

PATICCASAMUPPADA

ပဋိစ္စသမုပ္ပါဒ်သုတ် တရားတော်

Part - VI The Law of Dependent Origination

Rebirth leads to Old Age and Death in Future Life

The realization of the Universal law of **Anecca, Dukha** and **Anatta** is the only way to Nibbana.

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**.

Clinging leads to Becoming

When the sensual desire for an object develops into an intense craving, a person becomes desperate and tries to acquire it by fair means or foul. Some crimes are rooted in **sensual clinging upadana** while others arise from one of the three kinds of

illusion based clinging *upadana*. People commit these crimes not only because of their unwholesome desires but also because of their blind attachment to their loved one.

The Puppharatta Jatka story should illustrate the evil resulting from sensual desire and clinging *upadana*.

Puppharatta Jatka

Long ago there was a poor man in **Benarese**. He had only a suite of thick clothes. He washed it to wear during the light festival. But his wife disliked the white clothes and craved for a garment of pink color. All his efforts to reason with her being in vain, **the man at last sneaked into the royal garden at night to steal the flower that was to be used for dyeing his wife's garment.** He fell into the hands of the guards and was ordered by the king to be executed. He suffered terribly with the crows pecking at his eyes. Yet he murmured that his physical pain was nothing when compared to the mental suffering that overwhelmed him when he thought of the non-fulfillment of his wife's desire and his inability to enjoy the festival together with her. So crying over his ill—luck, he died and landed in hell.

All these evil deeds comprise *kammas* stemming from clinging and leading to the lower worlds. So, "**Under the influence of sensual clinging *upadana*, people do evil in deeds, words and thought because of their craving for sensual objects in the present life and their desire to preserve the objects in their possession. Such evil deeds usually lead to the lower worlds.**"

Lesson 1. Craving and desires to make loved one happy could lead one to act foolishly that could results in hell.

Right and Wrong Kamma

In the case of mercy killing, Buddha said it is to bring about the speedy death of a person who is suffering from an incurable, painful disease. It is a grave *kammic* offence that leads to hell.

"Craving for the sensual pleasures of the human and deva worlds, and some people do misdeeds such as killing for the attainment of their object. As a result of their evil kamma, they land in the lower worlds after death."

The good deeds which we do for our welfare here and now or hereafter are wholesome *kammas* that stem from clinging (*upadana*) in the sensual sphere. These *kammas* lead to rebirth in the human or deva worlds. So *"Those who hear the true teaching believe in kamma and the efficacy of good deeds as Passport to better life in the sensual worlds of rich men, aristocrats or divine beings. So they do good deeds under the influence of kamupadana and are reborn in the human and deva worlds."*

Lesson 2 – doing good deeds support one to take rebirth in either human or the Deva world. Better yet is to do good deeds in support of attaining Nibbana.

Kamma and Rebirth

Rebirth occurs in the human, deva, or in the lower worlds dependent on good or evil kamma-process. So rebirth stems from *kamma*: that result from clinging (*upadana*) and craving that is rooted in the contact between the six sense-objects and the corresponding sense-organs

These new *kammas* accumulate by the thousands in a single lifetime. Under certain conditions one of **these kammas becomes a death-bed vision and leads to rebirth** while other *kammas* will create rebirth at other times in the life-cycle.

If there are residual *kammas* from the previous lives that possess greater force, they take precedence over present *kamma*, appear as death-bed visions and create rebirth in the lower or higher worlds. The destiny of the person in such cases is determined by the nature of *kamma*.

Lesson 3. It is best to keep doing good deeds so our death bed vision will be good to let us land in higher worlds of Deva. A strong *kamma* could over power any weaker evil *kamma*.

Four Kinds of Kamma

Kamma is of four kinds, according to the way in which it bears fruit.

- .(1) *garu kamma* - **weighty kamma**,
- (2) *bahula* or *acinnaka kamma* - **habitual kamma**,
- (3) *asanna kamma* - **death proximate kamma** and
- .(4) *kotatta kamma* - **stored-up kamma**.

