

Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta

The Greater Discourse on the Destruction of Craving

[Consciousness, rebirth and liberation]

(Majjhima Nikāya 38/1:256-271)

Translated by Piya Tan ©2003

Introduction

1 Conditionality of consciousness

The Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta teaches the conditionality of consciousness (*viññāṇa*). Consciousness, in other words, is not an entity (like an immortal “soul” or enduring “substance”) transmigrating life after life, but it is a “stream of consciousness” (*viññāṇa,sota*).¹

The average ordinary person is very likely to view things as wholes and entities. For example, he may think that there is a permanent “self,” “soul,” “person” or “being” when what he is really experiencing is only a series of mental events comprising a super-rapid series of discrete thought-moments.

Our minds do not simply mirror the sense data that comes streaming in through the six senses, but works [them], shapes [them] in complex ways to construct out of [them] a sense of “me” and “my world.” We conceptualise or “reckon” our world, and we do so in terms of “What is this to *me*?”...

Looking at me speak, you think you “see” me speaking, but you don’t. You see forms by means of eye-consciousness, and hear sounds by means of ear-consciousness, and they are distinctly different.

So the Buddha is training his students to see separately and therefore distinctly—to *vi-passati*, the verb from which we get the noun *vipassanā*, usually translated as “insight” but literally meaning “seeing (*passanā*) separately (*vi*).” When we do not see separately, we assume unity, the one who is seeing and hearing (the self), and the one who is seen and heard (the other). When we see separately we see that each moment of consciousness is distinct and discrete, and so impermanent, arising and ceasing. (Patrick Kearney, Week 3, 2002:3, digital ed)

The Buddha teaches that whatever exists are all dependently arisen phenomena (*paṭicca,samuppānā dhammā*) that occur as a process of dependent arising (*paṭicca,samuppāda*).² Nothing exists as an independent entity in this world, but we are often beguiled by the continuity of things and events that we think they are permanent.

2 Sāti’s wrong view

The occasion for this teaching is when the monk Sāti the fisherman’s son misunderstands the Buddha’s teaching, thinking that it is the same consciousness (*viññāṇa*) that continues in the rounds of rebirths [2].³ **KR Norman** suggests that

This would appear to be a recollection by Sāti of some such statements as those found in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad that *vijñāna* continues: *idam mahad bhūtam anantam apāram vijñānaghana eva* [2.4.12], “This great being, endless, unlimited, consisting of nothing but intelligence”;

¹ This is a rare term in the Canon, found only in **Sampasādanīya S** (D 28.7/3:105) which probably refers to the better known commentarial term, *bhavaṅga* (“life-continuum” or the sub-unconscious) or *bhavaṅga,sota* (sub-conscious stream). See BDict: bhavaṅga & Ency Bsm: bhavaṅga.

² For detailed discussions, see (**Paṭicca,samuppāda**) **Vibhaṅga S** (S 12.2), “Dependent Arising” (essay) and **Mahā Nidāna S** (M 15) at SD 5 nos 13-15 respectively.

³ See also Gombrich 1996:47 f.

sa vijñāno bhavati, sa vijñānam evānvavakrāmati [4.4.2], “He becomes one with intelligence; what had intelligence departs with him”; *sa vā eṣa mahān aja ātmā yo ’yaṃ vijñānamayaḥ prāṇeṣu* [4.4.22], “Verily, he is the great unborn Self who is this (person) consisting of knowledge amongst the senses.” (KR Norman, “Aspects of early Buddhism.” 1990:24)⁴

Norman adds that Radhakrishnan’s note on Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.1 states that “the principle of intelligence (*vijñāna*), after having absorbed all the functions of consciousness, proceeds to continue in a new life.” (*The Principal Upaniṣads*, London, 1953:270).

The Papañca,sūdanī, the Majjhima Commentary, says that the monk Sāti, a fisherman’s son, was not learned. He was a Jātaka Reciter, so he thinks that, although the other aggregates (*khandha*) cease now here, now there, consciousness (*viññāna*) runs on from this world to the beyond and from the beyond to this world. As such, he concludes that consciousness has no condition (*paccaya*) for arising. The Buddha however teaches that where there is a condition, it arises, and with no condition, there is no arising of consciousness. Sāti therefore professes what the Buddha does not teach, giving a blow to the Conqueror’s Wheel, and was a “thief” in his dispensation. (MA 2:305)

3 Gandharva

The Mahā Tanhā,sākhaya Sutta contains an interesting term, **gandhabba** (Skt *gandharva*). The *Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism* gives two meanings of the *gandhabba*:

1. A class of heavenly beings, famed particularly for their musical skills. The name, meaning “fragrance-eater,” derives from the belief that they feed only on fragrance. [In this sense, it is found only in the Commentaries, J 2:249 f, 3:188; VvA 36, 137; PvA 119.]
2. A term for the non-material form a being is believed to take after death, according to some schools of Buddhism. In this ethereal form the spirit of the deceased person passes through the intermediate state or bar-do prior to a new birth, entering the mother’s body at the moment of conception. [They inhabit the Cātum,mahā,rājika heaven of the guardian kings of the four quarters. D 2:212; M 1:265 f; A 2:39 (as birds), 4:200 (with asuras and nagas), 204, 207; DhA 420 = Sn 644; Miln 123 ff; cf S 3:250 ff; V 2:106.]

(*Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism*, ed Damien Keown, 2003; parenthetical notes added)

What “continues” after a being’s death is called the “gandharva” (*gandhabba*) [26] or “being to be born” (*sambhavesī*)⁵ or, in Abhidhamma terms, the subconscious (*bhavaṅga*), also called the “intermediate being” (*antarā,bhava*), especially in Mahāyāna scripture. This intermediate being is “fuelled by food” (M 38.15/1:261) or as stated in the **Kutūhala,sāla S** (S 44.9): “When, Vaccha, a being has laid down this body but has not yet been reborn into another body, it is fuelled by craving, I say!” (S 44.9/4:400).

The *bhavaṅga* (lit “existence-factor”) or “life-continuum” is a concept that evolved primarily in the Abhidhamma commentarial tradition to explain the continuity of consciousness and personal identity in the absence of a permanent self (which is denied by the *anattā* doctrine). The life-continuum flows on like a stream (*sota*) from one existence to the next. It is sometimes called *bhavaṅga,citta* (existence-factor consciousness) or “consciousness continuum” and is the foundation of all experience, both conscious and unconscious.

It retains the traces of all impression and sensations, and makes it possible to have recollections of these in the form of memories. At the beginning and end of each individual existence it is known as “rebirth-linking consciousness” (*paṭisandhi*) and “death consciousness” (*cuti,citta*) respectively. The concept of the *bhavaṅga* paved the way for later idealist trends and the evolution of the notion of the *ālaya,vijñāna* or “storehouse of consciousness.”

(*Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism*, ed Damien Keown, 2003)

⁴ See also Norman, “Death and the Tathāgata,” 1991a:256.

⁵ M 38.15/1:261; Sn 147 = Kh no 9.

In modern Buddhist writings, the terms “**subconscious**” is sometimes used as a translation of *bhavaṅga*. “Subconscious,” however, is a 20th century psychological term, referring to that part of one’s mind not usually accessible to the conscious process but powerfully influencing it. As the term is imprecise, some academics prefer to use “preconscious” instead. Sometimes the word “**unconscious**” is used instead. “**Preconscious**,” however, as a psychoanalytic term refers to “knowledge, emotions, images, etc, that are not momentarily consciousness but which are easily accessible” (AS Reber, *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology*, 1985). In Buddhist psychology, the “subconscious” or “unconscious” generally refers to the latent tendencies (*anusaya*),⁶ or the “store-consciousness.”

ālaya, vijñāna (Skt). The eight consciousness, being the substratum or “storehouse” consciousness according to the philosophy of the Yogācāra school. The *ālaya, vijñāna* acts as the receptacle in which the impressions (known as *vāsanā* or *bīja*) of past experience and karmic actions are stored. From it the remaining seven consciousnesses arise and produce all present and future modes of experience in *samsāra*. At the moment of enlightenment (*bodhi*), the *ālaya, vijñāna* is transformed into the Mirror-like Awareness or perfect discrimination of a Buddha.

(*Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism*, ed Damien Keown, 2003)

4 The life-continuum

Sections 7-8, a key passage where the Buddha declares the dependent arising of consciousness and applies the fire simile—which appears to rule out the concept of the “life-continuum” (*bhavaṅga*), well known in the Abhidhamma tradition. The fire simile might be seen to imply that, just as there is no latent, non-burning form of fire, so there is no latent form of consciousness, apart from its six form arising dependent on a sense-organ and sense-object. However, **Peter Harvey** argues that the simile should be understood against the Buddha’s Indian milieu (1995:156).⁷ **FO Shrader** has pointed out the relevance of Upanishadic ideas of fire to Buddhist similes, asserting that such ideas:

[T]he common Indian view is, since the oldest times, that an expiring flame does not really go out, but returns into the primitive, pure, invisible state of fire it had before it’s appearance as visible fire.⁸ (Shrader 1904-05:167)

RH Robinson similarly asserts that traditional Indians fire as “an indestructible element latent in every bright or warm thing, but especially in fuel. It alternates between manifestation and ‘going home’ to its occult source” (1970:38 f, 1982:44). In a footnote, Harvey however cautions that

Buddhism would not, of course, accept fire as an “indestructible element” but would see it as an element in flux; this would certainly be the Abhidhamma perspective. Nevertheless, some instance of the element would always be present in a material object, so this makes little difference to the general idea of fire. (Harvey 1995:467 n2)

The fire simile of the Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta [8ab] (M 1:259 f), then, concludes Harvey,

is to be understood against the background of such ideas. This means that the text does not rule out a latent form of discernment [consciousness], but indirectly alludes to it: just as “different and changing forms of fire arise from the latent form of fire dependent on certain fuels, so different

⁶ See S 36.6.8b = SD 5.5 (3 kinds), M 18.8 (7 kinds) = SD 5.17, & SD 6.14 Intro (5).

⁷ Harvey 1995:95 f (§6.13) & 155-160 (ch 10).

⁸ For example, Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 1.13: *Vahner yathā yoni, gatasya mūrtir na drśyate n’ aiva ca liṅga, nā-saḥ...* The **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36) contains the famous parable of the fire-sticks (M 36.17/1:240 f): see SD 1.12. Even so late a text as **Milinda, pañha** contains this passage: “Sire, just as there is what is called fire, though there is no place for storing it up, a man, rubbing two sticks together, obtains fire’ even so, though there is no place for storing Nirvana, sire, but there is this Nirvana, whereby one practising rightly by means of skillful attention realizes Nirvana.” (Miln 327)

and changing sorts of discernment [consciousness] arise from a latent source dependent on certain sense-organs and sense-objects. (Harvey 1995:157 (§10.5))

5 Sutta structure

The framework of the introductory portion of this sutta [1-8] is identical to that of **the Alagaddûpama Sutta** (M 22.1-8/1:130-133). Like the Alagaddûpama Sutta, **the Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta** (M 38), too, teaches that one should regard the Dharma as a skillful means:

Bhikkhus, having known the parable of the raft, you should abandon even the Teaching, how much more that which is not the Teaching!⁹ (M 38.14/1:135)

The point of **the parable of the raft** is that the Dharma or right view is not a possession. Although we might say (in conventional terms), “We have right view,” we do not really own it. We do not really *have* right view since, right view, like wrong view, arises and passes away dependent upon conditions. Whatever is impermanent cannot be said to be “I,” “me” or “mine”: it precludes ownership and self.

As an early text, the Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta is one of the most complex. It opens with the monk Sāti declaring a wrong view regarding rebirth [2]; several monks try to correct his wrong view [3]; having failed, they bring the matter before the Buddha [4], who then summons him [5a]. The Buddha questions him all over again as the monks have done earlier and when Sāti’s wrong views are established [5b], and discovers that he has another wrong view about consciousness [5c]. The Buddha then goes on to reprimand him [6].

