

PAṬICCA-SAMUPPĀDA

“Whoever sees the Dhamma, sees me;
whoever sees me, see the Dhamma.”

“Whoever sees *paṭicca-samuppāda*, sees the Dhamma;
whoever sees the Dhamma, sees *paṭicca-samuppāda*.”

1. The Law of Idappaccayatā: The Heart of Paṭicca-Samuppāda

Imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti

When this exists, this naturally exists;

Imassuppādā idaṃ uppajjati

Due to the arising of this, this consequently arises.

Imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti

When this does not exist, this naturally does not exist;

Imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati

Due to the quenching of this, this consequently quenches.

[Maj. Maj. 13/355/371; Saṃ. Nidāna. 16/84/154; and a dozen others.]

2. Hey! What's the Problem?

(some guide questions for introspection)

1. What's the problem? What about it really bugs me, hurts me, or feels most heavy? (Focus on a particular instance or situation in which the “problem” manifested. If we think we have a problem, that's suffering.) Then, simply hold the experience of being troubled, disturbed, upset, etc., whatever the storyline.
2. How do I relate to it emotionally (fear, resentment, anger, boredom, lust, greed, worry, guilt, pride ...)?
3. Who do you think you are in this story (“I am this,” “I am not that”)? Who's got the problem? What are the particular identities, personas, masks, self-images, roles involved in this problem?
4. What is mind/thought stuck on & trying to control? To what idea or memory or experience does it keep coming back? Around what is the sense of being “somebody” congealed? How?
5. What does it want (positively or negatively)? What is its agenda, goal, or motivation? (Look carefully. Sometimes this in the “shadow” and may arising in the opposite direction.)
6. Which experiences & events connected with the “problem” feel unpleasant (uncomfortable, painful), which feel pleasant (nice, convenient, happy), and which are ambivalent or neutral yet grab your attention?
7. Which experiences & events of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, remembering,

imagining, and thinking trigger these cycles? Are there any sense stimuli that regularly trigger your stuff? How?

8. Which assumptions, beliefs, interpretations, and misunderstandings underlie this process and keep it spinning?

These questions are intended to aid introspection and reflection. They may have multiple answers and varying layers of subtlety. They may require time and further observation (not just thinking) to go deeper. They may be investigated repeatedly. Go into specifics and real-life detail. Notice how things interdependently co-originate and proliferate.

The above guide questions are derived from the Buddha's "short form" teaching on paṭicca-samuppāda.

Depending on the eyes (*cakkhu*) and form (*rūpa*), eye-consciousness (*cakkhaviññāṇa*) arises. The meeting together of these three dhammas is contact (*phassa*).

With contact as condition, there is feeling (*vedanā*);
with feeling as condition, there is craving (*taṇhā*);
with craving as condition, there is clinging (*upādāna*);
with clinging as condition, there is becoming (*bhava*);
with becoming as condition, there is birth (*jāti*);
with birth as condition, old age and death (*jarāmaraṇa*), sorrow, grief, pain, lamentation, and despair arise completely.

The dependent co-origination of the entire mass of dukkha happens in just this way.

Depending on the ears (*sota*) and sound, ear-consciousness (*sotaviññāṇa*) arises. ... (and so on) ...

Depending on the nose and odor, nose-consciousness arises. ... (and so on) ...

Depending on the tongue and flavor, tongue-consciousness arises. ... (and so on) ...

Depending on the body (*kāya*) and physical sensation, body-consciousness (*kāyaviññāṇa*) arises. ... (and so on) ...

Depending on the mind (*mano*) and an "idea" (*dhammāramaṇa*), mind-consciousness (*cakkhaviññāṇa*) arises. The meeting together of these three *dhammas* is contact (*phassa*).

With contact as condition, there is feeling (*vedanā*);
with feeling as condition, there is craving (*taṇhā*);
with craving as condition, there is clinging (*upādāna*);
with clinging as condition, there is becoming (*bhava*);
with becoming as condition, there is birth (*jāti*);
with birth as condition, old age and death (*jarāmarāṇa*), sorrow, grief, pain, lamentation, and despair arise completely.

