
XI-XII. *Jāti-paccayā maraṇaṃ soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyāsā sambhavanti.*  
*Evaṃ-etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti.*

*Avijjāya tveva asesavirāga-  
nirodhā saṅkhāra-  
nirodhā viññāṇa-  
nirodhā nāmarūpa-  
nirodhā saḷāyatana-  
nirodhā phassa-  
nirodhā vedanā-  
nirodhā taṇhā-  
nirodhā upādāna-  
nirodhā bhava-  
nirodhā jāti-  
nirodhā jarā-maraṇaṃ  
soka-parideva-  
dukkha-domanassupāyāsā  
nirujjhanti.*  
*Evaṃ-etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti.*

## Translation

- I-II. Through Ignorance (*avijjā*) conditioned are the Karma-Formations (*saṅkhāra*).  
II-III. Through the Karma-Formations (*saṅkhāra*) conditioned is Consciousness (*viññāṇa*; in a new birth).  
III-IV. Through Consciousness (*viññāṇa*) conditioned are Mentality and Corporeality (*nāma-rūpa*).  
IV-V. Through Mentality and Corporeality (*nāma-rūpa*) conditioned are the six Sense-Bases (*saḷāyatana*).  
V-VI. Through the six Sense-Bases (*saḷāyatana*) conditioned is Sense-Impression (*phassa*).  
VI-VII. Through Sense-Impression (*phassa*) conditioned is Feeling (*vedanā*).  
VII-VIII. Through Feeling (*vedanā*) conditioned is Craving (*taṇhā*).  
VIII-IX. Through Craving (*taṇhā*) conditioned is Clinging (*upādāna*).  
IX-X. Through Clinging (*upādāna*) conditioned is the Process of Becoming (*bhava*).

- X–XI. Through the (*karmic*) Process of Becoming (*bhava*) conditioned is Rebirth (*jāti*).
- XI–XII. Through Rebirth (*jāti*) conditioned are Decay and Death (*jarā-maraṇa*), sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

Thus arises this whole mass of suffering.

Through the entire fading away and extinction of this Ignorance, however, the Karma-Formations become extinguished. Through extinction of the Karma-Formations, Consciousness becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Consciousness, Mentality and Corporeality become extinguished. Through extinction of Mentality and Corporeality, the six Sense-Bases become extinguished. Through extinction of the six Sense-Bases, Sense-Impression becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Sense-Impression, Feeling becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Feeling, Craving becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Craving, Clinging becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Clinging, the Process of Becoming becomes extinguished. Through extinction of the Process of Becoming, Rebirth becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Rebirth, Decay and Death become extinguished, as well as sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

Thus takes place the extinction of this whole mass of suffering.

# CHAPTER I

In the *Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, ch. XVII, it is pointed out that, and the reason why, the Buddha employed various methods in dealing with the Paṭicca-Samuppāda. Four such methods are exemplified in that work.

The 1st and usual method leads in progressive order from I—XII; the 2nd, in progressive order from VII—XII; the 3rd, in retrogressive order from XII—I; the 4th, in retrogressive order from VIII—I. Besides these four, there are however, still other methods to be found in the Sutta Piṭaka, e.g., one leading from III—XII (Nid. Samy. 49) and one from III—XII (ib. 43). In the Vibhaṅga of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, even twelve different methods are given. In the following, examples are quoted for the four first-mentioned methods.

(1st method). This is the usual twelve-link formula preceding this chapter.

(2nd method). “And whilst approving of the Feeling (VII) and cherishing it Craving springs up. But craving for Feelings means Clinging, and through Clinging conditioned is the Process of Becoming, through the Process of Becoming conditioned is Rebirth, and through Rebirth conditioned are Decay and Death (XII), sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Thus arises this whole mass of suffering” (MN 38).

(3rd method). “Through Rebirth conditioned are Decay and Death (XII); thus it was said. But are, O monks, Decay and Death really conditioned through Rebirth, or not? Or how is it?”—“Decay and Death, O Lord, are conditioned through Rebirth. Thus we think.”—“Through the Process of Becoming conditioned is Rebirth; thus it was said. .... Through Ignorance (I) conditioned are the Karma-Formations: thus it was said .... (etc.).” (ib.)

(4th method). “Through what, O monks, are those four nutriments—material food, sense-impression, mental volition, consciousness—conditioned, what is their origin, how are they produced, how do they arise? Through Craving (VIII) are these four nutriments conditioned.... Through what, O monks, is Craving conditioned? Through Feeling.... Through what is Feeling conditioned etc. .... are the Karma-Formations conditioned? Through Ignorance (I)” (SN 12:11).

Before explaining the eleven propositions in the basic formula of Dependent Origination, it will be necessary for a full understanding of the relationship and interdependence of its twelve constituent links to give the reader an idea of the various ways in which they are conditioned, i.e., of the twenty-four modes of conditionally (or, for short, Conditions), which are enumerated and described in the last book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, the Paṭṭhāna, the Book of Origination.

## The Twenty-Four Conditions (*Paccaya*)

1. Root Condition	Hetu-paccaya
2. Object Condition	Ārammaṇa-paccaya
3. Predominance Condition	Adhipati-paccaya
4. Proximity Condition	Anantara-paccaya
5. Contiguity Condition	Samanantara-paccaya
6. Co-nascence Condition	Sahajāta-paccaya
7. Mutuality Condition	Aññamañña-paccaya
8. Support Condition	Nissaya-paccaya
9. Decisive Support Condition	Upanissaya-paccaya
10. Pre-nascence Condition	Purejāta-paccaya
11. Post-nascence Condition	Pacchājāta-paccaya
12. Frequency Condition	Āsevana-paccaya
13. Karma Condition	Kamma-paccaya

## The Twenty-Four Conditions (*Paccaya*)

14. Karma-result Condition	Vipāka-paccaya
15. Nutriment Condition	Āhāra-paccaya
16. Faculty Condition	Indriya-paccaya
17. Jhāna Condition	Jhāna-paccaya
18. Path Condition	Magga-paccaya
19. Association Condition	Sampayutta-paccaya
20. Dissociation Condition	Vippayutta-paccaya
21. Presence Condition	Atthi-paccaya
22. Absence Condition	Natthi-paccaya
23. Disappearance Condition	Vigata-paccaya
24. Non-disappearance Condition	Avigata-paccaya

These twenty-four conditions do not necessarily exclude one another, as we shall see later on. Some are even fully identical with each other. All these twenty-four conditions, according to the *Abhidhammattha-Saṅgaha*, may be reduced to only four, namely: Object (2), Decisive Support (9), Karma (13), and Presence (21).