Garukamma - is **killing parents** or an **Arahat** or causing **injury to a Buddha** or **causing a schism in the Sangha**. The evils *garukamma* leads direct to hell after death; hence the five great *evil-kammas* leading invariably to hell. The man who kills his father or mother unknowingly or knowingly can never attain *jhana* or the path and fruition (*magga-phala*) in the present life; he is bound to land in hell after his death. He cannot attain *jhana* or the path nor can any good *kamma* save him from hell. This is evident in the story of **Ajatasattu**.

The Story of Ajatasattu

Ajatasattu was the son of **Bimbisara** the king of **Magadha** state, a devoted follower of the Buddha. Prior to the birth of the prince, the queen had the desire to drink the blood from the right arm of the king. When the king learnt this, he had the blood taken out and fulfilled her desire. The soothsayers then predicted that the child in the queen's womb would become the king's enemy. Hence the name **Ajatasatu** — the potential enemy of the father while still in the mother's womb.

The queen tried to abort the child but as the king's *kamma* and the child's *kamma* would have it, she failed in her attempt. The king had her pregnancy well protected and the child was born. When he came of age, he was appointed heir-apparent.

Then the young prince fell into the clutches of the evil-minded Devadatta who misused his psychic power for his selfish ends. Turning himself into a boy with a snake coiled around his waist, he appeared before Ajatasattu and then showed himself as a *bhikkhu*. The prince was deeply impressed and no wonders for people are very much interested in miracles and they have blind faith in anyone who can perform them. The prince held Devadatta in high esteem and became his devoted follower.

Then Devadatta made another move for the success of his evil design. He told the prince that since people did not live long, he (the prince) should kill his father and become king while still in the prime of his life; and that he (Devadatta) on his part would kill the Buddha. The prince failed in his attempt on the life of the king but when the latter learnt of his desire, he handed over his kingship to his son.

The transfer of power nonetheless came short of Devadatta's scheme. On his advice, Ajatasattu imprisoned his father and starved him. The queen was the only person who was permitted to visit the prison and see the king. She secretly brought food for the king by various means and at last she was forbidden to visit the prison. From that day the king got nothing to eat but still he managed to keep himself in good physical condition by pacing on the floor. Then by the king's order, the barbers caused such injury to the feet of his father as to make it impossible for him to walk. According to the commentary he was thus injured because in a previous life he walked with footwear on the platform of a pagoda and trod with unwashed feet on a mat meant for the *bhikkhus*.

King Bimbisara died probably at the age of 67. His son Ajatasattu was not evil-minded at heart. His good nature was evident in his devotion to the Buddha after he had wronged his father, his adoration and enshrinement of the Buddha relics and whole-hearted support which he gave to the First Council. **It was his association with the evil teacher that led him astray to the point of patricide.** His life affords us a lesson that we should specially bear in mind.

On the very day of his father's death his wife gave birth to a son. On hearing the news, he became excited and overwhelmed with great affection for his child. This reminded him of his father and he ordered the release of the imprisoned king. But it

was too late. When later on he learnt from his mother how much he was loved and cared for by his father in his childhood, he was seized with remorse. His life became wretched and miserable. He could not sleep at night, haunted by the visions of hell and smitten by conscience for his crime against his father and a devout lay disciple of the Buddha at that.

So led by the physician **Jivaka**, he went to see the Buddha. At that time the Lord was surrounded by over a thousand *bhikkhus*. But as they were in a contemplative mood, all was quiet with none speaking or making any movement of their hands or feet. Being deeply impressed, the king said, "**May my son Udaya baddha be blessed with the kind of serenity which these *bhikkhus* possess!**" Perhaps he feared lest his son should come to know how he seized power and try to follow in his father's footsteps. But later his fear did become a reality for down to his great grandson; the sons ascended the throne after killing their fathers.