The dependent co-origination of the entire mass of dukkha happens in just this way.

[This passage appears a number of times in the Pali Suttas, for example, Saṃyutta-nikāya, Saḷāyatana-vagga, Saḷāyatana-saṃyutta, Yogakkhemi-vagga, Sutta #10 (18/111/163)¹, when the Buddha spoke these words to himself while alone in the forest.]

3. Searching Out The Modes of Dukkha Before Awakening²

Bhikkhus, before the awakening, while we were as yet unawakened and still a Bodhisatva, this intuition arose. “This world's beings are immersed in difficulties, naturally are born, age, die, move on, and arise again. When the world's beings do not know the *upāya*, the escape beyond dukkha — that is, *jarāmaraṇa* (old age and death) — how will release from *dukkha* (old and death) ever happen?”

Bhikkhus, the question occurred to us that “with the existence of what, does *jarāmaraṇa* exist? Old age and death exist because of what *paccaya* (condition)?”

Bhikkhus, through careful reflection the wise insight arose for us that “Because just this *jāti* (birth) exists, there is *jarāmaraṇa*. Old age and death exist with birth as their condition.”

... “Because just this *bhava* (becoming) exists, there is *jāti*. Birth exists with becoming as its condition.”

... “Because just this *upādāna* (clinging, attachment) exists, there is *bhava*. Becoming exists with clinging as its condition.”

... “Because just this *taṇhā* (craving) exists, there is *upādāna*. Clinging exists with craving as its condition.”

... “Because just this *vedanā* (feeling) exists, there is *taṇhā*. Craving exists with feeling as its condition.”

... “Because just this *phassa* (contact) exists, there is *vedanā*. Feeling exists with sense contact as its condition.”

... “Because just these *saḷāyatanas* (sense media) exist, there is *phassa*. Sense contact exists with the sense media (“connectors”) as its condition.”

... “Because just this *nāmarūpa* (mind-body) exists, there are *saḷāyatanas*. The sense media exist with mind-body as their condition.”

... “Because just this *viññāṇa* (consciousness) exists, there is *nāmarūpa*. Mind-body exists with consciousness as its condition.”

... “Because just these *sankhāra* (power of concocting) exist, there is *viññāṇa*. Consciousness exists with the *sankhāra* as its condition.”

... “Because just this *avijjā* (ignorance) exists, there are *sankhāra*. *Sankhāra* exist with *avijjā* as their condition.” With ignorance as the condition, there are *sankhāra*;

¹ References here & following are given according to the Thai names and style. The numbers in [brackets] refer to the standard Thai Pali edition of the *Tipiṭaka*.

² Translated from *The Lord Buddha's Life from His Own Lips*, p.86.

with the *sankhāra* as the condition, there is consciousness;
with consciousness as the condition, there is mind-body;
with mind-body as the condition, there are the sense media;
with the sense media as the condition, there is contact;
with contact as the condition, there is feeling;
with feeling as the condition, there is craving;
with craving as the condition, there is clinging;
with clinging as the condition, there is becoming;
with becoming as the condition, there is birth;
with birth as the condition, there are old age and death, sorrow, grief, pain, lamentation, and despair.

The dependent co-origination of the entire mass of dukkha happens in just this way.

Bhikkhus, the eye (*cakkhu*) arose, knowledge (*ñāṇa*) arose, understanding (*paññā*) arose, insight (*vijjā*) arose, and light appeared in us regarding something we had never heard before that there is this “dependent co-origination, dependent co-origination.”

Bhikkhus, the question occurred to us, “with the non-existence of what, does *jarāmaraṇa* not exist? Due to the quenching of what, does old age and death quench?”

Bhikkhus, through careful reflection the wise insight arose for us that “Because just this *jāti* does not exist, *jarāmaraṇa* will not exist. Old age and death quench because birth quenches.”

... “Because just this *bhava* does not exist, *jāti* will not exist. Birth quenches because becoming quenches.”

... “Because just this *upādāna* does not exist, *bhava* will not exist. Becoming quenches because clinging quenches.”

... “Because just this *taṇhā* does not exist, *upādāna* will not exist. Clinging quenches because craving quenches.”