The Buddha then takes great pains to explain that consciousness is not what Sāti takes it to be, but dependently arisen. First, he declares this to Sāti himself [6] and then addresses the congregation, stating that consciousness is dependently arisen [7]. Then he shows how consciousness arises in connection with **the six sense-bases** [8], after which, applying the catechetical method (*pucchā,visajjanā*), he explains how a “being” arises through “**food**” [9-13]. Yet he warns the monks not to cling to such right views, “no matter how pure, how clear,” [14].

The four types of food are then mentioned [15] and showing how they are conditioned by craving and so on by way of **an eight-link dependent arising** ending with ignorance [16]. Then restarting with ignorance, he gives the forward cycle of **full twelve-link dependent arising**, ending with birth [17], from which he restarts the cycle, questioning the monks on each link, ending with ignorance [18]. **The specific conditionality formula of origination** (*samudaya*) is then stated and whole forward dependent arising is recapitulated [19], and then the reverse (ending) cycle [20]. The monks are then questioned on this reverse cycle, link by link [21], closing with its recapitulation beginning with **the specific conditionality of cessation** (*nirodha*) [22]. The whole first section then concludes with the Buddha catechizing the monks on the immediacy of the Dharma.

6 The 16 doubts

Section 23 of the Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta lists (cases of) “the sixteen doubts.” They are also listed in such suttas as **the Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta** (M 38.23/1:265),¹⁰ **the Sabb’āsava Sutta** (M 2.7 f/1:8) and **the Paccaya Sutta** (S 12.20/2:26 f). **The Visuddhi,magga**¹¹ discusses the abandonment of these 16 doubts in some detail. **The Saṃyutta Commentary** explains that the basic division expressed in the doubts—between existing and not existing in the past, etc—reflects the antinomy of eternalism and

⁹ *Dhammā pi vo pahātabbā pag’eva adhammā*. Comy takes *dhammā* here to mean “good states”, ie calm and insight (*samatha,vipassanā*), citing **Laṭṭikōpama S** (M 1:455=66.26-33) as an example of the teaching of the abandonment of attachment to calm, and the Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhaya S (M 1:260 f=38.14) as one of the abandonment of attachment to insight. Bodhi, however, is of the view that “*dhamma* here signifies not good states themselves, but the teachings, the correct attitude to which was delineated just above in the simile of the snake.” (M:ÑB 1209 n255). See Intro.

¹⁰ See SD 7.9 (2005).

¹¹ Vism 19.5 f/599 & 19.21-27/603-605.

annihilationism. The other doubts pertaining to past lives arise within an eternalist framework. Similar discussions apply to the doubts pertaining to the future and the present (SA 2:241 f).

The Bhaddekaratta Sutta (M 131) presents the 16 doubts in a different manner: by way of the “fifteen wrong views” (*diṭṭhi*) that are to be avoided (M 131.4, 6, 8) and their antidotes (M 131.7, 9, 11). This simple framework showing the wrong views is based on **the five aggregates** (*pañca-k,khandha*) wrongly viewed over the three periods of time (past, present, future), thus totalling 15 wrong views. Conversely, the avoidance of them are regarded as as 15 right views, that is, no views.¹²

7 Developmental psychology

The Mahā Tanhā,saṅkhaya Sutta then continues with an interesting passage [26-29] that would be described in modern parlance as dealing with development psychology. First, there is a statement on **human conception** [26] where it is said that conception can only occur when there is coitus, it is the woman’s fertile period and there is an intermediate being or gandharva (*gandhabba*) to “descend” into the zygote. Medical science prescribes only the first two conditions. The absence of the third factor—the intermediate being—evidently explains still birth and some miscarriages.

For nine to ten lunar months, the mother carries her unborn child (*gabbha*), nourishing it “with her own blood” [27]. After the child is born, he grows into childhood and enjoys children’s toys and games [28]. When the child matures into an adolescence and youth, he begins to be captivated by the five cords of sense-pleasure, swinging between liking pleasurable things and disliking unpleasurable things [29-30].

The Sutta then shows how this cycle is broken (between feeling and craving) so that one is spiritually liberated [31]. Then it goes on to systematically describe the pilgrim’s progress from renunciation [32] through monastic moral training (the long Lesser Section on Moral Virtue) [33], through mental cultivation [34-36], through overcoming the five mental hindrances [37], into the four meditation absorptions [39] and final liberation [40].

8 When does life begin?

The Mahā Tanhā,saṅkhaya Sutta is an important text in any discussion on the question of when life begins. There are today two opposing camps, as reflected in the issue of abortion, that is, the “life” camp and the “choice” camp. The pro-life advocates based their beliefs and arguments on what the early Buddhist texts call “eternalist view” (*sassata.diṭṭhi*) of life. This view is usually based on a belief in some form of immortal or abiding soul, and since such a soul could not have existed on its own, it must have been created by a God. Or, such a soul is a spiritual entity, a divine spark that distinguishes humans from all other beings, and so gives human life a unique ethical value.

Pro-life advocates believe that the soul enters the embryo during conception (when the sperm successfully merges with the egg in the proper conditions). The embryo, as such, is henceforth a fully-fledged human being, like an adult. To kill such a being is regarded as murder.

The “choice” camp, that is, those who allow or accept abortion under certain (or any) circumstances include the materialists who believe that the primary substance of the world (animate and inanimate) is matter. Under the right conditions, matter can evolve into complex organisms, and when consciousness has emerged in them, they are said to be “life.” The materialists, as such, regard consciousness as an epiphenomenon (or emergent property) of matter, and they generally believe that consciousness emerges in the embryo during the third or fourth month of pregnancy. Before that it is just a non-conscious lump of meat. Such ideas are based on an “annihilistic view” (*uccheda,diṭṭhi*) of life, that also regards this life as our only one with no afterlife.

The mainstream Buddhists take a middle way beyond these two extremes of eternalism and of annihilationism. Before we go into the Buddhist stand on this issue, let us look at the Buddhist definition of conception. According to **the Mahā Tanhā,saṅkhaya Sutta**, human conception occurs when these three conditions are fulfilled:

¹² See **Bhaddekaratta S** (M 131/3:187-189) = SD 7.9 Intro (2).

1. there is coitus,
2. it is the woman's fertile period, and
3. there is an "intermediate being" (*gandhabba*) to "descend" into the zygote. [26]

This effectively means that life (as consciousness) begins with conception.

The Mahā Nidāna Sutta (D 15) clearly states that if consciousness does not arise in the embryo, the mental and physical aspects of life do not take shape:

“Ānanda, how consciousness conditions name-and-form should be known in this manner:

If there were no consciousness to descend into a mother's womb, would name-and-form take shape in the womb?”¹³

“Certainly not, bhante.”

If, after descending into the mother's womb, the consciousness were to depart, would name-and-form be generated in this state of being here?”

“Certainly not, bhante.”

“If the consciousness of a young boy or a young girl were to be cut off, would name-and-form grow, develop and mature?”

“Certainly not, bhante.”

“Therefore, Ānanda, this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition for name-and-form, that is to say, consciousness. (D 15.21/2:63 = SD 5.17)

Sujato, in his article, “When life begins,” published in *Eastern Horizon*, gives an insightful summary of the whole matter:

So the texts state that consciousness is present from the inception of life. A being who is conscious can feel pain, and therefore deserves moral consideration. It goes without saying, however, that the ability of a newly conceived embryo to feel pain is very rudimentary, perhaps comparable to someone in a deep coma or under a deep anaesthetic. According to Buddhism these are states of consciousness, but too dim to be noticed when compared with the glare of waking consciousness. The texts frequently speak of the “growth, increase, and maturing” of the newly re-born consciousness. In accordance with the findings of science, the texts speak of the gradual development of the embryo's sense faculties. But unlike the scientists, they do not assume that consciousness does not appear until the senses develop. So while the embryo certainly deserves moral consideration, its limited capacity to feel pain means that killing an embryo falls short of “murder.”

There is clear support for this conclusion in the Vinaya. This states that a monk or nun should never, for the whole of their life, intentionally kill a human being, “even to the extent of causing an abortion.” Similarly, they should not have sexual intercourse “even to the depth of a sesame seed.” They should not steal “even as much as a blade of grass.” They should not lay claim to spiritual attainments “even by saying ‘I delight in an empty dwelling.’” So abortion is clearly regarded as intentional killing of a human being; yet it is the least serious act of this kind.

So the Buddhist texts pertaining to abortion provide a classic model for a “middle way,”

¹³ Cf **Titth'āyatana S** (A 3.61) where the Buddha declares: “Based on the six elements, there is descent into the womb; | (On account of) such a descent, there is name-and-form; | With name-and-form as condition, there is contact; | With contact as condition, there is feeling. | Now, it is for one who feels that I make known [the 4 noble truths]” (A 3.61.9/1:176). This clearly shows that feeling arises with the descent of the *gandharva* (rebirth consciousness) into the womb. However, this is not a common interpretation of *viññāṇa-nāma,rūpa* dyad, where “*viññāṇa* in this context became the consciousness that descends into the mother's womb at conception, while *nāma-rūpa* became the body complex that takes shape and, after developing sense-organs (*saḷāyatana*), experiences contact (*phassa*) and so on.” (Bucknell 1999:339). More commonly, *viññāṇa* is “the consummation of the six types of consciousness associated with the sense organs, which makes the version read like an account of the psychological process of sensory perception.” (Bucknell 1999: 327): see **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18.16-18/1:111-113). See discussion on **nāma,rūpa** in the essay “Dependent Arising” = SD 5.11 Intro.

which accepts some of the propositions of the extreme views, while avoiding their absolutist and simplistic conclusions. Together with the eternalists we believe that an embryo from the time of conception is endowed with a non-physical property that entitles them to moral consideration. However we do not accept that this principle is a spiritual entity, a spark of God's glory; nor do we accept that this supposed "soul" is a unique distinguishing feature of humanity.

We believe that it is a conditioned stream of consciousness, ever changing and evolving as it passes from life to life. Together with the annihilationists we believe that the weight of moral consideration due to an embryo is not static, but gradually increases with the development of the embryo's mind towards full awareness. However we do not accept that it can be proved that the inception of consciousness takes place only after three or four months. This is an ethically arbitrary date which simply marks the present day limits of scientific knowledge, but tells us nothing about the moral status of the embryo. (Sujato, "When life begins," 2003:7)

9 Related suttas

Sāti's wrong view as mentioned in the Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta—"It is this same consciousness, not another, that runs and wanders through the rounds of births" [2]—falls under the category of eternalism (*sassata,vāda*). There are a number of other occasions involving wrong views: (V 2:25 f; M 1:130, 326; A 5:194).

As already mentioned [5 above], section 23 of the Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta lists (cases of) "the sixteen doubts." This section should be studied with **the Bhaddekaratta Sutta** (M 131) that presents the 16 doubts in a different manner: by way of the "fifteen wrong views" (*diṭṭhi*).¹⁴

Section 30 of the Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta should be studied with **the Saññoga Sutta** (A 7.48/4:57-59) which describes how sexual lust arises.

The Sutta's concluding section [26-29] shows a concrete application of dependent arising to the course of an individual existence.¹⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi notes

The passage §§26-29 may be taken to show the factors from consciousness through feeling that result from past ignorance and formations, §40 the causal factors of craving and clinging as they build up a continuation of the saṃsāric round. The following sections (§§31-40), connecting dependent arising to the appearance of the Buddha and his teaching of the Dhamma, shows the practice of the Dhamma to be the means of bringing the round to an end."

(M:ÑB 1233 n410)

This concluding portion of the Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta [31-38], ending with the section on sense-restraint and liberation [40], is elaborated in **the Cūḷa Hatthi,padôpama Sutta** (M 27.19-26) which gives a full description of the dhyanas (*jhāna*) and other attainments (M 27.19-26/182-4).

