

# PATICCASAMUPPADA

ပဋိစ္စသမုပ္ပါဒ်သုတ် တရားတော်

## Part - II

### The Law of Dependent Origination

#### Consciousness ARISES Mind and Matter

1. Avijja - ignorance or delusion
2. Sankhara - kamma-formations
3. Vinnana - consciousness
4. Nama-rupa - mind and matter
5. Salayatana - six sense bases
6. Phassa - contact or impression
7. Vedana - Feeling
8. Tanha - craving
9. Upadana - clinging
10. Bhava - becoming
11. Jati - rebirth
12. Jara-marana - old age and death

Introduction – **PA-TIC-CA-SA-MUP-PA-DA** – the law of Dependent Origination – is very tedious to study and so is to get a clear understanding of one’s interaction of kamma’s action in the frame work of the present, past and future existence.

#### Lesson No. 1 – Kamma Action

Kamma action depends on one’s intention. An individual is not responsible for any kamma action, if he or she has committed a deed without volitional intention.

The Arahant Thera **CAKKHUPALA THERA** was stamping on insects and many were killed, because he was blind. He has no volitional intent to kill the insects; and hence, Buddha said, he is free and not responsible for this action and therefore no kamma is generated against him.

*“Buddha, the Lord said that since the **thera had no intention to kill the insects, he was free from any moral responsibility for their destruction.***

*So we should note that causing death with out cetana or volition is not a kammic act. Some Buddhists have doubt about their moral purity when they cook vegetables or drink water that harbor microbes.”*

*Buddha said - "Cetana (volitional act) is that which I call kamma."*

## **Lesson No. 2 – Pure Thought brings happiness**

*An individual in any state of condition – if at the time of death, adoration of the Buddha on his deathbed had benefited him. He urged his father to seek refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha and observe the five precepts.*

The very first thought of adoration of Buddha or good deeds, if any, will bring good kamma action in one's rebirth. See the story of [Matthakundali](#).

**Because of rebirth consciousness there arise mental phenomena associated with it such as feeling, remembering, perception, reflection,** After the cessation of rebirth consciousness *cetasikas* (mental factors) arise in the wake of every activity of *vinnana* (consciousness) and so do *rupas* conditioned by *citta*, *kamma*, *utu* (heat) and *ahara* (nutriment).

There is no doubt about the close connection between *citta*<sup>1</sup> and *cetasika*<sup>2</sup>. When *citta* is active we feel, we remember, we think, there arise greed, anger, faith and so forth. Equally obvious are the physical phenomena that stem from *cittas*. In fact the arising of rebirth consciousness and *rupa* at the moment of conception takes place in a split second and as such it is invisible even to the divine eye. The divine eye may see what happens shortly before death and after rebirth but it is only the Buddha's omniscience that sees death-*citta* and rebirth-*citta* directly. But from what we know about the cause of physical phenomena, we can infer the arising of *rupa* from the rebirth-*citta* at the moment of conception.

Some physical phenomena have their origin not in *citta* but in *kamma*, *utu* (heat) and material food but without *citta* they will have no life. A corpse is lifeless although it is composed of *utujarupas*. It is because of the contribution of *citta* that the *rupas* based on *kamma*, *utu* and nutriment exist and form a continuous stream of life, Once death supervenes, cutting off the stream of consciousness, the *cetasikas* and living *rupas* cease to exist. Hence the teaching that *namarupa* is conditioned of *vinnana*.

Because of *sankhara* (good or bad kamma) there is an uninterrupted flow of *vinnana* (consciousness) in the new existence. Coupled with every *citta* is

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<sup>1</sup> *citta*: Mind; heart; state of consciousness.

<sup>2</sup> *cetasika*: Mental concomitant (see see *sankhara* (kamma) ..

*namarupa* which arises ceaselessly. The duration of *namarupa* depends on *citta*.

If *citta* lasts an hour, so does *namarupa*. If the stream of *citta* flows for 100 years, we say that the life of *namarupa* is 100 years.

In short, we should understand that life is only the continuum of ceaseless causal relationships between mind and matter (*namarupa*) and consciousness (*vinnana*).

In point of fact *citta* and *cetasikas* arise together but because of its predominant role *citta* is described as leading the latter. If a man's mind is evil, he does evil deeds, utters evil words and harbors evil thoughts. These three kinds of *kammas* are *sankharas*" born of ignorance. They become potential for evil kammic effect. Every deed, speech or thought is accompanied by seven impulse-moments that flash forth several times.