### 1. Root-condition: *Hetu-paccaya*

Just as a tree rests on its roots and cannot exist without them, so are all karmically wholesome (*kusala*) phenomena dependent on the presence of three wholesome motives, or Roots (*hetu*, or *mūla*): Greedlessness (unselfishness), Hatelessness (good-will), or Undeludedness (wisdom), and the three karmically unwholesome phenomena on the presence of unwholesome motives, or Roots: Greed, Hatred, or Delusion (*lobha, dosa, moha*).

Thus, to the associated wholesome or unwholesome mental phenomena as well as to the corporeal phenomena produced by them, these six phenomena are said to be a condition by way of Root.

### 2. Object-condition: *Ārammaṇā-paccaya*

Just as a weak man must lean upon his crutches to be able to walk, so do the six sense-objects (*ārammaṇa*, lit. ‘props’ or ‘supports’)—i.e. the visible object, sound, odour, taste, tangible object, and mind-object, be they past, present, or future—form the props or supports to the corresponding six kinds of consciousness and the mental phenomena associated therewith.

Thus they are said to be to consciousness a condition by way of Object.

### 3. Predominance-condition: *Adhipati-paccayā*

The four predominant factors are: concentrated Intention, concentrated Consciousness, concentrated Energy, concentrated Investigation (*chanda, citta, viriya, vīmaṃsa*). Whenever through the predominance of one of these factors a state of consciousness comes to arise, then this factor forms to consciousness and its concomitant mental phenomena an aid, or a condition, by way of Predominance.

### 4. Proximity-condition: *Anantara-paccayā*

Immediately upon eye-consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇa*) there follows the mind-element (*mano-dhātu*), and immediately upon the mind element there follows the mind-consciousness-element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*) etc. (see Chapter 2, section II). Just so it is with ear-consciousness etc.

Thus, eye-consciousness and its concomitant phenomena are to the mind-element etc—and in the same way, the mind-element to the mind-consciousness-element, and all the preceding phenomena to all the immediately succeeding phenomena—a condition by way of proximity. Therefore, whenever



in proximity to wholesome or unwholesome phenomena, other phenomena do arise, then the former phenomena are to the latter phenomena said to be a condition by way of proximity, without which the latter phenomena cannot arise.

### **5. Contiguity-condition: *Samanantara-paccaya***

This condition is identical with the foregoing and only different in name.

### **6. Co-nascence-condition: *Sahajāta-paccaya***

Just as the burning lamp is a condition for light, so are the four mental groups (feeling, perception, mental formations, consciousness) one to another a condition by way of their Co-nascence or simultaneous arising.

That means, none of these phenomena can arise alone. If any of them arises, the others also do so simultaneously, so that the arising of any of them is conditioned through the simultaneous arising of the others. The same relationship exists between the four elements (solid, liquid, heat, motion), and—but only at the moment of conception—also between corporeality (*rūpa*) and mentality (*nāma*).

### **7. Mutuality-condition: *Aññamañña-paccaya***

All aforementioned co-nascent phenomena (No. 6) are, as a matter of course, also conditioned by way of Mutuality.

### **8. Support-condition: *Nissaya-paccayā*.**

This condition refers to a phenomenon which is aiding other phenomena in the sense of a foundation or support, just as the trees have the earth as their foundation, or as an oil painting rests on the canvas.

Thus, all the above co-nascent (No. 6) and mutually (No. 7) conditioned phenomena are one to another also a condition by way of Support. Also the six physical bases of consciousness (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and the physical organ of the mind) are to the six kinds of consciousness (eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness etc.) a condition by way of Support.

### **9. Decisive-Support-condition: *Upanissaya-paccayā***

This condition refers to a phenomenon which is aiding other phenomena as a powerful and decisive support or inducement. It is of three kinds: Decisive Support (1) by way of Object (*ārammaṇupanusaya*), (2) by way of Proximity (*anantarupanissaya*), (3) by way of Natural Condition (*paṭupanissaya*).

(1) If, e.g., after having performed a wholesome or an unwholesome deed, one is intensively reflecting on this deed as object, it becomes a strong and decisive support by way of Object (Condition 2).

(2) Any preceding wholesome phenomenon is to any succeeding wholesome phenomenon ... to some of the succeeding unwholesome phenomena ... to any succeeding neutral phenomenon etc., etc., a Decisive Support by way of Proximity (see Condition 4).

(3) Good or bad qualities, as faith, morality, learnedness, deludedness, etc., are a Decisive Support by way of Natural Condition. Moreover, anything whatever—past, present or future, real or imaginary—may become a decisive condition to our mind and body, e. g. the desired future health or wealth, or even Nirvana, may become a decisive condition to our present exertions.

### **10. Pre-Nascence-condition: *Pura-jāta-paccayā***

The six physical sense-organs (see Condition 8), as well as the five physical sense-objects (visible object, sound etc), are to the corresponding kinds of consciousness (eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, etc.) a condition by way of Pre-Nascence. In other words, eye-consciousness etc.

cannot arise without the pre-arising, or pre-existence, of the physical organs and physical objects. At the moment of conception of a being, however, mind-consciousness is co-nascent with the physical organ of mind, as mind-consciousness arises at the very moment of conception.

### **11. Post-Nascence-condition: *Pacchā-jāta-paccaya***

Consciousness and its concomitant mental phenomena are to this already-born body a condition by way of Post-Nascence, aiding the body in the sense of a prop, or support.

### **12. Frequency-condition: *Āsevana-paccaya*.**

This condition refers to a phenomenon which is helping towards the competency and strength of the contiguous phenomena by way of Frequency, just as in reading a book, all the preceding applications to books, etc., do. It is threefold: by way of wholesome, unwholesome, or mere functional 'impulsive moments' (*javana*, see Chapter 2, II-III, note). As it is said in Tika-Paṭṭhāna: "All the preceding wholesome phenomena are to all the succeeding wholesome phenomena a condition by way of Frequency, etc."