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¹⁴ See **Bhaddekaratta S** (M 131/3:187-189) = SD 7.9 Intro (2).

¹⁵ For an example of the social application of dependent arising, see **Mahā Nidāna S** (M 15.9-18/2:58-61), where it shows how social conflicts arise.

The Greater Discourse on the Destruction of Craving

(M 38/1:256-271)

[256]

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying in Anāthapiṇḍika's park in Jeta's grove, near Sāvattthī.

SĀTI'S WRONG VIEW

Sāti's evil false view

2 At that time, an evil false view¹⁶ arose in a monk named Sāti, the fisherman's son:

“As I understand the Dharma taught by the Blessed One, it is this same consciousness,¹⁷ not another, that runs and flows through the rounds of births.”¹⁸

3 Several monks, having heard:

“It is said that an evil false view had arisen in a monk named Sati, the fisherman's son, thus:

“As I understand the Dharma taught by the Blessed One, it is this same consciousness, not another, that runs and flows through the rounds of births”

Then these monks went to the monk Sāti, the fisherman's son, and asked him, “Avuso Sāti, is it true that such a evil false view has arisen in you, thus:

“As I understand the Dharma taught by the Blessed One, it is this same consciousness, not another, that runs and flows through the rounds of births?”

“That is very true, avuso. As I understand the Dharma taught by the Blessed One, it is this same consciousness, not another, that runs and flows through the rounds of births.”

Then those monks, desiring to detach him from that evil false view, pressed and questioned him thus:

“Avuso Sāti, do not say so! Do not misrepresent the Blessed One: it is not good to misrepresent the Blessed One. The Blessed One would not speak thus. For in many ways the Blessed One has stated that consciousness is dependently arisen, [257] since, without a condition, there is no arising of consciousness.”

Yet although pressed and questioned and cross-questioned by those monks in this way, the monk Sāti, the fisherman's son, still obstinately held on to the evil false view, clinging on to it, and said:

“Avuso, as I understand the Dharma taught by the Blessed One, it is this same consciousness, not another, that runs and flows through the rounds of births.”

Sāti holds on to his view

4 Since the monks were unable to detach him from that evil false view, they approached the Blessed One. Having approached the Blessed One, they saluted him, and then sat down at one side.

Seated thus at one side, they told the Blessed One...[all that had occurred]...and said:

“Bhante, since we could not detach the monk Sāti, the fisherman's son, from this evil false view, we have reported this matter to the Blessed One.”

5a Then the Blessed One addressed a certain monk, thus:

“Come, bhikshu, [258] tell the monk Sāti, the fisherman's son, in my name, that the Teacher calls him.”

¹⁶ “An evil false view” (*pāpakam diṭṭhi, gatam*). *Pāpaka* (“evil”) is often rendered as “pernicious.” *Diṭṭhi, gata*, “recourse to views, field of views: (Ñānamoli, 1994): 6 kinds are given at Pm 1:130, 2 kinds at It 43.

¹⁷ “Consciousness,” *viññāna*: see SD 17.8a; also Johansson, 1965:189-215. On *viññāna* as a link in dependent arising, see (**Paṭicca, samuppāda**) **Vibhaṅga S** (S 12.2/2:2-4) = SD 5.15.

¹⁸ “It is this same consciousness, ... the rounds of births,” *tad ev'idaṃ viññānaṃ sandhāvati saṃsarati anaññan ti*.

“Yes, bhante,” the monk replied and then he approached the monk Sāti. Having approached him, the monk said this to him,

“The Teacher calls you, avuso Sāti.”

“Yes, avuso,” he replied, and he went to the Blessed One. Having gone to the Blessed One, he saluted him, and then sat down at one side.

5b The Blessed One then asked him:

“Sāti, is it true that the following evil false view has arisen in you: ‘As I understand the Dharma taught by the Blessed One, it is this same consciousness, not another, that runs and wanders through the rounds of births.’?”

“That is very true, bhante. As I understand the Dharma taught by the Blessed One, it is this same consciousness, not another, that runs and wanders through the rounds of births.”

5c “What is this consciousness, Sāti?”

“Bhante, it is that which speaks and feels¹⁹ here and there; it feels the results of good and evil deeds.”²⁰

“Misguided one [You hollow man],²¹ to whom have you ever known me to have taught the Dharma in that way? Misguided one, have I not stated in many ways that consciousness is dependently arisen;²² that without a condition there is no arising of consciousness?

But you, misguided one, have misrepresented us by your wrong grasp and injured²³ yourself, and stored up much demerit—for, this will bring you harm and suffering for a long time.”

CONSCIOUSNESS

Consciousness is dependently arisen

6 Then the Blessed One addressed the monks thus:

“Bhikshus, what do you think? Has this monk Sāti, the fisherman’s son, kindled even a spark of wisdom in this Dharma and Discipline?”²⁴

“How can this be, bhante? No, bhante.”

When this was said, the monk Sāti, the fisherman’s son, sat silent, dismayed, his shoulders drooping, hanging his head, glum, and at a loss for an answer.²⁵

¹⁹ Native gloss on *vado vedeyyo*, from Sāti’s wrong perspective: “That which speaks, that which feels, and that which experiences now here, now there, karmic fruits that are good and that are bad, that is, *consciousness* (*viññāṇa*), bhante, that I am speaking of.” (MA 2:305 f). Comy on **Sabb’āsava S** (M 2.8/1:258) glosses “that speaks and feels” (*vado vedeyyo*) as the conviction of the eternalists. *Vada* is the vocal act. *Vedeyyo* is that which experiences (*vediyati*). So it means it experiences, undergoes (*anubhavati*). What does it feel (know, *vedeti*)? It experiences (*paṭisaṃvedeti*) now here, now there, the fruits of karma that are good and that are bad. “Now here, now there” refers to a womb, destiny, station, abode, species, or mental object. (MA 1:71).

²⁰ As in **Sabb’āsava S** (M 2.8/1:8) where it is one of a number of examples of *ditṭhi,gata*. This statement by Sāti is his second wrong view, the first being stated in §3.

²¹ *Mogha,purisa*, lit “empty person.” I’ve followed a safe well-tested translation here. However, while *mogha* evokes more deeply a spiritual lack, “misguided” connotes more of psychosocial errancy. Cf TS Eliot’s “Hollow Men” (where “empty men” is also mentioned) which fully brings out the meaning here but lacks emotional connection for those unfamiliar with the poem.

²² “Consciousness is dependently arisen,” *paṭicca,samuppannaṃ viññāṇaṃ*. Cf **Mahā Hatthi,padōpama S** (M 28): “These five aggregates of clinging are dependently arisen.” (M 28.28/1:191 = SD 3.13).

²³ “Injured,” *khanasi*, 2nd p sg of *khanati*: (1) hurts, injures; impairs (V 2:26 = M 1:132; D 1:86; S 1:27; A 1:89, 3:350; Tha 1173); (2) digs; digs up excavates (V 3:48, 76, 4:32; M 2:51; S 1:127; A 4:159; Dh 247, 337; U 15). There is a wordplay here: Sāti harms himself with wrong view, and also dig up his wholesome roots.

²⁴ A similar context for this stock phrase is the Buddha’s rebuke of Ariṭṭha (**Alagaddūpama S**, M 22.7/2:132). Comy there remarks that this phrase refers to “one who has not cultivated the ‘warmth of understanding’ (*ñāṇ’usmā*) that can mature the ‘seed of wisdom’ (*paññā,bījā*, MAT) for winning the paths and fruits.” (MA 2:104).

Then knowing that the monk Sati, son of a fisherman, was sitting silent, dismayed, with shoulders drooping and head down, glum, and at a loss for an answer, the Blessed One said this to him:

“Misguided one [You hollow man], you will be recognized by your own evil false view. I will question the monks on this matter.”

7 Then the Blessed One addressed the monks thus:²⁶

“Bhikshus, do you understand the Dharma taught by me as this monks, Sāti, [259] the fisherman’s son, does when he misrepresents us by his wrong grasp and injures himself and stores up much demerit?”

“No, bhante. For in many ways the Blessed One has stated how consciousness is dependently arisen, since, without a conditions, there is no arising of consciousness.”²⁷

“Good, bhikshus. It is good that you understand the Dharma taught by me thus. For in many ways I have spoken on how consciousness is dependently arisen, since, without a conditions, there is no arising of consciousness.

But this monks Sāti, the fisherman’s son, misrepresents us by his wrong grasp, and injures himself and stores up much demerit. For this will lead to this misguided one’s [hollow person’s] harm and pain for a long time.

Conditionality of consciousness

8a Bhikshus, consciousness is reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which it arises.

When consciousness arises dependent on the eye and forms, it is reckoned as eye-consciousness.

When consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds, it is reckoned as ear-consciousness.

When consciousness arises dependent on the nose and smells, it is reckoned as nose-consciousness.

When consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and tastes, it is reckoned as tongue-consciousness.

When consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches, it is reckoned as body-consciousness.

When consciousness arises dependent on the mind and mind-objects, it is reckoned as mind-consciousness.

8b THE FIRE SIMILE. Just as **fire** is reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which it burns:²⁸

when fire burns dependent on wood, it is reckoned as “wood fire”;

when fire burns dependent on wood chips, it is reckoned as “wood-chip fire”;

²⁵ This stock passage show defeat and resignation, and is used of Māra when he fails in his machinations against the Buddha and his disciples (eg S 1:124). Although reflecting defeat, this passage also suggests lack of contrition on the part of the person. In Mahā Taṇhā,saṅhaya S, Sāti is not mentioned as having recanted his wrong view. For the reason, see prec n.

²⁶ Comy on **Alaggadūpama S** notes that by questioning the other monks, the Buddha wants to clarify the Sangha’s view and to leave no doubt in Ariṭṭha that through his mindset, he had alienated himself from the Sangha. (MA 2:105). Compatibility of view (*ditṭhi,sāmaññatā*) is the last of the 6 qualities constituting the virtues for the spiritual community (*sāraṇīya,dhamma*, D 3:245, A 3:288 f), the first 5 being: showing lovingkindness in deed, in speech, and in thought; communal sharing, compatibility of moral virtue. However, despite Sāti’s alienation, no disciplinary measure is put upon him. Instead, the Buddha actually clarifies the situation before the assembly in Sāti’s presence which apparently would benefit him in due course. §§7-8 here appears to rule out the possibility of the “life-continuum” (*bhav’aṅga*), a doctrine introduced in the Ahidhamma tradition: see Intro (5).

²⁷ Although it is not mentioned who or how many monks are behind these words, apparently, one of the monks, probably an elder, speaks on behalf of the assembly.

²⁸ The following are the fuel mentioned above for the fire in Pali: *kaṭṭha* (wood, stick, twig), *sakalika* (splinter, chip), *tiṇa* (grass), *go,maya* (cow-dung), *thusa* (chaff), *saṅkāra* (rubbish, refuse). The Pali word for “fuel,” *upādāna*, also means “clinging”, since clinging adds fuel to our craving (*taṇhā*). Our desire works closely with our self-view and self-identity: in fact, we are what we desire. “Bhikshus, one having sensual desires is reborn as an individual (*atta,bhāva*) into this or that existence depending on one’s merit or on one’s demerit.” (**Nibbedhika (Pariyāya) S**, A 6.63.4c/3:411). This passage centring around the fire simile is a sort of abridgement of **Aditta,pariyāya S** (S 35.28) = SD 1.3.

when fire burns dependent on grass, it is reckoned as “grass fire”;
 when fire burns dependent on cow-dung, it is reckoned as “cow-dung fire”;
 when fire burns dependent on chaff, it is reckoned as “chaff fire”;
 when fire burns dependent on refuse, it is reckoned as ‘refuse fire’;
 even so, too, bhikshus, consciousness is reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which it arises.