... “Because just this *vedanā* does not exist, *taṇhā* will not exist. Craving quenches because feeling quenches.”

... “Because just this *phassa* does not exist, *vedanā* will not exist. Feeling quenches because contact quenches.”

... “Because just these *saḷāyatanas* do not exist, *phassa* will not exist. Contact quenches because the sense media quench.”

... “Because just this *nāmarūpa* does not exist, the *saḷāyatanas* will not exist. The sense connectors quench because mind-body quenches.”

... “Because just this *viññāṇa* does not exist, *nāmarūpa* will not exist. Mind-body quenches because consciousness quenches.”

Bhikkhus, the question occurred to us “with the non-existence of what, does *viññāṇa* not exist? Due to the quenching of what, does consciousness quench?”

Bhikkhus, through careful reflection, the wise insight arose for us that “Because just this *nāmarūpa* does not exist, *viññāṇa* will not exist. Consciousness quenches because mind-body quenches.”

Bhikkhus, the insight occurred to us that “the path to perfect awakening which we have finally reached is the following:

due to the quenching of mind-body, consciousness quenches;
due to the quenching of consciousness, mind-body quenches;
due to the quenching of mind-body, the sense media quench;
due to the quenching of the sense media, contact quenches;
due to the quenching of contact, feeling quenches;
due to the quenching of feeling, craving quenches;
due to the quenching of craving, clinging quenches;
due to the quenching of clinging, becoming quenches;
due to the quenching of becoming, birth quenches;
due to the quenching of birth; old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair quench.

The quenching of the entire mass of dukkha happens in just this way.

Bhikkhus, the eye (*cakkhu*) arose, knowledge (*ñāṇa*) arose, understanding (*paññā*) arose, insight (*viññā*) arose, and light appeared in us regarding something we had never heard before that there is this “remainderless quenching, remainderless quenching (*nirodha*).”

[Dasama-Sutta, Buddha-vagga, Nidāna -saṃyutta, Nidāna-vagga, Saṃyutta-nikāya, 16/11/26; from *Evolution/Liberation* #5. *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, 537-540.]

4. How The Buddha Investigated *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* After the Great Awakening³

At that time, the Blessed Lord Buddha, recently awakened, remained seated at the base of the Bodhi Tree, near the bank of the Nerañjarā River, in the area of Uruvelā. The Blessed One sat in one spot beneath the Bodhi Tree for all of seven days tasting the bliss of liberation.

Then, the Blessed One reflected upon *paṭicca-samuppāda* forwards and backwards throughout the first watch of the night, as follows:

with *avijjā* (ignorance) as condition, there are the *sankhāra*;
with the *sankhāra* as condition, there is *viññāṇa* (consciousness);
with *viññāṇa* as condition, there is *nāmarūpa* (mind-body);
with *nāmarūpa* as condition, there is *saḷāyatana* (sense-media);
with *saḷāyatana* as condition, there is *phassa* (contact);
with *phassa* as condition, there is *vedanā* (feeling);
with *vedanā* as condition, there is *taṇhā* (craving);
with *taṇhā* as condition, there is *upādāna* (clinging);

³ Translated from *Paṭicca-samuppāda from His Own Lips*, p. 5-10.

with *upādāna* as condition, there is *bhava* (existence);

with *bhava* as condition, there is *jāti* (birth);

with *jāti* as condition, old age and death, sorrow, grief, pain, lamentation, and despair arise completely. The dependent co-origination of the entire mass of *dukkha* naturally happens in just this way.

Due to the fading away and remainderless quenching of *avijjā*, the *sankhāra* quench;

due to the quenching of the *sankhāra*, *viññāṇa* quenches;

due to the quenching of *viññāṇa*, mind-body quenches;

due to the quenching of mind-body, the sense-media quench;

due to the quenching of the sense-media, contact quenches;

due to the quenching of contact, feeling quenches;

due to the quenching of feeling, craving quenches;

due to the quenching of craving, clinging quenches;

due to the quenching of clinging, existence quenches;

due to the quenching of existence, birth quenches;

due to the quenching of birth, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are quenched. The quenching of the entire mass of *dukkha* naturally happens in just this way.