If the first impulse-moments are favorable, the *kamma* is productive in the present life; otherwise it becomes sterile.

If one of the seven impulse-moments is favorable, it gives rise to kammic images or visions of afterlife on death-bed and produce kammic effect in the next life, otherwise it is sterile.

As for the other five impulse-moments, they produce kammic effect from the third existence till the last existence (the existence when Nibbana is to be attained) under favorable circumstances. It becomes sterile only after the attainment of Nibbana.

Before the attainment of Nibbana its potential remains intact for innumerable lifetimes, ready to bear fruit when circumstances permit. It bears fruit in terms of suffering, both mental and physical, in the lower worlds. If by virtue of good *kamma* the person is reborn in the human world, he will be followed by evil *kamma* and suffer regardless of his station in life.

### **Dhammapada Verse No. 1**

#### **The Story of Thera Cakkhupala (Verse 1)**

While residing at the Jetavana monastery in Savatthi, the Buddha uttered Verse (1) of this book, with reference to Cakkhupala, a blind therā.

On one occasion, Thera Cakkhupala came to pay homage to the Buddha at the Jetavana monastery. One night, while pacing up and down in meditation, the thera accidentally stepped on some insects. In the morning, some bhikkhus visiting the thera found the dead insects. They thought ill of the thera and reported the matter to the Buddha. The Buddha asked them whether they had seen the thera killing the insects. When they answered in the negative, the Buddha said, "Just as you had not seen him killing, so also he had not seen those living insects. Besides, as the thera had already attained arahatship he could have no intention of killing and so was quite innocent." On being asked why Cakkhupala was blind although he was an arahat, the Buddha told the following story:

Cakkhupala was a physician in one of his past existences. Once, he had deliberately made a woman patient blind. That woman had promised him to become his slave, together with her children, if her eyes were completely cured. Fearing that she and her children would have to become slaves, she lied to the physician. She told him that her eyes were getting worse when, in fact, they were perfectly cured. The physician knew she was deceiving him, so in revenge, he gave her another ointment, which made her totally blind. As a result of this evil deed the physician lost his eyesight many times in his later existences.

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

**Verse 1:** All mental phenomena have mind as their forerunner; they have mind as their chief; they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with an evil mind, '*dukkha*' follows him just as the wheel follows the hoof print of the ox

**At the end of the discourse, thirty thousand bhikkhus attained arahatship together with Analytical Insight (*Patisambhida*).**

To an ordinary observer, the thera's blindness may appear to be the price that he had to pay for the over—exertion of his energy. But the main cause was the evil deed he had committed in his previous life as a doctor. Even if he had not practiced meditation, he might have become blind one way or the other. But the attainment of Arahatsip was an immense benefit that he accrued from his zealous and strenuous exertion.

**Lesson No. 1** - There are two lessons that we can learn from the story of Cakkhupala thera. As an energetic monk, he continued to practice *vipassana* after he became an Arahata. As he paced on the ground while meditating, the insects that lay in his path were trampled to death. When the matter was brought to the notice of the Buddha, the Lord said that since the *thera had no intention to kill the insects, he was free from any moral responsibility for their destruction.*

So we should note that causing death with out *cetana* or volition is not a kammic act. Some Buddhists have doubt about their moral purity when they cook vegetables or drink water that harbor microbes. They should of course remove living beings that they can see. But they need not have qualms about the destruction of creatures that may be accidentally connected with their actions. Some are said to feel guilty over the death of insects that rush against a burning lamp. Theirs is an extreme View and *cetana* (volition) as the key-stone of moral problems in the context of kammic law is borne out by Moggaliputtatissa thera's verdict in his reply to king Asoka.

### THE THERA'S VERDICT

When king Asoka supported the Buddha-dhamma some heretics joined the Buddhist sangha for material benefits The true bhikkhu refused to have anything to do with the bogus monks and for seven years the *uposatha* service fell into abeyance at the Asokarama monastery in Pataliputta city. So king Asoka sent a minister to see to it that the bhikkhus perform the *Uposatha* service But the bhikkhus refused to comply with the king's wish. They said that the *uposatha* service was to be performed only by the assembly of true bhikkhus. If there happened to be a morally impure monk in the assembly he had to be admonished and penalized for any infraction of Vinaya rules. The Sangha held the service only when there Was reason to believe in the Purity of every member; and they did not meet for the service together with non-bhikkhus. If they did so, they would be guilty of a serious offence.