When consciousness arises dependent on the eye and forms, it is reckoned as eye-consciousness....

[260] When consciousness arises dependent on the mind and mind-objects, it is reckoned as mind-consciousness.

BEING & FOOD

Existence according to specific conditionality²⁹

9 Bhikshus, do you see thus, ‘*This* being [*This* has come into being].?’³⁰

“Yes, bhante.”

“Bhikshus, do you see thus, ‘Its coming into being is on account of *that* (condition) as food.’?”³¹

“Yes, bhante.”

“Bhikshus, do you see thus, ‘With the ending of that food, that which has come into being is subject to ending.’?”³²

“Yes, bhante.”

10 “Bhikshus, does doubt arise when you are uncertain thus, ‘Has this (being) come into being?’”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Bhikshus, does doubt arise when you are uncertain thus, ‘Does its coming into being arise with that as food?’”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Bhikshus, does doubt arise when you are uncertain thus, ‘With the ending of that food, is what that has come into being subject to ending?’”

“Yes, bhante.”

11 “Bhikshus, is doubt abandoned in you when you see as it really is with proper wisdom thus, ‘This (being) has come into being.’?”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Bhikshus, is doubt abandoned in you when you see as it really is with proper wisdom thus, ‘Its coming into being is on account of that (condition) as food.’?”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Bhikshus, is doubt abandoned in you when you see as it really is with proper wisdom thus, ‘With the ending of that food, that which has come into being is subject to ending.’?”

²⁹ The tr here may seem awkward is the difficulty of the English idiom to capture the simplicity of the Pali statement on specific conditionality (*idap.paccayatā*): see **Dependent Arising** = SD 5.16 (2)+(6).

³⁰ *Bhūtam idam ti bhikkhave passathā ti*. Comy: “**This**” refers to the five aggregates (MA 2:307). Having shown the conditionality of consciousness, the Buddha now shows the conditionality of all aggregates, which arise through conditions, their “food” and pass away with the ending of those conditions. I have amplified this reading with “being” in agreement with the syntax, rather than amplifying it with “the 5 aggregates” or “the fivefold aggregate.”

³¹ *Tad āhāra,sambhavan ti bhikkhave passathā ti*. Comy takes “**that**,” *tad* [*taṃ* before a vowel], as a nominative representing the subject [*taṃ khandha,pañcakam*], but, notes Bodhi, “it seems more likely that it qualifies *āhāra* and that both should be taken as ablatives [tr “from”], the subject *idam* being understood. This interpretation seems confirmed by the third statement, *tad-āhāra,nirodhā yaṃ bhūtam taṃ nirodha,dhammam*. Horner’s ‘This is the origination of nutriment’ [M:H 1:315] is clearly wrong.” (M:ÑB 1232 n405). This important passage [9] “indicates that rebirth occurs because, by grasping at various things, discernment [consciousness] is made to be ‘dependent’ (*nissita*) on them. S 2:66 [**Cetanā S 2**, S 12.39] complements this by saying ‘When discernment [consciousness] is supported (*patiṭṭhite*) and growing, there is descent (*avakkanti*) of mind-and-body,’ ie a being develops in the womb to bring another birth.” (Harvey 1995:96). See §26 below on the nature of conception.

³² *Tad āhāra,nirodhā yaṃ bhūtam taṃ nirodha,dhamman ti bhikkhave passathā ti*.

“Yes, bhante.”

12 “Bhikshus, are you thus free from doubt here thus, ‘This being [This has come into being].’?”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Bhikshus, are you thus free from doubt here thus, ‘Its coming into being is on account of *that* (condition) as food.’?”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Bhikshus, are you thus free from doubt here thus, ‘With the ending of that food, that which has come into being is subject to ending.’?”

“Yes, bhante.”

13 “Bhikshus, has it been properly seen by you as it really is with proper wisdom thus, ‘This being [This has come into being].’?”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Bhikshus, has it been properly seen by you as it really is with proper wisdom thus, ‘Its coming into being is on account of *that* (condition) as food.’?”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Bhikshus, has it been properly seen by you as it really is with proper wisdom thus, ‘With the ending of that food, that which has come into being is subject to ending.’?”

“Yes, bhante.”

14 “Bhikshus, no matter how pure, how clear, [261] this view may be, if you stick to it, prize it, be acquisitive about it,³³ treat it as a possession,³⁴ would you then understand that the Dharma has been taught as being comparable to a raft³⁵ that is for crossing over [the waters to the far shore], not for the purpose of grasping?”

“No, bhante.”

“Bhikshus, no matter how pure, how clear, this view may be, if you do *not* stick to it, do *not* prize it, are *not* acquisitive about it, do *not* treat it as a possession, would you then understand that the Dharma has been taught as being comparable to a raft, which is for crossing over [the waters to the far shore], not for the purpose of grasping?”

“Yes, bhante.”

FOUR KINDS OF FOOD

Food and dependent arising

15 “Bhikshus, there are these **four kinds of food**³⁶ that sustain beings who have come into being or who are seeking birth.³⁷ What are the four?”

³³ “Be acquisitive about it,” *dhanāyati* (denom of *dhana*, “treasure”) lit “make a treasure of it,” he desires (like money), wishes for, strives after. Also read as *vanāyati*, he hankers after.

³⁴ This verse up to here qu in Comy to **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22) (MA 22.21/2:109).

³⁵ “Being comparable to a raft,” *kullūpamaṃ*. The whole phrase can be alt tr as “would you then understand the Dharma as taught in the parable of the raft...?” See **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22.13/1:134). “This is said to show the bhikkhus that they should not cling even to the right view of insight meditation” (M:ÑB 1233 n406).

³⁶ Comy: The Buddha gives the teachings of this verse and the next to link up the “foods” with dependent arising to show his wisdom covers not merely the 5 aggregates but also the whole sequence of conditions (*paccayā, paramparā*) responsible for their being (MA 2:308). They are called “food” (*āhāra*) because they serve as *special conditions* for the personal life-continuity (*ajjhatika, santatiyā visesa, paccayattā*). For material food (*kabalīnkāra āhāra*) is a special condition for the physical body of those beings who subsist on material food. In the mental body, contact is the special condition for feeling, mental volition for consciousness, and consciousness for name-and-form. **The products of food** (what it nourishes): (1) Material food put into the mouth produces the groups of form with nutritive essence as the eighth (*oja’atthamaka, rūpāni*, an Abhidhamma term for the simplest cluster of material states); (2) contact as food (*phass’āhāra*) produces the three kinds of feeling [pleasurable, painful, neutral]; (3) mental volition as food (*mano, sañcetanāhāra*) produces the three kinds of existence [sense-world, form-world, formless world]; and (4) consciousness as food (*viññāṇ’āhāra*) produces name-and-form (*nāma, rūpa*) at rebirth. (MA 1:207 ff; SA 2:22-27; KhA 75 ff). See **Āhāra S** (S 12.11/2:11-13) in SD 7. Also see Nyanaponika 1967.

They are:

- (1) material food (*kabaḷīṅkāra āhāra*), gross or subtle;
- (2) contact (*phassa*) as the second;
- (3) mental volition (*mano,sañcetanā*) as the third;
- (4) consciousness (*viññāṇa*) as the fourth.

16 And, bhikshus, these four kinds of food—what is their source; what is their cause; from what are they born and produced?³⁸

These four kinds of food have **craving** as their source;³⁹ they have craving as their cause; they are born from craving; they are produced by craving.

And this craving, bhikshus—what is its source; what is its cause; from what is it born and produced?

This craving has **feeling** as its source; it has feeling as its cause; it is born from feeling; it is produced by feeling.

And this feeling, bhikshus—what is its source; what is its cause; from what is it born and produced?

This feeling has **contact** as its source; it has contact as its cause; it is born from contact; it is produced by contact.

And this contact, bhikshus—what is its source; what is its cause; from what is it born and produced?

This contact has **the sixfold sense-base** as its source; it has contact as its cause; it is born from contact; it is produced by contact.

And this sixfold sense-base, bhikshus—what is its source; what is its cause; from what is it born and produced?

This sixfold sense-base has **name-and-form** as its source; it has name-and-form as its cause; it is born from name-and-form; it is produced by name-and-form.

And this name-and-form, bhikshus—what is its source; what is its cause; from what is it born and produced?

This name-and-form has **consciousness** as its source; it has consciousness as its cause; it is born from consciousness; it is produced by consciousness.

And this consciousness, bhikshus—what is its source; what is its cause; from what is it born and produced?

This consciousness has **formations** as its source; it has formations as its cause; it is born from formations; it is produced by formations.

And these formations, bhikshus—what is their source; what is their cause; from what are they born and produced?

These formations have **ignorance** as their source; they have ignorance as their cause; they are born from ignorance; they are produced by ignorance.

DEPENDENT ARISING

Dependent arising: Forward sequence

17 Thus, bhikshus, with ignorance as condition, there are volitional formations;⁴⁰

³⁷ “Who are seeking birth,” *sambhavesī*. Some Buddhists are of the opinion that the term *sambhavesī* may refer to the “intermediate state” (*antarā,bhava*, Tib *bardo*) or “intermediate being” (*antarā,bhava sattva*) which links one birth to the next and which, according to “Northern” Buddhism (ie Mahayana and Vajrayana), may last up to 49 days. During that period, the deceased’s “conscious principle” (*rnam shes*) encounters many visions of both peaceful and wrathful deities which are personifications of one’s past karma. See **Karaṇīya Metta S** (Khp 9 = Sn 1.7) in SD 38.3 n5c.2.

³⁸ See **Cūḷa Sīha,nāda S** (M 11.14/1:67).

³⁹ Craving is regarded as the source of “food” because the craving of previous lives is the source of the present individuality, which depends upon and continually consumes the 4 “foods” in this existence.

⁴⁰ Comy: When it is said, “With ignorance as condition, there are volitional formations,” the meaning should be understood thus: “It is ignorance and it is a condition; hence ‘ignorance-as-condition’ (*avijjā ca sā pacayā cā ti avijjā,paccayā*). Through that ignorance-as-condition, volitional formations come to be (*tasmā avijjā,paccayā saṅkhārā sambhavanti*)” (SA 2:9 f). Bodhi: “This explanation suggests that the verb *sambhavanti*, which in the text

with volitional formations as condition, there is consciousness;
with consciousness as condition, there is name-and-form;
with name-and-form as condition, there is the sixfold sense-base;
with the sixfold sense-base as condition, there is contact;
with contact as condition, there is feeling;
with feeling as condition, there is craving;⁴¹
with craving as condition, there is clinging;
with clinging as condition, there is existence;
with existence as condition, there is birth;
with birth as condition there arise decay-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain and despair.

—Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

Dependent arising: Forward sequence catechism

18 ‘With birth as condition, there is decay-and-death,’ so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does decay-and-death have birth as condition or not, or how is it here?⁴²

“Bhante, decay-and-death has birth as condition. Thus we understand it here as ‘With birth as condition, there is decay-and-death.’”

“**‘With existence as condition, there is birth,’** so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does birth have existence as condition or not, or how is it here?”

“Bhante, birth has existence as condition. [262] Thus we understand it here as ‘With existence as condition, there is birth.’”

“**‘With clinging as condition, there is existence,’** so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does existence have clinging as condition or not, or how is it here?”

“Bhante, existence has clinging as condition. Thus we understand it here as ‘With clinging as condition, there is existence.’”

“**‘With craving as condition, there is clinging,’** so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does clinging have craving as condition or not, or how is it here?”

“Bhante, clinging has craving as condition. Thus we understand it here as ‘With craving as condition, there is clinging.’”

“**‘With feeling as condition, there is craving,’** so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does craving have feeling as condition or not, or how is it here?”

“Bhante, craving has feeling as condition. Thus we understand it here as ‘With feeling as condition, there is craving.’”

