



The Role of Psychology in the Doctrine of Dependent Origination from Various Schools of Buddhist Thought

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Abstract

The concept of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is so deep and profound that it plays an important teaching in Buddhism. The Buddha himself praised those who could understand the theory of causation through intensive observation of suffering, training of insight, absorption of knowledge and seeing the truth as it is. Apart from the Buddha's presentation of the teaching of Dependent Origination, it was also skillfully ascribed by the Buddha's immediate pupils and subsequent eminent Buddhist scholars, such as Nāgārjūna (2nd Century CE.) and Buddhaghosa (5th Century CE.). The Buddha and his disciples' interpretation of the doctrine of Dependent Origination is appeared in the early *Nikāya* texts of the Pāli traditions. Moreover, the framework for this seminal teaching appeared to the Buddha during the period when he struggled for and later attained enlightenment. The doctrine of Dependent Origination captured the Buddha's vision, knowledge and highest wisdom. It provides the conceptual framework for Buddhist psychology which describes the origin and cessation of suffering and how to wisely reflect on the mind (*yoniso manasikāra*). The aim of this research paper is to ascribe the role of psychology in the doctrine of Dependent Origination from various schools of Buddhist thought.

Keywords: Dependent Origination, Twelfefold Links, Nāgārjūna.

Introduction

The doctrine of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is one of the most profound, yet subtle, teachings of the Buddha. It explicitly ascribes the law of nature and the root of suffering and uplifts Buddhism as a very unique and dynamic teaching compared to other religions and philosophies. On one occasion, the Buddha acknowledged a noble disciple who had clearly seen reality with correct wisdom, i.e., Dependent Origination¹. The Buddha also stated that Dependent Origination appeared to him as the astonishing, eye-opening discovery that brought about vision, knowledge, wisdom, understanding and light during the period while the Blessed One struggled for enlightenment². The concept of Dependent Origination is so deep and profound that it plays an important teaching in Buddhism. It is an auspicious doctrine used for instructing an individual (*puggala*) to transcend beyond Samsaric suffering (*dukkha*). Hence, discourses on Dependent Origination have repeatedly appeared in almost every Pāli Canonical (*Nikāya*) text. For clarifying the importance of dependent origination and its strong linkage for absorbing the essence of ‘*Dhamma*’, the Buddha expounds: “One who sees dependent origination sees the *Dhamma*; one who sees the *Dhamma* sees dependent origination.”³ Additionally, the role of Dependent Origination is an essential and integral element of the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri ariya saccāni*). However, the cycle of Dependent Origination is precisely drawn out in a clear process of life from birth to death. It is a complete patterning with twelve constituents, and reflects an awareness of causes and conditions that demonstrate a mutual interaction within each link. The aim of Dependent Origination is an attempt to cease the entire mass of suffering and stress (*dukkhanirodha*)⁴.

Aspects of Dependent Origination in Various Schools of Thought

The doctrine of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) was presented by the Buddha to indicate the origin and cessation of the suffering (*dukkha*). The Pāli word ‘*paṭiccasamuppāda*’ is derived from a combination of two words - ‘*paṭicca*’ and ‘*samuppāda*’.

¹Paccaya Sutta, S. 12.20.

²Nagara Sutta, S. 12.65.

³Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta, M. 28.

⁴“Dutiyabodhi Sutta, Ud. 1.2.

The first word ‘*paṭicca*’ means ‘because of’ or ‘on account of’⁵, whereas the second word ‘*samuppāda*’ means ‘arising on the ground of’, or ‘happening by way of cause’⁶. Again, ‘*samuppāda*’ can be divided into two words – ‘*saṃ*’ and ‘*uppāda*’ (*saṃ + uppāda*) where ‘*uppāda*’ means ‘origin’, ‘arising’ or ‘coming to be’⁷. Furthermore, Eminent Venerable Buddhaghosa defines the term of ‘*paṭiccasamuppāda*’ in his monumental text *The Path of Purification (Visudhimagga)* as thus: ‘having dependent (*paṭicca*) a right (*sammā*) arising (*uppāda*)’⁸. Literally, the Pāli term ‘*Paṭiccasamuppāda*’ can be translated into English as ‘Dependent Origination’, or ‘Dependent Arising’.