Then, as the Blessed One experienced this, he uttered this verse:

“Whenever the dhammas manifest clearly
To the Brahmin striving in focused contemplation,
Then all of this Brahmin's doubts vanish,
For this Brahmin fully comprehends all dhammas and their causes.”

Then, the Blessed One reflected upon *paṭicca-samuppāda* forwards and backwards throughout the middle watch of the night, as follows:

With *avijjā* (ignorance) as condition, there are the *sankhāra*; ... [as above] ...

With *jāti* as condition, old age and death, sorrow, grief, pain, lamentation, and despair arise completely. The dependent co-origination of the entire mass of *dukkha* naturally happens in just this way.

Due to the fading away and remainderless quenching of *avijjā*, the *sankhāra* quench; ... [as above] ...

Due to the quenching of birth, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are quenched. The quenching of the entire mass of *dukkha* naturally happens in just this way.

Then, as the Blessed One experienced this, he uttered this verse:

“Whenever the dhammas manifest clearly
To the Brahmin striving in focused contemplation,
Then all of this Brahmin's doubts vanish,
For this Brahmin has known the ending of all conditions.”

Then, the Blessed One reflected upon *paṭicca-samuppāda* forwards and backwards throughout the final watch of the night, as follows:

With *avijjā* (ignorance) as condition, there are the *sankhāra*; ... [as above] ...

With *jāti* as condition, old age and death, sorrow, grief, pain, lamentation, and despair arise completely. The dependent co-origination of the entire mass of *dukkha* naturally happens in just this way.

Due to the fading away and remainderless quenching of *avijjā*, the *sankhāra* quench; ... [as above] ...

Due to the quenching of birth, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are quenched. The quenching of the entire mass of *dukkha* naturally happens in just this way.

Then, as the Blessed One experienced this, he uttered this verse:

“Whenever the dhammas manifest clearly
To the Brahmin striving in focused contemplation,
Then this Brahmin incinerates Māra and his armies
Just as the sun (vanquishing darkness) keeps the air bright.”

[Vinaya-piṭaka, Mahāvagga; 4/1/1. Appears in other places, such as Khuddaka-nikāya, Udāna, Bodhi-vagga, Bodhi-suttas #1, 2, & 3.]

5. The *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* of *Avijjā*'s Food⁴

Bhikkhus, the original beginning of *avijjā* (ignorance) does not appear. Before this, *avijjā* did not exist; however, *avijjā* came to exist later. Bhikkhus, the following statement is worthy of being spoken and should be said that “*avijjā* naturally appears due to having this as condition (*paccaya*).”

Bhikkhus, we say that even this *avijjā* is a nature with food, that it is without food cannot be. What then is the food of *avijjā*? The answer ought to be that “the five *nivaraṇa* (hindrances)⁵ are the food of *avijjā*.”

Bhikkhus, we say that even these five *nivaraṇa* are natures with food, that they have no food cannot be. What then is the food of the *nivaraṇa*? The answer ought to be “the three *ducarita* (wrong behaviors).”⁶

... “not restraining the senses” ...

... “lack of mindfulness and clear comprehension” ...

... “unsystematic, irrational reflection” (*ayonisomanasikāra*) ...

... “lack of faith” (*asaddhā*) ...

⁴ Translated from *Paṭicca-samuppāda from His Own Lips*, p. 622-6.

⁵ Sensuousness, aversion, sloth & torpor, worry & flurry, and doubt.

⁶ In body, speech, and mind.

... “not having heard the True Dhamma” ...

Bhikkhus, we say that even not hearing the True Dhamma is a nature with food, that it has no food cannot be. What then is the food of not hearing the True Dhamma? The answer ought to be “not associating with *sappurisa* (noble persons).”

Bhikkhus, in just this way, when not associating with *sappurisa* is fulfilled, it causes not hearing the True Dhamma to be fulfilled. When not hearing the True Dhamma is fulfilled, it causes lack of faith to be fulfilled. ... causes unsystematic, irrational reflection to be fulfilled. ... causes lack of mindfulness and clear comprehension to be fulfilled. ... causes non-restraint of the sense to be fulfilled. ... causes the three wrong behaviors to be fulfilled. ... cause the five hindrances to be fulfilled. When the five hindrances are fulfilled, they cause ignorance to be fulfilled.