### **13. Karma-condition: *Kamma-paccaya***

Volition (*cetanā*)—manifested in wholesome or unwholesome bodily, verbal, or purely mental Action (Pali *kamma*)—is to the karma-resultant (*vipāka*) four mental groups (see Condition 6), as well as to those corporeal phenomena due to Residual karma (*kaṭattā*), a condition by way of Karma.

*Kaṭattā* = *katassa bhāvena*, lit. "through having been done," refers to such minor wholesome or unwholesome acts as have not yet produced results.

### **14. Karma-Result-condition: *Vipāka-paccaya***

Karma-result (*vipāka*) is a condition which, by its passive nature, is supporting the other karma-resultant phenomena in their passivity ("effortless calmness" says Paṭṭhāna). As it is said (ib.): "The four mental groups, in so far as they as Karma-results, are one to another a condition by way of Karma-result."

### **15. Nutriment-condition: *Āhāra-paccaya***

There are four nutriments—(1) material food, (2) sense-impression (*phassa*), (3) mind-volition (*mano-saṅcetanā*), (4) consciousness (*viññāṇa*)—which are aiding the corporeal and incorporeal phenomena in the sense of a support, or prop. Material food is the necessary condition for the support of this body, whilst 2–4 are the nutrient conditions to their concomitant mental phenomena, as well as to the corporeal phenomena (e.g. bodily and verbal intimation) produced thereby (Tika-Paṭṭhāna.)

By the 3rd nutriment 'Mind-volition', according to the Commentary to the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* ch. VII, we have to understand wholesome and unwholesome Karma; whilst the 4th nutriment 'Consciousness' refers to Rebirth-consciousness, i.e. that state of consciousness that arises at the moment of conception of a being.

### **16. Faculty-condition : *Indriya-paccaya***

There are twenty Faculties—physical, mental or moral—which are a condition in helping or influencing other phenomena in the sense of Predominance (Condition 3). They are: the six sense faculties: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; vitality (either physical or mental); the five faculties of feeling: bodily pleasant and painful feeling, gladness, sadness, indifferent feeling; the five ethical faculties: faith, energy, attentiveness, concentration, wisdom; further, three supramundane faculties possessed by the four kinds of Holy Men (see my *Guide through the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka* II 5).

The five physical sense-faculties (eye, ear, etc.) are a condition only to mental phenomena (eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness etc.), whilst the remaining faculties may be sometimes a condition to physical phenomena as well.

So is, e.g., the physical vitality to those corporeal phenomena due to residual Karma (Condition 13) a condition by way of faculty, without which those corporeal phenomena would not arise. The mental and moral faculties are a condition to their concomitant mental phenomena, as well as to the corporeal phenomena produced thereby.

### **17. Jhāna-condition: *Jhāna-paccaya***

Jhāna is here to be understood in its widest sense as a combination of certain mental constituents due to that concentration of mind which is an indispensable factor in any state of consciousness, be it karmically wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral; the karmically-neutral Jhāna is either a Karma-result (*vipāka*), or a mere functional state as in the case of the Arahāt. There are altogether seven Jhāna-constituents: Thought-conception, Discursive Thinking, Interest, Joy, Sadness, Indifference, Concentration. In joyful consciousness of the sense-sphere (*kāmāvacara*), as well as in the first Jhāna of the form-sphere (*rūpāvacara*), five Jhāna-constituents are present, to wit: Thought-Conception, Discursive Thinking, Rapture, Joy, One-pointed-ness of mind (*vitakka, vicāra, pīti, sukha, citt'ekaggatā=samādhi*).

These phenomena are to their concomitant mental groups, as well as to those corporeal phenomena due to residual Karma (Condition 13), a condition by way of Jhāna.

### **18. Path-condition: *Magga-paccaya***

The twelve constituents, of which some belong to the right, some to the wrong path, are: wisdom, thought-conception, right speech, right bodily action, right livelihood; energy, attentiveness, concentration; wrong views, wrong speech, wrong bodily action, wrong livelihood.

Thought-conception, energy, attentiveness and concentration may be either karmically wholesome (right), unwholesome (wrong), or neutral (as in the case of the Arahāt).

These constituents, be they karmically wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral, are to their concomitant mental phenomena, as well as to the corporeal phenomena produced thereby, a condition by helping them in the sense of a release from this or that.

Within the above corporeal phenomena are, according to the Pañha-vāra of Kusalattika-Paṭṭhāna, also included the corporeal phenomena due to residual Karma (Condition 13).

### **19. Association-condition: *Sampayutta-paccaya***

A phenomenon which by its association is aiding other phenomena is called an Association-condition. Thus, the four mental groups which are arising simultaneously are one to another a condition by way of Association (Conditions 6, 7).

### **20. Dissociation-condition: *Vippayutta-paccaya***

This condition refers to a phenomenon which is aiding other phenomena by not having the same base (eye, ear, etc.) and object (visible object, sound, etc.) Hence the corporeal phenomena are to the mental phenomena, and the mental phenomena to the corporeal phenomena, a condition by way of Dissociation. It is threefold: co-nascent, post-nascent, or pre-nascent. As it is said in Paṭṭhāna:

“The ‘co-nascent’ wholesome (mental) groups are to the corporeal phenomena produced by mind a condition by way of Dissociation. So are the ‘post-nascent’ wholesome groups to this pre-nascent body.”

In the Saha-jāta-Vibhaṅga it is said: “The karma-resultant (*vipāka*) neutral groups at the moment of conception are to those corporeal phenomena due to residual Karma (Condition 13) a condition by way of Dissociation. And the (mental) groups are to the physical base (of mind), just as the latter is to the (mental) groups, a condition by way of Dissociation.”

Further it is said in the Pañha-vāra of Kusalattika-Paṭṭhāna: “The ‘pre-nascent’ physical eye-base etc., is to eye-consciousness etc. a condition by way of Dissociation.”

