

PATICCASAMUPPADA

ပဋိစ္စသမုပ္ပါဒ်သုတ် တရားတော်

Part - IV The Law of Dependent Origination

Feeling leads to Craving in Present Life

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

The doctrine of Paticcasamuppada can be represented as a ring of chain twelve links like a garland, one depending on the other, depicting as the chain of causations, i.e.

- ? *avijja* and *sankhara* are described as the causes in the **past life**,
- ? *vinnana*, *nama-rupa*, *phassa* and *vedana* as the consequences in the **present life**; *upadana* and *bhava* as the causes in the **present life** and
- ? *jati* and *jaramarana* (old age and death) its consequences that will occur in the **future life**.

The dependent origination consists of twelve links beginning with **ignorance** and ending in **death as the last link**. The **ignorance** and **craving** are the two root-causes:.

1. The first cycle begins with **ignorance** and ends in **feeling**,
2. The second cycle begins with **craving** and ends in **old age and death**. Since anxiety, grief and the like do not occur in the Brahma world, they do not necessarily stem from birth (*Jati*) and as such are not counted among the links of the dependent origination

It is evident that the pleasant feeling that we have when we hear a pleasant sound. Sweet words are welcome to the ear while harsh words do not. The nature of some feelings caused by ordinary sound is not obvious and such feelings are neutral.

We are all familiar with the smell of something rotten or the sweet fragrance smell of flowers. **Common people** perception of the smell might differ from those of a **Yogi**:

- a. Common people believe that it is they who smell
- b. Yogi knows that it is only a phenomenon arising from the conjunction of the nose, the odor and consciousness and he comes to realize the ceaseless influx and impermanence of everything.

Feeling may be agreeable or disagreeable according to the nature of contact and impression. Scents of flowers and perfumes cause pleasant feelings whereas the stench of the decomposing matter is offensive to the nose. The ordinary smells cause neither pleasant nor unpleasant feelings. The yogi notes the smelling consciousness and becomes aware of the three kinds of feelings, and their arising and dissolution.

Consciousness in eating arises from contact between the tongue and the food. Without the tongue or the flavor of food there can be no consciousness of taste. Common people believe that it is a living being that eats and enjoys the flavor. This is familiar to everybody.

- a. **Common people** think that it is they as living beings that experience the flavor.
- b. **Yogi** who notes all the physical events that occur while he is eating knows it as a phenomenon dependent on the tongue, the flavor and consciousness. Later on he gains a clear insight into its **ceaseless flux and impermanence**

Another source of **contact, feeling**, etc., is the sensitive part of the body. It is said: "Body consciousness arises from the body and the tactile object. **Body-impression** arises from the conjunction of the body, the tactile object and tactile consciousness and the tactile impression conditions the (tactile) **sensations**

- a. **You are conscious of eating only when you are eating,**
- b. **You are conscious of hearing only when there is something to be heard.**
- c. **Your body is conscious, in regard to every part of the body. You have tactile impression somewhere on your body at any time whenever you think of it. So its sphere is extensive and its duration is long.**

Body-consciousness is always present. It is not apparent when the mind is absorbed in any object other than the body. But if the attention is directed to the body, there

is no doubt about the tactile impression somewhere as, for example, the contact between the body and the floor, the body and the clothes, and so forth.

The object of contact is of three kinds, viz, earth, water and air (*pathavi, tejo* and *vayo*.)

Earth element has the attribute of **hardness, softness** and **coarseness** and this attribute is to be found if one examines or focuses on a part of the body that gives a clear impression of contact.

The particles of powder are combined and held together by the **water**(*apo*) element. The lump also contains heat (*tejo*), element that is concerned with heat or cold, as well as the **wind** (*vayo*) element that supports stiffness and expansion.

As for the common people, contact with earth element is usually understood in terms of hands, legs, clothes, man and so forth. This way of thinking is wrong but the yogi knows the truth through the practice of mindfulness.

Heat element is evident when we change the position of the body because we feel heated and pressed in some part of the body.. The water in the pot is cool relative to that in the open air but hot when compared to iced water. Hot, warm and cool are relative terms that mean essentially heat (element).

Wind – (Atmosphere) Vayo element has the characteristics of **stiffness and rigidity**. If you sit erect and stretch your back and introspect yourself, you will find rigidity.

To summarize - The Law of Dependent Origination - Ignorance of the four noble truths. It makes ordinary people blind to the impermanence and instability of sense-objects. So they think, speak and act in the hope of securing happiness in the present life or hereafter. These deeds in thought, word or bodily, actions are either wholesome or unwholesome and they are also called **kamma** formation).

The kamma formation give rise to new existence, the dying person has flashbacks of his kammic deeds and visions of future life that impress him and condition his new consciousness in a new life. In the absence of any special object that concerns the new consciousness, the latter occurs repeatedly with the death-bed impression of his precious life as its object.