Bhikkhus, the food of *avijjā* happen in just this way and are fulfilled just like this.

Bhikkhus, this process can be compared to a heavy rain falling upon the mountains. The rain seeks the lower places and naturally fills the crevices, ravines, and streams. Once the crevices, ravines, and streams are filled, they naturally fill the bogs. Once the bogs are filled, they naturally fill the marshes. Once the marshes are filled, they naturally fill the small rivers. Once the small rivers are filled, they naturally fill the large rivers. Once the large rivers are filled, they naturally fill the oceans.

Bhikkhus, in the same way the fulfillment of not associating with *sappurisa* naturally causes not hearing the True Dhamma to be fulfilled. The fulfillment of not hearing the True Dhamma causes lack of faith to be fulfilled. ... causes unsystematic, irrational reflection to be fulfilled. ... causes lack of mindfulness and clear comprehension to be fulfilled. ... causes non-restraint of the sense to be fulfilled. ... causes the three wrong behaviors to be fulfilled. ... cause the five hindrances to be fulfilled. The fulfillment of the five hindrances causes ignorance to be fulfilled.

Bhikkhus, the food of *avijjā* happen in just this way and are fulfilled just like this.

Note: The student should observe that this entire passage has the characteristic of *idappaccayatā*, that is, these are the modes of the *paṭicca-samuppāda* of *avijjā* through which *avijjā* arises before it functions to concoct the primary *paṭicca-samuppāda* process that creates *dukkha*.

[Anguttara-nikāya, Tens, Yamaka-vagga, Āvija-sutta #1; 24/120/61.
Spoken to a group of bhikkhus.]

6. The *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* Beyond *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* (having 23 modes)⁷

Bhikkhus, we speak of the *āsava* (outflows, eruptions from the unconscious) ending for the one who knows (*jānato*) and who sees (*passato*), not for the one who neither knows nor sees.

⁷ Translated from *Paṭicca-samuppāda from His Own Lips*, p. 615-21.

Bhikkhus, the ending of the *āsava* happens in one who knows and who sees in what way?

Bhikkhus, the ending of the *āsava* occurs naturally in one who knows and sees that “*rūpa* is like this, the origin of *rūpa* is like this, and the non-establishment of *rūpa* is just like this”; and that “*vedanā* is like this, the origin of *vedanā* is like this, and the non-establishment of *vedanā* is just like this”; and that “*saññā* is like this, the origin of *saññā* is like this, and the non-establishment of *saññā* is just like this”; and that “*sankhāra* is like this, the origin of *sankhāra* is like this, and the non-establishment of *sankhāra* is just like this”; and that “*viññāṇa* is like this, the origin of *viññāṇa* is like this, and the non-establishment of *viññāṇa* is just like this.” Bhikkhus, the ending of the *āsava* happens in one who knows and sees in just this way.