King Ajatasattu asked the Buddha about the immediate benefits of the life in the holy order. The Lord enlarged on the benefits accruing from the holy life—the lay follower's reverence for the bhikkhu, moral purity, the first *jhana* and other higher states of consciousness in the mundane sphere, psychic powers, extinction of defilements and the attainments of the holy path.

After hearing the sermon, Ajatasattu formally declared himself a disciple of the Buddha. He would have attained the first stage on the path but for his patricide. Nevertheless, from that time he had peace of mind and after his death **he was spared the terrors of Avici hell** that would have been in store for him had he not met the Buddha.

Ajatasattu was able to control on his present life and his future's by taking refuge in the three jewels – **Buddha, Dhamma and Samgha** -and his adoration and enshrinement of the **Buddha relics and whole-hearted support which he gave to the First Council** He was spare the terror of hell, as a result of killing his father. The over whelming strength of Good could overcome the strength of bad kamma.

Lesson 4. Strong Good deeds could totally over whelm the bad deeds, once you take refuge in the three jewels – Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha,

The Other three weighty *kammas* viz., killing an Arahant, causing injury to the Buddha and willfully causing a schism in the Sangha are also bound to drag the offender to hell.

Other Kammas that Bear Fruits

1. The habitual *kamma* is the other type *that* bears fruit. Failure to lead a good moral life may become habitual if no step is taken to remove it, and it will have evil *kammic* effect in a future life. So laymen should live up to **the five Precepts** and in case of any breach verbally affirm the will to guard one's moral life more vigilantly,

2. Alms-giving, reverence for parents and teachers, contemplation of the Buddha, practice of meditation and so forth which one does daily are also habitual *kammas* that tend to bear immediate fruits.

3. In the absence of habitual *kamma* what we do at the **last moment of our life, death-bed *kamma* also produces kammic results.** In one Abhidhamma book it is described as being more potent than habitual *kamma* but. However, the commentaries say, the habitual *kammas* probably take precedence and bear fruits.

Lesson 5 – Maintain a good habitual kamma, (five precepts) do alms giving, so we could accrue better life now and after.

Birth and Suffering

The role of *kamma* in the chain of causation starting **with: kamma formation leads to the rebirth consciousness.** The dying person is attached to the signs and visions relating to his *kamma* and so on his death their follow *kamma*-based *rupas* together with rebirth consciousness conditioned by his death-bed attachment.

Among human beings, suffering is an inescapable fact of life. Everyone is subject to old age, sickness and death. Once a man is born, there is nothing that will protect him from these evils of existence. Hence the Buddha's saying in the Dhammapada that there is no place in the sky, on land or in the sea, where one can escape death.

Verse 17

The Story of Devadatta

While residing at the Jetavana monastery in Savatthi, the Buddha uttered Verse (17) of this book, with reference to Devadatta.

Devadatta was at one time residing with the Buddha in Kosambi. While staying there he realized that the Buddha was receiving much respect and honor as well as offerings. He envied the Buddha and aspired to head the Order of the bhikkhus. One day, while the Buddha was preaching at the Veluvana monastery in Rajagaha, he approached the Buddha and on the ground that the Buddha was getting old, he suggested that the Order be entrusted to his care. The Buddha rejected his offer and rebuked him, saying that he swallowed other people's spittle. The Buddha next asked the Samgha to carry out an act of proclamation (*Pakasaniya kamma**) regarding Devadatta.

Devadatta felt aggrieved and vowed vengeance against the Buddha. Three times, he attempted to kill the Buddha: first, by employing some archers; secondly, by climbing up the Gijjhakuta hill and rolling down a big piece of rock on to the Buddha; and thirdly, by causing the elephant Nalagiri to attack the Buddha. The hired assassins returned after being established in Sotapatti Fruition, without

harming the Buddha. The big piece of rock rolled down by Devadatta hurt the big toe of the Buddha just a little, and when the Nalagiri elephant rushed at the Buddha, it was made docile by the Buddha. Thus Devadatta failed to kill the Buddha, and he tried another tactic. He tried to break up the Order of the bhikkhus by taking away some newly admitted bhikkhus with him to Gayasisa; however, most of them were brought back by Thera Sariputta and Thera Maha Moggallana.