However, it is undoubtedly well accepted that the doctrine of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is one of the core teachings of Buddhism. Prolific Buddhist scholar Bhikkhu Bodhi states the teaching of Dependent Origination is the radical insight at the heart of the Buddha’s teaching from which everything else unfolds⁹. Professor David J. Kalupahana mentions as the ‘central philosophy of Buddhism’¹⁰. The doctrine of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) has profound and in-depth meaning, in addition to its significance status paving the way to realize *Dhamma*. It is well acknowledged that Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is very difficult to comprehend. Therefore, the Buddha mentioned that Dependent Origination is subtle, profound and deep in implication (*paṭiccasamuppādo gambhīrāvabhaso*)¹¹ and very difficult to see (*sududdasa*)¹². Hence, prolific Buddhist scholar Nyanatiloka states the teaching of Dependent Origination of ‘all phenomena of existence’ and has given rise to greater misunderstandings, more contradictory,

⁵A. P. Buddhadatta Mahāthera, **Concise Pali-English Dictionary** (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers Private Limited, 1994), p.156.

⁶T.W. Rhys Davids, and William Stede, **Pali-English Dictionary** (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers Private Limited, 2007), p.688.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Paññā-bhūmi-niddesa, Vism. Ch. XVII; Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa. **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**. Trans. by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli. (Penang: The Penang Buddhist Association, 1999), p.594.

⁹Interview with Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi, an eminent Buddhist translator from USA, at the University of Hamburg, Germany on June 22-25, 2018.

¹⁰David J. Kalupahana, **Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism** (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1975).

¹¹‘D. II 55; S. II 92.

¹²Vin 14.

more absurd speculations and interpretations¹³. Apart from the Buddha's presentation of the teaching of Dependent Origination, it was also skillfully ascribed by the Buddha's immediate pupils and subsequent eminent Buddhist scholars, such as Nāgārjūna (2nd Century CE.) and Buddhaghosa (5th Century CE.). The Buddha and his disciples' interpretation of the doctrine of Dependent Origination is appeared in the early *Nikāya* texts of the Pāli traditions.

Notion of Dependent Origination in Early Buddhism

The notion of 'Early Buddhism' is referred to the pre-sectarian Buddhist era (until the first documented split in the *Saṅgha*), which was existed from the Buddha's time to one hundred years after the passing away (*mahāparinibbāṇa*) of the Buddha. *Nikāya* texts are defined as the scriptures of 'Early Buddhism'. Texts from Sutta Piṭaka, Vinaya Piṭaka and Abhidhamma Piṭaka are considered as the scriptures of early Buddhism. According to Pāli Nikāya tradition, the doctrine of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) are mostly presented into twofold classifications, namely: (i) the abstract formula and (ii) the twelvefold linked formula through two sequences,

Firstly, the abstract formula of the doctrine of Dependent Origination is appeared from the exposition of 'cause and effect' matter. According to the *Nidāna-Saṃyutta* from the Saṃyutta-Nikāya, abstract formula of Dependent Origination refers to the law of causation that has arisen depending upon causes (*hetu*) and conditions (*paccaya*), additionally known as the law of conditionality (*idappaccayatā*). According to the to the *Nidāna-Saṃyutta* from the Saṃyutta-Nikāya and the Bahudhātuka Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya, a conversation between the Buddha and his attendant Venerable Ānanda can be found where the Blessed One introduces the law of causation (abstract formula of cause and effects) with delineating both forwarding and reversing order as follows: "When this exists, that comes to be; with this arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases."¹⁴

