

## Dependent Origination (Paticcasamuppada) – The Universal Doctrine

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### Discussion

Evidence can be found that Indian intellects were engaged in intense efforts to find out what is the real nature and the ultimate truth about the world and living creatures. The Buddha was born in such a situation. According to Pali canon texts, the contemporary intellects who engaged in the search for truth were of two types called Ascetic and Brahmins. Brahmajāla Sutta in Dhīghanikaya states that there were 62 heretics among them (D.N., Brahmajāla Sutta). It is said that they were engaged in exploring the facts about living creatures and the world through Ātappamanvāya (making attempts), Padhānamanvāya (taking effort), Anuyogamanvāya (repeatedly taking effort), and Sammā Manasikāramanvāya (memorizing well).

The Karma Marga or the results of past actions with veneration and rituals, which was prominent during the Vedic Brahmin eras, began to subdue in the forestry Upanishad era. The path to knowledge was highlighted during these later eras. Accordingly, people searched for the truth through debate and arguments (Saññaṃ ca dīṭṭhiṃ ca ye agga hesuṃ – te ghaṭṭhayantā vicaranti loke) (Suttanipata, 1962:75). Some took to paths of practicing yoga and meditation. The Buddhism points out seeing the reality (Dīṭṭhiṃ ca anupagamma) (Metta Sutta). without adhering to any of these views. (Dassanena sampanno) (Metta Sutta). The Buddha has stated that all the aforesaid viewpoints fall into two main extremes and are dualistic, and that he does not follow these extremes and preaches the Dhamma in moderation.

*Sabbam atthīti ayameko anto. Sabbam natthīti dutiyo anto.*

*Ete te ubho ante anupagamma majjhena tathāgato Dhammam desati*

(D.N., Brahmajāla Sutta).

(There is everything (shashvata). This is one extreme. There is nothing (ashashvata). This is the second extreme. Dhamma is being preached taking the middle path without falling into

any of the extremes). Thus, the Buddhism has introduced two philosophical study methods to help understanding the reality without falling into these two extremes. They are:

1. Theory of Analysis
2. Theory of Synthesis

The Theory of Analysis is dividing people and world into the entities that are binding them. The theory of synthesis is re-uniting of what has been thus divided. It is been taught in the Dependent Origination (Paticcasamuppada) or Cause and Effect Theory of Buddhism. Accordingly, the Dependent Origination (Paticcasamuppada) holds a special place among the teachings of the early Buddhist period. This shows that none of the root factors divided into parts such as connective entities or elements etc. do not exist individually, independently or in isolation but all exist in a relative manner to each other. It has been pointed out that the dual aspect of Shastava Ucheda is also excluded in the study of the factors that exist. Thus, everything is relative, not absolute. Everything depends on each other and not independent. Everything is defended, not independent or autonomous. This means that everything is connected to each other as a cause or effect. Understanding the Paticcasamuppada means understanding the Buddhism. Understanding the Buddhism means understanding Paticcasamuppada (*Yo paticcasamuppadaṃ passati. So Dhammaṃ passati. Yo Dhammaṃ passati. So paticcasamuppadaṃ passati*) (S.N., Paticcasamuppada Sutta). It is taught in the Buddhism that Buddhism and Paticcasamuppada are not different or separated from each other, they are a single and a unified philosophy. As depicted in Mahawaggapali, when Upathissa Paribrajaka asked Assaji Thero what is the dhamma that he follows, the Thero said that his dhamma is the Paticcasapuppada or the theory of Cause and Effect.

*Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā - tesaṃ hetu tathāgatho āha*

*Tesaṃ ca yo nirodho - evaṃ vādi mahā samaṇo* (Majjhimanikaya).

Following the enlightenment, the Buddha had reflected on the Paticcasamuppada from the natural order to reverse (*Paticcasamuppadaṃ anuloma paṭilomaṃ manasā kāsi*), (K.N., Bodhi Sutta). So it was reflected during the first week because it was the basic teaching. After reflecting on it this way, the Buddha felt that it would be beneficial to preach to the community who have a mindset that is drunk with lust and greed. The concept of Dhamma that is not understood is nothing but this same Paticcasamuppada,

*“Ālayarāma ayaṃ paja ālayaratā ālaya samudayo idaṃ pi kho tṭhānaṃ*

*duddasaṃ yadidaṃ idappaccayatā paticcasamuppādo”* (Majjhimanikaya).