### **21. Presence-condition: *Atthi-paccaya***

This condition refers to a phenomenon which by its presence—being either pre-nascent, or co-nascent—is aiding certain other phenomena as a support.

For example, the four simultaneously arising mental groups are one to another a condition by way of presence, i.e. the existence of any of the groups is dependent on the presence of the other groups. The same applies to the four primary physical elements, whilst the presence of corporeality is a condition to mentality. Also consciousness and the mental phenomena are to the corporeal phenomena produced by mind a condition by way of presence. So are the four physical elements to the derived corporeal phenomena, the five sense-organs and objects ('pre-nascent') to the five kinds of sense-consciousness (eye-consciousness etc.), and the physical organ of mind to mind-consciousness.

### **22. Absence-condition: *Natthi-paccaya***

This condition refers to just passed (*samanantara*) mental phenomena, which through their absence are aiding the mental phenomena immediately following after them, by giving them an opportunity to arise.

Thus, the consciousness and mental phenomena which have just passed, are to the presently arisen consciousness and mental phenomena a condition through their absence. That means the present consciousness is conditioned through the absence of the past consciousness.

### **23. Disappearance-condition: *Vigata-paccaya***

In as much as those last mentioned phenomena are by their disappearance giving other phenomena the opportunity to arise, they are called also a condition by way of Disappearance.

### **24. Non-Disappearance-condition: *Avigata-paccaya*.**

This condition is identical with the Presence-condition (Condition 21), and refers to the same phenomena.

## CHAPTER II

### *Explanation of the formula of Dependent Origination*

#### **I-II. Through Ignorance conditioned are the Karma-Formations (*Avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā*).**

'IGNORANCE' (*avijjā*) is in the Sutta-piṭaka explained as not understanding the four Noble Truths regarding suffering, its origin, its extinction, and the path leading to its extinction; and in the Abhidhamma-piṭaka, further, as not understanding the past, future and both the past and future existence, and as not understanding the Dependent Origination of all the phenomena of existence.

By 'FORMATIONS' (*saṅkhārā*) are here meant the Karma-Formations, i.e. the rebirth-producing volitions (*cetanā*) manifested in bodily, verbal, or purely mental actions (Pali *kamma*, Sanskrit *karma*). They are either: (1) meritorious (*puññābhisaṅkhāra*), as such appertaining either to the sense sphere, or to the Jhānas of the form-sphere; (2) demeritorious (*apuññābhisaṅkhāra*), appertaining only to the sense-sphere; or (3) imperturbable (*āneñjābhisaṅkhāra*), appertaining to the four Jhānas of the formless-sphere. (1) and (3) are worldly wholesome (*lokiya-kusala*), and (2) karmically unwholesome (*akusala*). Karmically neutral, as well as supramundane wholesome (*lokuttara-kusala*) states, do not come into consideration here, as they are no condition for rebirth.

**Meritorious Karma-Formations.** Ignorance may be to the meritorious Karma-Formations a condition (a) by way of Object (Condition 2), or (b) by way of Decisive Support (Condition 9(1)).

(a) For example, if we take our own, or another person's Ignorance, as Object of our contemplation, considering it as something evil and rejectable, then we thereby produce meritorious volitions, meritorious Karma-Formations. In this case Ignorance is to these meritorious Karma-Formations—belonging to this sense-sphere—a condition through being the 'Object' of our contemplation.

Or, when with Jhāna-vision (in the form-sphere) we recognize Ignorance in another person's mind, at that time the thus produced meritorious Karma-Formations in the form sphere are dependent on Ignorance as their 'Object.'

(b) But if, in order to overcome Ignorance, we are induced to perform meritorious deeds or practice self-control—belonging to the sense-sphere—or attain the Jhānas of the form sphere, in that case all these meritorious Karma-Formations produced thereby are dependent on Ignorance as their 'Decisive Support' (*upanissaya*).

**Demeritorious Karma-Formations.** If, however, through thinking on a state of Ignorance, greed or any other demeritorious phenomena springing up, then these demeritorious Karma-Formations are dependent on Ignorance, are conditioned through Ignorance by way of 'Object' (*ārammaṇa*).

Or, if we pay great attention to that state of Ignorance as object, concentrate our mind on it, and enjoy it by way of greed, etc., then Ignorance is to these demeritorious Karma-Formations a condition by way of 'Predominating Object' (*ārammaṇādhipati*; Conditions 2 and 3), and by way of 'Decisive Support through Object' (*ārammaṇūpanissaya*; Condition 9 (1)).

Or if, blinded and impelled by Ignorance, one commits crimes, or any other demeritorious actions, then these demeritorious Karma-Formations are conditioned through Ignorance by being their 'Decisive Support.'

The Ignorance bound up with each immediately Impulsive moment, is to the demeritorious Karma-Formations of each immediately following Impulsive moment (*javana*; see II) a condition by way of Proximity, Contiguity, by way of Decisive Support through Contiguity (see 9), by way of Frequency (see 12), Absence (see 22), and Disappearance (see 23).

Whilst doing any demeritorious action, at that moment Ignorance is to the *associated* demeritorious Karma-Formations a condition by way of Root, Co-nascence, Mutuality, Support, Association, Presence and Non-Disappearance.

**Imperturbable Karma-Formations.** To the imperturbable Karma-Formations Ignorance may be a condition only by way of Decisive Support. If namely for the purpose of overcoming Ignorance, we produce the four Jhānas of the Formless sphere, then these Imperturbable Karma-Formations of the formless sphere depend on Ignorance as their ‘Decisive Support.’

Here I wish to call attention to the fact that Ignorance, though being the main condition, is in no way the only condition to the Karma-Formations, and so it is to all other cases. Each of the twelve conditionally arising phenomena of the Paṭicca-Samuppāda is dependent on various conditions besides that given in the formula, and all are interrelated and interdependent in manifold ways.