Secondly, the Buddha explained the doctrine of Dependent Origination by listing of twelvefold links, which is also known as discourse or *dessanā* formula. At the beginning

¹³Nyanatiloka, **Guide through the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka: Being a Synopsis of the Philosophical Collection Belonging to the Buddhist Pāli Canon; Followed by an Essay on the Paṭicca-Samuppāda**, 4th ed. (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1983) p.155

¹⁴Bahudhātuka Sutta: M. 115; Trans. by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, **Majjhima Nikāya: The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha** (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995) 927.

of the *Nidāna-Saṃyutta* from *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, the Buddha advocates monks (*bhikkhu-s*) that he will teach Dependent Origination (*paṭicca-samuppādaṃ-desessāmmi*)¹⁵. Twelfefold links formula of Dependent Origination are presented as follows: (i) ignorance (*avijjā*), (ii) mental formations or fabrication (*saṅkhāra*), (iii) consciousness (*viññāṇa*), (iv) mentality and materiality (*nāmarūpa*), (v) sixfold sense bases (*saḷāyatana*), (vi) contact (*phassa*), (vii) feeling (*vedanā*), (viii) craving (*taṇhā*), (ix) clinging (*upādāna*), (x) becoming (*bhāva*), (xi) birth (*jāti*), and (xii) aging and death (*jarāmaraṇa*)¹⁶. The abovementioned twelfefold formulas are ascribed into two sequences: forwarding (*anuloma*) and reversing order (*paṭiloma*).

Concept of Dependent Origination in Madhyamaka

After the Buddha's passed away (*mahāparinibbāna*), Buddhism was spitted into eighteen sects, which are compiled into four main schools namely, Sarvāstivāda, Sautrāntika, Vijñānavāda and Madhyamaka or Śūnyatāvāda. The Madhyamaka (The School of Middle-way) as a systematic philosophical tenet among the four great Buddhist Schools, arose in the second century C.E. with the figure of the great saint Ācārya Nāgārjuna. Despite Madhyamaka School has had a continuous history of its development, it was established by means of subtle doctrinal exposition of emptiness (skt. *śūnyatā*) that was marvelously presented by Ācārya Nāgārjuna. However, Nāgārjuna presented the Dependent Origination (Pāli: *paṭiccasamuppāda*; Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*) is emptiness (*śūnyatā*). He says in his epic monumental text *Mūlamadhyamakārikā* 'The Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way' in Sanskrit stanza as thus: "*pratītya yad yad bhavati, tat tac Śūnyatā svabhāvataḥ*", which means "whatever is subject to conditionality (dependent origination), is by its very nature tranquil and empty"¹⁷. Nāgārjuna's analogy of twelve constituents of Dependent Origination into threefold categories- affliction (*kleśa*), action (*karma*) and suffering (*dukkha*), in demonstrating with cause (*hetu*) and effect (*paccaya*) as follows:¹⁸

¹⁵Nidānasamyyutta, S. 12.2.

¹⁶Ibid

¹⁷Svabhāva Parīkṣā, MMK 15.9

¹⁸Dvādasāṅga Parīkṣā, MMK 26.1-26.12.

1. Ignorance	→ Affliction (<i>kleśa</i>)	→ Cause (<i>hetu</i>)
2. Volition	→ Action (<i>karma</i>)	→ Cause
3. Consciousness	→ Suffering (<i>duḥkha</i>)	→ Effect (<i>paccaya</i>)
4. Name and Form	→ Suffering	→ Effect
5. Six Sense Doors	→ Suffering	→ Effect
6. Contact	→ Suffering	→ Effect
7. Sensation	→ Suffering	→ Effect
8. Craving	→ Affliction	→ Cause
9. Clinging	→ Affliction	→ Cause
10. Becoming	→ Action	→ Cause
11. Birth	→ Suffering	→ Effect
12. Old Age and Death	→ Suffering	→ Effect

According to the abovementioned chart,

- (i) The first category of affliction (*kleśa*) includes three constituents: (1) ignorance (*avidyā*), (8) craving (*trsnā*) and (9) clinging (*upādāna*).
- (ii) The second category of action (*karma*) includes two constituents: (2) volition or mental formation (*samskāra*) and (10) becoming (*bhāva*).
- (iii) The third category of suffering (*duḥkha*) includes the remaining seven constituents.