Then there is eye-consciousness that is dependent on the eye and visual form. It is part of the state of consciousness, that is, the whole mental life as conditioned by **kamma formation**. What we see, hear, etc. may be pleasant or unpleasant and the corresponding nature of eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, etc., is due to the ethical character of our past deeds, that is the wholesomeness or unwholesomeness of the **kammās** in the past existence.

Together with the arising of consciousness, there also arises other concomitant mental and physical phenomena (*Cetasika* and *rupas*). Thus consciousness leads to mind and matter.

Consciousness is followed also by the six (sense-organs) and **six** (sense-impressions).

Contact and Impression means the conjunction of the mind, the mind-object and the sense-organ. It gives rise to **feeling** which may be pleasant or unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant. The last kind of feeling which is called neutral consciousness (*upekkha vedana*) gives us the impression of the absence of any feeling but according to Abhidhamma it is in fact a kind of subtle pleasure that implies only the absence of unbearable pain.

Feeling leads to Craving

Because of pleasant or unpleasant feeling, there arises craving (*tanha*)... It craves for sensual objects that it does not have or it craves for more of the objects that it already has. It knows no satisfaction.

Poor people seek sensual pleasure to the best of their ability. Of course because of their poverty, they can never fulfill all their desires but equally insatiable is the craving of the rich, the high officials and the upper crust of society. This is due to the nature of craving. The more it is fed, the more hungry it becomes and so it is worse among the rich than among the poor, more oppressive in wealthy countries than in poor countries.

Six Kinds of Craving

Craving (Tanha) is never tired of seeing pleasant objects. Their desire for happiness, good memory and good intelligence points to their craving for certain mental faculties. For six sense-objects there are six kinds of craving. These six cravings may mean merely the love of **sensual pleasure** (*kamma tanha*). This may be combined with the illusion of **permanence** (*bhava tanha*), that implies the **eternity-belief**.

Craving is also bound up with the belief in **annihilation** which makes some people overly attached to **sensual pleasure** (*vibhava tanha*). Since each craving may relate to the present, past or future, there are thus a total of 108 kinds of *tanha*. But all kinds of craving boil down to three kinds vis., **kama formation, becoming and craving for sensual pleasure**.

People who had in contact with unpleasant sense-objects will long for pleasant objects. Absence of suffering means happiness (*sukha*). We seek freedom from preoccupation with unpleasant thoughts, from worry about food, clothing and shelter. But once a man is well provided with the necessities of life, he tends to develop other cravings. "**The wealthy man wants to increase his wealth.**" **For it is in the nature of craving to be insatiable.** We wish to enjoy the good things of life

repeatedly; we wish to increase our possessions. The more we have, the more we want and the higher the quality of life is the greater is the desire to enhance it. *Tanha* never comes to an end for it is fueled and perpetuated by feeling.

In short, pleasant sense-objects create attachment and craving for better object. Unpleasant objects create the desire to be rid of them. When the sense-objects produce neither pleasant nor unpleasant feelings, we are still discontented with our lot and crave for better things.

All these show how Feeling (*vedana*) gives rise to Craving (*tanha*).

Craving and Cycle of Rebirth

Simultaneously with the arising of consciousness at the moment of seeing, etc., there arise - Mind and matter, six senses, contact and impression, and feeling.

For every ordinary person who is not yet free from defilements feeling leads to craving.

Craving in turn causes clinging that makes him do good or bad deed kamma becoming Under certain conditions it gives rise to rebirth that makes living beings subject to old age, sickness, death, grief and all other mental and physical sufferings. This is how feelings lead to *samsaric dukkha*.

Nobody can prevent the arising of Mind and matter, six senses, contact and impression, and feeling as concomitants of consciousness.

Note - The Buddha and the Arahats too, have pleasant, unpleasant or neutral feelings as a result of contact with sense-objects. They feel pain that arise from physical affliction. But they do not suffer mentally; nor do they take delight in pleasant sensations. So they are free from craving and attachment. They do not strive for pleasure and happiness and because of their non-kammic way of life; they do away with rebirth *namarupa* and other causes of suffering. This is the extinction of *dukkha* for the Arahats who is completely free from defilements.

So it is said, "Due to the complete extinction of craving that is rooted in pleasant or unpleasant feeling on the Ariyan path there arises the extinction of clinging,

So it is said, "The extinction of clinging leads to the extinction of the cause of rebirth (*kammic* effort). The extinction of *kammic* effort leads to extinction of rebirth. Extinction of rebirth leads to extinction of old age, death, grief, etc

Extinction of Craving

a. An Arahatship means complete extinction of craving,

b. An *anagami* (once returner) stage on the path means extinction of sensuous craving together with rebirth in the sensual world, old age, death, etc.

c. A *sotapatti* (stream winner) stage is assured of extinction of all craving that may lead to the lower worlds or more than seven existences. So he is free from all suffering of the lower worlds and the suffering for more than seven lifetimes in the sensual world. Thus implicit in the Pattecasamuppada is the lessening of *dukkha* with the weakening of *tanha*.