- 1) Bhikkhus, the ending of the *āsava* occurs, the knowledge that the *āsava* have ended (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*) naturally occurs. Bhikkhus, we speak even of this knowledge as having a basis, it is not without basis.
- 2) Bhikkhus, then what is the basis for the knowledge of the *āsava*'s ending? The answer ought to be that “*vimutti* (liberation) is the basis for the knowledge of the *āsava*'s ending.” Bhikkhus, we speak even of liberation as having a basis, it is not without basis.
- 3) Bhikkhus, then what is the basis for liberation? The answer ought to be that “*virāga* (the fading away of attachment) is the basis for liberation.” Bhikkhus, we speak even of fading away as having a basis, it is not without basis.
- 4) Bhikkhus, then what is the basis for fading away? The answer ought to be that “*nibbidā* (disenchantment with the objects of attachment) is the basis for fading away.” Bhikkhus, we speak even of disenchantment as having a basis, it is not without basis.
- 5) Bhikkhus, then what is the basis for disenchantment? The answer ought to be that “*yathābhūtañāṇadassana* (knowing and seeing according to reality) is the basis for disenchantment.” Bhikkhus, we speak even of knowing and seeing according to reality as having a basis, it is not without basis.
- 6) Bhikkhus, then what is the basis for knowing and seeing according to reality? The answer ought to be that “*samādhi* (concentration, unity of mind) is the basis for knowing and seeing according to reality.” Bhikkhus, we speak even of *samādhi* as having a basis, it is not without basis.
- 7) Bhikkhus, then what is the basis for *samādhi*? The answer ought to be that “*sukha* (happiness) is the basis for *samādhi*.” Bhikkhus, we speak even of happiness as having a basis, it is not without basis.
- 8) Bhikkhus, then what is the basis for happiness? The answer ought to be that “*passaddhi* (tranquillity, physical and mental calm) is the basis for happiness.” Bhikkhus, we speak even of tranquillity as having a basis, it is not without basis.
- 9) Bhikkhus, then what is the basis for tranquillity? The answer ought to be that “*pīti* (contentment, rapture) is the basis for tranquillity.” Bhikkhus, we speak even of contentment as having a basis, it is not without basis.
- 10) Bhikkhus, then what is the basis for contentment? The answer ought to be that “*pāmojja* (delight, inspiration) is the basis for contentment.” Bhikkhus, we speak even of delight as having a basis, it is not without basis.

11) Bhikkhus, then what is the basis for delight? The answer ought to be that “*saddhā* (faith, trust) is the basis for delight.” Bhikkhus, we speak even of faith as having a basis, it is not without basis.

12) Bhikkhus, then what is the basis for faith? The answer ought to be that “*dukkha* (pain, stress, malcontent) is the basis for faith.” Bhikkhus, we speak even of *dukkha* as having a basis, it is not without basis.

13) ... “*jāti* (birth, egoism) is the basis for *dukkha*.” ...

14) ... “*bhava* (existence, identity) is the basis for ego-birth.” ...

15) ... “*upādāna* (attachment, clinging) is the basis for identity.” ...

16) ... “*taṇhā* (craving, blind desire) is the basis for clinging.” ...

17) ... “*vedanā* (feeling) is the basis for craving.” ...

18) ... “*phassa* (contact) is the basis for feeling.” ...

19) ... “*saḷāyatana* (sense media) is the basis for contact.” ...

20) ... “*nāmarūpa* (name-form) is the basis for the sense media.” ...

21) ... “*viññāṇa* (consciousness) is the basis for name-form.” ...

22) ... “the *sankhāra* (concoctings) are the basis for consciousness.” ...

23) Bhikkhus, then what is the basis for the *sankhāra*? The answer ought to be that “*avijjā* (ignorance) is the basis for the concoctings.”

24) [When we count the ending of the *āsava* there are 24 modes or *ākāra*.]

Bhikkhus, for the reasons we have just given, the *sankhāra* are said to have *avijjā* as their basis of dependence;

viññāṇa is said to have the *sankhāra* as its basis of dependence;

nāma-rūpa is said to have *viññāṇa* as its basis of dependence;

saḷāyatana is said to have *nāma-rūpa* as its basis of dependence;

phassa is said to have *saḷāyatana* as its basis of dependence;

vedanā is said to have *phassa* as its basis of dependence;

taṇhā is said to have *vedanā* as its basis of dependence;

upādāna is said to have *taṇhā* as its basis of dependence;

bhava is said to have *upādāna* as its basis of dependence;

jāti is said to have *bhava* as its basis of dependence;

dukkha is said to have *jāti* as its basis of dependence;

saddhā is said to have *dukkha* as its basis of dependence;

pāmojja is said to have *saddhā* as its basis of dependence;

pīti is said to have *pāmojja* as its basis of dependence;

passaddhi is said to have *pīti* as its basis of dependence;

sukha is said to have *passaddhi* as its basis of dependence;

samādhi is said to have *sukha* as its basis of dependence;

yathābhūtañāṇadassana is said to have *samādhī* as its basis of dependence;

nibbidā is said to have *yathābhūtañāṇadassana* as its basis of dependence;

virāga is said to have *nibbidā* as its basis of dependence;

vimutti is said to have *virāga* as its basis of dependence;

and the knowledge of ending is said to have *vimutti* as its basis of dependence.