These constituents, moreover, could be classified into two groups: causal (*hetu*) and resultant (*Paccaya*). In the commentarial text *Pratītyasamutpāda-hṛdaya-kārikā*, Nāgārjuna ascribes these twelfold constituent are empty (*śūnya*); his analogy of emptiness for twelfold formula of Dependent origination with regards to the aforesaid chart (of twelve links) as thus:

- (i) From the three, two originates; from the two, seven originate; and from these seven, in turn, the three originate. Thus the wheel of existence revolves again and again.

- (ii) The whole world is cause and effect; excluding this, there is no sentient being. From the factors (which are) only empty, empty factors originate¹⁹.

The aforesaid examination on the relationship between the doctrine of Dependent Origination and the doctrine of emptiness clearly reveals a note that those (the wise) who understands the essence of Dependent Origination, he (the enlightened one) obviously have seen the meaning of conditioned origination that is empty (*śūnya*). Hence, Nāgārjuna advocates in the dedicatory verse of the Mūlamadhyamakārikā:

“there is non-extinction (*anirōdham*), non-origination (*anutpādam*), non-destruction (*anucchedam*), non-permanence (*aśāśvatam*), non-identity (*anekārtham*), non-differentiation (*anānārtham*), non-coming into being (*anāgamam*) and non-going out of being (*anirgamam*); withdrawal of all mental-fabrication (*prapañcopaśamaṃ*) of dependent origination. I (Nāgārjuna) offer my humble obeisance to the Buddha as the teacher of Dependent Origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*)”.²⁰

Based on the above discussion on the doctrine of Dependent Origination in Madhyamaka School, Nāgārjuna strongly implies that the connection between the doctrine of dependent origination and emptiness could be revealed as real by means of ultimate standpoint that means those who sees the ultimate truth²¹ and confirms to obtain at the stage of freedom (*nirvāṇa*).

¹⁹Peter Della Santina, **Causality and Emptiness: The Wisdom of Nāgārjuna** (Singapore: Buddhist Research Society, Singapore, 2002) pp.60-61.

²⁰Dedicatory Verse, MMK.

²¹Nāgārjuna logically concludes his *śūnyatā* (emptiness) doctrine that things are based on two truths similar to the Buddha’s interpretation. The Blessed One’s teaching rests on two truths, namely, conventional truth (*samvṛti satya*), and truth in the highest sense (*paramārtha satya*). One who does not comprehend the distinction between these two truths does not comprehend the profound meaning of the Buddha’s teaching.

Dependent Origination and its Practicability

The doctrine of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is appeared from various aspects in *Nikāya* tradition with providing its details and comprehensive explanation. According to eminent Buddhist scholar Professor Kapila Abhyawansa²², the doctrine of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is described in two aspects, which are, (i) Theoretical aspects and (ii) Practical aspects.

Theoretical Aspects

The theoretical aspects of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) refers to the principle of causation that has arisen depending upon causes (*hetu*) and conditions (*paccaya*). Soon after the Buddha's enlightenment, theoretical aspects of dependent origination became the quintessence teaching which appeared between the conversation of Upatissa Brahmin and Arahat Assaji Thera. In conversation, Assaji Thera stated to Upatissa Brahmin his understanding of dependent origination as thus:

“The Tathāgata has declared the cause and also the cessation of all phenomena which arise from a cause. This is the doctrine held by the Great Samaṇa (the Buddha).”²³

This enlightened verse from Assaji Thera reveals the methodology of understanding the Buddha's teaching, that is, pinpointing the causes or reasons by which one could pursue the path to liberation. Moreover, Upatissa Brahmin obtained the first sainthood (*soṭāpanna*) upon hearing the same verse. The Buddha further illustrated dependent origination to his attendant Venerable Ānanda by introducing the formula of cause and effects as follows:

“When this exists, that comes to be; with this arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases.”²⁴

²²Interview with Professor Kapila Abhyawansa, Vice-Rector of International Buddhist College, Thailand; December 10-16, 2017.