The Advantage of Vipassana

Likewise, the *vipassana* insight ensures the momentary extinction of craving. The arising of six sense-objects leads to pleasant or unpleasant feeling and in the absence of *vipassana* insight it finally ends in craving and suffering.

The Story of Mahatissa Thera

There is the story of *Mahatissa thera* in Sri Lanka who overcame *tanha* through the practice of both *samatha* and *vipassana*. One day he left his forest retreat early in the morning and on the way to Anuradha city for his alms round he met a woman who had left her home after quarrelling with her husband. At the sight of the thera, there arose in her a lustful desire and she laughed aloud seductively. On looking at her the thera noticed her teeth. Since he had been contemplating the skeleton, the whole body of the woman appeared as a heap of bones. He concentrated on this mental image and attained *Jhana*. After contemplating the image of the skeleton in his *jhanic* state of mind, he attained *Arahatship*.

The thera continued his journey and on the way met the woman's husband. The man asked him whether he had seen a woman. The thera replied that he did see something but that he did not know whether it was a man or a woman. All that he noticed was a skeleton that passed him on the way.

What he actually saw was the woman's teeth but his practice of contemplation had turned his impression of her body into the image of a skeleton. Hence in his mind thera has no room for lust or any other defilement arising from his sense-contact with the woman. Then practising *vipassana* on the basis of his *jhanic* consciousness he became free from defilement and attained *Arahatship*.

Lesson 1. Imagination is the power of perception. Repeated contemplation strengthens perception.

Contemplation and Extinction

There can be temporary total extinction of craving that results from feeling, there is the extinction of clinging resulting from the extinction of all the of craving.

Contemplation of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* ensures the partial extinction of *tanha*, *upadana*, *kamma*, rebirth, etc.

The object of *vipassana* practice is to put an end to defilements and samsaric suffering. So it is a matter of paramount importance that deserves the attention of everyone who seeks total liberation. Without this practice pleasant or unpleasant feeling at every moment of seeing, etc., is bound to lead to craving, *kamma* and rebirth.

Cutting off the Root

In short, he must be mindful of all the mental and physical phenomena that arise from the six senses. As concentration develops, such mindfulness leads to insight into Impermanence, Sufferings and No-self (*anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*), an insight that leaves no room for craving.

With the extinction of craving, there is also an end to clinging, and rebirth with all its suffering. This is the way to the cessation of *samsaric* existence or life-cycle through the elimination of its root-cause, namely, craving.

Mindfulness of worldly Desires

Greed is another word for craving. It may be due to pleasant feeling or unpleasant feeling that causes us craving. Ignorance, too, leads to complacency, attachment and craving. Thus Greed, Anger and Desire (*lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*) give rise to feeling which in turn causes craving and sufferings of *samsaric* existence. It is only the practice of awareness of seeing, hearing etc. that rules out the possibility of craving and nostalgia for the pleasant sensations from the senses. Without this practice, craving dominates us and leads to suffering in afterlife as well as here and now.

Vipassana is the only weapon to cut off the root cause of craving; with the extinction of craving, we could then end the cycle of rebirths and suffering.

Three kinds of Cravings

If feeling that arises from contact with sense-objects is not rightly contemplated, it leads to one of the three kinds of craving viz.,

- a. craving for sensual pleasure,
- b. craving for existence and
- c. Craving for non-existence.

The first kind of craving (*kammatanha*) is the craving for sensual objects and it is most prevalent among the living beings of the sensual world.

The **craving for existence** (*bhavatanha*) is bound up with the **eternity-belief** (*sassata-ditthi*). It presupposes the permanence of a living being, and the indestructibility of the ego despite the dissolution of the physical body.

The **craving for non-existence** (*vibhava-tanha*) is born of the **annihilation belief** (*uccheda-ditthi*). *One cannot be a Buddhist, if he or she holds this belief.*

Each of these three cravings stems from the failure to realize the law of impermanence, suffering and no-self (*anicca, dukkha* and *anatta*.) So in order to forestall craving and its consequences, namely, rebirth and suffering, one should contemplate every mental and physical phenomenon and try to see everything as it really is.

Lesson 2 – **Craving is the root cause for the cycle of rebirth; to stop the cycle of rebirth, one must practice Vipassana to realize the perception of Anicca, Dukkha and Anatta**

Craving causes Clinging

From **Craving** there arises **Clinging**. Clinging is of four kinds

- (1) Clinging to sensuous objects**
- (2) Clinging to false views**
- (3) Clinging to irrelevant, non-Ariyan practices as the way to salvation and**
- (4) Clinging to *atta* or ego-belief.**

(1) Clinging to sensual objects: Sensual objects excite the desire of all living beings that are not free from the craving for sensual pleasure. These objects are five in number viz., **visual form, Sound, odor, taste and contact.**

Reference –

- 1. PATICCASAMUPPADA – by Mahasi Sayadaw**
- 2. PATICCASAMUPPADA – by Mogok Vipassana**