

Triratna Dharma Training Course for Mitras Year Two

Module 2: The Nature of Existence 1 – Conditionality *Prepared by Dhīvan and Sāgaraghoṣā*

Introduction

This revised Conditionality Module of the Dharma Training Course for Mitras explores the doctrinal core of the Dharma – in Pāli, paṭicca-samuppāda (pratītya-samutpāda in Sanskrit) or ‘dependent arising’, which we render simply as ‘conditionality’. The module provides an introduction to conditionality as the conceptual foundation of Buddhist thought and practice, though the emphasis is on putting the teaching into practice rather than merely exploring it intellectually.

Primary study material

The study text for this module is the book *This Being, That Becomes: the Buddha’s Teaching on Conditionality*, by Dhivan Thomas Jones (with the collaboration of Sagaraghosa), Windhorse Publications, 2011 (ISBN 978-1899579907):

(<http://tinyurl.com/4o4uykh>).

If you can’t get hold of the book, you can still download the original study material for this module, which is an earlier version of some of the same material:

<http://tinyurl.com/3zb2rpb>

But we encourage you to get the book if at all possible. Having it to hand will really improve your experience of studying this module.

The new book was written very much as a text for the *Dharma Training Course for Mitras*, though it was also written so that it could be read by anyone interested in the Buddha’s teachings, whether or not they are part of the Triratna Buddhist Community. After a substantial Introduction, there are eight chapters:

1. The Principle of Conditionality
2. The Scope of Conditionality
3. The Twelve Links
4. The Spiral Path
5. Karma, Conditionality and Ethics
6. Conditionality and the Middle Way

7. The Nature of Existence
8. Emptiness and Interdependence

These eight chapters naturally suggest an eight-week study course. However, the book as a whole is formed of two parts: Part 1, consisting of the first four chapters, presents the core teachings on conditionality, while Part 2, consisting of the final four chapters, presents some implications of conditionality. This means that a shorter course could be devised made up of Part 1 plus selected chapters from Part 2.

Study of Sangharakshita's teachings

The focus of the module's textbook is the historical Buddha's teaching of paṭicca-samuppāda. In fact, the book presents almost all the relevant material on conditionality that is preserved in the Pāli canon, either in translation or in summary form. Our presentation of the Buddha's teaching of conditionality is based on that of Sangharakshita, whose early insights into paṭicca-samuppāda (which he generally translates as 'conditioned co-production') inform the Triratna Buddhist community's approach to the Dharma. A familiarity with Sangharakshita's own writings and lectures on conditioned co-production is essential for anyone training for ordination into the Triratna Buddhist Order, and is also highly recommended for Mitras studying the Dharma Training Course. Here are the main resources to explore:

The links below will take you to <http://www.freebuddhistaudio.com>, and to the Windhorse Publications, Amazon or Google Books websites.

Recorded lectures by Sangharakshita (with transcripts)

The Psychology of Spiritual Development, 1967:

<http://tinyurl.com/nvu9ct>

Mind – Reactive and Creative, 1967:

<http://tinyurl.com/ny2dzd>

The Meaning of the Dharma, 1968

<http://tinyurl.com/nwvuqo>

A Vision of Human Existence, 1976

<http://tinyurl.com/nsblpq>

The Twenty-Four Nidanas, 1994

<http://tinyurl.com/ox4sdy>

Written materials by Sangharakshita

Buddhism as Philosophy and Religion (transcript):

<http://tinyurl.com/nan338>

A Survey of Buddhism, 9th ed., Windhorse 2001: ch. 1 secs. 11–14:

<http://tinyurl.com/mbjqyn>

The Three Jewels, 4th ed., Windhorse 1998: chs. 10–14:

<http://tinyurl.com/le8yec>

‘*Mind – Reactive and Creative*’ in *Buddha Mind*, Windhorse 2001:

<http://tinyurl.com/kk53vn>

Free transcript: <http://www.freebuddhistaudio.com/texts/read?num=031>

What is the Dharma?, Windhorse 1998: chs. 1, 2 & 7:

<http://tinyurl.com/yuv9d5>

A Guide to the Buddhist Path, 2nd ed., Windhorse 1998: pp.71–95:

<http://tinyurl.com/kqls52>

Other study materials

Some Triratna authors have also written and spoken about paṭicca-samuppāda – the chapter by Subhuti below is especially useful, as it is a faithful summary of Sangharakshita’s approach.

Written materials

Subhuti, *Sangharakshita: A New Voice In The Buddhist Tradition*, Windhorse 1994, ch. 3:

<http://tinyurl.com/mtjrmf>

Kulananda, *The Wheel of Life*, Windhorse 2001:

<http://tinyurl.com/ldrc2r>

Recorded lectures

Various Order Members: ‘*Dharmapala College: Pratitya Samutpada*’ 2006:

<http://tinyurl.com/nrn7mx>

The following book by Joanna Macy is also very much worth exploring, as she brings the Buddha's teaching of paṭicca-samuppāda into a dialogue with some modern scientific ideas:

Joanna Macy, *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory*, State University of New York Press 1991:

<http://tinyurl.com/6jyakw9>

However, although Macy's scholarship is excellent, she probably overstates the degree to which the Buddha's teaching is really one of mutual causality, so you should bear in mind that this book is not entirely un-controversial.

Additional materials for particular weeks

There are also some additional materials that you might want to consult as they work through the course textbook. All this additional study is, however, completely optional, as the textbook is self-contained and comprehensive.

In Chapter 2, in which we discuss 'The Scope of Conditionality', we make use of Sangharakshita's distinction of 'creative' and 'reactive' kinds of mind and mental functioning. This distinction is not a teaching of the Buddha, but a very useful way to interpret what the Buddha meant. In his writings, Sangharakshita also refers to the distinction of two kinds or modes of conditionality, the 'cyclical' and the 'progressive'. However, we have not used this distinction so much, because there are some problems with the scholarship upon which it is based. This scholarship is discussed in a very clear, though complicated, article by Sagaramati in the *Western Buddhist Review*, available online:

Dharmacārī Sāgaramati, *The Strange Case of the Beni Barua and the Therī Dhammadinnā*, 2010:

<http://www.westernbuddhistreview.com/vol5/index.html>

In Chapter 5, on 'Karma, Conditionality and Ethics', we only very briefly discuss the 'five niyamas' in relation to how not everything in experience can be said to happen because of past karma. You might know, however, that in June 2010, Subhuti released a paper entitled *Revering and Relying Upon the Dharma*, which includes a discussion of Sangharakshita's more recent thinking on the topic of the 'five niyamas'; available at:

http://www.sangharakshita.org/_notes/revering_relying_dharma.pdf

We chose not to discuss the 'five niyamas' in the book very much because it is Sangharakshita's adaptation of a later Buddhist classification, and not part of the Buddha's own teaching on paṭicca-samuppāda. However, it may well be of interest to you

if you would like to further explore Sangharakshita's particular presentation of conditionality.

Chapter 8 concerns 'Emptiness and Interdependence', and on this topic there is a very useful question-and-answer section on the topic of 'mutual interpenetration' in Mahāyāna Buddhism in Sangharakshita, *The Drama of Cosmic Enlightenment*, Windhorse: Glasgow 1993, pp.23–6.

Full translations of relevant Pali discourses

We did not have the space in our book to include more than extracts from the many Pāli discourses in which the Buddha is recorded as teaching paṭicca-samuppāda. These discourses are in fact spread throughout the *sutta* and *vinaya piṭakas* (see the next section, below, for more information on these terms). Here we include full and annotated translations of seven important discourses on the theme of conditionality. Extracts from most of these are mentioned or included in the book, but reading the suttas entire allows a more authentic encounter with the Dharma. The seven suttas, all translated by Dhivan, are as follows:

1. The City: Nagara Sutta, *Samyutta Nikāya* 12:65 – the full version of a sutta from which there is an extract in Chapter 1, in which the Buddha connects the contemplation of conditionality to the re-discovery of an ancient path to a once-great city – the city of nirvana.
2. The Great Explanation: the Mahānidāna Sutta, *Dīgha Nikāya* 15 – the fullest single discussion of nine of the twelve nidānas in the discourses, plus a discussion of how people have ideas about the Self. This sutta could be studied in relation to Chapter 3, on 'The Twelve Nidānas'.
3. Sheaves of Reeds: *Samyutta Nikāya* 12:67 – the full version of a sutta from which there is an extract in Chapter 3, in which the third and the fourth nidānas (consciousness and name-and-form) of the usual list of 12 are said to mutually depend on each other, like two sheaves of reeds.
4. Secret Causes: the Upanisā Sutta, *Samyutta Nikāya* 12:23 – this sutta is the only one in the Pāli canon to join the nidānas of the Wheel of Life and the spiral path into a list of 23. An extract from this sutta is given in Chapter 4, on 'The Spiral Path'.
5. What is the Point? *Anguttara Nikāya* 10:1 – another presentation of the stages of the spiral path, also relevant to Chapter 4.
6. Is it Necessary to be Wilfull? *Anguttara Nikāya* 10:2 – another presentation of the same stages, again relevant to Chapter 4.