²³Dhp. 392 ; Trans. by K. Sri Dhammananda, **The Dhammapada** (Kualumpur: Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society, 1992), p.629.

²⁴Bahudhātuka Sutta: M. 115; Trans. by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, **Majjhima Nikāya: The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha** (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), p.927.

The aforementioned formula can be divided into two parts- ascending (*anuloma*) and descending (*patiloma*). The first section of this formula: “when this exists, that comes to be; with this arising of this, that arises” refers to the arising of the phenomena, whereas the second section: “when this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases” refers to the cessation of phenomena. The theoretical formula of dependent origination clearly depicts the law of causation, i.e. the relation between cause and effect, which rationally and constructively explains that whatsoever is arisen, it must have a cause and cause leads to a consequence as a result. When seeking the cause of present actions (*Kamma*), one can understand the origination of suffering (*dukkha samudaya*). When penetrating the reason of suffering, one can discontinue producing new action (*Kamma*) which leads to the cessation of suffering (*dukkha nirodha*). In fact, the theory of cause and effect, in relation to dependent origination helps the practitioner to understand the taproot of suffering.

Practical Aspects

Practical aspects of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) refers to the process of a being's (*puggala*) birth to death, continuing from one lifetime to another, and expresses a clear structure of rotated existence (*samsāra*) within a twelvefold formula. Regarding the survey of Pali Nikāya texts, there are a number of variations on the list of twelvefold links, just as some links are excluded and some are changed in order. Common twelvefold constituents, however, appeared in almost all related discourses of dependent origination. Rupert Gethin noted that the twelvefold formula became standard early in the development of Buddhist thought²⁵. Practical and psychological explanation of twelvefold formula of Dependent Origination is expounding in below.

- (i) The Buddha states ignorance (*avijjā*) as the very first constituent of dependent origination; it defines lack of knowing the Four Noble Truths, namely - suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the way to its cessation²⁶. Paul Williams illustrates ignorance as a positive misconception and not the mere absence of knowledge²⁷. In Buddhism, ignorance also refers to the foundation of all evil-actions and taproot of all sufferings, therefore, it stands first in the formula of dependent origination.

²⁵Rupert Gethin, **The Foundations of Buddhism** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.149.

²⁶SN. 12.2.

²⁷Gethin, op.cit., p.150.

- (ii) The second constituent of dependent origination is volitional formation (*saṅkhāra*) which defines essential conditions or mental coefficients. The Buddha acknowledges three kinds of volitional formations- the bodily volitional formation (*kāyasaṅkhāro*), the verbal volitional formation (*vacīsaṅkhāro*) and the mental volitional formation (*cittasaṅkhāro*)²⁸.
- (iii) The third link of dependent origination is consciousness (*viññāṇa*) which defines the mental quality²⁹. The Blessed One classified consciousness into six-fold classes - eye-consciousness (*cakkhu viññāṇa*), ear-consciousness (*sota viññāṇa*), nose-consciousness (*ghāṇa viññāṇa*), tongue-consciousness (*jivhā viññāṇa*), body-consciousness (*kaya viññāṇa*) and mind-consciousness (*mano viññāṇa*)³⁰. Buddhist teaching of consciousness offers the basis for comprehensive understanding of mental states, whether normal or abnormal, and Bhikkhu Bodhi states the appearance of consciousness as thus: “Consciousness appears as an enduring subject due to lack of attention. When it is mindfully examined the appearance of lastingness is dissolved by the perception of its impermanence.”³¹

Additionally, Buddhist scripture clarifies that consciousness and wisdom are inseparable and precisely states that wisdom cannot flourish alone without awareness of consciousness (*viññāṇa*)³².