## II–III. Through the Karma-Formations conditioned is Consciousness (*Saṅkhāra-paccayā viññāṇaṃ*)

Here, by CONSCIOUSNESS (*viññāṇa*) are meant only those classes of consciousness which are the results (*vipāka*) of wholesome or unwholesome Karma done in a former existence, namely: eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-consciousness (i.e. visible sensation, audible sensation, etc.) with either desirable, or undesirable objects, according to whether they are the results of wholesome or of unwholesome Karma; further the Mind-element (*mano-dhātu*), i.e., Recipient Consciousness (*sampaṭicchana*), receiving the sense-object and being either the result of wholesome or unwholesome Karma; further, the Investigating (*santīraṇa*) and Registering (*tad-ārammaṇa*) Mind-Consciousness-Element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*) being unaccompanied by moral Roots, which, as result of wholesome Karma, is accompanied either by gladness or indifference, and, as result of unwholesome Karma, is accompanied by indifference; further those eight karma-resultant lofty states of Registering-, Rebirth-, Death-, and Sub-Consciousness which are accompanied by moral roots, greedlessness and hatelessness (*alobha, adosa*), and either associated with knowledge or not, accompanied by gladness or indifference, premeditated or not; further the karma-resultant consciousness in the form-sphere and formless sphere of existence due to the Jhānas practised in a previous birth (see Dhammasaṅgaṇī, or my *Guide through the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka*, I).

In the preceding para, reference has been made to the momentary stages within the process of a single unit of cognition (*citta-vīthi*; cognitive series). Though these stages are already indicated in the canonical Dhammasaṅgaṇī, they have received nomenclature and detailed treatment only in the commentarial Abhidhamma literature. In a single process of sense experience, taking visual consciousness as an example, the following stages, or phases, are distinguished:

As soon as the visible object enters the field of presentation, there occurs in (1) Subconsciousness (*bhavaṅga*) (2) a Perturbation (*bhavaṅga-calana*) and (3) a Breaking-off of Subconsciousness (*bhavaṅgupaccheda*), which in rapid succession is followed by (4) Advertence to the threshold of the sense stimulus (*pañcadvārāvajjana*), (5) Eye-consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇa*), (6) Recipient consciousness (*sampaṭicchana-citta*), (7) Investigating consciousness (*santīraṇa-citta*), (8) Determining consciousness (*votthapana-citta*), (9) the Impulsive moments (*javana-citta*), and finally (10) the Registering consciousness (*tadārammaṇa*, lit. “that object”), after which the whole sinks again below the threshold of full consciousness, and gets immersed in Sub-consciousness. Stage six is called Mind-element (*mano-dhātu*), 7–10 Mind-Consciousness-element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*).

Hence the Karma-Formations are to all the afore-mentioned karma-resultant classes of consciousness (which include Rebirth-Consciousness, *paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*) a condition by way of Karma (Condition 13), and thus also a condition by way of Decisive Support. For it is said in the Tika-Paṭṭhāna: “Wholesome and Unwholesome Karma (*kamma*) is to its result (*vipāka*) a condition by way of Decisive Support.”

Thus, the Karma-Formations are to Rebirth-consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*), too, a condition by way of Decisive Support.

Rebirth-consciousness, which of course is a mind-consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa*) arises at the very moment of conception.

In the Sutta it is said: “Once all (I) Ignorance and Clinging is extinguished, neither karmically meritorious, nor demeritorious, nor imperturbable (II) Karma-Formations are produced, and thus no (III) Consciousness will spring up again in a new mother’s womb” (SN 12:51).

### **III—IV. Through Consciousness conditioned are Mentality and Corporeality (*Viññāṇa -paccayā nāma-rūpaṃ*).**

“For, if Consciousness were not to appear in the mother’s womb, would in that case Mentality and Corporeality arise?” (Nid. Sutta). “Just as two bundles of reed leaning one against the other, so are Mentality and Corporeality dependent on Consciousness.” (SN 12:67).

‘Mentality’ (*nāma*) refers here only to three of the mental groups, i.e. feeling, perception and mental formations, for the 4th, the consciousness-group, has already been mentioned as the condition to the three other groups and corporeality. (Apart from the Paṭicca-samuppāda formula, Mentality, or *nāma*, is a name for all four mental groups).

‘Corporeality’ (*rūpa*) comprises the four primary physical elements—solid, liquid, heat, motion—and all the corporeal phenomena derived there from.

In the Sutta it is said: “Feeling, perception, volition, sense-impression, mental reflection: these are called Mentality. The four primary elements and the corporeality derived therefrom, this is called corporeality” (Majjhima-Nikāya 9).

**Consciousness and Mentality.** At conception, or during life-continuity, Rebirth-Consciousness or some other karma-resultant class of consciousness, are to the simultaneously arising three mental groups (‘Mentality’) a condition by way of Co-Nascence (Condition 6), Mutuality (7), Support (8), Association (19), Karma-Result (14), Nutriment (here consciousness; 15), Faculty (mind-faculty; 16), Presence (21), and Non-Disappearance (24).

**Consciousness and Corporeality.** Consciousness is to the six physical sense-organs (corporeality), only when they first arise, a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Karma-Result, Nutriment, Faculty (mind-faculty), Dissociation (20), Presence, Non-Disappearance, and Mutuality. To the remaining corporeal phenomena it is a condition in the same ways, excepting only Mutuality.

Karmic Consciousness, i.e. consciousness accompanied by rebirth-producing wholesome or unwholesome volitions—at the stage of Impulsive moments; see II—III—is to the karma-produced Corporeality (i.e. the physical changes arising from moment to moment during life-continuity) a condition by way of Decisive Support (9).

There are many more ways, in which the numerous Corporeal and Mental phenomena are dependent on the various kinds of karma-resultant Consciousness. A detailed explanation is given in Paṭṭhāna.

### **IV—V. Through Mentality and Corporeality conditioned are the Six Sense Bases (*Nāmarūpa-paccayā saḷāyatanaṃ*).**

The Six Sense Bases (*āyatana*) are a name for the five physical sense-organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body) and the Mind-Base (*manāyatana*), the latter being a collective term for the five kinds of sense consciousness (eye-consciousness etc.), the mind-element (*mano-dhātu*) and the mind-consciousness-element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*). Cf. II—III.