Later, **Devadatta** fell ill. He had been ill for nine months when he asked his pupils to take him to the Buddha, and subsequently made the trip to the Jetavana monastery. Hearing that Devadatta was coming, the Buddha told his disciples that Devadatta would never get the opportunity to see him.

When Devadatta and his party reached the pond in the Jetavana monastery compound the carriers put down the couch on the bank of the pond and went to take a bath. Devadatta also rose from his couch and placed both his feet on the ground. Immediately, **his feet sank into the earth and he was gradually swallowed up**, Devadatta did not have the opportunity to see the Buddha because of the wicked deeds he had done to the Buddha. **After his death, he was reborn in Avici Niraya, a place of intense and continuous torment.**

* **Pakasaniya kamma:** An act of Proclamation carried out by the Order of the Samgha regarding a member declaring that as his conduct was of one kind before and is of another kind now, henceforth all his physical and verbal actions are only his and have nothing to do with the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Samgha.

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

Verse 17: Here he is tormented, hereafter he is tormented; the evil-doer is tormented in both existences. He is tormented, and he laments: "Evil have I done." He is even more tormented when he is reborn in one of the lower worlds (Apaya).

Alambusa Jataka (523)

Isisinga, son of the Bodhisatta and of a doe, who had drunk water into which the Bodhisatta's semen had fallen, lived the ascetic life like his father. He had been warned by his father about the wiles of women, and lived in the forest practicing the most severe austerities. By virtue of the power of these austerities, Sakka's abode trembled, and Sakka, fearing his rivalry, sent down a beautiful celestial nymph, **Alambusá**, to tempt him and despoil him of his virtue.

This she succeeded in doing, and for three years he lay unconscious in her embrace. At last, realizing what had happened, he forthwith forsook sensual desire, and developing mystic meditation, attained to jhána. **Alambusá** pleaded for forgiveness, which was readily granted. The story was related in reference to the temptation of a monk by the wife he had had during his lay life.

All these sufferings are rooted in rebirth. Life is all suffering without the ego and without anything good even if there were such ego to enjoy it.

The doctrine of Paticcasamuppada said that the only thing that links one existence with another is the cause-and-effect relationship. From craving, *kammic* effort, etc., based on ignorance in one existence, there arise five effects, viz., consciousness, body and mind, sense- organs, contact, and feeling. These effects begin with rebirth and end in death with old age, anxiety and other sufferings in between them.

Lesson 6 – One must always be conscious of the present, because it is the present kamma that will lead you to your future life.

The Story of Subrahma Deva

Subrahma deva was having a good time when his attendants, the goddesses who were singing and plucking flowers on the tree died suddenly and landed in hell. Subrahma deva saw them suffering in hell and at the same time he foresaw that he too would die in a few days and share the fate of his attendants. Being much frightened, he came to the Buddha and asked the Lord to show him the place where he could live without fear. The Lord then says that he sees no way to salvation for every living being other than the practice of *bojjhanga* dhamma (links of enlightenment such as mindfulness), the *dhutanga* (ascetic Practices) and *sammuppadhana* (right exertion), that serve to put an end to defilements, the control of senses (*indriyasamvarasile*) the control of that helps to keep off the defilements and Nibbana which means renunciation of everything.

On hearing this, the deva and his attendants attained the first stage on the holy path. What we should note here is the sudden death of the goddesses. The fate of those who thus die suddenly while engaged in the pursuit of pleasure is indeed terrible for they are likely to land in hell as a result of unwholesome *kammic* impulses. If there is any sign that heralds the approach of death, it creates fear and adds to their suffering.