- (iv) Mentality and materiality (*nāma-rūpa*) is the fourth link of the chain of causation, where it is conditioned by consciousness (*viññāṇa*). In the discourse of dependent origination, the Buddha precisely described mentality (*nāma*) as it correlates to feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), volition (*cetanā*), contact (*phassa*) and attention (*manasikāro*), while form (*rūpa*) derives from the four great elements (*mahābhūtānaṃ upādāyarūpaṃ*)³³. By contrast, according to the *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, Venerable Buddhaghosa

²⁸S. 12.2.

²⁹ Davids & Stede, Op.cit., pp.618-619.

³⁰S. 12.2.

³¹ Mahānidāna Sutta Aṭṭhakathā; Trans. by Bhikkhu Bodhi, **The Great Discourse on Causation: The Mahānidāna Sutta and Its Commentaries** (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2000) 20.

³² Mahāvedalla Sutta, M. 43.

³³S. 12.2.

states, when mentality and materiality (*nāma-rūpa*) are connected to the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*), mentality (*nāma*) is correlated with the three aggregates of feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*) and mental formation (*saṅkhāra*), whereas materiality is signified with the aggregate of material form (*rūpa*)³⁴.

- (v) The six sense bases (*saḷāyatana*) is the fifth link of dependent origination that defines the six sense organs, viz., the eye base (*cakkhāyatana*), the ear base (*sotāyatana*), the nose base (*ghāṇāyatana*), the tongue base (*jivhātana*), the body base (*kāyāyatana*) and the mind base (*manāyatana*)³⁵.
- (vi) The sixth link of dependent origination is contact (*phassa*), as originating in the contact of mentality (*nāma*) and materiality (*rūpa*)³⁶. Through ‘The Discourse of Honeyball’ (*Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*), Venerable Mahākaccāna expresses contact as follows: “Dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact.”³⁷ Moreover, with reference to the *Pali-English Dictionary*, Mrs. Rhys Davids and William Stede define contact (*phassa*) as the fundamental fact in sense impression³⁸. According to the Buddha, contact is classified into six classes: eye-contact (*cakkhusamphasso*), ear-contact (*sotasamphasso*), nose-contact (*ghāṇasamphasso*), tongue-contact (*jivhāsamphasso*), body-contact (*kāyasamphasso*) and mind-contact (*manosamphasso*)³⁹.
- (vii) The seventh constituent, feeling (*vedanā*), is a condition for the arising of craving. Regarding the six senses, the Buddha distinguishes six kinds of feelings – feeling born of eye-contact (*cakkhusamphassajā*), feeling born of ear-contact (*sotasamphassajā*), feeling born of nose-contact (*ghāṇasamphassajā*), feeling born of tongue-contact (*jivhāsamphassajā*), feeling born of body-contact

³⁴ Paññā-bhūmi-niddesa, Vism. Ch. XVII; Trans. by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, p. 122.

³⁵ S. 12.2.

³⁶ Sn. V. 878.

³⁷ Madhupindika Sutta, M. 18; Trans. by Ñānamoli and Bodhi, **Majjhima Nikāya: The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha**, p. 203.

³⁸ Davids & Stede, op.cit., p.478.

³⁹ S. 12.2.

(*kāyasamphassajā*) and feeling born of mind-contact (*manosamphassajā*)⁴⁰.

(viii) The eighth formula, craving (*taṇhā*), is denoted as the chief root of suffering. In the discourse of dependent origination, the Buddha expounds upon six classes of craving: craving for forms (*rūpatāṇhā*), craving for sounds (*saddatāṇhā*), craving for smells (*gandhatāṇhā*), craving for tastes (*rasatāṇhā*), craving for tactile objects (*phoṭṭhabbatāṇhā*) and craving for mental phenomena (*dhammatāṇhā*)⁴¹.