As condition to the Sense Bases, Mentality (*nāma*) again refers to the above mentioned three mental groups, whilst Corporeality (*rūpa*) refers to the four primary physical elements, the six physical seats

(*vatthu*) of consciousness (i.e. eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and physical seat of mind) and the physical life-faculty.<sup>2</sup>

**Mentality and Mind-Base.** The three mental groups ('Mentality') are a condition only to the 6th Base, the Mind-Base (*manāyatana*), as it is said in Vibhaṅga: "Through Mentality (*nāma*) conditioned is the sixth Base (*nāma-paccayā chaṭṭhāyatanaṃ*)."

At the moment of conception the three mental groups ('Mentality') are to the mind-Base a condition in at last seven ways, i.e. by way of Co-Nascence (6), Mutuality (7), Support (8), Association (19), Karma-Result (14; see II), Presence (21), and Non-Disappearance (24); some mental phenomena ('Mentality') also by way of Root (e.g. karmically neutral greedlessness, etc. included in the group of Mental Formations), or by way of Nutriment (e.g. Mind-Volition and Mind-Impression; see 15).

Also during life-continuity, karma-resultant Mentality is to the Mind-Base a condition in the above ways, whilst the meritorious and demeritorious Mentality is to it a condition in the same ways, excepting only Karma-result; some non-resultant (meritorious, etc.) mental phenomena may be to the Mind-Base a condition by way of Root some by way of Nutriment.

**Mentality and five physical Bases.** Karma-resultant Mentality dependent on the five sensitive organs (e.g. Feeling or Perception produced through eye-impression, ear-impression, etc.) is during life-continuity, to the five physical sense-organs ('Bases') a condition by way of Post-Nascence (11), Dissociation (20), Presence (21), and Non-Disappearance (23).

Also karmically wholesome and unwholesome Mentality is to the five physical sense-organs ('Bases') a condition in the above four ways.

**Corporeality and Mind Base.** The physical seat of mind (included in 'Corporeality') is, at the moment of conception, to the Mind Base a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Dissociation, Presence, and Non-Disappearance. The mind is functioning from the very first moment of conception of a being. Hence, at conception, and only at conception, does the physical organ of the mind arise simultaneously with mind-consciousness ('Co-Nascence') both being conditions one to another, whilst the physical organ of the mind is a Support (or foundation) to the Mind-base by its Presence and Non-Disappearance.

**Corporeality and five physical Bases.** The four primary physical elements, i.e. the solid, liquid, heat and motion (included in 'Corporeality'), are to any of the five physical sense-organ Bases (i.e. eye, ear, etc.), only when they first arise, a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Presence, and Non-Disappearance. Of the five sentient organs only the body-sensitivity appears at conception, hence simultaneously with the four elements ('Co-Nascence'), whilst the other organs appear later. The existence of all these five physical Bases, however, is dependent on the Support, Presence and Non-Disappearance of the four primary physical elements.

The physical Life-Faculty (included in 'Corporeality') is, at conception and during life-continuity, to the five physical sense-organ Bases (eye, ear, etc.) a condition by way of Presence, Non-Disappearance and Faculty. In other words, the five sense-organs are dependent on the Faculty of physical life, on its Presence and Non-Disappearance.

Bodily Nutriment (included in 'Corporeality') is to the five sense-organ Bases, during life-continuity, a condition by way of Presence, Non-Disappearance and Nutriment. In other words, the five sense-organs can exist only as long as the material nutriment is present.

**The six sense organs and Mind Base.** The five physical sense-organs (included in 'Corporeality') are, during life-continuity, to the five kinds of sense-consciousness, as eye-consciousness, etc. (included in the Mind-Base), a condition by way of Support, Pre-Nascence, Faculty, Dissociation, Presence, and Non-Disappearance. In other words, these five kinds of consciousness cannot arise without the Support, the Pre-Arising, the Presence, and the Faculty of the five physical sense-organs.

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<sup>2</sup> The physical seat of mind must not be confounded with the Mind-base (*manāyatana*); cf. preceding paragraph.



The physical organ of *mind* (included in 'Corporeality') is, during life-continuity, to Recipient consciousness and mind-consciousness (included in the 'Mind-Base'; see above) a condition by way of Support, Pre-Nascence, Dissociation, Presence, and Non-Disappearance, i.e. the arising of these two kinds of consciousness depends—during life-continuity—on the Support, Pre-arising and Presence of the physical organ of the mind.

#### **V—VI. Through the Six Sense Bases conditioned is Sense-Impression. (Saḷāyatana-paccayā phassa).**

The six kinds of Sense Impression (*phassa*) are: eye-impession (visual contact), ear-impession, nose-impession tongue-impession, body-impession, mind-impession, being either the results of wholesome or unwholesome Karma. They are associated with all the above-mentioned kinds of karma-resultant consciousness (see II—III).

**5 sense-organ Bases.** The five physical sense-organ Bases (eye, ear, etc.) are to the corresponding five kinds of sense-impession (eye-impession, etc.) a condition by way of Support, Pre-Nascence, Faculty, Dissociation, Presence, and Non-Disappearance. Here it should be remembered that the sense-organ Bases are included also in the twenty 'Faculties' (see 16). Sense-Impression cannot take place without the physical organs having already arisen (Pre-Nascence), without their being 'present' etc.

**Mind-Base.** The five classes of sense consciousness, visual, etc. (included in the 'Mind-Base') are to the corresponding karma-resultant Sense-Impressions a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Karma-Result, Nutriment, Faculty, Association, Presence, and Non-Disappearance.

Here again we have to remember that consciousness and its mental concomitants, hence also Sense-Impression, are all 'simultaneously arising' (Co-Nascence), 'mutually conditioned' and inseparably 'associated' with each other, and that the five kinds of sense-consciousness are all 'Karma-Results' and considered as 'Nutriment' (consciousness) and 'Faculties' (see 16).

**5 physical object-Bases.** The five physical sense-object Bases, as visible object, sound etc., are to the corresponding five Sense-Impressions a condition by way of Object, Pre-Nascence, and Non-Disappearance. That means, the existence of the five Sense-Impressions depends on the existence of the five physical Objects, on their having 'already arisen' (Pre-Nascence), on their 'not having disappeared'. For, if the five physical Objects have not already arisen, no corresponding Sense-Impressions will take place.

**6 object-Bases.** The six objects, i.e. the physical objects, and the mind-object (which latter may be sometimes also a corporeal phenomenon), are to Mind-Impression a condition merely by way of Object, i.e. through their being its objects.