Rebirth in any of the 31 abodes means sufferings. All beings in the 31 abodes of existence will leads to decay and when his course is run, he cannot avoid death.

In order to avoid rebirth, we must seek to avoid desire for anything. This denial of desire through the contemplations, *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* of everything arising from the senses is the only way to avoid craving, rebirth and other links in the causal sequence that leads to old age and death..

Lesson 7 – There is sufferings as long as one is recycled within the Samsara – 31 planes of existence. Contemplate on Anecca, Dukha and Anatta, to escape from the cycle of rebirth.

Wrong view is the Cause of Rebirth

The followings views are not accepted in Buddhism”

1. **The belief in annihilation.** A person who holds such a belief will have no need to do good deeds or avoid evil.
2. **Eternal Belief - Kammic deeds may also be motivated by eternity-belief** The belief creates the illusion of personal identity, the illusion which makes a man believe that it is his permanent self that will have to bear the consequences of his good or bad deeds in a future life.
3. **Superstitious belief** - Still, another mainspring of *kammic* deed is superstitious belief. There are many superstitions, as for example, that seeing a man of low class brings about misfortune, that the bee-hive or a guana in a house is a sure omen of poverty. Under the influence of such beliefs, a person may do evil, such as treating an outcast cruelly or killing the bees.

Lesson 8 – Avoid the wrong beliefs.

Lusting for Other Man’s Wife

The king had taken a fancy to a married woman and so one day he sent her husband on an errand to a distant place. Should he fail to accomplish the task entrusted to him and return to the capital on the same day, he was to be punished. The man carried out the king's order and returned before sunset but the city-gate was closed and so being unable to enter the city, he spent the night at Jetavana monastery.

Overwhelmed with lust and evil desire, the king could hardly sleep in his palace. He heard the voices of the four men who were suffering in hell for having committed adultery in their previous lives. It was perhaps by virtue of the Buddha's will and psychic power that the king hears these voices from hell. The king was frightened and in the morning he sought the advice of the Brahmin counselor. The Brahmin said that the voices portended imminent misfortune and that in order to stave it off the king should sacrifice elephants, horses, etc., each kind of animals numbering a hundred.

The king made preparations for the animal sacrifice. How cruel is human nature that dictates the sacrifice of thousands of lives to save one's own life! Among the potential victims there were human beings and hearing their cries, Queen Mallika approached the king and asked him to seek the advice of the Buddha.

The Buddha assured the king that the voices had nothing to do with him. They were the voices of four young men who having seduced married women in the time of Kassapa Buddha were now suffering in Lohakumbhi hell. They were now repentant

and belatedly trying to express their desire to do good after their release from hell. **The king was very much frightened and vowed never to lust for another man's wife.**

After hearing this *gatha*, many people attained *sotapanna* and other stages on the holy path. The king ordered the release of all living beings that were to be sacrificed. But for the Buddha's words, he would have done unwholesome kammās and this story shows how superstitious beliefs lead to evil deeds.

Lesson 9 . Superstitions could lead one to do evil deed. Lusting for other's man's wife is an evil deed and could lead one to suffer in hell.

Belief in Self – Ego

Belief in Ego or Self is non- Buddhist belief. The attachment to ego-belief. It is the strong conviction about the ego-entity, the firm belief that the ego exists permanently, that it is the agent of every deed, speech and thought.

The average man believes that it is "I" who sees, hears, moves, etc. This illusion of ego entity is the mainspring of self-love and concern about the welfare of one's self. The universality and omnipotence of self-love are underscored in Queen Mallika's reply to king Kosala.

Mallika was originally the daughter of a flower vender. One day she met the Buddha on the way and offered her food. After eating the food, the Lord told Ananda that the girl would become the queen of king Kosala. On that very day king Kosala who was defeated in the battle fled on horseback. Utterly exhausted and forlorn, the king rested in the flower-garden where he was tenderly attended on by Mallika. Being much pleased, the king took her to the palace and made her his chief queen. The Buddha's prophecy came true because of her recent good *kamma* and her good deed in the past existence.