The minister regarded this reply as defiance of the king's order and put the good monks to the sword. The king's younger brother, **Tissa thera**, escaped death because the minister recognized him just in time. On hearing the news the king was greatly shocked and he asked **Moggaliputtatissa thera** whether he was kammically responsible for the death of the bhikkhus. The thera asked him whether he had intended to have the monks killed. **When the king replied that he had no such intention, the thera said that he was free from kammic responsibility.** The thera gave this verdict on the basis of the Buddha's saying,

*"Cetana (volitional act) is that which I call kamma."*

He also cited Thera jataka in which the bodhisatta who was then a rishi emphasized the dominant factor of *cetana* in the operation of the kammic law.

*The reliable test of arahatship is to see whether or not a person who claims or is credited with it has craving, love of pleasure, attachment anger, depression fear,*

*anxiety, restlessness the tendency to speak ill of others, the habit of laughing loudly, irreverence to the memory of the Buddha and so forth.*

If he has those moral weaknesses he is certainly not free from greed, anger and ignorance. If a thorough inquiry does not reveal any sign of these weaknesses, we may assume that he possesses the admirable attributes of an Arahant or at least the quality of a holy man who is close to arahantship.

### **Pure Thought brings Happiness**

Just as an evil thought is followed by suffering; so also will happiness followed pure thought. Those who think, speak and act with pure thought build up good *kamma sankhara*. Good *kammās* invariably lead to happiness in the present life and hereafter.

### **Dhammapada Verse No. 2**

#### **The Story of Matthakundali (Verse 2)**

While residing at the Jetavana monastery in Savatthi, the Buddha uttered Verse (2) of this book, with reference to Matthakundali, a young Brahmin/ Matthakundali was a young Brahmin, whose father, Adinnapubbaka, was very stingy and never gave anything in charity. Even the gold ornaments for his only son were made by himself to save payment for workmanship. When his son fell ill, no physician was consulted, until it was too late. When he realized that his son was dying, he had the youth carried outside on to the verandah, so that people coming to his house would not see his possessions.

On that morning, the Buddha arising early from his deep meditation of compassion saw, in his Net of Knowledge, Matthakundali Lying on the verandah. So when entering Savatthi for alms-food with his disciples, the Buddha stood near the door of the Brahmin Adinnapubbaka. The Buddha sent forth a ray of light to attract the attention of the youth, who was facing the interior of the house. The youth saw the Buddha; and as he was very weak he could only profess his faith mentally. But that was enough. When he passed away with his heart in devotion to the Buddha he was reborn in the Tavatimsa celestial world.

From his celestial abode the young Matthakundali, seeing his father mourning over him at the cemetery, appeared to the old man in the likeness of his old self. He told his father about his rebirth in the Tavatimsa world and also urged him to approach and invite the Buddha to a meal. At the house of Adinnapubbaka the question of whether one could or could not be reborn in a celestial world simply by mentally professing profound faith in the Buddha, without giving in charity or observing the moral precepts, was brought up. So the Buddha willed that Matthakundali should

appear in person; Matthakundali soon appeared fully decked with celestial ornaments and told them about his rebirth in the Tavatimsa world. Then only, the audience became convinced that the son of the Brahmin Adinnapubbaka by simply devoting his mind to the Buddha had attained much glory.

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

**Verse 2:** All mental phenomena have mind as their forerunner; they have mind as their chief; they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness (*sukha*) follows him like a shadow that never leaves him.

**At the end of the discourse Matthakundali and his father Adinna pubbaka attained Sotapatti Magga and Sotapatti Phala. Adinnapubbaka also donated almost all his wealth to the cause of the Buddha's Teaching.**

According to the Dhammapada commentary, the brahmin and the deva attained the first stage on the holy path after hearing the verse. It is worthy of note that it was just the mere thought about the Buddha that led to the young man's rebirth in the deva-world. He did not seem to have any hope or desire for Nibbana. His rebirth as a deva was indeed devoid of intelligence but hearing a verse made him a *sotapanna*. These two verses from Dhammapada echo the *Paticcasamuppada* teaching that *vinnana* is conditioned by *sankhara*.

For the verses say that happiness or misery arises from *kamma sankhara*. and in fact *sukha* or *dukkha* occurs together with *vinnana*. Again *vinnana* implies the associated mental factors and its physical basis viz., *rupa*. Hence the teaching that *vinnana* conditions *nama-rupa*.

**Reference –**

1. PATICCASAMUPPADA - ပဋိစ္စသမုပ္ပါဒ်သုတ် တရားတော် explanation by by Mahasi Sayadaw
2. Dhammapada – Translated by Daw Mya Tin