“**‘With contact as condition, there is feeling,’** so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does feeling have contact as condition or not, or how is it here?”

“Bhante, feeling has contact as condition. Thus we understand it here as ‘With contact as condition, there is feeling.’”

“**‘With the sixfold sense-base as condition, there is contact,’** so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does contact have the sixfold sense-base as condition or not, or how is it here?”

“Bhante, contact has the sixfold sense-base as condition. Thus we understand it here as ‘With the sixfold sense-base as condition, there is contact.’”

“**‘With name-and-form as condition, there is the sixfold sense-base,’** so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does the sixfold sense-base have name-and-form as condition or not, or how is it here?”

occurs only at the end of the whole formula, should be connected to each proposition, thus establishing that each conditioned state arises through its condition. The twelve terms of the formula are treated analytically in [the **Vibhaṅga S**].” (S:B 725 n1)

⁴¹ In (**Samuday’atthaṅgama**) **Loka S** (S 12.44), the dependent arising is shown to be broken here when “with the utter fading away and ending of that same craving comes cessation of clinging...” the rest of the chain breaks accordingly leading to the ending of “this whole mass of suffering.” (S 12.44/2:71-73)

⁴² “Or how is it here?” *katham vā ettha hotī ti*, ie “or how do you understand this?”

“Bhante, the sixfold sense-base has name-and-form as condition. Thus we understand it here as ‘With name-and-form as condition, there is the sixfold sense-base.’”

“‘**With consciousness as condition, there is name-and-form,**’ so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does name-and-form have consciousness as condition or not, or how is it here?”

“Bhante, name-and-form has consciousness as condition. Thus we understand it here as ‘With consciousness as condition, there is name-and-form.’”

“‘**With volitional formations as condition, there is consciousness,**’ so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does consciousness have volitional formations as condition or not, or how is it here?”

“Bhante, consciousness has volitional formations as condition. Thus we understand it here as ‘With volitional formations as condition, there is consciousness.’”

“‘**With ignorance as condition, there are volitional formations,**’ so it is said. Now, bhikshus, do volitional formations have ignorance as condition or not, or how is it here?”

“Bhante, volitional formations have ignorance as condition. Thus we understand it here as ‘With ignorance as condition, there are volitional formations.’”⁴³

Recapitulation on dependent arising

19 “Good, bhikshus! So you say, and I too say thus:⁴⁴

‘When this is, that is; [263] with the arising of this, that arises.’⁴⁵

That is, with ignorance as condition, there are volitional formations;

with volitional formations as condition, there is consciousness;

with consciousness as condition, there is name-and-form;

with name-and-form as condition, there is the sixfold sense-base;

with the sixfold sense-base as condition, there is contact;

with contact as condition, there is feeling;

with feeling as condition, there is craving;

with craving as condition, there is clinging;

with clinging as condition, there is existence;

with existence as condition, there is birth;

with birth as condition there arise decay-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain and despair.

—Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

Dependent arising: reverse cycle

20 But with the utter fading away and ending of ignorance, volitional formations end [do not arise],⁴⁶

⁴³ *Avijjā,paccaya saṅkhārā ti*. M:ÑB erroneously renders this as “With formations as condition ignorance.” (M:ÑB 355).

⁴⁴ This statement confirms “the compatibility of view” (*diṭṭhi,samaññatā*), one of the virtues conducing to the spiritual community. See §7n & **Sama,jīva S** (A 4.55) in SD 5.1 Intro.

⁴⁵ This line is a statement of the “**specific conditionality**” (*idap,paccayatā*) of arising (*samudaya*)—together with the statement on cessation, *nirodha* [22]—is a general principle of conditionality inherent in all existence, and of which the main expression is that of dependent arising. This particular statement here is a “sufficient condition” (ie a cause that must always produce the effect). For details, see “Dependent Arising” (essay) in SD 5.12.6.

⁴⁶ Payutto (1994) remarks: “Generally speaking, the word ‘cease’ [or ‘end’] means to do away with something which has already arisen, or the stopping of something which has already begun. However, *nirodha* in the teaching of Dependent Origination (as also in *dukkhanirodha*, the third of the Noble Truths) means non-arising, or non-existence, of something because the cause of its arising is done away with. For example, the phrase ‘when *avijjā* is *nirodha*, *saṅkhārā* are also *nirodha*,’ which is usually taken to mean, “with the cessation of ignorance, volitional impulses cease,” in fact means that ‘when there is no ignorance, or no arising of ignorance, or when there is no longer any problem with ignorance, there is no volitional impulses, volitional impulses do not arise, or there is no longer any problem from volitional impulses.’ It does not mean that ignorance already arisen must be done away with before the volitional impulses which have already arisen will also be done away.” (1994:107-108) In this context, he sug-

with the ending of volitional formations, consciousness ends,
with the ending of consciousness, name-and-form ends,
with the ending of name-and-form, the sixfold sense-base ends
with the ending of the sixfold sense-base, contact ends,
with the ending of contact, feeling ends,
with the ending of feeling, craving ends,
with the ending of craving, clinging ends,
with the ending of clinging, existence ends,
with the ending of existence, birth ends,
with the ending of birth, there end decay-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain
and despair.

—Such is the ending of this whole mass of suffering.⁴⁷

Dependent arising reverse cycle catechism

21 ‘With the ending of birth, decay-and-death ends,’ so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does decay-and-death end with the ending of birth or not, or how is it here?⁴⁸

“Bhante, decay-and-death ends with the ending of birth. Thus we understand it here as ‘With the ending of birth, decay-and-death ends.’”

“**‘With the ending of existence, birth ends,’** so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does birth end with the ending of existence or not, or how is it here?”

“Bhante, birth ends with the ending of existence. Thus we understand it here as ‘With the ending of existence, birth ends.’”

“**‘With the ending of clinging, existence ends,’** so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does existence end with the ending of clinging or not, or how is it here?”

“Bhante, existence ends with the ending of clinging. Thus we understand it here as ‘With the ending of clinging, existence ends.’”

“**‘With the ending of craving, clinging ends,’** so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does clinging end with the ending of craving or not, or how is it here?”

“Bhante, clinging ends with the ending of craving as condition. Thus we understand it here as ‘With the ending of craving, clinging ends.’”

“**‘With the ending of feeling, craving ends,’** so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does craving end with the ending of feeling as condition, or how is it here?”

“Bhante, craving ends with the ending of feeling. Thus we understand it here as ‘With the ending of feeling, craving ends.’”

“**‘With the ending of contact, feeling ends,’** so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does feeling [264] end with the ending of contact as condition or not, or how is it here?”

“Bhante, feeling ends with the ending of contact. Thus we understand it here as ‘With the ending of contact, feeling ends.’”

“**‘With the ending of the sixfold sense-base, contact ends,’** so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does contact end with the ending of the sixfold sense-base as condition or not, or how do you understand it?”

“Bhante, contact ends with the ending of the sixfold sense-base. Thus we understand it here as ‘With the ending of the sixfold sense-base, contact ends.’”

gests that the reverse (cessation) cycle of dependent arising might be better rendered as: “being free of ignorance, there is freedom from volitional impulses...,” or “when ignorance is gone, volitional impulses are gone...,” or “when ignorance is no longer a problem, volitional impulses are no longer a problem.” (1994:107). See **Kaccā(ya)-na,gotta S** (S 12.15) SD 6 Intro (3).

⁴⁷ Comy: By “ending” (*nirodha*) in all these phrases Nirvana is meant. For all those phenomena end in dependence on Nirvana, and therefore the latter is spoken of as their ending. Thus in this sutta, the Blessed One teaches the round of existence (*vaṭṭa*) and the ending of the round (*vivaṭṭa*) by 12 phrases and brought the discourse to a climax in Arhathood (SA 2:18).

⁴⁸ “Or how is it here?” *katham vā ettha hotī ti*, lit “or how is it here?.”

“**With the ending of name-and-form, the sixfold sense-base ends,**’ so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does the sixfold sense-base end with the ending of name-and-form as condition or not, or how do you understand it?”

“Bhante, the sixfold sense-base ends with the ending of name-and-form. Thus we understand it here as ‘With the ending of name-and-form, the sixfold sense-base ends.’”

“**With the ending of consciousness, name-and-form ends,**’ so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does name-and-form end with the ending of consciousness as condition or not, or how do you understand it?”

“Bhante, name-and-form ends with the ending of consciousness. Thus we understand it here as ‘With the ending of consciousness, name-and-form ends.’”

“**With the ending of volitional formations, consciousness ends,**’ so it is said. Now, bhikshus, does consciousness end with the ending of volitional formations or not, or how do you understand it?”

“Bhante, consciousness ends with the ending of volitional formations. Thus we understand it here as ‘With the ending of volitional formations, consciousness ends.’”

“**With the ending of ignorance, volitional formations ends,**’ so it is said. Now, bhikshus, do volitional formations end with the ending of ignorance or not, or how do you understand it?”

“Bhante, volitional formations end with the ending of ignorance. Thus we understand it here as ‘With the ending of ignorance, volitional formations end.’”

Recapitulation on dependent ending

22 “Good, bhikshus! So you say, and I too say thus:

‘When this is not, that is not; with the ending of this, that ends.’⁴⁹

That is, with the ending of ignorance, volitional formations end [do not arise],
with the ending of volitional formations, consciousness ends,
with the ending of consciousness, name-and-form ends,
with the ending of name-and-form, the sixfold sense-base ends
with the ending of the sixfold sense-base, contact ends,
with the ending of contact, feeling ends,
with the ending of feeling, craving ends,
with the ending of craving, clinging ends,
with the ending of clinging, existence ends,
with the ending of existence, birth ends,
with the ending of birth, there end decay-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain
and despair.

—Such is the ending of this whole mass of suffering.

The 16 speculative doubts

23a Bhikshus, knowing thus, seeing thus, [265] would you run back to the past,⁵⁰ thus:

- (1) ‘Were we in the past?’
- (2) ‘Were we not in the past?’
- (3) ‘What were we in the past?’
- (4) ‘How were we in the past?’
- (5) ‘Having been what, did we become in the past?’”

“No, bhante.”

23b “Bhikshus, knowing thus, seeing thus, would you run ahead to the future, thus:

⁴⁹ This line is a statement of the “**specific conditionality**” (*idap.paccayatā*) of cessation (*nirodha*)—together with the statement on origination, *samudaya* [19]—is a general principle of conditionality inherent in all existence, and of which the main expression is that of dependent arising. This particular statement here is a “necessary condition” (ie a cause without which there would be no effect). For details, see “Dependent Arising” (essay) in SD 5.12.6.

⁵⁰ See **Paccaya S** (S 12.20/2:26 f). On the 16 doubts, see **Bhaddekaratta S** (M 131/3:187-189) = SD 7.9 Intro (2).

- (6) ‘Will we be in the future?’
- (7) ‘Are we not in the future?’
- (8) ‘What will we be in the future?’
- (9) ‘How will we be in the future?’
- (10) ‘Having been what, what will we become in the future?’⁵¹
“No, bhante.”

23c “Bhikshus, knowing thus, seeing thus, would you now be inwardly uncertain about the present, thus:

- (11) ‘Am I?’
- (12) ‘Am I not?’
- (13) ‘What am I?’
- (14) ‘How am I?’
- (15) ‘Where has this being come from?’
- (16) ‘Where will it [this being] go?’⁵²
“No, bhante.”

True measure of wisdom⁵²

24a “Bhikshus, knowing thus, seeing thus, would you speak thus:
‘The teacher [Gotama] is respected by us.’⁵³ We speak as we do out of respect for the teacher?’⁵⁴
“No, bhante.”

24b “Bhikshus, knowing thus, seeing thus, would you speak thus:
‘The recluse [Gotama] says thus, and we speak thus following the word of the recluse?’⁵⁵
“No, bhante.”