#### **VI—VII. Through Sense-Impression conditioned is Feeling (Phassa-paccayā vedanā).**

There are six kinds of Feeling (*vedanā*): born of eye-impession, ear-impession, nose-impession, tongue-impession, body-impession, and mind-impession. With every kind of consciousness, Feeling is inseparably associated. Here, however, only the karma-resultant Feelings come into consideration, i.e. those Feelings which are associated with the above mentioned classes of karma-resultant consciousness (see II—III) and karma-resultant sense-impessions (see V—VI).

The five Sense-impessions (i.e. eye-impession etc.) are to the corresponding five kinds of Feeling (i.e. born of eye-impession etc.) a condition in eight ways, i.e. by way of Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Karma-Result, Nutriment, Association, Presence, and Non-Disappearance. Here again the reader has to remember that all the mental phenomena in one and the same state of consciousness, hence also the above Sense-Impressions and the corresponding five kinds of Feeling, are necessarily dependent one upon the other by their 'simultaneous arising' (Co-Nascence), their Presence, their Association etc.

To those karma- resultant Feelings, however, which arise along with the Recipient, Investigating, and Registering stages of consciousness, the five Sense- Impressions are a condition by way of Decisive Support. To Recipient Consciousness, however, they are a condition also by way of Contiguity.

Mind- Impression (*mano-samphassa*) is to the simultaneously arising karma- resultant Feelings of the sensuous sphere associated with Registering consciousness, a condition in the above eight ways (i.e. by Co-Nascence etc.).

To those karma- resultant Feelings of the three spheres (the sensuous, form- and formless- spheres) that arise at conception, in sub- consciousness, and at death, as well as to those Feelings that arise along with the Registering consciousness at the mind- gate, to all those does Mind- Impression associated with the 'Advertence to the threshold of the mind' (*mano- dvārāvajjana*) constitute a condition by way of Decisive Support.

### VII—VIII. Through Feeling conditioned is Craving (*Vedanā-paccayā taṇhā*).

With regard to the six objects, there are six kinds of Craving, i. e. craving, with regard to visible objects, sounds, odours, tastes, bodily sensations, and mind objects. If, with regard to any of these objects Craving arises with the desire for sensual enjoyment, it is called 'Sensuous Craving' (*kāma- taṇhā*). If it is connected with the belief in eternal personal existence, it is called 'Craving for Existence' (*bhava- taṇhā*). If it is connected with the belief in annihilation of personal existence, it is called 'Craving for Annihilation' (*vibhava- taṇhā*).

Any Feeling associated with any karma- resultant consciousness is to Craving a condition by way of Decisive Support, irrespectively whether the feeling be agreeable, painful or indifferent. For even painful Feeling may be a condition to Craving, as dependent on painful Feeling there may arise the desire and craving for happiness.

### VIII—IX. Through Craving conditioned is Clinging (*Taṇhā-paccayā upādānaṃ*).

The four kinds of Clinging (*upādāna*) are: sensuous clinging (*kāmupādāna*), clinging to erroneous opinions (*diṭṭhupādāna*), clinging to mere rules and ritual (*silabbatupādāna*), clinging to the Ego belief (*attavādūpadāna*). □

Sensuous Craving (*kāma- taṇhā*) is to Sensuous Clinging (*kāmupādāna*) a condition by way of Decisive Support. To the other three kinds of Clinging—if associated with it—it is a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Association, Presence, Non-Disappearance, and Root (greed); further, Craving may be to them a condition by way of Decisive Support, in which case, of course, it cannot be co-nascent etc.

### IX-X. Through Craving conditioned is the Process of Existence (*Upādāna-paccayā bhavo*).

The Process of Becoming (*bhava*) is of two kinds:(1) Karma-Process (*kamma-bhava*), being the active side of existence; (2) Rebirth-Process (*upatti-bhava*), being the passive (reactive), karma- resultant side of existence.

(1) The Karma-Process consists of rebirth-producing volitions (*cetanā*) and the mental phenomena associated therewith, which all, combined together, are to be considered as Karma, or action (Pali: *kamma*). As it is said in Vibhaṅga: "What at that occasion is the Karma-Process? It is the meritorious, demeritorious, and imperturbable karma-formation (see I-II). This is called the Karma-Process. Moreover, all action leading to rebirth is called Karma-Process."

Hence, 'Karma-Process' (*kamma-bhava*) is a collective name for rebirth-producing Volition (*cetanā*) and all the mental phenomena associated therewith, whilst the 2nd link of the formula, the Karma- Formations (*saṅkhāra*), according to the Paṭisambhidāmagga (Ñānakathā No. 4), designates the rebirth-producing Volitions (*āyuhana-saṅkhāra*) only.

(2) The Rebirth-Process, in short, comprises the karma-resultant (*vipāka*) groups of existence. In Vibhaṅga VI it is said: "What on that occasion is the Rebirth-Process? There is the process of existence in the sensuous sphere, in the form-sphere, the formless sphere, the perception-sphere, the non-perception-sphere, the neither-perception-nor-nonperception-sphere, the one-group sphere (i.e. of the unconscious beings, possessing only one group, the Corporeality-group) the 5-group sphere (i.e. the sense-sphere and form-sphere): this is called the Rebirth-Process of Existence."

Now, impelled by 'Sensuous Clinging' (*kāmuṇāpādāna*) one may produce a meritorious or demeritorious Karma-Process that causes Rebirth in the sensuous sphere. Or, through sensuous clinging to happiness and joy (which one hopes to find in the form- or formless-sphere) one might practise the Jhānas of the form- or formless-sphere, and thus be reborn in that special sphere. In that case, Sensuous Clinging would be a condition of that meritorious Karma-Process that causes Rebirth in one of these spheres.

Or, impelled by 'Clinging to Erroneous Opinions' (*diṭṭhūpādāna*), e.g. to belief that the Ego reaches extinction in one of the three spheres, one may produce a Karma-Process, that causes Rebirth in that special sphere. Thus, the Clinging to Erroneous Opinions is a condition to that Karma-Process, that causes Rebirth in one of these three spheres.

