

THE MIDDLE DOCTRINE.

Dependent Origination,

a.--Translated from the Samyutta-Nikâya (xxii.90¹⁶).

Introduction:

The self-enlightened one *Tathâgata* teaches us the middle doctrine - *Myintzemapadipata* philosophy - one must be wise to understand the action and inaction of one's *Kamma*. That is why, if we are ignorant of the action of *kamma*; *karma* (*kamma*) arises. If we are skillful, no unwholesome *karma* will arise....*The Tathâgata, and it is a middle doctrine he teaches:--*

On ignorance depends *karma*;

On *karma* depends *consciousness*;

On *consciousness* depend *name* and *form*;

On *name* and *form* depend the *six organs of sense*;

On the *six organs of sense* depends *contact*;

On *contact* depends *sensation*;

On *sensation* depends *desire*;

On *desire* depends *attachment*;

On *attachment* depends *existence*;

On *existence* depends *birth*;

On *birth* depend *old age* and *death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair*. Thus does this entire aggregation of misery arises



The world, for the most part, *O Kaccâna*, holds either to a belief in being or to a belief in non-being. But for one who, in the light of the highest knowledge, *O Kaccâna*, considers how the world arises, belief in the non-being of the world passes away. And for one who, in the light of the highest knowledge, *O Kaccâna*, considers how the world ceases, belief in the being of the world passes away. The world, *O Kaccâna*, is for the most part bound up in a seeking attachment, and proclivity [for the groups], but a Monk does not sympathize with this seeking and attachment, or with the mental affirmation, proclivity, and prejudice, which affirms an Ego. He does not doubt nor question that it is only evil that springs into existence; and only evil that ceases from existence, and his conviction of this fact is dependent on no one besides, himself. This, *O Kaccâna*, is what constitutes Right Belief. (p.166. S. xxii 90 ¹⁷)

That things have being, *O Kaccâna*, constitutes one extreme of doctrine; that things have no being is the other extreme. These extremes, *O Kaccâna*, have been avoided by [The Tathâgata](#), and it is a middle doctrine he teaches:--

On ignorance depends karma;
On karma depends consciousness;
On consciousness depend name and form;
On name and form depend the six organs of sense;
On the six organs of sense depends contact;
On contact depends sensation;
On sensation depends desire;
On desire depends attachment;
On attachment depends existence;
On existence depends birth;
On birth depend old age and death, sorrow, lamentation,

misery, grief, and despair. Thus does this entire aggregation of misery arise

But on the complete fading out and cessation of ignorance ceases karma;

On the cessation of karma ceases consciousness;

On the cessation of consciousness cease name and form;

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

On the cessation of the six organs of sense ceases contact;

On the cessation of contact ceases sensation;

On the cessation of sensation ceases desire;

On the cessation of desire ceases attachment;

On the cessation of attachment ceases existence;

On the cessation of existence ceases birth;

On the cessation of birth cease old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair. Thus does this entire aggregation of misery ceases

b.--Translated from the Samyutta-Nikâya (xii.35¹).

Thus have I heard: .

On a certain occasion: The Blessed one was dwelling (S.xii35¹) at Sâvatthi in Jetavana monastery in Anâthapindka's Park. And there, The Blessed One addressed the Monk (p.167. S.xii35¹)

Monks," said he.

"Lord," said the Monks to The Blessed One in reply. And The Blessed One spoke as follows:

O Monks, on ignorance depends karma. . . . Thus does this entire aggregation of misery arise."

"Reverend Sir, what are old age and death? and what is it has old age and death?"

"The question is not rightly put," said The Blessed One.

"O Monk, to say: 'What are old age and death? and what is it has old age and death?' and to say: '**Old age and death are one thing, but it is another thing which has old age and death,**' is to say the same thing in different ways. If, O Monk, the dogma obtain that the soul and the body are identical, then there is no religious life; or if, O Monk, the dogma obtain that the soul is one thing and the body another, then also there is no religious life. Both these extremes, O Monk, have been avoided by The Tathâgata, and it is a middle doctrine he teaches: '**On birth depend old age and death.**'"

"Reverend Sir, what is birth? and what is it has birth?"

"The question is not rightly put," said The Blessed One.