7. Secret Causes: a second Upanisā Sutta, *Anguttara Nikāya* 10:3 – a final presentation of the same stages, relevant to Chapter 4.

Alternative translations to some of these suttas can be found on <http://www.accesstoinsight.org>, and in the translations listed at the back of the book. Reading different translations can help you get a more rounded sense of the discourses.

The City

(*Samyutta Nikāya* 12:65 PTS ii.104–7)

At Sāvātthi.

‘Monks, before my awakening, when I was still an unawakened bodhisatta, I had this thought: “How this world is fallen! It is born, it ages, it dies, it passes away and it re-arises; and no one knows how to escape from *dukkha*, from ageing and death! When will an escape from *dukkha*, from ageing and death, be discovered?”

‘Then, monks, I had this thought: “When what exists does ageing and death exist? From what as condition is there ageing and death?” From paying wise attention I came to realize through insight that: “When there is birth then ageing and death exist; with birth as condition, there is ageing and death.”

‘Then, monks, I had this thought: “When what exists is there birth? ...is there becoming? ...is there clinging? ...is there craving? ...is there feeling? ...is there contact? ...are there the six sense realms? ...is there name and form? From what as condition is there name and form?” From paying wise attention I came to realize through insight that: “When there is consciousness then name and form exist; with consciousness as condition, there is name and form.”

‘Then, monks, I had this thought: “When what exists does consciousness exist? From what as condition is there consciousness?” From paying wise attention I came to realize through insight that: “When there is name and form then consciousness exists; with name and form as condition, there is consciousness.”

‘Then, monks, I had this thought: “This consciousness turns back at name and form and does not go beyond it. To this extent is one born, and does one age, die, pass away and re-arise, that with name and form as condition there is consciousness... with consciousness as condition there is name and form... with name and form as condition there are the six sense realms... with the six sense realms as condition there is contact, and so on. Thus there is the arising of this whole mass of *dukkha*.”

‘Thinking, “this is arising (*samudayo*)!”, monks, in relation to teachings that had not previously been available, vision, knowledge, insight, wisdom and illumination arose in me.

‘Then, monks, I had this thought: “When what does not exist does ageing and death not exist? From the cessation of what is there cessation of ageing and death?” From paying wise attention I came to realize through insight that: “When there is no birth then ageing and death do not exist; with the cessation of birth, there is cessation of ageing and death.”

‘Then, monks, I had this thought: “When what does not exist is there no birth? ...is there no becoming? ...is there no clinging? ...is there no craving? ...is there no feeling? ...is there no contact? ...are there no six sense realms? ...is there no name and form? From the

cessation of what is there cessation of name and form?” From paying wise attention I came to realize through insight that: “When there is no consciousness then name and form do not exist; from the cessation of consciousness, there is the cessation of name and form.”

‘Then, monks, I had this thought: “I have found this path to awakening, namely that from the cessation of name and form, there is cessation of consciousness... from the cessation of consciousness there is cessation of name and form... from the cessation of name and form there is cessation of the six sense realms... from the cessation of the six sense realms there is cessation of contact, and so on. Thus there is the cessation of this whole mass of dukkha.”

‘Thinking, “this is cessation (*nirodho*)!”’, monks, in relation to teachings that had not previously been available, vision, knowledge, insight, wisdom and illumination arose in me.

‘Monks, it is as if a man walking about in a wooded wilderness should see an old path, an unwinding old road travelled by people of former times: that man would follow it, and following it would see an old city, an ancient capital city inhabited by people of former times, a city having lovely parks, groves and ponds, and with a raised mound around it. ‘Then, monks, that man would tell his king or the prime minister about it, saying, “Your majesty should know that, while walking about in a wooded wilderness, I saw an old path, an unwinding old road travelled by people of former times; I followed it, and following it, I saw an old city, an ancient capital city inhabited by people of former times, a city having lovely parks, groves and ponds, and with a raised mound around it. Sir, please restore it!” Then, monks, the king or prime minister would restore that city, and after some time it might become prosperous and powerful, rich and populous, as successful as it had been before.

‘In the same way, monks, I saw an old path, an unwinding old road travelled by Buddhas of former times. And what, monks, is this old path, this unwinding old road travelled by Buddhas of former times? It is just this noble eightfold path, namely, right view, and so on, up to right concentration. This, monks, is the old path, the unwinding old road travelled by Buddhas of former times. I followed it, and following it, understood ageing and death; I understood the arising of ageing and death; I understood the cessation of ageing and death; and I understood the path leading to the cessation of ageing and death. ‘I followed it, and following it, understood birth... I understood becoming... I understood clinging... I understood craving... I understood feeling... I understood contact... I understood the six sense realms... I understood name and form... I understood consciousness.

‘I followed it, and following it, understood formations; I understood the arising of formations; I understood the cessation of formations; and I understood the path leading to the cessation of formations.

‘Having understood all this, I have told the monks, nuns and lay-followers about it. This spiritual life (*brahmacariya*), monks, has become prosperous and powerful, well known and popular, widespread and well declared among gods and human beings.’

Mahānidāna Sutta

(*Dīgha Nikāya 14 PTS ii.55*)

The Great Explanation¹

Introduction

1. [55]² Thus have I heard. At one time the Blessed One was living among the Kurus, in a Kuru town called Kammāssadhamma. The Venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One and having greeted him sat to one side. Then while sitting to one side Venerable Ānanda said this:

‘It is wonderful, Bhante, it is marvellous, how deep and profound is this dependent arising, though to me it seems quite plain.’

‘Do not say that, Ānanda, do not say that. This dependent arising is deep and profound. It is from not understanding and penetrating this dharma that people have become like a tangle of string covered in mould and matted like grass, unable to escape from saṃsāra with its miseries, disasters and bad destinies.’³

Summary of nine nidāna chain in reverse order

2. ‘Ānanda, if someone were to ask, “do age and death (*jarāmaraṇam*) arise due to a particular condition?”, the reply should be, “yes”. If that person were to ask, “due to what condition is there age and death?”, the reply should be, “from birth as condition is there age and death.”

‘Ānanda, if someone were to ask, “does birth (*jāti*) arise due to a particular condition?”, [56] the reply should be, “yes”. If that person were to ask, “due to what condition is there birth?”, the reply should be, “from existence as condition is there birth.”

‘Ānanda, if someone were to ask, “does existence (*bhava*) arise due to a particular condition?”, the reply should be, “yes”. If that person were to ask, “due to what

¹ This title is suggested by Jurewicz 2000, p.100. *Nidāna*, as well as meaning ‘cause’ or ‘connection’, means ‘source’ or ‘explanation’. It is an old Vedic term used to designate the underlying ontological connection between appearance and reality, the hidden reality behind phenomena. The word *upaṇiṣad* is an equivalent. For the Vedic thinkers, this *nidāna* or *upaṇiṣad* is the *ātman* or Self which is the brahman or truth of things. In the present sutta, the Buddha demonstrates his own ‘great explanation’ of reality: that there is no *ātman* at all but just *paṭicca-samuppāda*, dependent arising.

² Figures in square brackets show the page number in the PTS ed. of the Pali.

³ This opening section also occurs at S 12.60 (ii.92). There, the Buddha goes on to teach Ananda that contemplating gratification in things that can be clung to increases craving, and with craving as condition arises clinging and so on; from contemplating the danger in things that can be clung to, craving ceases, and with the cessation of craving, clinging ceases and so on. Arising is compared to the growth of a tree, ceasing to felling and burning it.

condition is there existence?”, the reply should be, “from grasping as condition is there existence.”

‘Ānanda, if someone were to ask, “does clinging (*upādāna*) arise due to a particular condition?”, the reply should be, “yes”. If that person were to ask, “due to what condition is there grasping?”, the reply should be, ‘from craving as condition is there grasping.’”