Described as Dhamma<sup>tt</sup>hitattā, Dhammaniyāmatā, Idappaccayathā, Dhammatā etc., the Paticcasamuppada, is a universal doctrine that has existed throughout the ages, regardless of a Buddha was born in this world or not (Uppāda vā tathāgathānam<sup>tt</sup> hitāva sā dhātu yadida<sup>tt</sup> paticcasamuppādo) (Sa<sup>tt</sup>yuttanikaya). Due to the special feature of this doctrine, the attention of many scholars who have provided information about Buddhist history has been drawn to it. During a later period of time, Dr. Nagarjuna who is considered to be the founder of Mādhyamaka philosophy or nihilism, has pointed out that nihilism is the Middle Path or Madyama Prathipada,

*“Yah pratītyasamuppādah śūnyatām<sup>tt</sup> pracakshamahe. Sā praññappti rūpādāya pratipatsayva madhyamā<sup>tt</sup>”, (Mūlamadhyamikakarika, 24).*

Accordingly, Paticcasamuppada is an eternally existing doctrine in the world. The man always has to deal with birth, existence and the death. Since the man is unable to comprehend this, a Buddha is born from time to time to teach them this reality. The Buddha explained to Ananda Thero in Mahanidhana Sutta in Dīghanikaya that human without a proper understanding of this situation, are being born and die in a chaotic state similar to a tangled ball of thread,

*“Etassa Ānanda Dhammassa ananubodhā appa<sup>tt</sup>tivedha evamaya<sup>tt</sup> pajā tantākulakajātā gulāguṇḍikajātā mujjhabbajabūtā apāya<sup>tt</sup> duggati<sup>tt</sup> vināpātā<sup>tt</sup> sam<sup>tt</sup>sāra<sup>tt</sup> nā<sup>tt</sup>tivattanti”, (D.N. Mahanidhana Sutta).*

According to the theory of Paticcasamuppada, it means that:

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|---|---|
| Asmi <sup>tt</sup> sati ida <sup>tt</sup> hoti            | - This will happen when this is there.        |
| Asmi <sup>tt</sup> asati ida <sup>tt</sup> na hoti        | - This is not there when this does not exist. |
| Imassa uppāda <sup>tt</sup> ida <sup>tt</sup> uppajjati   | - This occurs when this occur.                |
| Imassa nirodha <sup>tt</sup> ida <sup>tt</sup> nirujjhati | - This ceases when this ceases to exist.      |
- (Sa<sup>tt</sup>yuttanikaya)

There are two pairs of words, ‘have’ and ‘have not’ can be seen here. As per the first two words, the existence of something in relation to something else has been expressed. Accordingly, anything or action in the world exists and occur in relation to any other occurrence. There is nothing independent or self-made on this world. Also, have and have not denotes the existence or non-existence of something. That is the theory of impermanence. There is nothing in this world that is stable and lasts forever. By looking at every person and every object according to this theory, a realistic interpretation and

understanding can be gained. Accordingly, if something exists because of the existence of another thing, when one of them disappears, the other will cease to exist. This is the essence of Paticcasamuppada theory. This excludes the concept of some early philosophers that the world was created by the Mahabrahma and everything in this world happens according to his wish. According to the Paticcasamuppada theory, the responsibility and freedom to shape the future of everything depends on the actions performed by the individual. Therefore, the Paticchasamuppada theory is a concept that understands the actual situation of the world and guides one to move towards the desired goals according to one's wishes.

Although the basic of Dependent Origination (Paticcasamuppada is the above-mentioned concept of have and have not, it is said that Buddha reflected on the concept from the beginning to end and vice versa after his enlightenment. This means that Paticcasamuppada has two aspects The two-fold Paticcasamuppadaya means:

Avijja	- ignorance of Four Noble Truths
Saṅkhāra	- adding defilement
Viññāṇaṃ	- knowledge
Nāmarūpaṃ	- the body
Salāyataṃ	- six senses
Phasso	- touch
Vedana	- feeling
Taṇhā	- desire
Upādānaṃ	- holding
Bhavo	- existence
Jāti	- birth
Jarā, Maraṇa, Soka, Parideva, Dhukka, Domanassa	

As stated here, one causes the other. That leads to another. In this way, twelve things cause the birth of a person. As per this, birth is what causes a human being to become degenerate, to die, to the state of grief, sorrow, suffering, etc. The primary cause for birth is to acquire a being. All this comes into existence because of the firm grasping of everything as mine. In this way, individual actions affect each other to the point of not having a proper understanding of the Four Noble Truths. If the fourfold truth is properly understood and cultivated, the person will not be reborn in this world. It can be said that ignorance and the cause mentioned in this dual-fold Paticcasamuppada affect the past, birth and death affects

the future while everything else affects the present. However, Mr. Wettamuni states that this concept cannot be accepted when everything that exists in the world which is constantly becoming impermanent is considered in a subtle manner.