"O Monk, to say: 'What is birth? and what is it has birth?' and to say: 'Birth is one thing, but it is another thing which has birth,' is to say the same thing in different ways. **If, O Monk, the dogma obtain that the soul and the body are identical, then there is no religious life; or if, O Monk, the dogma obtain that the soul is one thing and the body another, then also there is no religious life.** Both these extremes, O Monk, have been avoided by The Tathâgata, and it is a middle doctrine he teaches: 'On existence depends birth.'"

"Reverend Sir, what is existence? . . . attachment? . . . desire? . . . sensation? . . . contact? . . . the six organs of sense? . . . name and form? . . . consciousness? . . . karma? and what is it has karma?"

"The question is not rightly put," said The Blessed One.

"O Monk, to say: 'What is karma? and what is it has karma?' and to say: 'Karma is one thing, but it is another thing which has karma,' is to say the same thing in different (p.165 S xii 35 ¹⁴) ways. **If, O Monk, the dogma obtain that the soul and the body are identical, then there is no religious life; or if, O Monk, the dogma obtain that the soul is one thing and the body another, then also there is no religious life.** Both these extremes, O Monk, have been avoided by The Tathâgata, and it is a middle doctrine he teaches: '**On ignorance depends karma.**'"

"But on the complete fading out and cessation of ignorance, O Monk, all these refuges, puppet-shows, resorts, and writhings,--to wit: What are old age and death? and what is it has old age and death? or, old age and death are one thing, but it is another thing which has old age and death; or, the soul and the body are identical, or the soul is one thing, and the body another,--all such refuges of whatever kind are abandoned, uprooted, pulled out of the ground like a palmyra-tree, and become non-existent and not liable to spring up again in the future.

"But on the complete fading out and cessation of ignorance, O Monk, all these refuges, puppet-shows, resorts, and writhings,--to wit: What is birth? . . . existence? . . . attachment? . . . desire? . . . sensation? . . . contact? . . . the six organs of sense? . . . name and form? . . . consciousness? . . . karma? and what is it has karma? or, karma is one thing, but it is another thing which has karma; or, the soul and the body are identical, or the soul is one thing and the body another,--all such refuges are abandoned, uprooted, pulled out of the ground like a palmyra-tree, and become non-existent and not liable to spring up again in the future."



c.--Translated from the Visuddhi-Magga (chap. xvii.).

In as much as it is dependently on each other and in unison and simultaneously that the factors which constitute dependence originate the elements of being, therefore did The Sage call these **factors Dependent Origination**.

For the ignorance etc. which have been enumerated as constituting dependence, when they originate any of the elements of being, namely, karma and the rest, can only do so when dependent on each other and in case none of their number (p.169. Vis.xvii) is lacking. Therefore, it is dependently on each other and in unison and simultaneously that the factors which constitute dependence originate the elements of being, not by a part of their number nor by one succeeding the other. Accordingly, The Sage, skilful in the art of discovering the signification of things, calls this dependence by the name of **Dependent Origination**.

And in so doing, by the first of these two words is shown the falsity of such heresies as that of the persistence of existences, and by the second word, a rejection of such heresies as that existences cease to be, while by both together is shown the truth.

By the first:--The word "**Dependent**," as exhibiting a full complement of dependence and inasmuch as the elements of being are subject to that full complement of dependence, shows an avoidance of such heresies as that of the persistence of existences, the heresies, namely, of the persistence of existences, of uncaused existences, of existences due to an overruling power, of self-determining existences. For what have persistent existences, uncaused existences, etc., to do with a full complement of dependence?

By the second word:--The word "**Origination**," as exhibiting an origination of the elements of being and inasmuch as the elements of being originate by means of a full complement of dependence, shows a rejection of such heresies as that of the annihilation of existences, the heresies, namely, of the annihilation of existences, of nihilism, of the inefficacy of karma. For if the elements of being are continually originating by means of an antecedent dependence, whence can we have annihilation of existence, nihilism, and an inefficacy of karma?

By both together:--By the complete phrase "**Dependent Origination**," inasmuch as such and such elements of being come into existence by means of an unbroken series of their full complement of dependence, the truth, or middle course, is shown. **This rejects the heresy that he who experiences the fruit of the deed is the same as the one who performed the deed, and also rejects the converse one that he who (p.170.Vis.xvii) experiences the fruit of a deed is different from the one who performed the deed, and leaning not to either of these popular hypotheses, holds fast by nominalism.**

Source - <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/bits/bits025.htm>