‘Ānanda, if someone were to ask, “does craving (*taṇhā*) arise due to a particular condition?”, the reply should be, “yes”. If that person were to ask, “due to what condition is there craving?”, the reply should be, “from feeling as condition is there craving.”

‘Ānanda, if someone were to ask, “does feeling (*vedanā*) arise due to a particular condition?”, the reply should be, “yes”. If that person were to ask, “due to what condition is there feeling?”, the reply should be, “from contact as condition is there feeling.”

‘Ānanda, if someone were to ask, “does contact (*phassa*) arise due to a particular condition?”, the reply should be, “yes”. If that person were to ask, “due to what condition is there contact?”, the reply should be, “from name and form as condition is there contact.”

‘Ānanda, if someone were to ask, “do name and form (*nāmarūpa*) arise due to a particular condition?”, the reply should be, “yes”. If that person were to ask, “due to what condition is there name and form?”, the reply should be, “from consciousness as condition is there name and form.”

‘Ānanda, if someone were to ask, “does consciousness (*viññāna*) arise due to a particular condition?”, the reply should be, “yes”. If that person were to ask, “due to what condition is there consciousness?”, the reply should be, “from name and form as condition is there consciousness.”

Statement of nine nidāna chain in forward order

3. ‘So, Ānanda, from name and form as condition there is consciousness; from consciousness as condition there is name and form; from name and form as condition there is contact; from contact as condition there is feeling; from feeling as condition there is craving; from craving as condition there is clinging; from clinging as condition there is existence; from existence as condition there is birth; from birth as condition there is age and death; from age and death as condition arise grief, [57] sorrow, pain, misery and despair. This is the origin of this whole mass of pain (*dukkha*).

Analysis of nidānas in reverse order: age and death to feeling

4. ‘When I said, “from birth as condition there is age and death,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. From birth as condition there is age and death: if there were no birth, Ānanda, at all, anywhere, of anything – of gods to the god-state, of heavenly beings into a heavenly state, of demons into a demonic state, of ghosts into a ghostly state, of human beings into the human state, of animals into the animal state, of birds into the state of birds, of reptiles into the reptilian state; if, Ānanda, there were no birth of any beings whatever into any state, then, when there is no birth at all, and from the cessation of birth,⁴ would age and death be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause (*hetu*), the source (*nidāna*), the origin (*samudaya*), the condition (*paccaya*) of age and death – namely, birth.

5. ‘When I said, “from existence as condition there is birth,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. From existence as condition there is birth: if there were no existence, Ānanda, at all, anywhere, of anything – existence through desire (*kāma*), existence through form (*rūpa*), or existence without form (*arūpa*) – then, when there is no existence at all, and from the cessation of existence, would birth be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of birth – namely, existence.

6. ‘When I said, “from clinging as condition there is existence,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. From clinging as condition there is existence: if there were no clinging, Ānanda, at all, anywhere, to anything [58] – clinging to desires (*kāma*), clinging to views (*diṭṭhi*), clinging to rites and rituals (*sīlabbata*), or clinging to a teaching about the Self (*attavāda*) – then, when there is no clinging at all, and from the cessation of clinging, would existence be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of existence – namely, clinging.

⁴ The form of words here, *sabbasa jātiyā asati, jāti-nirodhā*, ‘when there is no birth at all, from the cessation of birth,’ uses the form of words of parts of the cessation half of the general formula of conditionality, thus showing how the relation of specific factors is an exemplification of the general formula.

7. ‘When I said, “from craving as condition there is clinging,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. From craving as condition there is clinging: if there were no craving, Ānanda, at all, anywhere, of anything – craving for forms, craving for sounds, craving for smells, craving for tastes, craving for physical contact, craving for thoughts (*dhamma*), – then, when there is no craving at all, and from the cessation of craving, would clinging be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of clinging – namely, craving.’

8. ‘When I said, “from feeling as condition there is craving,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. From feeling as condition there is craving: if there were no feeling, Ānanda, at all, anywhere, of anything – feeling born of eye-contact, feeling born of ear-contact, feeling born of nose-contact, feeling born of tongue-contact, feeling born of body-contact, feeling born of mind-contact – then, when there is no feeling at all, and from the cessation of feeling, would craving be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of craving – namely, feeling.’

Digression: secondary nidāna chain from feeling

9. ‘Moreover, Ānanda, craving is dependent on feeling, seeking (*pariyesanā*) is dependent on craving, gain (*lābha*) is dependent on seeking, decision (*vinicchaya*) is dependent on gain, desire and greed (*chanda-rāga*) are dependent on decision, relishing (*ajjhosānaṃ*) is dependent on desire and greed, grasping (*pariggaha*) is dependent on relishing, selfishness (*macchariyaṃ*) is dependent on grasping, guarding (*ārakkha*) is dependent on selfishness, [59] and because of guarding there are many evil unwholesome things – the taking up of sticks and swords, quarrels (*kalaha*), strife (*viggaha*), disputes (*vivāda*), arguing, slander and lies.⁵
10. ‘When I said, “because of guarding there are many evil unwholesome things – the taking up of sticks and swords, quarrels, strife, disputes, arguing, slander and lies,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. Because of guarding there are many evil unwholesome things – the taking up of sticks and swords, quarrels, strife, disputes, arguing, slander and lies: if there were no guarding, Ānanda, at all, anywhere, of anything, then, when there is no guarding at all, and from the

⁵ This sub-sequence of nidānas is related to the *Kalahavivāda Sutta*, Sn 862–77, where some of the phenomena of social disquiet, which are here part of a digression starting from feeling and craving, are discussed in relation to name and form, contact, feeling and craving.

cessation of guarding, would there be so many evil unwholesome things – would the taking up of sticks and swords, quarrels, strife, disputes, arguing, slander and lies be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of so many evil unwholesome things – of the taking up of sticks and swords, quarrels, strife, disputes, arguing, slander and lies – namely, guarding.

11. When I said, “because of selfishness there is guarding,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. Because of selfishness there is guarding: if there were no selfishness, Ānanda, at all, anywhere, about anything, then, when there is no selfishness at all, and from the cessation of selfishness, would guarding be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of guarding, namely, selfishness.

12. ‘When I said, “because of grasping there is selfishness,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. Because of grasping there is selfishness: if there were no grasping, Ānanda, at all, anywhere, of anything, then, when there is no grasping at all, and from the cessation of grasping, would selfishness be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of selfishness, namely, grasping.

13. ‘When I said, “because of relishing there is grasping,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. Because of relishing there is grasping: [60] if there were no relishing, Ānanda, at all, anywhere, of anything, then, when there is no relishing at all, and from the cessation of relishing, would grasping be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of grasping, namely, relishing.

14. ‘When I said, “because of desire and greed there is relishing,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. Because of desire and greed there is relishing: if there were no desire and greed, Ānanda, at all, anywhere, for anything, then, when there is no desire and greed at all, and from the cessation of desire and greed, would relishing be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of relishing, namely, desire and greed.

15. ‘When I said, “because of decision there is desire and greed,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. Because of decision there is desire and greed: if there were no decision, Ānanda, at all, anywhere, about anything, then, when there is no decision at all, and from the cessation of decision, would desire and greed be discerned?’ [61]

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of desire and greed, namely, decision.

16. ‘When I said, “because of gain there is decision,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. Because of gain there is decision: if there were no gain, Ānanda, at all, anywhere, of anything, then, when there is no gain at all, and from the cessation of gain, would decision be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of decision, namely, gain.

17. ‘When I said, “because of seeking there is gain,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. Because of seeking there is gain: if there were no seeking, Ānanda, at all, anywhere, of anything, then, when there is no seeking at all, and from the cessation of seeking, would gain be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of gain, namely, seeking.

18. ‘When I said, “because of craving there is seeking,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. Because of craving there is seeking: if there were no craving, Ānanda, at all, anywhere, of anything – craving for pleasures (*kāma*), craving for existence (*bhava*), craving for non-existence (*vibhava*) – then, when there is no craving at all, and from the cessation of craving, would seeking be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of seeking, namely, craving. So, Ānanda, these two teachings⁶ though divergent have a common origin (*eka-samosaraṇā*) in feeling. [62]

Analysis of nidānas in reverse order: feeling to consciousness

19. ‘When I said, “from contact as condition there is feeling,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. From contact as condition there is feeling: if there were no contact, Ānanda, at all, anywhere, of anything – eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, mind-contact – then, when there is no contact at all, and from the cessation of contact, would feeling be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of feeling – namely, contact.