(ix) The ninth constituent, clinging (*upādāna*) is commonly referred to as grasping⁴². The Blessed One expounds four kinds of clinging- clinging to sensual pleasures (*kāmūpadāna*), clinging to views (*diṭṭhūpadāna*), clinging to rules and vows (*sīlabbatūpadāna*) and clinging to a doctrine of self (*attavādūpadāna*)⁴³.

(x) The tenth formula of dependent origination is existence or becoming (*bhāva*) which refers to the sensual characteristics of the body⁴⁴. The Buddha describes threefold existences- sense-sphere existence (*kāmahavo*), form-sphere existence (*rūpabhavo*) and formless-sphere existence (*arūpabhavo*)⁴⁵.

(xi) The eleventh link of dependent origination is birth (*jāti*) which comprises the entire embryonic process beginning with conception and ending with parturition⁴⁶. The Blessed One expounds upon birth as follows:

“The birth of the various beings into various orders of beings, their being born, descend [into mother womb] production, the manifestation of the aggregates, the obtaining of the sense bases.”⁴⁷

(xii) The twelfth constituent is aging and death (*jarāmarana*). In the discourse of dependent origination, the Blessed One explained that aging (*jarā*) refers to a being’s old age, brokenness, greyness, wrinkling, decline of vitality,

⁴⁰S. 12.2.

⁴¹S. 12.2.

⁴²Nyanatiloka, **Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines** (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2004) 184.

⁴³S. 12.2.

⁴⁴Nyanatiloka, Op.cit., p.31.

⁴⁵S. 12.2.

⁴⁶Nyanatiloka, Op.cit., p.69.

⁴⁷S. 12.2

degeneration of the faculties, whereas death (*marana*) refers to a being's deceasing, passing away, breaking up, disappearance, mortality, death, completion of time, breaking up of the aggregates and casting off of the body.⁴⁸

The twelve-fold formula of dependent origination explicitly ascribed the entire lifespan of a being (*puggala*) as a whole. In addition, Venerable Buddhaghosa categorized the twelvefold constituents into three lifetimes, they are, past, present and future⁴⁹. Moreover, Venerable Buddhaghosa expounds the first two constituents (in order), viz., ignorance and volitional formations are correlated to the past life; the next eight links, viz., consciousness, name and form, six-sense bases, contact, feeling, craving, clinging and existence are correlated to the present life; the last two formulas, viz., birth and aging-and-death are correlated to the future life⁵⁰. Practical aspects of dependent origination define the wheel of birth and death, depicting the endless cycle of death and re-birth from one existence to another existence within the twelve-fold formula.

Conclusion

When we look at the doctrine of Dependent Origination (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*), it is evident from the foregoing research that it provides the framework of Buddhist psychology. The psychological aspect of Dependent Origination (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*) draws a clear picture of the constituents from the law of causation and analyzes the mental states and motivational factors behind each constituent. In conclusion, the Buddha's objective is to present a discourse in the theory of dependent origination to delineate a clear process of life from birth to death, seeking out the taproot of suffering and the method to vanquish suffering in the path to liberation. The doctrine of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) skillfully explains the psychological aspects of the nature of suffering. It provides a framework for understanding the nature of the mind while establishing the possibility of liberation from the rotated cycle (*samsāra*). Mental factors, the twelvefold constituents, the five faculties, motivation, and personality factors create a psychological foundation for understanding the function of the mind through the process of dependent origination. Wise attention (*yoniso manasikāro*) and clear comprehension of these significant elements guide and tame the mind along the path to liberation (*nibbāna*).

⁴⁸S. 12.2.

⁴⁹Vism. Ch. XVII; Op.Cit., p. 287.

⁵⁰Ibid.

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