Bhikkhus, this process can be compared to a heavy rain falling upon the mountains. The rain seeks the lower places and naturally fills the crevices, ravines, and streams. Once the crevices, ravines, and streams are filled, they naturally fill the bogs. Once the bogs are filled, they naturally fill the marshes. Once the marshes are filled, they naturally fill the small rivers. Once the small rivers are filled, they naturally fill the large rivers. Once the large rivers are filled, they naturally fill the oceans.

Bhikkhus, in the same way the *sankhāra* are said to have *avijjā* as their basis of dependence; *viññāṇa* is said to have the *sankhāra* as its basis of dependence; *nāma-rūpa* is said to have *viññāṇa* as its basis of dependence; *saḷāyatana* is said to have *nāma-rūpa* as its basis of dependence; *phassa* is said to have *saḷāyatana* as its basis of dependence; *vedanā* is said to have *phassa* as its basis of dependence; *taṇhā* is said to have *vedanā* as its basis of dependence; *upādāna* is said to have *taṇhā* as its basis of dependence; *bhava* is said to have *upādāna* as its basis of dependence; *jāti* is said to have *bhava* as its basis of dependence; *dukkha* is said to have *jāti* as its basis of dependence; *saddhā* is said to have *dukkha* as its basis of dependence; *pāmojja* is said to have *saddhā* as its basis of dependence; *pīti* is said to have *pāmojja* as its basis of dependence; *passaddhi* is said to have *pīti* as its basis of dependence; *sukha* is said to have *passaddhi* as its basis of dependence; *samādhī* is said to have *sukha* as its basis of dependence; *yathābhūtañāṇadassana* is said to have *samādhī* as its basis of dependence; *nibbidā* is said to have *yathābhūtañāṇadassana* as its basis of dependence; *virāga* is said to have *nibbidā* as its basis of dependence; *vimutti* is said to have *virāga* as its basis of dependence; and the knowledge of ending is said to have *vimutti* as its basis of dependence.

[Saṃyutta-nikāya, Nidāna-saṃyutta, Dasabala-vagga, Sutta #3; 16/35/68.
Spoken to the bhikkhus at Jetavana.]

7. Dhamma Flows Into Dhamma Without Anyone Who Intends (Liberation is a Natural Process)⁸

Truth Seekers,⁹ when morality is perfected there is no need to intend¹⁰ “may a clear conscience arise in me.” Seekers, it is natural that when morality is perfected, a clear conscience arises by itself.

⁸ Translated from *Paṭicca-samuppāda from His Own Lips*, p. 805-7 (Anguttara, Ekadasaka. #2, *Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta*, 24/336/209).

⁹ "Truth Seekers" and "Seekers" are used in place of the original *bhikkhu* (monks, beggars, mendicants) for the sake of inclusiveness.

Seekers, when there is a clear conscience there is no need to intend “may delight (*pāmojja*, gladness, inspiration.) arise in me.” Seekers, it is natural that when there is no bad conscience, delight arises by itself.

Seekers, when there is delight there is no need to intend “may contentment (*pīti*, satisfaction, rapture) arise in me.” Seekers, it is natural that when there is delight, contentment arises by itself.

Seekers, when there is contentment there is no need to intend “may my body relax.” Seekers, it is natural that when there is contentment, the body relaxes by itself (*passaddhi*).

Seekers, when the body is relaxed there is no need to intend “may I feel happy.” Seekers, it is natural that when the body is relaxed, happiness is experienced (*sukha*).

Seekers, when there is happiness there is no need to intend “may my mind be well established in *samādhi*.” Seekers, it is natural that when there is happiness, the mind establishes in *samādhi* by itself.

Seekers, when the mind is well established in *samādhi* there is no need to intend “may I understand and see according to reality.” Seekers, it is natural that when the mind is well established in *samādhi*, it naturally understands and sees according to reality.

Seekers, when understanding and seeing according to reality there is no need to intend “may I be disenchanted (with attachments: *nibbidā*, weariness regarding attachments).”¹¹ Seekers, it is natural that when there is understanding and seeing according to reality, there is disenchantment.