20. ‘When I said, “from name and form as condition there is contact,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. From name and form as condition there is contact: when those properties, features, signs and indications do not exist – through which properties, features, signs and indications there is the idea (*paññatti*) of what belongs to the category of name (*nāma-kāya*) – would designation-contact (*adhivacana-samphassa*) with regard to what belongs to the category of material form (*rūpa-kāya*) be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘When those properties, features, signs and indications do not exist – through which properties, features, signs and indications there is the idea of what belongs to the category of material form – would resistance-contact (*paṭigha-samphassa*) with regard to what belongs to the category of name be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘When those properties, features, signs and indications do not exist – through which properties, features, signs and indications there is the idea of name and form – would contact be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

⁶ I take ‘these two teachings’ (*ime dve dhammā*) to refer to the two chains of nidānas just described, both of which include craving (defined differently in each) and both of which hence depend on feeling. The Commentary, however, takes dhammā to refer to two sorts of craving, craving which is a root of the round and obsessional craving (Bodhi 1984, pp.58, 94).

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of contact, namely, name and form.

21. ‘When I said, “from consciousness as condition there is name and form,” [63] Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. From consciousness as condition there is name and form: should consciousness not descend into a mother’s womb, would name and form arise in a mother’s womb?’
‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Should consciousness, Ānanda, once it has descended into the mother’s womb turn aside then would name and form be produced in this state of existence?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Should consciousness, Ānanda, of someone young be cut off, a boy or a girl, then would name and form come to increase, growth and development?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition of name and form, namely, consciousness.

22. ‘When I said, “from name and form as condition there is consciousness,” Ānanda, then it should be understood in this way. From name and form as condition there is consciousness: should consciousness not get hold of a foundation in name and form, would the origination of birth, age, death and pain in the future be discerned?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the case, the source, the origin, the condition of consciousness, namely, name and form. To the extent that one is born, grows old, dies, falls away and re-arises, to that extent there is a path (*patha*) for designation (*adhivacana*), a path for language (*nirutti*), a path for ideas (*paññatti*), a domain for understanding (*paññā*), to that extent the round turns [64] to prompt an understanding of this state of existence, namely, that there is name and form together with consciousness.

Ways in which one has ideas about the Self

23. ‘In what ways, Ānanda, does someone having ideas about the Self (*attā*)⁷ do so? Having the idea that the Self is material (*rūpī*) and limited (*paritta*) one has this idea by thinking “my Self is material and limited”. Having the idea that the Self is

⁷ ‘Self’ is capitalised to denote the implication of permanence in *attā*.

material and infinite (*ananta*) one has this idea by thinking “my Self is material and infinite”. Having the idea that the Self is immaterial and limited one has this idea by thinking “my Self is immaterial and limited”. Having the idea that the Self is immaterial and infinite one has this idea by thinking “my Self is immaterial and infinite”.

24. ‘In the case, Ānanda, of having the idea that the Self is material and limited, one has the idea that the Self is material and limited right now; or one has the idea that the Self is going to be like that (*tathā bhāvin*),⁸ material and limited; or one thinks “despite its not being like that (atatham), I will fetch it into true being (*tathattāya*)”. This being the case, Ānanda, it suffices to say that a theory of the Self as material and limited underlies (*anuseti*) it all.

‘In the case, Ānanda, of having the idea that the Self is material and infinite, one has the idea that the Self is material and infinite right now; or one has the idea that the Self is going to be like that, material and infinite; or one thinks “despite its not being like that, I will fetch it into true being”. This being the case, Ānanda, it suffices to say that a theory of the Self as material and infinite underlies it all.

‘In the case, Ānanda, of having the idea that the Self is immaterial and limited, one has the idea that the Self is immaterial and limited right now; or one has the idea that the Self is going to be like that, immaterial and limited; or one thinks “despite its not being like that, I will fetch it into true being”. This being the case, Ānanda, it suffices to say that a theory of the Self as immaterial and limited underlies it all.

‘In the case, Ānanda, of having the idea that the Self is immaterial and infinite, one has the idea that the Self is immaterial and infinite right now; or one has the idea that the Self is going to be like that, immaterial and limited; or one thinks “despite its not being like that, I will fetch it into true being”. [65] This being the case, Ānanda, it suffices to say that a theory of the Self as immaterial and infinite underlies it all.

‘In these ways, Ānanda, someone having ideas about the Self does so.

Ways in which one does not have ideas about the Self

25. ‘In what ways, Ānanda, does someone not having ideas about the Self not do so? Not having the idea that the Self is material and limited one does not have this idea by thinking “my Self is material and limited”. Not having the idea that the Self is material and infinite one does not have this idea by thinking “my Self is material and infinite”. Not having the idea that the Self is immaterial and limited one does not have this idea by thinking “my Self is immaterial and limited”. Not

⁸ *tathā* is a variant reading for *tattha* in PTS; cf. Holder 2006 p.35.

having the idea that the Self is immaterial and infinite one does not have this idea by thinking “my Self is immaterial and infinite”.

26. ‘In the case, Ānanda, of not having the idea that the Self is material and limited, one does not have the idea that the Self is material and limited right now; nor does one have the idea that the Self is going to be like that, material and limited; nor does one think “despite its not being like that, I will fetch it into true being”. This being the case, Ānanda, it suffices to say that a theory of the Self as material and limited does not underlie it all.

‘In the case, Ānanda, of not having the idea that the Self is material and infinite, one does not have the idea that the Self is material and infinite right now; nor does one have the idea that the Self is going to be like that, material and infinite; nor does one think “despite its not being like that, I will fetch it into true being”. This being the case, Ānanda, it suffices to say that a theory of the Self as material and infinite does not underlie it all.

‘In the case, Ānanda, of not having the idea that the Self is immaterial and limited, one does not have the idea that the Self is immaterial and limited right now; nor does one have the idea that the Self is going to be like that, immaterial and limited; nor does one think “despite its not being like that, I will fetch it into true being”. This being the case, Ānanda, it suffices to say that a theory of the Self as immaterial and limited does not underlie it all.

‘In the case, Ānanda, of not having the idea that the Self is immaterial and infinite, one does not have the idea that the Self is immaterial and infinite right now; nor does one have the idea that the Self is going to be like that, immaterial and limited; nor does one think “despite its not being like that, I will fetch it into true being”. [66] This being the case, Ānanda, it suffices to say that a theory of the Self as immaterial and infinite does not underlie it all.

‘In these ways, Ānanda, someone not having ideas about the Self does not do so.’

Ways in which one considers the Self and feelings

27. ‘In what ways, Ānanda, does someone considering the Self do so? Considering feeling as the Self one considers thus: “my Self is feeling”. Or considering the Self one considers it thus: “surely my Self is not feeling; my Self is without experience of feeling”. Or considering the Self one considers it thus: “surely my Self is not feeling, but neither is my Self without experience of feeling; my Self experiences, my Self is indeed subject to feelings”.
28. ‘In the case, Ānanda, of someone who says “my Self is feeling”, they should be asked: “friend, there are these three kinds of feeling: pleasant feeling, painful

feeling and neither pleasant nor painful feeling. Of these three kinds of feeling, which do you consider to be the Self?”

‘At the moment, Ānanda, that one experiences a pleasant feeling, one is not at that moment experiencing a painful feeling, nor is one experiencing a neither painful nor pleasant feeling; at that moment one is experiencing just a pleasant feeling. At the moment, Ānanda, that one experiences a painful feeling, one is not at that moment experiencing a pleasant feeling, nor is one experiencing a neither painful nor pleasant feeling; at that moment one is experiencing just a painful feeling. At the moment, Ānanda, that one experiences a neither painful nor pleasant feeling, one is not at that moment experiencing a pleasant feeling, nor is one experiencing a painful feeling; at that moment one is experiencing just a neither painful nor pleasant feeling.

29. ‘Pleasant feeling, Ānanda, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to exhaustion, fading and cessation. Painful feeling, Ānanda, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to exhaustion, [67] fading and cessation. Neither painful nor pleasant feeling, Ānanda, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to exhaustion, fading and cessation.

