

# **Introduction to Buddhism**

## **Lesson 5, Part 1**

### **Paticca Samuppada**

Paticca means “because of”, or “dependent upon”.  
Samuppada means “arising” or “origination”.  
Paticca Samuppada, therefore, literally means :

"Dependent Arising"  
or  
"Dependent Origination."

### **The Buddha :**

Whoever sees Dependent Origination sees the Dhamma.

### **Four Aspects of Dependent Origination**

1. Principle of Causality.
2. The components and causes of rebirth.
3. The cyclical nature of existence.
4. How to attain happiness, and finally Nibbana.

### **The Principle of Causality :**

Dependent Origination explains the Principle of Causality. Nothing exists on its own, but arises from earlier circumstances. For example, we did not spontaneously come into existence at birth.

We are the result of our parents, of the circumstances of their meeting, and of all that happened before. Everything is always a result of something that has happened before.

### **The general principle :**

When A arises, B arises.  
Therefore when A exists, B exists.  
When A does not arise, B does not arise.  
Therefore when A does not exist, B does not exist.

## Cause and Effect

All our intentional actions of body, speech and mind will have their corresponding positive or negative results. Therefore once we know the Principle of Causality, we know best how to lead our own lives and take our own destiny into our own hands.

## The 12 links of Dependent Origination :

Depending on ignorance arises kammic formations.  
Depending on kammic formations arises rebirth consciousness.  
Depending on rebirth consciousness arises mind and matter.  
Depending on mind and matter arises six sense bases.  
Depending on six sense bases arises contact.  
Depending on contact arises feeling.  
Depending on feeling arises craving.  
Depending on craving arises clinging.  
Depending on clinging arises becoming.  
Depending on becoming arises birth.  
Depending on birth arises decay, suffering and death.

## 12 Links – Explanations

Ignorance (Avijja) is the first link or cause of the wheel of life. It clouds all right understanding.

Dependent on ignorance of the Four Noble Truths arise activities (Sankhara) -- both moral and immoral. The activities whether good or bad rooted in ignorance which must necessarily have their due effects, only tend to prolong life's wandering. Nevertheless, good actions are essential to get rid of the ills of life.

Dependent on activities arise rebirth-consciousness (Vinnana). This links the past with the present. Simultaneous with the arising of rebirth-consciousness there come into being mind and body (Nama-rupa).

The six senses (Salayatana) are the inevitable consequences of mind and body. Because of the six senses contact (Phassa) sets in.

Contact leads to feeling (Vedana). These five -- viz., consciousness, mind and matter, six senses, contact and feeling -- are the effects of past actions and are called the passive side of life.

Dependent on feeling arises craving (Tanha).

Craving results in grasping (Upadana).

Grasping is the cause of Kamma (Bhava)

Which in its turn, conditions future birth (Jati).

Birth is the inevitable cause of old age and death (Jara-marana).

### Three lifetime model of Dependent Origination

**Past Life**

- Actions (Kamma) of the Past Life

**Present Life**

- Resultants on the Present Life
- Actions (Kamma) of the Present Life

**Future Life**

- Resultants on the Future Life

### Three lifetime model

Ignorance or delusion	Past life
Kammic formations	Kamma
Rebirth consciousness	
Mind and matter	Present life
Six sense bases	Resultants
Contact	
Feeling	
Craving	Present life
Clinging	Kamma
Becoming	
Birth	Future life
Decay, suffering and death	Resultants

## **Buddhist art**

### **Tibetan thangka**

A painted or embroidered Buddhist banner hung in a monastery or a family altar and occasionally carried by monks in ceremonial processions. In Tibetan the word *thang* means flat, and thus the Thangka is a kind of painting done on flat surface but which can be rolled up when not required for display.

Originally, thangka painting became popular among traveling monks because the scroll paintings were easily rolled and transported from monastery to monastery. These thangka served as important teaching tools depicting the life of the Buddha, various influential lamas and other deities and bodhisattvas. One popular subject is The Wheel of Life, which is a visual representation of the Abhidharma teachings (Art of Enlightenment).

To Buddhists these Tibetan religious paintings offer a beautiful manifestation of the divine, being both visually and mentally stimulating.  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thangka>

### **The Wheel of Life**

This is a presentation of the Buddhist teaching on the suffering and impermanence of cyclic existence. The Lord of Death, Yama, holds the wheel of existence between his teeth, hands and feet.

At the centre of the wheel are three poisonous delusions represented by a red cockerel (passion and lust), a green snake (hatred and aggression), and a black pig (ignorance and confusion). These three creatures chase and bite each others tails, giving rise to the endless cycle or becoming.

In the next circle beings rise to enter the three higher realms, or fall to enter the three lower realms. The six realms are represented within the spokes of the wheel.

The hell realm, in the lower part of the wheel is characterized by the extreme suffering of the various hot and cold hells.

The hunger ghost or preta realm in the lower left is characterized by craving and enormous hunger. The denizens of this realm having huge empty stomachs and mouths like pinholes.

The animal realm is characterized by extreme stupidity.

The jealous gods in the upper left, suffer from competitiveness and ambition as they strive for the realization of their desires.

The god realms are sensual heavens, where the inhabitants are totally involved in the pursuit of pleasure.

Only in the human realm, with its constant fluctuation of pleasure and pain can the dharma be clearly heard and liberation attained.

In the outer ring are the twelve links of the chain of Dependent Origination. Clockwise from the top they are:

1. Ignorance (a blind person)
2. Action (a potter)
3. Consciousness (a monkey holding fruits)
4. Name and form (a person rowing a boat)
5. Sources (an empty house with five windows and a door)
6. Contact (sexual contacts)
7. Feeling (a person with an arrow in his eye)
8. Craving (a person drinking alcohol)
9. Grasping (a monkey picking fruit from a tree)
10. Becoming ( a pregnant woman)
11. Rebirth (a baby being born)
12. Old age and death (an old person walking with a cane). At the top left of the painting is the paradise of Amitabha.

A pathway leads from the judgment hall of the dead in the hell realm to Amitabha's paradise, along which those being with the most fortunate Karma proceed.

At the top right is Shakyamuni Buddha who, having attained liberation from the wheel of existence, points towards his perfect wheel of the Buddhadharma.