24c “Bhikshus, knowing thus, seeing thus, would you turn to another teacher?”
“No, bhante.”

24d “Bhikshus, knowing thus, seeing thus, would you resort to⁵⁶ the observances [rules], strange arguments, and auspicious and portentous rites and practices⁵⁷ of common [worldly] recluses and brahmins, taking them as the essence [the heart of the holy life]?”
“No, bhante.”

24e “Come now, bhikshus, do you speak only of what you have known, seen⁵⁸ and understood for yourselves?”
“Yes, bhante.”

⁵¹ See **Sabb’āsava S** (M 2.7/1:8).

⁵² This section reflects the vital early Buddhist spirit that the Dharma takes first priority, and should be studied alongside **Apannaka S** (M 60/1:400-413) = SD 35.4 and **Kesa,puttiya (Kālāma) S** (A 3.65/1:188-193) = SD 35.4.

⁵³ This and the next sentence: *satthā no garu, satthu, gāravena ca mayam vādemā*. “The teacher is respected by us,” *satthā no garu*, alt tr: “Our teacher is respected/respectable.” Comy glosses *garu* (“respected”) here means *bhārika* (“grievous, burdensome, to be followed unwillingly,” MA 2:309).

⁵⁴ The two assertions here [24ab] are conflated into one forming the last of the 10 “doubtworthy positions” (*kaṅkhāniya-t,thānā*) of **Kesaputtiya S** (A 3.65) = SD 35.4, where it is not regarded as a valid source of spiritual knowledge (A 3.65.3b/1:189)

⁵⁵ “And we speak at the instruction of the recluse,” PTS Be Se *samaṇā ca na ca mayam*; Ce (Buddha Jayanti) *samaṇa, vacanena ca mayam*. Here Bodhi proposes that the latter is the better reading, which I follow. “The Recluse” here is the Buddha.

⁵⁶ “Would you resort to,” *paccāgaccheyyātha*, or “would you return to, fall back on.”

⁵⁷ “The observances [rules], strange arguments, and auspicious and portentous rites and practices,” *vata, kotūhala, maṅgalāni*. The word *kotūhala* or *kutūhala* here is probably confused with *kolāhala*, “tumult, chaos.” *Kotūhala*: “eagerness, excitement; curiosity; excited talk, vehement discussion.” However, as a cpd with the prefix -*maṅgalika*, the reading should be *kotūhala* or *kutūhala*, thus *kotūhala, maṅgala* (“auspicious and portentous rites and practices”) (A 3:439; J 1:373). Cf A 3:206, 439. See A:H 3:151 n4.

⁵⁸ “Seen,” *diṭṭham*, ie seen with the eye of wisdom (*paññā, cakkhu*) (MA 2:309).

25 “Good, bhikshus! So have you been guided by me with this Dharma, seen here and now [to be realized in this life], timeless, for one to come and see, accessible [leading onward], to be personally known by the wise.

For it is in reference to this that it has been said:

‘Bhikshus, this Dharma is **seen here and now, timeless, for one to come and see, accessible, to be personally known by the wise.**’”

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Conception and growth⁵⁹

26 Bhikshus, **the descent into the womb** [conception] takes place through the coming together of three things.⁶⁰

Here⁶¹ there is the union of the mother and the father, but the mother is not in season, and the gandharva⁶² is not present, there is no [266] descent into the womb.

Where there is the union of the mother and the father, and the mother is in season, but the gandharva is not present, there is no descent into the womb.

But where there is the union of the mother and the father, the mother is in season, and the gandharva is present, there is descent into the womb.

27 Bhikshus, the mother then carries the child⁶³ as a heavy burden in her womb with much anxiety for nine or ten lunar months.

Then, bhikshus, after nine or ten lunar months of carrying the child as a heavy burden in her womb with much anxiety, she delivers the child. When the child is born, she nourishes it with her own blood—for the mother’s breast-milk is called blood in the noble one’s Discipline.

28 Bhikshus, when this very boy grows up, comes to the maturing of his faculties,⁶⁴ plays such games⁶⁵ as these: toy ploughs, tipcat [stick-game], turning somersaults [acrobatics], playing with toy windmills, toy measures, toy chariots, toy bows.

⁵⁹ This section [26-29] shows a concrete application of dependent arising to the course of individual existence. “The passage §§26-29 may be taken to show the factors from consciousness through feeling that result from past ignorance and formations, §40 the causal factors of craving and clinging as they build up a continuation of the saṃsāric round. The following section [31-40], connecting dependent arising to the appearance of the Buddha and his teaching of the Dhamma, shows the practice of the Dhamma to be the means of bringing the round to an end.” (M:NB 1233 n410). See §9 & n (Harvey) therein.

⁶⁰ See **Assalāyana S** (M 93.18/2:156 f); Miln 123; Divy 1:440. The **Sampasādanīya S** (D 28) describes the following 4 types of conception, also listed in **Saṅgīta S** (D 33): (1) one enters the mother’s womb, remains there and leaves it unknowing; (2) one enters the womb knowing, remains there unknowing, but leaves it unknowing; (3) one enters the womb knowing, remains there knowing, but leaves it unknowing; (4) one enters the womb knowing, remains there knowing, leaves it knowing (D 28.5/3:103; 33.1.11(37)/3:231). See also Harvey 1995:96 (§6.14).

⁶¹ “Here,” *idha*, ie in this world of beings (MA 2:310). On the types of “world,” see **Rohitassa S** (S 2.26/1:61 f) in SD 7 Intro (1).

⁶² “Gandharva” (*gandhabba*). Comy explains it as the being that is descending into the womb; the being about to enter the womb (*tatrūpaka,satta*); about to come into that situation, driven on by the force of karma. (MA 2:310). The exact meaning of *gandhabba* is not given in the Pali Canon. It is mentioned only here and in **Assalāyana S** (M 93.18/ 2:156 f). In **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15), it is said, “If there were no consciousness to descend into a mother’s womb, would name-and-form take shape in the womb?” (D 15.21/2:63). Thus, remarks Bodhi, “we might identify the *gandhabba* here as the stream of consciousness, conceived more animistically as coming over from the previous existence and bringing along its total accumulation of kammic tendencies and personality traits.” (M:NB 1234 n411). There is also enough evidence from the Canon to show that rebirth need not be immediate, and that the intermediate state (*antarā,bhava*) exists. See eg **Kutūhala,sāla S** (S 44.9): “When, Vaccha, a being has laid down this body but has not yet been reborn into another body, it is fuelled by craving, I say!” (S 44.9/4:400). See OH de A Wijesekera, 1945, where he suggests that *gandhabba* means a “saṃsāric being in the intermediate stage (between death and birth).” See also “Is rebirth immediate?” (Essay) in SD 2.17.

⁶³ “Child,” *gabbham*. The word has a range of meanings: “womb, embryo, foetus, sprout, calyx (of a flower), inner chamber.”

29 Bhikshus, when the child grows up and his faculties mature (further), he enjoys himself, endowed with **the five cords of sense-pleasure**⁶⁶—

with *forms* cognizable by the eye that are wished for, desirable, agreeable and pleasing, connected with sense-desire, arousing lust;

with *sounds* cognizable by the ear wished for, desirable, agreeable and pleasing, connected with sense-desire, arousing lust.

with *smells* cognizable by the nose wished for, desirable, agreeable and pleasing, connected with sense-desire, arousing lust.

with *tastes* cognizable by the tongue wished for, desirable, agreeable and pleasing, connected with sense-desire, arousing lust.

with *touches* cognizable by the body that are wished for, desirable, agreeable and pleasing, connected with sense-desire, arousing lust.

Continuation of the round of births⁶⁷

30 On seeing a form⁶⁸ with the eye, he lusts after⁶⁹ it if it is pleasurable. He dislikes it if it is unpleasurable. He dwells with mindfulness of the body unestablished, with a limited mind,⁷⁰ and he does not understand it as it really is the liberation of mind and the liberation by wisdom⁷¹ wherein those evil unwholesome states cease without remainder.

Engaged as he is in liking and disliking,⁷² whatever feeling he feels—whether pleasant or painful or neutral—he delights in that feeling, welcomes it, and remains holding on to it.⁷³

As he delights in that feeling, welcomes it, and remains holding on to it, delight arises in him and remains.

⁶⁴ As in **Upāli S** (A 10.99/5:203). See also D 2:305; M 1:49; S 2:42 ff. Here the maturing is in regards of the development from infancy to childhood.

⁶⁵ Games listed are: *vaṅkakam ghaṭikam mokkhaṅgam cingulakam pattāḷhakam rathakam dhanukam*. See V 3:180, D 1:6 for these and other games. See also V:H 1:316 f.

⁶⁶ As at D 1:245; M 1:85, 92, 226, 3:234; A 3:411. Def as “gratification of desire” (*kamānam assāda*) at **Cūḷa Dukkha-k,khandha S** (M 14.6/1:92) = SD 4.7; also at **Mahā Dukkha-k,khandha S** (M 13.7-15/1:85-88) = SD 6.9. See **Mahā Suññata S** (M 122.14/3:114) = SD 11.4.

⁶⁷ This section [30] should be read with **Saṅṅoga S** (A 7.48/4:57-59) which describes how sexual feelings arise.

⁶⁸ See **Lohicca S** (S 35.132/4:120) & **Avassuta S** (S 35.243/4:184).

⁶⁹ “Lusts after,” *sārajati*. Comy glosses as *rāgam uppādeti*, “arouses lust” (MA 2:311). S 4:120, 184 read *adhimuccati*, “he inclines to.”

⁷⁰ “Limited mind,” *paritta,cetaso*. The opp, *appamāṇa,cetaso* means “immeasurable mind” (M 1:270, S 4:120, 186). Cf *paritto appātumo appa,dukkha,viḥār...aparitto mah’attā appamāṇa,viḥārī* (A 1:249). Comy explains *paritta* as *akusala*, “unskilled, unwholesome” (MA 2:311).

⁷¹ “Liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom,” respectively: *ceto,vimutti* (or, liberation by concentration, ie through destruction of the mental hindrances) and *paññā,vimutti* (liberation through insight) (A 1:60). One who is “liberated by wisdom” “may not have reached the 8 Liberations (*vimokkha = jhāna*) in his own body, but through seeing with wisdom, his mental cankers are destroyed” (M 70.16/1:478). All Arhats are perfectly liberated in the same way from ignorance and suffering, but are distinguished into two types on the basis of their proficiency in concentration. Those who can attain **the eight liberations** (*aṭṭha,vimokkha*), which include the four Formless Attainments and the Attainment of Cessation, are called “liberated both ways”, that is, liberated from the physical body by means of the Formless Absorptions, and from all defilements by the Path of Arhatship. Arhats like Sāriputta and Moggallāna are “liberated both ways” (*ubhato,bhāga,vimutta*). The differences between the two types of liberation are given in **Mahā,nidāna S** (D 2:70 f) and **Kīṭāgiri S** (M 1:477 f).

⁷² “Liking and disliking,” *anurodha,virodha*, also “compliance and opposition.” Qu at Kvu 485; cf A 4:158, S 1:111. Comy glosses as *rāgañ c’eva dosaṅ ca*, “attachment as well as hatred” (MA 2:311).

⁷³ Comy explains that he delights in the painful feeling by clinging to it with the thoughts of “I am suffering” (*ahaṃ dukkhito*) and “This pain is mine” (*mama dukkhan*) (MA 2:211). Examples of delight in pain can be found in masochism, sadism, extreme sports, ascetic practices, religious penances and self-infliction of pain to reinforce one’s own ego.

Now delight in feeling is clinging.
with his clinging as condition, there is existence;
with existence as condition, there is birth;
with birth as condition there arise decay-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain and despair.

—Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

On hearing a sound with the ear,...

On smelling a smell with the nose,...

On tasting a taste with the tongue,...