‘For someone experiencing a pleasant feeling, thinking “this is my Self”, from the cessation of just that pleasant feeling they think “my Self has gone!”. Experiencing a painful feeling, thinking “this is my Self”, from the cessation of just that painful feeling they think “my Self has gone!”. Experiencing a neither painful nor pleasant feeling, thinking “this is my Self”, from the cessation of just that neither painful nor pleasant feeling they think “my Self has gone!”.

‘Thus, when once the truth has been seen (*diṭṭhe va dhamme*),⁹ someone who said that “my Self is feeling”, when considering the Self considers it as impermanent, a mixture of pleasure and pain, and subject to arising and passing away. Therefore and on account of this, Ānanda, it is inappropriate to consider “my Self is feeling”.

30. ‘In the case, Ānanda, of the one who said that “surely my Self is not feeling; my Self is without experience of feeling”, he should be asked this: “friend, should there be somewhere in which nothing at all is experienced, would the thought ‘I exist’ arise there?”’

[He might reply]¹⁰ ‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

⁹ *Diṭṭhe va dhamme* is traditionally taken to mean ‘in this world’ and translated as ‘in the here and now’ etc., but Richard Gombrich (personal communication) points out that the literal meaning, ‘once (*eva*) the truth (*dhamma*) has been seen (*diṭṭha*)’, often makes good sense, as here. The locative absolute construction can have a spatial implication but is often used temporally, e.g. in the general formula of *paṭicca-samuppāda*, in which *imasmiṃ sati* means ‘when this exists’.

¹⁰ Walshe 1987, p.565, notes that the Pāli manuscripts appear to ascribe these replies to Ānanda, though they make more sense ascribed to the hypothetical interlocutor. Cf. Holder 2006, p.37.

‘Therefore and on account of this, Ānanda, it is inappropriate to consider “surely my Self is not feeling; my Self is without experience of feeling”.

31. ‘In the case, Ānanda, of the one who said that “surely my Self is not feeling, but neither is my Self without experience of feeling; my Self experiences, my Self is indeed subject to feelings”, he should be asked this: “friend, if all feelings whatever anywhere were to cease without remainder, then when there are no feelings at all, from the cessation of feeling, would the thought ‘I am this’ arise there?”

[He might reply] ‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘Therefore and on account of this, Ānanda, it is inappropriate to consider [68] “surely my Self is not feeling, but neither is my Self without experience of feeling; my Self experiences, my Self is indeed subject to feelings”.

32. ‘When, Ānanda, a monk (*bhikkhu*) does not consider the Self as feeling, does not consider the Self as without experience of feeling, and does not consider that “my Self experiences, my Self is subject to feeling”, then, not considering in this way he does not cling to anything in the world, not clinging he does not thirst (*paritassati*), and not thirsting he personally attains nibbāna, and understands that “birth is finished, the spiritual life (*brahmacariyaṃ*) has been lived, what was to be done has been done, there is nothing beyond this state of being”.¹¹

‘It would be improper, Ānanda, for someone to say of a bhikkhu whose mind has thus been liberated that he holds the view that the Tathāgata exists after death; it would be improper to say that he holds the view that the Tathāgata does not exist after death; it would be improper to say that he holds the view that the Tathāgata both exists and does not exist after death; it would be improper to say that he holds the view that the Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.

‘Why is that? Because, Ānanda, as far as there is designation and a path for designation, as far as there is language and a path of language, as far as there are ideas and a path of ideas, as far as there is understanding and a domain for understanding, as far as there is a round and the round turns, the monk is liberated through realization of all this, and it would be improper to say about a monk

¹¹ There is a relation between this stock passage concerning the liberation process to some of the factors of paṭicca samuppāda. On condition of not considering the Self as *vedanā*, etc. ‘one does not cling (*upādiyati*) to anything in the world’. *Upādiyati*, ‘clings’, is cognate with *upādāna*, ‘clinging’. ‘Not clinging (*anupādi*) one does not thirst (*paritassati*)’. *Paritassati*, ‘thirsts’ or ‘trembles’, is cognate with *taṇhā*, ‘thirst’ or ‘craving’ via the Sanskrit root *ṭṣ*, thirst. ‘Not thirsting one personally attains nibbāna’. The passage could therefore be explained as: from the cessation of [considering Self as] feeling, the cessation of clinging. From the cessation of clinging, the cessation of craving. From the cessation of craving, the attainment of nibbāna. NB the apparent transposition of *upādāna* and *taṇhā* in this version, suggesting that these *nidānas* are co-nascent rather than craving being a support condition for clinging.

liberated by that realization that he holds the view that there is no knowing or seeing.

Seven stations for consciousness

33. ‘There are, Ānanda, seven stations for consciousness and two spheres. What are the seven?’

‘There are, Ānanda, beings who are diverse in body and diverse in perception, such as human beings, some gods and some beings fallen into lower realms. This is the first station for consciousness.

‘There are, Ānanda, beings who are diverse in body but identical in perception, such as gods of the order of Brahma who have been reborn through the first [*jhāna*]. This is the second station for consciousness.

‘There are, Ānanda, beings who are identical in body but diverse in perception, such as the gods of streaming radiance (*ābhassara*). This is the third station for consciousness.

‘There are, Ānanda, beings who are identical in body and identical in perception, such as the gods of refulgent beauty (*subhakiṇṇa*). This is the fourth station for consciousness.

‘There are, Ānanda, beings who, from the complete overcoming of perceptions of material form, from the disappearance of perceptions of resistance (*paṭigha*), and from not paying attention to the diversity of perceptions, aware that space is infinite, have attained the sphere of infinite space. This is the fifth station for consciousness.

‘There are, Ānanda, beings who, completely overcoming the sphere of infinite space, aware that consciousness is infinite, have attained the sphere of the infinity of consciousness. This is the sixth station for consciousness.

‘There are, Ānanda, beings who, completely overcoming the sphere of infinite consciousness, aware that there is nothing, have attained the sphere of nothingness. This is the seventh station for consciousness.

‘Then there is the sphere of beings without perception and secondly the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception.’

34. ‘In the case of this first station of consciousness, in which beings are diverse in body and diverse in perception, such as human beings, some gods and some beings fallen into lower realms – if, Ānanda, one understands it, if one understands its arising, one understands its disappearing, one understands the sweetness in it, one

understands the danger in it, and one understands the escape from it, would it be appropriate for someone to enjoy it?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘In the case of [the other stations of consciousness] ... this sphere of beings without perception ... this sphere of neither perception nor non-perception, if, Ānanda, if one understands it, one understands its arising, one understands its disappearing, one understands the sweetness in it, one understands the danger in it, and one understands the escape from it, would it be appropriate for someone to enjoy it?’

‘Certainly not, Bhante.’

‘When, Ānanda, a monk knowing as they really are these seven stations of consciousness and these two spheres, their arising, disappearing, the sweetness and danger of them and the escape from them, is liberated through non-clinging, then this monk, Ānanda, is called one liberated through wisdom.

Eight liberations

35. ‘There are, Ānanda, these eight liberations. What are the eight?’¹²

‘One who has material form sees forms. This is the first liberation.

‘One who is internally without perception of material form sees forms externally. This is the second liberation.

‘Aware only of beauty one becomes set on it (*subhan t’eva adhimutto hoti*). This is the third liberation.

‘From the complete overcoming of perceptions of material form, from the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, and from not paying attention to the diversity of perceptions, aware that space is infinite, one enters and dwells in the sphere of infinite space. This is the fourth liberation.

‘Completely overcoming the sphere of infinite space, aware that consciousness is infinite, one enters and dwells in the sphere of infinite consciousness. This is the fifth liberation.

¹² Bodhi p.66 notes that the following discussion is slightly elaborated, though not much explained, at D ii 110–1.

‘Completely overcoming the sphere of infinite consciousness, aware that there is nothing, one enters and dwells in the sphere of nothingness. This is the sixth liberation.

‘Completely overcoming the sphere of nothingness, one enters and dwells in the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception. This is the seventh liberation.

‘Completely overcoming the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception one enters and dwells in the cessation of experience and perception. This is the eighth liberation. These, Ānanda, are the eight liberations.

‘When, Ānanda, a monk attains these eight liberations in forward order, when he attains them in reverse order, when he attains them both forwards and in reverse, when he attains and leaves them when, how and as he wishes, from the destruction of the corruptions (*āsavā*), when once the truth has been seen and having realized for himself through direct knowledge he enters and dwells in the uncorrupted liberation of the heart (*citta*) liberated through understanding, then, Ānanda, this he is called a monk liberated in both ways, and there is no liberation in both ways that is beyond or more excellent than this one.’

