

Conditional Origination

from the beginning

PRATĪTYASAMUTPĀDĀDIVIBHAṄGANIRDEŚASŪTRAM
TRANSLATED BY ĀNANDAJOTI BHIKKHU

The Discourse giving the Explanation and Analysis of Conditional Origination from the Beginning

Translated by Ānandajoti Bhikkhu

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The Discourse giving the Explanation and Analysis of Conditional Origination from the Beginning¹

This I heard:

at one time the Fortunate One was dwelling near Śrāvastī,² in Jeta's Wood, at Anāthapiṇḍada's³ monastery, together with a great Community of monks, with twelve-hundred and fifty monks.

There the Fortunate One addressed (the monks, saying):

“I will teach you, monks, about conditional origination from the beginning, and its analysis,

listen to it, apply your minds thoroughly and well, and I will speak. What is conditional origination from the beginning?

¹ This is a translation of Pratītyasamutpādādivibhaṅganirdeśasūtram published in Buddhist Sanskrit Texts No. 17 Mahāyāna-sūtra-saṃgrahaḥ (part 1), edited by P.L. Vaidya (Darbhanga, 1961). With this discourse should be compared and contrasted Vibhaṅgasuttaṃ from Nidānasam'yuttaṃ (SN 12.2), which is similar but takes the factors in reverse order to the one adopted here, and is somewhat less elaborate.

² Pāli: *Sāvasthī*; in the translation I use the Sanskrit form of the words.

³ Pāli: *Anāthapiṇḍika*.

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This being so that is, beginning with the arising of this that arises, thus: With ignorance as condition there are (volitional) processes, with (volitional) processes as condition: consciousness, with consciousness as condition: mind and body, with mind as condition and body: the six sense-spheres, with the six sense spheres as condition: contact, with contact as condition: feeling, with feeling as condition: craving, with craving as condition: attachment, with attachment as condition: continuation, with continuation as condition: birth, with birth as condition: old age, death, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair (all) arise, and so there is an origination of this whole great mass of suffering.

This is called conditional origination from the beginning.

What is its analysis?

‘With ignorance as condition there are (volitional) processes’, what is ignorance?

Not knowing the past, not knowing the future, not knowing the past and the future, not knowing the internal, not knowing the external, not knowing the internal and the external, not knowing what are (volitional) actions, not knowing results, not knowing (volitional) actions and their results, not knowing the Buddha, not knowing the Teaching, not knowing the Community, not knowing suffering, not

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knowing origination, not knowing cessation, not knowing the path, not knowing causes, not knowing the origination of causes in things, (not knowing what is) wholesome and unwholesome, blameworthy and blameless, what should be practiced and what should not be practiced, not knowing the despicable and the excellent, the black and the white, those things that are a part of conditional origination, again (not knowing) the comprehending of the six spheres of contact as they really are, not knowing here and now (things) as they really are, not seeing, not penetrating, darkness, complete delusion, blind ignorance.

This is called ignorance.

What are (volitional) processes?

There are these three (volitional) processes: bodily (volitional) processes, verbal (volitional) processes, mental (volitional) processes.

‘With (volitional) processes as condition: consciousness’, what is consciousness?

There is a group of six consciousnesses: eye-consciousness, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind-consciousness.

‘With consciousness as condition: mind and bodily form’, what is mind?

The four formless constituent groups.

Which four?

The feelings constituent group, the perceptions constituent group, the (volitional) processes constituent group, the consciousness constituent group.

What is bodily form?

Whatever bodily form there is, all of that is (made of) the four great elements. Attachment to the four great elements, this is bodily form.

This simply and in short is what is called mind and bodily form.

‘With mind as condition and body: the six sense-spheres’, what are the six sense-spheres?

The six internal sense-spheres: the internal eye-sense-sphere, the internal ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind-sense-spheres.

‘With the six sense spheres as condition: contact’, what is contact?

There is a group of six contacts: eye-contact, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind-contact.

‘With contact as condition: feeling’, what is feeling?

There are three feelings, pleasant, unpleasant, and neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant.

‘With feeling as condition: craving’, what is craving?

There are three cravings: craving for the sense-realm, craving for the form-realm, and craving for the formless-realm.

‘With craving as condition: attachment’, what is attachment?

There are four attachments: attachment to sense pleasures, attachment to views, attachment to virtue and practice, attachment to self-theories.

‘With attachment as condition: continuation’, what is continuation?

There are three continuations: continuation in the sense-realm, continuation in the form-realm, continuation in the formless-realm.

‘With continuation as condition: birth’, what is birth?

For the various beings in the various classes of beings there is birth, being born, appearing, turning up, manifestation, the acquisition of the constituent parts (of mind and body), the acquisition of the elements, the acquisition of the sense-spheres, the turning up of the constituents (of mind and body), the manifestation of the life faculty.

‘With birth as condition: old age and death’, what is old age?

Whatever baldness, greying hair, wrinkled skin, agedness, bentness, crooked-, warped-, twisted-, aging-, hanging-bodiliness, rheumatic pains in the body, forward bending of the body, propping up on crutches, indisposition, slowness, dwindling away, complete dwindling away, decay of the sense faculties, breaking up of the processes, elderliness, decrepitude.

This is called old age.

What is death?

For the various beings in the various classes of beings, there is a fall, a falling away, an internal dwindling away, a dwindling away of the lifespan, a dwindling away of the vital heat, a cessation of the life-faculty, a throwing off of the constituent parts, a death, a making of time.

This is called death.

This death together with the former old-age, these two together are in short what is called old-age and death.

This is what is called the analysis of conditional origination.

‘I will teach you, monks, about conditional origination from the beginning, and its analysis’, is what was said to you, and this is what was said in reply.

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The Fortunate One said this,

and those monks were uplifted and greatly rejoiced in the Fortunate One's words.

*The Discourse giving the Explanation and Analysis
of Conditional Origination from the Beginning is Complete*

A translation of a Sanskritised Prakrit discourse on conditional origination which gives a somewhat different explanation of the factors involved to the normal Pāḷi exposition.