On feeling a touch with the body,... [267]

On cognizing a mind-object with the mind, he lusts after it if it is pleasurable. He dislikes it if it is unpleasurable. He dwells with mindfulness of the body unestablished, with a limited mind, and he does not understand it as it really is the liberation of mind and the liberation by wisdom wherein those evil unwholesome states cease without remainder.

Engaged as he is in liking and disliking, whatever feeling he feels—whether pleasant or painful or neutral—he delights in that feeling, welcomes it, and remains holding on to it.

As he delights in that feeling, welcomes it, and remains holding on to it, delight arises in him and remains.

Now delight in feeling is clinging.
with his clinging as condition, there is existence;
with existence as condition, there is birth;
with birth as condition there arise decay-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain and despair.

—Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

ENDING OF THE ROUND OF BIRTHS⁷⁴

Ending of the round: the gradual training

31 Here, bhikkhus, there arises in the world the Tathāgata [Thus Come], an Arhat, fully self-awakened, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, well-gone, knower of the worlds,⁷⁵ unexcelled trainer of tamable persons, teacher of beings human and divine, awakened, blessed.

Having realized by his own direct knowledge this world with its gods, its Māras [evil ones], and its Brahmās [high gods], this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers⁷⁶ and people, he makes it known to others. He teaches the Dharma, good in its beginning, good in its middle, good in its end, endowed with meaning and phrasing. He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure.

32 A householder or householder's son, hearing the Dharma, gains faith⁷⁷ in the Tathāgata and reflects:

⁷⁴ This section here [31-38] is elaborated in **Cūḷa Hatthi, padōpama S** (27.19-26) which gives a full description of the absorptions (*jhāna*) and other attainments (M 27.19-26/182-4).

⁷⁵ Comys give 3 senses of the word “world” (*loka*): (1) The world of formations (*saṅkhāra loka*), (2) The world of beings (*satta loka*), (3) The world of space (ie of space-time) (*okāsa loka*). (Vism 7.37/204 f; DA 1:173 f; MA 1:397, 2:200). For details, see **Rohitassa S** (S 2.26/1:61 f) in SD 7.1 Intro.

⁷⁶ *deva*, here in the sense of “devas by convention” (*sammati, deva*), ie kings. The other 2 types of *deva* are “gods by rebirth” (*upapatti, deva*) and “gods by purification” (*visuddhi, deva*), ie the Buddhas, Pratyeka Buddhas and Arhats. (CNid 307 KhA 123). See n7.

⁷⁷ “Faith,” *saddhā*. There are 2 kinds of faith (*saddhā*): (1) “rootless faith” (*amūlaka, saddhā*), baseless or irrational faith, blind faith. (M 2:170); (2) “faith with a good cause” (*ākāravati, saddhā*), faith founded on seeing (M 1:320, 8 401, 23); also called *avecca-p, pasāda* (S 12.41.11/2:69). “Wise faith” is syn with (2). *Amūlaka* = “not seen, not heard, not suspected” (V 2:243 3:163 & Comy). **Gethin** speaks of two kinds of faith: the cognitive and the affective (eg ERE: Faith & Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963:387): “Faith in its cognitive dimension is seen as concerning belief in propositions or statements of which one does not—or perhaps cannot—

‘The household life is stifling, a dusty path.⁷⁸ The life of renunciation is like the open air. It is not easy living in a house to practise the holy life completely, in all its purity, like a polished conch-shell. What if I were to shave off my hair and beard, put on the saffron robes, and go forth from the household life into homelessness?’

So after some time he abandons all his wealth, great and small⁷⁹ and relatives, be they few or be they many, shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the saffron robes, and goes forth from the household life into homelessness.

THE LESSER SECTION ON MORAL VIRTUE⁸⁰

33 Having thus gone forth and possessing the monk’s training and way of life,

Novice’s precepts 1-3

(1) having abandoned the destruction of life, he abstains from destroying life. He dwells with rod and sword laid down, conscientious,⁸¹ merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings.

(2) Having abandoned the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given.

[268] He takes only what is given, accepts only what is given, lives not by stealth but by means of a pure mind.

(3) Having abandoned incelibacy, he lives a celibate life,⁸² living apart, refraining from the sexual act, the way of the village.⁸³

Right Speech

(4) Having abandoned false speech, he abstains from false speech. He speaks the truth, the truth is his bond,⁸⁴ trustworthy, reliable, no deceiver of the world.⁸⁵

(5) Having abandoned divisive speech he abstains from divisive speech. What he has heard here he does not tell there to break those people apart from these people here. What he has heard there he does not tell here to break these people apart from those people there.⁸⁶

Thus reconciling those who have broken apart or consolidating those who are united, he loves concord, delights in concord, enjoys concord, speaks things that create concord.

(6) Having abandoned abusive speech, he abstains from abusive speech. He speaks words that are humane, soothing, loving, touching, urbane, and delightful and pleasant to the multitude.

have knowledge proper (however that should be defined); cognitive faith is a mode of knowing in a different category from that knowledge. Faith is its affective dimension is a more straightforward positive response to trust or confidence towards something or somebody...the conception of *saddhā* in Buddhist writings appears almost, if not entirely affective, the cognitive element is completely secondary.” (Gethin 2001:207; my emphases).

⁷⁸ “A dusty path,” *rajā, patha*. Comys, following the Mahā Aṭṭhakathā, take this to mean “the dust of passion”, but add that it is also *āgamana, patha*, “the path that returns, the way of rebirth” (MA 2:204 = DA 1:180).

⁷⁹ On the accumulation of wealth, cf **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.1.23-24/2:85 f).

⁸⁰ This section [33] as at **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.8-27/1:4-11); cf **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41.7-14/1:287), **Kandaraka S** (M 51.14-19/1:345-7), **Cha-b, bisodhana S** (M 112.13-17/3:33-36); also A 2:208, 4:249; Pug 56.

⁸¹ *lajjī*, “feel shame, modest”, explain in the Comy on S 1:73 as “one who has moral shame (*hiri*) and moral fear (*ottappa*).” Opp *alajjī*, shameless.

⁸² *Brahma, cāriya* is the supreme conduct or holy life, ie celibacy. Dīgha Comy points out that it involves refraining from other forms of erotic behaviour besides intercourse (DA 1:73).

⁸³ *gāma, dhamma*, ie the way of the householder, vulgar (in the sense of being associated with the masses) (MA 2:206 = DA 1:72).

⁸⁴ “The truth is his bond,” *sacca, sandha*. Comy glosses as *saccena saccam sandahati*, “he joins truth with truth” (MA 1:206 = DA 1:73).

⁸⁵ This verse as in **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30.2.16/3:170).

⁸⁶ This verse as in **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41.9/1:286 f) & **Sevitabbāsevitabba S** (M 114.6/3:49).

(7) Having abandoned idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter. He speaks in season, speaks what is true, what is in accordance with the goal [or, what is beneficial].⁸⁷ He speaks on the Dharma [Teaching]⁸⁸ and the Vinaya [Discipline].⁸⁹ He speaks words worth treasuring, seasonable, backed by reason, measured, connected with the goal.⁹⁰

General

(8) He abstains from damaging seeds and plant life.⁹¹

Novice's precepts 6-10

- (9) He eats only once a day, refraining from the evening meal and from food at improper times.⁹²
 (10) He abstains from dancing, singing, music and from watching shows.⁹³
 (11) He abstains from wearing garlands and from beautifying himself with scents and make-up.⁹⁴
 (12) He abstains from high and luxurious beds and seats.⁹⁵
 (13) He abstains from accepting gold and silver [money].⁹⁶

General

- (14) He abstains from accepting uncooked grain; raw meat;⁹⁷ women and girls; male and female slaves; goats and sheep, fowl and pigs; elephants, cattle, horses, and mares.
 (15) He abstains from accepting fields and lands [property].⁹⁸
 (16) He abstains from running messages [or errands].⁹⁹
 (17) He abstains from buying and selling.
 (18) He abstains from dealing with false scales, false metals,¹⁰⁰ and false measures.¹⁰¹
 (19) He abstains from bribery, deception, and fraud.

⁸⁷ *attha, vādī*. That is, he speaks about what is connected with the spiritual goal here and now, and hereafter (MA 2:208; DA 1:76).

⁸⁸ He speaks on the 9 supramundane things (*nava lok'uttara, dhamma*) (MA 2:208 = DA 1:76), ie the 4 paths, 4 fruitions, Nirvana (Dhs 1094).

⁸⁹ The discipline of restraint (*samvara*) [of the senses] and of letting go (*pahāna*) [of defilements] (MA 2:208 = DA 1:76).

⁹⁰ *attha, samhitam*.

⁹¹ Curiously, this replaces the precept against intoxicants which is omitted. As at D 1:10. On *bīja, gāma, bhūta, -gāma*, see Pāc 11 (V 4:34); see also D 1:5; MA 2:208.

⁹² "Improper times" here means between noon and the following dawn (V 1:83, 4:86); cf S 5:470; A 1:212; Kvu 2.6.

⁹³ A *dukkata* (wrong-doing) offence for monks (V 2:108); a *pācittiya* for nuns (V 4:267). Cf D 1:6, Kvu 2.7.

⁹⁴ Cf Kvu 2.8.

⁹⁵ See Pāc 87; V 1:192, 2:163; D 1:7; A 1:181. Comy says that the "high beds" are those that exceed the prescribed measurements and the "large beds" are those that are not allowable (MA 2:209).

⁹⁶ See Nissagīya 18 (V 3:236 ff); Kvu 2.10. For detailed discussion, see "Money and Monastics" (essay) in SD 4.19-23.

⁹⁷ "Raw meat." See V 3:208 where the nun Uppala.vaṇṇā prepares or roasts meat before offering to the Buddha.

⁹⁸ The Buddha however accepted land from rajahs like Bimbisāra and Pasenadi, and others like Anāthapiṇḍika and Visākhā, which were all received in the name of the Sangha. What is connoted here is accepting land on a personal basis.

⁹⁹ "Running messages." See D 1:8; S 3:239.

¹⁰⁰ "False metals," *kaṃsa, kūṭa*. See Nun's Nis 11, 12 & n at V:H 3:230. Comy however says that *kaṃsa* refers to a bronze bowl with a veneer of golden colour presented as a golden bowl to mislead others. (MA 2:210 = DA 1:79).

¹⁰¹ Comys mention 3 methods: *hadaya, bheda* ("heartbreak"), used in measuring ghee, oil, etc; *sikhā, bheda* ("heap break"), used in measuring sesamum, husked rice, etc; *raju, bheda* ("cord break"), used in measuring fields and sites (MA 2:210 = DA 1:79). *Sikhā* refers to a pyramid-shaped heap of grain on a tray of prescribed measurements.

(20) He abstains from wounding, executing, imprisoning, highway robbery, plunder, and violence.¹⁰²

MENTAL CULTIVATION

Contentment

34 He is content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to maintain his belly, and wherever he goes he sets out only with these¹⁰³ with him.

Here, just as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden, so, too, he is content with robes to protect his body¹⁰⁴ and with almsfood to maintain his belly, and wherever he goes, he takes only these with him.¹⁰⁵

Possessing this [269] aggregate of noble virtue, he experiences within himself a joy that is undefiled.¹⁰⁶

Sense-restraint

35¹⁰⁷ When he sees a form with the eye, **he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.**

So long he dwells unrestrained in that eye-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure¹⁰⁸ might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the eye-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the eye-faculty.

(2) When he hears a sound with the ear, **he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.**

So long he dwells unrestrained in that ear-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

¹⁰² Dīgha Comy says that they kidnap victims by hiding in the snow and by hiding in a thicket (DA 1:80).