This is what the Blessed One said. Venerable Ānanda, satisfied, rejoiced in what the Blessed One had said.

Abbreviations

D = *Dīgha Nikāya*

S = *Saṃyutta Nikāya*

Sn = *Sutta Nipāta*

References

Bhikkhu Bodhi (intro. & trans.) 1984. *The Great Discourse On Causation: The Mahānidāna Sutta And Its Commentaries*. Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy.

<http://tinyurl.com/6je7667>

John J. Holder (ed. & trans.) 2006. *Early Buddhist Discourses*. Hackett: Indianapolis.

<http://tinyurl.com/5s353mv>

Joanna Jurewicz 2000. ‘Playing With Fire: The Pratītyasamutpāda From The Perspective Of Vedic Thought’. *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, Vol.26, pp.77–103.

<http://www.palitext.com/palitext/jours.htm>

TW Rhys Davids & J Carpenter (eds.) 1903. *Dīgha Nikāya, Vol.II*. Pali Text Society.

<http://tinyurl.com/3kypyql>

Maurice Walshe (trans.) 1987. *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*. Wisdom: Boston.

<http://tinyurl.com/oxp9tl>

Sheaves of Reeds

(Saṃyutta Nikāya 12:67 PTS ii.112–5)

At one time the Venerable Sāriputta and the Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita were living in Benares, in the deer park at Isipatana. One evening, the Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita rose from his solitary meditation and approached the Venerable Sāriputta. He greeted Venerable Sāriputta, and when they had exchanged friendly and courteous greetings, he sat to one side, and said this:

‘Friend Sāriputto, is ageing-and-death made by oneself, made by another, or is ageing-and-death made by both oneself and another? Or is ageing-and-death perhaps not made by oneself nor by another, but arisen by chance?’

‘Friend Mahākoṭṭhita, ageing-and-death is not made by oneself, nor by another, nor is ageing-and-death made by both oneself and another. But being made neither by oneself nor another, nor is ageing-and-death arisen by chance, for ageing-and-death exists with birth as its condition.’

‘Friend Sāriputto, is birth made by oneself, made by another, or is birth made by both oneself and another? Or is birth perhaps not made by oneself nor by another, but arisen by chance?’

‘Friend Mahākoṭṭhita, birth is not made by oneself, nor by another, nor is birth made by both oneself and another. But being made neither by oneself nor another, nor is birth arisen by chance, for birth exists with existence as its condition.’

‘Friend Sāriputto, is existence made by oneself... is clinging made by oneself... is craving made by oneself... is feeling made by oneself... is contact made by oneself... are the six sense realms made by oneself... is name-and-form made by oneself, made by another, or is name-and-form made by both oneself and another? Or is name-and-form perhaps not made by oneself nor by another, but arisen by chance?’

‘Friend Mahākoṭṭhita, name-and-form is not made by oneself, nor by another, nor is name-and-form made by both oneself and another. But being made neither by oneself nor another, nor is name-and-form arisen by chance, for name-and-form exists with consciousness as its condition.’

‘Friend Sāriputto, is consciousness made by oneself, made by another, or is consciousness made by both oneself and another? Or is consciousness perhaps not made by oneself nor by another, but arisen by chance?’

‘Friend Mahākoṭṭhita, consciousness is not made by oneself, nor by another, nor is consciousness made by both oneself and another. But being made neither by oneself nor another, nor is consciousness arisen by chance, for consciousness exists with name-and-form as its condition.’

‘Now we understand the Venerable Sāriputta’s teachings to be thus: “Friend Koṭṭhita, name-and-form is not made by oneself, nor by another, nor is name-and-form made by both oneself and another. But nor is name-and-form arisen by chance, being made neither by oneself nor another, for name-and-form exists with consciousness as its condition.” However, we also understand the Venerable Sāriputta’s teachings to be thus: “Friend Koṭṭhita, consciousness is not made by oneself, nor by another, nor is consciousness made by both oneself and another. But nor is consciousness arisen by chance, being made neither by oneself nor another, for consciousness exists with name-and-form as its condition.” But how, friend Sāriputta, should these teachings be reconciled (*daṭṭhabba*)?’

‘My friend, I will make you a comparison, because some intelligent people understand better through similes (*upamā*) what the teachings mean. Friend, it is as if two sheaves of reeds were stood leaning upon each other. Likewise, consciousness exists with name-and-form as its condition, and name-and-form exists with consciousness as its condition. With name-and-form as their condition are the six sense realms, with the six sense realms as condition is contact... Thus there is the arising of this whole mass of suffering. If one of these sheaves of reeds were to be pulled away, the other would fall over; if the other were to be pulled away, the first would fall over. Likewise, from the cessation of name-and-form is the cessation of consciousness; from the cessation of consciousness is the cessation of name-and-form; from the cessation of name-and-form is the cessation of the six sense realms; from the cessation of the six sense realms is the cessation of contact... Thus there is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.’

‘Wonderful, friend Sāriputta, marvellous! The Venerable Sāriputta has taught this very well. We rejoice in the Venerable Sāriputta’s teachings for these thirty-six reasons: if a monk teaches the Dhamma for the ceasing of, for dispassion towards, and for disenchantment with ageing-and-death, he is appropriately called “a monk who is teacher of Dhamma”; if a monk has practiced for the ceasing of, for dispassion towards, and for disenchantment with ageing-and-death, he is appropriately called “a monk who has practiced the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma”; if a monk has been liberated through non-clinging through the ceasing of, through dispassion towards, and through disenchantment with ageing-and-death, he is appropriately called “a monk who has attained nirvana in the here and now”.

‘If a monk teaches the Dhamma for the ceasing of, for dispassion towards, and for disenchantment with birth... existence... clinging... craving... feeling... contact... the six sense realms... name-and-form... consciousness... formations... ignorance, he is appropriately called “a monk who is teacher of Dhamma”; if a monk has practiced for the ceasing of, for dispassion towards, and for disenchantment with ignorance, he is appropriately called “a monk who has practiced the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma”; if a monk has been liberated through non-clinging through the ceasing of, through dispassion towards, and through disenchantment with ignorance, he is appropriately called “a monk who has attained nirvana in the here and now”.’

*Upanisā Sutta – Secret Causes*¹³

(Saṃyutta Nikāya, 12:23 PTS ii 29)

Living at Savatthi. Monks, I say that there is destruction of the pollutants (*āsavas*) because of knowledge and vision, not without knowledge and vision. And because of knowledge and vision of what, monks, is there destruction of the pollutants? Because of knowledge and vision like this: ‘such is form, such is the arising of form, such is the disappearing of form; such is feeling¹⁴ ... and so on... such is perception... such are formations... such is consciousness, such is the arising of consciousness, such is the disappearing of consciousness;’ in this way there is the destruction of the pollutants.

Now, this knowledge about destruction (*khaye ñānaṃ*) when there is destruction (*khayasmim*), monks – I say that it has a secret cause (*upanisā*), not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of knowledge about destruction? The answer is ‘liberation’.

I say that liberation (*vimutti*), monks, has a secret cause, not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of liberation? The answer is ‘dispassion’.

I say that dispassion (*virāga*), monks, has a secret cause, not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of dispassion? The answer is ‘disenchantment’.

I say that disenchantment (*nibbidā*), monks, has a secret cause, not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of disenchantment? The answer is ‘knowledge and vision of reality’.

I say that knowledge and vision of reality (*yathābhūtañāṇadassana*), monks, has a secret cause, not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of knowledge and vision of reality? The answer is ‘concentration’.

I say that concentration (*samādhi*), monks, has a secret cause, not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of concentration? The answer is ‘bliss’.

I say that bliss (*sukha*), monks, has a secret cause, not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of bliss? The answer is ‘tranquillity’.

I say that tranquillity (*passadhi*), monks, has a secret cause, not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of tranquillity? The answer is ‘rapture’.

¹³ The commentary glosses *upanisā* as *kāraṇa* ‘cause’ and *paccaya* ‘condition’, and it is usually translated ‘prerequisite’, ‘supporting condition’, etc. However, Aśvaghoṣa uses the Sanskrit *upanisad* in a close parallel to this sutta at *Saundararanda* 13:22-26, and I have followed Linda Covill’s translation of *upanisad* as ‘secret’ here (*Handsome Nanda*, Clay Sanskrit Library 2007, p.247). Translating *upanisā* as ‘secret’ also has the merit of linking to the original meaning of *upanisad* in the Upanisads: ‘hidden connection’ (see Patrick Olivelle, trans., *The Early Upanisads* OUP 1998 p.24). Some vestige of this may have been intended in the Pāli.