As stated above, the life originates, rely and exists on the concepts of Avijja, Paccaya and Sankhara. On the other hand, it can also be seen as in the diminishing order. That means, removing ignorance leads to removal of origins. Consciousness is removed by the loss of origins. In this way, by removing each other and getting rid of birth, the occurrence of evil, death, sorrow and suffering etc. will also be removed. All these facts are caused by a suffix (paticcasamuppanna) and the occurrence is suffixed (paticcasamuppada) (Visuddhimagga). Therefore, all these are relative, subordinate to each other, and interconnected to each other. One is neither absolute nor free. Accordingly, Paticcasamuppada should be considered as a cycle but not as a vine.

In this way, the Paticcasamuppada theory is the basis for everything in the world. According to Maha Nidhana Sutra, the factors that are causing social chaos and discomfort to people have been described in order. As explained there, craving causes the pain, pain causes the search, the search causes the seeking, seeking causes judging good and bad and that leads to loving the judged object, the liking causes the strong desire of selfishness and that leads to the greed, greed causes the sense to protect, that sense leads to weapons and disputes, arguments lying and various other sins and wrongdoings,

*“Iti kho panetaṃ ānanda vedanaṃ paṭicca taṇhā, taṇhaṃ paṭicca pariyesana, pariyesanaṃ paṭicca lābho, labhaṃ paṭicca ajjhosānaṃ, ajjhosānaṃ paticca pariggaho, pariggahaṃ paticca macchariyaṃ, macchariyaṃ paṭicca ārakkho, ārakkhadikaraṇaṃ paṭicca daṇḍādaṇa satthādaṇa kalaha viggaha vivāda tuvaṃ tuvaṃ pesuṇṇa musāvāda aneka pāpakā akusalā dhammā sambhavanti”,*

(D.N., Mahānidhāna Sutta).

According to Paticcasamuppada theory of Cakkavattisāhanāda Sutta in Dīghanikaya, it has been pointed out that the poverty led to committing ten-fold evils. Increase in poverty led to theft. Theft led to increase in weapons and more weapons caused more killings. Killing caused lying. Lying led to slander and that caused using harsh words. Harsh words led to unchastity. Unchastity led to speaking meaningless and various other sins ,

“Iti kho bhikkhave adhanānaṃ na dhane ananuppapadiyamāne dāḷiddiyaṃ vepullamagamāsi. Dāḷiddiye vepullaṃ gate adinnādanāṃ vepullamagamāsi. Adinnādāne vepullaṃ gate satthaṃ vepullamagamāsi. Satethe vepullaṃ gate pāṇātipāto vepullamagamāsi. pāṇātipāte vepullaṃ gate musāvādo vepullamagamāsi. Musāvāde vepullaṃ gate pisuṇā vācā vepullamagamāsi. Pisunāvācāya vepullaṃ gatāya kāmesumicchācāre vepullamagamāsi. kāmesumicchācāre vepullaṃ gate dve dhammā vepullamagamāsu. pharusā vācā saṃpappalapo ca. Dvīsu dhammesu vepullaṃ gathesu abhijjhā vyāpādo vepullamagamāsu. Abhijjhāvyāpādesu vepullaṃ gatesu micchādiṭṭhi vepullaṃ magamāsi” (D.N., Cakkhaviṭṭhāna Sutta).

In this way everything is connected to Dependent Origination (Paticcasamuppada). It can be pointed out that this theory can be even applied to any organization. For instance, doctors are in a hospital because of patients. Since there are doctors, they need a place for treatment. For this purpose, hospitals are being built. A hospital has beds, chairs and other equipment for patients. According to this theory, due to ignorance, deaths sorrow, grievances and suffering arise. After death people rejoin the cycle of samsara because they have not realized the Fourfold truth. Thus, the journey of the individual always takes place like a cycle. In this example when there are no hospitals, there are no patients, etc., when there is no such thing, its existence cannot be seen.

## Conclusion

If you take a school or a university, there are teachers because of students. There are buildings to facilitate their teachings. There are chairs, tables, etc. because of the buildings. There is a separate administration to manage these buildings and other physical facilities. Students are been enrolled by the administration. Similarly, a tree grows from a seed. The tree produces leaves and flowers. Leaves and flowers produce fruits. In this way, it can be said that the existence of a tree also happens according to the Dependent Origination (Paticcasamuppada) theory. Without a seed, a tree cannot grow (Bhījabhāve phalābhavo). Accordingly, it can be pointed out that Paticchasamuppada theory is valid for anything and everything. This is a brief narration on Dependent Origination (Paticcasamuppada). As per this analysis of the Paticcasamuppada principle, it can be said that almost everything in the world is subject to this theory. It is an eternal theory. Through this, we can understand the existence

of the world and the living creatures originate and survive. It should be emphasized here that this takes place as a circle not as a vine.

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