¹⁰³ “These,” ie the 8 requisites (*aṭṭha parikkhāra*): a small razor (*khuddaka, vāsi*), needle (*sūci*), water-strainer (*parissāvana*), almsbowl (*patta*) with a shoulder-strap, the triple robe (*ti, cīvara*), belt (*kāya, paṭibandha*) (MA 2:213 = DA 1:297; DA 1:206 = J 1:65; DhA 2:61; J 4:342, 5:254). Explained in detail at DA 1:206 f.

¹⁰⁴ As in **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.66/1:71).

¹⁰⁵ This whole section (Contentment) up to here as in “the mental development” section of **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.66/1:71).

¹⁰⁶ *So iminā ariyena indriya saṁvarena samannāgato ajjhataṁ abyāseka, sukhaṁ paṭisaṁvedeti.* Cf **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.63/1:70).

¹⁰⁷ This whole para: *Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu cakkhunā rūpaṁ disvā na nimitta-g, gāhī hoti nānuvyañjana-g, gāhī. Yatvādhikaraṇaṁ enaṁ cakkhundriyaṁ asaṁvutaṁ viharantaṁ abhijjhā, domanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā anvāssaveyyuṁ, tassa saṁvārāya paṭipajjati, rakkhati cakkhundriyaṁ, cakkhundriye saṁvaram āpajjati.* On *Na nimitta-g, gāhī hoti nānuvyañjana-g, gāhī*, lit “he is not one who grasps at a sign, he is not one who grasps at a detail (feature),” see SD 19.14. Comys say that “**sign**” (*nimitta*) here refers to a grasping arising through one’s sensual lust (*chanda, rāga, vasena*) or on account of merely one’s view (*diṭṭhi, matta, vasena*); “**detail**” (*anuvyañjana*) here refers to finding delight by grasping at another’s limb or body part (eyes, arms, legs, etc) (Nm 2:390; Nc 141, 141; DhsA 400, 402; cf MA 1:75, 4:195; SA 3:4, 394; Nc 1:55; DhA 1:74). On other meanings of *nimitta*, see SD 13 §3.1a.

¹⁰⁸ “Covetousness and displeasure,” *abhijjhā, domanassaṁ*, which Walshe (1995:335 & n632) renders as “hankering and fretting for the world”; alt tr “covetousness and displeasure” or “longing and loathing.” MA says that longing and displeasure signify the first two hindrances—sensual desire and ill will—principal hindrances to be overcome for the practice to succeed. They thus represent the contemplation of mind-objects, which begins with the five hindrances. Cf M 1:274/39.13; see also **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.13) and **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10.36) on how to deal with the hindrances in one’s meditation. The monk effects the abandoning of the hindrances by the contemplations of impermanence, fading away (of lust), cessation (of suffering) and letting go (of defilements), and thus comes to look upon the object with equanimity. On *abhijjhā, domanassa*, there is an interesting related passage from **Pubba or Pubb’eva Sambodha S** (A 3.101): “Bhikshus, before my enlightenment, when I was still a bodhisattva, this thought occurred to me... ‘Whatever physical and mental joy (*sukha, somanassa*) there is in the world, that is the gratification (*assāda*) in the world; that the world is impermanent, suffering and of the nature to change, that is the disadvantages (*ādīnava*) in the world—the removal and abandoning of desire and lust for the world, that is the escape from the world’.” (A 3.101/1:258, pointed out to me by Robert Eddison).

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the ear-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the ear-faculty.

(3) When he smells a smell with the nose, **he grasps neither its sign nor its detail**.

So long he dwells unrestrained in that nose-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the nose-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the nose-faculty.

(4) When he tastes a taste with the tongue, **he grasps neither its sign nor its detail**.

So long he dwells unrestrained in that tongue-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the tongue-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the tongue-faculty.

(5) When he feels a touch with the body, **he grasps neither its sign nor its detail**.

So long he dwells unrestrained in that body-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the body-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the body-faculty.

(6) When he cognizes a mind-object with the mind, **he grasps neither its sign nor its detail**.

So long he dwells unrestrained in that mind-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the mind-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the mind-faculty.¹⁰⁹

Possessing this noble sense-restraint, he experiences within himself a joy that is undefiled.

Mindfulness and clear knowledge¹¹⁰

36 While going forward or back,	he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
while looking forward or back,	he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
while bending or stretching,	he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
while carrying his upper robe, outer robe and bowl,	he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
while eating, drinking, chewing and tasting,	he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
while voiding or peeing,	he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
while walking, while standing, while sitting, while asleep,	
while awake, ¹¹¹ while talking, or while remaining silent,	he is clearly aware of what he is doing.

Overcoming the 5 mental hindrances¹¹²

37 Possessing this aggregate of noble virtue and this aggregate of noble sense-restraint and this noble full awareness,¹¹³ he seeks out a secluded dwelling: a forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle grove, the open air, a heap of straw.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ D 2.64/1:70, 10.2.2/1:207, 33.1.11(10)/3:225; M 27.15/1:180, 33.20/1:223, 38.35/1:269, 51.16/1:346, 53.8/-1:355, 94.18/2:162, 101.33/2:226; S 35.120/4:104, 35.239/4:176; A 3.16/1:113, 4.14/2:16, 4.37/2:39, 4.164/2:152 (×4), 4.198.11/2:210, 5.76.12/3:99 f, 5.140.11/3:163, 10.99.6/5:206, 11.18.23/5:351. For a detailed analysis, see Vism 1.53-69/20-22. For a study, see SD 19.14.

¹¹⁰ *Sati, sampajañña* = *sati*, “mindfulness,” *sampajañña*, “clear knowledge.” In *Satipaṭṭhānas Ss*, however, this section is “clear knowledge” (*sampajañña*); “mindfulness” (*sati*). *Sāmañña, phala S* (D 2.67/1:71) reading: *sati, -sampajāna, kāri*, “he acts with mindfulness and full awareness,” so too below here [36]. As in *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S* (D 22.4/2:293) = *Satipaṭṭhāna S* (M 10.8/1:57) = SD 13 Intro (3.6abc).

¹¹¹ “When asleep, when awake” *sutte jāgarite*. Comy glosses *sutte* as *sayane*, “lying down, sleeping.” See SD 13 Intro (3.6c).

¹¹² As in *Satipaṭṭhāna S* (M 10.36/1:60). See details in *Mahā Assapura S* (M 39.12-18/1:274 f).

¹¹³ As in *Sāmañña, phala S* (D 2.67/1:71).

38 Returning from his almsround, after his meal, he sits down, crosses his legs, holds his body erect, and establishes mindfulness before him.¹¹⁵

(1) Abandoning **covetousness** with regard to the world, he dwells with a mind devoid of covetousness. He cleanses his mind of covetousness.

(2) Abandoning **ill will and anger**, he dwells with a mind devoid of ill will, sympathetic with the welfare of all living beings. He cleanses his mind of ill will and anger.

(3) Abandoning **sloth and torpor**, he dwells with a mind devoid of sloth and torpor, mindful, alert, perceiving light. He cleanses his mind of sloth and torpor.

(4) Abandoning **restlessness and remorse**, he dwells undisturbed, his mind inwardly stilled. He cleanses his mind of restlessness and remorse.

(5) Abandoning **spiritual doubt**, he dwells having crossed over doubt, with no perplexity with regard to wholesome mental states. He cleanses his mind of doubt. [270]

The 4 mental absorptions

39 (1) Having abandoned the five mental hindrances, impurities of the mind that weaken wisdom, quite detached from sensual pleasures, detached from unwholesome mental states, he enters and remains in **the first absorption**, accompanied by applied thought (*vitakka*) and sustained thought (*vicāra*), accompanied by zest (*pīti*) and happiness (*sukha*) born of seclusion.

(2) Furthermore, bhikshus, with the stilling of applied thought and sustained thought, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, he enters and remains in **the second absorption**, free from applied thought and sustained thought, accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration.¹¹⁶

(3) And furthermore, bhikshus, with the fading away of zest, he remains equanimous, mindful and fully aware, and experiences happiness with the body. He enters and remains in **the third absorption**, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’

(4) And furthermore, bhikshus, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of joy and pain—he enters and dwells in **the fourth absorption**, that is neither pleasant nor painful and contains mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.

WISDOM & LIBERATION

Total ending of the round

40 On seeing a form with the eye, he does not lust after it if it is pleasurable. He does not dislike it if it is unpleasurable. He dwells with mindfulness of the body established, with an immeasurable mind,¹¹⁷ and he understands it as it really is the liberation of mind and the liberation by wisdom wherein those evil unwholesome states cease without remainder.

¹¹⁴ “He seeks out... a heap of straw,” see **Mahā Assapura S** on wakefulness (M 39.12/1:274) & **Gaṇaka Moggallāna S** (M 107.8/3:3).

¹¹⁵ Comy. He applies mindfulness towards his meditation subject; or he sets it up in the region of the mouth. As such, it is said in the Vibhaṅga: “This mindfulness is set up, set up well, at the tip of the nose or at the sign of the mouth” (Vbh §537/252). NT: The “sign of the mouth” (*mukha, nimitta*) is the middle region of the upper lip, against which the air strikes when it comes out of the nose.

¹¹⁶ The 2nd absorption is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṅhī, bhāva*) because within it applied thought and sustained thought (thinking and discursion, *vitakka, vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur (S 2:273); cf. S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī, saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. In **Ariya, pariyesanā S** (M 1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie either talk Dharma or meditate).

¹¹⁷ Comy: An immeasurable mind (*appamāṇa, cetaso*) is a supramundane mind, that is to say, he has gained the path (MA 2:311). Cf *aparitto mah’attā appamāṇa, vihārī* (A 1:249).

Having thus abandoned liking and disliking, whatever feeling he feels—whether pleasant or painful or neutral—he delights not in that feeling, does not welcome it, and does not remain holding on to it.¹¹⁸

As he does not do so, delight in feelings does not arise and remain in him.

With the non-arising of this delight, clinging ends [does not arise];

with the ending of clinging, existence ends;

with the ending of existence, birth ends;

with the ending of birth: decay-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain and despair end.

—Such is the ending [non-arising] of this whole mass of suffering.

On hearing a sound with the ear,...

On smelling a smell with the nose,...

On tasting a taste with the tongue,...

On feeling a touch with the body,...

On cognizing a mind-object with the mind, he does not lust after it if it is pleasurable. He does not dislike it if it is unpleasurable. He dwells with mindfulness of the body established, with an immeasurable mind, and he understands it as it really is the liberation of mind and the liberation by wisdom wherein those evil unwholesome states cease without remainder.

Having thus abandoned liking and disliking, whatever feeling he feels—whether pleasant or painful or neutral—he delights not in that feeling, does not welcome it, and does not remain holding on to it.

As he does not do so, delight in feelings does not arise and remain in him.

With the non-arising of this delight, clinging ends [does not arise];

with the ending of clinging, existence ends;

with the ending of existence, birth ends;

with the ending of birth: decay-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain and despair end [do not arise].

—Such is the ending [non-arising] of this whole mass of suffering.

Conclusion

41 Bhikshus, remember this liberation through the destruction of craving given in brief by me. But remember, too, the monk Sāti, [271] the fisherman's son, as one caught in a great net of craving, in the tangle of craving."¹¹⁹

The Blessed One said this. The monks joyfully approved¹²⁰ of the Blessed One's word.

— evaṃ —

¹¹⁸ Bodhi: "This statement reveals that the chain of dependent origination is broken at the link between feeling and craving. Feeling arises necessarily because the body acquired through past craving is subject to the maturation of past kamma. However, if one does not delight in feeling, craving will not have the opportunity to arise and set off reactions of like and dislike that provide further fuel for the round, and thus the round will come to an end." (M:ÑB 1234 n141)

¹¹⁹ "Caught in...the tangle of craving," *taṇhā,saṅghāta,paṭimukka*. Cf M 1:383.

¹²⁰ "Joyfully approved," *attamanā...abhinandun*.

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050224; rev 061214; 070523; 081127; 090414 CT; 091118