In a similar way, also 'Clinging to Rules and Ritual' (*sīlabbatūpādāna*) and 'Clinging to the Ego Belief' (*attavādūpādāna*) may be a condition of such a Karma-Process that causes Rebirth in one of these three spheres.

To the existence in the form- and the formless-sphere, as well as to the wholesome Karma-Process and the Rebirth-Process included in the sensuous sphere, this fourfold Clinging is a condition only by way of Decisive Support.

In the Sensuous Existence these four kinds of Clinging are to the unwholesome Karma-Process, if associated therewith, a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Association, Presence, Non-Disappearance and Root (greed); but if dissociated therewith, merely a condition by way of Decisive Support.

## **X-XI. Through the Process of Becoming conditioned is Rebirth (*Bhava-paccayā jāti*).**

Birth (*jāti*) is here explained as the manifestation of the five groups of existence (corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations, consciousness) at conception, which in the world of men takes place in the mother's womb.

By the Process of Becoming (*bhava*) in this connection, i.e. as the condition to Rebirth, we have to understand the Karma-Process of Becoming (*kamma-bhava*).

This Karma-Process is to Rebirth a condition by way of Karma, and hence by way of Decisive Support (see II-III).

To the question, how one could know whether the Karma-Process is really the condition of Rebirth, *Visuddhimagga* XVII gives the following answer:

"Though the outward conditions may be absolutely the same, there still can be seen a difference in the beings with regard to the qualities, as wretched, noble, etc. Even though the outward conditions, such as sperm and blood of father and mother, may be the same, there still can be seen that difference between the beings, even if they be twins. This difference cannot be without a cause, as it can be noticed at any time, and in any being. It can have no other cause than the Karma-Process. And, as in the own life-continuity of those reborn beings no other cause can be found, it must be due to the Karma-Process. Karma (action) namely is the cause for the difference amongst beings with regard to high and low, etc. Therefore the Buddha has said: "Karma divides the beings into high and low" (*Majjhima Nikāya* 135). In this sense we should understand that the Process of Becoming is the condition of Rebirth."

That in this ever-repeated process of Rebirth, in the absolute sense, no self, no Ego-entity is to be found besides these conditionally arising and passing phenomena, this truth is expressed by the Buddha in the following words:

“To believe that the doer of the deed be the same as the one who experiences its result (in the next life): this is one extreme. To believe that the doer of the deed, and the one who experiences its result, be two different persons: this is the other extreme. Both these extremes the Perfect One has avoided and taught the truth that lies in the middle of both, to wit:

Through Ignorance conditioned are the Karma-Formations; through the Karma-Formations conditioned is Consciousness through Rebirth conditioned are Decay and Death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair” (SN 12:46).

“No doer of the deeds is found,  
No one who ever reaps their fruits:  
Empty phenomena roll on,  
This view alone proves right and true.  
“No god, no Brahma, can be found,  
No maker of this wheel of life:  
Empty phenomena roll on,  
Dependent on conditions all.”

(quoted in *Visuddhimagga* XIX).

### **XI–XII. Through Rebirth conditioned are Decay and Death (*Jāti-paccayā jarā-maraṇaṃ*).**

Where there is no Rebirth, there is no Decay and Death, no sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. But where there is Rebirth, there also is Decay and Death. Thus Rebirth is to Decay and Death, etc., a condition by way of Decisive Support.

The following diagram shows at a glance the relationship of dependence existing between three successive lives.:

Past	1. Ignorance ( <i>avijjā</i> ) 2. Karma-Formations ( <i>saṅkhāra</i> )	Karma-Process ( <i>kamma-bhava</i> )
Present	3. Consciousness ( <i>viññāṇa</i> ) 4. Mentality & Corporeality ( <i>nāma-rūpa</i> ) 5. The six Sense-Bases ( <i>āyatana</i> ) 6. Sense-Impression ( <i>phassa</i> ) 7. Feeling ( <i>vedanā</i> )	Rebirth-Process ( <i>uppatti-bhava</i> )
	8. Craving ( <i>taṇhā</i> ) 9. Clinging ( <i>upādāna</i> ) 10. Process of Becoming ( <i>bhava</i> )	Karma-Process ( <i>kamma-bhava</i> )
Future	11. Rebirth ( <i>jāti</i> ) 12. Decay & Death ( <i>jarā-maraṇa</i> )	Rebirth-Process ( <i>uppatti-bhava</i> )

Group 1–2 is identical with Group 8–10, as each of these two groups represents the Karma-Process, containing the five karmic causes of rebirth, to wit: 1. Ignorance, two Karma-Formations (rebirth-producing volitions), 8. Craving, 9. Clinging, and 10. Karma-Process (*avijjā, saṅkhāra, taṇhā, upādāna, kamma-bhava*).

In the same way, Group 3–7 is identical with Group 11–12, as each of these two groups represents the Rebirth-Process, containing the five Karma-results, to wit: 3. Consciousness (rebirth, etc.), 4. Mentality and Corporeality (conception), 5. the Bases, 6. Sense-Impression, and 7. Feeling (*viññāṇa, nāma-rūpa, āyatana, phassa, vedanā*). Cf. *Paṭisambhidā, Nānakathā* No. 4.

“Five causes were there in the past.  
Five fruits we find in present life,  
Five causes do we now produce,  
Five fruits we reap in future life.”

(*Visuddhimagga* XVII).

In SN 12:34 there are given seventy-seven kinds of knowledge regarding the Paṭicca-Samuppāda. They form eleven groups, corresponding to the eleven propositions of the formula, each with seven kinds of knowledge. As all the eleven groups are in every respect throughout analogous, I am giving here only the first group of seven kinds of knowledge, namely:

that through Ignorance the Karma-Formations are conditioned;  
that, if there is no Ignorance, there also are no Karma-Formations;  
that also in the past the Karma-Formations were conditioned through Ignorance;  
that, if there had been no Ignorance, there also would have been no Karma-Formations;  
that also in the future the Karma-Formations will be conditioned through Ignorance;  
that, if there will be no Ignorance, there also will be no Karma-Formations;  
that even one’s knowledge of the Fixity of this Law is subject to decay, disappearance, waning and cessation.

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