¹⁴ The following elisions follow those in the Pāli.

I say that rapture (*pīti*), monks, has a secret cause, not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of rapture? The answer is ‘joy’.

I say that joy (*pamojja*), monks, has a secret cause, not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of joy? The answer is ‘faith’.

I say that faith (*saddhā*), monks, has a secret cause, not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of faith? The answer is ‘pain’.

I say that pain (*dukkha*), monks, has a secret cause, not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of pain? The answer is ‘birth’.

I say that birth (*jāti*), monks, has a secret cause, not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of birth? The answer is ‘existence’.

I say that existence (*bhava*), monks, has a secret cause, not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of existence? The answer is ‘clinging’.

I say that clinging (*upādāna*), monks, has a secret cause, not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of clinging? The answer is ‘craving’.

I say that craving (*taṇhā*), monks, has a secret cause, not that it is without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of craving? The answer is ‘feeling’¹⁵... the answer is ‘contact’... the answer is ‘the six sense realms’... the answer is ‘name-and-form’... the answer is ‘consciousness’... the answer is ‘formations’.

I say that formations (*saṅkhārā*), monks, have a secret cause, not that they are without a secret. And what, monks, is the secret of formations? The answer is ‘ignorance’.

So, monks, ignorance is the secret of formations, formations are the secret of consciousness, consciousness is the secret of name-and-form, name-and-form is the secret of the six sense realms, the six sense realms are the secret of contact, contact is the secret of feeling, feeling is the secret of craving, craving is the secret of clinging, clinging is the secret of existence, existence is the secret of birth, birth is the secret of pain, pain is the secret of faith, faith is the secret of joy, joy is the secret of rapture, rapture is the secret of tranquillity, tranquillity is the secret of bliss, bliss is the secret of concentration, concentration is the secret of knowledge and vision of reality, knowledge and vision of reality is the secret of disenchantment, disenchantment is the secret of dispassion, dispassion is the secret of liberation, and liberation is the secret of knowledge about destruction.

Just as, monks, when it rains huge drops on the tops of mountains, the water pouring down the slopes fills up (*paripūreti*) the branching clefts of mountain gullies; the full up

¹⁵ The following elisions follow those in the Pāli.

branching clefts of mountain gullies fill up ponds; the full up ponds fill up lakes; the full up lakes fill up streams; the full up streams fill up rivers; and the full up rivers fill up the great ocean;¹⁶ likewise, monks, ignorance is the secret of formations, formations are the secret of consciousness, consciousness is the secret of name-and-form, name-and-form is the secret of the six sense realms, the six sense realms are the secret of contact, contact is the secret of feeling, feeling is the secret of craving, craving is the secret of clinging, clinging is the secret of existence, existence is the secret of birth, birth is the secret of pain, pain is the secret of faith, faith is the secret of joy, joy is the secret of rapture, rapture is the secret of tranquillity, tranquillity is the secret of bliss, bliss is the secret of concentration, concentration is the secret of knowledge and vision of reality, knowledge and vision of reality is the secret of disenchantment, disenchantment is the secret of dispassion, dispassion is the secret of liberation, and liberation is the secret of knowledge about destruction.

¹⁶ ‘Fills up’ as a translation of *paripūreti* unfortunately fails to capture the word-play in the Pāli, in which *paripūreti* also means ‘fulfils’ in the sense of ‘brings to perfection’. Hence in A 10:2 PTS v.3–4, in relation to just the same sequence of positive states: ‘Thus, monks, states (*dhammā*) as it were overflow (*abhisandenti*) into states, states as it were fulfil (*paripūrenti*) states, in order to go from here to the beyond (*apārā param gamanāya*).’

What is the Point?

(Anguttara Nikāya 10:1 PTS v.1)

Thus have I heard. Once the Blessed One was living at Savatthi, in the Jeta Grove, in Anathapindika's Park. The Venerable Ananda approached the Blessed One, and having approached and bowed sat to one side. Then, while he sat to one side, Ananda said this to the Blessed One:

“What is the point,¹⁷ Lord, of virtuous conduct (*kusalāni sīlāni*)? What is the benefit¹⁸ of it?”

“Freedom from remorse (*avippaṭisāra*), Ananda, is the point of virtuous conduct. Freedom from remorse is the benefit.”

“But what is the value, Lord, of freedom from remorse? What advantage does it hold?”

“The value of freedom from remorse, Ananda, is joy (*pāmojja*). Joy is the advantage.”

“But what point does joy have, Lord? What is the benefit of that?”

“The point of joy is rapture (*pīti*), Ananda. Rapture is the benefit.”

“But, Lord, is there any meaning in rapture; any reward in it?”

“The meaning and reward of rapture, Ananda, is tranquillity (*passadhi*).”

“But does tranquillity have any purpose and advantage, Lord?”

“Bliss (*sukha*), Ananda, is the purpose and advantage of tranquillity.”

“But what point and benefit, Lord, does bliss possess?”

“Concentration (*samādhi*) is the point, Ananda, of bliss. Concentration is its benefit.”

“But, Lord, what is the purpose of concentration? What is its reward?”

¹⁷ The word *attha* means ‘point’, ‘purpose’, ‘value’ and ‘meaning’, and I have rung the changes in what follows to exploit the various connotations presumably intended by the Buddha.

¹⁸ The word *anisamsa* means ‘benefit’, ‘advantage’ and ‘reward’, and I have similarly employed these alternatives for the sake of a more interesting reading in English.

“The purpose and reward of concentration, Ananda, is knowledge and vision of reality (*yathābhūtañānadassana*).”

“What value does knowledge and vision of reality have, Lord? What is its benefit?”

“Ananda, the value of knowledge and vision of reality is dispassion (*virāga*) and disenchantment (*nibbidā*), and these are its benefits.”

“And, Lord, what is the purpose and benefit of dispassion and disenchantment?”

“Knowledge and vision of liberation (*vimuttiñānadassana*), Ananda, is the purpose and benefit of dispassion and disenchantment.

“So, Ananda, the point and benefit of virtuous conduct is freedom from remorse; the point and benefit of freedom from remorse is joy; the point and benefit of joy is rapture; the point and benefit of rapture is tranquillity; the point and benefit of tranquillity is bliss; the point and benefit of bliss is concentration; the point and benefit of concentration is knowledge and vision of reality; the point and benefit of knowledge and vision of reality is dispassion and disenchantment; the point and benefit of dispassion and disenchantment is knowledge and vision of liberation. So, Ananda, good conduct leads gradually to the very highest state.”

Is it Necessary to be Willful?

(Anguttara Nikāya 10:2 PTS v.2)

“For someone who is ethical, monks, someone established in virtuous conduct, it is not necessary to be willful,¹⁹ wishing ‘may I have freedom from remorse.’ It is natural (*dhammatā*), monks, that for someone who is ethical and who is established in virtuous conduct that freedom from remorse arises.

“For someone who is free from remorse, monks, it is not necessary to be willful, wishing ‘may I feel joy.’ It is natural, monks, that in someone who is free from remorse joy is born.

“For someone who is joyful, monks, it is not necessary to be willful, wishing ‘may I feel rapture.’ It is natural, monks, that for someone who is joyful rapture arises.

“For someone whose mind is rapturous, monks, it is not necessary to be willful, wishing ‘may my body calm down.’ It is natural, monks, that for someone whose mind is rapturous their body calms down.

“For someone whose body has calmed down, monks, it is not necessary to be willful, wishing ‘may I experience bliss.’ It is natural, monks, that for someone whose body has calmed down they experience bliss.

“For someone whose is blissful, monks, it is not necessary to be willful, wishing ‘may my mind become concentrated.’ It is natural, monks, that for someone who is blissful their mind becomes concentrated.

“For someone who is concentrated, monks, it is not necessary to be willful, wishing ‘may I know and see reality.’ It is natural, monks, that for someone who is concentrated they know and see reality.

“For someone who knows and sees reality, monks, it is not necessary to be willful, wishing ‘may I be disenchanted, may I be dispassionate.’ It is natural, monks, that someone knowing and seeing reality is disenchanted and dispassionate.