Seekers, when there is disenchantment there is no need to intend “may my attachments fade away (*virāga*).” Seekers, it is natural that when there is understanding and seeing according to reality, attachments fade away.

Seekers, when attachments fade away there is no need to intend “may I realize the knowing and seeing of liberation.” Seekers, it is natural that when attachments fade away, the knowing and seeing of liberation is realized in itself.

Truth Seekers, in this way fading away (*virāga*) has the knowing and seeing of liberation (*vimuttiñāṇadassana*) as its benefit and purpose; disenchantment (*nibbidā*) has fading away as its benefit and purpose; knowing and seeing according to reality (*yathābhūthañāṇadassana*) has disenchantment as its benefit and purpose; concentration (*samādhi*) has knowing and seeing according to reality as its benefit and purpose; happiness (*sukha*) has concentration as its benefit and purpose; tranquillity (*passaddhi*) has concentration as its benefit and purpose; contentment (*pīti*) has tranquillity as its benefit and purpose; delight (*pāmojja*) has contentment as its benefit and purpose; clear conscience (*avippaṭisāra*) has delight as its benefit and purpose; and wholesome morality (*silasampanna*) has delight as its benefit and purpose.

Truth Seekers, in this way dhamma flows into dhamma, dhamma completes dhamma, for the reaching of the shore (that is, *nibbāna*) from what is not shore (that is, *saṃsāra*). So it is.

(Aṅguttara-nikāya, Elevens, Nissaya-vagga, Sutta #2:
translated from Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's Thai rendering)

¹⁰ "Intend" (*cetanā*) has connotations of to hope, wish, and seek.

¹¹ Sometimes erroneously translated as "revulsion" and "disgust."

8. Dhamma Pocket¹²

Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu in this training (Dhamma-Vinaya) naturally studies the Dhamma teachings, namely, *Sutta*, *Geyya*, *Veyyākaraṇa*, *Gāthā*, *Udāna*, *Itivuttaka*, *Jātaka*, *Abbhūtdhamma*, and *Vedalla*, but s/he doesn't waste the whole day in learning that Dhamma, doesn't avoid solitude, and regularly pursues the Dhamma which is a means of inner peace. This sort of bhikkhu is called “*Dhammavīhārī* (Dhamma Dweller).

Bhikkhus, we have spoken of well learned bhikkhus, we have spoken of well instructed bhikkhus, we have spoken of bhikkhus who are expert reciters, we have spoken of intellectual bhikkhus, in this way.

Bhikkhus, any duty that a caring Master would discover for the benefit of and through kindness would do for his disciples, that duty I have done for all of you. There, bhikkhus, are the bases of trees. There, bhikkhus, are empty dwellings. Bhikkhus, you all ought to strive in burning up the defilements; don't be careless. Don't be someone who will end up anxious later. This is our repeated instruction to all of you.

[Ānguttara-nikāya, Fives [22/99/73]]

Suggested Reading

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: a new translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya, Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi, (2000, Wisdom). Especially Book II: The Book on Causation.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: a new translation of the Majjhima Nikāya, Bhikkhu Bodhi, (2000, Wisdom).

Mahānidāna Sutta, tr. Bhikkhu Bodhi (BPS).

Paṭicca-Samuppāda: Practical Dependent Origination, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, tr. Steve Schmidt (originally published in 1986, revised in 1992: reprinted by & available from Suan Mokkh, Chaiya)

Dependent Origination: The Buddhist Law of Conditionality, P. A. Payutto, tr. Bruce Evans (1994, Buddhadhamma Foundation, Bangkok)

Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought, Bhikkhu Nyanananda (1971, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka)

The Magic of the Mind: an Exposition of the Kalakarama Sutta, Bhikkhu Nyanananda (1974, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka)

Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory: The Dharma of Natural Systems, Joanna Macy (1991, SUNY Press, Albany)

The Embodied Mind, Francisco Varela, et al. (1993, MIT Press)

¹² Translated from *Treasure Chest of Dhamma from His Own Lips*, p.348.