But Mallika was not as good looking as other lesser queens. Moreover, as a woman born of a poor family, she felt ill at ease among the courtiers. So in order to cheer her, the king one day asked her whom she loved most. The answer which he expected was "Your Majesty. I love you most." He would then tell her that he too, loved her more than anyone else and this demonstration of his love would, so he thought, increase their intimacy and make her more at home in the palace.

Nevertheless, as an intelligent woman who had the courage of conviction, Mallika replied frankly that she there was no one whom she loved more than herself. She asked the king whom he loved most. The king had to admit that he too loved himself more than any one else. He reported this dialogue to the Buddha. Then the Lord said,

"There is no one in this world who loves another person more than himself. Everyone loves himself or herself most. So everyone should have sympathy and avoid ill-treating another person"

Because of this self-love based on ego-belief, man seeks his welfare or the welfare of his family by fair means or foul. He does not hesitate to do evil that serves his interests. But the belief in a permanent self also leads to good *kammas*. Some people are motivated by the belief and so they practice *sila, dana, jhana*, etc., for their welfare in afterlife. As a result they land in deva and Brahma worlds but there they have to face again old age, death, and other evils of existence.

Lesson 10 – Belief in Self or Ego could lead one to commit evil deeds (Akusala); but there are also some who do good deed for their own self to reach a higher plane of existence. Do good deeds with sole intent of attaining Nibbana, not just to enjoy the luxuries of Deva world.

The Story of Ugga

Ugga was a householder in Vesali city. The Buddha spoke of the eight wonderful attributes possessed by Ugga, In response to the inquiry by a monk about the Lord's reference to his attributes Ugga said that he knew nothing about it but that he had eight distinctive qualities which were as follows.

- 1. When he saw the Buddha for the first time, he concluded decisively that Gotama was the real, all-enlightened Buddha.**
- 2. He attained *anagami stage through insight* into the four noble truths when he heard the Buddha's discourse. He observed the five precepts that included abstinence from sexual intercourse.**
- 3. He had four young wives. He told them about his sexual abstinence and permitted them to return to their parents' homes or to marry the men of their own choice.**
- 4. He had resolved to spend all his wealth on giving alms to holy men of high moral character.**
- 5. He approached the bhikkhus respectfully.**
- 6. He listens to the bhikkhu's sermon respectfully. He preached if the bhikkhu did not give a sermon.**
- 7. The devas came to him and said, "The doctrine of the Buddha is very good." He replied that the Dhamma was a good doctrine whether or not they said so about it. He did not feel conceited for his dialogue with the devas.**

8. He found himself free from the first five attachments that led to the lower, sensual worlds.

One day Ugga, the householder who possessed these eight qualities and had attained the *anagami* stage on the path offered food and robes to the Buddha. The Lord commented on the nature of alms-giving as follows:

"One who offers anything that pleases him or that he prizes highly gets some thing which he adores. One who offers to the Ariyan Noble who is of high moral character is doing an act of *dana* that it is hard for ordinary people to do and therefore he gets what he wants very much."

Some years later Ugga died and passed on to the **Suddhavaśa brahma**-world. Before long he came and paid respect to the Buddha. He said that he had attained **Arahatship that was indeed the object of his aspiration when he offered his much beloved food to the Lord in his previous existence.** The Buddha again commented on the nature of *kammic* benefits of alms-giving — how the giver got what he prized most if he offered his much-prized object, how he attained a rare object if he offered rare things, how he attained to a much extolled stage if he offered much-extolled objects.

The moral of this story is that one may even attain *Arahatship*, the holy life as the *kammic* result of giving away one's much prized and precious objects. Ugga's alms-giving was motivated by the desire for *Arahatship* and it is this desire that formed his driving force.

Lesson 11 – To give away one's prized possession to an Ariya will result in good kamma, and fulfilling of one's aspiration.