“For someone who has become disenchanted and dispassionate, monks, it is not necessary to be willful, wishing ‘may I realize the knowing and seeing of liberation.’ It is natural, monks, that someone who has become disenchanted and dispassionate realizes the knowing and seeing of liberation.

“So, monks, disenchantment and dispassion have knowledge and vision of liberation as their meaning and reward; knowledge and vision of reality has disenchantment and dispassion as its meaning and reward; concentration has knowledge and vision of reality

¹⁹ The phrase ‘it is not necessary to be willful’ translates *na cetanāya karaṇīyaṃ*.

as its meaning and reward; bliss has concentration as its meaning and reward; tranquillity has bliss as its meaning and reward; rapture has tranquillity as its meaning and reward; joy has rapture as its meaning and reward; freedom from remorse has joy as its meaning and reward; virtuous conduct has freedom from remorse as its meaning and reward. In this way, monks, states overflow into states, states fulfill states, in order to go from here to the beyond.”

Another Upanisā Sutta – Secret Causes

(Anguttara Nikāya 10:3 PTS v 4–5)

‘Monks, for someone unethical (*dussīla*) and lacking in virtue (*sīlavipanna*), the secret cause of freedom from remorse (*avippaṭisāra*) has been ruined (*hatupanisa*).²⁰ When there is no freedom from remorse, for someone lacking in freedom from remorse, the secret cause of joy (*pamujja*) has been ruined.²¹ When there is no joy, for someone lacking joy, the secret cause of rapture (*pīti*) has been ruined. When there is no rapture, for someone lacking in rapture, the secret cause of tranquillity (*passadhi*) has been ruined. When there is no tranquillity, for someone lacking in tranquillity, the secret cause of bliss (*sukha*) has been ruined. When there is no bliss, for someone lacking in bliss, the secret cause of right concentration (*sammāsamādhī*) has been ruined. When there is no right concentration, for someone lacking in right concentration, the secret cause of knowledge and vision of reality (*yathābhūtañāṇadassana*) has been ruined. When there is no knowledge and vision of reality, for someone lacking in knowledge and vision of reality, the secret cause of disenchantment and dispassion (*nibbidā-virāga*) has been ruined. When there is no disenchantment and dispassion, for someone lacking in disenchantment and dispassion, the secret cause of knowledge and vision of liberation (*vimuttiñāṇadassana*) has been ruined.

‘It’s as if, monks, there was a tree lacking branches and leaves; its bark-crust would never attain full development, and nor would the inner bark, sapwood or heartwood attain full development.²² In the same way, monks, for someone unethical and lacking in virtue, the secret cause of freedom from remorse has been ruined. When there is no freedom from remorse, for someone lacking in freedom from remorse, the secret cause of joy ... etc. ... the secret cause of knowledge and vision of liberation has been ruined.

‘Monks, for someone ethical (*sīlavant*) and established in virtuous conduct (*sīlasampanna*),²³ the secret cause of freedom from remorse is fulfilled (*upanisasampanna*). When there is freedom from remorse, for someone with perfect freedom from remorse, the secret cause of joy is fulfilled. When there is joy, for someone fully joyful, the secret cause of rapture is fulfilled. When there is rapture, for someone completely rapturous, the secret cause of tranquillity is fulfilled. When there is tranquillity, for someone attained to tranquillity, the secret cause of bliss is fulfilled. When there is bliss, for someone perfectly blissful, the secret cause of right concentration is fulfilled. When there is right concentration, for someone established in right concentration, the secret cause of knowledge and vision of reality is fulfilled. When there is knowledge and vision of reality, for someone in whom there is perfect knowledge and

²⁰ There is an allusion here to the general formula of paṭicca-samuppāda: ‘when this does not exist, that does not exist’. The implication is that the succeeding factor does not exist without the preceding factor as its condition.

²¹ ‘Ruined’ translates *hata-* in the compound *hatupanisa*, lit., ‘having a secret cause which is ruined’. *Hata* is the past participle from *√han*, ‘kill’, ‘strike’, and therefore suggests more than mere non-existence.

²² *na pārīpūriṃ gacchati*: lit., ‘it does not go to fullness’.

²³ *sampanna* is a past participle from *saṃ-pra√āp*, ‘completely obtain’, and has a wide range of connotations, from establishment to perfection, which I have marked here by translation with a variety of English expressions.

vision of reality, the secret cause of disenchantment and dispassion is fulfilled. When there is disenchantment and dispassion, for someone established in disenchantment and dispassion, the secret cause of knowledge and vision of liberation is fulfilled.

‘It’s as if, monks, there was a tree flourishing (sampanno) with branches and leaves; its bark-crust will attain to complete development, and its inner bark, sapwood and heartwood will attain to complete development. In the same way, monks, for someone ethical and established in virtuous conduct, the secret cause of freedom from remorse is fulfilled. When there is freedom from remorse, for someone with perfect freedom from remorse, the secret cause of joy ... the secret cause of knowledge and vision of liberation is fulfilled.’²⁴

²⁴ This sutta is repeated nearly verbatim at A 10:4 (v.5), after the following introduction: ‘Then Venerable Sāriputta addressed the monks...’; and at A 10:5 (v.6–7), after the following introduction: ‘Then Venerable Ānanda addressed the monks...’. All three suttas are repeated verbatim at A 11:3–5 (v.313–7), with their differing interlocutors, except that *nibbidā* (‘disenchantment’) and *virāga* (‘dispassion’) are listed separately. Hence the suttas list eleven positive factors rather than ten, and hence these three suttas are in the section of the elevens. You can’t say the *Āṅguttara Nikāya* isn’t logical.

The Arrangement of the Pāli Canon

After the Buddha died, it is said that the early Buddhist sangha of monks and nuns gathered together (at the first communal recitation or ‘council’) to share everything that they remembered that the Blessed One had taught. Some years later there was a second communal recitation in which the monks and nuns again gathered to remember and organise the teachings. Gradually, all this material was sorted into three *piṭakas* or ‘baskets’:

- I. The *Sutta Piṭaka* or basket of discourses, mainly containing records of the doctrinal teachings of the Buddha and his awakened disciples; its five main divisions are:
 - i. *Dīgha Nikāya* or collection of 36 long discourses
 - ii. *Majjhima Nikāya* or collection of 152 middle length discourses
 - iii. *Samyutta Nikāya* or collection of discourses arranged in 56 topics (*saṃyuttas*)
 - iv. *Aṅguttara Nikāya* or collection of discourses arranged numerically (ones, twos, etc. up to elevens)
 - v. *Kuddhaka Nikāya* or miscellaneous collection of various works, short discourses and poetry, like *Dhammapada* and *Sutta-Nipāta*
- II. *The Vinaya Piṭaka* or basket of discipline, mainly concerned with the detailed rules governing the way of life of the *bhikkhus* and *bhikkunis*;
- III. The *Abhidharma Piṭaka* or basket of further teachings, highly schematised lists and formulae concerning *dharmas* or the elements of reality. This collection probably dates from several centuries after the Buddha.

These three baskets are called *tipaṭaka* or in Sanskrit *tripiṭaka*. The tipiṭaka was initially written down in a number of Indian languages, because the Buddha had expressly said that the Dharma should be taught to people in their own language. However, after the demise of Buddhism in India (by the 12th c. CE), only the whole canon written in the Pali language survived.

So now the Pali canon is the only surviving complete collection of the early Buddhist scriptures in the three baskets. It has been preserved by the Theravāda tradition in Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand, and in the 19th and 20th centuries printed in Roman script by the Pali Text Society. For more information, see Sangharakshita, *The Eternal Legacy*, Windhorse 1985, chs. 4 & 5; Andrew Skilton, *A Concise History of Buddhism*, Windhorse 1994, ch.9.

Conclusion

In this Conditionality module of the *Dharma Training Course for Mitras*, your study will focus on the historical Buddha's teaching of *paṭicca-samuppāda*. This teaching is sufficiently comprehensive and difficult that it will be worth spending time absorbing it, reflecting on it and making it your own. It is on the basis of a thorough understanding of the Buddha's teaching that you can go on to study how the later Buddhist tradition developed new ideas about the nature of reality, as they tried to present the Dharma in different ways suitable for new occasions. Some of these new ideas and modes of presentation are the subject of another module of the *Dharma Training Course for Mitras* – Module 2 of Year 3, 'The Nature of Existence 2: In Search of the Middle Way'.

Dhivan and Sagaraghosa, March 2011